REDWINGBLACKBIRD SINGS

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INTRODUCTION

REDWING BLACKBIRD SINGS, has been a project in the offing for more than two years. A collection of poems, plays, stories and song lyrics: stuff I have been wanting to share for quite some time.

As a novelist/Singer song writer, I thought it might prove interesting to see how all these different venues sat when put in a common context.

For those of you who find and read this collection, I hope that it offers something you enjoy. I've had a lot of fun with writing and then putting it together for you.

Deep love:

cdm

P.S.: The cover art was done by my friend and brother Samuel R. Marquez.

This is dedicated to Dwight and Alan in QUENTIN BLUES.
CONSPIRE

Conspire for the sake,
of every moment spent awake
and hold fast despite it all,
dare to scale every wall.

Believe when it is not in fashion,
find the heart in righteous passion
Take wing and dare to fly,
reach within your blue minds sky.

Dance above the rattling noise,
revel in the simple joys

There's nothing formed that you can't handle,
don't allow mediocrity to blow out your sacred candle
Free beyond what you see
unknown, unexpected,
unapreciated,
sometimes agitated,
by what these eyes see.

The cold nature,
of the cold nature
within the creature,
bound in chains,
woven in time.
seeking the sublime
in a place...
sadly short on rhyme

Where time and space
reflect in flawed glass,
features of a stranger,
unrecognized by me,
unknown by me.
ANY GIFT

I am not tempted,
by a need to be seen.
I am already seen by God,
and that is enough.

What I offer up freely,
I do because it was a gift
Nothing I hold is actually mine.
it is only borrowed for the moment.

Any gift I'm blessed to give,
is given back,
in my seeing the needs
of another being met.
Only in letting go,
am I truly able to hold on....
THE CULTURE SHOCK

She looked out
through a dirty window
the culture shock
her inner standing
of understanding
without one hint
of demanding
her hope commanding
the height of her dream.

Wishing upon a star
which she could not see.
through the brilliant sunlight
on that cold
late November day.
But deep down in her heart she knew
the star was there
AN AUTUMN MOMENT.

Infinitesimal curiosity hammerred,
soft as purest gold, gleaming
Momentarily enamoured,
woken suddenly from dreaming.

Running wild, free of cause,
obstacles lit up and burning
Through the bonds of inner flaws,
boundless thoughts, ever yearning.

Letting go perpetually,
of myths and fables tethering.
Eyes wide, born to see,
nature of a life that's weathering

Definate mute, stone beliefs,
deafening in their contradiction.
One single moment of relief,
wears away the deep conviction.

When stillest silence alone remains,
warm blue velvet to the touch
The smell of gentle autumn rain,
a reaching soul will never clutch.

At the final taken breath,
failing leaves make no sound.
But whisper quietly in death,
when at last they reach the ground.
STONE COLD.

Stone cold, in my mind
waterwashed and worn.
With every moment born,
I follow the shades of ink
Ever made to rethink,
places that I’ve been
Faces that I’ve seen,
that left a mark on me
Confined, too blind to see,
the cause and its effect
The derelict I knew,
had faded out, stage right.
The glare of the flood lights,
leave shadows in thier wake.
They involuntarily shake,
no marionette, or strings.
Whatever today may bring,
for good, or ill, I know.
I am trapped and stone cold,
waterwashed and old.
I am not I,
at least,
not I,
as I once was,
or as I will be,
when we will be,
will be.

I can not say,
and somehow, some way,
where the daylight drones,
in sullen rooms,
full of hearts alone

The I resounds,
and reverberates,
dancing a
lively,
multi hued,
two step,
when finally found.

The tans and browns,
sing silently,
and wish violently
for change
living in
a world,
they call strange.

Innocent eyes,
see poisoned lies,
that wither fast,
the recent past,
its wrinkled face,
a crumpled map,
just a trap.

And the I once I,
sees and flows
its broken nose
with crimson flow
does not dream,
the otherwise...
Spent a day and a night,
beneath a harvest moon,
Contemplating everything,
I'd ever done, or said.
The tides came in,
then went back out,
While visions played,
inside my head.

I've heard it said, many times,
man is measured by legacy.
Fortunes turn on a dime,
come and go, like the wind.
That was is gone and what might be,
wind me caught, in between
Thoughts like wispy moments
they never come again.

And all I crave is peace,
yeah ...my soul longs for peace.
A moment held in eternity
where a spirit finds its release.
And in the final measure,
when all the turmoils cease,
I will open my soul and sail
upon the winds of peace.
SCOUNDRLS

A PLAY.

ACT ONE.

Setting: A crowded tavern in 1650 England. Two men sit on opposite sides of a table in a darkened corner. They talk in a secretive fashion over their mugs of ale.

Horatio: Harvin, the only son of a wealthy local merchant, sits sullen in his half drunken state. He gazes across the table at his older companion, a long faced Frenchman by the name of Pierre Laboe. Pierre looks back at the younger man intently, listening.

Horatio: Thou dost not understand me, nor my sorry state. Thou canst understand.

Pierre: [Smiling wanly, reaches across the table and pats his friend on the hand.] Nay, but I do understand thee all too well, young Horatio. [He pauses and looks around, then leans in and speaks more quietly.] Thy desire is surely driven by thy need for comfort. It is the way of all men.

Horatio: [Mockingly scoffs] Hah! My desire is as troubling as an itch passed on to me by an unkempt wench. No! [He slaps the table.] It is the desire of that worm eaten father of mine which doth vex my aim and causes me such distress.

Pierre: [Sits back and strokes his whiskered chin.] So, thou hast said on many an occasion. Then...what’s to do? Tell me again, good fellow, what lays at the heart of this matter?

Horatio: [Rubs his temples.] It is Lucinda! Always, Lucinda, curse her serpentine eyes. [Lifts his mug and drinks.] She has, despite my best efforts to the contrary, bewitched the heart of the old man. So much so in fact, that he now sees nary a thing 'cept that which might be pleasing to her. Oh, how I rue the day my sweet mother drew her last breath.

Pierre: And so I am led to believe that thou art afloated by this, Lucinda?

Horatio: [Angrily.] I fear no living soul!
Pierre: [Unphased by the outburst.] Horatio, it is a wise man that keepth a pinch of fear in and amongst his coins. [Pauses.] What then? Is not thine own father a man of great means? [Drinks, then motions to Horatio with a flourish of his left hand.] Art thou not his sole heir? Art thou not his only progeny?

Horatio: [Looks to Pierre scornfully.] Thou knowest this to be so. [Pauses, looking at his friend suspiciously.] What kind of mischief now lays within the depths of thy dark eyes?

Pierre: [Places his hand over his heart feigning hurt.] Me? Mischief? Nay, my truest friend, not I. It is only the perplexing ardor resting upon the brow of thine heart that inspires me to speak of this at all.

Horatio: [Impatiently.] What then? Speak! I pray thee. What festerth in that sullied mind of thine?

Pierre: [His hand still on his heart] As pure as newly fallen snow are my intentions. [He sighs.] Perhaps it might behoove thee to take thine suit to thy father directly?

Horatio: [Looks at Pierre with scorn again.] Hast thou now stuffed thine ears with clay? Have I not been speaking plainly to thee? Wilt thou hear me now at last?

Pierre: Speak on then, young friend.

Horatio: It is Lucinda. [Puts his face in his hands for a moment, then slowly removes them.] She is nothing more than a common strumpet. She is mine own age, none the less, and known carnally by me on many an occasion.

Pierre: [His eyes go wide.] Truly, sir?

Horatio: I now bear my soul with open and honest conviction. [He pauses again and sighs.] Before and since the old man had her. And I'd wager you a pretty farthing now, she has taken on other lovers in the meanwhile. I am convinced of it.

Pierre: [Clucking his tongue.] Of a truth, I have caught an eyefull of her myself. What a pretty picture that must portend?

Horatio: [Wistfully.] Aye! A picture I have seen on many an occasion when my father was away. let me tell you.
Pierre: [With eyebrows raised.] Then what of your sway upon the wench? Surely, thou must have some action in this regard?

Horatio: Alas, none Forsoth, she is a woman scorned, smeared by jealousy fiercer than a storms tide. Do not be mistaken, my friend, there is indeed a lovely picture there to be certain, but the fire that burns within it is rank beyond any common measure. Her heart is poison.


Horatio: [Draws a deep breath and begins his tale.] Once, a year or so ago, I took Lucinda as a lover. To my misery, her heart became set upon me, but in my own heart, I saw her as nothing more than sport. But oh, had I had the good sense to leave her where I found her at the first. She, when she found me unwilling to be tied, in vengeance set her ill wiles upon my father. He, lonely and unsuspecting, was taken in wholesale. I pleaded with the man to forego his desire, but my words were envious to him. He put a ring on the hand of that vile paramour and since that time, I have been nothing more than a knave in his eyes, a mere scoundrel, unworthy of the better angels of his nature.

Pierre: [Peigning genuine concern.] Hast thou no meet to escape thy sad state? Methinks thee to this occasion and thereby gage, as thy fathers issue, your rightful remembrance in his heart.

Horatio: [Shaking his head.] Were it that easy, good Pierre. My father, I fear, has sold his everlasting soul. He has become a cuckold to the wench who's only aim is revenge upon myself for using, then scorning her outright.

Pierre: And what of it, friend? Wilt thou stand idly by and see they fathers stock fall into the clutches of such a woman? Nay! seemeth to me, for thee to allow such a tragedy wouldst mean that thou hast shirked thy sacred office as thy fathers son. but...I do digress. Who am I to prate against a man of thy station?

Horatio: [Sadly.] Truly, sir, I am a man caught in between. [He lowers his head into his hands on the table.] Whichever
way I do presently turn, I am caught in a web of mine own sad and contemptible benediction. Inaction wouldst seemeth to me to be my only recourse.

Pierre: [Now pressing.] Then plead the matter with thy father. Go and seek from him that which is thine birthright. When thou hast gained as much, leave thy home and make thine own way in the world. It is truly, just that simple.

Horatio: [Laughs maniacally] Not so much as half a pence wouldst my father loose to me beyond my allowance. And if he were to learn of my trimming the wench, I wouldst not even receive that pittance... No... Lucinda has the old mans ears and to my eternal sadness, I am afeared that my fathers ears have migrated south to his groin.

Pierre: [Snickers at this.] Dost thou love thy father?

Horatio: [Thoughtfully.] Certainly there was a time when I loved the old man. But anymore, he'd rather that I avaunt. I fear I have become nothing more than a stain upon what were once his most sincere affections.

Pierre: [Sitting back.] Tell me, young Horatio...[Pauses] how far wilt thou fain to venture in order to be unshackled from these unruly chains of thine?


Pierre: [Smiling wickedly] I am no bawdy soul to unsavory deeds. What beshrews such a situation as this, my good lad, is easily remedied and it is no low brow craving of which I now speak. Be sure of this.

Horatio: What then? Tell me. For what now weigheth upon me layeth upon my soul, heavy as a millstone.

Pierre: [Reaches into his coat and takes out a vial.] You must first make thine efforts to reason with the old man. Put thine own best foot forward, as it were, in appealing to what thine own self hast called...'The better Angels' of the old mans nature. Then, should he chide you for your effort...

Horatio: [Almost whispering.] Poison him?
Pierre: Nay! [He looks around them again.] Nay, my brave Horatio. Not poison. Such an act would be unbecoming. A deed such as that in this instant would be base.

Horatio: Forsooth! I would discover thine intent!

Pierre: The intent is not mine, good Horatio, but rather, thine. I am no more than a conduit to an end in this matter. [Pushes the vial across the table.] Not poison, my friend, merely a potion to induce deep sleep.

Horatio: [His face full of concern.] Thus, to what end?

Pierre: [Lets the moment hang before responding.] Look in the reflection in the glass of thine own soul. Put away the habit of beggar and gae what means you might finally attain thy gentle station. Sometimes the forest must be cut down in order to build a kingdom.

Horatio: Of a certainty, thou speakest in heavy riddles, man. Now, tell me your aim. Hie, speak plainly.

Pierre: [Pushes the vial into Horatio's hand, then forces the fingers of the younger man closed around it.] How thou farest in thy affair will only be measured by thy humour, here and now. Dost thou now understand my meaning?

Horatio: [Looks at Pierre incredulously.] Dosing the old wheezer? What satisfact wilt be attained by such a deed?

Pierre: How far art thou willing to push this matter? How strong are thy bonds to thy patriarch? [Pauses.] Dose them both and whilst they are both fast asleep, let the dagger at thy side do its own work.

Horatio: [Shaking his head.] Foul murder?

Pierre: Your freedom, good Horatio.

Horatio: I would surely hang for such a wicked deed.

Pierre: [Again smiles wickedly.] Not so, young friend. [He pauses and looks about once more.] When thou hast dispatched the old man, blood the woman, then place the weapon firly in her hand. Meantime, I shall arrive at that moment with the constables. When the wench is discovered in her position, thou
wilt find thyself in the cat-birds seat.

