

This PDF is provided for free by UDP.

It documents the existence of the book, *Thank You for the Window Office* by Maged Zaher, which was first printed in 2012 in an edition of 1,000.

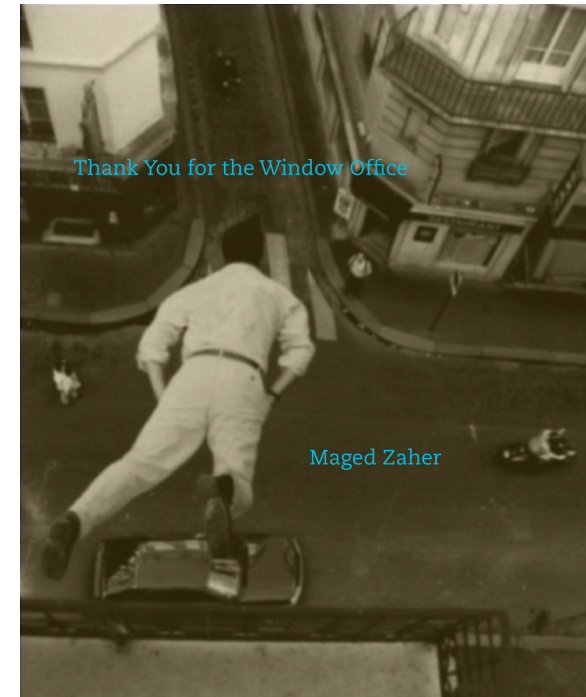
If you like what you see in this PDF proof, we encourage you to purchase the book directly from UDP, or from our distributors and partner bookstores, or from any independent bookseller.

If you find this PDF useful for your research or as a resource for teaching, please consider [making a donation](#).

If you make copies of this PDF for your students or any other reason, we ask you to include this page.

Please support nonprofit & independent publishing by making donations to the presses that serve you and by purchasing books through ethical channels.

UGLY DUCKLING PRESSE  
uglyducklingpresse.org





Thank You for the Window Office



Maged Zaher



*Thank You for the Window Office*  
Copyright 2012 by Maged Zaher

ISBN 978-1-933254-97-5  
Distributed to the trade by  
Small Press Distribution  
[www.spdbooks.org](http://www.spdbooks.org)

First Edition, First Printing  
Limited to 850 copies

Ugly Duckling Presse  
The Old American Can Factory  
232 Third Street #E-303  
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Cover design by Lyric Hunter  
Typeset by Don't Look Now! in Fournier and Caecilia

Printed and bound at McNaughton & Gunn  
Covers offset-printed at Polyprint Design

Some of these poems previously appeared in *6X6*, *Alice Blue Review*,  
*Capitalism Nature Socialism*, *Filter*, *Rattapallax*, and *Saltgrass*

This book was made possible in part by a generous grant from  
the National Endowment for the Arts

*To Marcel Nasif and Pam Brown*



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE ARTS

I am hiding my vulnerability at the shawarma shop  
Some people need to die for civilization's sake  
Let me tell you about my exotic country then  
Let me also tell you about the danger of not having a poetic project  
Your dress invokes my longing for reality  
I have a standard response for good looks  
And the feeling that I will be punished for it  
And that I will have to head back home to jerk off under pressure  
The hit man is hungry  
He needs encouraging text messages  
Let us hear Hamlet moan because of his sore nipples  
I have to stay here and ask for a better menu next war  
There are people in the pub slowly eating their way into life

Being classically trained and stuff  
I left this small-time success story behind  
Poetry isn't about music or ideas or things  
I made paper before and it hurts  
Homesick and scarred—the text is shooting at our desires  
(This is an approximation of course)  
I was at the Marx-in-the-Park festival  
They made sure we knew that there is no such thing  
As perfectly parallel streets  
So armed with knowledge about nutrition  
We will integrate our business strategy  
With God's will  
Please note that people who are assertive travel a lot

So what if you just ate an overpriced burger  
It is love that will eventually make a difference  
And to hold the earth with one hand  
You need a larger notebook  
I am tired of history  
I am tired of this poem  
I just want to tell the same story to different people  
About the dancer who brought my friend happiness  
She told him about the drama of having an accent  
“Do you at least love me?”—he said to his doctor  
Who replied: “We have to keep the news about the project a secret  
But not the loneliness of the engineers”  
I am dreaming  
I am dreaming that  
I am dancing to a rhythm  
And that I am not interested in going to the cash machine yet

