

NEBRASKA FANTASTIC

by Scott Abels

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Lame House Press also published “The only way to survive in this competitive environment is to be a specialist.” as a postcard poem.

Some of the language of *Nebraska Family Tree* was inspired by Judene Abels’s excellent work on our family tree.

Nebraska Fantastic

I make a Nebraska mule
from a bucket of meth-size hail.
Think about the data and the line
and the big wigs that indicate
the Midwest and the West.
Out of sorrow,
entire wolves have been built.
This story is very scary
for the mountains and history.
I beef out my body.
I make a little heart
out of salt and an onion
peel and
pee on it.

Somebody pay me to watch this plane crash.

I go to Bomgaars shopping for pellets.
I am ready for anything
in the Professor job interview.
I imagine Nebraska.
Underpants, underpass.
I am the striding man
on Johnnie Walker.
The sky is skill
and the final interview is a fistfight.
Tremendous explosions of
what we know now.
Somebody pay me
to watch this
barn crash.

The only way to survive in this competitive environment is to be a specialist.

I write that you have 30 minutes on the board,
and after 10 minutes

I write that you have 20 minutes.

They think I am punishing them.

Satanists, please do not write a list.

I come to teach college.

They say that Grimace from McDonald's
is a shake, and I don't know that.

Remember the Hamburglar
with his prison uniform

before he steals the hamburger.

This outlaw shit is getting out of hand.

A tiny seismicity machine in Nebraska.

Famous, come to this place.

This is the first time a faux hawk gets used.

I have my night class
draft homestead acts.
Jed does a flood control project, and
Clown of Vaseline has chapped lips
for years. There is pee flying into
a pail in the grain states.
I put some heartburn
into my soft water.
I say, students,
did you know this sock
used to be puppets?
Tomorrow, I will do a pun.
The daylight is coming
quickly on.

**I won't go to work today.
I won't go to work.**

During the commercial
for drinking coffee with Ronald Reagan
we brush our teeth in the river
with a hundred neighbors.
My trousers are just butterflies.
Your legs look long
like long eggs.
Fresh cut grass.
Something lucky follows,
and when you look
into his whipping cream eyes
they sell a lot of coffee.
You just cannot bomb mud.
There is work to do. Wake up now.

**This is a chili making competition,
not a chili eating competition.**

Students, gravy isn't
an ingredient.

It is 10-15 minutes
of big secret.

The chili making competition will be
up to twenty percent of your grade.

An average can of stewed tomatoes
will give the deterioration you need.

Three or four
ingredients per dish.

That's your strategy.
If you see a gray bird
with a red tail
call Julie.

**Course he can write and he can read,
but some problems with word order.**

Peter went out without talking.
As a teacher, I am going to call
my friend Million Meter Peter
to make him feel better.
At school they say to him,
you are Millimeter Peter.
You make terrible choices when
it comes to women. They say his picker
must be broken. This story helps explain
why Americans stare
at the river
looking for patterns.
M. M. Peter can make butter
out of hard water.

In a panic, the family scatters.

Fantasy Nebraska
is dying to leave.
A border of great ice comes apart.
In food, this is called
a deconstruction.
Take out all the things
that make it good,
and change them,
and bring these back together.
Bring back fun.
What kind of hot dog chef is there?
Good luck mean world.
I serve the students hot dogs,
and I feel good.

Doorbell somebody I will meet and remember.

Very much the first thing
a European man ever looked for in America
was your fountain for youth.
This was one of the oldest and worst
experiences of losing
the country of origins.
No one comes here to calm a crisis
in their faith. Exxon, Extend on.
I bet Texas looks like France.
Fake accents that are not a reference.
Students, you will find that fourth thing,
and that's what it's about.
I wonder if we can do that
with this good life.

Nebraska Family Tree

Key:

T	tobacco
F	food
Ca	caffeine
Al	alcohol/pool hall
Rx	prescription medicines
Non RX	street drugs
W	work
SRP	strong religious preference
EF	excessive firearms
GR	gambling/racetrack

1. Jed looks like clip art.
There is no father.
There is a lake
that surges with
antibiotics and 50 new homes
brings the population to roughly 60.
Works at the state patrol where
he tests envelopes.
Is poor
in groups. Neat and rodent
in appearance. A candle-
light kind of life.

Ca, RX, Al

2. Jen had a husky tongue.
She was a seamstress.
Photos of her were found
performing a pole dance.
She walked away and died.
What has been found
Pepsi commits to using.
The next generation
of kidney stones
will be in their cola.

