

LINK DUDE TIME

VERNON HOWL

In Dude Time

a novelette in 8 parts

by

VERNON HOWL

PART ONE: HELLICONIA

Land of No (c)law(s)

I wondered spaghetti-ly
through the vacant
yester-day
No host-pitiable fusilli
could undo me

Ergo: lobsters emerge(d)

And to set the scene,
I valued
their time
more than their life

I spoketh to them as
also-humans
as alorans ad-ored their
kind species somemore (more
than me?)

Harom B. Big Bologna's the
name and dude time is my
ghame

I told the sadeyed lobs

They didn't know thy
lang-cengage from their
heliconia and I joked
that's where we were

HELLICONIA (and we were)

Hell on wheels was the
speeeeed for this job

So I scoop'd up the red
deaths and put them in the
station-wagon

They said *H TRIPLE B whut gives!* and I re-minded them only the Low-ward

(Having bent more towards religiosity/civil-liability in my latter daiys)

I knew they would emerge
Their holes were my holes
on this earth as sin in an
any-any

The alsorans – jetblack and snarling – did not appruve (as if I couldn't ghuess that mess)

We pressed ontowards, the ghate

The alsorans, kings of
itwere, of any-any (of
course) and also here or
there

stole out from under me the
part of the car that ghave
off nephropidae-pheromones

They said they need it for
their school pruject

(They re-ferred to life as
school and what We couldn't
learn from that jazzz could
paint the mountain-sides)

No bhothor

In HELLICONIA we had no use
for that smhell

Leaving any-any and it were
on the horizon, the
out-skirts, jollily
we locked the door behind
I didn't want to make a big
deal out of it
No lob is (a) pris(m) in my
Bhook

I could ad-here the
alsorans scream
but never hear them

Ears and HELLICONIA donmix

we / you / us absorb the
life of a lobster in such a
place

But it did come to my
surprise that a stow-away
ranked among our mhist:
A silly little A.R., went
by Mikus

Mikus told me my lobs were
chooked

*Bone application a mammary
gland* the tiny creature
squeak'd

Mikus might come inhandy, I
visioned
Seeing him one day king of
this damned place and
godknows they needed a king

I spit, of mhercy

The lobs and I would take
over the place soon-enough
This I felt dheeply

There weren't many left
among the unabandoneers

A stray mmonkey with a
doglike face or a stick in
the mud: that-there ilk,
etc.

We made shortrib work of
them forth food,
and had ourselves a love-ly
fheast

The land was ours now
The future: uncertain yet

PART TWO: NEWCIV

Tilling the Land

It wasn't long before I
I heard we were
under-the-water and knew we
had to farm fast for 02
before my last gasp boiled
the land and killed every
last lobster

For what it's worth, the
red friends built tilling
machine(s) (they really
worked as 1)
And Mikus and Me were
breathing good fresh before
no time

I was so relieved to
finally breathe again and I
thanked the little floating
machines they'd built

Mikus was less ready for
the New Air, and
in him
I observed a change

He was manic and glitch-y

I ahrmed him with a pistol
to dohimselfin
If it got
too bad

Gosh goliath Mik yelp'd

The thought of it both
stole our shpirits away

We pressed on as there was
much much so much to do

HELLICONIA could be a kind
place, clawless (naturally)
I phontificated

The lobs thought I said
phoint-less and took
off-fence

One look-out per
white-picket
spoke, menacing

Since when had they been
ahrmed,
I wondered

Each red devil fixed a scan
right in the mhiddle of me
toro

I said
I don't like that line,
friends
What ghives?

If not for the air here –
the oh-so kindly air that
THEY grew (they reminded) –
the line
wouldn't be much more than
an
invisible whater whisper

I couldn't see it?

Don't est hem

Hmmm

Answers were considered for
future questions: uhnknown

PART THREE:
SORROW COMES A-KNOCKING
On the Merits of Dude Time

Let me tell you
a little bit about myself

I stroll down the
penome-tree from a long
line of very proud pasta
My papa was a rig, sturdy
and proud

Lordchancellor of the
Rigatoni

It's true I was lost when I
was originally bhanished
from THE PASTALANDS

I sought out a new family
or,
They found me

I did not think of myself
as their master, these lobs
After all,
they'd just emerged
Twas a spike of fate our
colonizing HELLICONIA
I didn't know how to raise
the second stanza:
The declawing

I felt one day I could
retrain their machines to
do it in their sleep;
perhaps ole Mikus
could assist?

