

Evan Eisenberg

## THE TRUMPIAD

Muse, you're fired. It's sad. Sad!  
I mean, you're a nice piece of ass—  
But I can do this myself. You've heard  
How smart I am? How I have the best words?  
How I was first in my class?

A man and his money I sing, O Muse—  
*Muse, you heard me! Get out!*  
*That desk had better be clear by three—*  
As I was saying, my theme will be  
A man, his money, his mouth.

This is the ballad of Donald J. Trump,  
A tale of greed and gall;  
A tragedy birthed before our eyes—  
A man, his money, his mouth, his rise  
And if there's a God, his fall.

A man, his money, his mouth, his rise,  
His fall—or, otherwise, ours:  
If you doubt his swagger, bluster and blunders  
Can lead to disaster, you're rashly misunder-  
Estimating his powers.

His tongue is fleet as Achilles' feet,  
If slightly more prone to stumble;  
His wiles would make Ulysses blush,  
And like Aeneas (that's Latin for "tush")  
He's always ready to rumble.

Having established his *bona fides*  
As hero, let's give his Begats,  
Beginning in Kallstadt, where, by God,  
The Trumps, once Drumpfs, grumpily trod  
The blood of grapes in vats.

Grandpa Trump resembled his  
Descendant, fore and aft;  
But as his feet were bone-spur-free  
He had to sail across the sea  
To dodge his nation's draft.

An immigrant! An enterprising,  
Civic-minded fellow—  
Thanks to whom the gold-drunk Yukon  
Had a gilded floor to puke on  
In a posh bordello.

Did Dudley do right when the Mounties  
Shut that cat-house down?  
Right or wrong, Trump cashed his chips,  
Checked the list of east-bound ships,  
And skipped for his hometown.

He wed, and launched the burgher's life  
His frosty hoard afforded;  
But Ach!—the draft board checks again,  
And like a wetback Mexican  
Poor Friedrich is deported.

Chastened by King, he hastened to Queens—  
Scene of son Fred's future capers.  
Blood-and-iron-willed, hungry, lean,  
Fred launched his empire at sixteen  
With Mother signing the papers.

Like Friedrich, Fred was gifted with  
An instinct for what works:  
Parking garages for new-fangled wheels;  
New-fangled self-service grocery deals  
That let him cashier the clerks.

Fred's latest, greatest strategem  
Was simple: he'd invite  
Manhattan's huddled, muddled masses  
To a paradise where grass is  
Green, and skin is white.

Where once were forests of oak and pine,  
Where once were fields and furrows,  
Trump's rickety "Dumps on Stumps"  
Spread like chicken pox or mumps  
Across the outer boroughs.

When G.I. Joes came marching home  
He built them seaside flats:  
Noble work, nobly rewarded  
With the subsidies all hoarded  
In his Homburg hat.

Such profiteering struck even  
Even-tempered Ike as rank;  
Called before a Senate hearing,  
Fred purred: It isn't profiteering  
If the profit just sits in the bank!

*Enough Begats, now.* Faith and begad,  
We'll strain the straps of mirth  
If, lacking Tristram's comic clout,  
We wear our reader's patience out  
Before our hero's birth.

His birth—*but wait!* If climate change  
Is merely a hoax hatched in China,  
How do we know the Donald's not  
An Erdoganic despot-bot  
Devised in Asia Minor

And engineered by Vladimir's  
Rechristened KGB—  
Which China will shortly mass produce—  
A handy source of mass abuse  
For all humanity?

We don't. But let's be gracious and  
Concede he was conceived  
By Fred on his Mary, née MacLeod,  
A Scottish housemaid, broke but unbowed,  
At Ellis Isle received.

(An immigrant! Another one!  
To this surmise I'm leaping:  
Should Trump meet such a one tonight  
And should her skin be not-quite-white,  
He'd call her Miss Housekeeping.)

What crêche can conjure up the kings  
Who 'round the cradle stand?  
Did Dolf and Benny bow to her?  
And did the frankincense and myrrh  
Already bear His brand?