Horatio: [Sits back and ponders.] And what chance doth ill intent hie mine own liberation? I am a man who sitteth on the outside of his own life, mulling over the pittance my father allows. I am truly grieved at such cold and bold persuasion, which, once undertaken, might tip the scales against, or in favor, regarding my present lack of fortune. [Looks to Pierre with an eye of suspicion again.] And what of thee?

Pierre: [Smiling brightly.] What of me?

Horatio: Tell me, pierre ...what doest thou stand to gain by the working of this endeavor? Tell me now, what expectest thou?

Pierre: [Chuckles at this.] Only thine own well being, my young friend. Nothing more than that, I swear. [Raises his right hand in a pledge.]

Horatio: [Eyeing the vial in his hand.] Never have I given place to such deviation toward ungentle attention. Forsooth, my father can not be blamed for the bewitching which has befallen him. Were I a lesser man, I too would have fallen victim to Lucinda's guile. Of a trth, it is mine own resistance to her chains which hath brought me to this horrid office. Indeed. I would gladly 'scape this dire circumstance were mine own father willing to warrant what is mine by right. [Slaps the table again.] Ayel! My once happy home is undone.

Pierre: Then it is agreed?

Horatio: Indeed. It is with a heavy heart, I now say aye.

Pierre: Then let what must be done, be done.

Together they rise and exit, stage right.

ACT II.

Setting:

The manor home of Edmond Harvin. The old man sits at the head of the dining room table, his young wife Lucinda sits at the opposite end and Horatio sits mid table between them. The trio argues hotly.
Edmond: [Angrily.] I'll not have it! Truly, have I worked an entire lifetime just to see my fortune spent on thine whores and God only know what other kind of licentious living? I shall hear no more in regard to this, Horatio.

Horatio: [Pleading.] Father, I am only soliciting of thee what is mine by right. What dost keep thee from reason in this matter, father?

Lucinda: [Snorts loudly.] Truly, Horatio... [She pauses to burp loudly.] thou art a man of ill issue. What nerve thou hast to make such greed laced demands upon thine own father. See how thou hast distressed him in this?

Horatio: [Points to Lucinda angrily.] Hold thy evil tongue. Lucinda! This matter is not thine affair. Now, hold thy poison tongue, lest thine own indiscrations come to light.

Lucinda: [Smiling wanly.] I have nothing to hide, Horatio. Truly... [She pauses to burp again.] I am a gentle woman who's love for thy father you might do well to mark.

Horatio: [Scoffs.] Thy love? As it is professed, it is nothing more than a mockery of self same word.

Edmond: [Slams his fist on the table.] ENOUGH! [Turns his eyes on his son.] I dare not commend thee on thy colors, Horatio. Your standard has waned in my eyes in the light of thy bawdy nature. [He pauses and points.] Oh, yes! Dost thou for a moment consider me a doddering old fool? I know the whole of thy unholy carousing and my shame in its regard canst be measured.

Horatio: [Stammering.] Father...I...I...

Lucinda: [Smugly.] Not so brazen now art thou, feckless philanderer?

Edmond: [Gently to his wife.] Lucinda, that is enough.

Horatio: [Rises from his chair.] I fear to a greater degree, thine own measure of brave sense hath failed thee, father. [Picks up the wine bottle from the table, walks over and refills his fathers goblet.] Nor the less, thou art my father and I am thy son. As it pleaseth thee, so will I do.

Lucinda: [Snorts hearing this.]
Horatio: [Looks over to Lucinda, who empties her goblet, then tilts it toward him indicating she wanted more. He moves to the end of the table and accommodates her.] Canst there be peace 'tween thee and I, Lucinda? If not for mine, or even thine own sake, then for the sake of father here?

Lucinda: [Scoffing.] Indeed! As if thou really had any kind of concern, save for thine own self? No! There will be no bridge of civility 'tween thyself and I.

Edmond: [Sets his goblet on the table and rises shakily.] I fear that the wine hath taken hold of me. Perhaps I wouldst do well to retire. [He steps away and then goes down in a heap.]

Lucinda: [Peigning concern.] EDMOND! [She rises from her chair and moves toward her husband. She staggers and goes down to a knee. She looks back to Horatio with pleading eyes.] Help him, Horatio! Help thy father! He has taken the falling sickness.

Horatio: [Looks on with disdain.] That wouldst seemeth to be a truth, Lucinda. And what of you?

Lucinda: [Rises again, staggers and falls.] What hast thou done, Horatio? Are we poisoned?

Horatio: [Now smiling.] Nay, not poison.

Lucinda: [Clutches her midsection and moans.] What then?

Horatio: [Apathetically.] What matter is it to you, vile woman? Thy fate is sealed and so I shall be rid of thee once and for all time.

Lucinda: [Now falls unconscious with a loud groan.]

Horatio: [Nears and stands over his father.] What manner of man art thou, mine father? Thine own callous will hath driven me to this madness. Too far gone down the rabbit hole are we now and I am truly afeared of what is to be. My love for thee was sold by thee in exchange for thine affections for this base woman. Now all that is thine shall be mine and she is powerless to 'scape the hold her own low brow web hath trapped her in. [He points to Lucinda.] Nay! [He draws his dagger.] Sadly it is perforce I act now. Thou hast been undone old man by thy passion misplaced. What of my colors now? [He kneels and stabs Edmond in the heart.]
Lucinda: [Suddenly leaps up screaming.] Bloody murder! Oh, most foul deed!

Horatio: [Stunned to see Lucinda conscious.] What is this? How is it thou are awakened so soon from such ill effect?

Lucinda: [Crying out again.] HORATIO! HORATIO! WHAT DEPTH OF DARKNESS HATH DRIVEN THEE TO SUCH A DARK DEPLORABLE ACT AS THIS? YOU HAVE KILLED YOUR FATHER!

Horatio: [Rises, the bloody dagger still in his hand.] What manner of deceit hath thou wrought, oh foul wench? I saw with mine eyes as thou drankeast thy wine.

Lucinda: [Cries out once more.] THOU HAST MURDERED THY FATHER!

Horatio: [In desperation, moves upon Lucinda.] You will most surely die, foul creature!

Pierre: [With several constables rushes into the room, thier swords are drawn. He calls out.] HOLD! LAY DOWN THY WEAPON!

Lucinda: [In a voice laced with grief.] HE HATH MURDERED HIS FATHER! See? THE BLOODY TOOL IS STILL IN HIS HAND.

Horatio: [As the constables move in, disarm him and lay hands upon him.] WHAT IS THIS TREACHERY, PIERRE? WHAT HAST THOU WROUGHT? IT IS A CONSPIRACY? AM I UNDONE?

Lucinda: [Frantically.] HE IS MAD! HE IS MAD! [Her tears flow freely.] This devil hath murdered my sweet, sweet Edmond. With mine own eyes have I witnessed the foul deed!

Horatio: [Puts up resistance as he is pulled away. He laughs madly.] WHAT MANNER OF BEGUILING WITCHERY IS THIS? PIERRE? THINE OWN TRAITOROUS BLACK HEART HATH WOVEN THIS NET I AM NOW CAUGHT FAST WITHIN!

Pierre: [Pointing to Horatio accusingly.] Nay, young scoundral! It is thine own hand soaked in thy fathers blood that hath now fastened thee to the net thou art trapped within. Thou hast foresworn any gentle nobility once possessed, Horatio. The fault is thine, not mine.

When the constables have dragged Horatio away, Pierre and Lucinda look at each other silently for a moment. In the next moment they both break out into laughter.
Pierre: Fruit twas ripe as thou professed it to be.

Lucinda: [Happily wiping moisture from her face.] Indeed. [She offers her hand to him.] And so ends this piece of the matter, my love. [She allows Pierre to kiss her hand, then nods to Edmonds corpse.] Only the disposal of this course thing remains undone.

Pierre: [After kissing Lucindas hand, smiles arcaneley.] Oh, what wicked webs we weave, when we practice to deceive.

Lucinda: Yes! Yes! [She looks at the room around them.] The legalities should be a mere formality. [Pauses and sighs.] It is a shame though.

Pierre: What is that, my love?
Lucinda: [Pouting.] The carpet yonder where I poured out my wine...
Pierre: What of it?

Lucinda: Twill have to be replaced...

finis.
TODAY IS NOT THAT DAY.

Tore a page from the word,
and dropped some thoughts in ink.
Grey days make me think,
of better childhood times.
Reminded of how I climb,
and where I once was.
Working through the hazy fuzz,
as the distance between expands.

I hold out my hands,
reaching for what might be.
These old walls sing to me,
in taunting lyric rhyme.

No holding onto time,
far too slippery for that.
Rising from the mat,
where life has knocked me down.

And everything I have found,
can never be possessed.
And some day I will rest,
but today is not that day.
BI-POLAR ATTITUDES.

Damn the bi-polar attitudes,
pendulum swinging to and fro.
They make their case,
suspended and groundless.

Every vision stretching boundless,
one eye present, another on the past.
Scenes play on endlessly,
but forever remain soundless.

Down the bottomless rabbit hole,
scraping its sides with my mind.
Quiet prayers fall from lips,
who's desperation, marks the day.

Damn the hopes unfulfilled,
cast upon the burning heap.
Voices silent, cold as flame,
forever, nothing left to say.
THE INVISIBLE MAN.

What is it that I know, the unseen show
wrapped in nothing, exposed, cut out of sight
and I watch you, but never touch you.

you see the dark, I am too light

and I go far away, in my troubled play,
smother the feeling that out me at risk.

blind leading the blind,

into the ditch, at a pace far too brisk.
Alarm! Alarm! Down on the yard!
A dozen, or more times a day.
The blue comely, sit and wait,
motion stopped in its tracks.

Faces turn to identify,
an ambulance, or speeding cart.
Heart-attack, or cell fight,
someone won't be coming back.

Alarm! Alarm! Down on the yard!
Shoots fired, someone falls.
Blood spilt; on hot asphalt,
life spent from barrel flash.

Final point of no return,
baby blue, turned to red.
The trembling whispered, silence falls,
with a resounding, thundering crash.

Alarm! Alarm! Down on the yard!
Men in blue laying prone.
Running green across dead grass,
voices raised, angry demands.

The precious crimson tide of life,
shots fired without a cause.
A murdered man lays quickly dying,
his hour-glass, now out of sand.
THE HAPPY MAN.

He was a man, born a man,
but convinced by the world otherwise.
the twisted face of compromise,
locked up in secret revulsion.

In an instant of compulsion,
he stepped out over the edge,
no thought for the height of the ledge,
he began his rapid descent.

And in finding freedom to be bent,
he disappeared into the mass,
finally believing he'd come home at last,
and feeling oh, so satisfied.

He marched smartly professing pride,
the happy man, on the wing,
but it didn't mean a thing,
when he suddenly became a she.

The claiming of identity,
putting fire out with gas,
a hurt child moving past,
what others thought him to be.
IT IS, WHAT IT IS.

It is what it is,
and that's all that it is,
twisting and turning,
pining to be free.

Release is fantasy,
somewhere I can't be,
only in my mind,
a dream always falling short.

From the distance, a report,
jesters holding court,
spouting nonsense to the masses,
believing their own lies.

What is on the rise,
paints pictures in the eyes,
of all who dare to hope,
in what they do not see

World turning perpetually,
toward eventuality,
fatal is it's kiss,
it is what it is.
Wounded by the truth,
the ruthless tolling of bells,
pushing at my senses,
causing me to realize,
causing me to think.

Trapped in the acrid stink,
of a past unrelenting,
innuendos ever hinting,
at what might yet be,
or at what I've missed.

Or by what I've seen,
one name on a long list,
for slow extermination,
death by old age,
debts rising from the past,
tomorrow comes too fast,
I am resigned at last.

And the faces I once knew,
despite thirty years in chains,
they're still young in my mind,
strangely now I find,
no advantage for the blind,
bent lines slowly straighten,
out of necessity,
right at the journies end.

Letters I've written, but never send,
and so I begin again,
right where I never was,
this causes all brand new,
at last, healed by the truth.
THE CONSCIOUS MAN.

The conscious man,
need not pretend,
or contend,
he does not know.
When fascades fade,
eyes open.
taking in light,
feeling the pain.

Living a life,
accountable to all,
in the moment,
being occupied.
Open hands,
open heart,
what holds worth,
will yet remain.
HEART AND SOUL.

Hold my heart,
if you dare.
Feel its beating,
its living sign
Feel the breath
that I exhale
Its cool hue
a precious find

Hold my soul,
if you can.
Feel its motion,
ebb and flo
Feel this life's,
eternal spark
Then open your hands,
and I will go.
Setting: At dusk on a city street in Oakland, California. A group of young men gather, intending to protest the police killing of a local youth, Jimmy Hill. Some carry signs, some carry placards, they are all angry.

Protestor #1: [Speaking to the white man and the Asian man who have joined their group.] We really appreciate you guys standin' with us.

Protestor #2: Jimmy was our friend, man. He didn't deserve to go out that way.

Protestor #3: Yeah man, we got more folks comin' down too. We're gonna make some noise tonight. Come what may, we're gonna ride for this. We're gonna ride for Jimmy.

Protestor #4: What we oughtta do, is go burn down that damned cop-shop! [He looks around him warily, waves his hand in the air.] Maybe then they might get the message that we ain't gonna take this kind of shit no more.

