



The Homeless Mind Series

IF NOT THEN,
WHEN?

BY DAVID DEUBELBEISS

POEMS 2018 - 2020

If Not Then, When?

Poems

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For My Mom

"And dwelling in the light, there is no occasion at all of stumbling, for all things are discovered with the light. When thou art walking abroad, it is present with thee in thy bosom, thou needest not to say, Lo here, or Lo there: and as thou liest in thy bed, it is present to teach thee, and judge thy wandering mind, which would wander abroad, and thy high thoughts and imaginations, and makes them subject. For following thy thoughts thou art quickly lost. But dwelling in this light, it will discover to thee the body of sin, and thy corruptions, and fallen estate, where thou art. In that light which shows thee all this, stand, neither go to the right hand, nor to the left."

- George Fox

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I Had No Map

I loved
before I knew what or who to love.

I opened doors
before I had any known address.

I walked about
in order to find where I was going.

I spoke
before I had anything to say.

I sang
then I learned all the notes.

I dreamed
after I was done.

I died
without knowing how to live.

Almost now,
I am back to where I started.

To Those Who ...

Do not liberate me

Help me liberate myself.

Do not put food on my table.

Help me to buy that food myself.

Do not give me an education.

Help me to educate myself

in my own way.

Do not teach me your rules.

Let me make those rules with you.

Do not encourage me to dance to your tunes.

Let us dance together to our tune.

Do not walk in front of me.

Do not talk down to me.

Do not even, pull me along.

Walk, talk, with me.

So we both are, do, be ... long.

My Lord's Prayer

Our father
who aren't in heaven
hollow be thy name.

Thy kingdom's dumb
thy will never done,
on earth
nor in any 7 Eleven.

Don't give us today any bread
nor forgive us our weaknesses
'cuz we're not gonna forgive theirs.

Please lead us into temptation
for deliverance is evil
'cuz thine is no kingdom
of power nor glory
never, ever, ever
amen.

You're Never Gonna Win

You're never gonna win
not even if you practice all day,
not even if you get that nose job,
not even if you win the lottery or
hit the triactor.

It's just not gonna happen.

Entropy has us all in her dirty hands.
There's a loose nut in every assembly line.
There's a self-destruct button blinking
on and off
in everyone's heart.

Best to not swim upstream.
Learn to love the toast on the floor,
jam side down 'cuz
your ship always will be
going back out again
and
you're never gonna win.

Get used to it.
There ain't no Oz, Dorothy.

Starting Well

Grouchy Jim
upstairs apartment
37 years
always made his wife breakfast.

37 YEARS!

Then a kiss on her cheek
and off to the pit at
D & W Oil & Lube.

Now that June is gone
he wakes up late
spits and coughs
then staggers straight to McDonalds.

Sometimes he sees Anne there
and buys her a hash brown.

He's learning how to live again.

Life Is Short

Ask Maradona, ask Marilyn

Ask your dog, her cat.

Ask the mayflies on your window

or the mosquito you just smashed.

Ask the 1,000s of micro-organisms

expunged with each breath you take.

"It is what it is." - said the Capo.

It's a bloody holocaust out there.

Each and every second.

As much death as life -

it's the dark matter of existence.

Yet nobody sees it.

We're all just a smudge

on the window of time.

Nobody talks about

the glue factory around the corner.

It's all pomp and pretense.

Self-help haikus and macrobiotics.

G_d, Ekhardt Tolle, medals around the neck.

Puffed up purpose.

There IS NO PURPOSE.

What it all comes down to is
life is short.

The best of us laugh and
get the joke
tick-tock, tock-tick
waiting until the wet rag
runs across our chalkboard
and we are no more.
Forgotten like Shakespeare,
Midas or Maradona
and like this poem.
Now.

Right Now

58

washed up

bushy eyebrows

dirty, old man thoughts.

2 eggs sunny side up

sit n sit n sit

shit

the day won't go away.

Headache, pills.

Stronger pills.

After noon

one drink, two drinks, more

sun through the door

sit n sit n sit

shit

it's dark

cold noodles and bread

more dirty thoughts

pills

the end.

58 and a day.

Nobody Owes You Anything

not the bank
that won't extend your line of credit,
not the snot-nosed kid
you used to be,
not the tooth fairy or Santa Claus
not the girl you gave your heart to
not the President or your dad's estate
not the bars you so well indulged
and which now won't allow you in
anymore,
not even the poker dealer
who always tosses you
7 deuce with a smile.

Nobody owes you anything.

Not your folks who didn't push you enough
into this too soft world,
certainly not this
pale blue dot that
gives you a roof over your head
and the right to be here,
certainly not time
the gatekeeper and
most democratic of sliding doors,

certainly not bare-bones life
to which you aren't even
an afterthought.

Nobody owes you anything.

Get over it.

Close your ledgers.

Melt your tin trophies.

Get off your ass and
grow some balls.

Realize

the finish line is also

a starting line.

Nobody owes you anything.

Speechless

I'm a little scared
of what the world's
coming to.

I'm a little scared
of the things I'm gonna
have to do.

It's a little unsettling
how heavy the world can
weigh on you.

It's a little unsettling
how you now know
you'll be doing the things
you once
didn't know you could do.

I wish I had a cloth
to wipe it all away
then hug each n every
damn one of you
bereft, left
like this poem
with nothing else to say.

Pandemic Poses

"Then to the chagrin of the animal world, along came humans and their
fancy inventions."

- E.O. Wilson

We are all guilty.

You leave the door open
and the cat runs out
never to be seen again.

You eat and breathe
and a 1,000 miles away
dies the last dawn ant.