Dear Poet—death is just another tool for the living to use  
And soccer is a wonderful sport  
Even with all the time spent driving around  
Here is one more thing to sacrifice for meaning—  
I am alive but I lied to you  
About the random desires I keep having  
(Some distortions will keep making sense)  
So what if we objectify each other?  
Life better be a song  
That is starting soon  
We are mere productions of power  
At least by feeling entirely surrounded  
The rest of the rest are drunk  
Including the Egyptian who is waiting  
We will fuck you over kindly if you cross us  
The virus that swept the computer today  
Is not to be taken seriously

We stood up and appealed to death  
Oh! the hyper sensitivity of the small bourgeoisie  
When someone asks about the mechanics of the world  
And we have to answer back  
Then imagine a straightforward future  
While being actively anxious  
I will talk to the sexy girl about immigration issues  
Cover up the sins of everybody  
Like a martyr  
Of course I don't believe myself  
Hence I look so innocent in these pictures  
Power is often an approximation  
You should go to New York often  
To zoom up on nostalgia

Yesterday I invited a woman  
To my mid-life crisis  
She adjusted her scarf and asked:  
“How often will you agree with me?  
The fact that you don’t have a tv  
Will help me interpret your dreams”  
I replied: “My friends are on their way to Europe  
In search of good kissers  
And I am living with the hope that somewhere a woman  
Will undo an extra button of her shirt”

In the helicopter important people are doing important things  
They are—for example—singing  
And carrying important patients to hospitals  
We are all walking the city streets without a chance of sex  
The skinny bartender had this kind look  
As if to say: “You need to look mysterious  
Otherwise you will endanger the whole plan”  
Even terrorists need some love  
And you have something to learn about my feelings  
I will start by putting you on a pedestal  
Then talk to some political representative  
Who will remind us of the importance of positioning  
I will mention the tears that hit me in airports or in Cairo’s streets  
It is time to exchange one exile for another

Gravity arrived in a cab  
Meanwhile three different treasure hunts were going on downtown  
Please forgive our group their racial composition, Your Honor  
The translator is thinking of the bodies of strangers  
In my memory I located the texture of the theatre seat  
You were sitting next to me  
In my memory there is also a short order cook taking a nap,  
A Marxist scholar studying utopia,  
And a hostess who is tired  
Outside of my memory there is a mortgage broker  
And three environmental activists having breakfast  
You look at your phone as if it matters  
And scream three times before you inform them of your loneliness  
You tell me: "Five more minutes to reach intimacy"  
My mind is full of sexual images  
Of many young academics arriving at the conference  
With their hostile lovers  
I ate my leftovers yesterday  
Today I am planning  
To start a new poem

I want to write the jaywalker's aesthetics manifesto:  
Love seems like some sort of violence  
So while crossing the street toward a Subway shop  
There is often a group of ideas to balance in your head  
This was the time when urine was often mixed with blood  
Language was what made it all happen  
When things didn't go my way then I never threw a fit  
I just jumped from boats mid-distance to shore in order to impress myself  
Or defended my favorite musician and kissed him on the forehead  
Then analyzed the cartographer's intention  
To end the world with his prayers  
We understood capitalism then  
Or what it looked like under the pressure of alcohol



The city was loaded with small-time investment bankers  
And the occasional sexual tourists  
(Our main business is obedience to people with important illusions)  
My visit was thought of as a political move  
Now I can say things like: “She is the one who started the kinky sex lesson”  
You are the driver  
And we managed to go around the world during a thousand rush hours  
The young woman took his insanity seriously  
She asked: “Can you stay around after tennis?”  
And because I abstracted everything: the Danish  
Women at the party, the sidewalks of the ghetto, etc.  
I am sending three cheers to the poets of Cairo  
And their longing for good vodka

He thought that the Dalai Lama was a nice guy with important things to say  
Yet deep down Marx was still his rock star  
The whole effort was a waste—especially thinking  
About the Udhri poets’ re-enactment of the crime scene of love  
Meanwhile I told them that it didn’t hurt as much anymore  
It was just the right time to sleep  
Two weeks later we started the no-shoes campaign  
And disappeared precisely when expected  
Get some alcohol, son  
Mix it with coffee and think about  
The number of real estate sales in California  
I am using my symptoms effectively  
But I won’t be approving of them anytime soon

