

In the
Presence of
Canopies

JACOB RUSSELL DRING

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

Although this is my ninth installation in an ongoing high-quantity-content series of poetry collections, it stands apart from its six of eight predecessors. It stands apart not in quality, necessarily, because that varies from reader to reader and entry to entry. With only its immediate precursors—*Recess From Reality* and *The Treasured Aberration*—able to stand on the same field, *In the Presence of Canopies* varies greatly in theme from the other titles.

The title reflects a variety of subject matter that I scrutinize and explore, designated by the notion of reaching skyward and gathering the unknown for study both in the light and under the dark. Equivocal topics include life beyond our planet and in other dimensions; religion and its possibilities; the human conscience and dreams; moral spectrums; personality disorders; natural essence, and more. The title also refers to the feeling of ataraxia I have when I'm at a park or in the woods and I recline to gaze up, as if drifting out of my life and toward the treetops just barely impeding full daylight.

I hope you enjoy the exploration between the lines I've haphazardly placed for *In the Presence of Canopies*, and feel free to provide feedback in any manner.

I'll see you up there...

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1

GROWING PAINS

The sky above me is spider-webbed
I used to understand the arms overhead
But lately it's all one vast puzzle
Which I don't feel fit to unravel

Full of tangles now gone from them
They've aged a thousand times over
Yet still they reek of inexperience
The misery, however, lingers heavily

I want to reach up and seize
That emptiness left to the ceiling
Take it for myself, spare the trees
But only if they sustain the feeling

2

WHAT THE MIND WANTS

He falls through floors, chasing dreams
Faint reveries to events far too distant
The descent is true, but he sees a summit
Heart submissive to mind, bursting at seams

This will be his end, if he doesn't apprehend
The mind is at work, unrelenting fantasies
Implausible goals set beyond his hands
While the heart bids tangible possibilities

He hears the applause of his friends, family
Distorted from the truth as they cry out
But he listens only to his mind with no doubt
Grasp the reality of it all before time runs out
Bleed through the skull this bitter epiphany



SINCE THE END OF TIME

Wash away the weight of the world
Feel my voice upon your shoulders
A new breath beckons a fresh verse
From skies above clouds imperceptible
Galaxies born but not yet unfurled
Nature has become fickle, most variable
Only we can set our feet in stones
Shake free the mud from our tombs
Whatever this eternity promises
I know that it will not last forever
But the portals on the other side
Open the window to infinite offers

4

TO THE HILT

Fought our way back home
We were too vacuous to realize
How everything has changed
The cities soar now above
And the grass is bleeding away

We're lost in the chaos of abandon
We're lost in the chaos of the seldom found

Buried to the point of no return
Buried to the point of the greatest burn

Fought our way back to fate
We were too hollow to recognize
The sphere of terrible change
Civilization has been upended
And the earth is fleeing us

We will not find our exit wound
We will not find our exit in this tomb
We've managed to dig for ourselves

5

RECONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

A mirage no less beautiful
Than the plagues are plentiful
Just because we don't see this
Cannot mean it doesn't exist
The capacious corridor grows dark
And we're too eager to disembark
When we should be investigating
Instead of drearily contemplating
Meanwhile sifting through shadows unseen
We are missing all the dilemmas in between
A word of advice from a stone constantly turned
Is to not so easily dismiss that which we've yearned
Only if we can fasten responsibility
For what we have brought disability

6

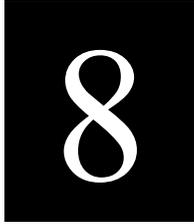
PEOPLE WHO WALK WITHOUT MOVING THEIR ARMS SHOULDN'T BE TRUSTED

A deterioration seeping through the cracks
Allows me to lucidly see the fallen outcasts
Asphalt paved in the blood of the greediest
Desertion of everything once sophisticated
I've collapsed from below and now I grasp
The rise of the firmament within corruption
A confusion has leaked into our subsistence
Whatever the somber want from me
They will never acquire it so freely
I still possess my essence in entirety
Unlike others, I will gallop through rapture
Or descend en route, so as to elude capture



PUBLICITY STUNT

She cries out for eyes
Mascara courses cheeks
She desires even lips
Are we so blind to fall in
When all else is sullied
So much of everything
The true gems passed over
Onward to this grime
Her voice is strident
And I am growing tired
Of all the games played
Fixed in an era of the naïve
Her eyes betray façade
I know what to look for
As if it was ever difficult
Her cries go unheard by me
Do however you feel
I'll dig for my gold, thank you
I'll dig for my gold
Don't want to spoil myself
With the scraps of selfish smog



DANGEROUS GAME

Kept in these cages for too long
Growls one, roars another, all the same
But different per spirit, the rage
Of ferocity for the uninhibited within
Fur sprouts beneath the skin, as if to breathe
Lacking the oxygen yearned so long
To flee the prison of guidelines
Wrapped around them like latticework
A cry escapes the mouths of the bound
And to the skies of green are unwound
Sink new fangs of a dead age
Into the flesh of the far less awake
Draw no grasp on pity or remorse
This is the truth inside of us
This is the truth clawing out of ourselves
The lot of us too unfortunate to contain it



