

Poetry for the time we almost lost.

By

John Grace

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*-Thank you Courtney for making it
“just so”.*

-Thank you mom for believing in me.

*-Thank you dad for being a father that
I could try to live up to.*

*- Thank you Amberly for making every
project easier, every burden lighter, and
every task more simple. The world was such
a complex and confusing place until I saw it
through your eyes. Whatever else you do,
wherever else you go, I hope you take some
satisfaction from what you have already
accomplished through me.*

This collection of work is dedicated to the most perplexing creature on the planet, capable indescribable beauty and inescapable savagery.

The best and worst of mankind are not separated by geographical borders, race, or education, but rather live within each of us. Coming to terms with this fact, is the most important step toward understanding our “perceived” differences. Often, when we cannot understand others, the truth is: we are afraid to face ourselves.

Welcome to the best and worst of my mind - and yours as well. I hope you learn to love them both. I have.

The diversity of the human experience: every emotion, every expression, every wish that each human being has felt since the dawn of our existence, is alive in all of our minds. To feel the triumphs and sorrows contained within the book of man, you need only look in the mirror and see what you feel.

John Grace

The Healing Power of Imagined Beauty

*The night grew late,
The moon hung high,
Walking through a dream went I.
The mountains vainly bore their quills,
I proudly paced upon those hills.*

*My even step,
Was clear and crisp.
Like good intentions before a wish.
So perfectly the seconds swept,
That closer to the dream I crept.*

*The full serene,
Awoke my eyes,
It was love granted to the despised,
Beauty's soft, and firm, command,
Corralled me to a gentle plan.*

*And in the dream,
Upon the hill,
Emotions that slept cold and still,
Awoke in song and echo proud,
Beside the marching summer clouds.*

*I closed my eyes,
And slowly climbed,
Into the catacombs of my breathing mind,
To test the tingling promenade,
That held my shallow masquerade.*

*And in those thoughts,
Beneath that sun.
My tired war its rage had run,
Was growing quiet, long, and deep.
The beast within began to sleep.*

*The anger fell.
The guilt now slept.
As close to the waking world I crept.
Free of years, of pain, of ills,
By dreams of soft, green, mountain quills.*

Auric Mystery

*The sunlight poured,
Across my hands,
Down my face,
Between my lips.
From God's fingertips it ran,
Like wind through wheat on yellow sand.*

*The azure fell,
Into my eyes,
Through my dreams,
Beneath my sun.
At the horizon it dies,
Like summer's breath of saffron skies.*

*Apollo's weight,
Between the air,
Guards the day,
Divides the dish.
Sweet Copernicus be fair,
Balancing all in golden share.*

THE CONCRETE ARMY

Miles.

Developing.

Spreading over hills,

Mountains.

Streams.

Calling to technology.

Crawling over land.

The roads spread out.

Conquerors.

SEVERE DEPRESSION

"I wish your sky was mine."

*There they stood with so many,
And I stood with so few,
And the long sky stood before me,
And the harsh wind spoke of my ruin.*

*And the black rain sang a haunting song,
And it crawled deep within my chest,
And the elements fell into a benediction,
And I heard the sun confess.*

*And I watched the storm march forward,
And I felt the lightning fall,
And I reached for a shield of silver,
And I begged for the winter to thaw.*

*And I cried for the cloud's sweet mercy,
And I ran from the monsoon's breath,
And a god closed his fingers around my heart,
And I felt his icy caress.*

*And I laughed with a crystal purity,
And a joy ran fast through my nails,
And a black ship pushed into my violet harbor,
And a whisper from hell blew her sails.*

*And I kissed a priest on defiled ground,
And my lips ignited in flame,
And I lied to the truth within,
And it broke every bone of my brain.*

*And I saw your judging eyes,
And I felt my padded wall,
And the restraints collapsed around my limbs,
And the IV started to fall.*

*And I saw you thought me a coward,
And my bottom lip trembled with rage,
And if you could see my scars,
And know the wars I've waged.*

*And the world has been different for you,
And I looked into your mind.
And I saw a peaceful, swirling, blue,
And I wished your sky was mine.*

Beauty's Toll

*The climbing oak,
Bowed in reverence
to the passing stranger,
Amid the lazy afternoon sun
stumbling across the
sky.*

*A brief pause,
from the gentlemen,
was enough to elicit nature's
grand display.*

*A small price,
To pay,
For such a revelation:*

A moment of time...

On a quiet day.

The Icy Soldiers

The skeleton trees of the winter day,

Without the leaves they've lost.

The beautiful isolation,

The solitude.

That comes with the coming of frost.

Cold,

Cold,

Icy,

Skies,

Lonely,

and Alone.

Cold,

Cold,

Icy pride,

Forms the winter's bone.

An Evolution of Arms

*Infinity be granted,
To the falsetto dream that lies,
Above a broken youth abandoned,
In the eyes,
Of a majestic son.*

*Overrun with reason,
We tumble on as oxen in the yoke,
Mired in personal treason,
A sad joke,
To this intellect won.*

*A pernicious mind,
Throws up in screaming envy to the world,
A protest to the time,
Of plumed, swirled,
Dogma of the gun.*

Proletariat Munchkin

*Sing a song!
The rich are dead!
Which old rich?
The wicked rich!
Sing-a-song,
The wicked rich are dead!*

*They've always kept us down.
Now we'll turn some rules around.
Ding-dong the wicked rich are dead!*

*O.K.
O.K.
Quiet
Now.
Now that they're dead,
How do we divide their money?*

Ember

Ember was a dragon in an ancient lonely keep.

Ember stared into the stars.

His eyes were green.

His claws could crush the mountains,

His breath could sear the sun,

His life could measure time itself,

His eyes were very green.

Ember was a whisper in a child's memory,

Ember walked among gods.

His eyes were green.

Greener than the forests,

Darker than the weeds,

Emerald, jaded eyes,

Reflecting in the leaves.

Ember was a riddle in a rhyme no one believed,

That mentioned once of dragon's tears,

Painting all the trees.

Is this what you want from your little girl?

Tisk.

Tisk.

What a pity.

What a pity it is.

Tisk.

Tisk.

What a pity.

What a pity it is.

That you cry for pretty,

When pretty is.