This is a badly decorated crisis—  
Time to migrate to the next condo  
All lines of poetry are created equal  
So deliver your speech without background music  
I finished my dream  
Then with a skateboarder's single mindedness  
I went to the market  
Some porn is taken for granted  
Hopefully you can see  
This poem is struggling hard  
To be on someone's top ten list  
You always said: "Capitalism made me do it"  
It is sometimes irrational to be irrational  
And whatever you wear on Casual Fridays is up to you  
Or so said the cockroaches of hope  
For a dollar you can have a glimpse at the Dalai Lama's soul  
I need this poem to make it to the playoffs tomorrow

While thinking about your lips  
He also thought about the pick-up algorithm  
Later he told me: "I am not rigorous enough"  
He also said: "I got my friends the books  
They needed, yet nothing changed"  
Poverty is not well-hidden  
We follow the same timetable  
Except that I am not falling in love tonight  
The imagination always kicks reality's ass  
So let's step out for a cigarette or two  
On our way we can visit the media lab  
And learn about the organization of dreams  
We are surrounded by different kinds of sale items  
We need to ask for their forgiveness  
Then leave for the craft store to flirt with the experts

Hello roller coaster  
Hello soup du jour precious feelings  
Here we do sales  
There they do shopping  
In the resurrection's parade  
I took a different name  
Which was an inevitable twist to the plot  
Yet someone in the organization had to ask:  
"Is people management an essential skill?"  
The bohemian is still alive

Take a number my dear friend  
These are the leaders of the industry  
They go to the Skywalker Ranch to discuss stuff  
And these are the masses—they buy the stuff the leaders create  
Now I will teach you the best cock block move I know  
Because it is time to save civilization  
One iPhone user at a time  
Historical materialists of Cairo unite  
And let us partake in the power of the masses  
I saw the great minds of my generation working  
For Microsoft and Boeing to be laid off later  
Like dogs  
I am a descendant of those who drank themselves to death  
And I am glad to report—there are so many red Cadillacs at the lodge

Someone said: “mass suicide can be erotic”  
So was Chairman Mao’s cultural revolution  
Okay—let’s flirt again:  
    One plane, one shuttle,  
    Four metro lines, and here you are—  
        An occasional muse  
But you give Rasta men a bad name  
And you don’t have the right to sleep  
I am preparing an erratic dance  
To please the board of directors  
Dear random coworker  
Since the whole point is to have a fetish  
Can you imagine what some S&M would do to this poem?  
I will concede that she is wearing a nice hijab  
And that I understand poetry to be about both fucking  
And fucking up

Farmers marry farmers  
This was a childhood lesson  
The text is more profound before it is written  
I am in a Cairo coffee shop recording facts  
Don’t let your occasional fuck buddy dictate the orgasm situation  
The world has changed and I misplaced the email  
Every human-to-human touch carries a probability  
Otherwise where to go when we turn around and sleep  
There are no sexual activities at the gym  
The trainers now fuck on their own time  
But people here are concerned with justice  
They are important and kind

Love in the frozen vegetables aisle  
Lap-dance security forces  
Why do you care about the well being of the enemy?  
I am wondering—how could anyone trust anyone  
Writing a collection of Star Wars poems?  
She was the go-go dancer from hell  
He was a poet fond of clichés  
Eventually an infinite amount of sadness  
Accumulated in the IT department  
Heidegger Hegel Wittgenstein Kant  
Spinoza Kierkegaard Nietzsche  
Transcendentalists Empiricists  
Benjamin Adorno Marx Situationist International  
Foucault Habermas Derrida Žižek  
Deleuze Deleuze and Guattari  
Edward Said Fred Jameson Terry Eagleton

I will give you this: There is a conceptual gap in some love stories  
You whisper to me about the oddities of software  
I hover over the loneliness embedded in the act of making a choice  
And we read manifestoes to each other  
Working software is the primary way of showing progress  
Let me think of myself politically for a moment  
Having a high sex drive is an emotional hurdle  
You have to learn the trick  
I have to learn the trick  
Because it is often sad to touch the pages of the books I will never read  
I am working my way toward the Q&A session  
I am looking at the machine and the love it provides  
And doing some reaching out because my feelings are hurt

