I, Poetaster

by

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poetaster [poh-it-as-ter]
-*noun*
an inferior poet.

-Merriam-Webster Dictionary

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Writing is baring your soul to the world. If you don't have the courage to do that, put your pen down.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

POEMS

Poet's Enemy	1
Edna	2
Dance of the Poet	3
Moonstone	5
Raise the Lights	6
Frost-ing	8
Once You Spoke to Me	9
Thirst	11
The Mind a Pond	12
Pool of Dread	13
Craving	14
Ethereal Lover	15
At the Sight of You	17
The Rabbit and the Boar	18
Reds	20
Lesson	21
The Ghost of Lost Hope	22
On the Day of the Dingo	24
Enigma	26
Gold	28
The Daisy	30
Streets	32
Gardens	33
Soft Lips	34
Ride	35
Ice Warriors	36
Bourn Far Away	37
Observing	38
What It Is About	39
You	40
My Way	41
Waiting for Joshua	42
Night After Night	43
Climb the Mountain	45
Brandi	46

Joshua 47
Knee Draggin' 49
Caitlin 50
Irish Toast to Newly Weds 51
Willows Part 52
My Oasis 54
Compelled 57

SHORT STORIES

Friend 61
I See You 66
Sin Unto Death 76
The Hatch 83

PAGES FOR NOTES

POEMS

Poet's Enemy

"A poet, a poet I struggle to be."

"A poetaster." He says of me.

"A bard, a bard is such a grand thing."

"Ah, but you," he says, "Are just a bardling."

"A master of verse I am to be."

"A verse monger you are." He says of me.

"Surely I will someday become a muse."

Says he, "Your musing will likely get you a noose!"

"Sir," I said, "A poet is what I will be."

"You fool, you fool, just a poeticule!"

"Who are *you* then? A balladeer, a poet, a master of verse?

A royal bard, or the king of prose, sent here to judge?"

"No, no you rhymester. My name is Reason!"

Edna

Edna, dear Edna,

a darling of the past.

She felt her light

would not last the night.

But it did, it does,

it is still so very bright.

Maybe even warmer now,

she can not chill your heart,

by loving you Wednesday

and not Thursday.

Dance of the Poet

Dance, dance with fervor and feeling.

Dance to the music of your soul.

Move with grace, listen to your heart.

Take a pen in your hand and let it do the dance.

The dance of a poet.

Without a thought.

No-that will steal your rhythm. (like a bad drummer)

Follow the melody of your heart, your soul.

Listen, listen-

the drums of your troubles,

the violins of your sorrow,

the flutes of your joy,

is the orchestra of your soul.

Do the dance of the poet.

Allow your emotions to choreograph the ink

onto the paper.

Dance poet, dance.

Moonstone

My dearest Selene,

fragile cabochon.

Your gentle touch,

protecting true love.

You are my adularia -

my dream stone.

The One True Creator,

made the perfect cut

revealing your adularescence

lighting my life.

Raise the Lights

Raise the lights, raze the

City. Roll the

Streets up, sidewalks,

Glass, blood, bullets.

String them up. Only the

Bright ones do what is

Right or wrong. Twisted

Gray matter swinging, still

Light reflected, gone away.

Pay the price, green, pale,

Red, isolation and pain.

Endless heat, cold, rain.

Spin the wheels, tip the

Scales the pendulum is

Stuck. Double mind, double

Way, double standard, double

Trouble. Death, right-o-cide

Cleanse the clean it is best

For you. Turn white black.

Planet of the apes. Still me.

Frost-ing

Shadows of the leaves skitter across the grass.

Like water spiders on the surface of their world.

Light of the sun, bright and warm.

The breeze fresh as cool, cut watermelon.

There is something about this place out of doors,

like a poignant memory you can't reach out and touch.

Or the feelings for a lover you just can't express.

It's there, it's there.

But, what is it?

We know, yet cannot put it into words,

and know it cannot be had to excess.

Once You Spoke to Me

At first you were just

a flower in a field,

I admired your beauty

With great appreciation.

