

Q and A

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73000overcaffeinated

g/rackleS(

(C22 Press, 2026)

1-What are the context and background of this collection of poems?

In the late summer of 2025, I received an email from Joshua Martin, a member of the C22 Experimental Writing Collective, which oversees C22 Press. He had seen some of my more experimental poems in the journal *ST((O))NE[D]!*. He offered me the opportunity to contribute a chapbook to C22's Open Editions Series. Of course, I accepted the offer with all enthusiasm, and the process of creating *73000overcaffeinated g/rackleS(* began. It took me a few months to compile and complete the collection, and the title of the book didn't become apparent until late in that process. By early 2026, there was a complete draft; the book was then published and released by C22 Press in April of 2026.

2-What are some elements of your writing process that were involved in its creation?

I'm always writing. And I never sit down with the specific intention of writing a poem—instead, poems speak to me amidst the daily activities of living, and I attempt to write them down as best I can in that flow of life. I initially write all my poems using the notepad app on my phone, so this makes it easy to record and work with snippets of ideas and phrases during random moments throughout days and nights. Once poems are complete, I try to seek out publishing outlets for them. Josh's invitation came at a very active time in my writing life—I had written a bunch of new poems not long before his initial email, and I also had a number of new ones in the works. So, the initial creation of *73000overcaffeinated g/rackleS(* was a process of compilation, of choosing poems from those recently written and from those that were still developing at that time. Through those months, other new poems were also written—poems that hadn't been in the works at all at the time of Josh's invitation—and so I chose some of those as well. While experimental poetry is my primary area of focus in writing, I also have poems that aren't particularly experimental. In keeping with the aesthetic focus of C22, I knew that I wanted this collection to really showcase my most experimental work to date. I also knew that this collection would give me the opportunity to explore writing that would push the envelope of experimentation even further than I had in many previous pieces, and so some of the new poems that happened around that time took advantage of that opportunity.

The overall title of the book eventually became apparent through these activities. As I worked through the process of writing, choosing, and compiling poems, some interrelated over-arching themes for the collection began to emerge. I find today's world to be one of extreme oversaturation and overstimulation; as part of that, I find the condition of living in today's world to be full of chaos, contradictions, ambiguity, absurdity, surreality, fragmentations, interruptions, and complexity. The infinite layers and facets of life constantly amaze me, as do their collisions and interactions. Indeed, there's a great deal of cognitive dissonance in all of this, but it also has its own kind of exuberance and vibrance and absurd hilarity and bizarre harmony—to me it's overwhelming but also exhilarating and energizing. John Ciardi may have described it best in his phrase *This Strangest Everything*, which is the title of one of his books and also of one of the poems in that book. That phrase is quoted in *73000overcaffeinated g/rackleS(*, in the poem "WORLD ridiculouslysearing AND75JOGGERS." So, many of the poems in this collection explore and work with these themes of the surreal, the bizarre, the absurd, contradictions, chaos, ambiguity, states of strange exuberance and oversaturation, and so on. The image presented in

the overall title is, to me, a fitting encapsulation of all of that. Grackles are generally quite raucous and boisterous just under normal circumstances. Of course, grackles don't drink coffee in real life—but in an alternate universe, if they did drink coffee, and way too much of it, imagine the extreme chaos and cacophony that one would find in a gathering of 73,000 of them! Also, I'm sure you won't be surprised to know that these themes are in no way exclusive to this collection—in one form or another, these and related themes have figured prominently in my thoughts and in my writing for decades. They definitely play major roles in my other two books of poems: *mudtrombones knotted in the spill* and *locust blindfold stompchant rain*, both published by Arteidolia Press, in 2023 and 2026 respectively.

In addition to being a poet, I'm a composer of experimental music and a pianist with an abiding love of improvisation, so it also won't be surprising to know that when I work with words, I love to play with the sonic qualities of words, and of various unusual combinations of words and phrases. I love to make up words sometimes as well, and also to experiment with intentional misspellings and fragmentations of words, as well as the embedding of words within other words. Humor is very important to my writing and to my life, so I have a great deal of fun with this kind of wordplay, and I also discover what I view as previously unimagined perceptions and implications of shades of meaning, or at least half-glimpses thereof. All of this is certainly reflected in *73000overcaffeinated g/rackleS*, as well as in the two collections published by Arteidolia Press.