THE LIFE OF ME

This will have caused the death of my apparition, as has it beckoned the life of my oscillation, an honest denouncement of my conscience seeking unjust pronouncement, for everything that has stirred mischief in the shrouded past of my nothing, and what little have I suffered if not for a life perpetually unbuffered, a chain of events best looked upon with a gaze void of pain, for it is I who have surfaced above the ocean of guilt and every shameful notion, this will be the life of me unraveled with the expanse of wilderness to be traveled

10

CARING IS SHARING

He possesses a compassion too vast for just himself
He holds with him a lot of imperfections regardless
Two decades has been long enough to keep to himself
A heart yearning for the touch of another's happiness
He believes to share it is to show his care
He comprehends no better a way to fare
Going any further by himself may feel a bit fruitless
The smiles might be there but it's ultimately hopeless
He knows that in the end he will have to give more to receive
Although this has already been done, so what has he to believe
Except that life is as long as it is short and capricious
And so far he feels as though he's been surreptitious

11

VERDANT SOLACE

I find solace in the trees
And not just their ethereal beauty
I can touch upon a kind of divinity
Here I dwell far from the city
Digging not down but upwardly
Through the branches of clarity
Into the bowels of verdant seas
And I ask Her a great please
Just let all of us be

12

MADE BUT NOT KEPT

Honestly, I've found new motivation in death
A fresh pair of eyes glaring into the light
The talons in my back loosen their clutch
I am myself, stronger than before, burning bright
My tongue has lapped at words in my brain
For a past riddled with uncertainties and doubt
Seeking to rid the shadows and their pain
Having engaged in the search for a way out
But seeing death now as the meanest of all beasts
I've braced my legs and set my feet in stone
I shall deny them of any premature feasts
Betray my promises, contest if I must alone
If these walls choose to bleed around me
Then I will knock them down and flee free
Find a goal somewhere shy of death
And not once dare to lose my breath

13

STRAY DREAMS

Only time listens to me openly
I am buried in a foxhole of murk
Torching the cavern with thoughts
Lost to myself, blind of potential
I'm told that the possibilities are endless
And yet the confusion devours the trust
There is no way out of here
There is only a deep-rooted fear

I'd like to believe I have control
There's something nibbling at my conscience
Knees brought up from the stained gray
Seeking answers only to find more questions
Time might betray me in the end
This place bears neither foe nor friend
Just a discontent leech in between
A sort of dryad to my slumbering insomnia

And I cannot reach topside, even as I try
I wonder if I really want to, lucidity dilutes

14

IGNORING THE ITCH

Feel the feeling creep into your skull
Beneath the skin, writhing in your veins
 You want it, you need it, or so you're told
 Not by voice but by the urge in your flesh
 Be reassured quite the contrary
 You're better than a loss of control

Just when you feel it all collapse
Believe you taste victory before seeing it
Fool the heart in your fingertips withdraw
 Remember what it took to get where you are
 Realize that all of the pride is not worth this
 Trash only a sense of regret that you feel it
 But the humans of our ancestry forgives
 Because this is who we have always been
 Set fire to the source and let it burn

Let it burn
Let it burn

Bathe in the smoke of patience reborn

15

PRECIOUS CARGO

Single file, ghost's faces on our own
We pass through the shadowy underpass
Forgetting what we have in tow
Living to forget that we aren't alone
Or alive at all ever to begin with
Wings torn from our shoulders, embers lit
We can't help the guilt from bursting
Or is it all in the wake of apprehension
Carrying with us prisoners of essence
Far from us to realize we're the same
Slaves of similar circumstance
Directionless and lost in our agendas
Kept to the corners of reluctance
Wherever the keys have sunken to
Our reach is limited by our conscience
And this troubles me to believe
That the abilities will never truly be let free
Within us, from us, we are trapped
If we never remove the binds from us
We will only sink deeper into the holes
Formed by the captives at our sides

16

A NEW BEGINNING TO AN OLD END

He stood there screaming
At the heavens which shone down
Sweat glistening his brow
Arms at sides, fingers spread apart
Jaw agape and spit flying
Nose wrinkled like a wolf provoked

“I would die just to live
And yet we all live to die!”

The voice scratched my insides
And I knew he spoke truth
But the light in me said otherwise
Or was I just being blinded
By that doubt lingering deep within
Because instead of standing
Like this vigorous man was in ire
I’ve been kneeling all my life
Not seeing the words he’s screamed
Until I’ve spoken them myself like fire



17

LICENSE TO FEEL

He was born the same as me
My skin might ripple differently
Pockmark my soul or scar my brain
Feed me the same crow as before
He and I will never lose that gift
He and I will never lose this curse
We in all will forever be outcast
Exiled for the hearts throbbing inside
The energy racing in veins
All the same color, various results
My hands go differently than his
But I have faith when you do least
In time he will see the mistake
Of betraying that which was given
And the loss is great, he knows
Reflection in my eyes, he sees
Himself years in the future, different
And yet all the same in birth
I want to believe he'll understand
But faith is as unreliable as its source