From youth, our Cheeto Jesus was  
Entirely without sin:  
How else withstand a toddler's moans  
While bravely showering with stones  
The crib that it was in?

(Where's that toddler, now? Does he,  
Still trumpatized, thumb-suck?  
Is the memory sharp or fuzzy?  
Does he watch the news, and does he,  
Seeing Donald, duck?)

More deeds served to demonstrate  
That Donald was no wuss:  
Attempting to defenestrate  
A chum; socking a second-grade  
School teacher in the puss.

(That last, Don's boast—the victim never  
Validated it;  
But murmured to his kindred, when  
Upon his deathbed, "Even then  
He was a little shit.")

Faced with a strapping lad intent  
On scrapping every rule,  
Father Fred, severe but fair,  
Remanded Donald to the care  
Of a military school.

(That window flap in fact belongs  
At this point in the plot;  
But time, we know, is an illusion;  
Rhyme, though in the worst confusion  
Hudibrastic, not.)

*Bully to Leader*—context shapes  
The words, and hence the man.  
A hero in the making? Hell  
No! His Captain's bars look too swell  
To soil them in Khe San.

Three school deferments from the draft,  
And one more for good measure,  
Because a well-paid doctor, Sir,  
Has kindly found a fine bone spur.  
Which foot? Well, what's your pleasure?

Survivor guilt's a bitch; but Don,  
That Fury to appease,  
Endured a "personal Vietnam"  
By braving (*wham, bam, at ease Ma'am*)  
Venereal disease.

Thirsty, he imbibed the business  
At his father's feet:  
A ton of brass, a dash of knuckle,  
Plus a long, hard, steady suckle  
At the public teat.

Soon he found a second father  
To perfect his parts—  
His guru (not the least Siddharthy)  
None but Senator McCarthy's  
Master of Dark Arts.

Roy Cohn! The consigliere,  
Cold collusions ever hatching,  
Teaches Donald how to cozy  
Up to handy mafiosi  
When a back needs scratching.

Roy Cohn! The cognoscento  
Of the con, the squeeze, the steal,  
The secret blade, the tidied gore,  
The set-up, shakedown, flimflam, or  
As Don would say—the Deal.

When Fred handed Donald the company's reins,  
Roy was enlisted, not for  
Legal matters dry and humdrum,  
But for an unreal-estate conundrum  
That would have baffled Bohr.

Is light a particle or wave?  
Depends on how it's detected.  
Does Trump have vacancies right now?  
Depends, in a quantumy way, on how  
The questioner's complected.

More plainly: people of color found  
Reception rather rude.  
Twenty years earlier, wroth at this wrong,  
Woody Guthrie wrote a song;  
Now steely Justice sued.

Countersue! cried Donald. Roy  
Rogered: Defamation!  
Dismissed! snapped the judge, which must have nettled:  
Trump, who *never settles*, settled  
For corporate probation.

Before Trump Tower could rise, Bonwit  
Teller had to fall;  
For this, undocumented Poles—  
Hard-hatless, maskless, homeless, cold—  
Were at Trump's beck and call.

The "Polish Brigade," when paid at all,  
Was paid the merest pittance;  
Safety inspectors and union crews  
At a nod from Roy Cohn, knew  
Not to seek admittance.

Two Deco nymphs were smashed to bits  
Despite their fervent suitors;  
Yet we must count their fate deserved,  
For surely they'd have been preserved  
Had they had bigger hooters.

While LeFraks and Resnicks all deplored  
The local mob's monopoly  
Of concrete, and used steel instead,  
Don with Fat Tony hopped in bed  
And did so very hoppily.

The Roman who first mixed concrete  
Now in Elysium gloats:  
Behold its metamorphic powers!  
For pals like Donald, topless towers;  
For others, overcoats.

Only in America  
Could such a tale unfold:  
By the bootstraps that he hitches to,  
Donald lifts himself from riches to  
Riches, gold to gold.

In fact, had he invested Fred's  
Multimillions in a  
Nice NYSE index fund, his wad  
Would be (though fans might find this odd)  
Thicker now, not thinner.