You forget to pack
the P & J sandwiches
in your kid's lunch bag
and he leaves school
to go to the store
and gets hits by a bus.

We are all culpable. Deserving blame.

We all dance this dance macabre.

Life is perilous.

There is no safety,
the way atoms smash
and the wrong card hits the river.

There is no innocence, no salvation.

We are all guilty. Complicit in endless murder.

And so?

Get on with it.

Nature abhors a vacuum.

A Poet's Work

It takes so little to make you happy.

A cup of hot tea.

A whiskey jack's wail.

The huzza of your grandkids
playing and jousting outside.

Me?

Happiness is a thought.

An intellectual exercise.

An ideal

my hands will never

caress or contain,

a light beyond the mist

of what I am.

No wonder Plato

threw us out of the Republic.

My only consolation.

The thought of you happy.

As close to happiness

as I'll get.

Giving Up

There is a moment in a man's life
when he realizes deep down in his gut
his groin, his gait
he realizes
he'll never experience much
that life has to offer.

TV, news, radio, magazines, books, atlases, photos
airplanes, buses, the brain, our imagination
can't take us there or anywhere
near the sum of experience.

There's a time in your life
when sadness soaks all and
awareness becomes a chore given
there's so much you'll never have or know
in this big candy story.

And the only recourse once you do feel
once you do know this,
the only action, the only response
is to give up

sit down in your garden, enjoy the day's sun
'cause you ain't going anywhere important
in this short time you've got.

Enjoy your slice and
give up the guilt of not owning
the whole damn chain of stores.

Waiting For The Virus

What are we waiting for, assembled online?

The virus is due here today. Any day.

Why isn't anything going on with the government?

Why are the senators sitting there without legislating?

Because the virus is going to kill us all.

What's the point of senators making laws now?

Once the virus has hit its peak, they'll be no need for laws.

Why did our president get up so early,
and why is he sitting enthroned at twitter's gate,
in state, wearing his crown?

Because the virus is growing day by today

and Dr. Fauci's waiting to stamp it out.

He's even got a scroll to give the president,

loaded with scientific terms, with imposing names.

Why have our two spokesmen and celebrities come out today
wearing their embroidered fine suits?

Why have they put on masks with so many colors,
eyes sparkling with magnificent knowing?

Why are they carrying elegant books
beautifully worked in silver and gold?

Because the virus is coming strong
and things like that dazzle the barbarians.

Why don't our distinguished journalists turn up as usual
to make their speeches, say what they have to say?

Because the virus is coming on
and they're bored by rhetoric and public speaking.

Why this sudden bewilderment, this confusion?
(How serious people's faces have become.)

Why are the streets and squares emptying so rapidly,
everyone going home lost in thought?

Because night has fallen and
the virus is still coming on strong.

And some of our men just in from the border say
there isn't a virus any longer.

Now what's going to happen to us without the virus?
That thing was a kind of solution.

Being Human

People will always do
what they want to do
eventually.

You can never stop 'em.

No matter what pains or pleasures
imposed
eventually
they'll get there
and do it.

Jesus, Bundy, Madoff, Mandelstam, Martin Jr.
even sophisticated Syssiphus
they all got there.

There was no holding them back.

So don't worry if
you can't get there ...
You're in a tired marriage.
You push papers around endlessly each day.
Nobody reads your poems.

You have 4 toddlers and no ticket out.

Life makes no sense.

The virus has you locked inside.

Don't worry.

You'll get there - eventually.

Everybody does.

Everybody will always do
what they want to do.

That's what
makes us human.

Peekaboo

Now you see it.

Now you don't see .

I've never understood that
that magic trick.

Me
a big eyed, long haired kid
wondering where
the bouquet of flowers went.

Me
running to the window
Sunday winter morning
looking out bewildered
wondering where
my snowman went.

The scientists contrive.
The philosophers surmise.
The magicians surprise.

Me

I'm at a loss.

Here and now

4 am

sitting on the couch

wondering where

yesterday went

and reaching down

to pet my dog

but he's gone.

Dog gone.

I just don't get it.

Now he's here.

Now 's gone.

So You Want To Be A Teacher, eh?

If it doesn't come bursting out of you
In spite of everything
Don't do it.

Unless it comes unasked
Out of your heart
Out of your mind
Out of your gut
Don't do it.

If you have to sit for hours
Staring at your computer screen
Or hunched over your tablet
Looking for a lesson plan
Don't do it.

If you're doing it for money
Or fame, or someone else
Don't do it.

If you're doing it to meet
The woman of your dreams
Or the man of your lonely heart
Don't do it.

If you have to sit there
Worrying about tomorrow's lesson
Over and over.
Don't do it.

If it's hard work just thinking
About doing it
Don't do it.

If you're trying to teach like somebody else
Forget about it.
If all you got is a worksheet and commands
Run away.

If you have to wait for the lesson
To roar out of you
Then wait patiently.

If it never does roar out of you
Do something else.

If you first have to read about it,
Or learn about it, study it, figure it out
Don't do it.

If you first have to check
With your colleagues or girlfriend
Or with your principal
Or with anybody at all,
You're not ready.

Don't be like so many teachers.
Don't be like so many 1,000s of people
Who call themselves teachers
Who the government deems teachers.

Don't be dull, and boring, and pretentious.
Don't be consumed with self-love
The classrooms of the world have
Yawned themselves to sleep over your kind.
Don't add to that.
Don't do it.

Unless the lesson comes out of your soul
Like a rocket
Unless not being a teacher
Would drive you to madness
To suicide, to murder.
Don't do it.

Unless the ideas inside you
Are burning your gut.
Unless you get up always thinking
Of the possibilities possible
In your class
Don't do it.

