

GAY DETERIORATA

Written October 21, 1977, this Feature Poem was published in *Drummer* 21, March 1978.

- I. Author's Eyewitness Historical-Context Introduction written April 6, 2000
- II. The Feature Poem as published in *Drummer* 21, March 1978

**I. Author's Eyewitness Historical-Context Introduction written July 10, 2001**

In the pre-Stonewall gay-hippie 1960s and the gay-hippie 1970s that preceded the mid-70s clones, the ancient prayer, "Desiderata," was very popular, and this piece—satirizing the poem and our toll-taking acid-amyl lifestyle—was published as a full-page poster with art nouveau scroll work in *Drummer*.

In 2000, John Embry and I buried the hatchet—at least, the handle, because he wanted to return to his roots in *Drummer*.

So "Gay Deteriorata" was reprinted 22 years after its first publication, with the author's permission, by former *Drummer* publisher and owner John Embry on the masthead of his new magazine, *Super MR (Super Manifest Reader)*, June 2000, in which John Embry touted his 25 years in gay publishing by invoking what he termed the "classic writing and art from the early period at *Drummer*."

Somewhere in that is John Embry's non-spinning judgment of how I did *Drummer*.

I think John Embry realized that the second biggest mistake of his professional life was selling *Drummer*. His first, according to my eyewitness play-by-play watching *Drummer* unfold, had to do with his not paying the talent—and there were many who created that classic writing and art. As the second and last editor in chief of *Drummer*, I was the wrangler who rounded up that talent and the contact to whom they complained about his nonpayment.

"Gay Deteriorata" was also published in *Some Dance to Remember*, Reel Two, Chapter Four. "He [Ryan O'Hara] sent up the Castro in the Bicentennial issue of *Maneuvers* [which is the fictionalized *Drummer*]. Within six weeks, the satire became a best-selling poster."

I wrote an alternate version of "Gay Deteriorata" titled "DesiderBEARata" in the magazine, *Bear* #6, 1988, page 46.

**II. The Feature Poem as published in *Drummer* 21, March 1978**

GAY DETERIORATA

Go placidly amid the boys and taste,  
and remember what Southern Comfort there may be in grabbing a piece thereof.  
Avoid quiet and passive men unless you are in need of Quaaludes.

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Keep your act together.  
Speak glowingly of those hunkier than yourself and heed well their color-coded hankies.  
Know what to suck and when.  
Consider that two lovers do not a three-way make.  
Wherever possible, write your number on walls.  
Be comforted that in the jaded face of all aridity and disillusionment and despite the changing fortunes of time, somewhere in Iowa a chicken is coming out.  
Remember to clip your nails.  
Strive at all times to suck, fuck, snort, and stand erect.  
Douche yourself; if you need help, call the Fire Department.  
Exercise caution in your affairttes,  
especially with those closest to you: that dildo you live with, for instance.  
Be assured that a walk through a backroom bar will wet your feet. Fall not in the urinal therefore; you will chip your caps.  
Gracefully surrender the things of youth: continual hardons, size 30 Levi's, tight ass, new tattoos, bootcamp fantasies, and wet dreams.  
Let not your popper spill down your nose.  
Hire models from ads.  
For a good time, sit on your own face.  
Take heart amid the deepening gloom  
that your stretch marks do not show in the red lights at the baths.  
Reflect that whatever misfortune is your lot, it could only be worse in Dade County.  
You are a jerk-off of the Universe. You have no right to be here,  
especially in full leather on a bus.  
Remember that behind the cosmos there is no great mystery—only a couple of joke books.  
Therefore, make peace with your Master, whatever you consider him to be:  
Hell's Angel biker or Sugar Plum Fairy.  
With all its talk of gyms, real estate, and rising consciousness, the world continues to fuck up.  
You may as well fiddle as Rome burns.  
Be happy.  
Do what you must and call it by the best name possible.  
Fist yourself, jack off, and try not to drool.  
And above all, remember that if wrinkles hurt, you'd be screaming.  
Be thankful you were ever laid in the first place.

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