



Tom Trainor  
**COCOON**

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## A FABLE

Rumors are rife / That  
Hugo Hyde  
Took his frail mother's  
Life  
That her death was no  
Accident / No / That  
He smothered his own mother  
With her favorite feather  
Pillow  
Sole heir to her estate  
Nor was that the worst of the  
Gossip  
He keeps weapons of mass destruction  
Is a cult unto himself / Abnormal  
For Hugo is under suspicion by the  
Clearhaven neighborhood association  
A man who should be tracked  
Registered  
His comings / His goings  
How he lived with his mother / Just the  
Two / In that tall brooding  
Victorian  
Encircled with a balustrade porch  
Set back / Way back  
In the woods /  
And high up a turret / A light  
Still flickers day and night / The room  
Where Hugo's frail mother  
Drew her last gasp

The floor down below dimly lit / As  
Hugo Hyde sits / Surrounded by stacks of  
*The New York Times*  
Stacks piled high from floor to the  
Ceiling / Room upon room  
Narrow useless aisles Hugo can barely  
Squeeze by  
Delivered daily and Sundays but left  
Unread / Except  
For an occasional crossword puzzle  
Near genius he's been described  
Though strange if true / More likely  
Perverse  
He sits and he sits / Long nights  
Alone  
Never answers the phone  
Mail gets slid through a slot in  
The door  
Pizzas too  
Boxes of KC fried chicken / Along with  
Icy cold cola by the case  
Man's diet's restricted to  
Bloat  
Four / Five hundred pounds of it  
More  
Since his poor mother's demise  
He has grown thrice in size  
Can't fit up the stairs  
Can't fit through the door / Stuck  
There on the first floor  
The neighbors / They wonder  
What is it he's doing / Braced in an  
Oversized leather lounger / Laptop  
Set precariously on the lowest roll of  
Distended intestine / Face  
Bathed in a fiendish green glow  
Hugo stares at the screen / Eyes  
Dazed  
Fingers fiddle the keyboard / Man's  
Crazed

How is it the neighborhood  
Knows so much about  
Hugo Hyde / It's  
Their kids / They roam  
On nightly security patrol  
Creep  
Along the balustrade porch  
Peek  
Into windows and watch  
One with nappy hair  
Another a slanty-eyed glare  
A third red and fair  
For decades ago Hyde Farms raised prize  
Thoroughbreds  
The stables and meadows where  
Race horses once grazed / Now abound  
With quarter acre tracts of flat  
Bungalows  
Occupied by waves of invading  
Immigrants  
With Hugo the only Hyde left / Last scion  
From a fine family / He abides  
Barricaded behind  
*The New York Times*  
Unread  
Tapping out something  
Indecipherable / With  
Demonic intensity

The sight of / The fright of  
Huge Hugo Hyde  
Doesn't prevent these three  
Neighborhood kids from  
Snooping / No  
They're merciless  
They chide him / Deride him  
Rattle the handle / Scatter when  
Hugo comes hollering after  
"Leave! / Leave me alone / I own  
My own home!"  
Laugh / They mock  
Since Hugo's so slow / Up  
Out of his chair / Fat  
Can't get passed

The door / The dog  
Too old it can barely *ru-roof*  
Cats / Legions of which recline  
Supine / Stretch / Scratch  
Upon stacks / Of  
*The New York Times*  
Combined with a stench / That pervades the  
Balustrade outside / Though  
Hugo's safe / Enclosed within a  
Thick case / A  
Cocoon

Why / Why  
Do these kids taunt him so / Try to  
Flush him out  
See what Hugo Hyde's made of  
Flesh / No bone  
Hand to mouth his existence  
Rest and digest  
Age indeterminate  
Occupation none / Yet  
Beyond  
The Victorian's balustrade porch  
There's war / There's more  
Those coping with loss  
Costs  
A mortgage / No job  
New babe on the way  
An emergency room visit  
Though Hugo Hyde's immensely  
Oblivious  
He pays cash for the delivery man's  
Visit

The kids / They creep upon the  
Balustrade porch / Catch  
Hugo dozing  
Contentedly sprawled across his leather  
Lounger  
Dog too / The cats  
Kids could care less / They  
Bang on the panes  
"Hugo / Fat Hugo"  
They cry / Run off

Hugo's so startled he stays awake  
Day and nightmares / Plays  
Hide and get sought / Awaits the next  
Onslaught

If their creeping and peeping aren't  
Punishment enough  
Come Halloween / Three masked marauders  
Rattle the knob  
Cats go ballistic  
The dog *ru-roofs*  
Hugo tries / Struggles to rise  
To rise too late to  
Retaliate  
They've already spray painted the  
Balustrade porch lime green  
Tricked / Hugo is / While the three  
Retreat  
But what can he do  
Ignore them  
Yes / Hugo consoles himself  
They'll grow up / They'll go away  
He hunkers down further into his  
Cushy chair  
Chin to keyboard / Fingers to lips

"What?" / Asks the nappy haired kid  
"What's he doing in there all by himself?"  
"Something mighty suspicious!" / Shouts  
The slantily eyed child  
"We've got to find out!"  
"Storm the door!" / Braves red freckles  
"No! Let's slip through the window we broke!"  
"Yah! That one in the cellar!"