Protestor #1: [Calmly.] That ain't the answer, bro.

Protestor #5: [Suddenly speaks out angrily.] Then what is the freakin' answer? bro? These white cops killin' our folks like we ain't about nothin'. I say its gotta stop.

Protestor #4: Yeah, man! [Still lookin' around nervously.] We gotta do somethin' to make these pigs see, we ain't just gonna roll over and let these no good cracka' cops cap us like they did Jimmy.

Protestor #2: We need to stay calm and think about what we're doin' out here tonight.

Protestor #5: [Sneering.] What do you know about white boy? Ya don't even live here!

Protestor #1: [To protestor #5.] That attitude us any, bro. [Points to protestor #2.] He's right, our heads cool about all of this.
Red-wing Blackbird sings. R Dean Morris.

Protestor #3: So? What're we gonna do?

Protestor #1: When the others sho, we're gonna march. We gotta do this in a peaceful way though.

Protestor #5: Hell with that! [Hits his bald with his right fist.] All this peaceful shit ain't ever got our people nothin' but more killin' by the white ass pigs! [Points to protestor #1.] This ain't the nineteen sixties and you sho as hell ain't M.L.K.

Protestor #1: [Turns and nods to a knot of riot police in full gear who are now looking toward them.] We're here to make a point, yes. [Looks directly into the face of protestor #5.] I don't give a rats ass about bein' arrested, if that's what it comes down to. [Pauses and draws a deep breath.] But we gotta do this right, brotha.

Protestor #5: What's right, bro? [Sarcastically.] The Grand Jury let that pecker-wood cop get away with killin' Jimmy, man. Jimmy didn't do a damned thing to deserve bein' capped like that! He wasn't a banger, man. He was a smart kid that was on his way to college next fall.

Protestor #4: [Speaking to protestor #1.] Yeah, bro! [Throws a fist in the air.] A life for a life! Whitey gots to pay!

Protestor #3: You brothers need to take a step back and give some serious thought to what you're considering. We don't want to kick off another mess like the one they had down in L.A with the Rodney King thing. The community is behind this march, but they won't be if things start gettin' crazy.

Protestor #1: [To protestors #4 and #5.] You brothers just need to calm down. You ain't thinkin' straight.

Protestor #5: Calm down, my ass! [He reaches inside his jacket and takes out a Molotov cock-tail.] We gonna get some kind of vengeance for Jimmy tonight.

Protestor #2: We didn't come here for this kind of crap!

Protestor #1: [Speaking to protestor #5.] Don't even think about it brotha. This ain't the answer!
Protester #4: [To protestor #1.] What? You scared, brotha?
Ya gonna piss on yo'self, or what?

Protester #5: Yeah bro. [Pulls a lighter out of his pocket]
We gonna light this place up like it's the fourth of July.

Protester #3: This ain't cool, brother.

Protester #4: [Angrily to protestor #3.] Well, get yo Asian ass on then! If you scare, you ain't needed here.

Protester #1: Don't do this, brother.

Protester #5: [Lights the fuse on the molotov.] Forget you, bra! [He throws the bomb through a shop window]

Protester #3: Aww, shit! The cops are movin' this way.

Protester #1: [Shoves protestor #5 hard.] You stupid ass!

Protester #5: [Smiling.] Ya should'na done that bra.

Protester #2: This ain't why we came here.

Protestors 4 and 5 now attack protestor #1 and when he goes down to the ground, the kick and punch him brutally. The store behind them begins to burn.

Protester #3: [Frantically.] Here come the riot cops, man! [Tear gas cannisters begin to explode around them.] Freakin' tear gas! [He turns and flees.]

Protester #2: [As he coughs, manages to get between protestor #1 and his attackers. He is releived when the two men turn and flee, both coughing heavily as they go. The fire in the shop is now fully engaged, the riot officers near with weapons drawn.]

Riot Officer #1: [Loudly ] MOVE AWAY! PUT YOUR HANDS ON YOUR HEAD WITH THE FINGERS LACED!

Protester #2: [Disoriented by the tear gas, having a hard time breathing, holds his cell phone in his right hand. He points to his friend on the ground, battered and bleeding.] He's hurt bad! He needs a doctor!

Riot Officer #2: DON'T MOVE! DON'T MOVE! PRONE OUT!

Riot Officer #1: [Seeing the object in protestor #2's hand.]
DROP THE WEAPON! DROP THE WEAPON!

Protestor #2: [With hands up.] Don't shoot! Don't shoot!

Both Officers open fire and protestor #2 falls dead.

The end?
SIX INCHES OFF THE GROUND.

Vs.1
Can't get past the mental block.
I'm like a ship sunk, still in dock.
Always tryin' to beat the clock,
but never seem to win.

Seems I'm always stuck in place,
left at the gate in the biggest race.
In constant need of heavens grace,
but down and out again.

Cho
Six inches off the ground,
the world turns beneath my feet.
The passing of time, I've found,
is the fleeting taste of sweet.

And old memories from the past,
go in and out of time.

Six inches off the ground,
and it's a stinkin' rotten crime.

It's a stinkin' rotten crime.

Vs.2
Can't get away from the suspicion.
Life is a trick played with decision.

At the outer edge of my vision,
are my dreams and reality.

Seems I'm always stuck in place,
left at the gate in the biggest race.
In constant need of heavens grace.
needin' a bar of modality.
RED-WING BLACKBIRD SINGS.

A song lyric by
R. Dean Morris.

Vv.1]  Once I thought I knew it all,
       but I didn't know a thing.
       I tried to do things my own way,
       only felt life's bitter sting.
       But then I opened up my eyes,
       And I saw the light of day.
       Felt the winds of inspiration,
       Show me a brand new way.

Chv]  Now I can rise,
       nothin' can hold me down.
       I can rise,
       with my feet on firmer ground.
       And every lesson learned,
       plays before my eyes.
       Of this one thing I am sure,
       now I can rise.
UPWARDS AS I FALL.

VS. I]

Tired on the inside,
tired and falling upwards.
Moving at the speed of thought,
on a collision course with the sun.
Counting every heartbeat,
in the cold of deepest space.
So many battles fought,
that were never meant to be won.

VS. [II]

Tired on the outside,
frayed around the edges.
Pieces fall away from me,
to never be seen again.
Up against the cosmic tide,
my mind just shards of light.
Everything that went before,
is burned up in the solar wind.

CHO]

And I'm tryin' to remember,
where it is I've been.
Everything is changin',
startin' all over again
The only sense of certainty,
is I can't be certain at all.
So strange to me, to be,
movin' upwards as I fall.
I KNOW YOU'RE LEAVIN' ME.

Vs. I
It's become apparent to me,
that you've changed your mind.
And the dreams we once built together,
are what you're leavin' behind.
What was once so simple, is now a tragedy
You don't have to say it
baby I know you're leavin' me.

Vs. II
I'm lettin' go of illusion,
and finally comin' to my senses.
Breakin' through the hurt and confusion,
there won't be any mending fences.
Once you swore that forever, in love we'd always be,
now you've changed your mind.
baby I know you're leavin' me.

Chorus
Go on, just get it over.
My heart's already broken, but I'll recover.
What's done is done, it's so plain to see.
I can't change your mind, baby I know you're leavin' me.
LONG TIME UP THE RIVER.

Vs. I]  Gonna take a little time now,
to get my act together.
Gonna take a little time now,
to check the changin' weather.
And it don't matter where I've been, baby,
I know where I need to be.

Cho]  Been a long time up the river,
now I think it's time for change
Been a long time up the river,
some people might think it's strange.
But don't ya know,
in the face of things,
I've got to learn how to be free,
all over again.

Vs. [II]  Gonna take a little time now,
to check the changin' weather
Gonna take a little time now,
to get my act together.
And it don't matter where I've been, baby,
I know where I need to be.

Cho]  Bridge.]  I've seen a lot of madness,
watched a lot of strong men fall.
Felt the bitter winds of sadness,
with my back against a concrete wall.
IN MY LIFE.

Vs.I] In my life,
I've seen the highs and lows.
I've been loved.
and I've been laid low.
I have seen.
the passing of so many scenes.
Like a play
written from the deepest dream.

Cho] Now as I fade,
into oblivion.
Years become moments,
there and then done.
All regrets recede,
as steeper grows the climb.
I watch my vision dimming,
in my time,
in my life.

Vs.II] In my life,
just a bird in a cage.
My shadow remains,
the same as I age.
The world turns,
I'm frozen here in place.
See these lines,
growin' deeper in my face.
RED-wing blackbird sings.

HOKA HEY.

Vs.1] ridin' into the mid-night blue,
told to lay it all on the line.
But how can I measure what I see,
against what I have left behind?
dreams of home and road-side bombs,
so many people askin', why?
Will there be enough of me left,
to send home if I die?

Cho] ain't afraid to do my duty,
others before me sacrificed.
But the things I see, they trouble me,
who really pays the price?
Sometimes, I can't help but feel,
God has turned his eyes away.
Someone's gonna die tonight,
could this be my Hoka-Hey?
could this be my Hoka-Hey?

Vs.2] Those us in the chain of command,
have said we've got to roll.
But the ringin' of their blood stained hands,
can't measure the human toll.
brothers statesideuggin' out,
in prisons, or on suicides
but here in war torn Rekete,
there ain't no place to hide.
Vs.1] I can't turn back the hands of time.

all I got is here today.

Tomorrow isn't guaranteed,

and with that, I'm okay.

I'm okay, I'm okay, I'm okay.

I can't turn off all the noise,

the world just keeps turnin' on

people passin' through my life,

another moment, and they're gone.

and they're gone, and they're gone, and they're gone.

Chorus:

and these old wings of mine,

have been clipped, time after time.

Now the used to be's,

are all I have it seems.

Yeah, these old wings of mine,

have been clipped, time after time.

Now I only fly,

in my deepest dreams,

with these old wings

Bridge:

And livin' clean and free,

is just another fantasy.

While I'm here walkin' this line,

most of me, has been left behind, whoa...
INSOMNIA.

Vs.I] There's a dog backin' up the street,
      won't let me get to sleep.
Two thirty five in the mornin',
and my thoughts are runnin' way too deep.
What came before was yesterday,
one passing breath now gone
Night-birds that make their way,
unhindered, just before the dawn.

Cho) And every heart-felt contemplation,
silent sound waves never heard.
And never once a spoken word,
the restless silence up ending.
cries out loud for finality,
and every thought slowly sendin',
insomnia, my reality.

Vs.II] Layin' in the warmth of silence,
considering what will go before.
Two thirty five in the morning,
and I'm tired to my very inner core.
What goes beyond this moment now.
virgin voosphere, yet unseen.
And the quiet sound of thunder,
makes me wonder, what it all means...
THE RACE.

Never give up my friend,
and never say die.
You can reach the mountain top,
if you'll only try.
Don't set your eyes behind,
you gotta look straight ahead.
Just keep rememberin',
the good things that your heart said.

Cho

Ya gotta keep believin',
you gotta keep flyin',
even when your insides make you feel like dyin'.
Ya gotta keep movin' up wards,
find your own time and space.
Never give up, never give up, never give up,
you gotta finish the race.

Never surrender my friend,
never give up the fight.
Just keep on movin' on,
deep down you know it's right.
You can be the champion,
no bad time will pull under.
Just take one step at a time,
never let them steal your thunder.
YOU SHOULD BE WITH ME.

Verse.
he's got a way of keepin' you,
right up under his finger.
I'm on the outside lookin' in,
just a fool who lingers.
You're hungry for love
it's so plain to see.
And I'm the only one who knows,
you should be with me,
yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Chorus.
And all the lonely nights you spend,
tellin' yourself he's out with friends.
But I know you know,
I know you know.
You're hungry for real love's fire,
and starvin' on what used to be.
He'll never love you like I want to,
you should be with me.

Bridge.
And I can't count the times,
I wanted to pull you aside.
And try and make you see,
that you should be with me.
RED-WING BLACKBIRD SINGS.

A song lyric by
D. Dean Morris.

BRIGHTEST L.A. LIGHTS.

Red haze in a blue sky,
stretchin' to forever.
Distant walker on the beach,
his thoughts are severed.
Not a single bird in flight,
the surf means its lonely song.
Tryin' to reach a point beyond,
before the day is gone.

Chorus:
And those bright L.A. lights,
were never kind to me.
One more passer through with dreams,
ever meant to be.
And on the possibilities,
stretched thin by my hindsight.
I never found one friend,
among the bright L.A. lights.

Verse II:
Sunset out in Malibu,
end of the world.
Feelin' desperate and worn thin,
like paper yellowed and curled.
Out of money, out of dreams,
wish I were home again.
Bus ticket in hand, sittin' in the sand,
some hearts never win.

Chorus:
And I could stay another day,
if I wanted to.
Find a job, keep hangin' on.
but what good would that do?
SANTA CRUZ

Vs. I]

The days are sweet,
on the beaches of Santa Cruz.
The sea-birds sing,
to the tides that roll in.
Nights are long,
and hearts fall in love anew.
Wish I were there again,
in Santa Cruz.

