

# **PEACHES & GRAVY**

**Selected Poems 1966–2016**

**LARRY FAGIN**

**edited by Miles Champion**

**Cuneiform Press**



Schneeworn  
2007

*We had to write poetry to obscure the meaning of what we were saying.*  
—U Tin Thit

*If I'm gonna be alone, I wanna be by myself.*  
—Roslyn, *The Misfits*



## **CREDO**

If you are to believe in yourself you must have the most incisive of insights, the clearest of visions. You must be entirely realistic about yourself and about the world you live in.

## **STATEMENT**

My poems are simple  
Rhythms and patterns  
Learned in school  
Sometimes changed around

Well known is the long parade of the caterpillars which is brought about by each animal placing its forehead on the ass of the animal in front of it, and following. If the lead of the parade falls in a hole out of which it cannot help itself, the parade comes to a stop and is liable to remain at a standstill until all the caterpillars starve. One must guide the lead caterpillar with the help of a decoy which will direct it to the end of the parade, thus placing the lead at the end. Then the parade will proceed in a circle until all marchers perish.

## NEW YORK

The radiator came on & the geraniums died.  
Finally throwing up all the arms on the page,  
They came down in bangs, spilling mucilage  
& some ink. Someone. I was careful to move  
a muscle...

I thought I witnessed an assist  
From it. In &/or Out of the Blue. Not  
A cloud. A huge network of dots got  
Connected, wd prove ghostly.  
Nor swan nor clown, but machinery  
For lowering or raising heavenly objects.  
When I rushed to pull the shade, the sky-  
Writers wrote Yanks 5, Reds 3,  
Across the page & would-be face. Then my ears  
Burned & I cheered, remembering what name  
& team

## OCCASIONAL POEM

Tom Clark and I went out to Greenwich  
And spread our lunch on Greenwich Green.  
There were ham and cheese sandwiches, peanut  
Butter and jelly sandwiches, ½ lb potato  
Salad, sweet and sour pickles, two cans  
Of black cherry soda, and some crumb cake  
My mother baked. After lunch and cigarettes  
We played catch with a red rubber ball, which  
Neither of us dropped, on Greenwich Green.  
It was a splendid day! The hot sun was killing  
All the germs on everybody's face, and kids  
And their nannies raced around like nobody's  
Business. Then, Tom and I went off to see  
The Queen's House and, in the Maritime  
Museum, under a microscope, the smallest  
Cannon in the world. We wondered how  
They ever managed to put it together. Yeah.

Toward the end of the day we went to have  
A coke in the small café nearby. Tom seemed  
Depressed so I told a joke to cheer him up.  
(Earlier, I had complained of one of my  
Famous stomachaches. Go to the bathroom,  
Tom suggested. I did and felt lots better.)  
The sun was going down. We took a bus to town.  
Tom caught his train and I, I caught mine.

When I got home I ate a good turkey dinner  
With blueberry pie à la mode for dessert.  
I watched a little TV, read for a while  
In bed, and had a nice cup of hot cocoa  
With a few chocolate chip cookies. Then I  
Turned out the light and had this terrible dream.

## THE JOKE

My wife was a joke  
I told a man  
who slept with her  
the night before.

Had she heard  
the cost  
would have been  
no love lost.

One night in bed  
the joke  
lit a cigarette  
and blew smoke

in my face  
which is no disgrace.  
Now she and her lover  
are free of each other

and he sits in a chair  
and laughs at her  
and makes an obscene gesture  
in the air.