**JOHNNY & SUSIE'S HALLOWEEN**

It's half past eleven

October 31

the night is as dark

as a black cat in chocolate sauce

and the wind is moaning

like a kettle on a hot plate

and the grown-ups are away

at a Halloween dance

No one is at home

but John and little Susie

but John and little Susie

Johnny? ***(EVIL LAUGH)***

Susie? ***(EVIL LAUGH)***

***(EVIL LAUGH)***

All of a sudden

a dog begins to squeal

away in the distance

like a bad set of brakes

Then two more are howling

a whole lot closer

like the devil's own stepkids

tossed out of hell

then four, six, a chorus

of canine cacophonies

till the walls are quaking

till the world is shaking

with the howling, howling of the dogs

***(DOG HOWL)***

 **MOAN, WIND, MOAN**

 **HOWL, DOGS, HOWL**

 **THUNDERCLAP, CLAP**

 **CACKLE, WITCH, CACKLE**

 **SCREAM, KIDS, SCREAM**

 **TONIGHT IS HALLOWEEN**

 **HALLO WHAT? HALLO WHO? HALLOWEEN!**

Now high over the house

comes the BOOM of thunder

breaking like a slag pit

under mountains of scrapped cars

till the sky's a roar of voices

on the rooftops, in the gutters

and they're blubbering at the windows,

crying, "Please, let me in!"

And it's way past their bedtime

but John and little Susie

are huddled by the TV

and they've turned down the sound

And they're trembling like a dishwasher

and they're quiet as two house plants

because somebody's knocking at their door

someone is knocking at their door

 **MOAN, WIND, MOAN**

 **HOWL, DOGS, HOWL**

 **THUNDERCLAP, CLAP**

 **CACKLE, WITCH, CACKLE**

 **SCREAM, KIDS, SCREAM**

 **TONIGHT IS HALLOWEEN**

Now all around the world

there are witches walking

disguised as little children

going door to door for treats

and they'll count up their candy

and if you give them craisins

or an apple and a toothbrush

or ask them for a trick

they'll swell up big as Disneyworld

and they'll chug down your TV

yes, they'll eat your darn TV

So now it's half past spooky

and it's raining bats and bullfrogs

and someone is knocking at the door

Johnny! ***[CACKLE]*** Susie! ***[CACKLE]***

Somebody's knocking at your door!

***(EVIL LAUGH)***

Peek through the window

What do you see?

It's a 5 foot fatty in a Mickey Mouse mask

and she sees you stir the curtains

and she crooks her little finger

"Come here, my pretties, let me in!"

So Johnny looks at Susie

and Susie gulps at Johnny,

and they sift through the candy

they've been hoarding since dawn…

Not much left now:

just a thousand chocolate wrappers

and twenty mucky fingers

and a pair of stomach aches

As the door grins open

and it's full of rain and midnight

and a witch is shaking water from her broom

 **MOAN, WIND, MOAN**

 **HOWL, DOGS, HOWL**

 **THUNDERCLAP, CLAP**

 **CACKLE, WITCH, CACKLE**

 **SCREAM, KIDS, SCREAM**

 **TONIGHT IS HALLOWEEN**

So it's trick or treat for Susie

and it's trick or treat for Johnny

as the witch says, "What's for supper?"
and "YOU ARE!" scream the kids

And they kill her with karate
coz she's old and fat and queasy

from eating too much candy

and chugging down TVs

from too much candy and TV

So now they'll watch the late show

as they feast on witch and popcorn

as the butter stains their night clothes

and witch bits dot the rug

The moral of this story

is as clear as chain store windows

Don't ever eat the TV!

At least, not more than two!