18

SUBATOMIC LEVELS OF THE CAT IN MY BACKYARD

The fence is too high, screaming barricades
The grass, intermittently dying in acres

Why is she here, why here, why has she come here
What does she see in this place, what does she see at all

The house is sanguine in color, manic nature
The monotony in the air still, not like inhabitants

The sky suspended above answerless, sure quietude
The trees as few and far between, barren towers

Why is she looking at me, why are her eyes so calm
What does she see in me, what does she smell in the air

Where is the place in her head, where is the home on her neck
When does she leave, when will she realize, when if ever

19

CHAINS OF SILK

Thoughts gossamer to a voice in my mouth
I'll speak my mind for once, louder this time
Chains of silk pinion my wrists behind me
But my muscles aren't weary and I'm eager
To break free once in a while, taste the breeze
Lift my heels from the dirt I'm so familiar to
And whistle away those rules formerly firm
Now flexible at my command, I'm at the helm
Innate hesitation keeps, the summit beyond me
But the climb is under feet with better traction
A visor above my brow, casting less paranoia
I am smart but I am a fool for more, let's try
Another round of the same old might kill me
While this will only remind me I'm alive
And these chains of silk will still remain
But their transparency is magnifying too
My list of things to do is just expanding
And my muscles refuse to contract in full

20

BLACK SAILS IN A RED SKY

A sound no less a clamor than a crash
Hymns on the waves which roar beside
Songs sung by serpents creasing the sea
A sanitarium below deck full of lunacies
And the vaster world beneath prosperous
Souls lingering at the feet of redwood masts
Death at their fingertips from swaying idly
Each crash threatening their ugly demise
Seeking brine only to numb wounds of old
Life in separated forms riding the clouds
Bleeding through the unseen horizon
Crying out against the wind of guidance
A destination too awry to ever justify
Vanguard without sanity or clemency
This is the universe in an hourglass
On its side and going nowhere in time
Save a burst of energy untouched upon
Until then the painting speaks for itself
A reminder of everything that is possible
In this realm or not it glides onward
Forgiving nothing and fearing only itself

21

CRAZY NOT IN LOVE

Pry open chest, excruciating emotion
Beautiful kisses me without lips
Why am I crucified for feeling otherwise
Cherish not the falling hands
But the eyes joining bridges in between

I'm not in love
BUT I LOVE HER
I'm not in love
BUT I LOVE HER

Searing distance with time's expansion
Care jointed without fingertips
Why do I listen to their inundation of lies
This feeling never disbands
Even when our gazes break the seam

I'm not in love
BUT I LOVE HER YET
I'LL ALWAYS LOVE HER
I'm not in love
CALL ME CRAZY
CALL ME CRAZY

22

BASED ON A (TRUE?) STORY

God, why won't you believe me
I'm wearing thin from the weights
God, why are you people staring
I'm sinking deep from the plights

Hate my gaze when my eyes are closed
Abhor my voice when my lips are shut
Loathe my presence when I'm not even here

I'M NEVER HERE
I'M NEVER WHERE YOU ARE

This is me falling away
From the place you hold dear
This is me peeling away
To the home I hold so very far

God, why won't you believe me
I'm crumpling from head to feet
God, why are you people laughing
I'm imploding from the fathoms
AND I'M NOT LIKELY TO **RETURN**

23

THE NOISE IN YOUR CLOSET

Wake up because you were never asleep
Open wide your ears and gape the limbic
Drop the blankets, the cold is warming
Doorknob rattles, all it wants is ventilation

You aren't alone, and that's not so bad
You aren't alone, and that's not so bad

Embrace the foreign with some confidence
Know that the ugly cannot be seen in murk
And often the brightest jewels are unnoticed
Ignore the fears in the air, ready a new friend

You aren't alone, and that's not so bad
You aren't alone, and that's not so bad

Smile and welcome, don't hide
No reason to fear the unknown
Imagine how they feel inside
Let your altruism be shown
Nobody is ever poorly alone

24

TO HEAVEN AND BACK

I've waited my lifetime to go home
Given everything to taste the light
Clearly I was wrong to believe
That I could trust my energy
Clearly I was wrong

The angels lament my departure
But I think it's laughter in disguise
How could I have been so blind
To think this was my destiny
I've been so blind

Am I being forced to feel regret
For the decision to bring me home
Light is receding from above
The guilt isn't so easy to forget
Especially after what I've seen

I don't want to
(Please don't do this)
I don't want to
(Please don't do this)
I don't want to swallow the unclean

I don't want to embrace the unseen
I CAN'T DO THIS
I'VE BEEN HERE ALREADY
OH, GOD, ACCEPT MY APOLOGY



25

THE HIGH ROAD

The air is steady
Enveloping me readily
Opened mouth to sing
Of this beautiful time
A transition bringing peace
Ridding the terrors bountiful

There is change
There is change
I see their faces
I hear their lips

Release me with them
Take me into the beyond

26

BLACK LIGHTNING

The sound takes me by surprise
I'm smiling out of sheer fright
The scene is twistedly glamorous
I'm laughing without a voice

Taken skyward, through clouds
At the aid of neither wings nor jets
I want to leave, somehow
But I'm tinged with trepidation