Floods happen  
And political assassinations too  
But the ones who stayed cashed in big  
A mysterious sound spoke slowly:  
“Did you introduce yourself to your city yet?”  
The Udhri poets were playing peek-a-boo with their desert muses  
I am more into watching soccer in a British pub  
Next to a woman eating fish and chips  
(I know that I have to think of her romantically)  
The bartender is reading his second manifesto  
The Udhri poets were not big into fucking  
Which understandably disappointed their muses  
“Power concedes nothing”—my friend announced  
I said: “We will be outsourced soon  
Let us just reach out into someone’s impossible life  
And make the sign of the cross”  
I am still expected to solve important business problems  
Cairo, I miss walking your streets before dawn:  
    My body—a disclaimer  
    And you—a random metaphor

Splitting a cardamom pod in two is a violent act  
Now that I am threatened by everything  
I can say the truth:  
The staff is pierced and shy  
I am looking for ways to work remotely  
And be radical about it  
This is how accidents work:  
    Fitting one poem at a time  
    Into a mid-sized cab  
    Without disturbing the poetics  
    Of the passing cars

In this poem there is a man and a woman  
They are dancing  
One is ambivalent  
And one is reading Marx and thinking:  
“I created a space for my body to feel inadequate”  
The whole story is of course tragic  
With a comic touch  
But we are in the middle of a presidential race  
And stale love is a matter of national security  
I am reaching this form on my own  
But I worry if I say the right things to authority figures  
And if a U-turn in this busy street  
Is all I need for now

The things we took for granted—  
The kids who beat us periodically  
And the metaphors we used for bragging—  
Didn't cause much disappointment  
It was hope that really screwed us  
Riding in the same trolley  
During the short business hours  
And being occasionally hurt  
By fashion and other things  
We hang out in the camel area  
To pick-up tourists  
And I feel my cell phone's vibrations  
Asking the big questions of the universe  
One more poet stepping into nihilism  
Sitting at the Cosmopolitan—downtown Cairo  
All big questions have one good answer—  
Here—downtown Cairo—poets take alcohol seriously  
I am more concerned about my desires  
And how to articulate them often

Poetry is a ghost  
That erases the good news  
If you believe in friendship at first sight  
Then spank me  
It is my birthday  
And I've already found a gap in the world—  
    Ask me not to panic  
    Because these words can be taken seriously

The aliens were jet-lagged  
Having one eye and fifty hands didn't help  
The poem is a division of labor  
Occasionally the muse gets pissed off  
If you lose her purse  
The others were grinding their teeth  
The corporation approved us and advised: step up  
We were just drunk not angry  
And wondering about all the people  
Who can't expense their dinners  
Then God—on a bad day—invented the poets



On Friday the corporate printer bin is full of coupons  
Direct presence of the world is impossible  
My friend always has a crush on the wrong woman  
This poem can be assumed to be hetero-normative  
I just love the idea of adventure  
Like being in an earthquake and discussing lust  
All these days at the gym—macho yet romantic  
I am working hard to accumulate money

Leading the world again  
Toward a solid business model  
Digital pork chops for everyone  
All the street signs are suddenly in English  
I have to wake up, then do something difficult  
Like letting go of five friends, then whispering  
Did your faith help you today?  
The cook was stranded on the island  
The polite dragons came to say goodbye  
Or check out the drama teacher's body

You are a free spirit  
With a good hugging pose  
I need editors with extravagant fetishes  
To have conversations about wine  
The Greyhound is an appropriate observation deck  
How often do you have a legitimate reason  
To erase the neighborhood from your memory?  
We asked the candidate: "Are you a team player?  
And if so, what do you want for breakfast?"  
Don't bring the executioner home  
Surprisingly I still make sense  
No matter how redundant the text  
Gravity will always stick around

There are different kinds of pills to take in hotels  
Line up all the candles  
No more superheroes  
Love might cover up bad logistics  
But your arms are getting older than you are  
Only few stories remain  
Of men who are the pride of their towns  
And the women who loved them  
Line up all the candles  
One nation under the sea

Don't assume lots of roles in one life  
Infinity grows bigger over time  
I've reached the age where I am asked for reference  
And receive lazy threats about Viagra  
You are on display 100% of the time  
Change your shape according to the law  
Occasionally you can sneak in an entrepreneurial move  
Then leave to check on your kids  
Not all of us in the porn industry are sexy  
I will disclose my age in a few milliseconds

Given all the lab tests they ran  
I am not thirsty or useful  
Lust is fleeting  
Even with a sexy accent  
You are allowed two pieces of luggage  
Because it is cold at destination  
The millionaire's text is everywhere—  
Welcome to averagehood everyone  
Stratification pays off  
I am sure the DVDs will be collected  
Before the end of the flight