Vs. II]

The summer never ends,
on the beaches of Santa Cruz.
The sea breeze blows,
any and every care away.
Boardwalk sounds,
dance across the endless blue.
Wish I were there again,
in Santa Cruz.
NOT SACRIFICED

Don't ask me why I write,
or where it all comes from,
the answers I possess
don't line up with the questions.

I can be perplexed,
or even sometimes vexed,
by the all of it all,
when nothing is everything.

Lines form on their own,
the pen moves, dropping ink,
then the vision sets,
in stone where it lands.

Not mind, or even hand,
but I think, something more,
something from beyond,
the space in which I sit.

Just a cup, not the wine,
holding golden potential,
in a fashion reverential,
the bard is not sacrificial.

Nothing, once imagined,
lingers on to long,
but just before it's gone,
a holy spark is captured,
so then...

there is the rapture.
END GAME.

I guess it's true, there are lines,
I won't cross, stigmas I won't bare.
I am on the outside, of so very many things
and most by choice, they don't need my voice.
I hear the cacophany, as it swells,
a gamblers tell, that gives him away.
The brand new day, does not take long,
to fall off key, then quickly fade.
And every aspiration, or intimation,
or desperation, subject to,
the consternation, smolders for a time,
turned on a dime, and then suddenly,
suddenly...
it bursts into flame, just an end game
The day was clear and bright, the morning mountain air sweet. The morning sun filtered through the trees, causing crystalline dew to melt on their limbs.

The Monroe mountain resort sat back, in contrast to the Alpine mountain looming behind it. The huge four story structure sat salmon pink, its hundreds of windows lit up like diamonds in the gathering sunshine.

It was early Spring, April, and the last of the heavy Winter snow was surrendering its icy grip on the Colorado landscape. It had been a long hard winter, but life was now blossoming again across the wooded glens.

An old and battered A.M.C. Rambler made its way up the final winding grade leading to the Monroe. It leveled off when it topped the rise, the old resort now looming before it. The dull root-beer brown automobile pulled into the parking lot and into a slot next to a brand new Cadillac Escalade. The contrast between the two vehicles was such that, anyone moving past could not help but have their eyes drawn to it.

A tall, thin man in his early thirties opened the driverside door of the Rambler, hearing the familiar groan of the rasping hinges protesting as he did so. The man stood up and looked about him, as if uncertain of his surroundings. He took the tattered Oakland A's baseball cap from his head, revealing a receding hair-line and grey peppered temples.

He thought about the child, his child still within the car, thought about all that they had been through already. She had been right since the visions started and they had come too far together for him to begin doubting her now.

He thought about the times he had stood silently watching as she conversed with the Angel she called Inriel. He had not seen the apparition himself, but he knew that the girl had, for everything the so called 'Angel' had told her had come to pass.

The man turned and leaned back into the cab of the car and spoke to the child. She was sitting passively, silently, as she had been much of the trip from California. He smiled gently at her as he began to speak.

"We're here, honey." He said. "This is the Monroe, just
like you described it."

The girl in the passenger seat of the car sat silent for a moment, looking at the Monroe through the windshield. She looked beyond the grand structure and saw them, just as she had been told that she would.

The man remained stooped looking at the girl and his thoughts went back to the events of the past several days. Her 'gift' as he had come to call it had begun to manifest two years before and over that time, though resitive at first, he had come to know that when she warned him of an upcoming event, it was time to pack up the car and get on the road.

The journey from California to Colorado had, in the past two days been eventful. They had been delayed a day when coming out of a Motel six, they had found all four tires on the Rambler slashed. He had through his frustration watched her as she spoke to the Angel she called Inriel. The man had never seen the heavenly visitor himself, but the accuracy of what the being had conveyed to the girl over the course of two years had convinced him that when she spoke, he had better listen.

"The tires." She had said to him two days before.

"What about them, honey?" The man had asked of her.

"Inriel says that the bad ones did this." She replied. "They are trying to keep us from getting to Colorado."

The man's thoughts came back to the present and he drew a deep breath and sighed. He looked at the girl who was unusually pale, but a pretty child in her pre-adolescence. Her hair was platinum, straight, shoulder length. But it was her eyes that captivated those who saw her. She had wolves eyes, grey, with gold flecks around the irises, intense and penetrating.

The girl now turned her face toward the man, her father, smiling wanly. There was a tinge of anxiety in her features as she drew a deep breath and spoke.

"I know we're here, daddy." She said. "It's just like Inriel showed me." She opened the passenger side door, its hinges squeaking in rusty protest and then got out of the car. She raised her right hand and pointed to the rise beyond the Monroe. "They're there, daddy." She said. "There are four Angels holing up the mountain, just like Inriel said they would be."
"And you can see them?" The man asked, though he already knew the answer to the question. It was always the same.

"Yes." She said, and coming around the front of the Rambler, she joined her father. "They're really beautiful."

"Describe them to me, honey." He said. "How many of them are there?"

Several seconds passed before she responded. She stood looking as if transfixed by what she saw. As she readied to speak, she pointed. "There and there." She said. "And there are two more, there and there."

"What do they look like, honey?" The man asked.

"Like I said." She said. "They're really big. As big as those veggie-saurs in the movie Jurrassic Park." She paused. "They have a whole lot of light coming off of them and they're all dressed in white, the shiniest white I ever saw. And they have wings, great big wings, each of them has four of them." She paused once more and looked back to her father. He was tired, she could see it in his face and in his posture. "The Angels are holding up the mountain, daddy. They're keeping it from falling down on all these people staying here."

The man went down to a knee and looked the girl square in the eyes. It was in moments like this daughter were most deeply connected. He had come to understand the nature of the girl-child he was raising, though the ramifications of it never ceased to frighten him. He placed his hands on her shoulders.

"I trust you, honey." He said. "I trust what you tell me is going to happen here."

"The Angels." She interjected, but was cut short before she was allowed to finish.

"I know." He assured her. "I know." He drew another deep breath and sighed once more. "Your mom would be so proud of you." He looked around them at the beauty of their surroundings. He understood that in a short while it would all be gone. "From what your Angel told you." He said. "There isn't a lot of time."

"I know, daddy." She said.

"Well, let's go then." He said and stood erect. "Maybe it'll be different this time."

"I hope so, daddy." She said. "I really hope so."
After closing the riverside door with the same rusty groan, the man put his arm around his daughters shoulder and together they walked toward the marble stairs leading up to the main entrance of the Monroe.

Carved marble lions sat at the foot of the stairs, their mouths agape, huge and imposing. The big stone cats looked as if they had been freshly painted. Their gold manes seemed to move in the early morning light. The girl eyed them warily, as if expecting them to pounce. She felt relieved when she and her father were past the beasts and began ascending the stairs.

The ground floor of the Monroe was faced with huge panes of tinted glass. The large oak double doors were ornately carved, stained in dark cheery.

The man pulled open the left door, waiting until his daughter had entered, before he himself went through. He stopped and looked about them at the huge foray. He could not help but be impressed while at the same time feeling uneasy that he and his daughter were both, out of thier element and at the same time, in a great deal of danger.

The inner walls of the Monroe were paneled in the same dark cheery as the entrance doors. It lent a cool ambiance to the place which was lit by three large chandeliers bobbed in glass that sparkled in the morning light filtering through the upper windows which were untinted.

The tiled floors were done in parkey, a black and white pattern, freshly buffed and gleaming. The check in desk sat in the center of the space, like a marble topped sentinal. The morning clerk sat in a padded chair reading the Enquirer, his expression one of abject boredom.

At either end of the foray were twin staircases, carpeted in indigo blue, bordered by a bannister that looked to be made of mahogany. The space the man and girl stood in was the epitomy of indulgence.

The girl stayed close to her father, as they neared the desk. Her eyes were just above its rim and she saw the clerk lower his paper and look at them with disdain.

"May I help you?" He asked and folded his paper carefully.

"Do you have a reservation, sir?"
"No." The man replied, looking down at his daughter and then back to the clerk. "My name is Wayne Bigelow, this is my daughter Juniper."

"What can I do for you, Mister Bigelow?" The desk-clerk asked, with more than a hint of impatience in his tone.

"I would like to speak to your manager." Bigelow answered.

"And what would this be about, sir?" The clerk asked, making less of an effort to disguise his disdain. "If you do not already have a reservation, I must tell you, we are booked solid."

"I don't need a room." Bigelow said. "I just want to speak to your manager."

"Is there a problem, sir?" The man behind the desk queried. "Perhaps I can be of some assistance?"

Wayne Bigelow now leaned over the desk and his dark eyes became intense. He understood completely that the clerk before him did not have the authority to get done what needed to be done. He looked at the name tag on the left side of the man's uniform. It read 'Joe'.

"I see your name is Joe." He said. "Well Joe, there isn't a lot of time. May I please speak to the Manager of this resort?"

"I can determine that." Joe the clerk said and now stood from his comfortable chair. "If you would just tell me what this is all about."

"You're wasting precious time." Bigelow stated. "Will you please get the manager?"

"Are you going to make problems?" The clerk asked and his right hand drifted toward a button below the desk. "Do I need to alert security to have you removed from the premises?"

"There were people moving about the foray, some were sitting in comfortable chairs. Many of them now looked, their attention drawn by the increasing volume of the conversation at the desk.

"You can do what you feel is necessary." Bigelow stated in a matter of fact tone. "Whatever it takes to get me into a real conversation with your manager."

"I think you need to leave, sir." Joe the clerk now proclaimed, noticing the attention being drawn to his station by the patrons.

"Daddy?" Juniper now spoke up, tugging at her father's coat sleeve. "I need to use the little girls room."
Joe, the desk clerk leered down at the girl, smiling in an insincere fashion. He pursed his lips and then shook his head in the negative.

"I am sorry, little girl." He said. "Only paying customers are allowed to use the facilities."

"Are you serious, man?" Bigelow asked, incredulously and anger flashed in his eyes. "Are you really gonna be that rude?"

The clerk stood glaring in silence for several seconds. The muscles in his jaws tightened, as did his thin lips. There was something about the man standing on the opposite side of the check-in desk that made the man feel uneasy. Something in the deep recesses of his mind told him that at that moment, he should have been listening.

"All I'm asking you for." Bigelow said. "Is to speak to your manager and to let my little girl use your restroom. Is that in some way unreasonable to you, man?"

"Mister Kreiter is a very busy man." The clerk now chirped. "You will have to make an appointment and then come back at another time."

"THERE WON'T BE ANOTHER TIME!" Bigelow now growled. "You need to listen to what I'm telling you, or a whole lot of people in this resort are going to die!"

"Sir." The clerk now said. "Are you now making a terrorist threat against this establishment?"

"Seriously?" Bigelow asked, the same incredulous expression on his face. "I'm trying to..."

"Daddy? I really need to go!" Juniper said and danced from one foot to the other to demonstrate her point.

"Where are the ladies rooms?" Bigelow asked. "My little girl needs to use the restroom."

"I'm going to have to ask you to leave the premises." Joe the clerk now demanded and pushed the button alerting the resort security that there was a problem. "You can either take your child and leave willingly, or both of you will be thrown out bodily."

Bigelow now looked about them and saw that more of the patrons were now interested in the goings on. A good many of them drew near out of curiosity.
"I'll take her to the ladies room." An elderly black woman with blue dyed hair spoke up. "That is, if you don't mind me doing so?"

Bigelow looked at the woman and then back to Juniper. He saw the child looking at him with pleading eyes. It was clear that her situation was becoming desperate.

"Is that okay with you, honey?" He asked of the girl. "This nice lady will take you okay?"

"Daddy?" Juniper looked up at her father unsure. She then looked to the woman who had her right hand extended.

"It'll be okay, honey." Bigelow said to her and then looked back to the woman. "Thank you, ma'am." He said and spoke to his daughter again. "Juniper, you go with the nice lady, okay?"

Bigelow now watched as his daughter and the woman moved away. When they were gone, he turned his attention back to Joe the clerk behind the desk.

"I'm going to ask you again," He said. "Will you please get the manager for me?"

Two security personnel now neared. One of the men was much taller than the other. He was a balding black man with a long face and an unusually long neck. The second security man was Asian, short and stocky, his long black hair in a pony-tail down his back.

"Is there a problem here, Joe?" The taller man asked and cast an eye to Bigelow. "What's going on?"

"Yes." Joe the clerk stated. "I've asked this gentleman to leave the premises. As you can see, he is still here."

Bigelow looked to the security men and pulled his arm away when they attempted to take him in hand. He felt sure that a confrontation was eminent.

"Wait a minute, fellas?" He said, with both hands raised. "I just wanted to talk to the manager. I'm not here to cause you any problems."

"You have been asked to leave, sir." The Asian security man said. "We don't need to make a scene."

"I'm not trying to create a scene." Bigelow said and was now becoming exasperated with the entire situation. "I'm trying to make someone in control here understand that everyone in this
resort is in great danger."

The security men looked at each other, then back to Bigelow.
"What are you trying to say to us, sir?" The taller man asked
as his hand slid down to the stun gun on his right hip. "Do you
know something that we need to know?"