When it is truly time
And if you have been chosen
Teaching will do it by itself.
It will keep on doing it
Until you die
Or it dies in you.

There is no other way
And there never was.

Don't try.

It's the trying that gets in the way.

Start. Teach.
Do it.

A Prayer

May this day bring

a cold drink
some laughter
beside the ceviche truck
outside the mercado
away from the bitching wife.

May this day bring

a poem
not even a good one
a paycheck
not even a large one
a song
somewhere
reaching my far away heart.

May this day bring

peace
give me just a little piece
that's all I ask
and like
change jingling in a homeless guys hand

I'll dance n smile
like a thief
stealing fire from god
like night
lasting all day long.

Amen, halleluja and all that jazz.

Fortune At

to love, to be loved
wanted, needed, counted on
breath, a bowel movement
the patter of rain on the roof
the hum of a full fridge
money, jingling in your pocket
a warm bed, a warm body
heart beating, music that moves
morning sun on your face
no anger,
at home in this world
here and now
alive
another day.

She

She reads Ayn Rand
and eats her veggie burgers
slowly, deliberately
with carrot sticks.

She says she'd never hurt a cow.

I tell her -
move to India.

I tell her
about the 287,368 micro-organisms
she expires
each time she respire.

She tells me
go live on the moon.
What can't be seen - doesn't count.

Despite her M.A. in Creative Writing
and fine smelling breath
she's clearly lacking in imagination.
A time is coming
when she'll be needed.
She's the perfect Nazi.

I Am Happy

“May I, emerging at last from this terrible insight
Burst into jubilant praise to assenting angels”

- Rilke

It is strange

but

I am happy.

Millions are dying of hunger.

Children with chopped off limbs

walk towards candy stores

in their dreams.

Fast cars roar off to nowhere.

Burn patients sit softly on white sheets.

People are jumping off buildings.

Buildings are falling down.

A millionaire counts his pennies

pulled from a cookie jar.

The sun is burning and mice

are getting caught everyday

in better built mousetraps.

Lungs fill up with the waste of man's ingenuity.

Whales cough blood in
the black of a cesspool sea.

Guns grow like geraniums
picked up and given in the name
of freedom rather than death.

My parents, your parents.

My son, your daughter.

The bright eyed boy across the street.

We are all going to die.

Funny.

I am happy.

Perhaps it is because

I am here.

Everyone Should Have To Dig A Grave

Everyone should have to dig a grave.

Choose a spot, break the earth

dig and dig and dig

jump in

dig and dig and dig

cold splashes on the face

bailing water

from the always giving, taking earth.

Everyone should have to dig a grave.

Then, feeling the arms light

hearing the smuck

as the body lands and settles

seeing how the first shovel full

lands and

illuminates the face

for a moment

though the earth abideth forever.

Everyone should have to dig a grave.

Digging, digging, digging
then, a few stones on top
a few quiet thoughts and
the wiping of the brow
the sun on the damp soil
finally, the back turned.

Everyone should have to dig a grave.

Who Knows

I don't know what our purpose is here.

Maybe my purpose is
to have no purpose
a witness only,
a standing lamp at
the back of the stage
Death Of A Salesman
pulled out and stood up
on the big night,
the rest of the time
dusty, un-needed, in a backroom
piled up with all the other rejected props.

I look out on this world
from my mountain perch
and I don't understand a thing.

I'm really at a loss.

My mouth agape,
My heart and head blank
as we spin through
this terrible but beautiful now
of time and place.

Poetic Regrets. No Beginnings.

" Main Degas, ce n'est pas avec des idées qu'on fait des vers, c'est avec des mots." ... Cede l'initiative a des mots."

- Mallarme

I cooda been a miner
but my hole was always full.

I cooda been a farmer
but necessity my horses wouldn't pull.

I cooda been a lifeguard
but I believed more in the waves.

I cooda been a politician
but I was too well misbehaved.

I cooda been a king
but my people chose to be slaves.
A philosopher
but I've never yet crawled out from one of Plato's caves.

I cooda been a musician
but the musics locked up inside.

I cooda been an explorer
but the pay's terrible, the ocean too wide.

I cooda been a criminal
but all I could ever steal was time.

I cooda been a beggar
but what would I do with just a dime?

Ah! I cooda been, I cooda been
but I never knew how to begin
so finished I em.

Why I Turned Out The Way I Am

It's for your own good
my father belted.

My mother did the same but
at the dinner table with peas.

Mr. Drury in Grade 7 had me
write lines of P P P P P P P P s

"It's for your own good", he opined.

Cigarettes are now 10 bucks a pack
and casinos 1,000 dollar plane rides away.

"It's for your own good", they say.

Seat belts, sanitariums and saints
always a safe, sane step away.

My wife, my ever, always wife
books me monthly to see a doctor
as much a dunce as a doc can be.

All he offers are pills and pleasantries.

Both saying, "It's good for you!"

Wars, weddings, sprayed green lawns
papal proclamations and government edicts

It's all for your own good
they declare when asked.

I am, my life now nearly done
yet to truly taste what we call
– free.

I followed footsteps and danced
for my own good, like I was told.

Thinking back I now know how
I came to be who I am
this man, here and now
finally at home in the world
on edge, now so aware
of what really is good for me,
MY FLUSHER BROKE.

It's like one day you wake up
And realize there ain't no jello tree
and the gingerbread man has
run out of your dreams or
you find out the dictionary
was written by a dyslexic pedophile
and you head out the door to
write your own.

- October 25th, 2020. Matagalpa, Nicaragua

It IS What it IS

The wind blows hard
on the top of the mountain
yet
the trees do not complain
the rocks do not weep.