3-What approach informed your revising of this work and readying it for publication?

Once the poems were chosen, I spent quite a bit of time experimenting with the order in which they would appear in the book. There is a set of 26 short poems called “dandruffflakes”—I knew that I wanted these to be more or less in the center of the book. So, with that as a starting point, I then worked quite a bit with figuring out which poems should appear before and after the “dandruffflakes,” as well as which poems should open and close the collection. One of the poems that had previously appeared in *ST((O))NE[D]!* is a poem called “!flaki+ngb)less”—I quickly came to the belief that this poem would serve well as the closer of the collection. One of the brand new ones, “y:uccaR /otor,” became the opener. I also spent a good bit of time determining how I wanted the text to look—which font to use, the size and spacing of the font, format of the page numbers, etc. Through the course of things I realized that I also wanted to include a quote from another poet in the front pages of the book, as is often done. I eventually came to choose a quote from one of my absolute favorite poets, E.E. Cummings, from one of his more surreal and lesser-known poems.

4-What are some of the key traits that distinguish this collection of poems from your previous writings?

73000overcaffeinated g/rackleS is consistently experimental throughout. By contrast, the two books published by Arteidolia Press contain plenty of experimental poems, but they also include a good number of poems that aren't very experimental—*locust blindfold stompchant rain* even contains some haiku. The books by Arteidolia Press also explore a wider range of themes. The

states of being overwhelmed by the world are there, as are explorations of life's chaos and absurdity and the like, but one can also find a variety of other themes, such as mindfulness, the tenacity of humanity, the vastness of what is not known, the interconnectedness (or lack thereof) of the universe, contemplations of death, the durability and malleability of language, humanity's place in the world of nature, etc. *73000overcaffeinated g/rackleS*(is a bit more focused on the related themes of overstimulation, absurdity, and surreality discussed previously, but with much exploration of the vast swath of things to be found even within that more focused thematic landscape. In general, I think of my work as an act of constant exploration, contemplation, and celebration of many aspects of life and the human condition, especially as experienced in today's world.

One element of the language of many of my poems is the use of symbols—brackets, parentheses, asterisks, virgules, plus signs, percent signs and the like—mixed into the words. To me, this intermixing of letters and symbols suggests, among other things, the contradictions, chaos, surreality and multi-layered complexity of the world discussed previously. This is sometimes combined with the intentional misspellings of words and fragmentations of words mentioned earlier, as well as with the embedding of words within words. While all of my books contain these sorts of things to a greater or lesser extent, *73000overcaffeinated g/rackleS*(takes this further than before, especially in poems like “Ba{looningh=ubacsp,” “redtideDREDGE7+\$!<c/&!!^[,” “Gg+rewILLS,” and “)73bli^ndfo<ld.”

One other difference between this collection and the others is the fact that this collection contains, as mentioned previously, a set of 26 short poems at its center. Each of these “dandruffflakes” is four lines in length; other than that, they have no predetermined structure. They explore surreal and bizarre scenes, unusual turns of phrase and juxtapositions of images and concepts, and much more. Also, unlike the poems mentioned in the previous paragraph, the “dandruffflakes” do not incorporate the intermixing of symbols, the intentional fragmentations of words, and such—instead, they are based on conventional words, albeit combined often in unconventional ways.

5-What do you hope to see resonate with readers in this poetry collection?

I'm heavily biased of course, but I think there's much here with which a reader can heartily engage, if they're so inclined. These poems live loud and proud, like the birds for which they're named. To me, the energy, humor, ambiguity, disorder, surreality, and harmonious dissonance (or dissonant harmony, if one prefers) of these poems all present ample opportunities for the reader's laughter, imagination, contemplation, and enjoyment. I like to think there are truths to be found there as well, or at least implications thereof. What truths can be unearthed, and how should one interpret them? While this interview can give something of a window into how I perceive my own work, I would never presume to tell a reader how to think about my work. I gladly leave it to the reader to answer those questions in whatever way they see fit, or to discard those questions entirely and explore other questions instead, if others are more relevant. I'm grateful to any reader who chooses to engage with my work, and however the reader chooses to approach that, I hope they'll find that process of engagement to represent time well spent.