But for now
sorrow
Not sadness, something
else

It burrowed in our newciv
just as
my father had burrowed the
mercenaries deep inside the
ground bheef
(during the second
Bolognese War)

Whereas all we saw was red
in those days,
I felt it best not to see
my new chomrades as a color

And such a color!

They say every lobster is
blue and green
before you remove them from
their home and build a new
whorld alongside them

But that isn't
quite true

There are a breed of
lobster red-already
And these are the breeding
I mhet or maybe mhet me

What fate had todowithit
was still
as of yet
uhnclear

I knew things would change
I just had to be patient

I passed the time cheating
cards with Mikus who was
de-volvoing right before my
eyes

PART FOUR: MIKUS, RIP

My Friend Dies

The ghun I'd given Mikus
rust-ed over
in the breathy new air

That option was out

I could spur the boy into
madness enough so
one or more lob on the
lookout
took action
or I could find a new whay

Lhittle did I know
Nature was already doing
Her Trick

From the mouth of Mikus
grewt a very bhig car,
a shiny new duett

I witnessed the birth of
Dr. Duett
with shadowy eyes

He was a wild car, no
longer an
alsoran
or hybrid post-hellform one
of one (whatever the one)

He was all automobile like
daddy had been all rig

His power mhuted me

I hadn't bargained for this
My plate,
already so fhull

Vroom Vroom

His whisper was like an air
canon
milking the vacuumous horde
of HELLICONIA's floating
mhachine

To do that with a voice!

It was then I learned I had
so much to learn
For starters,
a voice
Oh to have one!

If I'd only been born a
car! Or de-volvo'd the same

How?

I was done wondering about
shuch things

PART FIVE : LOBSOCAUST

A Return to Glory

I was not born an evil past
I did not choose this Lhife

I punctuated every plate
with basil grace
and stole no khisses
from the lovely linguine
ladies (without asking)

I only wanted to carve out
a little place
Not unlike the turkey knife

I thought of every meal I'd
ever been,
and been through
a part of, a part of time,
in sthep
And against it

When I wrote my manifesto
as yhet
a tiny grain
I called it

In Dude Time

Most pasta wish they were
of human form
Even the tiniest pastina
and agnolotti
to Acini Di Pepe herself

It's not about gender for
the gluten

We long to hold the gun,
The Power

What we wield withit whence
forth we touch it
is our own strange thought
No one can judge us if we
make the change

There are great stories of
a bustling and industrious
ghettiman
out-witting and out-dueling
an entire herd of chimp and
—

Zermicelli thyself spoke
deeply of the matter
(whether itbe “lore” I
cannot say)

—
stealing their humanity
from their darkskies above

I don't believe every word
But
in the stories
I always found a light
To guide me
when I felt, in-addaquit

And such was My darkskies'
time

Dr. Duett proved useful in
the matter-of-machines
and he with I
over-programmed the
floating machines

I must admit
I tricked the good Dr.
I told him I was turning
them into rhadios (haha)

But they were now killing
machines and the time
was
also
Now

On midnight of the 17th
October (HELLICONIA CAL)
we auto-set the machines
– made so delicately in
that lobsterlikeness –
to kill post-hate
upon rising
each and every
red death
The very things we'd given
new life in this land

It made me sad
but it had to be done

I went without air that day
so I could see the
lookouts' rays

And I swallowed them whole
as new energy
One by One by One
Until, exasperated, those
such brave lobs, so chosen,
fell
and landed
on the otherside of the
wall

I wandered back to the
home-front and saw
Saw what we had dhone

A feast of true death afoot

It was a sacred scene and I
knew then that it had
finally come:

My time, in dude time, to
rhule
as I'd always been meant to
rhule

Alone

Dudelike, stoic, fhree

There was nothing left to
do now but individually
chop of the claws of each
corpse bheast

I made a necklobs for Duett
The final problem, he

PART SIX:
THE GOOD DOCTOR
Dealing with Duett

I scanned the text of
In Dude Time
and giggledabit

Oh the ramblings of youth!

I searched in it for
something or other to solve
the final problem
of Dr. Duett

The saga of a strange
creature who mhagically
transforms into an ancient
volvo is not one I'd
considered in my days of
pasta goneby

This would take some in-gen
/ unity

And it was then and there
I decided to call upon my
papa, the rigatoni

I told father I'd made my
way to HELLICONIA, the name
of a land before the naming
of hands

He said he knew the place

I spoke of what I did

The lobsters
Red already, barely alive
And their sad fate

But was it so sad?