Nature has no self-pity.

It gets on with it -
with being alive.

There is no fast forward or rewind button.
No tear ducts or tissue.
Just the solid
neither weak nor strong
being of
it is, what it is.

I look out from the mountain
and follow the hawks floating
on the upward wind
until they disappear
ever higher above.

Whatever IT Takes

Do not deny us our sedatives.

For me it's beer and tequila
For others, it's Russian blondes
or the rifle range or little blue pills.

Whatever IT takes.

I once knew a woman
who with 6 inches of needle and thread
enjoyed sewing up her forearms
each Sunday morning.

There are things
nobody speaks of
that haunt and weigh.

There are things
science nor your mother
can explain.

They just are.

There's some need
to do IT.

Whatever IT takes
to make it through the week
or wake up another morning
to write
a shitty poem
like this one.

Energy Must Express Itself

Every morning I get up
and sit with my coffee
balancing
as the world spins away,
hoping my coffee won't spill
and this day
bring one flower
up through the rock hard bed
into my mind
where I can
keep it
in case
another one
never comes

Every morning after my coffee
I cough, shit, shower, sometimes shave
gargle and clean out
all my orifices.

I'm getting ready to
do battle with
the concrete keepers
where no grass grows
it only shines

like you think something's
there
but it is not.

No flowers
only an image of an image
from a silver machine that
keeps spinning like
a huge washing machine
cleaning everything up
thinking its winning while spinning
until that one flower springs up
and we walk on
knowing there can never be
any giving up.

Energy springs eternal.

I Cannot Sleep

Early dawn
sitting outside
in the half light
washed by a breeze
from the ever hills,
cicadas still loud
with desire,
birds in shadow
pass through my view.

My back aches.
I can't think without my coffee.
Nose hairs sprout with vigor.

What is this world - so strange
no longer at my feet?

I hear the wind blow leaves
off the mango trees.
I've never seen it
blow them back.

Traveling

I am a homeless mind.

A traveler with books and underwear.

Time is my currency.

The fruit trees sustain me.

People passing by energize me.

Evenings.

A little wine

and I'm somewhere else.

Now.

Nothing is foreign to me.

The cock crows thrice.

Coffee's on.

Each day

I ask myself

to stay a little longer.

Outside

the smoldering ashes

of last night's fire

survive

while

mangoes fall off

forgotten trees

to die on the ground.

Enlightenment

the first bite of an Arby's roast beef sandwich
the girl you didn't call
a car you didn't pay for
Van Morrison on the radio
wind in your hair, meat between your teeth
a dog that doesn't leave your side
a Sunday with nothing planned
a 3some on a single bed
words that make sense only to you
the winning lottery ticket you lost
a cold beer in a tall glass
the God that doesn't bother you
the song you know the words for
the ping of your phone
the drug that gets you mostly there
the fire that dances in the light wind
the mouse you didn't kill
the bong of the gong
the dada gaga dodo
a language of your own
that you are always relearning.

Enlightenment.

A Boy Named Sue

I am different.

These are the words
each great one hears
or if not the words
the feelings of them thereof.

Socrates, Napoleon, Li Po
Christ, Marilyn, Van Gogh
Little Richard, Picasso
maybe YOU?

All the great ones
have this call cursing through
their all too human veins.

I am different.

Doesn't matter
you don't get the girl
your spat on, kicked down
no food on the table
you aren't able
YOU are still great
in the sum of that difference.

Maya

Finally arrived
on top of the mountain
under the cross
looking out on ripples of ridges
disappearing into the horizon.

Then, 4 large vultures
soar by
just feet away.

The farm hand standing beside me
takes a last, long drag
on his cigarette
then picks up his machete
saying, "They're beautiful".

It was the first time
I ever realized that.

October 19th, 2019. Cerro Apante, Nicaragua

Almost Heaven

It's been 6 hours now
no electric
so calm
almost like things were meant to be.

No internet noise
no TV selling me stuff
just the vultures overhead
keepin' watch
and the always wind
a pleasant roar
up my unders
as I sit here in the hammock.

Reminds me of when
I was a kid
newspaper in hand
cleaning the kerosene lamps
one by one
while dreaming of African adventures
or building a battery powered radio
of my own.

Almost heaven. Almost.
Or the garden of Eden

except

I've got mangoes here

no apples

and no worries

of a god

I've armwrestled to death long ago

many drunken nights ago.

Time for a warm beer.

They aren't so bad

said my beloved Hrabal

rubbing his bald head

years ago in some other paradise.

Not so bad.

Better a warm beer than

a cold German woman.

My beer is gone.

So too heaven.

The hydro's back on.

The man has got his act together

and in the kitchen

murder is taking place

as the blender roars.

Damn.

I wish some people

had a plug I could pull out.

Endings

I'm tired.

Truthfully. Sincerely.

I've had enough.

There should be a place you can go
like a massage parlor
where you enter, relax
and then don't come out
(of course, you pay upfront).

Clean, tidy, that's all she wrote.

I'm not asking for much.
Maybe some nice music,
a glass of wine, a hand to hold
then it's over
you're outta here.

There's too many of us here anyway.

Why does it have to be so difficult
to exit stage left, do the sayonara?

I don't want to run in front of a bus
jump off a bridge or hang alone from a door frame.

I just want to get it done
sanely, safely
like how you shut off the lights
gracefully, contentedly
after a full day of sun at the beach
collapsing on the bed.

We're all gonna die
so once you've put in a good number of years
you should be allowed
a coward's way out.
You've earned it.
Dontcha think?

Can someone tell me
where my off button is?

Morning

So much to do!

