

# THE HOSPITALITY BUSINESS



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*The Hospitality Business* © 2016 Joseph Reich

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*valeveil* dash is a literary project which grants creative space as open-source alternative for experimental poets, writers and artists-as-writers who are working within a concise, clipped textual framework to generate poetic texts typically 30 pages or less. dash works collected and shared here aim to both explore and rekindle the concept of the traditional poetic chapbook but from a progressive, flexible perspective linking text to design. The project's title suggests that all contributors consciously navigate in-and-around the space between words and phrases with a contemporary awareness and critical eye. The 'dash' (whether it be em- or en- yet not to be confused with the 'hyphen') as punctuation mark is a grammatical device which literally instructs the reader to pause or break mid-sentence before moving forward with any idea-as-unit. The 'dash' recognizably divides words or phrases into compartmentalized parenthetical statements.

The production of each new dash text should be influenced by or speak to America (i.e., The United States of America) and / or Scandinavia; no specific citizenship status is required. The dash poetics project is most interested in highlighting self-assured voices who have adopted a specific textual strategy once perceived as hushed or even unheard while also embracing the site-specific parameter of the *valeveil* curatorial initiative. dash poetics exist as gratis, downloadable .pdfs.

3:30

whenever my shift used to begin  
to calm myself down i would take  
long strolls on the boardwalk and  
check out the stray dogs and blind  
men and old men roaming like sleep  
walkers with transistors pasted to  
their ears and black boys like pure  
freedom doing backflips off the stairs

4:15

you stare bleary-eyed through great big windows  
after having polished down the luggage carts  
having noticed the man in the hot ice truck  
has passed-out with his motor still running  
like some mafioso bludgeoned outside the front  
entrance could be dusk or dawn really doesn't matter

5:45

a marquee put up in the lobby for the cosmetologist convention

6:12

i like the busloads of germans  
and the busloads of asians  
the best as they don't speak  
the language and keep their  
distance trying to make  
the greatest connection  
and most curious about  
the culture we live in

with earnest expressions  
seeming the most  
satisfied and  
contented

in the morning they leave their bags outside  
the door and you get five dollars for each one

7:00

in the lounge the ventriloquist gets into a screaming match with his dummy and grabs him by the hair and starts swinging him around and banging his head against the stage; limbs go flying all over the place leaving the audience in utter shock-and-awe; never seen anything like this before and chokes the last of his look-a-like pal, then starts slowly mouthing the words with a sarcastic drawl. suddenly someone from the audience leaps up and hollers — “hey! why don’t you try to pick on

someone your own size!” he drops to his knees and starts banging his head against the stage. they bring in the lounge singer on wheels all decked-out in a faux white boy afro and out-of-date sequins like the pope mobile coyly winking at them or when they have to put fast food workers behind the bullet proof glass of *white castle* at curfew and gang members go flying through glass windows on queens boulevard having revelations

they all wake up numb experiencing something of a perverse psychological phenomenon of a rebirth feeling like new men.

7:30

mean and nasty, stingy and sexless, aristocratic women  
sneak past young couples patiently waiting in the vestibule for taxis  
whose exclusivity and manners is having absolutely no manners at all  
their husbands have turned them into widows in one form or another



8:45

they do a group mailing of glossy brochures showing a very sociopathic mathematician in henry kissinger glasses sitting contented in the cozy lounge with a view of the lit-up city after having just chopped up one of his mistresses into a million pieces and ecstatic family with pasted-on smiles sliding down the waterslide like an accordion; one of those milfs stepping out of the pool ...

11:45

the stud elevator repairmen and humble male dancer  
show up with their equipment at all hours of the night

idiots from the pharmaceutical convention and loud  
drunken middle-aged women have worn them out

things always confused by role-reversals  
or who's truly out there paying their dues

without the schmooze and  
sincerely trying to make a living

12:02

some of them even have secret code names  
like pornographic undercover kings and queens  
to keep their loved ones back home off the trail  
one wonders where suburbs begin and wildlife ends?  
real true life and play pretend? in the morning they'll  
come off the elevator as if nothing happened

you feel slightly nauseous in just feeling  
too close to them like some relationship  
you know should have ended staying  
together merely for convenience  
or the most vulgar of reasons

12:25

with patterns and symptoms of guests  
you find indifference (to try and impress)  
just not particularly impressive but those of  
compassion and spirit the ones who really made it

1:45

insurance salesmen from the midwest  
what they like to refer to as “family men” try to sneak  
in drag queens at all hours of the night from the meat market

the front desk supervisor who has been betrayed  
by his wife and ‘gone lesbian’ engages in a power-  
struggle with them and hollers—“this is a family run!”

2:15

the handsome greek from the corner diner  
shows up with a gyro without sauce  
french fries and an extra-dill pickle

4:45

the doorman wakes up in the bellman's closet

4:51

communication log reads—  
“bedbugs, ghosts”



5:02

everyone seems as fragile as glass animals  
trying to hide their lost shattered souls

how in configuration, function and form, you figure out  
the female is a semi-colon and male: dangling participle

6:25

dresser stands with playing cards  
and tapes on 'how to making a killing  
in the market,' xanax, tourist snow globes,  
panties with stained period blood in them

7:45

the pretty puerto rican housekeeping staff  
shows up as always (bright and early) giggling  
better than any rising sun or sidewalk hosed down

8:36

a note on the doorknob left for overnight  
guests tell them "thank you for your service"  
and that the hotel has changed management

8:41

bills slipped under doors by that soulful  
and solitary bellman during his graveyard  
like some denouement to an absurd drama  
reminding them to put their obvious and  
mediocre disguises back on; to hit the road  
and play the same unconvincing higher than holy  
roles their family and corporation (pretty much  
interchangeable) is expecting from them of quasi-  
normal, see-through and pathetic, not even close

9:45

with his tips from the night before the doorman  
will pick up those scrumptious eggs and hash browns  
made by that one-armed veteran at that grill in the station  
at the last stop in coney island knock it all down with a cold  
one and read the sports with the rhythmic hypnotic echo of  
the self-soothing surf from the distant ocean pounding his window  
and in the instance or during this routine and ritual able to forget it all