

Old News is a real city. Many persons on the pavements. A picture teacher. A brief history of Spirit-matter. A brief history of a lost dog. Total Assets: a flash card with the word *friend* on it. Professional History: picking through the garbage with Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Often it is permitted to return to a factory. A car goes by and it doesn't explode. What's it say to all these dead people? White House for rent, 2 bdrms 1 bath.

—Eric Baus

What immediately strikes me about *Old News* is the commingling of journalistic brevity with everyday vernacular. This combination naturally pulls irony to the surface, which is refreshing in an era when popular culture's version of irony bombards us. Oftentimes, pop culture leads us to believe that irony isn't natural and must be produced for us in the form of a sitcom. In turn, this manufactured irony makes it harder to discern true irony when we encounter it. *Old News* is journalism - objective and informative - but it is journalism written by someone who knows, whether it is 1923 or 2011, what's at the core of everyday life.

—Stan Mir

odd years

a priest blessed our house and said he can tell
if you have god or not, he can see it in your
eyes, some final word grown deep into soil
that translates the stampede of rain into a distant blah

blah. roofer tells me the siding was a real hack
job. another says whoever did the siding should be
shot. how long will i live here. my neighbor
clara calls me an angel and flaps her wings. born

again, bobby says, her husband used to be mob.
he sits on their bed now watching her blow dry plastic
against the window, a hundred some odd years
blackened in the street below. wet tires roll over

them. where are we going. i like to imagine
myself in new york or san francisco in the fifties, clothes
lines crossed between apartment buildings, writing
into my wooden desk at the window, stepping out

onto the fire escape for a smoke and waving to my
neighbor, who doesn't mind leaves falling on his roof.
real city life in a real city, beautiful promise against
motion. yesterday real city workers cut down the large

sycamore that stood guard of our block, old tree that
we loved, my wife & i at least. why are you doing this,
i asked one of them. they found somethin under there,
he said, blah blah, he said, blah blah blah, i said.

The Evening Bulletin, Monday, May 7, 1923:

'HANDS UP, BANDIT', SAYS HE,
'EH! UP YOURSELF', CRIES COP

Bluecoat Insulted

a postal clerk mistook a policeman for a thug
in germantown early today.

"i was on my way home," said Knox, "when
i saw a dark figure under the trees."

he drew a revolver and leveled it at
the officer, Leary, who seized Knox's wrist

and wrenched away the gun. Knox apologized
and explained: "i have been shy of bandits

ever since i was shot in a holdup of a mail
wagon at 43^d and Woodland a year ago."

odd jobs

i've got many hearts
one's a stick
i snap it over my knee

can't help it
can't help it

smoke
stacks
a big school
publics you out
ironfist pounds a cloud's
all you got so what
so what

jobs jobs jobs

Ryan Eckes was born in Northeast Philadelphia in 1979. He wrote *Old News* from the spring of 2008 to the spring of 2009 in South Philadelphia, where he continues to reside. More of his poetry can be found in the book *when i come here* (Plan B Press, 2007), on his blog, ryaneckes.blogspot.com, and in various journals. Along with Stan Mir, he organizes the Chapter & Verse Reading Series. He works as an adjunct English professor at Temple University and other colleges.