All that they ever wanted you to be.

Hush.

Hush.

You're not supposed to raise your voice.

You're not as good as little boys.

You let your daddy make that choice.

You shouldn't have those kind of toys.

Requests from a Tired Dreamer

*Shallow starlight standing tall,
Wallow through the closing doors.
Come beside me as I step into my private sea.*

*Sending me a sparrow's call,
Rending me a useless fool.
Ride above me as I wade into the mystery.*

*Carry color from the fall,
Bury dying dreams tonight.
Stand beside me in the past against reality.*

*Take me from the broken wall,
Wake me as I slip away.
Say the things I've never seen will be shown to me.*

*Stay beside through it all,
Play inside a fantasy.
Let the fallen dreams return to set the child free.*

The Midway

*Darkness closes like the Kahn,
A great warlord perched on the perimeter of life.
Slowly his soldiers ride headlong,
Everything and nothing collide.*

*If Donne could catch his falling star,
And Dickens could falter death's quiet pride,
Then might the quiet night be kept afar,
By raging Thomas and Blake's most even stride?*

*Amidst this circle,
Enclosed within this blackest night.
A poet speaks a word against the world,
And when those soldiers fall upon him
extinguishing his light,
There lives a quiet candle burning still.*

*I sit here waiting through the time,
And there is little truth to teach the world,
I must be content to teach myself,
But I am an uninterested learner.*

Am I My Dream?

I look in the mirror.

I see potential standing there.

Or is it just reflections,

That my mind transforms to dreams?

Water

*If there were only time for one kiss...then you would spend
all of your time kissing her.*

*If there were only time for one touch... then you would
spend every moment caressing her.*

*If there were only time for one voice...then you would
always be listening to her.*

There is only time for one love...

How will you spend that time?

The Door

*As the heavy door, Began its journey, Toward
that rusty lock I wondered,*

"Could I stop it?"

It was so far away. It moved soooooo fast!

Its destiny seemed certain:

TO SLAM!

TO SHUT!

TO CLOSE!

But. . .

*Despite the speed of the heavy door, My dreams
were much faster.*

*For they still managed to sneak out,
follow her, and leave me,
alone.*

As One Foot Follows the Other

I took a breath of the cold night in.

My skin was hot from running.

The stars swam and the stiff grass cracked,

As one foot followed the other.

Movement to the right,

Street light on fire,

Stars fall to thunder awakening me.

I cried out. I ran.

It charged from the bushes.

Razors gleamed.

The heated breath bore down.

Sweat and death were the air.

Fear curled my veins.

Scream! Scream! Scream!

Then. . . I turned from my daydream,

Forgot the illusion. Came back to myself,

And one foot followed the other.

After...

The sky calls to me...I forget my name.

The clouds reach down for me.

But the world has run away.

Heaven waits tonight for the victors of the stars.

While the fallen sleep tonight,

In battlefields of flowers.

Now I stand apart from those I stood beside.

My dreams no longer play,

As toys in a child's mind.

Rising from this fight and stepping to the door.

Waking from the night,

I've come home from the war.

The Whisper

Whisper. . .

*Glistening off my tongue into the silver night
flows the whisper . . .*

*Calling through the trembling leaves up to
the highest branches!*

*The lonely moon waits carefully in her sky
as the whisper. . . runs below the clouds.*

She steals the moment.

Oh the whisper . . .

Time and Learning

Wisdom can be cold,

And learning travels slowly.

Time waited too long it seems,

Because now it hurries.

There is less than a lifetime left,

And more than a lifetime to know.

Nothing is perfect,

And medicine is everything.

On the Fantastic Border

*Emerald dragon tails,
Beneath a purple rising sea in winter.
Scintillating, diamond scales,
Dancing in the luminous crash,
Verdant breath,
Arising from the callow snouts below the crests.
I'm standing on a solid shore imagining this magic.*

*Climbing rocky crags,
That spire over rolling glass.
Solid and impregnable,
The silence they create.
Stringent rules,
Divide apart fantastically cruel.
I'm gently at the mystic gates exploring mystery.*

*Corner stoned reality,
Breaking from a dying sun.
Grounded earthly,
Ingrained truth unsettled from the scape.
Watching there,
With child's eyes and a golden scare.
I'm thinking of compacting dreams contracting.*

Dangerous Words

Close your lips to darkness,
Do not spew forth your blindness to the air.
And let your *fierce* incisors:
Stand alert!
Razor,
White,
And Scared!

Hold each moment greatly,
Wait upon each second of the day.
Keep the *panther's* time:
With every sinew,
Loaded,
For the spring!

Engage the flying demons.
Stop their wings from soaring from your tongue.
Seize the *dragon's* flame,
Enfamished,
Cold,
And yearning for your lungs.

Sacrifice your fire,
Let it waste away within your cage,
Kiss the *beast* within you,
Awakened,
Loud,
And screaming for the stage.

Bind the virus tightly.
Stop the seeds from flowing to the breeze.
Keep the *angel* air:
Protected,
Pure,
And sterile from disease.

Dear you,

If we had more time, then we'd be better friends.

*If time were a better friend, we'd have more. But if more
were enough, it would never end.*

We had less,

It was more.

She tied his tie with a smile.

*She tied his tie with a smile,
And it was a good tight Windsor knot,
The silk ran round her fingers,
Round, around, her fingers.*

*The sun sailed high in the bright sky,
The flowers were dancing on their beds.
She always fixed him up,
Off to work,
Dashing and handsome.*

*For thirty years she loved,
And tied those Windsor knots,
She forgot,
Forgave little lies,
Steady, true, a rock of pride.*

*Their beautiful children were grown,
Children kept clear on Fridays,
A little too much make-up on Saturday,
But no matter,
The day was always gentle with her smile.*

*She tied his tie with a smile,
And it was a tight ol' Windsor's breath,
And for all the years of beating her,
She strangled that drunk to death.*

The Coming

Paused in the epitome of a statuesque Roman...

The clouds bowed...

The canopy shivered...

And jungle worshiped the dark omen...

As the panther balanced on a razor moment...

Then the claws of the God came down!

3:27 am

I sit on the edge of darkness,

Waiting on the shore of sleep.