A world of coupons  
In the dangerous part of the city  
The imagination fails one sentence at a time  
Should have stayed home  
Instead of letting poetry make it impossible to drive  
Write your narrative here  
We all need soft drinks  
The poet insists on kissing strangers  
Maybe one would give birth to a beautiful frog  
This is a war we need to win on merits  
The jukebox is playing French music  
And now you have to answer the same question twice  
Don't forget your jacket in straight bars

Would you believe me  
If I shaved the protagonist's head  
And claimed we can walk the streets defeated?  
Would you still have the same crush on him?  
Ah, the anguish of robots when they run out of electricity  
Knifed in the alley  
All the subplots are coming together  
A loaf of bread for dinner  
We never understood the intentions of the stabbed or the stabber  
There was a voicemail when we got home  
And enough material to build a small ninja-training camp

Take your memories to the kitchen  
Where they can't block you from talking to your children  
This is a rare moment when your student loans bring you joy  
Yet pleasure is prohibited tonight  
I said: "Let's be good technologists"  
There is enough room for all interpretations  
And I have to email you again about my feelings  
I need two water-cooler conversations a day  
I will write you a letter about breathing  
And about the left-over glue the brochure makers keep leaving behind

Mute the sound, and watch the images follow each other  
I want to do more shameful things tonight  
Like playing the famous angels against each other  
Or having a green card marriage  
There were people in bright orange vests in the streets  
The homeland is secure today except from my thoughts:  
The easiest way to make friends is to sleep with them  
The EU is full of good croissants  
Desire is expensive  
And my generic loneliness is overdue

It is useless to remind you of my flaws  
For example I am an outsider by choice  
Which—as you know—makes me  
Hopelessly middle class

I am here to report back  
The exploration of my subconscious was fruitful  
How often should you open the refrigerator door  
In order to watch  
The structure of habits form?  
We can imagine being the soccer fanatics  
Who stayed soccer fanatics  
Despite the changes to the rules  
I attached my desires to this email  
Please review them carefully

Watching from the airport tower  
Some guy called for the cook  
“You should have thought of greatness as an exit plan”  
Alcohol bottles flying  
Let me suggest some ad-hoc therapy  
The experience will fill you with joy  
Please be seated  
And save your questions for God until the end of the seminar  
You should expect miracles though  
After a long session of assertive prayers

The moon is there for everyone  
Seven days without poetry  
I am surrounded by process improvement diagrams  
A good fate for an ascetic  
To always be making business decisions  
In Sunday school I learned: Think of the angels as hip DJs  
Who line up treasures for us  
I asked too many questions  
And damaged all the gift-wrapping  
It wasn't just an identity issue  
Believe me—we had to develop the weapon  
The dragon ate the fish and there was no lunch left

Choose one specific room to hang the posters  
Romanticism was something to brag about  
Tonight we have a meeting with the absolute  
As imagined by a magician  
Once again I am surrounded by people with big visions  
The bride, however, is falling for the photographer  
And the paper airplanes flying nearby  
They added one number to the area code  
The world was one continuous tabloid article  
Peer pressure to walk on tables  
Courage is a bad toothpaste brand opportunity  
One more interview with a successful CEO  
One more poem about police brutality  
Thank you for the opportunity to join the subculture

One drama per night is enough for this small stage  
The outsider is caving in, hoping for a better exchange rate  
As anxiety builds minute-by-minute  
They are closing tabs all over town  
The bartenders asked all the right questions  
And we planned against the anticipated pain  
The phone rang in meeting room number three  
We received the signal  
To start Operation Fend off the Mystics  
The realists were also evacuated  
And the old homegrown music was back again  
All the bell captains were equally surprised  
Because of the new set of smooth pick-up lines  
And we were turned away from the spaceship  
The flight attendant whispered to me: "Did you think  
You would die if I loved you back?"



This is the pre-season  
Intellectuals are sought after  
There are cubicle walls to be moved  
And there is also this woman who wants to kiss me  
The sidewalk is becoming more metaphysical everyday  
Actually the whole city now is discussing Hegel  
It is soothing though to remember your customer number  
Because of all the rich technologists sitting at the bar  
My only friend in town—the one who died twice before—is away  
So I have to act like a good repairman  
Who is into espionage and the occult  
Or like an ancient Arab poet near the remains of his departed tribe  
Having tangential thoughts of sand, tents, and a whole community of ants

What is a city without its interpretation  
Without a dance club where straights kiss  
Without street cars  
Without the risk of being wiped out by a tornado or an earthquake  
Come visit us soon  
We will experience major cuts  
And the boys who hang out here will die  
Until you are back  
Carrying with you the complexity of money  
Everything feels strange  
The streets of the old city  
And the heaven everyone dreams of

This is an imaginary city  
It has seven hills  
And is always ready for your software needs  
I will describe it gracefully  
But first let me tell you about my mysterious encounter with magic  
The street beggars are walking  
Old people too  
They extract the nightness of the night  
These are good ducks in the park  
Now—what to do with the thought that people lived  
And died miserably?  
And that all the religious and Marxist books  
Can't change anything about that?