Fences to mend.

Wood to chop.

Emails to send.

Got to weed the garden.

There's gas to buy for the generator and
the dog's need their run.

Outside my window
the banana trees dance
in the ever wind
and wave their fronds at me
in laughter.

Morning Thoughts

Americans exhibit racism towards black robots.

Rats will work harder for the same amount of mashed potato when it is flattened than in a ball.

Your cat REALLY does miss you.

Flu shots are more effective when taken by those in a good mood.

Your voice gets higher when speaking with someone of higher social status.

The placenta is not a super food.

Men with a low resting heart rate are more likely to become stalkers.

Scientists are unanimous in proclaiming that it is unethical to let lab rats watch too much TV.

You can download an app that will give you something to do while waiting for another app to download and install.

People think themselves better than average at most things because they think of “average” as below average.

Researchers have found that there really is no end to investigations into the nature and conceptualization of infinity.

Those who say they’ve seen a UFO are more likely to be left handed and eat cereal in the morning.

The American swamp sparrow has not changed its song in 1,000 years.

You gain 7 hours of life for every 1 hour you run.

A Cold Wind

There's a damn cold wind
blowing across the valley
this morning.

I'm outside with my
coffee and blanket
waiting for the world
to put itself back together
again.

I think of those roughing it
sleeping on the concrete
on the square
night after cold night
getting up to a cold wind.

I hope they have
a bottle of something
to help them along.

Only when you've spent
a good amount of time
sleeping on the streets -
do you realize
how democracy works.

Everything has locks.

It's about getting some.

Keeping it. Getting more.

It's a cargo cult and
nobody's sharing.

Then it's forgetting
forgetting the poor bastards
on the street and
the cold wind.

Ease

If it's not easy
don't do it.

It must come up on you
like the spirit a Pentecostal.
It must be something you've
no say in.

It must be something you like too
not that it brings a smile
but rather that warm glow
like when you ejaculate
and get close to losing your self
into something larger
but very easy
because it's
all
there
really
is.

Appearances

There is something in me
something in each of us
that wants to sing
but somehow like the one legged guy
on the penny bicycle
we just can't get around to it.

It's the hope that gets in the way.

A lick of your mind and
the thought of
suffices,
then it's back to toast and jam,
paychecks and pantyhose
the dark bar on the corner
next to the porno shop.

We really don't want to sing.
It's too painful.
We'd rather just think about
singing
and watch that guy on the bike
try to get around.

All The Noise In Here

If it were up to me
I'd clean the house
once every 3 months.

Bring in some real professionals
to cleanse the joint
from tiles to rooftop
spic n span,
then it'd be peace n quiet
drinking, thinking, writing, being
but nope
each day here
a cacophony, a symphony of clean
everyone running about
with a rag, wiping down
every piece of shit that doesn't move
brooms, mops, spray bottles, sanitizer
and out back
the relentless, ceaseless baying
of beaten rugs.

Typical.

Descartes knew better. Just climb into a stove.

We can't seem to sit alone
in one spot and think
anymore.

If there is nothing else to do,
we'll find something to do.

Dishes in the sink
the endless battle against
dust and entropy
hell, even in this recession, depression
people are paying
to get their cars washed.

If it were up to me
I'd legislate for less hygiene.

The world is too busy being clean for me.

Waste

I wish things were like
in the movies
only the good parts, no dross
cut, snip, paste ...

No more brushing your teeth
sitting through the 3rd, 4th, 5th beers
or 30 minutes in line
at Western Union
sucking your thumb,
scratching your bum.

No.
Only the picturesque parts
the essential,
getting the girl
dancing naked in the dark
falling off your bike
cut - to the hospital
the face of pain,
cut - to you dancing in the dark
buck naked
fade into tomorrow
you're on your yacht
and the weather's always good.

No waste.

Cut to the chase.

just what counts.

Then the curtain drops

after the happy ending.

Recipe For Learning

Prepare.

Show up. Have desire.

Look. Listen. Lean in.

Gather. Notice.

Cook.

Try it. Fail. Try again.

Add your own spice.

Simmer.

Taste.

Note what doesn't belong.

Improve it. Practice it.

Teach others.

Repeat Daily.

Thoughts

"Often we have to get away from speech in order to think clearly."

— R. S. Woodworth, Experimental Psychology

to two too =s 3

no thinking thin king

run on sentence life sentence

le mot juste

Ommm Ahhh Oh! Yeah shhhhhhhhhh

says the tired tire

wee wee wee all the way

to the small home hole

Ole Ole Ole cafe au lait O! Lay

lady lay.....

springs sing

in the flower bed

every year why ear?

we're here weir

damn it! damn it! damn it!

aswants the tin mad!

steeling a way

anyway,

something like that

3 eees

with ease

we do as we please

stuckkkkkkkkkkin

bloody place body face
two faced the mirror
or rathOR
saw themselves in two
two pieces suits you
ewe moo you and who
who who who who
hoots the unfowl owl
Ough! aaaH! Ouch!
we too two wake up
at a wake
who who who who
died? Lewis
carolled
no question to mark
the grave
question a quest
ask again, request
Hark! who who who
goes there
any way or
somewhere like that
cuz THAT
is how it goes
goes goes oooooooooos
around
another round please

the wait'er is over
we have time to
two all ready drunks
 drink up get down
kup after hiccup
 to ketchup
words aren't enough
but they're all
 we hal ve
ah!!! So unfair there is
 no fair where
we're goinggoinggone
 all sawn
see saw
in two pieces
 who says.

A Week In Nassau

Got here.

Raining pigs and elephants.

Casino.

Lost a few thousand

in a few minutes

went outside

to clear my head and

bought a \$25 ice cream cone.