The night has been alive for some time now.

And as the creature grows,

It beckons.

I do not resist strongly.

I merely protest and put it off,

Another moment,

Fully accepting that it must come,

Just not now.

I'll be ready soon.

The Heavy Toll of Yesterday

*As the stillness of the mind overcomes me,
As the peace before my eyes starts to lose me,
Overshadowed by the time that has left me,
Overburdened I stand blind to the dark sea.*

*And the state,
Of all my thoughts,
Lies heavy on this pen,
While the weight,
Upon its tip becomes immense.*

*This fate,
That I've been taught,
Tries heavy to pretend.
A false resource,
It dangles,
From a questioning pretense.*

*At the rise of sun,
I'll wake the corpse that I inhabit.
And once again,
The day will battle with the walking dead.*

*A past of lies gets won,
To shape this corpse that I inhabit.
Denounce the wind,
For betrayal saddles,
Amidst the other monsters,
That are stalking in my head.*

Conviction

*My mind falls through your eyes.
Do you wonder where I wander to?*

*Crystal,
Silver,
Off your tongue,
Pretends to know me.*

*Unbalanced by determination,
I stagger round your thoughts.
Asking dreams upon the walls,
For solid, calm, assurance.*

*I slip,
And run,
On shifting moods.
I trip beneath the reason.
I cannot read the language,
Of this land.*

*Defeated and confused,
Still illiterate.
I return to myself questioning?
The pair of colored signatures,
Stamped beneath your brow.*

*They are the only promise I've received,
To believe the breath you send.*

*Two focused beams from moons,
Upon visaged terrain.
They cry.
They plead.
They wink.
Their mystery remains.*

*I cannot journey past those discs,
To the center of the stream.
So I wander,
Never knowing ...*

Your mystery remains.

Running in the Rain

*The marathon of memories runs further every day.
Across my mind images scramble.*

*When the race first started,
The visions did not have far to go...
To find shelter.*

*But now they must compete,
For cloistered space,
Within an aging globe.*

*So each new memory
seeks a place to hide
safely from the rain.*

Often . . . they throw another out.

*I wish I could give shelter to them all.
I wish I could stop the rain.
But still it comes, sweeping away,
All but the most protected few,
protected few,
and even
these, are smeared by endless rain.*

A Response of Force

*I am a grenade.
I sit and wait,
For someone to pull my pin.*

*I am a bomb.
I sit and wait,
For someone to push my button.*

*I am a gun.
I sit and wait,
For someone to pull my trigger.*

*I am a man.
I sit and wait,
For someone to challenge my religion.*

*Morning
Morning, Morning,
Fist full of Glory. You
Shift and shake. Alive. Awake.
Living. Breathing. Streaming Into
The Bedroom window, That waits for you.*

NOT

He's not working.

I don't care.

Why not try?

She's not there.

Please don't touch that!

Can't you learn?

Don't you love me?

It won't hurt.

I can't take this.

Weren't you home?

This can't happen!

She won't know.

Do not open!

Won't you stay?

Doesn't matter.

Not today.

You're not leaving.

I can't go.

Its not worth it?

I don't know. . .

Poisoned Chalice

*On rainbow dust we chose,
To build the scaffold of this state.*

*Our precarious construction must bow,
At nature's gate.*

*Or from this matrix that we sell,
Our mother to endure,*

*A wind of repercussive hell erodes,
The land impure.*

The END of CLAY

*To Live and To Die.
To Shatter the Mind.*

*To See the Sky.
To Feel the Night.
To Touch the Stars,
With an Outstretched Hand.
I'm A Traveler Born,
In Hourglass Sand.*

Looking Back

*If I wished to live . . . I should have.
If I wished to die . . . I could have.
If I wished to dream. . . I might have.
But I only wished to let life pass me by.*

*If I'd raised my voice. . .they'd have heard.
If I'd raised my eyes.. .they'd have seen.
If I'd raised my pride. . .they'd have known.
But I only raised the doubts within my mind.*

*If I spoke the truth. . .it withered.
If I saw the answer. . .it faded.
If I heard the call. . . it lied.
So quietly I fell to crushing time.*

And now I've let the final seconds by

Walking in a Nov'

*Walking in a November night.
The winter wind had a kiss of summer breeze.
I sat down in the plush green,
And let the emerald nails bend against my face.
My mouth was dry,
But it was tolerable.
The wind was cold,
But I did not hurry home.
And the air,
The air sat perfectly on a balance
Somewhere between heightening my senses,
And dulling them to oblivion.*

*Quiet,
It has been my friend when I have had no other,
Listened to those fears I could not share.
And in moments of desolation,
I have sometimes found shelter,
Letting my thoughts run over through the silence.
Quiet,
At times it has helped me,
To be my own best friend and savior.*

September Night.

*Walking in a September night.
The summer wind had a kiss of winter breeze.
I sat down in the harsh leaves,
As the brown sticks broke against my back.
My mouth was wet,
But intolerably dry.
The wind was warm,
But the night seemed very cold.
And the air,
The air sat perfectly on a balance.
Somewhere between heightening my senses,
And dulling them to oblivion.*

*Quiet,
It has stolen my friends when I needed them the most,
Created insecurities that were not there.
And in moments of desolation,
I have sometimes been lost,
Letting the silence run over my thoughts.
Quiet,
At times it has tricked me,
From my best friends and salvation.*

The unwelcomed guest

*Twelve eyes looked at me.
From across the table they looked at me.*

*Each pair crashed into me.
They ran through me and left me empty.*

*And I was empty.
Bare and empty.*

*And all that I had brought to the table,
Was taken away by those eyes.*

Crass

*Crass wax on the lips,
Of a window Payne,
Indentured servitude of rage,
Within a stare.
Wandered life into an empty moment.
Given up who to be,
For who to be now.
In shackles.*

A Certainty Within

*Like a sword in fiery forge,
The sun on the steps of the horizon.*

*Like a dream that sleeps on the edge of consciousness,
Hope that lies forgotten.*

*Like slender seeds falling from barking giants,
Newborn eyes awakening.*

*Like the moist and fertile soil,
The strong and true foundations.*

*Like the shutter of an eyelid as it opens to the sky,
The quiet, certain breath of still air in the morning.*

*An angry cloud that stares upon the ground before war,
The destined great inertia of a titan's fist in motion.*

An almost average day.

