

UNACKNOWLEDGED MIRACLES

Poems by
Robert H. Deluty



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Father's Day
a twenty year-old
a bird lover
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their mastiff
gravely ill trucker
grandmother and child
the patient asking
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Grandma uttering
his wife inquiring
100-year-old man
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their child ordering
fifth-year collegian
post quake/storms/flood
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*The angels are white flaming white and the
eye that would confront them shrivels
and there's no other way you've got to
become like stone if you want their company
and when you look for the miracle you've got to
scatter your blood to the eight points of the wind
because the miracle is nowhere but circulating
in the veins of man*

George Seferis



burned-out principal
fighting a strong urge to pull
the fire alarm

the old musician
praying he can play the blues
in heaven

leaving Vegas . . .
chucking the fuzzy dice
hanging in his car

denied check-out treats,
a child screaming her parents
are kidnappers

April Fool's Day . . .
pitching a no-hitter,
losing the game

on her deathbed
Grandma telling Grandpa
Behave

the Gulf Coast Smiths
christening their newborn
Biloxi Lou

Jet rookie pulling
a hamstring celebrating
his first touchdown

noticing her son
and his two roommates don't own
a waste basket

congratulating
the leukemia patient
on her weight loss

the daughters
of two demented elders
arranging playdates

their Dad arguing
roller derby should be
in the Olympics

New York subway cop
removing two severed thumbs
from a coin return

marveling
at the poodle pooping
a perfect pretzel

Halloween night . . .
in a suit of armor, hoping
lightning doesn't strike

on her birthday
the anorectic having
a second rice cake

July 4th . . . Yale profs
refusing to display flags:
We're not jingoists

Dean Pauline Mathe
asserting her preference
to be called Polly

the elder
asking her grandkids to say
manure instead

stiletto-heeled Brits
pacing outside a flophouse
on Trollope Street

her new patient
demanding the **right** answer
to Rorschach Card VI

Great-Gramps admitting
sixty-three years without sex
have made him testy

chiseling
into the mason's gravestone
The King of Rock

confessing
to the judge his crime sprees
were mistakes

financially strapped,
choosing a French pedicure
over counseling

after marrying

Ed Bayer, Dee Brown choosing

not to hyphenate

the prof bends over . . .

