

Will #17

by David Backer

I want crazy at my funeral.

I want clowns, a petting zoo, fireworks, craps tables, male and female strippers, and a three-person band composed of old men wearing striped vests, black pants, and straw hats: one plays a banjo, another on tuba, and the lead on clarinet.

I want a popcorn machine, a maypole, a DJ playing the Macarena, the electric slide. He will be giving away prizes. I want a fog machine. I want a Greek chorus wearing plaster tragedy masks. I want my best friends to play each other at air hockey. I want a roller rink and a movie set of fake skyscrapers. I want a Ford Model-T on display there. I want people to dig trenches like they did in World War One. I want a gas chamber that sprays pixy sticks instead of poison.

I want a rabbi, a priest, a Jain, a Sikh, a Chinese villager who prays to Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist gods. I want Kathy Lee Gifford there. I want Scarlet Johansson. I want Stan Getz to be playing a Bill Evans tune. I want J. Robert Oppenheimer to quote the Bhagavad-Gita on an old-style radio microphone while giving out lollipops and sparklers.

I want Pynchon, Steinbeck, Salinger, Vonnegut, and Joseph Heller and my parents and this guy named Topaz I met on a train once to brainstorm what my epitaph should be. I want there to be a sing along. I want there to be children and those about to die and pregnant mothers and veterans. I want farmers with tractors and pesticides, immigrants loitering and hippies in suits and flip-flops playing Frisbee. I want Nick Drake to give a lecture on the conversational arts. I want every single pair of glasses I've ever had strung up with bat repellant and bunting. I don't want any politicians within 500 feet of the celebration.

I want Grand Central station helicoptered in.