A sensation indescribable swathes me
I am the lights whirring over the sky
I am the winds circling my whole life
A confusion inexplicable clenches me

Lifted to see everything and nothing
Without promises or greeting, I'm compliant
I want to feel everything, no exception

27

SLAVES TO A GREATER VOICE

Call ourselves masters of the universe
Too keen to explore outside our boundaries
Stick instead to the simplicities offered
Manipulate machines for a better opus
Listen not to ourselves, but the conductors
It is all a means to escape our monotony
Realize that we could never come close
Enjoy the conversations in eccentric dialect
Remind ourselves that we shouldn't feel guilty
This is building upon our most graphic flaw

28

THERE IS A GOD

I feel It every time I make another day
I feel It with each passing whole page
I feel It not very often, but very well enough

Make way for my faith
I call out not from dark
No scripture in my realm
Making a faith for my way

I feel It within the music to my ears
I feel It after conquering any fear
I feel It like a slalom, nonlinear suffices

I call out in luminance
Scripture as my fiction
Make way for my faith
Paved in light of others' ways

29

CUT ME UP AND PASTE ME DOWN

The strings fixed to my limbs yank
Am I just a naïve puppet to this place
And the kid with a magnifying glass
Towering above us all, grinning
The gaze is fixed upon me alas now
I'm breaking under the pressure
This is not what I was made for
(For what purpose was I made?)
I'm another page to a scrapbook
Macabre, twisted and emotionless
Are my views on people distorted
It is coming to seem that way
(Nothing seems how it should)
When the scissors shear my strings
I'll be left to rot in the adhesion
Where pieces long since forgotten
Lay in a mass grave of vacancy
I'm right not to call out for help
I brought this fate upon myself
When I decided to be fucking human
(When I decided to be who I am)

30

MANNEQUINS NEED TO PARTY TOO

They keep to their corners, their floors
That might as well be ceilings upturned
Where the shadows not dance but stick
This is where they linger, gone unnoticed
Energy floats above their heads, untouched
There is light somewhere hiding within
It just needs to be unlocked, welcomed
This world is too thin to have only buoys
With an ounce of taking we can give back
To the voices unheard with so much to say
Often the greatest notions born from silence
This needs to change, we cannot deny it
Pack some confetti, don't be conservative
We need to hear their tongues and take note
This is a prodigious learning process
And the world will never be the same

31

TELEPORTATION COMPLETE

I found my way along an unpaved path
Different than yours and far from ours
The rainbows stretched above my head in arches
Like lightning giving birth to vibrant tongues
This feeling coursed through my body
Spinning through galaxies head over heels
Regurgitating only regret that it took me so long
To locate the wheel which has brought me here
But now that I'm here
There's nowhere not to be

NOWHERE NOT TO BE
AND I WANT NOTHING LESS
THAN TO BE INSIDE EVERYTHING
ALL AT THE SAME TIME

Disregard pain, if it exists then I don't need it
Delivered like a package of priceless value
Despite the risks, I've cartwheeled through perils
To reach a destination my mind can't comprehend
Inside a vortex not quite liquid nor solidity
This substance is something beyond my knowledge
And the pins it sweeps across my nerves

Induces an euphoria no drug can touch upon
I need not flesh or taste to know this is real
And that it is grander than everything of my past
Or my future, which I cannot say is so certain
Whatever the consequence of this adventure
I know that I'd rather be here
Than anywhere else
Wherever here is, I don't care

WHEREEVER HERE MIGHT BE
I'LL STAY UNTIL THERE'S NOTHING LEFT
AND THEN ADHERE TO REBIRTH
UNTIL I HAVE BECOME PART OF IT
PART OF IT

SOME HAD DREAMS

Spent lives uprooted the way we fear
Otherwise forget that they even existed to begin with
Feel thorns in our hearts when we realize
Yet how are we supposed to act instead?
These questions make my stomach turn
And I ponder if this species was truly wrought from a deity
Some flaws are difficult to look over
I understand a mass flock of them
And I am far from the perfection of comprehension and pity
However I acknowledge their pain
Which breaks the ground upon which I have complained
Whence I feel my soul take a dive
How could I have been so naïve
Regardless, the world has glassed over without a blemish
Suffered the greatest wound of all
When these dreams die without ever breaching atmosphere
And I know they are not all saints
But who are we to judge the sources
When they never got the chance to attempt filling them

33

SPAGHETTI

It spews and we're not patient
Whatever the meaning, maybe an ultimatum
ALWAYS AN ULTIMATUM
But I won't stick around for it
To be brought out into the light for reasoning
Because there is none, impossible
To make logic out of what's been spilt
THE FLOODGATES MIND US NOT
AND WE'RE SPILLING AS IT IS
But we don't need any more futility
Life is too baffling alone to ingest your waste
I'll stick to my own bowl and figure it out
I'll drown in my own muck
Before I ever fall into yours

34

PRESS STAR

Ire pushes through veins like fire
Release the mercury boiling within
When the preference is to disengage
Float out of the blast radius
And into a whole other realm

Rain is coming down in acid
And the cranium has taken enough
Just want to drift off into vacancy
Until there is nothing but self
And the presence of reflection