Trump's gift for turning gold to \_\_\_  
(Insert terms that disgust us):  
For this our best lexicographers lack words,  
But *Sadim Touch* (that's *Midas* backwards)  
Might just do it justice.

Here's a striking instance of  
An ill-advised *Trumpkrieg*:  
The time he sued the N.F.L.,  
Hail-Marla-passing straight to hell  
A promising young league.

The owners trusted Trump to win  
His antitrust lawsuit;  
But hey, we know the system sucks—  
The court awarded them three bucks.  
The U.S.F.L.? Kaput.

(Suppose it were the U.S., not  
U.S.F.L. he led?  
Gambling's fun when on vacation;  
Gambling when the stake's a nation—  
Not so much. 'Nuff said.)

The Trump Shuttle; the grand hotel  
Eloise absolutely adored—  
Though the Donald's flops are legion  
The floppiest flopped in the region  
Of the Jersey shore.

The Casino Control Commission, keen  
Its Garden State to keep  
Free of thugs like Bugsy Siegel  
Set up eighteen months of legal  
Hoops through which to leap.

Make it six months, Trump insisted.  
Hoops? He walked around them.  
Stains on ties from wise-guy vinos?  
Those who licensed his casinos  
Somehow never found them.

Hilton? Denied. Attorney tied,  
It seems, to shady party.  
Commishs conveniently forget  
One Cohn, Esquire, whose phone is set  
On speed-dial to John Gotti.

At Trump's casinos, chopper flights  
Were furnished by a thug:  
Joey Weichselbaum, whose varlets  
Used a network of used car lots  
As fronts for dealing drugs.

Quite a dicey choice on Don's part!  
Might we then surmise  
That Weichselbaum, besides the choppers,  
Gave elite casino-hoppers  
Other kinds of highs?

When Joe went down, Don's cronies found  
A way to hide the stench:  
Sentence in Jersey, where the Very  
Honorable M. Trump Berry  
Occupied the bench.

Though Sis recused herself, it's clear  
Her colleagues got the brief:  
"Treat our chopper guy with kid  
Gloves." So, demonstrably, they did;  
For while each petty thief

Caught up in Joey's escapade  
Got ten years, if an hour,  
The mastermind got only three  
And after eighteen months was free  
And living in Trump Tower.

Trump's letter asking leniency  
Might have helped (you think?) —  
And might have cost his gaming license  
Had not Enforcement, with its rye sense  
Humorous, merely winked.

Trump Plaza, Castle, Taj Mahal—  
As cash engorged his kitty,  
The boardwalk groaned beneath the weight  
Of monsters that, in due course, ate  
Each other, then the city.

Contractors, vendors, lenders, staff  
Were stiffed—lost shirts—lost skin—  
But Trump emerged (*triumphant pose*)  
Smelling, if not like a Rose,  
Then like a Benjamin.

Though certain indexed pages (*Trump,*  
*Donald, 97*)  
Are all he generally deigns to look  
At in any given book,  
He loves Chapter Eleven.

Bankruptcy! Lifeboat that lets  
    Captain Trump float free  
While backers, passengers and crew of  
Each of his titanic screw-ups  
    Sink beneath the sea.

Cash-strapped, he now takes public his  
    Casino company.  
Who needs fiscal sonograms  
When the ticker's monogrammed  
    Like golf towels, *DJT*?

Trump chips off fifty million bucks  
    In salary and bonuses;  
The bough will break, the stock will fall,  
Investors lose their little all:  
    On them, alas, the onus is.

(A sucker, so Barnum says, is born  
    Every minute, and this makes sense;  
A life cycle so lively—it turns on a dime—  
Allows one very little time  
    To learn from experience.)

Now a fresh hope bobs like flotsam  
    On the subsiding sea  
Of his slots-and-roulette-wheel typhoon:  
If he can't be a real tycoon,  
    He'll play one on TV!

Reality TV, no less  
    (That moron's oxymoron),  
Where mini-Dons brave Donald's ire  
Just for a shot at being hired  
    As Saruman to his Sauron.