Then, one day, you

spoke to me.

No big deal, just

casual conversation.

I learned you are smart

with a great sense of humor.

A very strong person with

an independent flair.

Beautiful inside and out,

that's so rare.

Before I knew it

I began to fall,

I know I barely know

you at all.

If I don’t love you,

then what do I feel?

The feeling I get at the

sight of you is real.

Thirst

When I inquire of your thirst,

think not of your parched throat first.

Consider the source of your lustful fire,

put your lips close to me.

Whisper your true desire.

The Mind a Pond

Does my pebble ever tossed,

push the waves your pond across?

If I my pebble toss,

in the heart it would splash.

Being there cause to dampen your lash?

My pond does forever quake

by your pebble and its wake.

With the wave quake does not end,

down my cheek does water send.

On frozen pond does pebble land?

I fear it never leaves the hand.

Pool of Dread

Which is lowest

I do not know,

My feelings, life,

or my soul.

The darkest, deepest

pool of dread.

Your shoes, your dress

lay near my bed.

This of love, not

lust or sin.

My feelings for you

are trapped within.

With purest love

I call your name.

Through desirous tears

I rebound in shame.

Craving

There is a fire burning,

hidden out of sight.

Fueled by savage attraction,

suppressed by moral light.

The very air around you,

intoxicates my being.

This craving overtakes me,

without so much as seeing.

The need wells up inside me,

unseen like rolling thunder.

I'm yours for the taking,

like a thief with her plunder.

Ethereal Lover

Entangled with my ethereal lover

her almond-shaped eyes

no earthly color.

Floating around,

no weight between us.

Somewhere, I think,

between Earth and Venus.

No lustful lunges

just passionate squeezing.

Never felt anything

quite so pleasing.

Her Mars-red hair

embraces us both,

we speak no vows

nor make any oath.

She holds me tight

with all her limbs,

our pleasure flows like

the waters of the Thames.

She moans and screams,

propels us with her spasm.

Oh, the ecstasy of

extraterrestrial orgasm.

At the Sight of You

What is this thing I feel at the sight of you?

It causes me so much pain and sorrow.

The having of it does not cause me pain and sorrow,

but the having of it and not having you.

I know what it is, dare I say, I am in love with you.

My greatest fear is that you think I am a fool, acting like an adolescent.

The Rabbit and the Boar

It is a tale of broken hearts,

of glad ones and sad ones.

A tale of hearts that mourn,

hearts that laugh and hearts that cry.

It is a tale of forbidden love,

passionate embraces,

and painful reality.

A tale of two souls intertwined,

two hearts as one, burning desire.

It is a tale that would surely bring you to tears,

and wrench your chest with pain.

A tale of unfathomable love,

an unimaginable blending of souls.

Two souls never to be separated,

though the bodies are forbidden to be together.

This is the tale of the Rabbit and the Boar.

Reds

Red hair puts me in a trance,

like an open flames unrhythmic dance.

Green eyes pierce my lonely heart,

like Cupid's well aimed dart.

Moist, luscious lips ignite my passion heat,

tempting me like a sinful treat.

Soft skin milky white,

destined to keep me warm tonight.

Lesson

Lesson, guilt, self-pity

Crying over cheeks laugh

It off be a man outside

Hurting inside. Strained

Banded steel, cold, hard,

Fantasy deepens the wounds

What might have been is

not cruel passage of time.

Reminding scent calls my

Sweet memory of you to

Haunt me. No body has

Ever been softer, smoother,

Lovelier. I have loved you

Forever, you said it first I

Say it still, I will say it last.

The Ghost of Lost Hope

Laid waste beside the road where I had been
drawn not long ago.
My steeds were noble, sturdy beasts that
feared no foe.
Drawn swiftly along toward my destiny, trusting
in my guide.
Then, out of the darkness, edge of the forest,
leaped an evil distracter knocking me from my
ride.
Face down on the trail, the world a blur,
I felt his boot on my neck.
I knew his hatred, heard his sword unsheathed.
The sharpest point of coldest steel, rested

against my throat.