Ca, Al, T

3. Teaching made her fall in love
with her own voice.
Before there was
an elephant
in mother's love story,
the sky was a schnauzer grey.
Beers would lead to
a much wanted pregnancy
for the young couple.
This would continue
for two hours.
Then she had us
build the churches.
Darnit, her
cutting the curse.
Pull the wet rope
to make the toilet flush.
Golly Lord Willikers,
You
go make a life.
SRP

4 & 5. Kendall and Wendy
hollered Crack!
The hills
had drugs.
Holding out had helped.
After all, a chain of phone
numbers led them
to some school of the ear
where a witch turns
into a pig
at night, and to keep her away
you need to pee
across both nostrils—
you need to
face this hung witch
and splash it
in the form of a cross, and
then she will know
this crack will have
no earthly use.
Rx, Non Rx, Ca, Al, T

6. Josh watched a water possum get
eaten by ants. Remembers locations
and dates by encounters with critters.
He hit a buzzard with an onion from
a million billion yards.
Vest, leather. A cougar
is searching for fiber.
This place is where
the eagle will eat a snake
to give messages to men.
Ca, GR, T, EF

7. Lance always had
an open sore.
Grew up with horse
farming and sugar
diabetes. Strict
and you better measure up.
From what others have said
or would have said,
a huge stupid ego
was drafted into service.
One of the most over
used words in horse
training and traveling is
Goddamn—this indicates it
was not an experiment
shaped like a cowboy.
It says it was meant to be
a trip to be
forgotten
in our lifetime.
W, EF, AI, T

8. Ruth felt the food spoiling
going down her throat.
We know now
the earth's bounty
is limited.
There was a great deal
of overdose
on any activity.
Let's remember
a majority of people in
the world use drugs.
Food, overweight.
Well known human abuse.
A religious preference first appears.
F, NonRX, SRP

9. Melanie had a turtle shell
artificially
implanted in her knee.
She was a Patriot Award.
She said that she
invented a version
of what would come to be
the television.
This was the first instance
of leaving the county.
T

10. Partner's house was
rubber and pork.
Nervous of
people's intentions
and the hooey over shooting
social rodents.
Very scared
by the world
and what they
might think of him.

11-18. Very little is known about the family, as everything is to be left alone and not talked about.

Some of these quite possibly are buried at the home place with no markers or stones.

19. Iris was a ton of fiber.
She was extremely
penny-pinching.
Stolen coffins
fueled the pizza ovens.
We can depend
upon the land.
But we cannot depend on jobs.

F

20. We count the ways
a group can end.
Guy searched for a sack
of money all his life.
Loved nature,
meat, and dinner.
A steady private income
from his mule train.
Can I use this
as an example?
A couple of
puppets living softly.
Pain, or even elation,
it exists
in layers,
and the meat, the most
brutal at the top
obscures the pain beneath.
So this is your invitation
to the autopsy competition.

W

21. We are all sons of Beth.
I have found
what you ask.
Almost everything
is still there.
Dysfunctional, chemical
dependent family secrets.
Their shine and scent,
it was a trick
to make it dark.
She never had
a greed for gold.
This land is worth
how much we need!
Happy journey,
Everybody.
We had medical care,
and Coca-Cola
has reached us here.

(1) Jed a) 1980 b) — c) —	<i>siblings</i>	(2) Jen a) 1972 b) 2000 c) organ failure, ulcers	
(3) Mother a) 1947 b) 2005 c) stroke	<i>siblings</i>	(4) Kendall a) 1949, in Illinois b) 1998 c) car accident	<i>partners</i> (5) Wendy a) 1952 b) 1998 c) car accident
(6) Josh a) 1929 b) 1988 c) died on a Tuesday	<i>siblings</i>	(7) Lance a) 1921 b) 1983 c) cerebral hemorrhage, found by Gus on a Friday, at 4:00 p.m.	<i>married</i> (8) Ruth a) 1928 b) 1982 c) heart disease
(9) Melanie a) 1911 b) 1980 c) chronic infection, was in bed before she died	<i>siblings</i>	(10) Partner a) born in Nebraska, 1982 baptized July 10th, 1938 b) unknown c) cancer of the liver	
[11–18]			
(19) Iris a) 1849, born in Russia b) 1937 c) unknown		<i>married</i> (20) Guy a) 1984, born in Finland b) 1939 c) unknown	

Key II:

- a) date of birth
- b) date of death
- c) cause of death

Course: HSC 225

Families: Functional/Dysfunctional/Chemically Dependent

SCOTT ABELS currently lives and teaches in Honolulu, where he edits the online journal of poetry *Country Music*. His poems can be found (or are forthcoming) in *EOAGH*, *inter/rupture*, *Tinfish*, *LEVELER*, *Forklift*, *Ohio*, *Action*, *Yes*, *Word for/Word*, *Best New Poets 2011*, *H_NGM_N*, and others. *Rambo Goes to Idaho* (BlazeVOX, 2011) is his first book of poems.