colleagues study the tattoo

on her lower back

their grandmother

assuming *polysexual*

involves parrots

two MIT deans

roaring hysterically

at Jethro Bodine

the old peddler

believing he could have been

a great diplomat

their son labeling
his cocaine addiction
a misadventure

at the wake, noting
her vain, late spouse will come back
as a peacock

berating his Mom
for having him delivered
on Christmas

at *Starbucks* ~ Grandpa
perturbed that so many words
are not in English

the Josephsons
introducing their children
Jo, Joe, JoJo

hoping in heaven
she can thank each person
who was kind to her

this year's Nobelists
debate which prior winners
were least deserving

complimenting
Grandma on how very black
her dyed hair is

on the bus, choosing
not to sit next to the man
clipping his toenails

at the zoo
struck by the resemblances
with his aunts, uncles

shell-shocked grad student
home on break, asking to sleep
with Mom and Dad

thrice-divorced writer
wishing he could take back
his books' dedications

her boyfriend's home . . .
asking about the hammock
in his kitchen

her boyfriend's home . . .
asking about the fridge
in his bathroom

three Duke professors
arguing who was better:
Shemp or Larry

the linguist
dreaming each proper noun
is also a verb

their six year-old
vowing never to wash
once he moves out

a con artist
practicing the shell game
with his schnauzer

wondering
what possessed his parents
to name him Jon Deaux

Ivy League athlete
correcting the grammar
of a sportswriter

the obese woman
assuming her thin in-laws
are sickly

anxious Mom's twins
on their tricycles, sporting
helmets, elbow pads

five-star *Chez Paul* . . .
Uncle Max asking about
the gefilte fish

in Maine, noticing
her turn signal has been on
since Rhode Island

ninety-year-old man
refusing to write a will:
Way too early

whispering
to her spouse how very much
she once loved him

Children's Hospital . . .
two quadriplegic children
drag racing

describing
their fifteen year-old
as *one huge gland*

400-pound man
hoping one day to take up
only one seat

in front of Aunt Sue
a boy telling his father,
*She's not **that** ugly*

a unionist
ponders how much bugs could do
if they'd organize

her daughter-in-law
preparing for dessert
deep-fried *Oreos*

fed up with the game,
inserting in his golf bag
fishing rods and reels

a Liberal
wishing his last name
were not Pincus

at the vet's office
the technician performing
a Persian cat scan

Hollywood icon
attempting to shoplift
a *Snickers* bar

pre-cruise . . .
the poet packing
a thesaurus

Halloween morning . . .
the Physics prof lecturing
in a Bozo wig

his wife ordering
coffee with four *Splenda*
and three crullers

Dad insisting
that his physicians call him
Master Sergeant

urging her sons
not to disgrace themselves
in their dreams

five-year-old Charlotte
questioning whether both *z's*
need to be pronounced

turning seventy,
a Bronx priest teaching himself
Yiddish idioms

Your line of work? . . .
the meth dealer answering
Pharmaceuticals

April 1st . . . learning
his mistress is pregnant and
tenure's been denied

her child demanding
an oncologist who knows
how to laugh

an elder inquires
if the *i* precedes the *e*
in his own last name

their muscular son
refusing to wear a shirt
that isn't skin-tight

her pre-teen claiming
the best television shows
all have corpses

an Arkansan
wishing his Chinese in-laws
spoke American

Truth Serum

Asked why he accepted
The mega-demanding new job,
Their father explains that
His three interviewers,
Over dinner and drinks,
Got utterly plastered,
Yet
With their inhibitions,
Defenses and filters
At their lowest, they
Spoke only positively
About their colleagues
And management

a senile man
staring at the motel sign
Vacancy

his four year-old
asking if the toll booth guy
owns the bridge

her rotund spouse
searching in *Macy's* for clothes
that camouflage

old-money couple
calling their new yacht
a blue blood vessel

after a poor round,
realizing what *golf* is
spelled backwards

during the credits
their ashen Mom exiting
the slasher film

upscale wedding . . .
under a twenty-grand gown,
a pair of white *Keds*

asking his folks,
Drew & Anne, why he was named
Andrew

fiftieth birthday . . .
two hookers baking brownies
for the homeless vet

believing
he'd have been a great priest
but for doubt, lust

her first grader
asserting that a hangman
has the coolest job

family wedding . . .
dancing only with grandkids,
his wife understands

the frail elder
hanging on, convinced he'll win
Powerball

acknowledging
their daughter married the best
of the schmucks out there

trying to explain
to a four-year-old boy
the term *life partner*

two friends
of a skilled shoplifter
placing orders

schizophrenic man
seeking life's meaning
in a spider's web

christening
his newborn boxer puppies
Baer, Ross, Zale, Conn

three middle schoolers
discussing the quickest way
to achieve fame

his grandmother
inquiring who leads
when gays dance

turning ninety-nine,
depressed she's lived sixty years
more than her Dad

a young girl
asking the vet what do bats
have nightmares about

asking forgiveness
from her priest for cursing
the House and Senate

introducing
his purple-haired fiancée
Violetta

Auschwitz survivor
watching a horror movie
with his great-grandson

the Don's nine year-old
noting that his closest friends
are button men

their professor
explaining why geniuses
need not be civil

goodwill ballgame
between the two Koreas
ending in a brawl

married thirty years,
calling his wedding band
the golden noose

an arsonist
showing his kindergartner
how to strike a match

inquiring
if *inept* is bad,
is *ept* good

a boy assuming
that after puberty
comes adultery

calculating
the number of calories
ten eye blinks burn

Aunt Margaret
insisting that her nephews
leer politely

under a full moon,
beaned for the second time
in the same inning

informed she's pregnant,
the fourteen year-old praying
she can still party

informed she's pregnant,
the forty year-old praying
her grandson won't mind

two psychologists
breaking confidences
over old Scotch

Dad's folks in a *Saab*,
Mom's folks in a *Toyota*
crashing on Route 1

elderly baker
advising, since life is short,
eat dessert first



*Miracles are a retelling in small letters
of the very same story which is written
across the whole world in letters too large
for some of us to see.*

