

Of the Seven Deadly Sins

David Allan Evans

Lust

Some days, well past 70,
he still has in his brain
enough of it to run a train.

Anger

Warning: fly into its trap and it'll wrap
you in your winding sheet. Make sure to veer
away quickly. Keep practicing.

Envy

His backhand's better, I confess,
if not his forehand. And yes,
he's got a lot of money.
But my love's the honey.

Gluttony

Picture yourself 50,000 years ago,
40 pounds leaner, stuffing as much grub
into your gut as you can find, and fleeing predators—
that was pretty much the daily scenario;

now look around you: no bikes,
no cars, no buses or trains.
To keep alive means to never quit
taking long, perilous, barefoot hikes.

And so: we were sired
by those lean, alert athletes of the Savanna.
In other words, when it comes to grub,
we're wired.

Pride

I'm no church goer, yet I may
step inside one if, some day
I notice on its marquee:
"Vanity, Vanity, all is Vanity."

Greed

Rhymes with *need*,
as in *I need*,
you need,
we need.

Sloth

He may seem at times a creature
as unhurried as a glacier,

but slothful? No, sir.

Just watch him climb
out on a ridiculously high and elongated limb reaching for a
rime.

I Am

David Allan Evans

"I think; therefore I am."

– Rene Descartes

"The consciousness that says 'I am' is not
the consciousness that thinks."

– Jean-Paul Sartre

I am

standing in a shower at the health club with newly-rinsed hair,
my eyes have opened and watching my right index finger
slowly moving from left to right and touching and counting
small wall tiles, 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10, and estimating
the number of water beads (in the hundreds) on each tile . . .

I am

when my finger drops down one row and comes back,
counting forward even as it's moving backward,
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 . . .

I am

even as my finger is counting all the way up to 26, 27, 28 tiles
or beyond; and then sometimes stops on a single tile
in the middle of a row, and (just as they're
disappearing) keeps on counting beads

When it Comes to Finding Words to Say

David Allan Evans

what it was like driving in a fierce July rain storm
on a country gravel road close to midnight, with Jan
beside me, after a family reunion in rural Nebraska . . .

so in my squeaky desk chair the next day, I came up with
windshield wipers, squeaky, dividing line, white, glimpses,
narrow shoulder, unblinkingly – all of which was not even
a thousandth of a percent of what it actually was like . . .

that is, being bent over the wheel and straining to see – yes
unblinkingly – squeaky windshield wipers – and getting
only – yes – glimpses of a – yes – white dividing line and –
yes – a shoulder – that was – yes – way too narrow even
to see at times; and at times too scared even to keep driving.

But as long as I'm still alive and breathing, I'll keep on
being one hundred percent privileged to be able to put
down words to try to say what may be impossible to say.

What If?

David Allan Evans

What if, on a morning in May, as you're pushing your baby in her stroller, and with so many what if's in your head, you take a turn you've never taken, and begin to panic because you believe you could be lost? And what if your baby, sensing the tension in your body, starts crying uncontrollably? What if, just then, you picture the frown on her mother's face – framed by the kitchen window – looking out and wondering why you've been gone so long? Or what if she's peeved at what you said about your own sister last week at the party? And what if you stumble on a rock and fall and twist an ankle, and can't walk?

But what if, instead, your baby stays quiet and often smiling during the outing? And what if, at one point, turning your head and seeing a robin land on a branch with a limp worm in its yellow beak, you realize that, after all, it's a beautiful spring day and everything is going to be just fine? And what if you turn your head again and see all of the what if's walking briskly out of your mind, and what if their exiting means they have left, if not for good, for at least well into the day, the week, the month?

The Evolution of Zebra Stripes

David Allan Evans

“Conventional wisdom says a zebra’s black-and-white stripes camouflage the animal in tall grass—the better to evade the colorblind lion. But a new study says the pattern scrambles the vision of a tinier biter: the bloodsucking horsefly.”

— Rachel Kaufman, for *National Geographic News*

There they go again suddenly *whup-whup-whupping* across the savanna.

What started them, lions? (watch out for those deft and deadly hooves).

But the lions are gone, and anyway, they’ve suddenly stopped,

and are once again grazing, indifferently, as if nothing happened.

But look again, closely: it was a swarm of tiny, winged predators

(watch out for those flicking, hurricane tails). But keep looking:

now those little beasts are buzzing around, confused, wondering:

Black’s white? white’s black? Meanwhile, their jittery-footed prey,

any second, may suddenly be *whup-whup-whupping* across the savanna.