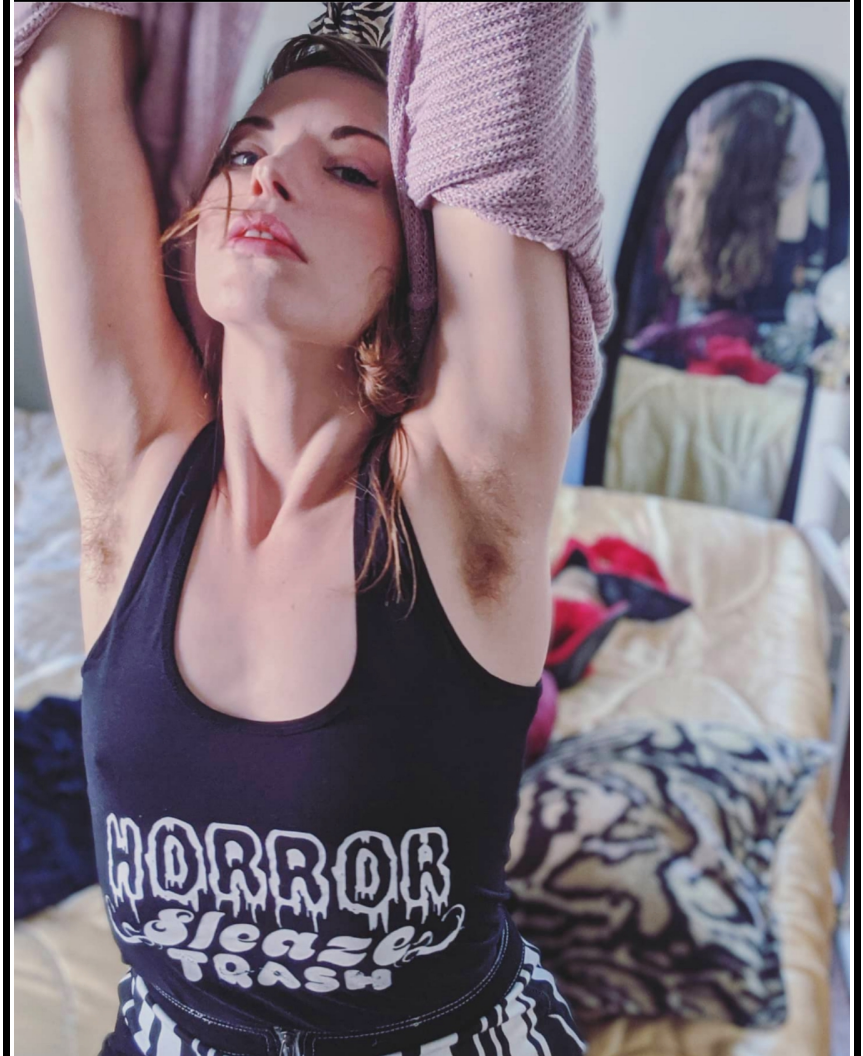




<http://www.horrorsleazetrash.com>

**HST QUARTERLY**



**WINTER 2021**

**Read On**  
**Arthur Graham**

Well, the solstice is finally upon us, and unfortunately that's not the only thing this year.

I suppose I could provide a rundown of all the fucked-up madness that's befallen us over the course of these past twelve months, but I think it's safe to say we've all been through enough already. In any case, it seems I certainly picked one helluva year to cut back drinking! Man, lemme tell ya, woof...

Anyhow, as much as I enjoy these little intros of mine (I don't always), I certainly hope you're not looking to ME for guidance in this current era. I'm no doctor, or a scientist, or the President of the United States, after all. I'm just a humble publisher of a poetry journal. But, as for whatever wisdom our poets have to offer this quarter, please, read on, read on.

Arthur Graham  
Salt Lake City, December 2020

**How To Write Poetry**  
**Robert Beveridge**

Crucified, Jesus  
spoke the world's  
most poetic line:  
“kĩ kĩ ! ĩ k k i”.  
Heleva, the second:  
“There is no poetry in that.”  
Nail yourself  
to a cross built  
from other dead girlfriends  
and their suicide boyfriends  
(preferably in mahogany)  
glued together with blood  
taken from the heart  
with a 14-gauge needle.  
Whisper the first thing  
that comes to mind,  
Aramaic optional.  
Wash your hands in urine,  
dry them on the stuffed  
carcass of an armadillo.  
Pink fairy is preferable  
but giant will do in a pinch.  
Touch someone beautiful,  
fall in love, commit  
suicide, repeat the cycle  
as often as possible.  
Don't forget the urine.  
Trim your adverbs.  
Trim your gerunds.  
And don't be cynical,  
whatever else you do.