The odor of blood and bile from others he had

smote sickened me.

He bent down oh so near, mouth next to my ear.

I heard his breathing, felt and smelt his breath.

He chuckled once and stood up straight, then

pulled his blade away.

I had my doubts as I began to pray, but never

said amen.

I lost all hope and now will never pass this way

again.

On The Day of The Dingo

On the day of the dingo, the

West wind blew,

While women swam nude

In the mud red water.

Trek the out back four feet,

Sometimes three,

Turning, taking in the

Tarp of sand.

Heat grass long gone,

Green, brown, blown away.

Ruddy rodents dart around,

Up, down, race for real

Rasping dingo snarl rat

Roast, raw, lunch.

Towel off drive away, feel

The breeze lonely, alone for

hundreds of miles; millions

of miles. A galaxy away.

Enigma

Baffled, confused, weary and tired.

Questioning the agony and the hopelessness.

A spade in one hand, a pick in the other.

It's not enough, not enough.

Trying to dig my way out of a hole.

How absurd!

Digging when I should have been building!

I see now...or do I?

Building up, while digging for my mortar?

Getting nowhere, finding answers.

This cursed hole so few have come out of.

Lost what they had found while in it.

Finding something on top of the mountain but finding what they found detrimental to their very soul and art.

Then they crash down, and draw on their

agony once more.

One more soulful work from the heart.

Before entering their finality, eternity.

Gold

Gold, brown, foamy, not

Rocks, strait, cold

Always warm. Friend today

Foe tomorrow, love for

Now courage to borrow.

Disappearing ink light, heavy

Hard to swallow write

It down deny it tomorrow.

Buy it now, sell it later.

Cherish it now, hate it later.

Run the stairs, roll the

Elevator, drive the chair,

Reward the skater. Public

Nuisance, free man-boy,

Women too, always women.

Tap it, tap it, wallow

In it. Let it go, stand,

Sit, leap the chasm.

Crystal lakes, blood red

Pools, short stem, cool, warms her up.

The Daisy

The winds of the storm beat

like thunder against the cabin wall.

Fast and furious the snow did fall.

The howling wind was monstrously bold.

The temperature dropped and it was deathly cold.

She gazed tearfully at the daisy she held in her glove,

a flower he had given her,

symbolic of their love.

He wasn't back yet- he must be lost.

She would go looking, she had to find him no matter the cost.

She struggled against the numbing wind and deep snow.

She could hear him calling, towards his voice she would go.

She clawed desperately, crawling through

the snow.

But when his hand she finally did reach,

it was the very last breath for each.

When they did live, their love did grow.

And in death, together they did sow

the seeds symbolic of their love.

In that very place every spring a daisy grows,

and tells a love story that no one knows.

Streets

Light brown speckled street.

Embedded pebbles smooth from the constant message of rubber.

Engines rumble by encased in shining color.

Aerodynamic skin reflecting bright sunlight.

Darkened windows block the ultra-violet.

As one passes by another approaches.

On that busy street.

Gardens

Gardens grow so freely-

content with where they are,

reaching out for the sun-

shining like earth-bound stars.

The colors they show are true-

no deceit or wicked scheme,

providing moments of pleasure-

images of which we dream.

Soft Lips

Cars are a way of getting around,

Art has no rules by which it is bound.

Real men do not lie, cheat, or steal,

Man is here for Lucifer's appeal.

Early morning is nice -coffee and mist.

X-ray eyes do not exist.

Ride

stand up at first.

Circles, think circles.

Get your pace,

breeze in your face.

Scenery whirrs by,

a blur.

Become a machine,

not mechanical.

Heart beat,

sweat bead, run

thighs lactic.

Just smile and ride,

end of circuit cooldown glide.

Pained, pleased, arrogant.

Worth it.

Ice Warriors

Glistening blades,

leather armor,

lances in their hands.

Great size, speed, strength.

Yet graceful and effortless.

They battle each other.

This side in crimson,

that side in blue.

The struggle is fierce and violent,

frighteningly so

when they drop the gloves.

Afterwards banished for two minutes,

five minutes or ten.