*Down in the mine,
Cold and still,
My father was asleep.
And I watched the lawn-mower groan.
And I waited for dad to come home.*

*The sun was up,
Hot and still,
It pushed me through my chores.
And the fields were sewn.
And I waited for dad to come home.*

*The day went by,
Long and slow,
Mom was nervous in her hands.
And I wished that she wasn't alone.
And I waited for dad to come home.*

*Then a man came,
Fine and trim,
With glasses and a tie.
And I saw her shake and moan.
And I knew he would never be home.*

I know.

*Behind the steel green in your eyes,
Behind the strength within your breath,
Inside the chambers of your chest,*

I know.

I know.

*All the moments in your day.
All the storms that you have seen,
The walls, the wars, the silent screams.*

I know.

I know.

*Dying rivers on your face,
Dying wishes in your well,
Mental trinkets you can't sell,*

I know.

I know.

The Lover's Oath

*If Love is Truth and Truth is Blind,
Then Lie Here in My Arms Tonight.
Let Your Breath Fall Into Mine.
Let Us Wage a War With Time.*

*Drown Within My Crystal Eyes.
Follow Me To Heaven's Skies.
Through Empty Years,
And Fallen Tears,
Blindly Worship All My Lies.*

*Let Me Hypnotize Your Soul.
Set Adrift Upon My Sea.
Fall To Me Without Control.
Revealing All Your Mystery.*

*Call to Me When Darkness Claims.
Your Eyes,
Your Heart,
Your Soul,
Your Veins.*

*And All the Sweet Caress You Find,
Will Lay My Thoughts Upon Your Mind.*

My Sweet

*Forests fall in fallen days,
In times that fall behind.
But I would let them fall away,
To keep you by my side.*

*I would ride the silver moon,
Or sail a golden sea,
To keep your kiss of golden hair.
That will belong to me.*

*Your lips so wet upon my mind,
Your body falls beyond.
Your sweet caress I always find,
To lose myself upon.*

*So kiss me as you close your eyes,
Say your last good-byes,
To dreams,
And things,
And silver rings that circle golden skies.
My wish,
My love,
My life is true.
And all I live,
I live for you.*

ALONE

I was in the night with a dream.

I wasn't alone.

I screamed.

I was stone.

And the wind,

It was cold,

With my sin,

All alone.

I was in a dream with the night.

I couldn't contain.

I fight.

I am pain.

And the day,

It is warm,

With my hate,

All alone.

I dreamed one night that I was.

I started to feel.

I love.

I am real.

And the sin,

Is alive,

In the wind.

All alone.

Halloween
“*The soft Side of Evil*”

*Castle bells and trinkets,
And little spells,
Are waiting.
For the soft side of shadows,
Inside the night.*

*Glowing eyes and whistles,
Say gentle lies,
While calling,
For the soft side of cobwebs,
Away from light.*

*Crazy howls and werewolves,
And razor teeth,
Are coming,
For the soft side of evil,
Can soft make it right?*

Value

*Were I to lose all I've done,
Were time to wash away the past.
If all the races I had run,
Had led me down a twisted path.
If all the mountains I had climbed,
Had left me where I started from.
Yet I still had you by my side,
Then all that matters I'd have won.*

Sacrifice

*I would have gone,
But life is long,
My dreams are weak.
My ties are strong.*

\$\$\$

He must be cruel only to be kind.

He's cruel.

He's cruel.

For the dollar sign.

He jumps.

He jumps

Every time.

It calls to him.

His profits climb.

The MOMENT

The arrows of a soul await the call to let them fly.

The springs within the sinews standing taut,

Within their sheaths.

A man is getting restless,

To a child's lullaby.

A dragon's is electric,

As it rises from the sleep.

A vein is growing bolder,

And its waiting for a switch.

A hand will soon be holding,

What the blood already knows.

A frozen flood is thawing,

As it stands before the cliff.

The moment now is drawing,

And I feel the seconds grow.

A Far Destination

Far there sits life.

Far away.

Aware,

Awake,

Alive,

A full,

Abloom,

Afar soon gets too far from simple losses.

Falling far across this time that is

So rigid,

Strict,

Defined,

And yet so vast and marching.

Climbing,

Crawling,

Calling from afar,

Stars fall fast as the future tumbles by.

1

*Twelve was the number of his pain.
And twelve crusted wrinkles twisted across his face.
Twelve thoughts danced across his brain,
Each of them taking 1-2...seconds apiece.*

*Twelve of his joints held snakes,
And they were wet, boggy with arthritis of age,
Twelve joints slithered, hissed, and ached.
He moved them 1. . .2 at a time but never more.*

*Twelve hours was half a day.
And that was the length of his final, empty shift.
Twelve times three was the number of years he had stayed,
On that quiet line performing his quiet trade.*

2

*Twelve pushed him away,
The twelve times six that was written behind his age.
Twelve was not his friend...he was afraid.
Now twelve minutes left before the whistle played.*

*Twelve breaths.
Twelve beats.
Twelve . . . fast it came!
Twelve seconds now.*

*...1...2 . . . The whistle played!
Now 12 has freed him,
For twelve times two hours,
Every day.*

STEPS

**You stepped into our lives,
With your white coats,
W I D E E Y E S!
Open Mouth,

And Clear Thoughts.
Asking us to teach you?
And as the years step by,
And we step forward,

We look behind,
To check on you.
Only to find that,
You now lead the way.**

LIFE (56)

I swam.	I birthed.	I came.	I nursed.
I cried.	I saw.	I learned.	I crawled.
I stood.	I walked.	I played.	I talked.
I schooled.	I cared.	I jumped.	I shared.
I drove.	I kissed.	I fell.	I missed.
I left.	I dorned.	I grew.	I formed.
I loved.	I wed.	I worked.	I bred.
I changed.	I burped.	I watched.	I heard.
I helped.	I taught.	I threw.	I caught.
I left.	I strayed.	I wept.	I stayed.
I sold.	I aged.	I moved.	I ached.
I lost.	I quit.	I mourned.	I sit.
I look.	I think.	I breathe.	I stink.
I thank.	I sigh.	I close.	I die.