C. S. Lewis

*Could a greater miracle take place than for us
to look through each other's eyes for an instant?*

Henry David Thoreau



learning the first name
he's been calling a colleague
for three years is wrong

asking the parents
of the obese one year-old
how he likes his steak

Great-Grandma Golda
describing her past hardships
as *Oyful*

reading of the will . . .
his first cousin taking out
a calculator

reading of the will . . .
his great-niece muttering
More charities?!

ninety-year-old Mae
estimating the hours spent
fretting about fat

a fifth grader
defining *varicose*
as *nearby*

a sixth grader
defining *fibula*
as *a tiny lie*

post-surgery . . .
praying her new nose attracts
better man

his sister-in-law
researching state licensure
for psychic healers

the passenger
on a *Harley Street Glide*
wearing swim goggles

staring at photos
of their gaunt, dour aunt giggling
as a little girl

reading the words
on her grandbaby's onesie:
Chick Magnet

a second grader
starting the conversation,
When I was a child . . .

urging her husband,
during lovemaking, to say
something besides *Uh*

pre-hurricane . . .
their grandfather stocking up
on beer, cigars, prunes

her Dad's funeral . . .
slugging the cousin who tried
to make her laugh

on the road . . . Nana
and three teens belting out
Highway to Hell

seeking a woman
who loves Shakespearean plays
and can gut a fish

seeking a man
who loves long walks in the park
and looks like Rambo

overhearing
her teen saying *Don't worry,*
I can drive drunk

therapist's office . . .
husband and wife discussing
their entitlements

from a hospice bed,
whispering her last words:
Boston cream pie

Rabbi Cardozo
peppering his Spanish
with Yiddish

writing
that her gravely ill mother
is *coma toast*

learning
the barfly was the first wife
of his thesis chair

May I smoke? . . .
the hostess responding,
Are you ablaze?

slamming the door
on the blind date sporting
an Elmer Fudd tee

asking her uncle
why all of his toupees look
like lettuce leaves

moving two coins
across his desk, calling it
a paradigm shift

telling friends
he is an only child
but for one sister

the old professor
giving her final lecture
in pantomime

the old professor
giving his final lecture
dressed as Spiderman

hurricane party . . .
thirty revelers singing
Goodnight Irene

Dachau survivor
grieving the suicide
of a ten year-old

a feather in hand,
their young son trying to make
the bulldog giggle

two actresses
arguing whose addiction
to tanning is worse

two actors
debating whose addiction
to lipo is worse

a kindergartner
asking at what age bellboys
become bellmen

AA meeting . . .
a teen sitting between
his grandparents

a third grader
attempting to define *the*
for a first grader

her twelve year-old
bringing a joy buzzer
to the ER

her thirteen year-old
bringing a whoopee cushion
to the ICU

a Buddhist woman
calling her Jewish husband
The Rabbi

a Jewish man
calling his Baptist wife, sons
The Goyim

first day of school . . .
the dean's mother insisting
he shine his shoes

first day of school . . .
the prof's mother insisting
he wear shoes

four-month-old twins
cackling with joy listening
to Grandpa snore

staring at the sky,
an adolescent seeking
erotic clouds

Black Muslim bakers
describing their son-in-law
as *white and wry*

summer vacation . . .