As his hot mic attested, to  
    Hot chicks he makes a beeline;  
The Donald needs no roll-call vote  
To let his tongue patrol their throats  
    Or grab them by the *feline*.

(My preference is to euphemize,  
    But if you think it wussy  
To beat around the Billy Bush  
And primly cite *derrière* or *tush*—  
    Go for it! I'm not fussy.)

Miss Universe, USA, Teen USA—  
All furnish more occasions  
For fingering the ripening fruit  
(He's the boss, so best be mute!)  
And dressing-room invasions.

Trump's business model now is just  
Ghost-writing gone berserk:  
Flush with the spectral coins of fame  
He's richly paid to put his name  
On other people's work.

Wine and water, steaks and neckties,  
Condos and cologne;  
And capping the buffoonery  
A real-estate tycoonery—  
A Wharton of his own!

Trump U., in truth, is not a U-  
Niversity at all;  
And though he claimed the faculty  
Were, to a man, "handpicked by me"  
His hands, you know, are small.

Were you among the thousands fleeced  
(Snowed, swindled, chiseled, conned)  
By "experts" hired off the street  
To pressure-sell the Gold Elite  
Package for thirty grand?

Take my advice, and you may find  
Trump's lessons more endearing:  
Ignore the content, watch the form!  
Thus clever sheep, while being shorn  
May learn the art of shearing.

Each Trump resort must proudly sport  
Its Star Diamond Award.  
The judges? Trump's family, Trump's staff,  
Trump and Trump's butler, too (don't laugh),  
Who constitute the board.

The president's Joey No Socks,  
A.k.a. the Preppy Don:  
Convicted felon, pusher, fence,  
As acquiescent as Mike Pence  
In Donald's every con.

The Trump Foundation—there's another  
Scam, and it's a honey:  
With gold-embossed pomposity  
He play-acts generosity  
With other people's money.

Now Donald finds a novel use  
For his foundation's cash:  
Dispensing it like Benadryl  
To state Attorneys General  
Who might do something rash.

Tim Tebow's helmet, too, he scores  
With philanthropic pelf,  
Plus a king-size portrait of his love—  
His life, his joy, his turtle dove—  
His deity: Himself.

(Its whereabouts are now unknown.  
Did it displease Der Führer?  
Did it reveal that—shades of Gray!—  
As he grew richer, day by day,  
His soul grew ever poorer?)

Pro among con-men, his resumé  
Still lacked one final rip-off:  
Make the people he'd been screwing  
Stamp and cheer for their undoing.  
Peeps, observe the tip-off:

Trump descending Trump Tower's mirrored  
Escalator, miming  
The prolapse of democracy  
To marble-wombed plutocracy  
With perfect comic timing.

*Global capital unbound—  
'Twixt rich and poor, a chasm—  
Party of the late white male  
Thrashing like a great white whale  
In its final spasm—*

*Plotting to suppress the vote  
Of blacks and browns and youth,  
Brashly gerrymandering  
And very rashly pandering  
To paranoid untruth—*

*Other party, partly bothered  
By its own collusion  
In despoiling of the earth, yet  
Partly feels the spoils are worth it—  
Hence, its lame confusion—*

*Whirling like a centrifuge  
The nation segregates—  
Inside red and outside blue—  
This side's false is that side's true—  
Vanished, the debates*

*Where facts were facts and logic was  
Just normally impaired—  
Now on social media  
Whichever lie is seedier  
Is seeded, tweeted, shared—*

Trump invented none of this.  
What *did* he do? Abet  
All that's most foul, unfair, and fake,  
And from the pot of plunder take  
Whatever he could get.

Stumpy hands still greasy, now  
To clean things up he'll pledge;  
From the stump and from his Twitter  
Spews a manic stream of bitter  
Bile that sets on edge

Mexicans, veterans, Muslims and Blacks,  
Asians and Jews and Aleutians,  
Vulvo-Americans of every hue,  
Handicapped folks and, presumably, you  
If you've read the Constitution.

Yet white blue-collars, nest eggs paltry,  
Feathers plucked by fate,  
Schooled by Fox News and hard knocks,  
Rapturously back the Fox  
To make the henhouse great.

