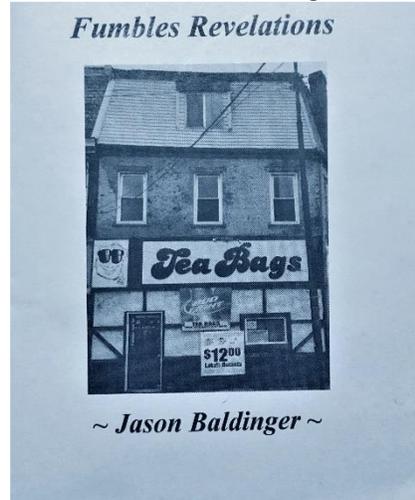


Fumbles Revelations by Jason Baldinger
Review by Roy Beckemeyer

I first met Jason Baldinger at a reading at The Raven Book Store in Lawrence, Kansas. We poets



had been brought together from places as disparate as Pittsburgh, PA (his home) and Pittsburg, KS, by KCMO poet-promoter Jameson Bayles. I was impressed by the percipient grit of Jason's work. University of Pittsburgh-Greensburg Professor Lori Jakiela described Jason's *The Lower Forty-Eight* (Six Gallery Press) as "the book you'd get if Jack Kerouac and Whitman loaded into a Pinto and hit the road with iced-down six-packs on the back seat and a bobble-head Neruda on the dash."

Jason's chaplet, *Fumbles Revelations* (2017), is the inaugural release from Don Wentworth's Grackle and Crow imprint. It is a 16-page booklet, 3½ by 4¼ inches, stuffed full with 15 short but weighty poems. This review will definitely clock in at more

words than are in the chaplet: the longest poem is 14 lines, the shortest three. Poetry this compact requires the author to quickly get to the gist of things. Baldinger channels Basho here, and gets it right; he points out a guy at a bus stop who "...thumbs pocket new testament / fumbles revelations..."

These are poems of everyman: the brother down the street who is just trying to survive, day to day, in the hard rustbelt heart of the USA where so many of us live. Here, the arrival of New Year's Day is just "to wake up / certain / nothing's / changed." Here's frustration, pissed-off resignation in wry, ironic, straightforward language.

Susquehanna River Blues

how many times
across the
Susquehanna
to get nowhere?

Aficionadas of the Kansas City scene will appreciate Jason's several paeans to KC. Here's his encapsulation of a hipster restaurant near Prospero's Books on 39th St:

Eric and Frac

I hosed six tacos
while the only
female body builder
in Westport

gives advice
about spray tans

Fumbles Revelations is an hors d'oeuvre, a small taste of Baldinger's writing. It will give you an appetite for more of his spot-on gritty poetic insight into what it takes to survive, today, in the mean streets of our America.

Jason Baldinger's *The Studs Terkel Blues* (2014) is available as an [audio-book](#).

Info on how to obtain his other books, including *The Lower Forty-Eight* and *Fumbles Revelations* can be obtained by contacting him on [Facebook](#).

Hear Jason discuss his chaplet in a podcast interview at [Episode 50](#)

by Roy Beckemeyer, July 1, 2017



This chapbook review is graciously provided to River City Poetry by Kansas Poet Roy Beckemeyer. Roy is the author of Kansas Notable book *Music I Once Could Dance To*, available from Coal City Press. He's also one of our Summer Sampler 2017 contributors, so click [here](#) to read more. A wonderful bio is also available from Washburn University's [Literary map of Kansas](#).