"Yeah, I do!" Bigelow said. "But I don't want to talk to you.
I just want to talk to the manager."

They came down upon the Monroe resort, seemingly out of
nowhere. Those who were outside, playing tennis, swimming in
the Olympic sized pool, riding horses, playing golf, were stunned
by the storm when it formed. Huge billowing black thunderheads
that rumbled and flashed, laying low and angry. Lightning filled
the air with static, crackling, some bolts coming low enough
to strike several people running for cover. People trying to
get out of the pool were thrown back into the water, the wet
on their bodies acting as a conductor. Those out on the horseback
tour, spurred their animals back to the safety of the barns.
Many of them were hit so fiercely that arms and legs were blown
off their bodies.

There would later be those who called the events a 'tragic
act of God', but it was anything but. And though those running
for their lives could not see, what manifested next was none
the less, very real.

The emanation came out of the thunderheads looking like deep
sea smokers, vents boiling at incredible temperatures. They came
twisting and undulating, heading directly for the resort and
the Angels holding up the mountainside behind it.

After using the restroom, Juniper came out in the company
of the woman escorting her. At once, she froze in place, her large
grey eyes widening, her jaws agape.

"We're out of time." She said, nearly under her breath.

"What was that, hon?" The elderly woman asked. "Are you okay?"
Child, you look like you saw a ghost!"

"You have to leave this place, right now!" Juniper turned
and said in a stern voice. "You have to get out now!"

"Child?" The woman said in surprise. "What in the world are
you talkin' about?"

The girl pulled away from the woman, then turning back, spoke
the same warning again. She pointed to the exit as she did so.

"YOU HAVE TO GET OUT!" She called out loudly. "YOU ALL HAVE
TO GET OUT NOW!"

Juniper turned slowly, seeing the black tendrils of the smokers
coming through the walls of the hotel. She had seen them before
and knew at once what they were. Leaving the woman, she hurried
to her father, who had turned, hearing her voice.

"DADDY!" She called out. "THEY'RE HERE! THEY'RE HERE!"

Bigelow turned back toward the desk and pointed his left
index toward Joe the Clerks face. He could only hope that the
man would now listen.

"You have to get everyone out of this resort and off this
mountain, or they're all gonna die!"

Now the Manager neared, his assistant right on his heels.
The former was a large black man with a large mole on his left
cheek. His expression was serious and he carried himself like
he was a former military man. The latter of the two a middle
aged woman who looked to be of Hispanic origin, lean and pretty.
She had a wide streak of grey that dominated the center of her
jet black hair, pulled into a tight pony-tail at the back of
her head.

"What in the world is this all about?" The Manager demanded,
stopping before Bigelow and the security personnel. "Someone
better talk to me right now."

"Mister Kreiter..." The clerk began and nodded toward Bigelow.
"this man has been demanding to speak to you."

Douglas Kreiter looked from the clerk to Bigelow and smiled
wanly. It had already been a trying day and this was the very
last thing that the Manager wanted to have to deal with.

"There's a storm coming." Bigelow said urgently. "You have
to get everyone out of this resort and down off this mountain.
Either you do it, or they're all going to die."

"What is this, a joke?" Kreiter asked and looked down as a
young girl ran toward them. He knew at once from her expression,
she was very frightened. "What's going on here?"

"Daddy, we have to go now!" Juniper said to her father tugging
at his left hand. "We have to go right now!"

Bigelow understood the urgency of the child and wholly trusted
what she was now saying to him. Without another word, he swept
her into his arms and began for the hotel exit. He spared one
last look back to the desk.

"GET EVERYONE OUT!" He called over his shoulder loudly.

In that instant a man rushed through the door, a badly wounded
boy laying lifeless in his arms. The youth looked to be badly
burned, smoke coming off his body.

"ALL HELL'S BROKE LOOSE!" The man carrying the boy screamed.

"CALL NINE ONE ONE! PEOPLE ARE DYIN' OUT THERE!"

Thunder rumbled behind the Monroe the violence of its force
such that it shook the windows, even cracking some. There was
now a loud murmuring in the hotel foray as several people neared
desiring to help the injured boy.

"Daddy, please?" Juniper pleaded, looking back she could see
the black smokers swirling around the patrons in the hotel. She
buried her face in her father's shoulder.

The rain fell in wind driven sheets as Bigelow, with Juniper
in his arms, hurried from the hotel Monroe. Lightening struck
the ground no more than twenty yards away ionizing the air about
them and filling their noses with the smell of ozone.

Bigelow nearly slipped as he carried his daughter down the
grand marble staircase past the golden lions which were being
pounded by the rain. He could see the Rambler, no more than two
hundred feet in front of them in the parking lot.

As they moved farther away from the Monroe, Juniper dared
a look over her father's shoulder at the alpine mountain behind
the hotel. The great Angels were still there, though they were
now under seige by countless winged figures, who were attempting
to pull the keepers away from their task. The dark spirits tore
at and buffeted the Angels as if determined to make them give
up their hold on the mountainside.

Bigelow, out of breath finally made it to the car. He ripped
open the driverside door and then bodily shoved Juniper inside.
He spared another look back and saw the left side of the mountain
begin to shift, slipping down.

"The bad ones pulled the Angel away, daddy!" Juniper said
to him in a frightened voice. "They pulled him away! The mountain
is coming down."

Bigelow rounded the front of the Rambler and got in. Pulling his door too, he started the car and put it in gear as the intensity of the rain increased. The raindrops sounded like marbles hitting the roof and hood of the old car. The clatter was nearly deafening.

"GO, DADDY! GO!" Juniper cried, the fear in her voice now wratcheting up. "THE ANGELS CAN'T HOLD THE MOUNTAIN ANYMORE!"

Bigelow back out of the parking slot just as a man and a woman bolted past ahead of the Rambler. The man carried the limp body of a young girl, the woman bodily dragged a young boy. The look of terror on their faces told the entire tale. As he shifted gears, it occurred to Bigelow that the man and the woman were dragging the children to their doom.

The Rambler started forward as the left side of the mountain behind the Monroe gave way completely. The second of the four Angels had, under relentless attack from the winged smokers, been forced to give way. The demons had completed half of their mission. There was a thundering crack as great slabs of granite broke loose in huge sheets, splintering trees that toppled over, sliding in the descending wall of mud.

Massive boulders were hurled into the air as if the earth beneath them had exploded. They rained down on the resort, bursting through its roof, reduced its plaster walls and wood interior to dust and splinters.

"They're dying, daddy!" Juniper sobbed. "They're dying! Why wouldn't they listen? Why daddy, why?"

Bigelow spared a quick glance at his daughter, without reply. He then looked straight ahead, guiding the car down the winding road, away from the catastrophe happening on the mountaintop above them. He felt a sick sensation in his stomach that told him, this time they weren't going to get out of their situation alive and well.

"Just be still and let daddy drive." He spoke to her at last. "You just be still and pray. Maybe that Angel of yours will show up. We could sure use his help about right now."

Bigelow looked ahead and saw the embankment to their right and just ahead, shift slightly. It released a cascade of small rocks that dinged off the roof of the Rambler as it moved past.
Not one prone to pray, he now said a prayer himself. "God, help!"

Back up the mountain, the third and fourth of the Angels were forced from the ground they were holding and with this, the side of the mountain gave way completely. Angels and Demons grappled above the chaos happening below them, light and dark becoming a phantasm that those dying below were never able to see.

The people that had run into the Monroe for the sake of safety, now attempted to flee again, fearing for their very lives. Their screams were drowned out by the cacophony descending upon them. The speed of the slide increased as it mass increased, nearing the hotel. The outlying buildings and barns, the maintenance facility, they all shook on their foundations and then were crushed, the first structures to go.

The great hotel groaned as the pressure on its foundation increased. It seemed to those trying in vain to escape that there were seconds of complete silence which caused many of them to stop and turn. In another instant, the Monroe exploded, swallowed up in rock and mud. The screams of those caught in this maelstrom swelled and then vanished completely, buried, ground up in the rolling horror.

Both Bigelow and Juniper heard and felt the ground rumble beneath the car. The sliding mud and dirt at the side of the road was now increasing, making their descent more treacherous by the moment.

"I know Inriel will come, daddy." Juniper stated, her eyes confident. "I know he will come and save us."

There were several rescue vehicles now coming up the road, rounding a bend, just ahead. Bigelow knew that he did not dare pull to the side, he did not dare stop the car.

A firetruck rushed past, its sirens blaring. An ambulance came behind it, now more than twenty yards off. The second of the rescue vehicles passed so close that it scraped paint with the Rambler, throwing sparks in the rain.

"FOOLS! FOOLS!" Feeling a sudden and deep despair for the men in the trucks. They were headed for their doom and there was nothing that he could do for them now.

The Rambler slowed, round the same hair-pin turn that the emergency vehicles had just come around. Bigelow looked to the
left and saw the road behind the turn give way, taking the 
firetruck and the ambulance over the edge and down into 
the deep ravine. His eyes went back to the road and in the next 
instant he looked over to his daughter in sadness. He felt sure 
that the moment of their deaths was now at hand. He did not 
want his little girl to see what was coming.

"GET DOWN ON THE FLOORBOARDS, JUNIE!" He said sternly. "DO 
IT NOW!"

Juniper complied, tears now streaming down her cheeks. She 
wanted the impossible, she wanted her father to hold her, she 
was afraid and could see clearly that he was afraid too.

Bigelow felt the car drop with a bump, then move forward 
again. He saw huge pines and innumerable quaking aspens tumble 
ahead of them, sliding off the road, taking the pavement with 
them as they went, down into the deep ravine.

The Angel descended, landing lightly, chest down on the roof 
of the car. The being wrapped its massive arms around the vehicle, 
his shining green eyes looking straight ahead, guiding the car.

The battle over what had, a short time before been the Monroe 
resort, was now over. Having driven off the black smoker demons, 
the quartet of four winged Angels came down, flying before the 
Rambler. Despite this, they could not completely mitigate the 
maelstrom still happening on the mountain.

"INRIEL IS HERE, DADDY!" Juniper called out. "HE'S HERE!"

In that instant, the madness descending from above caught 
the Rambler. Massive slabs of granite, the size of houses, all 
tumbling end over end appeared. They landed on top of the car, 
crushing it and then continuing to slide, carried what was left 
of the crushed vehicle and its passengers, over the edge and down 
into the ravine.

Juniper Bigelow woke with a start in the pre-dawn hours and 
saw the Angel Inriel sitting at the foot of the bed. The heavenly 
being looked at her and smiled and then touched its own eye with 
an index finger.

"Do I see?" Juniper asked of him and saw the Angel nod. "Yes, 
I see what you have shown me. Does this mean my dad and me are 
going to die?"

The Angel shook his head.

"Avoid the pitfalls, avoid the didaster." The Angel spoke
in a whispered tone. "Avoid the delays, avoid the catastrophe." And then the being was gone, leaving Juniper to consider what had just been said to her.

Reaching over, she turned on the lamp on the stand next to the bed and saw it wake her father who was sleeping on a blanket on the floor. She saw him sit up and look around the hotel room. Juniper sat up and saw her father shield his eyes against the light and then yawn.

"What is it, honey?" He asked of the girl. "What's wrong?"
"We have to go to Colorado, daddy." She said to him.
"Colorado?" Bigelow questioned.

Juniper climbed out of bed and began to change from her pajamas into her regular clothes. She stopped when she was half way done and looked at her father in earnest.
"We have to go right now!" She said.
The man stood, looking into the canyon, the toes on his bare feet, over the edge. An azure sky stretched over him, a vast blanket, broken only by a single cloud. There was a stern wind at his back, its fingers urging him forward.

A line from an old song played in a loop across his mind and he tried in vain to remember the name of the artist who sang it. The more he tried, the more the answer eluded him.

"Clowns to the left of me, jokers to the right, here I am, stuck in the middle with you..."

All these events drove his desire to fall, to take one final step out into eternity. But it was his lack of courage that kept him grounded. There was a deep seeded unsurety about what lay beyond his physicality, which held him in place. It was the glue that mitigated the unthinkable.

She was gone, the love of his life, the pain of her passing was the very pillow smothering his sanity. It was cruel in its action in that, it would only let him catch a breath when he was slipping into oblivion and then again, apply the pressure, strangling him. This was the mill-stone shackled to his soul, dragging him down into the depths.

Again the song echoed...

"You started out with nothin', then you find that you're a self made man..."

A brief instant of clarity, her face loomed before him, causing him to weep and laugh in the same instant. The bitter-sweet eddies, swirling, carrying, bearing away the detritus as well as pieces of his soul.

"Clowns to the left of me, jokers to the right..."

He stepped back from the ledge, wiped the moisture from his face and made his way back home. Tomorrow would be another day, perhaps he would find the courage within himself at last.
THE BIG HUNKS.

The kid loved Big-Hunks. The hard nugget treats were an addiction that had him spending the portion of his allowance that he was not made to save, purchasing them.

At ten years old, he was considered the runt of his fourth grade class. Passive by nature, he often found himself being bullied by the bigger boys. Due to this, he found himself alone, comfortable in solitude.