Such, at least, appears to be  
The liberal CW—  
Trump, like Sanders, taps the rage  
Of castoffs from globalization's stage.  
True, but this fact may trouble you:

Trumpsters earn more than the national mean.

Take the EPA-noncompliant  
Mortarboardless contractor whose price  
Contracts as in an iron vise  
His liberal-arts-grad client—

His beef with our Bollyhued McWorld  
Is hardly economic;  
But the promise to restore again  
The dominance of straight white men  
Braces him like a tonic.

Foxy Trump on his barnyard stump  
Warms his inmost cockles  
When he tasks that alien resident,  
The Kenyan, Muslim “President,”  
With the Texas Twit’s debacles.

Or blames an overbearing dame  
For—well, take your pick:  
When daily for a quarter century  
Your target’s tarred, eventually  
Most anything will stick.

Grand Old Partyers gape as each  
Caparisoned champion’s mown  
Down. A clown with painted mane  
Gleefully reaps the hurricane  
They themselves have sown.

Toppled are trees in whose lees  
Politicos crouched and cowered;  
Uprooted rocks, the muck vacating,  
Bare the pallid, pullulating  
Maggots of white power.

(Hill’s LOVE TRUMPS HATE signs—what a shame  
To truck them to the dump—  
Let’s thwart that ecotastrophe  
By adding an apostrophe  
And selling them to Trump!)

Evangelicals, you divine,  
Must shun as a pariah  
This lying, grasping, adulterous fraud?  
Behold! The preachers and ministers laud  
Trump as their new Messiah.

Pray, what do these good Christian folk  
And Donald have in common?  
(*Scratches head.*) No clue. Unless—  
Perhaps—their gospel is Success,  
Their god almighty Mammon.

Of course, there's the sort who cry "The court!"—  
Who wield love like a knife—  
Reverencing every human  
Till he rashly leaves the womb and  
Starts a human life.

Trump's running mate, a cunningly carved  
Etiolated tuber,  
The Evangelicals will wow:  
He's holier than I, than Thou,  
Than Martin Freaking Buber.

Ivanka's knack for marketing  
This veep pick will confirm,  
Affording swing-state ditherers  
A smorgasbord of slitherers—  
The serpent and the worm.

In Pence's mouth won't melt one pat  
Of butter from your pantry;  
Though they may seem like night and day,  
Mike and Donald are just two ways  
Of casting Elmer Gantry.

The platform of the GOP—  
A great, big, bloody bone  
Thrown to those who salivate  
To found a Christian caliphate  
In our once-temperate zone.

Our thrice-wed metrosexual?  
Such details merely bore him.  
Let the wonks wank with planks and stuff  
Just so that platform's tall enough  
For all eyes to adore him!

But hold—his people did find *some*  
Provisions worth disputing:  
Precisely those that might offend  
His Great-Dictator-Mentor and  
Man-Crush, Volodya Putin.

The DNC hack's one big scoop?  
Believe me, this is HUGE—  
The flag-draped, gold-domed candidate  
Who bragged he'd MAKE AMERICA GREAT  
Is just a Russian stooge.

Tangled up with oligarchs,  
He'll wangle them a thaw,  
And, as in Putin's gangster state,  
By all means needful obviate  
The pesky rule of law.

But who will hack Trump's tax returns?  
Not apparatchiks, surely;  
Release them, just like everyone?  
*Of course, soon as the audit's done!*  
Donald responds demurely.

And truth to tell, this morbid interest in  
Every blessed penny  
Paid by Trump at each quarter's finish  
Seems a tad angels-dancing-on-pinnish  
When he pays hardly any.

Is Trump worth what he says he is?  
It's hard to know the facts  
When assets are valued (this is ripe)  
Fifty times more when being hyped  
Than when they're being taxed.

His net worth has no fixed abode:  
No floor, no walls, no ceiling;  
And (what seems rather sad to me)  
Like parts of his anatomy  
It varies with his feelings.