Took the limo home

and chatted with the driver

about how cold it was

14 degrees

they'd closed a school in Freeport!

How life was so unfair

so shitty —

we laughed the whole way.

In the door.

A glass of water.

Crawled into bed

sick as a dog

— the FLU

Spent 5 days
in my room
rolling around, moaning
waiting for some brave sod
to come in
and put me down.

Nobody did so
I got up
went downstairs
and looked outside
at the emerald blue sky.

I couldn't believe I was still here.

It was all worth it
this trip.

What doesn't kill you
allows you
to do it all over again.

You Don't Hafta

There is not a lot you really, truly
hafta do.

You don't hafta marry that man.

You don't hafta drink that last beer
or you don't hafta not drink that last beer.

You don't hafta shave or dye your hair or
get groceries.

You don't hafta get out of bed
or go to bed.

You don't hafta sign that deal
or get that promotion.

You don't hafta take a shower
or get another credit card.

You simply don't hafta.

You can but you don't hafta.

You don't hafta get that degree
or build a better mousetrap
or bring home all that bacon.

You don't hafta smile at everyone you meet.

You don't hafta take it on the chin

You don't hafta play those two aces

or do what they tell you to.

You don't hafta buy a newer, newer car.

You don't.

You simply don't.

So, why do you do?

Without a second thought?

I'm not asking you to drop out.

I'm just asking you to dismantle
their joystick.

And asking you to do

the one thing

you really, truly hafta do -

Love.

Love everything, everyone as you should yourself.

The rest can wait or just never be.

Easter Sunday. April 12th, 2020.

Play Your Role

It's all good
even when it isn't.
Even when your ship doesn't come in
even when your flush doesn't
hit on the river
even when your car won't start
or your wife left you
or the check isn't
in the mail.

It's all good.

Black or white.
Victor or vanquished.
Golden spoon or no spoon.
Judge or just the janitor.
It's all good.

We just play our role
and it makes no sense
struggling in our chains
when we don't even know
why we're here or really
what's going on.

Latent structure rules obvious structure.

We live blind playing a game of incomplete information.

So laugh.

I guarantee you

the universe

Krishna

the great Kahuna in the sky

those sentient atoms

swirling around

are

all laughing at you

or even if they aren't

it's all good.

We don't know shit.

Just be glad to still

be here

standing naked

a disfigured, misinformed ape

40 lbs overweight

standing in the middle

of an empty room

alone

before the mirror of time.

It's all good.

Even when it ain't.

To All My Fellow Suffering Poets

I got into my Range Rover
and headed to the beach.
On the way cashed a check
and loaded the cooler
with Patron and Dom Perrignon.

I called my stock broker
to tell him to send money
to my bookie.
I put 200 quid down on the 7th
Exterminator to win.

It's a bitch being a poet
lying on the soft sand
cold drink in hand.

It's a bitch pretending to be
the poor degenerate
everyone wants you the poet , to be.

Read these poems of mine
'nd make no
mention of who I am.
Heaven does not accept
get out of jail free cards.

Overrated

They're always askin' me
"When's your book coming out?"
and I tell 'em
next month, I'm working on it
next year, just you wait
etc ...

The postman, my neighbor, my bartender
my neighbor's kid, the barber
even
my alter ego.

I should just come clean
say what I mean
"Never."

Books are overrated.
The minute you finish one
the thing is dead.

And then what?

So the notebooks pile up in
my back closet
and the word stays alive

as I like any poet
of good ilk
find better ways
to lie.

Go Ask A Poet

It was a cold fall farm morning
the kind where
you see everyone's last breath,
the cow in the barn
pulled up from the straw
by the nose,
the steam rising up and disappearing
god knows where.

I was 9 or 10 years old
enthralled by Mr. Sparling's
Popeye like forearms and dark beard
watching as he
put a bullet into the cow,
the cow just standing there
screaming, screaming
like cows scream.

Mr. Sparling slowly walking over to
the barn door
like this wasn't the first time
nor the last,
walking back with an axe
in his right hand
then lifting it and smacking it

backside up into
the cow's forehead,
the cow kneeling down and
with a few more Viking style whacks
rolling over silent.

Now many years and many deaths later
thinking of this,
of Layton's bull calf too
thinking of
my own time and space
and that
there are no winners.

Go ask Cesar.

Go ask Marilyn.

Go ask a card dealer.

Go ask a grave digger.

Go ask a good poet.

Tonight when I watch
the news
the body bags, the car wrecks,
the heavy eye shadow
on the newscaster,
when I watch all that

l

ike Li Po

I'll drink my wine

and laugh from the belly

and dream of my

pink row boat in the sky.

Hard Boiled Words (Just The Facts Mam)

Good people kill – other good people.

Ugly people have babies – beautiful babies.

Prostitutes have mothers – mothers have prostitutes.

Presidents are made, not elected and
some day have to stand naked.

Blood isn't bloody easy to remove.

Running water moves mountains.

Dogs piss to mark territory.

Men get pissed and then mark territory.

Elephants never forget what they don't know.

Small microbes can topple the largest of men.

The eye can't see itself.

Fire can't burn fire.

Everything is an accident or nothing is.

God doesn't play with dice, he plays with men
(because men play with themselves).

Dice don't believe in chance –
their number always comes up.

A horse is a horse.

A man isn't a horse.

Man's task is to find out why he isn't a horse.

Honor is what we will do some somebody else
but never for ourselves.

The first laws were created by criminals as justice, a justice – fiction.