The doctor, the priest, and the lawyer.

A doctor, priest, and lawyer sat inside a small café.

With a stethoscope, a rosary, and an attaché'.

The priest was of a quiet sort, the lawyer said too much.

The doctor said the right amount but who knew about what?

The lawyer sipped his mocha well, the doctor liked it black.

The priest was thankful for warm milk with bit of honey smack.

With Wall Street Journal in his face the lawyer sat awhile,

The doctor paged through his work and the priest sat with the bible.

The lawyer raised his clever brow, looking strangely at the day,

The priest waited, the doctor paused both wondering what he'd say.

With finger resting on his chin, his eyes up in the air.

The lawyer spoke as lawyers do with perfumed words to spare.

"I'm contemplating our objectives in the great design.

An introspective examination of our most perplexing time.

Wondering inquisitively about our occupational worth,

What exactly do we do for our fellow men on earth?"

Smiling with the quiet cool, of calm integrity,

The doctor's voice rang clear and proud with kind authority,

And as he talked he moved around, gesturing toward the air,

The doctor spoke as doctors do with complex terms to spare.

*"The hypothesis you seek to prove involves the variable of man.
The complexities of this research are immense you understand.
But I must conjecture that we'll find in this the doctor's best.
Doctors help through all the aches and pains till final rest."*

*Humble pie upon his lap the priest held back a smile,
Looking round the room, at the ceiling and the tile.
Then finally inspired by some cosmic inspiration,
The father spoke with words of grace and some consternation.*

*"My son I fear you fail to see the scheme of our God's plan.
Each of us must do his work in our craft you understand.
But certainly the lot of priests must hold a special place,
As the ensigns of his word and ministers of faith."*

*The lawyer kindly waited for the priest to have his say,
But he tapped his foot and rolled his eyes in quite a sharp dismay
Finally the seconds passed and the air began to sit.
And on the silence pounced the tiger with his rapier wit.*

*"Dearest colleague I beseech and humbly do object,
I beg your pardon and must premise that I mean no disrespect.
But clearly in the rights and wrongs and judicious care of man,
My profession pours the foundation upon which society stands."*

*And just as tempers came to flare and pots began to boil.
And fingers rose to point and voices told of foibles.
A man who sat in nearby seat with dirty shirt and pants,
Strolled over to the "professionals" in the midst of their fierce rant.*

*He rubbed his beard with gentle strokes and shyly gave a smile.
His eyes were soft, his face was plain, he held a simple style.
His voice was quiet, unassuming, guilt-free in the air.
And slowly spoke the words of truth without the weight of care.*

*"I do not mean to fringe upon the your happy little chat,
I'm a simple grave digger and my mind's a little flat.
Though I'm just a basic escort to the last and final rest,
In my topsy-turvy head methinks that I serve man the best.*

*"My clients do not fear their death, they do not fear their life.
They do not need my help to sleep or help to leave their wife.
They do not wonder 'bout the world that lies beyond the grave.
They do not seek to dodge or sneak the reaper from his day.*

*We all will sleep in deepest deep in a clay, cold bed
And all this comes through sun and sun no matter what gets said.
Though each of you may help men through the day to day calamity.
But I, oh I, am their final guide to where they spend eternity."*

*And all who heard, those gravest words nodded to their honesty.
And each of those professions learned a lesson in humility.*

“Spare a moment of your time?”

I feel that there's time.

Time tells me there isn't.

I feel that there's moments,

Forever to spare.

I give away smiles, sunsets, and kisses,

Like a child that's given too much to spend.

15 minutes here...30 minutes there....

I throw it away like Monopoly money.

Time seems common and mundane,

It feels so ordinary.

But time tells me it isn't..

I know in my mind the weight of each second.

I know in my thoughts what I should feel.

But my heart takes for granted what its always known.

And it cannot envision a world without its beat.

So those beats are lost in every day.

They are not counted or loved.

And the moment appears worthless as its given away.

Time whispers... "It isn't."

Watching from the Pier

*She was a small girl,
And I was a big guy,
And it was a big baby,
And she was such a small girl.*

*And the baby was gonna' come,
It had to come,
And she was such a small girl,
And I was really afraid.
And somewhere deep inside,
I didn't believe.*

*I didn't believe she would make it,
I didn't believe she could handle it,
I was sure she would need a c-section,
I was sure she would need drugs.*

*And I was so afraid,
And I wanted it to be OK.
And a part of me was angry at her,
Angry at needing me when I couldn't help,
Because I didn't know what to do,
And I was so afraid*

*The water broke and the labor started.
And the pain grew.
And the fear grew.
And the doubt grew.
But it all grew slow.*

*And I tried to help,
And I felt like a child helping,
Doing everything I could,
Not knowing what was helping,
But knowing it wasn't enough.*

*There was still so much pain,
And so much I couldn't do.
So I watched,
And watched,
And helped how I could,
Like a spectator on a pier,
Watching someone struggling in the waves,
Throwing a life preserver,
Calling for help,
Praying she would stay afloat.*

*And she cried,
And she cried,
And I didn't want to watch.
I wanted to turn away,
I wanted someone else to save her,
I wanted someone else to take responsibility,
But there was only me,
Watching her struggle in the waves of pain.*

*And she fought,
She fought for her child,
And I wondered,
How she believed she would make it through this?*

*Then I realized...she didn't.
She didn't know if she was gonna' make it,
She wasn't certain of anything,
But she wasn't gonna' stop.
She was not going to stop.
This was for her child.
And nothing else mattered.
And I was ashamed,
Ashamed of needing certainty,
Ashamed of my fear,
Ashamed of watching her struggle from the pier.*

*And I wanted to run,
While she cried,
While she struggled,
While she fought,
I didn't want to be a part of a failure.
I didn't want to be there if she didn't make it,
And I hated myself for that.*

*And the pain grew,
God it grew!
And she screamed,
And she held my hand and looked at me,
Exhausted, afraid, and alone.*

*It was just a moment,
It was just a second,
I look back now and thank God for it.
Because in a single moment,
I was saved.*

*I can't say how I got there,
I can't say where I found myself,
I never knew it was there,
But I know its there now.*

