

2022 Broadside Series



BUTTONHOOK PRESS
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Jason M. Thornberry

Fool's Gold



Poetry: All forms & styles

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Fool's Gold

Used to be is never going to happen again, he said. To anyone. To everyone who passed. He stood on the corner in his torn trousers and stained jacket, beyond the awning of the café. His beard was long. He looked like he hadn't slept. And the passing people avoided eye contact. Because, he said, we live in an age different from what your folkses folks left behind. They saw the Great Depression. But us? We see inverted collapse. Implosion. And he said it was because we didn't have a great war to fight or trial to overcome. Because the word adversity was full of mystery to most, he said we'd slowly drown within ourselves. To him, it was like sitting in the ocean, listening to the air softly squeak from a tiny hole in the side of a raft. You know you can't swim, he said. So, you raise your voice. You talk and talk and talk to drown out the sound of the whistling air. But when you're finished talking, you're still you. Notable having lived and consumed. That's all. And then when the whistling is gone, you're struggling to swim. To stay afloat. To be something. To make a dent in this world. And after all that talk about your accomplishments, you're no closer to being like your grandparents. Contributing more to the world than what you throw away every day. And the collapse? It's still waiting for you, right here, as you kick your legs in the water. Strolling past him, eyes glued to their phones, people found ways not to see the man. I saw him from where I sat. And I wrote down every word. We'll be smashed down, he said, by our privilege. Into nothing. And all the glitter we've spent our lives adorning ourselves with will make the mediocrity we've nurtured shine. Like fool's gold.



The Poor Fool by Amadeo de Souza-Cardoza

About the writer:

Jason M. Thornberry's work appears in THE LOS ANGELES REVIEW OF BOOKS, JMWW, NORTH DAKOTA QUARTERLY, and elsewhere. Jason overcame a traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic epilepsy. Relearning to walk and speak, he earned an MFA in Creative Writing from Chapman University. He lives in Seattle with his wife.

Image: *THE POOR FOOL* by [Amadeo de Souza-Cardoza \(1897-1918\)](#). No medium specified. No size specified. By 1918. [By free license via Pedro Ribeiro Simões from Lisboa, Portugal.](#)

THE BUTTONHOOK PRESS BROADSIDE SERIES

2020

Later Forms/Scars on the Land: A Collaboration

A poem and photograph by Laurinda Lind & Thelma Pott

The Last of the Gallants

A poem by Atar Hadari

Ox-eye Daisies

A poem by Evgenia Jen Baranova

2021

Cycling Around Lake Davis

A poem by Laura Ohlman

X-Ray/Chiaroscuro: A Collaboration

A poem and photograph by Marjorie Maddox & Karen Elias

Buffalo (Exclusive subscriber content)

A poem by Ruhi Jiwani

Winter's Orphan

A poem by Dana Sonnenschein

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