Invasion  
Stealthily they slip inside / Drop a few feet  
The dark / The dank / The stench  
Seep between the floorboards  
While directly overhead  
*Creak / Creak*  
Hugo's up / He's heaving himself about  
The dog *ru-roofs*

The kids / They can't see  
*CLANK!*  
One steps on a rake  
Movement above stalls to a halt  
Have they been found out  
*Creak / Creak*  
*Creak / Creak*  
The floorboards again squeak  
The kids below breathe relief  
*Creep / Creep*  
They tread up a stair  
*Creak / Creak*  
Slivers of light outline a door / When  
Suddenly / Without warning  
A shadow passes / A hulk / Hugo  
"What's he doing?"  
*Chomp / Chomp*  
Hugo's feeding  
*RU-ROOF?*  
Chomps stop  
*WHAM!*  
Cellar door swings wide  
*WHACK!*  
The steamy remains of a greasy pizza gets  
Flung / Down steps  
"Run!"  
Hugo yanks the tab off a fresh can of cola  
With bared teeth / Launches it  
*Ru-roof / Ru-roof*  
*Crash / Crash*  
Getting out a tall basement window in the  
Dark worse a  
Task / Than  
Getting in  
*Crash / Splash*  
Again and again  
A stray can lobs off the side of freckle's face  
Another full force upon the neck of nappy hair  
Two kids lift one up to the window  
The one in turn pulls the other two out  
*Crash / Crash*  
They tear across the yard  
*Splash / Splash*

Under steady barrage by  
Six packs

A few days truce ensues  
Wounds heal / Replaced with a brooding  
Revenge  
Kids hover / They plot  
What would be an appropriate response  
“Hot foot!”  
“Hose in the face when he opens the door!”  
“A smoke bomb tossed through the slot!”  
*Ah hah!*

They dress freckles up with a  
Pizza delivery  
He knocks and listens while  
Hugo lumbers toward the door  
“Who is it?”  
Kid carefully inserts this evening’s advertised  
Special / Pepperoni double cheese  
Garnished with  
Cockroach  
The live crawling variety / *Choke*  
A cry from inside / Hugo  
It seems  
Doesn’t much appreciate the joke

Still / The mystery remains  
What is it  
Hugo’s sitting there doing  
Hours upon hours  
Days into night  
Computing  
His stocks / His bonds  
Net worth to the penny  
Some other adult game / A war  
Against alien invaders  
Chat rooms / Seduce the unwary  
Porn of a horribly rarified type  
A twenty four hour site into  
Someone else’s most intimate life  
Though too / They could be  
Underestimating the man  
Hugo Hyde might be designing his very own  
Encryption system

Millions of lines of code / Or  
Spamming / Or  
Hacking his way past  
Formidable firewalls into the very bowels of the  
Pentagon's super computer  
But whatever Hugo does / These three kids  
Need to know / Need to know now

Midnight  
They're back / They'll stay out as late as  
It takes  
Traipse across the lime green balustrade porch  
Spy close by the window / And as  
Three sets of eyes rise to the sill  
**CRASH!**  
A fist / Shatters the glass / A  
Monstrous huge Hugo  
Erupts / Spewing  
All sorts of trash / While the  
Kids race for cover

Nights later / Nothing better to do  
They slip *oh so* silently back upon  
The balustrade porch  
Chuck a flare through the slot / But  
What starts as a joke smolders into  
Smoke / Bundles of  
*The New York Times*  
Set ablaze  
Cats freak / Riled / They leap  
Pile to pile  
The dog *ru-roofs* / No where to run  
Hugo / He tries and he tries to  
Get up / Get out  
He shouts  
Fire trucks respond / Spray down the  
Blaze  
Ax through the door / Uncover  
Hugo / Poor Hugo / Overcome  
Aslump in his lounge  
Takes eight to haul Hugo out / And as they  
Lift / Off slips his laptop / Cracks  
Against the step of the balustrade porch  
Lid splits / And there

For all the neighborhood to stare  
Black Jack to Red Queen / Conclusive proof of  
Hugo's highly suspicious / His sole solitary  
Preoccupation

Years pass  
The proud old Victorian reduced to ash  
No longer a light in the turret / For  
Hugo's been moved safely  
Out of sight / Kept nearby inside a quite  
Private institution / And the kids  
They grow / Slip off one by one  
Each to his very own cozy  
Cocoon

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