Bourn Far Away

Drive the beast sooner

Which of the coast cars, bikes, fly farther?

The limit is set by now

When does it slow, go away.

Deeper, stiller, darker.

Hot and cold west of

Reality runs the river

Turn it away by the horns keep stars to draw

Carnage, waste, glow green

Blows the wind across

East to west stinging,

Blinding morning blues

Evening shades red.

Stead of my bed moves,

Bumps rhythm, stop, start,

Finish sleep away the moment

Observing

Observing I am,

Being observed

Scrutiny undeserved.

Students doing all of the work.

The way it should be.

Teachers learning

What It Is About

There's a band in New Orleans
that plays just south of Bourbon Street
For a dollar a tune they'll take your request,
and the sound just can't be beat.
They don't want any fame,
or have any shame,
or even a name.
There's a band in Austin, Texas
that plays every night down on 6th Street.
They remember SRV and the soul
that gave his music wings.
They don't have to pretend,
or mean to offend.
They just want to ascend.
Making music is their life.
Helping folks forget their strife
Even people on the move,
stop to listen to their groove.

You

Moved by your thoughts,

persuaded by your feelings,

inspired by your love,

driven by your hope,

motivated by our dreams.

My Way

Forgetting the fads,

I'm doing it my way.

Don't you look sad,

I'm hitting the highway.

I'm not turning back 'til

I get my thrill.

A bottle of liquor and

a three dollar pill.

Waiting For Joshua

Zero-dark-thirty, light rain.

Fool on a bike -no light.

Downtown traffic, uptown hoods,

Beat feet down the street.

Show-off, show-out, get caught, pout.

A generation ago lived in the woods.

No concern for tomorrow, live for tonight,

Smaller go their tail lights -outta sight.

Night After Night

Night after night a prisoner

of poverty.

Night after night drowning

in despair.

Keeping reality in perspective

in spite of myself.

Burning a cross in my arm,

shaping up the wire.

Burning a cross in my arm,

hold it to the fire.

Smelling my flesh burn,

adding fuel to the fire.

A permanent scar,

a permanent scar.

Deep inside there is still

a flicker.

Killing the pain with music

and malt liquor.

Watch forty videos to see

the one I want to see.

It just makes matters worse,

they are all mocking me.

Climb the Mountain

Slipping, sliding

falling away,

the rope broke,

it had just begun to fray.

Gasping, grasping.

The snows give way.

Approaching the ledge

I begin to pray.

As I tumble and fall

through the air,

I think, “Why did I climb it?”

Because it was there.

Brandi

You are the flower

of our seeds of love.

You are the blossom

of joy we long dreamed of.

Though there are times

it doesn't seem true,

There's nothing we love

more than you.

You have more beauty

both inside and out,

than all other things

without a doubt.

You're so cute and sweet

and lovable too,

Brandi you know we both love you.

Joshua

You were born to us through love,

and with love you will be raised.

You're a blessing sent from God,

the God we've all praised.

We will pray for you and love you,

and teach you right from wrong.

That you may grow to suit your name,

and be God's soldier strong.

In whatever you may choose to do,

you do it for the Lord.

Taught to you by God's word,

His everlasting sword.

Don't try to live life on your own,

or be a self-made man.

Just pray that God will guide you,

reach out and take His hand.

Christ will be with you through every

situation.

For He is Lord, King of Kings,

God of our salvation.

Knee Draggin'

Red streak,

streaking red.

Slow down for the turn

you're dead.

Turn right go left,

Turn left go right.

Not a sport for the

weak or slight.

Slide the back

you're O.K.

Slide the front

it could ruin your day.

Caitlin

As pure as dew on rolling country fields.

Eyes as clear as a sunny summer day.

By His grace you are a gift -our new

treasure.

You make our lives rich and full –worth

living.

Caitlin Justine –In you we keep on being.

Irish Toast to Newlyweds

May you always

in business use your heads,

in love your hearts,

and, when there's time,

your other parts.

Willow's Part

Weeping, weeping, not sleeping.