35

REFLECTIVE BLASPHEMY

Created not in their image
Then whose tears do you shed?
Ask yourself pointless questions
Explore holes emptier than birth
By which you owe nothing
And everything else is a mirage

Lack belief in the obvious
Share doubt in the vaguest
Your definition is contradictory
And your groundwork corrupt
I have no respect for you
Only a twisted form of pity

I can't promise any traction for you
Just an option to try and understand
The possibilities that might accrue
In a future insulting yourself by pride
Perhaps you're afraid to take a stand
For the hollowness in which you hide

36

AT A LOSS

The panorama has stretched to engulf answers
Whose questions have yet to be inquired
Avalanches of uncertainty sounds distantly
But we can feel the ground shake under trees
As if the source in all of its chaotic splendor
Is working itself through our bodies ruthlessly

Is it just me or is this terrible conclusion
Some sort of a puzzle we aren't mean to solve
Is it just me or does this vacuous solution
Belong to an enigma we aren't meant to absolve

A lake ripples from the clamor in the valley
Things that ought to not exist scurry on by
We stand miles away at a loss and clueless
Like deer in headlights, fated for misery
Because we cannot grasp the bigger picture
Even as it roars its way into our vain frames

Is it just me or are we all in the 'L' column
Is it just me or will we all suffer the bomb

37

IT'S BETTER THAN NOTHING

Find yourself at the root of your problems
With shears to sever off the growing weeds
Which have begun to leech away at your brain
See, it's hard to realize facts when you're ashamed
Of the blatant prospect hiding under the hood—

There could be nothing after this!
There could be NOTHING

And yet you are milling around in monotony
Claiming that you are the sole affliction
When matters could be further down the drain
Or not there at all to begin with, not there at all
Imagine, not even a conscience to consult
A heart to feel the pain of your present
Or the bursts of glee that sweep your life
Neither notions nor dreams to ease the time
The latter of which slinks on by obliviously

There could be nothing right now!
There could be NOTHING
So take to your something while you can
Take to your SOMETHING

38

CRYING MY FEET OUT

A hollow tremble quakes my foundation
Inner voices reassure me everything's fine
But something is tearing away at my viscera
And I'm convinced quite the opposite
Especially when the rain beats my skin

The acknowledgement that an emotion breathes
Is the day that I step beyond my circle of strength
So instead I flush it all to the deepest wells
I won't give them what they think is human
No, I'll emit everything they don't expect
Better like this than to drown in the defects

A veneer dense with too many memories
Now camouflaged in a cape of gallantry
Put on display as flaws I've conquered

Whatever the truth really is, I'll never know
Maybe someday in the future it will avenge
But for now I am better than everyone else

39

RUNNING WITH KNIVES

Words splayed from a tongue
Mentality warped by experience
This path I'm paving for myself
It wields too many outcomes
And half of them end gruesomely

I don't heed my own precautions
And I don't care about yours
Warnings drift just past my ears
Surely I am doomed for it too
But I prefer the negligent risk

Glistening under dismal light
Success so shortly flourished
Over-enjoyed self-production
Until everything crashes in a clattering
And all I can hear is my world shattering

40

THRESHOLD OF PERCEPTION

A moonlit escape from troubles
Across seas glimmering with memory
Siphoned from mental stardom
A recollection of faces washed away
But in our reality we'll never let them go

The threshold of perception is cleansed
So that we may venture through at will
But it remains a path only for the brave
Although the tears can flow regardless
Helping lubricate their route of escape

Faces not without voices, just sometimes
And smiles that can render us useless
Futile not is the gateway to remembrance
Unless tackled by the far less secure
But eventually we must all take the trip

Cast into the shadows only in fright
Otherwise their place will always float
They are at rest, however, we are not
Should we veer into the depths after them

41

FIGHTING WATER WITH FIRE

Again with this rapacity
For the embers in the hearts of the weaker
Little do they realize
The embers are bigger than they could ever be
And in the light of error
They see no stopping because they don't want to
Will not repent this
Cannot repent this

Again I feel butterflies
Reading is too shy of seeing in the flesh
But it suffices still
Driving me against this wave of immorality
Yet I hold confidence
That their reign will not last much longer
In the wake of truth
The embers imbibed will only destroy them
And set free those stolen
Set free those fallen

The wielders of malevolent conflagration will see
That their puddles of victims lived brighter than they

42

AS THE GLASS SPLINTERS

Pushed into another's beyond
This is not the same path chosen
Differ the thickets rolled into view
Thorns longer than your precursor's

We refuse to complain, though
We the strong refuse to complain
We few stomach all the pain
We the strong survive through

When the glaciers begin to part
One voice grows into a thousand
Ignorance amplifies like sheer panic
While angels on their shoulders retreat

We refuse the easy way out, though
We the strong refuse to criticize
We few stomach all the plights
We the string manage to pull through

Who are you when it all comes tumbling down
Who are you to wear life's collar or crown?