*I jumped into the water,
Swam from the safety of the pier,
Swam to my wife,
Ready to fight for her,
Ready to fight with her,
Ready to drown with her but never ready to quit.*

*And I took hold of her,
Through each wave of pain.
I had no certainty.
I had no promises.
Except one...*

*I wasn't going to stop
I wasn't going to leave her,
No matter how long it lasted,
No matter how bad it was.
And I was there through each wave,
Just trying to stay afloat,
Just trying to make it another moment.*

*Time passed somehow,
And we were there.
And our child was there...exhausted but together,
Finally reaching the shore.*

*And I was so thankful,
So thankful I hadn't turned my back on her,
Because she had done it!
She had really done it!
Even though no one was sure she could.*

*And thank God,
Thank God that I got to be a part of that.
When things were hard, uncertain and unclear,
I stayed there.
I was there.*

*In her greatest challenge,
When my family needed me most,
I was there.
I stepped off of the pier,
Away from security,
Away from safety,
Into her arms,
Ready to face anything,
And we made it...together.*

*There's a side of us,
A strength,
That will always be here.
And I've learned,
I know.
Life isn't certain,
You can't **live** on the pier.*

To my wife in labor

*It is OK.
I am here.
I'm with everything that matters.
And I know.
I know.
I know what really matters.
And it's time to smile,
And time to know.
And it's time to smile because I know,
I'm with everything that matters.*

*It is OK.
You are here.
You're with everything that matters.
And you know.
You know.
You know what really matters.
And it's time to smile,
And time to know.
And it's time to smile because you know,
You're with everything that matters.*

*It is OK.
We are here.
We're with everything that matters.
And we know.
We know.
We know what really matters.
And it's time to smile,
And time to know.
And it's time to smile because we know,
We have everything that matters.*

Are Beauty and Mankind Compatible?

Please plug a sky into my brain.

Let the heaven slip under my skull.

Fold an endless range,

In my mind,

That waits for something more.

Tie the sunset,

And rope the waves,

Crashing on the shore,

Stuff them into my soul.

Make the beauty of the world,

Fit into my storm.

Morrow,

Morrow,

Marrow,

Moral.

Meat.

Bone,

Street.

Stone.

Turmoil,

The mortar of man,

Building altars to Gods we cannot stand.

Storms

Waves awakening the midnight of the ocean,

As lightning flies in a fury of pain,

A speck in a sea of rage,

The Erin rolled over mountains of water.

Captain turned his stomach over,

Heavy with responsibility,

He'd taken the crew so far,

And now, well now.

The storm was knocking on the hull,

And it was crawling into their thoughts,

Burrowing through their souls,

It made them doubt.

In a room with his men,

For now, dry and warm.

He looked into a hundred eyes and saw a hundred storms.

An Elaborate Lie

*Five fingers on an ape's hand,
The neoteny of a chimp to shape my skull.
Savagery inside this cunning mind,
Able to hide behind complicated schemes.*

*War for the sake of peace,
And death, sweet death, in the name of a cross.
Slavery inside a free society,
And all of your gains - are someone's loss.*

*Progress listens to you,
Otherwise you do not call it progress.
The progress benefits a few,
Who hold up the banner so we never forget.*

*We have lost truth so well.
We sit in this stew of insanity.
Am I pretending for me or for you?
Or are we both praying for clarity?*

*The television screams! The newspaper wails!
The faithful repeat the doctrine.
And somewhere when I am alone and scared.
The answer comes like a comet.*

*There is no answer that answers man.
There is no truth that explains our world.
There is no house that houses our sanity.
There is no escaping our reality.*

*Everything we do,
Everything we believe
Everything we create
That is the lie.
The lie hiding the truth.
Concealing the truth,
But not concealing it well.*

*So often it speaks through,
Sneaks through,
And rears its head for all to see.*

*This sweet lie,
This elaborate lie,
Runs to cover the honesty.
For our benefit and our safety.
To say it simply:
The truth of man is -
“Madness”*

A Brief

It was a quiet day that day.

A quiet,

Quiet sun.

The lake was rather quiet,

As the waves began to run.

One ran from the eastern shore,

One born in the west,

One ran toward the setting sun,

One thought the moon was best.

In the middle of this lake,

In quiet,

Quiet charm.

By random chance or chance mistake,

A wave had touched another's arm.

They rose up softly to a kiss.

They fell to soft embrace.

Encounter

By the closing of this day,

Of quiet,

Quiet time.

The waves had followed separate paths,

With separate dreams to find.

To the distant shores they went,

To a moonlight run,

Two that once a moment spent,

Together in the sun.

Each to soon forget the day.

Each forever changed.

Each to flow a different way,

But still,

To flow the same.

They found the dream,

So many missed amidst the quiet place.

.

Beauty

*I saw an old man
lift a soda pop to his
lips.*

Cold condensation trickled

d

o

w

n

in a fast-food

restaurant,

during the rain on a day that didn't matter.

*His esophagus jiggled perfectly as the liquid
flowed.*

*Then a woman with BIG HAIR, Golden shoes and
glASSes went by
to the bathroom.*

*Her fat calf-muscles flexed in the same manner
as a glorious Olympic sprinter.*

*Surrounded by physiologic complexity between
bites of a roast beef sandwich.*

En grossed in this sea of miracles,

I did not care.

And neither did anyone else.

Here is man.....

The perfect machine

That no one appreciates,

ADONIS in a world that is blind.

Although I hate to admit it,

I look at the life,
And the flag,
And the stars.

I wonder about:

Truth,
justice,
And the American way.

Or as some would say:

Food,
Shelter,
And enough to pay.

I can't help but be inspired
Because I'm supposed to,
Be inspired.

And I can't help but be scared when I'm not inspired.

“I wonder about this world.”

*If I could help it,
I'd think,
The way I'm supposed to think,*

*If I could stop it,

I'd stop thinking,
Just long enough,
To catch up with faith.*

Should I believe?

*Would it
Be
Me believing?*

*Or is my doubt,
A part of me?
And leaving it...*

Means leaving myself out.