Tears roll down and meet my pillow.

I play the part of the willow.

Wandering about in a quiet meadow,

keeping company with my shadow.

I play the part of the willow.

Tossing pebbles in the creek,

knowing not what I seek.

I play the part of the willow.

Alone I am and alone I'll be.

No one here to comfort me.

I play the part of the willow.

If only I could stand as firm as the tree.

Needing no love to comfort me.

I play the part of the willow.

Strong and tall against the storm,

no pressure to conform.

I play the part of the willow.

But my strength has left me

and the pressure has not.

The only part I play well

is mine for the keeping.

The emptiness, the pain, and the weeping.

I play the part of the willow.

My Oasis

Withdrawn away into my nook,

laying peaceful by the brook.

As far away as space itself,

I'm hid away to mind myself.

Grass, green, soft, cool,

water-still, yet shimmering

as I lay by the brook.

Sky-deep, blue, isolating-

insulating.

Sounds-none, some, peaceful,

whatever I choose.

No intrusion of promises I'm held to.

Trouble, pain, so far away

it doesn't exist.

No grabbing my mind or soul,

wrenching it with a twist.

No trespassers, no intruders

nor offenders be.

No one can journey here,

save me,

My safety, my fortress.

Trees-large, whispering, shading.

Breeze-cool, persuading ecstasy,

as I lay by the brook.

Mind-empty, resting, peaceful.

Soul-at ease without burden,

one with my oasis.

Peaceful peace,

comfort, soft bosom of the lady-my oasis.

Sweet smell of fragrant blossoms,

caress my senses with every breath I take.

Colors-red, blue, yellow, pink-all others,

soft, pleasing, easy on my eyes.

Troubled people of the world,

I do not hear your cries.

Not here, in my oasis.

Compelled

Cornered here, surrounded.

Locked in, imprisoned.

A dungeon of my own choosing.

A choice out of immaturity.

Can I be held accountable?

Not by you or them or they.

Because of me, I must stay.

Held here against my will,

yet I will it.

No pressure at all.

I feel it.

Heavy laden with these burdens I stumble

forward.

A major decision or choice I have never

made.

I have been compelled though,

this way and that.

I have chosen nothing!

I am heaved forward by His great will.

It is all laid out for me,

I curse it, hate it.

Because of my ignorance.

He smiles and shakes his head saying,

"If he only knew."

This corner a narrow, narrow path.

This prison a room of master keys.

This dungeon a place on high.

From which I follow,

from which I unlock,

from which I glide on the winds of my

destiny.

I will nothing,

God wills all.

SHORT STORIES

Friend

It was just before midnight. As I lay there fighting back the nausea I could hear the roar of his duel exhaust as he sped up and down highway six. I was trying to think of anything but vomit. So I just listened to my old buddy hot-rod up and down the highway wishing I were with him. My girl was supposed to come see me. Where *was* she? That bastard is out there with my girl. Every time I could not hear his Plymouth, I could imagine he and my girl doing things in his back seat. Things she was only supposed to do with me. That two-faced bastard. When I get out of this bed I will stomp his sorry ass right in front of everybody at school. Then I just lay there thinking about the payback. The

time he accused me of trying to make it with *his* girl. Well, I only did it once and she was willing and he did not even know about it. So, when I kick his ass for going after my girl I will just make up for him having the nerve to accuse me of doing it with his girl. It would be different if he actually *knew* about it. I lay there hating his guts. Listening to the roar of his engine and squeal of his tires off and on until just after one a.m.

We met in vacation bible school, we were both ten years old. It was the perfect way for a friendship to begin. We both got caught stealing old lady Willow's cookies before it was snack time. From that moment on there was a tight bond between us. A bond that perhaps only

people like Jesse and Frank James or Batman and Robin could fathom. Over the years our friendship grew. We got odd jobs together and argued as only brothers could about who worked hardest. We jumped off cliffs and bridges into the Brazos River together. We committed misdemeanors together and got drunk together. We fought, shot each other with BB guns, and jumped over his mother's car on our bicycles like Evil Knievel.