a Princeton student joining

Libyan rebels

Uncle Seamus

insisting Ravel's *Bolero*

be played at his wake

elderly tutor

asserting that Confucius

was his best student

unable to write

llama without thinking

of Tibet

Nobel laureate

mystified how his son-in-law

makes a living

the haiku poet
wishing his dog's breed
had one syllable

reading the name
on the heart-shaped grave stone:
Bea Valentine

her Doberman
treating its plush new bed
as a chew toy

two Johns Hopkins profs
sporting under their dress shirts
Shittsburgh Steelers tees

turning one hundred,
skipping for the first time
in ninety-four years

Grandma displaying
the names of twelve grandchildren
tattooed on her thighs

a German teacher
noting that her love life
is an *uber-mess*

asking the Asian
named Bo if that's short
for Beauregard

Aunt Fay describing
her deranged Chihuahua
as *spirited*

the old researcher
dreaming of disemboweling
Wikipedia

No-Shave November . . .

four hundred freshman displaying
pitiful beards

crushing her diet
under a nine by twelve pan
of fudge brownies

wondering why
their teen's truck is surrounded
by three police cars

mythology test . . .
confusing *Aphrodite*
with *hermaphrodite*

a prof fearing
his wallet's bills aren't facing
the same direction

in Sunday School
a child asking the rabbi
how God relaxes

her Dad refusing
to step in a store whose name
ends in *Shoppe*

learning his best friend
of the last decade served time
years ago for rape

the Gottliebs
silent movie buffs, naming
their child, D.W.

the Finkelsteins,
MGM film buffs, naming
their child, Clark Gable

a boy praying
for gift-giving days between
Christmas and Easter

using ground pepper
to determine if their Dad
can sneeze while asleep

on the highway
doing ninety to get home
three minutes sooner

a teen admitting
his support system consists
of four drug dealers

centenarian
recalling her late husband,
sons, granddaughter

old neurologist
diagnosing his patient:
Shoddy wiring

7:00 a.m. . . .
Gramps placing three *Cheerios*
in his bourbon

Jones, the young poet,
wishing that his last name
were Wordsworth

Smith, the young thug,
wishing that his last name
were Corleone

after the flood . . .
sitting in the dark, longing
for influence

Wiseguys

In response
To his query
Regarding in which dress
They should bury
Their late mother,
His sons declare
It should be
the black one,
Because they intend
To bury him
In the red one