You'll be too fat for karate

and develop indigestion

Too many TV dinners

are harmful to your health

 **MOAN, WIND, MOAN**

 **HOWL, DOGS, HOWL**

 **THUNDERCLAP, CLAP**

 **CACKLE, WITCH, CACKLE**

 **SCREAM, KIDS, SCREAM**

 **TONIGHT IS HALLOWEEN**

 **HALLO WHAT? HALLO WHO? HALLOWEEN!**

Ricky's Jackhammer Rap

 It was on a day in April, (*ride ride ride)*

 The dogwoods were chirping, (*that jackhammer)*

 My big brother says, Ricky, (*slide slide slide)*

 You want to play some hooky? (*back the trigger)*

 Come with us to the worksite *(ride ride ride)*

 And ride the jackhammer. (*ride—ride—ride)*

So we went down to the worksite, (*ride ride ride)*

And I pulled back the trigger, (*feel the weight)*

Till the jackhammer went vrrm, vrrm! (*peel the skin)*

And the pavement went krak, krak! (*from the street)*

Till my bones were like a frogpond, (*jump the dimes)*

Till my breath squeaked like a mattress, (*from your pockets)*

Till the sweat bust out like bedsprings, (*rock your eyes)*

And the concrete blew to pieces, (*out their sockets)*

Yeah, the concrete blew to pieces. (*ride—ride—ride)*

 So the principal says, Ricky, (*oh Ricky)*

 Now where were you last Tuesday? (*uh oh Ricky)*

 You didn’t go to English, (*oh Ricky)*

 And you didn’t go to History. (*things look sticky)*

 Now first you give up lunchbreaks, (*better not football)*

 And then you give up football. (*ride—ride—ride)*

It was on a Friday morning— *(ride ride ride)*

I wasn’t playing hooky— *(feel the hurt)*

I wasn’t playing football— (*rise rise rise)*

I was stripped down to my tee-shirt— (*in your throat)*

I was riding a jackhammer— (*rake your heart)*

And I rode it into English— (*shake your bones)*

And I rode it into History— (*make your lungs)*

And that jackhammer went vrrm, krak! (*like megaphones)*

And the principal said, Ricky!— (*pleeease, Ricky!)*

Till the walls went woozy— (*boom! kablooey!)*

And shook clean to pieces. (*down)*

 Well, I went down to McDonald’s, (*ride ride ride)*

 I said, Give me some french fries, (*let the ketchup run)*

 And give me a hamburger, (*let the ketchup run)*

 And I chowed down like a backhoe, (*run like kool-aid)*

 Till the ketchup ran like kool-aid. (*mmh that’s good)*

 This was on a Friday morning, (*dogwoods chirping)*

 With the catbirds mewling, (*Friday in April)*

 Blue sky, a little breeze— (*perfect)*

Ricky In November

It's late November *Lord Lord Lord*

My niece says, Uncle Ricky *Lord Lord Lord*

Come visit for Thanksgiving *Great Vague Spirit*

We'll pick you up on Tuesday *o Perhaps Oneness*

We can ride ride ride *we arise from & return to*

So I'm southbound sitting shotgun *in whom vaguely I trust*

Old freeway cargrowl chorus *we thank you*

Wheeze of wheels on pavement *for the spectacular*

Dazzle of sun on hubcaps *particularity*

Some last late fall colors *of this life*

And their dog Max back of me *of this teeming*

With his head out the window *dreamfidget of a life*

And my niece's husband Henry *I thank you*

Saying, Say if it's too drafty! *for the years I've had*

Don't mind Max, he's spoiled! *to savor it*

Oh, please, no fuss on my account *& I ask your mercy*

I say, my coat tugged round me *for the spectacular timidities*

And we ride ride ride *of my love*

I used to could, I tell them *of my kindness*

Howl just like a dog once *of my savoring*

I'd crack the window open *I ask your mercy for*

And I'd moan out at the girls *the slackness of my attention*

You rascal, Uncle Ricky *the self-interest*

My niece says, and we chuckle *of my tolerance*

So I roll down my window *the cravenness*

Waft of pine trees, car fumes *of my daring*

And I give this doleful dog wail *for the meekness of my deference*

Which rasps into a cough *to what has power but is not of you*

As the I-95 air *I ask your mercy and I*

Assails my face and throat *thank you*

But is otherwise not bad *for this, for this*

You okay, Uncle Ricky? *for this, and for this*

My niece asks Oh I'm fine! *miraculous, ordinary now*

And I roll up my window *for these, and for these*

Not bad, though, she says *miraculous and ordinary*

Not bad for an old hound *moments left to me*

Oh, sure, not bad, I answer *for this momentary*

But once I was a pup *& momentary*

And I tissue at my nose *world without stint*

I dab my windstung eyes *amen*

BACK GARDEN PRAYER

Our Thursday

This place under your sky, its scrawl of cables

An alley’s central nave, its trim backyards

The wind congregating in its tree limbs

The oak tree inspecting all its parts at once

The dogwood trickling onto our shade beds its rinsed sunlight

The pine trees talking to themselves in their tall and lolling language

Give us this day of yours our filtering selves

To stand here in the grace and clutter of you

Arms streaked with weeded earth and clipped grass

And hear the lilt and lap of breath move through us

Or see, perhaps, the sphinx moth in its hover

And feel some stir of you seep into us

Some flicker of scent, some flurry of swifts, darting, swiveling

And watch the dusk's brim brush with flame and darken

For yours will be the evening

And the trilling of the crickets

Till stillness, and in whisper,

O moon