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Kenneth B. Langness

### Evil Baby

I saw myself walking along the mall to the Plasma Center.  
It was there that I saw in a nurse's arms a green, scaly baby  
with eyes as red as apples. I knew this was Satan, and I  
was horrified.

As I was walking home, a voice came from a cloud that said,  
"Father God, Father God."

I woke up and went to a coffee shop where there was  
a Native American,  
smoking and drinking coffee. I told him about my vision  
and asked him what he thought it meant.  
He said I was the Evil Baby, and God was purifying me.

The doctor asked me to lie on a futon. He told me to close  
my eyes  
and picture myself in a grassy field with a path  
that led to a house with an open door. He said to go into  
the house  
and tell him what I saw. I said I saw the Evil Baby.

He said, "But you're the Evil Baby," and I said, "Yes,"  
and he said, "Satan?" and I said, "Yes."

I went to Hollywood in an old beat-up V.W. bug  
with a change of underwear, a toothbrush, and a little money,  
in hopes of being discovered and becoming a big star.  
I went to my first audition, and the man looked at my file  
and said, "So you're the Evil Baby?" and I said, "Yes,"  
and he said, "Satan?" and I said, "Yes,"  
He said, "Mister, you've got the part."

## Evil Baby 2

I took a bus tour to Yellowstone Park.  
When I got there, the Bison saw me and stampeded, just ran away.  
The man sitting next to me asked, "Did you do that?" and  
I said, "Yes."  
The man said, "The bus driver told me you were the Evil Baby,"  
and I said, "Yes," and he said, "Satan?" and I said, "Yes."  
He said, "Try not to do that again," and I said, "I'll try my best."

I took a jet to JFK Airport in New York and a cab to Manhattan  
to see the tall buildings. I thought because I was the Evil Baby,  
I was immortal.  
So, I went to the top of my hotel and took a swan dive off the roof.  
When I landed, a crowd formed, and I got up and dusted myself off.  
A woman in the crowd shouted, "He's the Evil Baby!"  
and a man said, "Yeah, he's Satan," and I said, "Yeah,"  
and went to get something to eat.

## Evil Baby 3

I drove my V.W. to New Orleans and found a hotel close  
to the French Quarter.  
I wanted to see Bourbon Street at night.  
When I got there, it was wild, people wall-to-wall.  
There were saxophonists on every corner. I stopped by one musician  
and listened for a while, and then I dropped a twenty in his sax case.  
He said, "I know you. Word has it that you're the Evil Baby,"  
and I said, "Yes," and he said, "Satan, right?" and I said, "Yes."  
He said, "You're one cool cat, man."

I took a cruise ship to an island paradise in the Caribbean.  
When I got there, I found they had a food item called "conch."

The Islanders used conch for everything from salad to fritters.  
I went to a café on the beach and ordered the conch salad.  
I thought it was terrible. I told the waitress, and she said,  
“I know you. I saw you in the paper. You’re the Evil Baby.”  
I said, “Yes,” and she said, “Satan?” and I said, “Yes.”  
She said, “So you don’t like the conch. Boy, you are an odd one!”  
I said, “Well, I’m Satan, so whaddya expect?”

#### Evil Baby 4

I went to “Jazz in June” in Lincoln, Nebraska, and watched the concert.  
When the concert was over, I went up to the lead singer and told her  
I had a question.  
She said her saxophonist had seen me in New Orleans and said I was  
the Evil Baby.  
I said, “Yes,” and she said, “Satan?” and I said, “Yes.”  
She asked, “What’s your question?” and I said, “What do you do  
when you need to use the restroom in the middle of a set?”  
She said, “I never really thought about it.”  
And she added sarcastically, “Thanks for bringing it to my attention.”  
I said earnestly, “You’re welcome.”

#### Evil Baby 5

I climbed Mount Ararat to talk to God.  
When I got there, He was in the form of a tree  
that looked like it was on fire.  
He asked, “So how’s my Evil Baby?”  
I replied, “Fine, but you haven’t given me much sustenance.  
I want a place I can call my own.”  
God said, “You can have a place underground,  
under Lincoln, Nebraska. You can call it hell, or the Inferno,  
or whatever you want.”

I went to the place under Lincoln, Nebraska,  
to look it over. It was great: suffering souls chained to the walls,  
and some souls eternally on fire. I talked to one of the spirits, and  
he said,  
“So, you must be the Evil Baby.”  
I said, “Yes,” and he said, “Satan?” and I said, “Yes.”  
He said, “Wow, you thought of everything!  
Even the coffee’s cold.”

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Kenneth Langness's poetry has been published in *Oak*, *Plainsongs*, *Story Teller*, and various volumes of *Writers on the Edge*. He also self-published a chapbook, *Too Much Thinking*. The poems in *Evil Baby* have been composed over the past five years; there are now more than ninety of them.