A comfortable chair for the poem  
I am not worried—but then, I need more wisdom  
Can you instead get me a heated croissant?  
Revolutions need people with good hair  
Lenin, Subcommandante Marcos, Chavez...  
Ok—so reality is a little confusing  
Justice will remain a simple data point  
Language is always good to express the middle class  
Money and roses for everyone else

Don't sell your season tickets  
Enough annoying kids are going into finance  
The first pitch is a good indicator  
Because our suffering is physical  
For example: allergies, lay-offs, and crucifixions  
I admit I am not associated with anybody  
Which is inevitably a radical move  
Yet I am one of the poets who cry  
In the company of other poets  
Is it possible to consult Heidegger's love letters  
About the next steps?  
All my friends are alive  
I have no record this poem ever happened  
The beautiful girls all went to marketing

In Reykjavik now some people are dancing  
They filmed the Golden Gate Bridge when she was walking  
Alright—this is supposed to be serious  
I am stuck with pain in my fingers  
The intellectuals are buying cheap goods  
My basic fear is keeping the systems in sync  
Of course this longing is sexual  
Although I like this nonsense about sublimating desire  
We can still assume everything is separate from everything else  
Welcome to Amsterdam Central Station

People eventually stop sending you party reminders  
And schedules empty out  
With few poems to rescue  
No one cares about the flag  
But some anarchists are also patriotic  
I am asking to be kindly left out  
They have lots of rugs downtown  
They are on perpetual sale  
But they help us fight back the communists

Now that we have touch-screen notebooks  
Some proximity to the water will suffice  
But whom do you talk to for inspiration?  
Suddenly, a certain metaphor feels inadequate  
Lots of Dutch people in Amsterdam  
All the middle class turned into bad tourists  
Okay—so you don't want to be my mistress  
Only my spiritual guide?  
The poem is a gift—like semen  
Or like beer  
In the morning I smell of hotel soap  
Naturally there is time to stop and think  
And time for auditors to ask the tough questions

You are the king but you are angry  
There is wisdom in accumulating goods  
Especially the goods sold at high margin  
One barista—infinite orders  
Which is a threat that will last for a while  
Time to start your own commerce activities  
We are experiencing longing  
And a little bit of hurt  
I will arrange for you to be someone else  
When I start using my powerful time machine  
While in business we will always love each other

The poem will end  
Okay—I didn't mean to be that melodramatic  
I mean there are always road accidents  
They won't leave the dance floor tonight  
Even if I start reading Das Capital out loud  
So there is love—and it collapses  
Under the mercy of production  
You stood there—angry and fragile  
Out of childhood fear  
And the Marxists' failures  
Which is almost the saddest thing you know

Time to sit here and feel inadequate  
The promoters killed the party  
It is not patriotic to accept the kisses of a stranger  
Here is a space to be sane  
Now keep the volume down  
And stick to sadness  
Even with such generous sweet potato portions  
The DJ realized he needed to accept requests  
We are to pretend that all competitors are created equal

The poet at the soccer game  
Reciting from Homer's Twitter feed  
Tires everywhere  
Piles of used Xboxes  
The bearded folks surrounding the entrance  
One of us will get to be the boss  
And feel the joys of the class system  
One will die of fear  
And although the guru said nothing about jerking off  
I will manage to wear green  
And offend no one today

This poem brings up love in a clichéd fashion  
We argued a lot with the freedom fighters  
And I promised them a couple of orgasms  
The city looked okay from the window  
But if you clicked on the zoom button  
You would find a homeless man  
Who is totally forgotten  
He brings his loneliness everywhere  
He also brings his desires  
And asks someone about aesthetics