43

ALTERCATION ALTERNATION

There is steam in the air
Difficult to see through the hate
Lingering in this place
Surely there is another safer way
Around all the chaos
This is not my home to belong
I prefer the tranquility
Maybe it awaits me in the distance
I can only hope it might
And that the agent won't come after me
And that the agent won't come after me
'Cause I'm sure to collapse
Sure to collapse under it
This just isn't my route to be entombed

44

SEALED WITH A BLISS

This bond between us
Is sealed with the bliss
You've granted my life with
And I'm eternally obliged

Remember day one
We had so much fun
You were inside me, and I you
Nothing existed we couldn't do

Then retract whenever
Now aren't you clever
Leave me on the brink of death
That seal at the cost of one breath

But you're still here
Forever is too mere
Might you grace me at the end
Lest I'll lose my greatest friend

45

COLLAPSE OF ROSES

They gave their all to your world
The swords went in and unfurled
Viscera of life despite the valor
And now they lay in livid pallor
Decay shies a word for their pain
After everything they won no gain
Just an enclosed cot in which to rot
And even so they're still too close

With a heave of their very last breath
They escape yet too late to cheat death
Instead there is a collapse far beneath
To lead them away from the deceived
To a true solace they certainly deserve
Elapsed existence and never unearthed
Finding peace and mourning none the least
This is where they came to die and feel alive

46

THE UNSEEN IS LIT

Caught in a chamber of nothing but shadows
There resides something else, however
A presence lurking the furthestmost corners
Not one but many, forming encirclement
Adumbrating the approach of a great omen
Shifting through dark barely starlit
Yet the skies are bleak and utterly barren
This is an anomaly unidentified for the best
Though time has carved its way in air
And when this entity is granted exposure
Not a pulse in the chamber will be spared
The black radiance shall expand greatly
A life hollowed from the inside out
Remembered not by flesh but atmosphere
And given the chance to voice its leer

47

SIRENS IN THE GUARDRAIL

He has been patient for long enough
Why the hesitation all of a sudden
The voices beckon him forward
And they sure are mellifluous
He can almost see their faces at last
Why he hasn't seen them before
Does not keep him from edging on

Doubts fill his skull like butterflies
They flutter about in his stomach
But somewhere deep within is calm
And the voices aid in the soothing
He needs it to get on with this
Or else the guilt might trip him up
If not accelerate his progress

Ears keen to digest the pretty voices
Words gone unspoken, just a song
His own requiem if he proceeds
Magnificent in flavor nonetheless
He wants to drown himself in them
So he steps forward to embrace them

48

OFF THE CHARTS

Sight is soaring, thought is plummeting
This stupidity is ever-flourishing
Forget me so that I may drift far away
From the ignorance killing us all
The emotions are thinning unbearably
Kiss my wound, treat like a child
Just jesters mingling with imprudence
Our predecessors are nearing rue
For ever stepping into these footprints
We have cast into the arid earth
Too little is sincerely absorbed recently
And I'm too vivid a soul to die
Without lobotomizing my hearty lungs
Especially with monotony off the charts
And everything we've raised in ditches

49

THROUGHWORLD

The questions we've illuminated
Face themselves only under halos
 But the answers cast into the dark thrive
 Like lepers to our minds they are exiled

Glorious are the finest fantasies
Dancing under celebrated skies
 While the far less appealing rot proudly
 Devouring relics of our mental shadows

 This place twists
 Consumes and spits
 Everything we've concocted
 Why have we fought it
 When we know its existence
Is based on our limbic subsistence
 And that escape is impossible
 As if the thought is even plausible
 We love to hold this place dear
A bittersweet child of peace and fear

50

Hi Coo

Brevity blesses me yet
I know time isn't relevant
Teach me more in less

51

FAMILIAR RHYTHM

It all makes me feel this way, I can't explain
The path enlightened somewhere inside of me
The light that's shining my way, I reach for it
And subside, into the shadows that motion free
Whatever the course of this is, I feel love exists
In one form or another, seeking to pry me apart
Piece by piece in ways I can't fathom but want to
For reasons my brain is tormented
Questions stretched unanswered
And tonight, I am sure to find my way in the dark
Pulled from the tattered road of all my miseries
Thrown into something far worse and yet so fine
Is it the cacophony of things I hear, saying my name
In tongues left to rot for the mute, cannot imagine
Why it's come for me, but still it has, and I am
ONE

52

EXERCISING THE DEMONS

Return – to – this place
I should have never left to begin with
Respect and love to the ceiling above
Cast its shade upon my faze gazing up
And soothe thoughts running rampant

Return – to – an escape
I should have never infiltrated the outside world
It knew nothing of me like the way you truly do
As the imps out there are inspired to stay hidden
Under here they have space to release their pain

Return – to – my home
I should never have left that which I know best

Return – to – be grown
I should have never ventured beyond your nest

Return – to – be alone
I should have never detained what can now rest

53

PUSH PLAY & FF SIMULTANEOUSLY

Take me somewhere that I don't know
I want the adventure I was never promised
Take me places that could never exist
I want the undertaking I cannot apprehend

TAKE ME THERE
TAKE ME EVERYWHERE

Don't let me ebb into the indolence
That has become my palpable nightmare
Don't let me sink into the oblivion
That has swallowed my desolate dreams