Is Trump a multithousandaire  
Or is it multibillions?  
Such doubts would not predominate  
If we could just denominate  
His net worth in *Trumpillions*.

He struts and frets the national stage  
While all the world observes:  
There he blows, in spate again!  
He'll make America grate again  
On all the world's nerves.

The mogul who, as cameras roll,  
All-powerful, growls “You’re fired”—  
To banish our despondency  
Will wave his tiny wand and see  
Twenty-five million hired.

“Fingers short, nose long”—so taunt  
His truth-obsessed accusers;  
Truly, Donald’s far too smart  
To blurt the words that gird his heart:  
“Truth? Truth is for losers.”

The sunset tints of cheek and jowl  
That in his fans inspire  
Daydreams of riches, glitz, romance,  
Are but the mirrored glow of pants  
Perpetually on fire.

“He speaks his mind.” Let me remind  
Those flummoxed by that phantom—  
His mind’s a jumble of paste pearls  
Whose correspondence to the world  
Is somewhat less than random.

Effete epistemologists  
Can bitch and moan and sob.  
*Total losers. Lightweight. Fools.*  
The wise man knows that words are tools  
You use to do a job.

In fact, it isn’t jewels, it’s tools  
That pack his cabinet mental:  
File, pick, chisel, slim jim, axe—  
Any relationship to facts  
Is purely accidental.

But as Trump’s tools tend to be blunt  
Or jagged, or uncouth,  
“He speaks his mind!” cry those who take  
Civility for something fake  
And boorishness for truth.

The press was his oyster, but now they’re all crabs—  
Those fact-checkers—*too* picky, *too* nitty!  
They’re missing the lesson he’s trying to teach:  
What’s the point of “freedom of speech”  
If a guy can’t lie with impunity?

The press that inflated him now he berates  
For detumescent polls.  
Want a metaphor for that?  
The man who, when it has a flat,  
Molotovs his Rolls.

*The vote is rigged!* Trump bellows—prim  
Republicans tut-tutting  
Know well the fuming lies he fans  
Were lit to justify their plans  
For Voting-Rights-Act-gutting.

*It's rigged, it's rigged, it's rigged,* he chants.  
The hypnotizing rhythm  
Charms and arms a thronging snake—  
If Donald has to lose, he'll take  
Democracy down with him.

Steaming, scattershot manure  
Prepares a bed most fecund  
For mayhem and bloodshed to grow—  
The only law the lawless know  
Being Amendment Second.

And that's one of the *good* outcomes.  
Appreciably less fun:  
The one where Donald and his cult  
Accept, as promised, the result  
Because... because... *he's won.*

To take the edge off edginess  
I'll venture to repeat  
Some armchair psychoanalysis  
(Excluding size of phalluses)  
While on the edge of my seat:

From paradise to barracks—did  
Young Donald's cold rejection  
By Fred the Father plant the seed  
Of raging, caged-in, stage-struck need  
And violent insurrection?

The child within the man is fathered  
By another child,  
And so (I see Tom Eliot grinning)  
A spore cast at the world's beginning  
May contain... *its end.*

But here's a cheerful thought—in fact,  
I think it's rather grand—  
As the Body Pol he's screwing,  
Trump's Great Dictator turn is doing  
Wonders for his brand.

(Why not license other names  
In ways likewise relentless?  
Stalin Steaks! Benito's Floss!  
Hitler Health Resorts! The pos-  
Sibilities are endless.)

*If there's a God, his fall*, I said;  
But should old Zeus or Gaea  
Have lost their fulminating clout  
It falls to us to bring about  
This fine peripeteia:

Of horse an ass, of jokes a butt,  
Of loserness a lump:  
The king of debt, and hype, and sex—  
The man who would be our T. Rex—  
Becomes, at last, T. Rump.

Note: While I have freely exercised both poetic and comic license, *The Trumpiad* is based on facts set out in two recent books—*The Making of Donald Trump*, by Pulitzer-winning reporter David Cay Johnston, and *Trump Revealed*, by the Washington Post team of Michael Kranish and Marc Fisher—as well as on things we've all seen and heard from Trump over the course of the 2016 campaign.