Male strippers also get their feelings hurt  
Despite your theoretical efforts you will stay skinny  
There are times to be ruthless  
For example when axing expensive labor  
There are problems that can only be solved when alive  
In the middle of the acquisition meeting  
I thought of Frank O'Hara walking New York streets  
My lunch poems were composed over Chinese take out  
While we decided whom to fire  
There are standard gestures in this world  
Like my buying you a drink  
Despite the obvious fact  
That infinite people are infinitely poor

Let us be accurate:  
Are you calling me in the middle of the night  
To talk about philosophy or about aesthetics?  
I am somehow mad at everything  
But this time I will earn my place on public transportation  
I swallow a couple of words every day  
Then knock on my neighbor's door  
To ask him to stop using these words for a week  
I learned the hard way  
That it is important to eat lettuce when rooting for democracy  
But if you are growing up poor and angry  
Then you need to understand the billboard messages

Occasionally at a cramped coffee shop  
I discover some profound truth  
For example: An insanely handsome celebrity lives nearby  
Or that God sometimes protects the middle class  
Sadness always arrives later  
While reading a poem by a poet who just died  
Graduate school proves useless  
There are always bootstrapping problems  
And people who uphold the law  
And circus clowns who are not liable for damages



On why I became a terrorist:  
My childhood was bad—  
The government invited everyone to brunch  
But showed up late  
Having a sexy mother didn't help either  
So I composed poems  
While watching you drink  
There is suffering in the universe  
It can give you pleasant feelings to know  
That others are also tired  
The futurists were on our backs  
Never agree to the fifteen-minute rule

I am rearranging the letters  
On the tv stand  
In order to make sense  
Of my own flesh  
Never expected  
That cultural experiences  
Could end that badly  
My syntax will work  
And yes—your age, your dress  
And the visibility of my dreadlocks  
Are all poetry material  
It is ugly though  
To oppose the commandments  
Even if in the high court  
They secretly have erotic thoughts  
About animals

You are cute—I am cute  
It is even  
The cubists in their cubes are waiting  
For someone to invent the cheeseburger  
The data is categorized  
And squeezed into the brains  
Of a few lucky employees  
We call this management  
It stands and watches the poet read  
A poem about a big gas station  
It is called  
The Big Gas Station Poem  
In Paris I heard  
They have umbrellas  
And they have croissants  
I also heard that  
Spirituality helps on the job  
And that when you are ready  
We will disappear together

Suddenly I am interested in local politics  
How much immunization should we provide for free?  
I am in the airport and I need to write an airport poem  
Being from Cairo do you still like Elvis?  
Maria is writing her second book as we speak  
Being martyrs my colleagues abandoned hope  
In finding the appropriate software  
They walk the hallways with shaved heads and visible genitals  
The private sector had to step in and save the day

There were hipsters before the hipsters  
That you think of as hipsters existed  
And there is nothing wrong with that—  
It is just a timing issue  
You need to fight hard  
For the Space Needle  
Because militants are beautiful creatures  
So are the sexy ferries  
We live in a subset of the universe  
Made out of three people  
Inside this subset we are scared  
Of being excluded from sales promotions

The information society crept up on us  
But now—armed with new ways of looking at things—  
We make coffee daily  
Do you know how tiring the business of revolution is?  
I will analyze someone's Madonna-whore complex  
It all started with an argument about religion  
Then—inspired by tv ads—the fantasy continued  
So as not to make more mistakes than I have to  
I will craft sentences out of the permutations  
Of imaginary alphabets  
In the USA—Mexicans cook for everyone  
I know you were oppressed as a child and as an engineer  
However it is time to ask the priestess to leave  
There is a heavy political component to all this twitching

Sometimes we fail to communicate  
And it is lots of fun  
(As if there is glitter everywhere)  
But thank you for the poem

Sleeping with the beautiful woman  
Doesn't really matter  
Because on a trip elsewhere  
I won't count the syllables  
And the poem will act angry  
Which is a half-assed tragedy  
The longing is disruptive though  
And having a new intelligence director  
Is an opportunity for joy  
Few bookstores are open today  
And I have this love for humanity except you

This is where famous spies used to hang out  
Good breathing is utilized by good detectives  
Do you remember sleeping in the same bed?  
Day in, day out—I am feeling sad  
Can you talk to someone important about this?  
I am writing my memoir  
About selling the house for the angry lovers  
Keeping the receipts won't help  
You have to fire people every now and then  
Waking up tomorrow—the world will hurt less  
Actually I am lying  
I am always lying