**Doing it Right**  
**C.L. Liedekev**

Everything, and I mean everything, is burning.  
The night of her 31st birthday: the smell  
of the car tires squealing, pinning me in the garage,  
the rush of blood from her slap across the face,  
pussy juices on the couch, the lingering of fucking  
in the air like the house was haunted,  
streaks of dust across the glass, small grains  
spilling down onto the rug. A tiny white landscapes  
where generations of ideas will die and be reborn  
only to be forgotten in the moment of insertion.

She will split the difference across the arms  
of the chair, every orifice, every pore – wide open  
and yearning – a flock for the shepherd. Some  
bearded wet Jesus in a dirty bathrobe, screwdriver  
and blackberry stained, Guccione's corpse  
on a bender, grave-stained and dick hungry.  
What burns harder the fire or the skin under  
the flame. Flesh peeling off into its own dance,  
Yanvalou summoning until the entire room  
is a gnawing mouth shape, a vulval vestibule  
that swallows and swallows and swallows.

The end of the night shits open the cracked curtains,  
the neighbors, the cats, the birds rattle the walls  
like a concert, no one bought tickets for,  
and the mountain erupts because it is always  
about the mountain, the eruption of bleach  
and pineapples, hands sticky and wiped on thighs.  
Thick bubblegum. Ripped panties don't  
always spell passion, sometimes just desperation.  
Spitting into opens mouths, a long stream down  
the face, the sheets ripped up into a skull  
and crossbones flag of attack.

Passion is crucified and dirty speak sounds  
like Anunnaki shit talking. Heaven is not  
on the end of a penis or three fingers deep.  
It is not pupils as black as dead moons  
spinning in a dead orbit in a dead circle,  
because what matters is the lava flowing under the bed,  
the raw animal machines, pegged time in a ball gag,  
the right here and right now of the in there and down there,  
the spitting blood and the flowered grotesqueries of fluid.  
Because if you are not doing it right, then don't do it at all.

**Awake to Nightmares**  
**Niklas Stephenson**

the severed head of medusa flies through spheres  
copy and pasted endlessly as screens show raped  
words for fame  
lick the hands of Dr. Mengele an iron taste  
of human shame  
the ratline ties a noose around my hopes  
they suffocate but won't die the invisible hand feeds it  
substance for conscience  
caged in by bones and teeth and scalps  
resembling markets  
in an absolute darkness the interior is superior  
but the doors are shut  
the lizard king drowns in the blood on the street  
graveyards in Paris buried the best men  
a shotgun blast through the mouth leaves a  
generation dead what followed was trauma  
art as dissociation a line was erased  
irrational emotion and obligation  
Eichmann reserved claiming innocence  
as teenage girls sell sex for the prude  
taste sweat and tears the salt of our wounds  
I am a wound in Limbo the philosophers  
have disappeared  
evangelist radicals scream the truth the left ears  
of listeners sown shut  
a gaping fire pit of hate mistaken for a mouth  
that doesn't close  
ants crawl on skin the cliché withdrawal the ants  
are norms not created by fiending brains  
my toes on acid they dig into the ground unable  
to move as fish fly through the sky carrying  
moral travelers  
hyperbolic adjectives smack my brain  
I cannot sleep  
I awake to nightmares

**diamond**  
**Paul Tanner**

she was stuffed  
into a long skirt.  
it was like clingfilm around her thighs  
and hugged all the way down to her ankles:  
she looked like an upside-down pear.  
she could barely move in it.  
and as she went past me  
doing these little trots in heels,  
I saw there was a hole  
in the stitching at the side,  
high up on her thigh:  
this tiny peek of leg flesh,  
like a diamond in the dark.  
all I could think about  
was running over  
and licking it:  
would it be stubbly?  
would it be smooth?  
would it taste of some lotion,  
or just good ol' sweat?  
I wanted to lick that diamond  
so bad  
but I'm a good man  
so I didn't  
and she trotted on  
quite safe in her little stifled trots.  
I wanted to lick that diamond  
so bad  
but wrote about it instead  
and now you do too,  
don't you?