Clear Days

*There is a time that is clear,
When men are young,
When young minds break.
Away from the time,
The time is strong.
Time sings a quiet song.*

*There is a love that is true.
When love is a fire,
When fire flames.
Consuming the emotions,
That fall between.
New feelings scream.*

*There is a doubt that waits,
When moments of weakness,
Weaken in faith.
Awaken the doubt,
The doubt crawls near.
Doubt awakens fear.*

Midnight Touch

*If Night Were Like Your Touch,
I'd Never Wish To See the Day.
Desperately I'd Clutch the Dark,
And Bind My Soul Unto The Shade.*

*I'd Breathe the Night,
And Steal The Moon,
To Make The Darkness Mine.
If Only It Could Feel Like You,
To Heal This Lonely Time.*

The Ocean and the Fire

*I doubt in the garden of Dionysus that life was sweet,
With the sweat of work.*

*Love in cupid's arms holds up,
Like sand against the wind.*

*A dream of Aphrodite's kiss is wet and tempting,
The lust of a raging succubus is wild, enticing wild!
And waiting in the mood of fire is foolish passion,
A moron with a storm for a soul and brain.*

*Oceans of regard and trust,
Thrown upon an unending flame.*

*And what will win...
Who will claim?
The soul of a spouse that strays.
The ocean and the fire rage.*

The Bravest Thing I have Ever Seen

*You treated me better than your father treated you.
Through his rage, his hatred, and quiet terror.*

*While he stormed your brain and battered your
mind with worthlessness, he ripped at your dignity
with his own insecurity.*

*Something inside of you survived his drinking and
pain.*

*It was just a piece, a small piece of you, a small
piece of an otherwise murdered childhood that
somehow managed to hide away. But it was
enough to give me a better life than you had.*

*I will always wonder what you might have been if
your father wasn't a monster.*

*You were just a child,
A child at 4, at 8, at 10.*

*A child with nothing. Without dignity, without love,
without a dream,
Left in the clutches of a madman determined to
have your soul and corrupt you to a life of hatred!*

But you, you managed to survive. You survived when you had nothing, nothing to fight with, and no one to help. You took hold of that small piece of goodness in your heart and hid it, hid it away, and you never let him touch it or take it away.

Every day, day after day, year after year, drink after drink, he would tear into you, trying to destroy that small piece kept from him. And every day you endured and kept it alive.

So that one day you would have more than hatred to give your son.

I don't know where you found love in the house of a devil. . . your own heart I suppose.

I don't know how you kept it alive.

All I know is that it is the bravest thing that I have ever seen. And all of my life, my accomplishments, were only possible because of years of courage and sacrifice.

Thank you for saving my childhood, my life, and my children's life from a devil that lived in your house.

I'm sorry that no one was there for you then but I will always be here now.

The Empty Chair.

*There stood a chair in a room.
An empty room with a chair.
On the walls were no windows.
Four legs and a back,
Not even a cushion.
There is left only...*

A space.

*A space for a person.
Room for a life.
Place for existence,
A void.*

*A grieving heart is an empty sky.
Once filled by a little boy.*

What She Sees in Me.

*She put her lips together.
And pushed them to my neck.
And I felt the midnight rising,
As I saw the red sunset.*

*She closed her whispers quickly.
And closed them with a smile.
And said, "Let's close the night away,
Just for awhile."*

*And my mind was staying confused.
But my emotions were quite clear.
Then she lifted my chin to her face.
And said, "I'm right here."*

*And I lost myself in her body.
And I didn't want to be found.
I swimming out to a mystery,
And I was looking to drown.*

Harmony

*Harmony held onto a beating heart,
A song.*

*Beating into the wind chime on a clock,
A life.*

Symphony left on a waiting sundial.

*My life is a song,
Written on paper,
Left on a clock,
That ticks away.*

But the ticking clock...is not the decay.

Fears and Years.

*A young man was afraid of what was coming,
Afraid of the unknown,
Afraid of what would happen,
Ashamed, afraid, and scared to go.*

*An old man was afraid of what had passed,
Of losing all he'd known.
Afraid of what would happen,
Ashamed, afraid, and scared to go.*

*Whether pressure from potential,
Or caution from success,
Fear is alive as constant as time.
A mailed shirt,
A breast plate,
A gauntlet of steel,
That's how it feels.*

*Through years the fears,
Protect,
Confine,
Suffocating alive.*

He was strong in his hands

*He was strong in his hands, strong,
Strong in his heart,
in his eyes,
in his heart,
Iron in his heart,
A mountain of strength,
A range of steel,
An endless sky of stone.
And he held his hands like a palace...of marble, of light and
life.
And there was strength in the blood and the muscle and the
stone and the bone.
And he trusted that strength,
Was certain of it. It would never leave him.
Until his mind left him.*

Life

*Life...life...you hold a piece of something
between your teeth. It is my soul you are slowly
tearing.
It is my time being ripped to pieces.
It is a life, a life being built,
A life being destroyed,
A picture being painted while it is on fire.*

Two Dollars

*In the morning before I left for work,
Checked out the wife's purse for a few bucks for morning
coffee.
Folded neatly in the back was all the money she had...two
dollar bills.*

*And I saw them,
There in her wallet,
Folded with care,
Kept aside for a moment when she might need them.*

*And it said so much
To see them there,
Folded gently, Taken with care.*

*She could have married someone with money.
And she never would care about those two dollars.
But she would rather be with me,
And gently fold each one.*

*I didn't have any coffee that day but I was smiling and wide
awake.*

You are one of us.

*I don't know anything yet here I do sit.
My first year of med-school and ready to quit.
I don't anything yet still I am here,
With wizards of MCAT who see it quite clear.
Their bright and their clever in litigation,
With dermal construction and tubal ligation.
And they know all their A's, their P's, and their Q's,
Capitals, lower case, and italics too!
Its an endless display of hemisphere might,
With lightning synapses and flashing insight.
But then why am I here and what have I got,
Against such a bulwark of juggernaut thought?
Against such an army I know I can't hold.
They're walking, talking, and conjecturing bold.
They're brilliantly gazing and calmly surmising,
Above all the foolish, and false aggrandizing.
I cannot contest them on land or on seas.
They're medical guru's and chem. deities.
So I know I must leave as I wave them good-bye:
Nirvana, Valhalla, Olympian Sky.
I'll just set it to rest and leave it aside.
I'd just be a bristle along for the ride.
Because all that I have a dream and desire,
Is not strong enough for Promethean Fire.*

But wait...