Nothing ends, it only changes

like a newton became a fig newton.
War was created so man could be at peace.
ART is not art.
So many countries but only one sky.
Man is more what he thinks and less what he lives.
Crows are also black birds.
A wink is as good as a nod to a blind man
but a nudge works every time.
A forest is a good place for rest.
There are only two kinds of people.
Collectors and garbage collectors.
Why is potato salad like a holy sock?
Dirty underwear is made to be washed.
A cup in only a cup because it has nothing inside it.
Church pews aren't built for comfort.
We reap what we owe. We weep what we sow.
Quantity affects quality.
Beauty is a blemish and a blemish is beauty.
Rome wasn't built in a day but a person is created in an instant.
Too much good is much worse than a little bad.
A spoiled bottle of wine gives all the others their taste.
Music is man's indifference to time.
Time conquered through mimicked time.
We only obey the cop because of their uniform.
We live only so we can sleep (but we don't know this).
Prison's are built with the bricks of righteousness.
Drunks never get hurt when they fall because

they cannot envision what might happen to them.
A guitar with a broken string can still play a song.
Infidelity is a means of confirming our infidelity.
Every marriage is a giving up. In effect we say, “defeated I win.”
Cease fires are agreements to re-load.
Cemeteries always have the greenest lawns.
The poet dies on the page.
The only good poet is a dying poet.
Sometimes even the president of the IMF
has to wipe his own ass.
Nothing ever ends, it’s only bandaged.....

Mind Wide Open

Beyond this day, the mind
that fools.

Beyond the eye, the make up
that rules.

Beyond hunger and satiation
Beyond want and need
the endless reaching and violation.

Beyond books and bombs
Beyond intelligence, weak or strong
Beyond the rules , this right or that wrong
Beyond lament and vision
Beyond death and non-living

Beyond what is never gone

Mind wide open.

You Are Special

Yes. – You!

You are special

and i don't mean

because U R unique

one of a kind

'nd all that B.S.

they feed you down at

the self help section.

No.

You may have

brought down 387 Spitfires over Germany

You may have

painted better than Picasso every done

You may have

been declared a saint

(and damn well know you ain't)

You may have

been the first man on another moon.

I don't give a shit

nor does the universe

for

you are special

in, of, and, as (you name the preposition)

you are.

Don't believe the buggers
that nail us to a wall
and describe how this one
is a work of art
the other not.

Don't believe the number nummers
the rankers with their files
the check markers with their critic's smiles.

You are special because
you are necessary.
Each photon of your enormity
says that
you are here and
this world wouldn't exist
without you

You may be a rock star
or slinging beer at a bar.
You may be on stamps
or enjoy fast cars.
Doesn't matter
Rich or poor
slow or sore.
You are special.

So relax and be.

There is nothing you
have to accomplish or believe
save,
you are special
a god that makes this world
go round
special, found
as you are, are
here 'n now.

Losing

I lost big at the poker table
and the zipper on my coat
wouldn't go north.

Jumped in the car for home.
My motor was coughing and pissin'
So I pulled over
for a nice glass of Pastis
and they were out.
I left a tip and
went home with a club soda.

Somedays, you just can't win.

Stroke that —
you never win,
you just convince yourself
luck will return
as the big dices in the sky
come up snake eyes
after snake eyes
we none the wise.

You Can Say No

You can always say no

You don't have to swallow that last bite.

You don't need to look up her skirt.

You don't got to buy that Lexus
or tell that girl you love her.

Romeo loved Juliet.

But he coulda said no

but he didn't

'nd where did that get him.

You can always say no.

You don't have to run, swallow or take it up the

You don't need to go, follow or give it a go

You don't go to follow that well trod path
or say you're doing well.

You can always say no.

Just turn around.

Just turn it off.

Just look away or
dive on in.

But whatever you do
don't do it to squire, to nod, to acquiesce.

Do it to confirm – who you be
Do it to get you where you are meant to be
Do it to make them ashamed
the ones who ask you to do it.

You don't have to do it.
You can say no.

Everything Hurts

You awake and time
pushes down on your chest
and the light outside blinds.
There is no way out and
you have no choice but to get up
and go through it
– the hurt.

Everything hurts.

The walk down the stairs.
The thought of the afternoon.
The weight of gravity.
The emptiness of the sky.
Each spoonful of cereal.
Each sup of coffee.
Every breath, every heartbeat.

Everything hurts.

You can't tell anyone about it.
That hurts more.
Besides,
you don't know exactly what it is
that hurts.

You only know it hurts.

Everything hurts.

The news

not getting any news.

The slow gnaw of microbes

enjoying your skin.

The sun, oh definitely the sun

that thought of always

not being

but also being too.

Everything hurts.

Getting dressed, getting ahead

getting head, getting a dress

having lunch – the necessity of it all.

Having stuff – the chance you swim in

the wind on your skin

the sound of distant laughter

Everything hurts.

There is no respite.

No water breaks.

Alcohol, sex, pills, rock n' roll

They only make it hurt more.

Everything hurts.

You roll on, on, on,

up that hill

but the top never comes.

And it keeps hurting, hurting.

It will keep hurting, hurting.

There is no end to it.

Nothing, not even drugs,

religion, sex or

the thought of death

can dial it down.

There is no kill switch.

There is no way out or off.

Everything hurts.

Happiness

Happiness
is not a general thing.

It is not a state
it moves
and is digested
like salad leaves
off the plate.

Happiness
is not what is.
At rest it disappears.
It is the eye of interest
a going there
a doing that
a mind that remakes all
an embracing even of that
which against us might just fall.

Happiness
is not a thing.

A car, a child that is mine
it is what can be
what might we always find

never looking behind
it is that fear unfounded
because the eye is up ahead.
Happiness a kind of compass
memory unbled.