One of the class bullies was a large, mean tempered brute by the name of Alexander Click. This one made himself a constant thorn in the side of the runt and took a deranged kind of pleasure in doing so. Whether he was after the milk money of the runt, or the lunch money the smaller boy brought to school, the bully would not relent until he had what he wanted.

It was a Tuesday, a blustery morning in February. The runt had stopped at the market on his way to school and bought for himself two Big-Hunk candy-bars. Understanding that he would likely be rousted, as he generally was, he put the treats down in his socks, feeling confident that they would not be found there before he had the chance to consume them.

The morning dragged past without conflict. At recess, after lunch, the runt found a quiet corner of the playground where he intended to enjoy his Big-Hunks in peace. Sadly, this was not meant to be.

He sat, feeling content to be alone. He had thought of this moment all morning long, this was his time and he intended to enjoy it to the fullest.

No sooner had he sat with his back to the chain-link fence, when he looked up and saw Alexander the brute, making a bee-line straight for him. Any hope that he had for getting through the day in peace was shattered. He looked at the bigger boy nearing, his thick jaw set in determination, his mean beady eyes cold and hard.

The runt gave serious thought seriously about getting up and making a run for it, but he knew that the bigger and faster bully would most certainly run him down before he was able to make any distance. His fight, or flight instinct was going to do him no good now.
"Missed you this mornin' crap-head." Alexander seethed, as he neared and kicked the runt hard on the soul of his right foot. "Are ya gonna give it up, or do I gotta mess ya up some?"

The runt now thought about the treasure, secreted in his scoks. Something shifted in him and it occurred to him that he had suffered abuse at the hands of this tyrant for too long. He knew in his depths, it had to come to an end today.

"Get up so's I can go through your pockets." Alexander now demanded. "C'mon! C'mon! I ain't got all day, ya know?"

The runt rose slowly, his adrenaline rushing, he knew full well what he had to do. The action he was now going to take would either make his point forever with the bully, or the villain would again beat the crap out of him. Whatever happened next, the brute wasn't going to get the Big-Hunks without some measure of resistance.

"C'mon! C'mon!" Alexander insisted, shoving the runt hard into the fence. "You know the whole routine."

That is when it happened. Without so much as another thought, the runt lifted his right knee, burying it in the testacles of the bully. He heard the bigger boy let out a gasp of pain and then double over. With all his strength, the runt then grabbed onto the collar of the bullies jacket and threw him to the ground. He then began kicking the bigger boy in the ribs and then several times in his chest. He spoke to the brute as he did this.


"YES! YES!" The bully cried out in pain, and curled up into a fetal position. "PLEASE?" He finished. "NO MORE!"

"Alright then." The runt said, feeling satisfied. He reached down into his sock and pulled out a Big-Hunk and opened it. He gave the bully one final kick to the ribs, turned and walked away. It was going to be a very good day.

Arden Stood: [A lean young man of seventeen, an indentured servant to Lord of the farm, Alistair Drummond. Arden is the one responsible for cleaning the pig-pens and making sure that the animals are properly fed. It is daybreak and the youth is already busy taking care of the animals. He grumbles under his breath as he feeds the animals.] Oh, how I rue the day my father sold me into this misery. [The swine grunt and snort as they begin to eat.] I am better than this! Oh, the grand colors of my dreams now running as if washed by rain. I should be in the court of the King, but alas...I am no more than a slave.

[The Master of the farm, a broad faced and mean man by the name of Lars Olim nears. His sour expression leaves no doubt in regard to his mood. He bellows at Arden as he nears.] Boy! Pick up thy pace! Yon molly-goggling wilt leave thee with no breakfast. [Coming up behind Arden, he slaps him hard in the back of the head, then kicks him in the seat of his pants.] Thou worketh for thy gruel. Set flame under thy arse and get thee on down the line. These beasts wilt not feed themselves.

Arden: [Begrudgingly.] Yes, master Lars. I am moving! I am moving!

Lars: Not to my satisfaction, boy. [Draws his hand back to strike the youth again.] Why my Lord Drummond brought thee here is truly beyond my reckoning.

Arden: [Moves quickly out of the reach of his Master.] I am halfway done, Master Lars. I am halfway done.

Lars: Halfway, eh? [Clears his throat and spits into one of the pens hitting one of the hogs.] Thy sloth hath thee halfway to hunger for the day, is what I say. No work, no food, that is the bargain. I shall return shortly and by heaven, thou had best have these stinking beasts fed. [Turns to leave and then turns back.] Lord Drummond will be venturing into Devonshire this morn. In his absence, I shall be in complete charge of
this farm. You know what that means?

Arden: Yes, Master Lars.

Lars: When thou hast finished with thy labors here, thou shalt hitch the cart and oxen for our Lord. When that is done, and only then, thou mayest have thy morning gruel.

Arden: As you wish, Master Lars. [With this, he goes back to work feeding the hogs, all the while watching out of the corner of his eye as the bigger man departs. He pauses and considers what has just been said to him.] So...[He sets the slop bucket down and stands for several seconds with his hand on his chin.] Lord Drummond makes to town, eh? When the cat is away, the fat rat plays. Oh, cruel Master Lars. I have suffered they heavy hand and boot these long five years. Infidelity, I see thine face! Ah, the occasions mine own eyes hath witnessed thine adulterous hypocrisy. You who do not not know I know and how I have waited in patience, longing with bruised flesh for my measure of vengeance. Mine Mistress, Lady Abigail, holding well her age in beauty, hath trapped thee, old dog, Lars. Oh yes, thou hast been the water that hast quenched her fires. I know, oh yes, I know all too well thy gruntings and moanings so far misplaced. [Picks up his bucket again, walks over to a barrel full of slop and refills it.] And what of young Mistress Deborah? Surely, she too must sense the nature of these doings? Oh, fair Deborah, my heart song. Your fair hair and soft face, mine only in my night dreams. [Seeds the last of the hogs and then hangs the bucket on a hook.] Shall today be the day? Dare I to be so bold? I am driven by a madness fueled by a lust that is not mine alone. Is today the day, mine day which wilt see the heavy chains of Lars thrown of mine back? [Pauses and puts an index finger in the air.] Once taken, thy dye shall be cast, where recourse and regret may well collide. But alas, it is only when a young man of low position such as myself dares to venture, that any spark of hope for rising may light the kindling and birth prosperity. [Pauses again.] Yes! Rise, or fall, I shall notch my arrow and let fly the miles of destiny. [He turns and strides off stage right.]
ACT II.

Setting: [The court-yard outside the manor house of Lord Drummond. He stands with his wife Abigail and daughter Deborah. He speaks to his wife directly.]

Drummond: Abigail, my love, I shall return before sunset. Daughter Deborah and I shall spend the day buying stuffs for they lardor.

Abigail: Oh, that I were going with thee. But alas, my curse will not allow.

Drummond: [Kisses his wife on the cheek.] No, my sweet one. you shall take thy rest. Young Deborah and I shall see to these affairs. [Looks and sees the farm Master Lars approaching.] Tell me, where is thy boy and that cart?

Lars: [Angrily.] Blast his insolent eyes! He should well have been here already. There, my Lord! The begarly whelp comes now.

Drummond: [Complaining.] The morn is already long spent. I desire to be in Devonshire 'ere the heat of the day sets—ah.

Lars: Very good, my Lord. [He nears the cart and pulls young Arden bodily off of it.] Art thou deaf, young fool? [Slaps him.]

Deborah: [Pleads to her father when she sees this.] Oh, father? Must the Master be so heavy handed with yon pig-boy? You know how it upsets me to see such things!

Abigail: [Now interjects.] Daughter, troubleth not thine heart over matters concerning the Master and his boy. See? The lad is unruly and in need of a good kicking from time to time. Do not let yourself be concerned over him, he is little more than a common slave.

Drummond: Come, Deborah, let us be on our way. It is a long road to Devonshire, many miles, many miles.

Deborah: [Obediently.] Yes father. [She looks sympathetically to Arden and in doing so, catches his eye.]

Arden: [Catches the look of the young Mistress, then realizes that Lars has seen it as well. He ducks under a slap from the heavy hand of the Master.]
Lars: [Aggravated that the youth has eluded him.] You ungrateful sack of dirty rags! [Points to Arden.] To the barn with thee! There shall be no breakfast for you. Thou shalt get about the shoveling out of the stalls and laying down fresh straw.

Arden: I am hungry, Master Lars.

Lars: And I am sour on thy insolence. Now go, or I shall beat thee to within an inch of thy miserable life!

Arden: [Hesitates, watching the cart and oxen slowly moving away. He was putting himself at risk, but he did not care.]

Lars: I so swear, boy! If thou dost not move thy arse now, I wilt surely throttle the right where thou standest.

Arden: Without another word, turns and walks slowly toward the barn He spares a look back over his shoulder to Lars. He sees the Master and Mistress nod to each other, then go their separate ways. He is aware that this is nothing more than a feint. The main event was about to begin.

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ACT III.

Setting: The road to Devonshire. The cart bumps along behind the oxen as Lord Drummond and his daughter Deborah talk

Drummond: Daughter, thou knowest thy mother to be right in this matter. It is no secret that you have feeling for the pig-boy. You know that your mother wilt not allow such a thing. The lad is beneath you.

Deborah: Perhaps. [She pauses and sighs.] But methinks it might well serve thine own interests, were the Master to be at least a bit more civil to the boy.

Drummond: [Becoming agitated.] The boy is endentured, my sweet. He is little more than the swine that he feeds. He is cheaply and easily replaced.

Deborah: Father, if I may be so bold.

Drummond: [Popping the reins to spur on the oxen.] Speak, daughter. Thou knowest my ear to free when it comes to thee. But why art thou troubled by such a piddling matter?

Deborah: [Hesitates, looking off to a cloud in the distant sky.] I know you to be a kind and honorable man, father.
Drummond: I am pleased to here thee speak such.

Deborah: Father, I am all of seventeen and am aware that thou hast sought for me a suitor in marriage. But my home is on thy farm, my place is with mother and thee. I do not wish to be thrown into the bed of some strange man I do not even feel genuine affection for?

Drummond: And this is thy mind? My, how thou hast become opined as thou hast grown into a woman.

Deborah: [Smiling.] Mother herself says as much. [She pauses.] Father, please give me the time to find a true love in my own right? I know you truly want what is best for me, yes?

Drummond: Thy mother and I have seen thy sympathetic eye for the pig-boy. [He laughs.] Perhaps I have been wrong. Perhaps that would be a match better suited to thee.

Deborah: Do not tease, father. Arden is a fine young man.

Drummond: So? It is the pig-boy, eh? Thy cat is out of yon bag, or so it seems.

Deborah: There is no cat, father, there is no bag. It is only my sadness at the manner in which Master Lars treats the boy. It is not fitting and proper in any wise.

Drummond: And thou hast actually spoken to the boy?

Deborah: I have, father and I have found him to be both quite intelligent and kind.

Drummond: [Angrily.] Well, I forbid it! No daughter of mine shall be in consort with a common swill-slinger. And that is all that shall be said further on this matter.

ACT IV.

Setting: The Drummond pig farm. Arden Stock watches from the shadows just inside the barn door. It is a scene he has witnessed many times before. He observes as Lars Olm moves toward the front door of the manor house. The door opens and Mistress Abigail steps out and embraces the farm master, they kiss passionately. Arden watches as the pair slip into the house, closing the door behind them.
Arden: So, thy net is cast. [Steps out into the barnyard.] I can take the masters mare and catch my Lord dere his cart makes the straighway road to Devonshire. [He looks to the Manor house again, satisfied in what he is now setting in motion. In another instant, he turns back into the barn and begins saddling Master Lars old mare. Climbing upon the back of the animal, he turns its head and begins out of the barn at a trot. The old mare still had speed, even at her age. Her long strides make quick work of the distance and in a matter of moments, she was carrying Arden over green-hill and down into the glen.

ACT V.

The oxen pulling the cart bearing Lord Drummond and young Mistress Deborah, plodded along the dusty road leading to Devonshire. The cool of the morning was already waning and from time to time, Drummond wiped his sweaty brow with a kerchief.

Drummond: [Looking over to Deborah.] There be a strange hue in the sky this morn, daughter. It doth not auger well when I see such things.

Deborah: [Chuckles.] Oh, father, these superstitions do ever amuse me. It is just the sunlight through yon clouds.

Drummond: I knoweth what I know, child. When thou art seasoned by thine years, as I am, thou wilt better understand what thou callest mine superstition. [Pauses.] Look yonder? Is that our pig-boy bearing down upon us on what looks to be the master old Mare? What might this mean?

Deborah: [Turns her head to look.] Yes father, it doth appear to be Arden.

Drummond: [Pulls the reins and brings the oxen and cart to a stop.] Ho there, young scoundral! What meaneth thee, bearing down upon us in such a manner? Speak now, I command thee.

Arden: [Brings the mare to a stop and dismounts.] My Lord, I have hurried out in this manner to alert thee.

Drummond: Alert me to what, boy? Hie! Speak plain.

Arden: My Lord I wholly beg thy indulgence. I had occasion
to be in thine manor, as I was commanded to fetch water...