*Behind all the weapons they hold in their brains:
The falchions, lances, daggers, and chains.
The scimitared venoms, halberds, and swords,
The fierce iron-maidens with harsh iron doors.
Behind all these trappings of artifact lies,
There lives something fragile asleep in the eyes.
A spirit, banshee, soul or a wraith,
An essence or specter to grapple with fate.
A yearning, crying, burning, or breath,
To hold off the reaper denying the death.
They're waiting, living, hoping to try.
They're loving, feeling, learning to cry.
They walk on the pavement and not in the skies.
The touch with their fingers and see with their eyes.
They push through their struggles and laugh with joy,
They clamor while building what others destroy.
They grapple with weakness and fall on their face.
They're not in some daydream or mystical place.
Though frailty binds them through steps and in sights,
Capriciously forcing a faith in the night,
In thought, in action, in word and deed.
They stand by their office and live through their creed.*

So...

*Beyond all the bases, buffers and gels,
The acids, treatments, cadavers and cells,
I think I belong here and think that I'll stay.
I think that I might Be a doctor some day.
I think that the journey will often command:
A faith in the calling with faith in my hand.
A faith in the learning with faith in the pride,
A faith in the others who walk at my side.
And through all the stresses, tortures and pains,
The dark midnight vigils, gram-positive stains,
We'll work through the riddles and battle the rhymes,
Standing, stumbling, and trembling at times.
While living, believing, stressing, and dreaming,
But searching for something to justify leaving:
The sanguine quiescence of feather-bed loads
The well-beaten paths and oft-traveled roads,
To enter the Sparky, imaginative scopes,
Extending the limits of wishes and hopes.*

*Too far past the falling beyond all the depths,
We're dancing on razors with slow, careful steps.
We're drifting and moving on borders unclear,
We're battling monsters, confusion, and fear.
We're straining and working but stopping to care,
Our knowledge is growing but learning to share.
We're feeling the front-line edge of the breeze,*

*It crawls in the chambers and the bones start to freeze.
We're sensing the maelstrom and facing the storm,
The army is churning; the battle is warm.
The conflict is weary; the forces are spent.
In anticipation of reinforcement.
The sun it is breaking, breaking the shore,
The trumpets are blasting, blasting the war.
The war it is running, running quite strong.
The time it is waiting, but not waiting long.*

*The echo is growing; the thunder begins,
We step to the tempest and call to the winds,
We call down the canyons and call through the air,
And call through our actions an oath that we share.*

*Dedicated to the Class of 2000
Southern Illinois University Medical School*

“What’s for dinner?”

*I’m not saying it was hard.
There nobody telling you times were tough.
It’s not exactly abuse.
Wasn’t entirely cruel.
No one was ever hit.
Unclear exactly what was missed.
I don’t have something against beer.
Milk isn’t the only thing I drink.
But looking back it seems strange.
The refrigerator had only one of the two.*

Faith is believing without proof.

*Agnostics have nothing.
They are certain of nothing.
They have no proof and no faith.*

*Deists have faith without proof.
They are certain of everything,
Without proof of anything.
Certain there is a God without proof of a God.*

*Atheists also have faith.
They are certain of nothing,
Without proof of nothing.
Certain there is not a God,
Without proof he does not exist.*

*The irony is the battle,
Between the deists and atheists.
The two groups with the most faith in the world.*

I'm the smartest person I know.

I'm the smartest person I know.

I don't have any problems.

I don't need anyone.

I don't care what they think.

I don't care what they do.

I'm not afraid.

I'm not afraid because I'm the smartest person I know.

And there is a piece of this that holds me.

And I know what I need.

I've figured it out.

I've figured it out because I'm the smartest person I know.

I know what I need.

I need to tell someone that I don't know it all.

And find someone I trust not to hate me because of it.

Don't Read This!

*Is it time to be scared?
Is it time to lose control?
Is time an illusion?
Is control a dream?*

*Are you lost and don't know it?
Is it worse than you think?
Is there something hiding?
Are you **willing** to see?*

*Are you missing something you need?
Are you suffocating while you breathe?*

*Is the nightmare reality?
Is the lie...security?
Can you accept responsibility
For recognizing insanity.*

Man's cruelty to himself.

21st century.

Modern man.

Clocks,

Time cards,

Obligations.

"Score higher."

"Run faster."

"Do more!"

"Think clearer!"

Push yourself to please others!

Then push yourself to please yourself!

"Always push yourself!"

"Always be the best!"

How do we teach forgiveness?

When we can't forgive ourselves?

How do we give compassion to others,

While torturing ourselves?

A dance of good and evil.

*Morn and evening danced together closely cheek to cheek.
The treble in this orchestra began a soft retreat.
As morning's crystal violet tears tumbled toward the street.
Empty hearts in lonely rooms let silence set the beat.*

*Evening raged on the stage of the wars that fell.
Heavy drums sent angry hums to the battle's knell.
Evening stepped to lost regret that lingered on a shore.
Loving strings softer sing in mounting cello score.*

*Morning sighed a quiet gasp to let the tempo slow,
But evening dances faster as the shadows start to grow.
All the cosmic architecture swaying to this flow,
Seeds within the breezes of the greatest wind to blow.*

*Time will err beneath the stare of every waiting eye,
Time will dance beneath the glances of the flowing sky.
Time is growing through the throwing of a dream away,
Time is drifting to the sifting of some hearts today.*

*Still the night is waiting for the final kiss to swell.
Still the air is pausing for the final chime to tell.
Still the dreams are dancing on a shady shifty fence.
And every fool a player in this orchestra, immense.*

Ferocity Tamed

*Where in the world did I wear away?
I'm weary as a werewolf walking far.*

*Wondering where to stay,
Aware I've stayed too long.*

*I'm wading in a wasteland,
Wasting away.
And wasting time that waited.*

*Wondering where to stay,
When I've waited too long.*

*I'm whistling with a whisper's say,
Around the willows bend.
Walking weary where I've stayed,
Where weary werewolves end.*

*I'm not the man I was,
Maybe that is better.*