Happiness
is what is alive.
That is each moment more
in interest
in possibility,
how in thought
we can walk through
every door
pushed by the question
what is this life for?

Waking Up

Poetry is hunger and protest.
Not pretty sounds
but a howl, a scowl
a wake up call for a drunk
in a hotel with
pretty lies and lights
and a roulette table
that never pays out but
keeps going round and round and round .

Poetry is a cry, a picture
that hopes to make the world ashamed
that hopes to make the world
– even one man
come out of that hotel
and into the sunlight
of acceptance
and each moment thereafter
be good
and each day thereafter
have a thought of the good.

Poetry is one hand slapping
the feckless face of man unkind.

So Change

Change.

Re — tire. Re — invent yourself.

Do one thing in 6 different ways.

Change.

Become something “other”.

Start again and again.

It’s your life after all.

Nobody else’s.

Live it. Fuck them.

Fuck them all.

Fill it with experiences

nobody will believe.

Screw what others think.

It’s your life.

Change it.

Even if, especially if

your comfortable and

constantly dream about butterflies.

It’s the only damn thing

those sun tossed Greeks

got right.

Change is sweet.

The only certainty is uncertainty.

So change.

Not tomorrow, next year
or even right this moment
but yesterday.

Change.

Put on a mask. Then another mask.

Pull up your roots
and soak them in tequila.

Start gardening, grow a beard.

Sing songs to the homeless
late every night.

Sit in bed all day long
with only your socks on.

Steal or give it all away — you decide.

Build a house nobody will ever live in.

Or burn your house down.

It's your life for Christ's sakes.

Walk away.

Change.

Life is not judged by
how good or not good you are or weren't
or happiness or a full belly.

Hell, life has no measurement

just what is and what the tape measure
can't catch up too.
Hey, you'll be forgotten
much sooner than you think.
Dust for better beetles to
frolic in.

So change.
It's all that matters.
And if you don't have
the balls to change
and hit the brakes
do a 180
then fail, just start failing.
You'll live a glorious, ever changing life
your only one,
the only one you got.

So change.
You'll be aligned with
the universe
this failing, entropy
stuffed full
universe.

It Doesn't Matter

It doesn't matter if
the air con is broke
the car got scratched
or the wine ain't chilled.

It doesn't matter.

Don't matter if
the dog went on the carpet
or Bitcoin is up or down.

Don't matter if
there's an earthquake in Ecuador
or you won the Super 7.

No worries about
missing the 9am meeting
drinking too much
drinking too little
no mayo in the fridge
a bad back, a better world.

It doesn't matter.

It doesn't matter if
the bus is late

or you arrived too early
Or Sunnis are killing Shias
Or Shias are killing Sunnis.

Don't matter if
you are this or
should be that.
Don't matter if
the dog got your cat or
carbon emissions are up.

It doesn't matter.

It doesn't matter
if your mother-in-law
hates your guts
or the plane's delayed.

Don't matter if
your bank balance is \$0
or the remote is broke.

Doesn't matter if
you don't finish this poem
or ever do.

It doesn't matter.

Why?

It doesn't matter.

Tooth Pickture

7 am

and still the tooth aches
and nothing else matters.
not the sleep you didn't get
not the dishes to do
not the unpaid bills
not the smack she gave you
not the 4 alarm fire downstairs.

The only thing that matters is
the absence
the abscess within.

Then, out of nowhere
mana from heaven,
the door is opened
and the hot iron
is taken off the wound.

Nothing else still matters
only this absence
that pain – where did it go?
How wonderful a world it now is.
Fields and fields of relief.
Belief, again.

A toothache is a poem
that we live
the moment pain is
re placed.

Not Going Far

It's strange how everywhere
I turn my head these days
I only see people dying.

Each page flip
Each channel change
Each item in my news feed
brings a death notice
and a reminder
that I'm next.

It's like when you finally
get the cash together
and drive off the lot
your shiny new sedan
and by the time you get
the 10 blocks home
you've seen 3 others just like it
and all you can do
all you can ever do
is just sit back and
enjoy the ride
because you ain't going far.

A Vaccine

The gravediggers are unemployed.

Soldiers march with joy in their steps.

There are free flowers sold on every street corner.

The prisons are fully voluntary.

The cops have begun to talk down
the few angry ones out there.

There's a chicken in every pot and
a basketball hoop in every driveway.

If you don't have the cash – they just give you the groceries.

Jobs galore but only if you want one.

Walls, barriers, borders – they've all been obliterated.

People hug strangers openly in the street.

Young people live old.

Old people live older.

Even the president of the United States stands naked, blissful.

I've begun to smile.

It's against the law not to smile.

I am a snake wearing a yellow polka dot bikini.

I'm making love to Gandhi and Lev joins in.

Brrrr. I wake up.

Jingle Jangle

I wanna bite off more
than I can chew.

Cookies, ice cream, chocolate cakes
whatever it takes
do and do and then undo.

I wanna bite off more
than I can chew.

I wanna run myself ragged
jingle, jangle
will be my only wealth.

Cars, cigars, drunken wakes
whatever it takes,
gulp, burp and whistle.

I wanna bite off more
than I can chew.

I wanna get lost in a
city in full view.
Streetcars, bums, Picassos and fakes
whatever it takes.....
cut through, cut off, renewed.

I wanna bite off more
than I can chew.

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Notable Publications.

Electric Chair For The Sun – Collected Poems 1990 – 2010.

The Idiot's Dictionary.

The Unbearable Lightness Of Being A Teacher.

Zen And The Act Of Teaching.

Last Train To Auschwitz. Poems On The Holocaust.