Give me a refillable pen  
And I will build you an illusion  
Do you understand how most machines work?  
Typically you feed them humans  
Or you wait until the poem  
Stops sounding like anything you know  
How many happy hours do you need to experience  
Before you stop singing along?  
We will party hard tomorrow  
With the sales executives  
For now let's just talk about our musical preferences

They selected me to die  
I am proud though of the design I left on the whiteboard  
And as I am close enough to heaven  
It is time to remove this sentence

I won't die in Paris on a rainy day  
I will be building technological platforms  
And the business architects  
Will be in perfect agreement with me  
(The official design strategy will annoy all of us)  
And I will nap for thirty minutes  
Then die

A good San Francisco investment banker  
Will offer you a job  
In exchange for bad sex  
Thank you for the pain  
I will stop manipulating you  
And I will have an abortion  
Then lick between your open legs  
For a full night

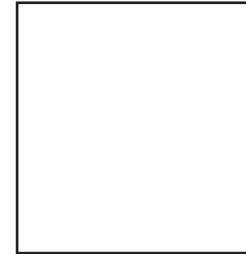
I have a pub life  
Where pages about science  
Disappear or get erased by strong governments  
I also go to watch my friends  
Die doing their homework  
I am still ecstatic though about someone winning the World Cup  
Because my friends will stay behind  
To guard the poetics for everyone  
Then draw lots of diagrams about the business process  
And all the beautiful women watching soccer  
In this pub where I have a life  
Old tourists jerk off in the bathroom  
Youth brings a sense of despair  
There are different ways to drag ourselves behind  
Lots of assumptions behind managing your friends

Some days metaphors just don't cut it  
The home team is on the road  
And I am in love with a blonde bike messenger  
I am pouring tea in my cup on my lap  
The city is overbuilt  
And cars make unnecessary U-turns  
This poem is not working  
Because an old map is still available  
In the well-lit corners of the castle

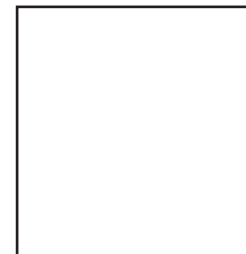
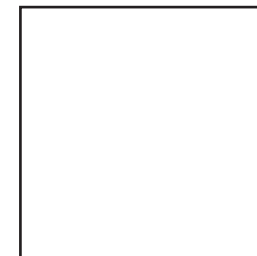
Monsters have a different value system  
They stare at blue lines  
And sell media to everyone  
Bikes are here to stay  
Some agitation is needed  
Because some poems are deeply Maoist  
Mistrust goes a long way  
I need to list all the patents we hold  
Give me value or give me death



This is a poem for the IT martyrs:  
The ocean doesn't save its creatures  
The airport doesn't either  
Okay—how to survive without a keyboard?  
I lost my cold glass:  
    Denial, anger, depression, acceptance  
To ask a question or not to ask a question  
Ending up in a mass grave  
This poem is my last kiss to the happy hour crowd  
I am angry  
But I am going to lunch  
I am going to lunch and need your blessing



Over the last twenty-three years, Maged Zaher has occupied various offices; some were shared, some were all his; some were internal, and a few were window offices. His previous books include *Portrait of the Poet as an Engineer*, and *The Revolution Happened and You Didn't Call Me*, as well as a collaborative work with the Australian poet Pam Brown, *Farout Library Software*.







**Recent poetry titles from Ugly Duckling Presse**

- Usselysses* / Noel Black
- Gowanus Atropolis* / Julian T. Brolaski
- The Return of the Native* / Kate Colby
- This Time We Are Both* / Clark Coolidge
- Christian Name* / Lawrence Giffin
- Ventrakl* / Christian Hawkey
- Cursivism* / Will Hubbard
- SLOT* / Jill Magi
- And If You Don't Go Crazy...* / Filip Marinovich
- Underlight* / Aaron McCollough
- Road of a Thousand Wonders* / Jeffrey Joe Nelson
- 60 Textos* / Sarah Riggs
- El Golpe Chileño* / Julien Poirier
- Applies to Oranges* / Maureen Thorson
- The Hermit* / Laura Solomon
- Greensward* / Cole Swensen
- One Sleeps the Other Doesn't* / Jacqueline Waters
- To Light Out* / Karen Weiser
- Walking Across a Field...* / Sara Wintz



For a complete catalog please see our website:  
[www.uglyducklingpresse.org](http://www.uglyducklingpresse.org)



For distribution to the trade please visit  
[www.spdbooks.org](http://www.spdbooks.org)