

## CLUBBING

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*Jim Ferris*

My foot is a club  
the sight of it batters  
the ten fingers ten toes  
as long as it's healthy  
anything goes, praise for the normal  
thank God we're normal  
exceptionally normal club  
that seems to start in the head —  
keep the head of the club level, keep  
your head down, the competition is all  
in your head, remember that cute baby harp seal —  
or does it start at the foot of the bed,  
or is it a berth, in the club car,  
my foot was clubbed at birth  
but my training has progressed,  
the lub-dub heart club requests  
the pleasure of your bequests,  
preserve your pious normate face,  
your demure coquette heart tart  
from which all else deviates,  
make mine a club sandwich,  
the universe is a club-  
like thing, infinite memberships —  
do you really want in a club  
that accepts members like  
you? Opt out now from this unkempt  
circle with unlimited centers  
(quit thinking in so few dimensions,  
in this universe all have extension),  
every man a king, the king of clubs,  
the club will foot the bill,  
every night there's a line to get in,  
my club is a foot long exactly,  
release your inner amputee,  
send all your clannish limbs to me,  
as long as they are healthy, they

can keep your phantom pain some company,  
send me ten fingers, ten toes,  
give or take a foot — our secret handshake,  
normally, nobody knows.



# WHY I'LL NEVER MEET TONY HOAGLAND

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*Jim Ferris*

1. That picture makes him look eight feet tall. He'll never even see me.
2. I'm not cool enough.
3. Or too cool. No — see number 2.  
my bones are so warped (do not try to straighten me, Doctor Tony, Doctor Apollo), and the naked men describe my proud and angry flesh (I'll never be Pope), my gentle curves, as if (a samba is out of place here) their silly show of superiority (judgmental — do not count Tony among them — he wasn't even there in spirit) made up for a secret shame their nakedness can neither hide nor display (exfoliate, then expiate) oh, muscles are so good, why don't you work out more, cover my face and put this one there — to sculpt is to be a god — for symmetry must be a prize that trumps even a hairless ass

Doctor Tony, dissect my flesh  
with your x-ray vision, I dare  
you, use your surgical wit, I am  
but half-assed on the left, apply  
to these hapless, happy bones your yardstick  
that masquerades as something else —  
a lighter, a handkerchief,  
a fine blond purse. I take nothing back —  
for these two fine trochaic feet,  
for Bilochun, the fine green tea from Suzhou  
that tastes of where the earth becomes the tree,

for the fine way he kept Vince Lombardi,  
the president (pick one), and Elvis (pick one)  
from the poem — my first wife, the blonde, said  
I hated pain because I'd had so much  
in my life — I said fine, it makes  
for smaller neighborhoods — but smell  
of passion fruit unhinges me  
in the produce section, purple ball  
of wrinkles at my nose parts, inhale  
until the stock boy bustles round  
like Tony Hoagland in a zebra shirt,  
whistle at his mouth parts, to protect  
the fruit from some fruit, this set of pitched  
vibrations that seems to be my voice —  
    you really sound like that —  
and smell and photokinetic sense  
of humor or its simulacrum —  
she's been dead for years, and so have I, but  
the jumble of passion fruit, just-ripe pears,  
the strawberries blooming in the snow,  
all the ways there are to make a fool of myself,  
just ask Tony Hoagland, just carve a pumpkin,  
the naked men will dress and leave in time,  
my ball and socket ache, familiar, in  
the fresh metallic breeze, silly man,  
I am so grateful I can hardly stand.

# KNOTTY

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*Jim Ferris*

try to be graceful in a body  
that defies grace, pull the nodding  
noggin, touch the face of that bobble  
head doll of Jesus the spacious, hobbled  
legs belong in this place, to be snobby  
is to be clueless, base, even dotty, knotty, plodding,  
no finish line to this race, to use the body  
is its own grace — when we're naughty,  
when we chase our tails, when we get snotty,  
way off-base, when we say we know the odds, we  
bet to place or show, I can't be caught, please,  
the taste is bitter but I'm not really  
full yet, in my haste I've forgotten  
or I've wasted so much, not rotten  
so much as out of pace, which is odd be-  
cause the taste is not in the buds nearly  
as much as in place and time, gaudy  
in its tasteless disregard either  
for the dictates of the lordly  
or the chastened no longer haughty  
saving face — life is sloppy,  
that is its grace, come, meet your body