

Burn or turn or

I'm secretly disgusting, I hear. I feel funny. Music plays in rooms and runs me off. I try to count myself. Just before I reach the sum, Tony Hoagland comes in, reads over my shoulder, and asks me what the Volvo in the driveway means. Write your own damn poem, I say. I blow smoke into a hollowed-out tooth. The Volvo explodes. Tony takes out a little notebook and jots down a couple choice words. Dean is going to love this, he says.

Stench it, period

Tony shows me the money. Nice, I say. How much is it? Who knows, I say. We went to all those rides with just one ticket. It was a marvel. We saved and saved. We wept. I'm spent, I say. Now do you believe me? The sun shines through the clouds, meaningless. We look away. Your attitude is going to cost us, Tony tells me, then turns around and hops onto a Ferris wheel in one smooth movement. I watch him go up, up, and reach for a door. I never want to wake up, I think, and turn the key.

One last poem about Tony Hoagland

Tony glances past me and I realize there is something going on behind my back. I usually rely on Tony to sort all that out, but today he's been acting strange, and I don't trust him. I do my own research. When I turn back Tony's gone, and there is a tall pilgrim in his place. He asks to borrow a little money, and I figure what the heck, his people really settled things back in the day. I give him a few dollars. Okay, I sign over the deed to my house. But who's counting? Certainly not the Indians.