



From Great Big Canvas

Philip Fried

Hop on, Hop off

Simon lies back in the starlit meadow
constellations rising and setting
as, nimble minikin, he hops

on and off the sightseeing bus,
visiting his red-shifted history.
Hops off in the galactic halo

to view the tomb of his fourth grade teacher,
confiscator of notes and sketches,
slayer of fantasy, now herself

its victim, with a Valkrie-like figurehead
doodled on her space-going coffin.
Alights to relive his own difficult

birth from a singularity,
the strain against nothing's loving tug.
Then, dancing master, he commands

himself to do the hop on, hop off,
revisits the evening street where mother
left him alone so long it seemed

the streetlight dimmed to a white dwarf star
as outer space started to open in him.
This cozy minuscule speck of a bus

travels faster than light through the trackless
universe, and the guided narration
omits nothing, not even a ruby

purie that hinged at bubble-like voids,
while supine in the sweet-smelling meadow,
Simon's the motionless Lindy Hopper,

triple stepping with Quasar and Quark.

A generous selection of Philip Fried's work appears in a new anthology, published in the UK by The High Window Press and titled *Four American Poets*. In the fall of 2016, Salmon poetry brought out his seventh book of poetry, *Squaring the Circle*.