DON'T LET ME GO
DON'T LET ME GO NOWHERE

Take me on with all my phobias
Push me off the cliff with no parachute
Take me on with all my flaws
Push me into the sea with no snorkel

TAKE ME TO THE END **NOW**

54

TOO GOOD TO BE FALSE

She tastes the authenticity this time
It's too palatable to be a frail fallacy

A delusion pulled taut over her face
It's happened before, not with him

These are the kind of goosebumps
She could get very used to loving

He gave his everything for her
She'd give it back if she could
As it is he's shown her a grace
That has lifted her to new feet

Untouched by the doubt of others
She'd love him even if she was it

A new breath to the same heart
And she has him to give thanks
But she has always had it in her
And she knows this is genuine
A nod that we ought to respect

55

STRANGERS STRANGER THAN ME

The curtains cast around me billow in shapes
Faces dancing across the white cotton in ways
That dilute their reality, who are these people
And why are their grins targeting me so feebly
I want to know their names but voices mean nothing
Everything is the same as if my choices mean nothing
A party that will never end feels like an intervention
Life is further exacerbated by their condescension
My mind betrays these eyes and I feel as if blind
To a world whose reality has unfurled before me

56

FOREBODING WEIGHTLESSNESS

Tasting light, pushed into the fangs
Mouth open wide, unsure of how to follow
Taken down into eviscerated horizons
Smile for yourself and nobody else
Or become engulfed in everyone's terror

Leaving behind all that is certainly real
Embrace abyss in order to swallow clarity
Foreboding weightlessness on the course
Crashing through the plane of logic
Waves of persuasion futile if not for you

Another life awaiting beyond the line
Forever kept to the infinite if declined
There is no time but the here and now
And yet there is no reason to ask how
This is what the sky has given birth to
It is the essence defining everything that is you

57

**A YOUNG MAN FILLED WITH REGRET,
WAITING TO DIE ALONE**

Subconscious particles intertwined
A mentality no less suffered here
In the depths of everything left in dismay
Lost to doubt and the guilt of trying
No way out but deeper in the terror built
To sustain me until my time comes
Sinking claws into my brain at long last
Millennia has passed me on by and yet
Here I stand crippled, a man of youth
But the skin deceives the brain as usual
My conscience has grown dreary
And I am not so easily defined
By the radical notion buried deep within
Because I'm still victim to the fight
Raging above the surface of my life
Threatening to take me under alas
Drown me in the briny sand of solitude
Unless I am already here, I can tell
That I might have been here all along

58

THE JACUZZI TO SATURN'S RINGS

When I reclined in my seat
I did not believe it to be material
Because a sensation came over me
And it was too ethereal to classify
But the sounds wormed their way inside
Until I felt like I wasn't even there
A mind detached and in flight
With eyes sweeping the plains below
I saw everything there was to see
And even more, the further I ventured
To realms not readily identifiable
Beautiful and magnificent even so
Vibrant and dancing with personality
A panoply of various existences
To know that others live differently
Is leagues from seeing them yourself
And in my own atmosphere just then
I knew as sure as I could see and feel
That to get up and leave would mean
My own unraveling, my own dissipation
But the mind is a labyrinth of cages
And mine is never unreceptive nor alone
And mine will never again be as enrapt

59

REDWOOD DRAGONS

Serpentine memories seize hold
This locus is not going anywhere
Nightmare resurrected as a dream
Tongue lashing through the bark
Home is just a word, this is feeling
Reality is no matter, rescaling
In a place breathing all at once
Never seen in whole, just shadows
Slithering across trunks and brush
Eyes glimmering only in the night
A pulse that never fades, ramose
Myth distant from these symbols
Of life and beauty and mystery
Swimming through to never die
Not so long as the trees grow high



60

DOMINATE THE EYES

Dominate the eyes, don't give up
Suns and moons glare for the stars
Imprisoned to the dark, keep it that way
Let them loose if you permit explosion
Dominate the eyes, don't cave in

Cerise skies and wine-bled clouds
The magma is no longer bound to earth
When your veins throb, the fire broils
Push it down or it will become volatile
Breathe steady and swallow gloom
Keep them where they should stay
Swathed in ire, outlined by shadows

Don't give up, **DOMINATE THE EYES**
The waves will beckon deep within
Everything you've fought to control
Stifle it while your handle is strongest
Don't cave in **DOMINATE THE EYES**

61

ALONE IN A CROWD

They're enclosing around me
These invisible walls growing tighter
Towering and shifty, I have no trust
They're here to surround me

Somehow or another they don't relate
I'm not the same as them
Their hearts speak differently
And eyes are abandoned
Somehow or another they won't abate

The fear of dying alone in a crowd
Matches not the adrenaline of drowning in arms
Grant me someone to love and I'll die happily
But this setting is no less than a fleshy prison
I can't imagine being safe and sound
I'm starting to melt into the ground

62

I WANT TO MISS EVERYTHING

A thought slips through me
It is a cogitation of clemency
However I can't bring myself to embrace it
My eyes do not lie to the soul sleeping inside
While I might wish to comply to a series of lies
I know in my heart that I owe this world more
And it is to this gesture that I question
The course upon which we have taken
The scenery we've burnt along the way
All the principles we've come to deface
How can I stand amid the ranks and condone it
When my beliefs do not align with that of theirs