Korean War vet
pummeling would-be muggers
with his iron hand

watching in awe
as their Uncle Walter
inhales a meatloaf

her father-in-law
wanting to be touched solely
for back scratches

a seven year-old
trying to teach her dachshund
to say *Meow*

warning the waitress
not to ask him questions
while he's eating

married fifty years,
regaling her spouse with tales
of old lovers

a girl pondering
how God can love the wicked,
yet she hates her folks

an obese bowler
telling his skeptical wife
he's a jock

the new lifeguard
praying the ugly elder
won't need CPR

a scholar struggling
to recall Gandhi's first name,
fearing dementia

her father
relying on prejudice
to save time

the youngest of ten
realizing that his niece
is older than he

a sleeping freshman
using his textbook, *Learning*,
as a pillow

a sleeping junior
using her textbook, *Ethics*,
as a footrest

the old man hoping
his obit does not mention
the six jail terms

her youngest son
expressing his love
under duress

a tone-deaf couple
buying their first home
on Rhapsody Lane

the four year-old
stating *When I can cross streets
and drive a car . . .*

her husband
offering a compliment
sideways

Dad wishing
Mom's gluten-free, fat-free cake
were not taste-free

wedding guest
wrapping her gift while running
into the church

8 a.m. Psych class . . .
thirteen freshman eating
Chick-fil-A fries

Norwegian soldiers
practicing close-order drills
on a frozen lake

after supper, Gramps
using an old mustache comb
to pick his teeth

winning candidate
staring at the headline,
Record-Low Turnout



These are the days of miracle and wonder

This is the long-distance call

The way the camera follows us in slo-mo

The way we look to us all

The way we look to a distant constellation

That's dying in the corner of the sky

These are the days of miracle and wonder

And, don't cry, baby, don't cry

Don't cry

Paul Simon



the pre-med student
displaying his heart, lung
and kidney tattoos

the pre-law student
displaying his tattooed skull
and crossbones

on his deathbed
pondering which relative
is the biggest schmuck

slumber party . . .
five teenagers discussing
how they purge

neighborhood gangster
humbly seeking permission
to wed their daughter

the old waitress
urging the obese patron
to chew

Ph.D. student
sporting a tux and top hat
to her orals

a boy requesting
from the pet shop owner
his scariest snake

a girl requesting
from the pet shop owner
his smartest goldfish

telling her daughters
if she didn't love their Dad
she'd murder him

informing
his pupils with a straight face
he **can** be bought

post-honeymoon . . .
showing her spouse a photo
of her old nose

a student driver
gripping the steering wheel
as if strangling it

buying as a gift
for his dissertation chair
a set of knives

in his lab
a Princeton geneticist
studying cowlicks

describing her teen
as four-weeks premature,
five-years immature

a Jewish boy
certain the Yankees lost
because he ate shrimp

filing for divorce
after she strikes him six times
with a cinder block

watching the news,
her young son wishing he were
a weatherboy

heartfelt praise
evoking shock, discomfort
in the abused child

his sister-in-law
hating the concept
of raisins

his mother-in-law
hating the concept
of Lady Gaga

a fan at Fenway
shoving aside two nuns
to catch a foul pop

her boyfriend
responding *Thanks very much*
to *I love you*

his girlfriend
responding *Oh, crap*
to *Marry me*

Quality Time

Over dinner,
Listening to his father
A computer scientist
And his mother
A clinical social worker
Talking shop,
Their thirteen-year-old son
Ponders which
Is more unbearable:
Technospeak or
Psychobabble

