

*Journal of*  
**Creative Work**

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**Twenty Kernel Sentences about a Newborn**  
**Greetings from the Course Syllabus**  
**Four Ways to Fix April**

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Statement of Purpose:

The three poems included here, like much of 20<sup>th</sup> century poetry, are personal, even confessional, in nature. However, they are likewise sufficiently impersonal, allowing the “voice” of each to focus not on the individual speaking, but on the issue at hand, poking fun at the institutions of parenthood, higher education, and the popular self-help movement. These poems can be considered “List Poems” or “Catalog Verse,” basically lists, like we take to the grocery store. This most elemental of structures is maybe our most ancient poetic form, while at the same time, the most contemporary. Lists appear throughout the history of many cultures—from the Bible, to the works of Homer and Virgil; from the poetry Milton, to the prose of Kerouac; from Whitman, to the 1950s “Burma Shave” signs along American roadways; from Hopkins’ spiritual litanies, to the lyrics of Bob Dylan. This basic list form is especially suited to our own fragmented, high-speed, data-drenched lives. Contemporary influences are visible in the poems here, in their appropriation of non-literary genres; in their “echoes” of other texts; and in the speaker’s sense of isolation and paranoia, barely held at bay through a teetering sense of humor.

***20 Kernel Sentences about a Newborn***

Father sleeps.  
Child cries.  
Mother drains.  
Mother wanes.

Mother sleeps.  
Child cries.  
Father blithers.  
Father withers.

Child cries.  
Mother cries.  
Father cries.  
Neighbors sigh.

Child sleeps.  
Mother sleeps.  
Father sleeps.  
Horn bleeps.

House creaks.  
Fan tweaks.  
Faucet leaks.  
Father freaks.

***Greetings from the Course Syllabus***

<u>Course Title:</u>	Trends and Issues in Contemporary Life Skills, Health 498
<u>Sections:</u>	All
<u>Semesters:</u>	Fall, Spring, Summer
<u>Grading System:</u>	HF: High Fail MF: Moderate Fail F: Fail LF: Low Fail W: Withdrawn * WLF: Withdrawn with Low Failing Grade I: Incomplete **
<u>Prerequisites:</u>	Sophomore standing and working knowledge of 4 prepositions, as demonstrated in the following text:  In a rain storm, under a car, a cat throws up, then falls down.

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\* Students who are withdrawn are asked to do so with a final grade of WLF.

\*\* Grades of I automatically convert to LF's approximately ten business days before they are submitted to the Registrar's Office.

**Four Ways to Fix April**

*April is the cruelest month.*

T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 1922

I.

Sharing and caring  
(of course)  
hack out its pancreas  
with a dull machete.  
Just for old time's sake,  
borrow the blade  
used by Juan Corona  
years ago  
in California.

II.

Dog-paddling  
rusty ice picks  
in each hand,  
mince-meat it  
into the ham salad  
once spread across  
those crust-less little  
finger sandwiches  
your grandmother,  
in white gloves,  
once ate in  
fashionable department stores.  
Then drop it gingerly  
into the cage  
of a drooling Hitler.

III.

Pour wet cement  
into a green garden hose  
(if you please)  
and whip its face  
into pimento cheese.

IV.

Holding firm  
to rod and line,  
set one barbed hook  
under each eyelid.  
Next, inch your way  
behind the barn,  
where,  
slowly reeling in,  
you grin,  
and fish  
your stout  
white heart out.