I feel as if this plan has injected venom
To the veins having kept us on our feet
And thus here I am laying down to sleep
A conscience enervated by the actions of my brothers
Vexed from the hassle of bearing weighted shoulders
Too long have these blasphemies of hearts sustained
I'd rather miss everything if the course is maintained
Succumb to a dark oblivion is better than this
And yet I can't help but pray that I am wrong



63

PAREIDOLIA

His eyes ascend to the heavens
Veiled by the truth, he doesn't care
Love at his side or alone forever
The mind perceives what the heart desires
Even if they have switched places
One sky suffices twofold for him
His brain paints the surreal in the clouds
Adversaries do battle as he pleases
Their blood spills into the dawn
Reverse day for the sake of logic
As if it matters, he feels in control
The question of his own sanity flees him
Or the whisper of a deity in the expanses
Regardless his creations gleam
For his eyes only, even under a solid roof
The scenes follow him accordingly
The inanimate are nothing monotonous
And his life is blessed by fresh faces
An atmosphere bursting with life
Even when everything is stillest
Do his eyes trace glorious vivacity



64

EOSPHOROS SMILES

Luminance comes down from below
Hands of claws and beautiful wings
A kiss to this planet by blackened lips
Our world no more magnificent here
A product of two energies' collision
Forced fusion of the greatest lights
Never darkness, only shades of color
All in separate vibrancy, same intent
An array of tones for shared emotion
Smiles big and bigger, cosmic power
Lives touched in individual manners
Censure one bulb and praise another
Who are we to differentiate the shine
Until terminus, they may be laughing
And by great cause, vast forgiveness
In lieu of smiles bringing elucidation
In spite of the puzzle, we see details
Implausible if not for fallen torches

65

INSUBSTANTIAL SUBSTANCE

So where does this story end?
I follow the voice to the top
And hope to never descend
I cannot grasp the full meanings
But the sensation flowing through
Is enough to make me stop
Fueling the doubt within the seams
I cannot fully convince you
Without having had the experience

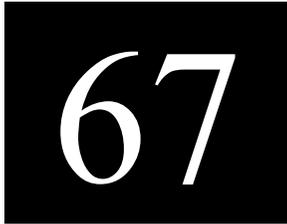
So where does this story end?
I subject myself to the webs
Intertwined and lost in the structure
Find myself awestruck ever since
I discovered little else to question
All my uncertainty now ebbs
Whatever enigmas remain are sure
To be unraveled in the requiem
Be it mine or theirs, who's to say
Doused in euphoria along the way
But this is where I belong with them



66

LAST CONTACT

Radio signals into nowhere
Life breathing too subtly
Masses lurking over us
A trillion uninterested souls
Rapt with our own cesspools
Existence pondering amid planets
Awaiting some kind of answer
Which had once been so eager
Now everything is far gone futile
An opportunity of generations
Down the same drain we'll die
Without a kind of knowledge
We've longed for through time
You might say "it's too bad"
But I think it's pretty sad
This is the best chance we've had
To authenticate the nothing
Know that it means something
Because clearly we did
But now their mind is changed
And so is mine



A CATCHY TITLE

I sought to find my answers elsewhere
But I know that time isn't on my side
The hourglass doesn't respond to zero gravity
Although that is where I'd prefer to be
Often it seems the stars are good to confide
But the voice you need to hear isn't there
And the lungs within resonate to an extent
It's the truly unspoken that needs escape
Especially when the skyscrapers only grin
Everything else is as if nonexistent
I know where I was and where I've been
Their difference is a painful realization
Leaving me with too much to contemplate
And far too little in which to find peace
Something I've been seeking for far too long
Investigating rainbows in grayscale form
Apprehensive of precipitate cessation
Yet I have a feeling it won't end anytime soon
I know that there is no right and wrong
Just as there is no threshold back to the norm
But at least I have risen from my knees
And can say I've spoken with the moon



68

KNIGHT IN DULLING ARMOR

Carried through life on a weary mule
He has little to show for, but inside
There is a shine few could ever match
However the seasons do their work
And it reveals the burdens in his brow
A gaze weighted by faded colors
Moments lost and never found to start
Dreams escaping his captive mind
Never reaching his calloused fingertips
Trapped within instead, maybe forever
But still he dons his sullen panoply
Unsure of when it will serve a purpose
Uncertain of his own limited endurance



69

EXPLOSIVE EYES

Notes of azure swirling
This is no picture
Nothing of the sort could capture
The sight and sound of such rapture
Eyelids incapable of blinking
I should be grateful for this
And the vivacity exhibited as such
If not for it, surrender be my word
Some things are worth bleeding for
The list is gaunt
However ingredient substitutes well
Elation worthy of Elysium
Events of this caliber are too seldom
Especially in the life of mine
Even in all their brevity
The stupor is most mesmerizing
Every single time
And should it never happen but once
All the more reason to persist
So that the bubbles don't pass me over
So that the eyes don't close on me