**Ghosted**  
**Clarice Hare**

I stumble through  
luminescences of rain:

awake at dawn, sweetened  
with salt,

palms crusted like  
my knees,

whiter than white. when  
river redgum roots snake

and tickle my  
unsandaled toes, I gasp

apologies and soak the sludge  
with my own blood.

moth-haunted and fly-  
haloed like some pale

swamp-goddess of  
degenerate creation,

I spit dew from my  
rosebud mouth and curse

them more for taking the canoe  
than what they

(falsely)

thought was my  
virginity.

**If It's Funny, It's Funny**  
**Brian Rihlmann**

I'm having a rare bull session  
with some old buddies  
and her name comes up—  
“Dude! You too?”  
Yep. Seems we all knew her.  
Intimately.

Of course Reno was  
a much smaller town, then.  
If a girl got around enough  
she could really make a name for herself.  
God knows I tried to make one for myself.  
It's how we became semi-famous  
before social media.

Maybe somewhere, a group of women  
sits down over margaritas, and  
one mentions this dude she used to  
know....and another says, “I remember  
that guy! All he did was talk about  
his ex...then he got too drunk to fuck  
me, and passed out on my couch!”

Then a third chimes in, and says  
“I was seeing him for awhile, but  
he left me for some bar skank.  
She was married, too. I wonder how  
THAT worked out.” and they all  
laugh. As they should.

**Got No Time for Worry**  
**Dave Cullern**

sunday afternoon. fathers nail innocence  
into wood. building future suicides from  
scratch. mould flesh into weaponised  
emptiness. mow grass like shaved heads.  
the next door kids are groomed by minds  
gone mad. clean the car. lock your bike.  
cut the hedge. the garages scream with  
the corporal punishment of days gone by.  
pet rabbits interred in compost heaps.  
dolls set alight by the sun. if you cry  
we'll have to buy you a dress. fucking  
pick one. dare you to fucking pick one.  
a lack of direction is palpable in the  
thin summer air. they only let you dance  
on the dance floor. that's if you're allowed  
to dance at all. they pick your clothes.  
clean your nose. regale your future with  
limitations and close. future doors. future  
dreams. the map you're expected to  
follow is exactly as small as it seems.

**Write About Your Favorite Color**  
**Tia Mitsinikos**

I like orange.  
But not the bright and bubbly kind.  
The dirty kind, like rust.  
The iris of rock doves,  
or pigeons' eyeballs if you like.

I also like its neighbor,  
dirty yellow.  
Like mustard.  
The color of forgotten couches  
and curtains smelling of mildew.

I even like my pink dirty.  
Like intestines,  
or a ballet slipper stained with sweat.  
And on the darker side of the spectrum,  
a dead rose, crusty like dried blood.

Imagine if every color were named  
after the dirtiest version of itself.  
“Burgundy” becomes “dried blood.”  
“Teal” becomes “mold.”  
Now mold is a versatile color.  
Everyone's favorite color  
can be found in mold form.  
Mold is prismatic, polychromatic,  
breaking barriers, breaking...moulds.

The Emperor's new clothes  
were just mold all along.  
Kind of ironic, seeing as mold  
is one of Earth's most  
oldest life forms.

The Emperor's old mold.  
Beautiful.

**No Gideon Bibles  
Judge Santiago Burdon**

There are no Gideon Bibles  
At the Chelsea Hotel  
Many a famous artist  
Seems to know it well

Bob Dylan wrote a song there  
Dylan Thomas lived his poems  
Ginsberg and Kerouac stayed there  
And Janis Joplin and Leonard Cohen

There's always a vacancy  
At the Chelsea  
Get a room without a phone  
Drinking Mad Dog in the lobby  
Or get drunk in your room alone

Thomas Wolfe wrote a novel there  
William Burroughs shot his dope  
Diego Rivera cheated on Frieda  
Sid Vicious cut Nancy's throat

If the manager doesn't like you  
He'll kick your ass out the door  
If you're broke but you look alright  
You can sleep on the hallway floor

There are no Gideon Bibles  
At the Chelsea Hotel  
When I get back to New York City  
Gonna stay there and raise some Hell

**The Empire Strikes Back  
Brian Rosenberger**

Up before sunrise.  
Late night. Two hours of sleep.  
Last call then fucking at her place. She was closer.  
She sounded satisfied. Maybe the whiskey helped.