the Mexican teen
weaving a sombrero
for her Chihuahua

referring
to their needy daughters
as Sponge 1, Sponge 2

the bride's estranged Dad
pinning a white boutonniere
to his polo shirt

the first grader
stating her favorite author
is Poe

a Marine captain
seeking the courage to heal
from childhood incest

pre-procession . . .
the maid of honor decking
the groom's father

eight-months pregnant,
her child having descended,
walking like John Wayne

up for a deanship,
regretting the neck tattoo
he got as a teen

a baseball fan
teaching her toddler to rhyme:
Rays, Jays, A's

outside the ER
an ambivalent man
stabbing himself

her four-year-old son
arguing that iced cupcakes
are too girly

observing
the big-rig driver steering
with only his thumbs

hoping her bosom
will deflect attention
from her facial tic

a Catholic boy
asking the nun if God
ever told a joke

the groom offering
his stepfather twenty bucks
to ditch the string tie

a gardener
dichotomizing people
as flowers or weeds

during Ramadan
two Muslim heretics
watching *Ben-Hur*

on Yom Kippur
two Jewish heretics
watching *Porky's*

her fiancé's Dad
cracking a tooth on nut cake
she baked for him

teenaged voyeur
wishing to become someday
a psychiatrist

a young therapist
inviting his rich patients
to the wedding

losing the pennant
in St. Louis, admitting
It's not in the Cards

Bio professor
dreaming she's denied tenure
for unstylish shoes

Math professor
dreaming he's denied tenure
for poor penmanship

the old Teamster
belting out *Nessun Dorma*
on the interstate

exiting Wrigley
three innings before
an 8-run comeback

her husband wishing
petit fours, ladyfingers
had different names

insulting
their opponents, calling them
a finesse team

imagining how
an eagle tattoo would look
on his infant son

two weeks post-rape,
asking her therapist when
she'll be over it

on a Texas ranch
the New Yorker referring
to gnats as *varmints*

college sophomore
tolerating Mom's questions
for a free dinner

college senior
withstanding Pop's presence
for a free lunch

famed violinist
responding he does **not** know
Turkey in the Straw

the divorcee
attempting suicide dressed
in her wedding gown

pregnant bus rider
beating the teen who refused
to give up his seat

their teacher claiming
his Plato impersonation
is spot-on

the archbishop
whispering to an old Jew
Good Yontif

Phyllis Phillips,
born and raised in Philly,
rooting for the Mets

from his hospice bed
the atheist demanding
respect from a priest

her grandchild
inquiring why hurricanes
don't have last names

Pa
calling Ma, *the waterfall*;
himself, *the bucket*

first session . . .
putting out her cigarette
on the shrink's new rug

opting not to tell
Sister Ann there's something
hanging from her nose

welterweight boxer
confessing his petite wife
abuses him

the job candidate
sporting a blue shirt, beige slacks,
red high top sneakers

the job interviewer
sporting a purple scrunchie
for his ponytail

Chez Pierre's chef
daydreaming of owning
a roadside diner

their four year-old
parading naked post-bath
but for cowboy boots

post Yom Kippur . . .
two Jews breaking the fast
with calamari

on a summer night
a fearless young Tiger
trying to steal home

Father's Day . . .
serenading their Dad with
Pop Goes the Weasel

a twenty year-old
sobbing inconsolably . . .
one gray hair

a bird lover
in Baltimore hoping
Ravens eat Bears

the groom
chatting with three loan sharks
on the bride's side

informing her shrink
she will commit suicide
if he retires

their mastiff
utterly convinced
he's a lapdog

gravely ill trucker
slipping the young orderly
ten bucks for a *Coors*

grandmother and child
wishing they could trade
age spots for acne

the patient asking
whether his alter ego
could be a lizard

Sandler fans watching
on the Spanish-language channel

Feliz Gilmore

Grandma uttering
her final words: *Avoid*
meatloaf in diners

his wife inquiring
why the Falcons cannot play
all their games at home

100-year-old man
screaming at his eldest son
to grow up

her broker sharing
his investment strategy:
Hang in there

expectant father
praying for ten fingers,
ten toes, a head

their child ordering
his tuna salad sandwich
medium rare

fifth-year collegian
answering *What's your major?*
with *I'm not sure*

post quake/storms/flood . . .
a New Yorker researching
Egypt's ten plagues

her aunt's funeral . . .
the Goth eighteen year-old
dressed in white

Insight

Asked what
His mother and father
Have in common,
The third grader
Thinks long and hard
Before answering
With dead seriousness
And utmost certitude,
*Neither one wants
Another kid*

a Methodist
congratulating a Jew
with *Ma Salt Off*

realizing
every meal with his wife
is a roast

Grandma asking
her son about his children:
How's your family?

football fanatic
caring deeply which team
wins the Pro Bowl

telling his shrink
he can't afford both him
and a mistress

True/False test item . . .

a college freshman writing

C in response

his child questioning

the logic of *It's better*

to give than receive

twice-divorced woman

urging her daughter to wed

an orphan

Philosophy prof

hoping his taped lecture

goes viral

the new Grandpa . . .

his immediate elation

giving way to glee



Author's Note

Dr. Robert H. Deluty is the Associate Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. He has been a psychology professor at UMBC since 1980, and was named Presidential Teaching Professor in 2002. He and his wife, Barbara (a clinical psychologist), live in Ellicott City, Maryland and have two adult children, Laura and David, and a granddaughter, Ava. Dr. Deluty's poems and essays have been published in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Baltimore Sun*, *Modern Haiku*, *Voices: The Art and Science of Psychotherapy*, *Psychiatric Times*, *the Journal of Poetry Therapy*, *Welcome Home*, *Muse of Fire*, *Maryland Family Magazine*, *Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture*, and many other newspapers, journals, and anthologies. *Unacknowledged Miracles* is his thirty-fifth book.

