

NOTES

Random mass shootings have dominated the news in recent years. This powerful collection of poems, *Cap'n Crunch and 2% Milk*, may be performed by either a male or female and should be entered in Poetry Interpretation. Serving as both a response to a random act of violence, as well as depicting the devastation and unanswered questions left behind after an unforeseen tragedy, *Cap'n Crunch and 2% Milk* is comprised of three character-driven poems. It is critical for the performer to create three distinct, honest narrators. The first poem, entitled "Warm," is told from the viewpoint of the shooter's mother. The second poem, "Love," is told from the perspective of the girlfriend of the perpetrator, while the final poem, "Cap'n Crunch and 2% Milk," is told from the viewpoint of the person who committed the heinous crime. Each poem may be performed in its entirety, or the performer may choose to integrate the poems throughout the presentation. The drama mask icons are simply suggestions as to when to turn the pages in the manuscript.

Warm

In the newspaper this morning
She said you were *a nice guy*.
They said you were a quiet guy.
Nobody ever thought you would do this—
Especially me.

All I can see is you eating breakfast.
You loved Captain Crunch—
I mean, *Cap'n Crunch*.
(You always corrected me on that.)

When you were little, sometimes you would refuse
To eat anything but Cap'n Crunch—
Filling yourself with sugar.
On that day, were there Crunch Berries in your belly?
Why do I continually dream of guns now?
Of bullets? Of weeping parents?
Of you in an electric chair?



When my water broke, we rushed to the hospital.

In the hospital, your father told me to push—
But maybe I just pulled the trigger,
And you exploded from my barrel like a bullet.
I obviously didn't check my sights like you did.
Did you check your sights?
Did you carefully construct each piece of collateral in your crosshairs?
If I could cross out anything you did, would you still be my child?
Would you still be that little monkey
Climbing all over my jungle gym limbs in the grocery store?

Maybe it's a gross error of judgment on my part.
Was I too engrossed in my love for you—
That I forgot—sometimes—happiness is a warm gun?
Was it warm, dear?



The spotlights are on you now.
Do they feel more like hugs to you
Than any of the empty things my arms attempted?
People now tell us that it's our fault—
Their words—picked out of your victims' wounds like shrapnel.

What do you think about the death penalty?

Bang!

Why do you own a gun?

Bang!

Why did you raise a Godless monster?

Bang!



I picked your name from a page in the Bible—
Hoping you would find grace in the process.
Instead, you graced us with bursts of brimstone.

I read in the paper the names of your victims:
Margaret, Harry, Austin, Lisa, and Art.
Did you mean to kill Lisa?
I remember you two playing together—
Pulling palaces up from the playground sand.
Were your actions pre-planned or simply providence?
Did you have their names in a notebook?
Did you have charts for your gun-powdered sail boats?