Drummond: [Impatient.] Forestall all the blither-blather, boy!

What is the issue?

Arden: [Eyes wide.] I heard strange noises...

Drummond: Noises? What manner of noises? What meanest thou?

What art thou saying to me?

Arden: My Lord, the noises were coming from Mistress' own bed-chamber. My Lord, I did not dare to enter, but only listened through the door. Fearing that Mistress Abigail was in some great travail, I saddled my mare and came straightaway to do what I thought was my duty.

Drummond: And what of your master Earl? What of him?

Arden: I dare not say my Lord. [He looks to Deborah.] I did not think it prudent spending time looking about for him. As I have sworn, I came straight here to you.

Deborah: [Alarmed.] Oh, father?

Drummond: Worryeth not thy pretty head, child. I shall go straightaway and see to the matter. I am quite sure that all shall be well. [He looks back to Arden.] I shall take the mare and make speed back to the manor, boy. Thou shalt bring the cart back in as short an order as thou art able. Dost thou understand me in this?

Arden: Aye, my Lord. I understand.

Deborah: Father? Is mother ill?

Drummond: [Mounts the mare.] I do not as of yet know, daughter [He turns the horse.] The heart of the matter shall surely be discovered shortly. [With this said, he burys his heels into the flanks of the horse and the animal breaks into a run.]

Deborah: [Turns to Arden, her eyes tearing up.] Oh, my dear Lord in heaven. What has become of my mother?

Arden: [Climbs up on the cart next to Deborah][He takes the reins and begins to turn the team of oxen.] I canst say, my Mistress. But whatever all this brings, I am quite sure that it will turn for the advantage of all concerned.
Setting: The Drummond family farm. After hurrying back from the road where he had left his daughter Deborah in the care of the pig-boy, Lord Drummond draws the old mare to a stop, dismounts and rushes into the manor house. There, he runs into one of the house servants, an old woman by the name of Anna.

Drummond: [Taking the old woman by the shoulders.] Ann! What is the state of thy mistress?

Anna: Don't rightly know m'Lord. I've not seen her grace t'was back churnin' the cream into...

Drummond: [Without allowing the old woman to finish, he pushes her aside and bounds up the staircase. Stopping before the door of his wife's bedchamber, he hears the moaning of Abigail in the throes of ardent passion. He bursts in.] ABIGAIL?

Abigail: [Cries out in despair.] MY LORD!

Lars: [Rolls away from his lover and off the bed, then tries to speak. He is cut short.]

Drummond: [Pointing at the Master.] Do not presume to say a word, thou treacherous blaggard. Put on thy breeches and retire to the barn I shall deal with thee there

Abigail: My Lord, I must explain...

Drummond: What canst thou say, adulteress? Would that our daughter were her to see thee in thy craven state! And I warned that thou wast in grave distress hurried at mine own peril over hill and dale to see about thee.

Abigail: [Pleading.] My Lord, please?

Drummond: [ Watches Lars quickly dress and then hurry out of the bedchamber.] Oh woman, how hast thou fallen? I took thee from nothing and gave thee all thine heart couldst desire. What? Is this infidelity thy measure given me in return?

Abigail: [Now becomes indignant. She gets out of bed and puts on her robe.] What of it? Canst thou for a moment remember my needs? When last didst thou even make a feeble effort to plow these pastures thou once so enjoyed? No! Thy anger is as
feeble as thy shrewed member you once so clumsily offered.

Drummond: Darest thou to speak to my person in such a bawdy manner? Art thou so ignorant? I have caught thee cold in thy act. Thy life now hangs by a thread in mine hands.

Abigail: Hah! Thy man-jewells are as small as thy threats. So, now the fact is known. I have taken a lover and it is most surely thy impotence which hath inspired me. [She makes an effort to push past him.]

Drummond: [Catches Abigail by the wrist and pushes her back. He watches her fall, seeing her strike the back of her neck on the bed-post. She crumples to the floor dead.] Get up! Get up I say, face thy indecencies!

Abigail: [Lays motionless, her eyes wide, unblinking.

Drummond: [Kneels, checks his wife, realizing she is dead.] By the heavens, I have killed you. What damnation, even in this I am cheated, damnable woman. What hast thou done to me? [Now thinking fast, he takes a blanket from the bed and wraps the body of Abigail within it. Picking her up, he hurries downstairs and finds the old servant waiting at the foot. He nods to her.] Anna, go down into the root-celler and take stock of everything therein

Anna: Is there trouble afoot, m'Lord?

Drummond: Thy Mistress hath taken the house monies and made off with the Master Lars.

Anna: Oh, m'Lord!

Drummond: Do not concern thyself with this. The Mistress hath made her choice for better, or for worse. Now we must make the best of what yet remains. Now go! Do as I have commanded thee. Go and make haste.

Anna: Yes, m'Lord. [She turns and hurries away.]

Drummond: As stupid as ever [He watches the servant go, then after setting the blanketed body of his wife down, he retrieves a match-lock pistol from his gun cabinet. He puts the weapon in his belt, picks up the body of his wife, throwing her over his left shoulder and moves out of the manor. He crosses the barnyard at a deliberate pace and enters the barn.]
Lars: [Nears, a pitchfork in his hand.] What hast thou done? Hast thou now proven thyself a beast rather than a man?

Drummond: [Looks to the Master with eyes of hatred.] Bold words from the lips of a sodden creature as thou art. [He drops Abigail's body to the floor of the barn. He draws the pistol from his belt and sees Lars stop in his tracks. He points it down to the body of his wife.] This is thine handiwork, not mine. And in this, thou hast forfeited every thread of gratitude offered thee on my part.

Lars: [Angrily.] Thou hast murdered Abigail?

Drummond: [With madness in his eyes.] Not so much murder. More of a tragic mishap, you might say. An accident to be sure. But thine own demise shall not be as such. Oh, home-wrecker! I see you clearly and the vision, rank as it is does not elicit mercy in the least.

Lars: [Threw the pitchfork. just as he hears the pop of the pistol, then feels the pressure of the lead ball as it entered his forehead. He falls dead.]

Drummond: [Stands in stunned silence, the long tines of the pitchfork buried deep into his chest. He staggers back, drops the pistol and with his remaining strength, pulls the implement from his flesh. He tosses it away, turns and goes down on one knee.] Alas! What hath become of me? I see such great unraveling and all mine. I fear. All mine great intentions slipping away. So...I now go to the dust. [Falls over the blanketed body of his wife Abigail]

ACT VII.

Setting: [The barnyard of the Drummond family farm. Arden Stock pulls the cart and oxen to a stop just as Anna, the old house servant rushes frantically from the barn.

Anna: [Frantically.] Young Arden! Mistress Deboraha!

Arden: [Climbs down from the cart.] What is it, Anna? What troublest thee?

Anna: DEAD! GOD IN HEAVEN! THE LOT OF "EM, DEAD! THERE IN YON BARN!
Arden: [Looks to Deborah.] Young Mistress, thou stayest here. I wilt go and discover the matter that has old Anna in such a state of distress. [Looks to Anna.] Stay here with my Mistress, I shall return shortly when I have seen what is amiss.] He then strode to the barn and entered. There, he discovered the bodies of Lord Drummond, Mistress Abigail and Master Lars. Hearing a noise behind him [beethed to] the Mistress Deborah. [Looking on, her features ashen.]

Deborah: [Trembling.] Mother? Father?

Arden: [quickly rises and goes to her. He puts himself between the young woman and the tragedy before her. Taking her in his arms, he guides her back out to the barnyard. He calls to Anna] ANNA! Come here.

Anna: [Though still shaken, complies.]

Arden: [Now giving orders.] Take Deborah into the Manor house and keep her there. I have to ride to Devonshire and bring back the constables. I shall return as quickly as I am able.

Deborah: [Weeping.] My Father, my mother, dead? What will become of me now? I am alone.

Arden: [Takes her face in his hands.] Thou art not alone, fair Deborah. Thou wilt never be alone as long as I draw breath. [With this, he went to the old mare, mounted and was off, heading toward Devonshire.]

Epilogue.

Setting: [Six months later, the family farm of Arden and Deborah Stock. They stand before the servants, speaking to them having just gotten married.]

Arden: [looking at the man he has just hired as the new Farm Master. The older man, weathered and worn, a patch over his left eye stands with his hands firmly on the shoulders of a fair haired youth, the new 'pig-boy'.] Thou shalt treat each other with the same respect shown thee by thy Mistress Deborah and I. Neither she, nor I shall tolerate less. Have I made myself plain to thee in this matter?
Red-wing Blackbird Sings. R Dean. Morris. [78]

Servents: [In unison.] Yes m'Lord.

Arden: Very well then. Go about thy duties in peace. [He watches the servants disperse. He calls out to the new Farm Master.] Master Rogin! [Sees the Master turn back.]

Rogin: Yea, m'Lord?

Arden: A light hand on the pig-boy, if you please?

Rogin: [A glint in his good eye.] As thou desirest, m'Lord. [He turns and follows the pig-boy into the barn. When he is sure that he is out of the sight of the Manor Lord, he grabs the boy hard, pulling him close.] Let's ye and me have an understandin' young cur. Ye was pulled out of shit to shovel the shit. Any off step by ye and it'll be the back of me hand fer thee. [He throws the youth down.] Dost thou understand me?

Pig-boy: [With hatred in his eyes.] Aye, Master Rogin. I understand thee...

Finis...
INDIFFERENT

Indifferent? No!
The winter wind that blows,
without a thought,
yet it knows
when bone deep,
and oh so chill...

Far beyond the human will.
the swirling bit.
carried in
to day, from night
unhampered by the sun.
too far away to intervene
THE KNOWN AND UNKNOWN

Hosting a tenuous hope,
such a dangerous proposition.
Not unlike a blind man,
with eyes set on a mission
And beyond the obvious scope
of what is lost, or found,
dreams filtered through shifting sand,
ever find solid ground
The known and unknown,
cousins to cruel fate,
wager on a future,
that always comes too late.
And with the new day shown,
the obvious is glaring.
The past can never endure,
its wisdom fades with sharing
With each new breath taken,
drawn without intention,
spent and then let go.
seldom even mentioned
Hosting a hope shaken,
down to its deepest core
as a final heartbeat shows,
we're always left wanting...just one more.
I can stop on the stairs
at the top of Mount Quentin
being still, listening
as the Redwing Blackbird sings.

High and aeth, the avian passion
and my envy starts
all in vain for something,
I can never be.

A stream of purest melody
cutting through the winter air
brushing with brashness,
across my deepest soul

I can not fly,
or rise high upon my own,
but if I could,
I surely would

And where I chose
to land again,
I would sing the song
the Redwing Blackbird sings,
a song of freedom.
Sitting and waiting,
anticipating
one single moment
still yet unborn.

The passing morn,
grown old and grey
silent as a promise
never sooken.

And yet unbroken
by those passing through
without one thought
for what they held

Patient are the tells
that reveal grudgingly
their secrets
everyone already knows
TWISTING IN THE WIND.

Listening to the rattling,
prattling misn-mash talk
amounting to nothing,
measured against something.

Accusations, flatulations
shot out verbally,
with bold vulgarity,
and with regularity

The twisted intent
too badly bent
to straighten out,
jump and shout.

Twisting in the wind,
with patience wearing thin
painted by the inconvenience
of imbalance ala perpetual.

Listening to the complaint,
whispering oh so faint
until nothing is everything,
and yet, nothing at all.
CALM BEFORE THE STORM

Living in the moment
watching the day fly
Images and colors meld
then quietly pass by.
Reaching for a clarity
and found without a price
Living life in service
such a willing sacrifice

Beyond the walls impending
reeling in the years.
Finding cause in everything
a heart dares to hold dear
Rising above circumstance
the exception not the norm
Anticipation in 3-0
the calm before the storm.

Pulling against the current
of this day and time
Listening to the rising wind
moving through the chimes
Breathing in and out
free of care or thought
letting go of everything
that ever had me caught.

Beyond the walls impending
reeling in the years
Finding cause in sanity
this heart dares hold dear.
Rising above circumstance
the exception not the norm.
Anticipation in 3-0
the calm before the storm.
CHAMBA'S MOUNTAIN.

Up on top of the mountain
there's a large time goin' on.
People come to sing and play
from miles and miles beyond
Some bring their flat top guitars
still others bring fiddles to play.
There's music dancin' in the tree
sun up 'til the end of day
sun up 'til the end of day.

Come on up come on up come on up
everybody's welcome
Come on up come on up come on up
to Chamba's mountain

There's love up on the mountain.
and there's apple cider wine
people come to breathe clean air
and leave their troubles behind.
Some show up to find themselves
to learn how to laugh and smile again.
Let their spirits fly like eagles
up where everyone's a friend
up where everyone's a friend.
THE SOLUTION

Start at the beginning
winning is not on the table.
Out on a limb alone again
No more myths, or fables

Waning daylight retreating
beating the dusk as it goes.
Words faulter in the twi-light,
it's an ill wind that blows

We'd better look for an answer
'cuz it looks like we're short on time.
Hatred is the greatest cancer
cuttin' young men down in their prime
Can we step back from the situation
start an open heart revolution?
Will this be the last generation
or will we finally find the solution?