Both of us mid-forties, lonely. Saturday night blues.  
She liked my Charles Vess Death t-shirt.  
I liked that she liked.  
Her cleavage and smile helped.

There's no offer of breakfast.  
I wash my cock and balls in her bathroom sink.  
Never a boy scout, never swore the oath,  
but I improvise. Tooth paste on my finger.

In search of my pants, I notice her walls  
are decorated by images of Star Wars.  
Old school – Vader, Fett, Tusken Raiders,  
the Cantina scene. Even Bossk.

I grab her ass and kiss her  
with what's left of last night's passion,  
hoping she's game for a sequel.

**Old 45s**  
**William Taylor Jr.**

After she's made dinner  
after they drink and fight  
have sex and watch  
the television  
after he goes to bed  
she stays up and drinks  
tequila and dances  
alone to old 45s  
Dusty Springfield  
Patsy Cline  
The Shangri-las  
and for a few hours  
she forgets about  
the debt  
and the doubt  
the things he said  
the things she said  
and where it's all  
surely headed  
she gets lost  
in old songs  
and for a while lives  
in the music that sings  
of other times  
when the world  
was different  
when she said  
pretty things  
to pretty people  
and tomorrow wasn't  
always something to dread  
she has to be at work  
in 5 hours and she  
says just one more  
shot and turns  
the record  
over.

**The Quick Side of Night, Wailing**  
**James Diaz**

Rita is on the edge  
of town tonight  
the sound of the rails  
are coming in like rain  
through a hole in the roof

just one more thing  
you can't keep out

when is love not more give than take  
the car is rolling and there's no brakes  
something about the levee can't hold back  
when the floodplain / the vein / just gives right in

been through the burnout / rehab stints /  
the decades of bad luck / bad checks /  
old story / you know it?  
then don't look down like that  
on what you ain't, for one second,  
been in knee deep  
and no way out

trash bag on her car window  
it's no fucking metaphor  
it's making due  
with whatever you have tucked  
underneath the driver's seat

there must be light  
in all this somewhere  
or else why even try, right?

you open the book  
and not a damn word of it  
feels right tonight  
Rita's chucking bottles at trains  
screaming about Ray and Daddy  
and when  
oh fucking when  
is it gonna end

you think the night is long?  
you've no idea  
how fast it goes  
down here



**Towhead**  
**Jon Bennett**

I wasn't drunk yet  
and I went between the trees  
where I always go  
to take a piss  
I was looking at nothing  
thinking nothing  
and letting the piss  
take care of itself  
when I heard, "Hey!"

Beneath the canopy  
of low branches  
was a little boy, maybe 4,  
with a Tonka truck  
loaded with a pinecone  
and I knew  
I was fucked  
because he had piss  
on his towhead

"Oh shit," I said  
and I backed out of there  
The dad was behind me  
"Did you see..?" he asked  
My hands were in the  
"Who? Me?" configuration  
and I was distraught

The little boy came out  
of the woods  
and he said,  
"He peed on me."

"I didn't mean to,"  
I said, "but I did."  
and I sat on a stump  
and waited for  
the police to come  
and sort it out

What should I have done?  
Lied? What should I have said?  
There was nothing I could do  
to make it right

It's like so much these days  
the facts speak  
for themselves  
but they don't always  
tell the whole story.

**Lay Me Down**  
**Daniel S. Irwin**

Yeah, well, fuck this shit!  
I've had my fill of this crap.  
Lost the job, money gone,  
Can't get no damn credit.  
Title Loan was happy to  
End up with my car.  
Makes life hard on the feet.  
The bar's full of losers, but  
They're doin' better than me.  
Bitch kicked me out the house.  
Sometimes the magic shaft  
Ain't enough to please her.  
She found some new peter  
With a steady income.  
Got a damn future as bright  
As that of a back yard dog  
On a ten-foot chain in a  
Nine-foot flood. Jesus!  
Jesus, baby, show me the way.  
Gi'me a plan outta this mess.  
Take that last long drink,  
Empty the bottle, toss it away.  
Lay me down on wood and iron.  
In the night, the distant blast  
Of the horn hails the approach  
Of the 'midnight special' and  
End-game salvation.