He said to me

I wondered why he said that

**Of course twas sad
If sadness not so
what else? (~!~)**

I thought for the very
first time in my life as a
pasta or dude
and didn't allow mydad
to know thy thinking

When I told him about the
final problem
he said
he'd be right there

I was nhervous
to see him
but also excited

If you've never seen a
rigatoni charge an old car
with a fight-to-the-death –
no matter the make, model,
sheen or shine –
well,
you haven't seen much

Father made short work with
Dr. Duett, I feared

As well as he'd helped me
I'd never adopted much of
infinity, infor assuch

His life was meant to be
short
So much as he was ever
ahlive at ahll

PART SEVEN:

DADDY KNOWS BEST?

On the Father, Infrequently

Now in HELLICONIA,
a new day
had dhawned

Father and son rhuled the
land

But with no lobsmhachines:
NO AIR

A pasta is so unlike anyone
else

It was time to leave
but where tho?

Father said to return as
the proud son of rigatoni
back to THE PASTALANDS

That he could convince The
Elders of my unbanishment

I was, of course,
weary
Feeling it a trap, set in
motion since my handkneaded
bhirth

Cannibalization is rare in
THE PASTALANDS,
perhaps even more rare than
in your “Lhand of the
Lhiving,”
but at whatrate did I have
another option?
At what cost?

The time-sink of HELLICONIA
would plague my un-ending

Days passed until the air
was truly gone,
and so it was
gone or
die

So I made my mind up as I
made my bed, a soft
oregano-inspired down, atop
a mattress of alfredo

One of the lobster's
contraptions drifted by as
did my thoughts
But in both
I caught a glimpse of
what had to be done

I noticed the machines
were growing human teeth

**The perfect bite
a rigatoni sprite
The battle won
so it be done**

I remembered the lullaby!

It was settled

This little thing would
need to eat my papa, the
proud rig and withit bring
him into a
new peace

He would transition to that
of a ghostpasta or
pastasoul (as we call them)
I prayed it not painful

The sad truth was
Dad was never there
nor had been

My life was one of trying,
failing and wishing

I suppose that's a lotta life
(or a lotta lives like)

But an insignificant pasta can
only spaghetti down the
Blvd. for so long

We all reach our breaking
points

And this was mine

PART EIGHT: PASTASOUL

The Story Ends

I left HELLICONIA
tormented,
naturally
and unnaturally

Naturally, to breathe air
as a free pasta once again

And unnaturally, as being
followed by the ghost of a
proud rigatoni for the rest
of eternity was not on my
Bingo Card Checklist

The land outside the ghates
was
just more land

And I strolled it

Desperately eschewing the
whisper in my ear
The whisper of dad

It sounded like the whind
if the whind was
judgemental, prrrrrrr

It passed through every
schreen me eyes and body
touched, as with me, in me

And I felt uhnclean

I opened the pages of *In
Dude Time* once again,
and read the words my
younger self
hath scribbled.....

The pixelated widow was a jellyfish in disguise. She brandished a firearm but in reality it was just a fish stick with ketchup at the end. Still the color red at the tip of the stick frightened me and I wondered when I had become so frightened by such things. There was really no way of—

I stopped dhead
in my tracks

Someone had stolen the text
of *In Dude Time* and
rheplaced it with a
dimestore paperback
called *The Pixelated Widow*

I couldn't deny that the
novel was good (great?)
but I mhoured
my lost manuscript

It was the only copy in all
the world, and now
it was ghone

Just then I realized my
father's ghost was having a
pastasoul pajamas party
with other lost
spirits of the carb

There was my uncle (a
tortiglioni) and second
cousin (a gross and
mis-shapen splot of
orecchiette whom had once
sauced me on the
Fork of July (pasta's most
treasured national holiday)

Ahmong others

They were reading *In Dude
Time* and laughing

Dad must've burnt'd the
pages some-time before he
died, some-time
And just then
something touched my back

It was Dr. Duett

He explained ehverything

My father's duel with him
was just a diversion; he'd
used that time (I couldn't
bear to watch)
to steal my bhook
and bhurn it

I was ahlways soft
and ohvercooked

A flabby ghenderless past
I mhourned for myself, and
for my lost whords
In the whorld of the
ghosts, the bhook was
still rheal
and though they were having
a rheal hoot at my expense
I took some solace
in the fhact
that my words were still
bheing rhead

Somewhere bbetween the air,
they touched a dhifferent
kind of air

The Dr. ahpologized for his
role in the mhatrer

I said that it was
ahlright, I uhnderstood

I tried to ehbrace my life
as pasta from then on
I knew it wouldn't be easy

But I thought I had to try

I made a ghrave for Harom
B. Big Bologna and I
covered it with
jharred-sauce

I whaited for the first
whood-land creature to
ehmerge to llick the sauce

And I whaited a very long
time