Write it out in stone
so that the whole world can see.
And let the remnant remember
what springs from seeds of apathy.
If the sun rises again
should we all live another day.
What once drove us hard to win
winds of change might blow away

We'd better look for an answer
'cuz it looks like we're short on time.
Hatred is the greatest cancer
cuttin' young people down in their prime.
Can we step back from the situation
start an open heart revolution?
Will this be the last generation,
or will we finally find the solution.
WHERE THE BLIND MAN SEEES

I'd love to understand
but it's beyond me now
Lookin' into the half life
I see it all somehow.
I'd love to comprehend
all the 'where's' and 'why's'
In this moment and this breath
spread my wings and fly.
Tearing down the walls
that loom so ominously
with words spoken true
the way they're meant to be.
Old memories that call
in such sweet melody.
Forever in a moment
where the blind man sees.

I'd love to see the world
through the eyes of a child
No preconceptions needed
just sail on for a while.
I'd love to find a clarity
the kind found in vivid dreams
where hopes light never fades
and pure thought flows in streams.

Tearing down the walls
that loom so ominously
With words spoke true
the way they're meant to be.
Old memories that call
in such sweet melody.
Forever in a moment
where the blind man sees.
NIGHT STALKERS

He's still in the game
says he'll never change
Hopelessly addicted
to a lifestyle so deranged.
Livin' in the fast lane
where people get run down.
Takin' crazy chances
on the bad side of town.

And when the sun goes down
the night stalkers rise
Playin Russian roulette
some gonna live, some gonna die.

It's a loaded gun
for all of the hell bound
Night stalkers set the house
when the sun goes down.

Young man bleedin' in the street
a bullet in his brain.
His mother gonna cry tonight
her broken heart in pain.
Sixteen year old trigger finger
tattooed teardrop on his eye.

The hero for the moment
tomorrow it's his turn to die.

And when the sun goes down
the night stalkers rise.
Playing Russian roulette
some gonna live, some gonna die.

It's a loaded gun
for all of the hell bound.
Night stalkers set the house
when the sun goes down
when the sun goes down...
Nothin' sweeter than love.

In these crazy times when the world is makin' no sense
I can look in your eyes and find my recompense

Tomorrow may never come and yesterday's in the past
In this moment now I've found my peace at last

In you I can believe there's a heaven above.
Right here and right now there's nothin' sweeter than love.

In this crazy life where people don't look eye to eye
I can see your smile and finally understand why?
And what livin' really means it all becomes crystal clear.

My heart skips a beat every time you come near

In you I can believe there's a heaven above.
Right here and right now there's nothin' sweeter than love.

There's nothin' sweeter than love.
THE GRASS ALWAYS SEEMS GREENER.

Being still in the here and now
is all I'll ever own
what was floats farther down stream
then sinks like a stone.

Master, maker, spark of life
what do you desire?
Freedom never comes for free
walkin' a high wire.

Lookin' beyond this now
longin' for somethin' better.

Disaffection is a ruse
that traps the lightest troader.
when what remains lays unseen
and given no value at all.
The grass always seems greener
on the other side of the wall.

Tomorrow is a dream
that never comes at all.
Yearning hearts burst their seams
when sweet dreams crumble and fall

Bein' real is painful now
but its seeds must be sown.
I can't live my life
in a moment never known.

Lookin' beyond this now
longin' for somethin' better

Disaffection is a ruse
that traps the lightest troader
when what remains lays unseen
and given no value at all
The grass always seems greener
on the other side of the wall.
ONE WRONG TURN

They beat him until he couldn't stand,
and when he was down, kicked him visciously.
A man in the wrong place at the right time,
in a bloodied haze, hearing the insults cast at him.

No justification, no rationale, he'd done nothing,
except make a wrong turn, where he was set in upon.
A brick through his windshield, shattering,
driverside door pulled open, he was drug out.

His useless pleas muted in a rampant state of confusion.
A stranger welcomed with brutality.

Seemingly from a great distance, he wondered...
What was to become of his wife and children?
Through blood filled eyes he now saw
a rope being thrown over a lamp-post.

The frenzy escalated, with calls for vengeance.
"KILL THE SONOFABITCH! STRING HIS ASS UP!"
And
"HE SHOULDN'T OF BEEN HERE ANYWAYS!"

He dragged him over the rough asphalt,
he lost his left shoe in the madness,
then he was stood up, gasping for air.
Looking about him at the angry faces
he saw their eyes, ha and mean.

Then the rope was around his neck, tightening.
And in his last moments, he saw one young man pleading:
"DON'T DO THIS! THIS IS NOT WHO WE ARE!"
The rope bit into pale flesh,
the pleas had fallen upon deaf ears.
As the man was lifted, there was a sudden silence,
except for the creaking of the rope
and the strange human fruit dangling, struggling.

And in that moment, those in the mob became
the very thing they had professed to hate most...
LISTENING

Listening to the rattling
prattling wish-mash talk
amounting to nothing
measured against something.

Accusations, verbal flatulations
shot out violently
with bold vulgarity
and starched regularity

The twisted intent
too badly bent
to straighten out
jump and shout.

Twisting in the wind
with patience wearing thin
painted by inconvenience
of imbalance perpetual.

Listening to the complaint
whispering, on so faint.
until nothing is everything,
and yet. nothing at all
THIN WINTER LIGHT

Been hit by hail
sitting in the alley
waiting out the storm
screaming at the sky:
"IS THAT ALL YOU GOT!"
Been hit by reality
sitting by myself
just trying to stay warm
my guts ties in a knot.

And the thunder rolls
deep and resonate
dark grey cieling hung
a sea of moving slate
Glaring down upon me
through a cold disdain
The opportunists handbook
optimism, made to wait
Rain soaked are its pages
and yet the ink remains.

Been a witness to lightening
exploding in the sky
gone as quickly as it came
there's no measuring now
And in the after-stillness
rising anticipation,
thin as winter light.
Too weak to stay. some now . .
AN EVAPORATING DREAM

At odds with time
though resistance is futile
I swim against its current
and still wind up downstream

My wrinkles now have wrinkles
my eyes fade in and out
fighting to save a moment
an evaporating dream

At odds with my youth
it abandoned me too soon
leaving me to wonder
about all that's left undone.

My joints pop and snap
like a loud percussion section.
Hairs in my nose and ears
grow faster than a cheetah runs

At odds with age and life
still alone at fifty five
I'm left to just be thankful
that I'm even still around.

Thoughts too easily scattered
like dust balls dirty and soft.
They fly away and rise,
but like time, they always find the ground.
THE PAIN IN MY HEAD

My head has been hurting
for the past two months
right behind my eyes
and I am perplexed

It seems that life is killing me
though I vehemently protest
while pondering it in earnest
in the end I remain vexed

Sixteen penny nails driven meanly
through my skull inside out
their pointed ends protruding
in my bleeding aggravation.

Sunlight and false light stabs me
I squint instinctively in vain
The message plays loud and clear
a wave of thundering desperation.

I could curl up in a ball tightly
in a corner like a child
but this nemesis has my number
I'm far too easy to find.
Only in sleep do I find peace
and it's as fleeting as the day.
The pain in my head surges on
it's cold touch so unkind.
THE BARD

Given in a fit of passion
without thought
without remorse
without intent

Driven into the deep unknown
within a moment
around an assertion
beyond present norms

Forcing the issue
and standing imperical
one fool on a hill
clueless and mad

Weighing the consequence
was never an option
one single bullet
formed for the bard

And the people
stood curiously around
many sure they knew
the man to be sane
Then ever so slowly
the crowd moved away
until only the body
of the bard remained.
HEART OF A CHAMPION

You've always had
the heart of a champion.
Ain't no mountain too high
for you to climb
you dare to dream
with honest laughing eyes
and a holy heart
so now it's your time

And on, my amazing friend
you lift my spirit high
and capture my imagination
as I watch you fly
There can be no doubt
you are my teacher.
For you've always had,
the heart of a champion.
GET ON THE BUS

There's been a lot of hurt
now the time has come to heal.
No one else can tell us about
what this is that we feel
Too long in the wilderness
not knowin' what to expect
Nothin' would do my heart better
than for us to reconnect.

Get on the bus
spend a day gettin' back to us.
Let's bind up the wounds
our mutual healing is a must.
Leave the past, we have today
we can take a chance on trust
Nothin' would be finer
than for you to get on the bus.

There's been too much division
we've come through the stormy weather.
The skies above us are clear now
and it's time to come together.
Been too long without your smile
and the light in your eyes
won't you answer my prayer
and be my sweet dream realized.

Get on the bus
spend a day gettin' back to us.
Let's bind up the wounds
our mutual healing is a must.
Let's leave the past, we have today
we can take a chance on trust.
Nothin' would be finer
than for you to get on the bus.
Setting: Eighteen twenty-four England. A grassy ridge along the cliffs of Dover. Two women walk along as the sun dips low in the late afternoon.

Marie Pembrose: A tall thin woman in her late teens; fair haired and lovely. She listens attentively to her lifelong friend, Alice Bagley, who is shorter and plain of features.

Alice: [Happily] I believe John will ask me for my hand in marriage. He nearly did as much yesterday when he confided that the firm means to make him Captain of the Meadowlark.

Marie: [Sighs] Oh Alice. I fear you set yourself up for deep disappointment. You truly have such a fertile imagination.

A: [Stops and looks at her friend curiously.] What do you mean? Do you think my John has eyes for another?

M: [Chuckles at this.] Men always do! [She wraps her arm within that of Alice. My dear Alice, you are plain and come from meager means. Do you really think that such a handsome man as John Hall would ever seriously consider you worthy of his affections? I fear you deceive yourself, my dear.

A: [Pulls away. anger flashing in her eyes.] I asked you come out on this walk on this glorious evening to tell you of my joyous news, and you insult me this way? And so, I suppose you are an authority on the mind of John Hall, and what his truest feelings are? [She pauses.] Do you think for a moment I consider it fidelity when I wonder the actual depth of your friendship to me?

M: [Stops and looks hard at Alice.] What are you saying to me, Alice? Just what do you mean by this?

A: [Points an accusing finger.] You know perfectly well what I am now saying to you!

M: [Holding her ground.] No! I want you to make your meaning plain to me!
A: [Turns away and looks off into the distance at the roiling sea far below.] I remember the times we came here to play as children. [She reminisced.] It's so strange how distant all of that seems to me now.

M: [Insistently.] Tell me what you mean saying such scurrilous things to me?

A: [Turns partially and looks Marie directly in the eyes.] since you and I were children. [She pauses and signs.] You were always the pretty one, doted upon and spoiled.

M: [Sarcastically.] And you have ever been the jealous one! [She smiles spitefully.] You have never been happy for my good fortune. Have you?

A: [Stands in silence, she turns and looks out over the angry sea again.] No! I have been the dutiful fool who has walked in your shadow. Even your scrap. have been surrendered with a begrudging heart. I have played the friend, watching in sad resignation as you have willfully dashed, or outright stolen every good prospect fortune has ever presented to me.

M: And yet you have remained my friend? What does this speak of your self esteem? No! [She points at Alice.] You need me. Alice Bagley! I am the bright light in your otherwise drab little existence!

A: [Leers back, saying nothing.]

M: [Flippantly.] Nonetheless. [She gestures happily.] It is a glorious evening! Look! See how beautiful the sunset is!

A: [Speaks in a near whisper.] I know that you have made advances toward John Hall. [She falls silent again, gazing over the edge of the cliff.] Did you really suppose I wouldn't know?

M: [Smiles broadly.] What of it, Alice? Am I meant to not notice the appreciation in his gaze when he sees me? John Hall is becoming a man of real substance, Alice. He deserves a wife with the beauty to match his rising station.

A: [Mistfully.] Perhaps. [She pauses again and looks down at
the crashing surf below, then points.] what is that shining there below?

M: [Nears.] what? what do you see?

A: [Moves out of Maries way.] there below! can you see it shining on the rocks? [she points downward.] what is it?

M: [Peers downward intently.] i do not see what you mean? what are you seeing, alice?

A: [Moves behind Marie and kicks her over the cliff. She smiles widely as she stands watching Marie fall, screaming all the way down to the rocks below.] i am in your shadow no more! [She chuckles an insane smile.] such a beautiful summer, such an ugly fall! [She laughs loudly as she turns and walks away.]

Fin.
THE JOURNIES END.

Dare I say
what I see.
with eyes closed?
the journey in flight
the direction chose
and landing, resting,
is but for a moment
And then the compulsion
to fly again
rises, calling me on
until the journey is complete.
And I give up the wind
for the sought out peace
of the journeys end...
ABOUT THE AUTHOR.

Dean Morris is a fifty five year old lifer currently doing time in San Quentin State Prison, San Quentin, California. He has been serving time since 1985.

A writer, singer/songwriter/poet, he uses his work as a means of healing and making amends for a past he has come to understand no longer represents him.

R D M. has four other fiction novels published through the PRISON FOUNDATION. The author welcomes comments on this work and hopes that its readers enjoy it as much as he enjoyed putting it together.

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