In America, the good ol' U.S. of A.,  
Over two hundred people a year  
Commit suicide by train.  
I will not be one of them.

**Outlaw Wanderer's Last Words**  
**Mendes Biondo**

After a long ride  
While the snow is falling  
And your hands are hurting  
Broken feet and legs  
You tired and godless

After all the icy rivers  
The bears in the middle of the wood  
Screams of Indians claiming their lands  
Rattlesnakes and wolves  
You scared and alone

After all the people you lost  
False friends made in saloons  
Moans of women who won't remember your name  
Gamblers and brothers  
You betrayed and lonely

After all this great mess  
The clouds will dance away from the moon

Bright stars to follow for the promised land  
Gold and water  
You blessed and holy

The moment when the tear falls  
Life and its deep meaning  
Before your very eyes

Suddenly, the truth

**Quiet Master**  
**John Maurer**

Like the cellulose encased chunks of Einstein's brain  
They want my prose in rows,  
my poetry about a gust through the trees  
My poetry doesn't give a singular phonetical fuck  
about your doctor of philosophy  
There is no healing for those  
who wound themselves

'Art School Drop Out Aficionado'  
and a roach clip on my desk  
Taxes require income,  
poets only know the inevitability of death  
I'm digging a mine shaft  
with my fingernails and a fountain pen  
The artists' creed, I blink therefore I am  
For what is thought without vision?

I am your favorite writer's favorite writer to plagiarize  
At school, they told me to explain more but when I did,  
they understood less  
I don't interfere with my peers  
when they sell their souls to paperback presses  
When they give eighty hours a week  
to a job they hate to pay for their chic Soho loft  
So they can 'be on the scene'

When we speak two years later  
they say they haven't written in a couple of years

**White Trash**  
**Donna Dallas**

When I drive back to the house  
three stories with railroad rooms  
still under foreclosure  
my brother holed up  
in the basement  
on a toilet that doesn't work  
smoking meth for days  
until his legs are purple  
and swollen

My sister-in-law relies  
heavily on Zani  
she's got a gut like Kuato  
living under her shirt  
from the drink or  
God knows what

I've watched the daisies  
and the violets bloom  
under the weeping willow  
year after year

I tried to help them all  
when I lived upstairs  
and she would come up  
black eyed and fucked  
or their kids would  
come pound on my door  
screaming bloody murder  
because he beat her again

The willow is dead now  
like a sinister twisted stump  
behind a busted fish tank  
a ratty chair and a crate  
with empty beer bottles

In my old apartment  
now lives another woman  
who'd escaped her ex  
who became a Satan worshipper  
she had to change her name  
just in case he came after them

Her, their daughter  
and son live there now  
along with the son's girlfriend

This is how we live  
it's called white trash  
it's so obvious it's a branding  
a nationality

I can still feel it  
the trash  
Mom would sit out the third floor  
windowsill  
smoking cigarette after cigarette  
watching everyone and everything  
except us

I didn't need watching  
I needed a mother  
who wasn't recovering  
and didn't bring home  
bible toting boyfriends from AA  
who would help us all recover  
together in that house  
in the middle of the block  
surrounded by other white-trashers  
with their own set of problems  
and a load maybe worse  
than even ours

**Moribund**  
**Alexandre Alphonse**

poetry is moribund  
lil peep wrote better than us  
meat computer writes better than us  
poetry is a lame ass art form  
too worn out  
rimbaud would be doing something  
different today i promise you

i wish i made fashion  
8th art  
or video games  
9th art  
even better  
90's video games  
or hypermodern trap  
or post anti folk  
but u r stuck with me for a bit  
if u still want to be that is  
i am stuck with me, being me,  
for ever and ever and ever ever ever.

how to be cool after van gogh, basquiat, modigliani,  
rimbe, nick drake, césar aira, duchamp, alfred jarry,  
manuel antonio, kafka, pessoa,  
rosalía de castro, cervantes...  
and the sky  
and the sea  
and the deeply rooted trees.

**Vampire Wine**  
**Dan Cuddy**

The label read "Vampire"  
"A merlot as sweet as blood"  
But blood's not sweet  
Just the heart's thing to pump  
And if it is sucked out  
The heart is low and dry  
A tough squeeze and cry

The story:  
Love drinks wine  
Gets intoxicated  
Chit-chats lotsa shit  
Bits of bric-a-brac  
Cool conversation  
Masking the heat  
Beneath the clothes  
That want to come off  
And lie like a heart  
Body sucked out  
A pudding without the pud

Love toasts itself  
Two vampires  
In the bite of night  
Screeching like bats  
Growling like wolves  
Two moaning carcasses  
Without a mind

Love has drama

The "ever after"  
An empty bottle  
With just a label

Romantics are monsters

**And All That Shit**  
**David J. Thompson**

For Christ's sakes, Mary, Joseph told her.  
You've got to stop crying and staring out  
that fucking window. Face it, Jesus died  
on the cross, no matter what that crazy bitch  
Mary whatshername says, and that's that.  
He's just not coming back. Ever.

This was in the summer, months after  
the crucifixion. Mary had barely changed  
her clothes since then, spent her days  
in total silence with cigarettes and bourbon.

It's more than that, Mary said as she walked  
over and sat opposite Joseph at the kitchen table.  
She lit up a fresh Marlboro, told him she had  
something to tell him. What's that? her husband asked.  
You know that whole story about the virgin birth?  
she asked. When he nodded, she continued,  
Well, don't get angry or upset, but it was all bullshit.  
Jesus's father was some Roman soldier, definitely  
not God. We met one night at a club, we were so young  
back then and drinking and dancing and doing Ecstasy  
and he promised to pull out, but . . .

Her voice trailed off into silence, she made  
a little palms up gesture. You mean, you weren't  
really the *Virgin* Mary after all? Joseph demanded.  
Hardly, she replied, then made a sound like a snorting horse.  
Joseph said he felt like throwing up. Mary pushed  
the bottle of Jim Beam across the table, urged him  
to have a drink instead.

Later, when Joseph had finally stopped crying  
and the bottle was almost empty, Mary was back  
at the window. She asked him how in the hell  
he ever believed her ridiculous story anyway when  
everybody else in Galilee knew she was a party girl  
prone to big lies. I don't know, he replied sounding  
like he was going to start crying again. I guess  
because life is so much easier if you believe in God  
and miracles and all that shit. Ha! said Mary still waiting  
at the window, fucking tell me all about it.

**And the Beat Goes On**  
**David Estrangel**

Dropping from the air  
upon ears like paper blotters on willing tongues,  
raging at the bloodlessness of cardboard cutouts  
against a shrinking sky,  
through psychedelic lenses  
let me seeeee, let me beeeee the pulse of silent rage  
that rails against the vulgar machine  
with words  
that organize, legitimize, minimize, super-size,  
tranquelize, proselytize, tantalize, infantilize,  
sexualize, stigmatize the suckled teats  
of long-conditioned truths.

Poking the bear,  
disturbing the seas of featureless beige,  
stirring the comatose anima  
with battle-cries of sight and sound  
that pierce dusty eardrums like sterling icepicks,  
repressed wants teeeeem, solemn faces beeeeeeam,  
liberated in the warmth of a sun that breaks  
just beyond the horizon on coffee-house stages,  
rousing thoughts to gestate, ruminate, conjugate,  
propriate, sublimate, fornicate, obliterate,  
determinate, propagate, exfoliate dangerous visions,  
birthed from the unfetteredness of a purple haze.

Fueling the scribblings of furious hands  
upon white sheets with whisky and cigarettes,  
Making, naked, ugly underbellies  
of the angst-ridden and inflamed  
with the glorious promises  
of their ecstatic treasure-trails,  
let's revel in the coolness of poetry's heeeeeeat,  
indulged in pollen-dusted skin so sweeeeet  
within the honeyed tangles of poets' asymmetries  
to detoxify, dulcify, intensify, demystify, purify,  
glorify, magnify, beautify, electrify,  
sanctify our bodily streams of light  
that sugar lips and candy fingertips.

Tearing away at the fabric, unraveling,  
woven from Gloopstick youth and plasticine smiles,  
repulsing at the hordes in their mindless quests  
for extra-flavor and double-coupon days,  
looking for a steeeeeal, wanting to feeeeel,  
as hollow dollars crumble to coins  
when plopped upon unsated palms and countertops.

Think! Think! Think! Think! Think!  
We are on the brink  
of the Fall of the American Empire.  
Dig.

*Originally published at littledeathlit*