But now, he was out there with *my* girl. That sneaky, no good low-life. How could he betray his best friend like this? Why, just last week, before I got sick, we were working hard and having a great time at the stockyards. We even formulated a plan to steal a few bottles of

Mr. Brady's Jack Daniels. A plan we were going to carry out tonight! I bet he got the whiskey and went looking for *my* girl! I hate him. What if she likes what *he* does better than what *I* do? He does have some Latin blood in him. Man, I am going to kill that son of a bitch. I might just tell my girl I know what they did, are doing *right now*, and tell her to just be his girl from now on. That is *it*! I hate him, I hate her, and we are through! I am going to kill him!

I was awakened by the creak of my bedroom door. It was my Mom. She said some of my friends from school were here to see me. I felt a lot better so I told her I could use some company. They just kept coming through the door. *All* of my friends came to see me. All except my old pal

with the hot-rod Plymouth and the scent of *my* girl on him. My friends needed to lighten up. It was only a virus. Besides, I was not even nauseous any more. My Mom sat gently beside me. "He is dead, honey. Jack is dead."

I sat up and spewed the sickening bile of hatred I had for myself. I wanted to expel all those evil thoughts that had gone through my brain. The last thoughts I had about my best friend, my partner in crime, were hatred, jealousy, and revenge.

I See You

I stood in front of the full-length mirror and saw a man with dark brown eyes looking back at me. He was clean-shaven with a dark complexion. His hair was short, neat, and about the same color as his eyes. He was not quite six feet tall. Under the dark blue suit jacket were well-defined muscular arms and shoulders, flat stomach, and trim waist. You couldn't tell by looking that his favorite meal was a twenty ounce sirloin steak-medium rare, with a side order of steak fries -heavily salted, washed down with two bottles of Kirin beer–chilled to 40 degrees Fahrenheit. I smiled and he smiled back. White, straight teeth seemed to make the room brighter. He reached up with his right hand and needlessly

straightened his already perfect tie.

As I walked towards the door of my apartment I glanced at my watch and calculated the time it would take me to walk to my meeting six blocks away. I always feel energized after a walk. It's like drinking a cup of coffee without the bad breath. I wasn't nervous; it's not in my nature. But I couldn't help thinking about an article I had recently read that offered reasonable evidence that "attractive" people are such and such per cent more successful than "unattractive" people. My Mother and a few girlfriends had told me I was attractive. I hoped they were right.

I had been building and selling my own line of electric bass guitars for most of

my adult life. With a handful of loyal clients and word of mouth sales I made enough money to get by but I didn't have the financial security I wanted. One day opportunity came to the door. Well, she showed up with one of my clients. Chico was a first call studio bassist and his band had become extremely popular on the local music scene. He was bringing one of his basses to me for a new custom paint job. The woman that was with him was named Jackie and she represented a major guitar manufacturer. Jackie was attempting to sign Chico to an endorsement deal but Chico refused to play anything but my custom built basses. She explained that her company was interested in marketing my custom built

bass guitars as part of Chico's endorsement deal. God bless Chico. He is a true friend. She examined the four instruments I had in my "shop" (in most other people's apartment it would be called a spare bedroom). She played all of them; and she played them well. I don't know why that surprised me. It made sense, actually. You wouldn't send someone who couldn't drive to consider an automobile purchase on your behalf. Chico and I joined her for an impromptu jam session. Fortunately, she was more impressed with my craftsmanship than my playing. A few days after that, Jackie called me and set up a meeting to discuss the deal. I was to meet her and Chico at a local restaurant.

I locked my apartment door and turned to head off to the meeting. I almost walked right over a little girl. She must have been standing directly behind me while I was locking my apartment.

"Whoa! I almost stepped on you little lady."

She just stood there, looking up at me with big green eyes staring from behind long amber eyelashes. Her curly, slightly mussed red hair framed an expressionless face and didn't quite touch her shoulders. She wore a little white knee length dress and shiny black shoes; the kind with one strap across the top that buckles like a belt. She had a red sucker in her hand. I guessed she was about five or six years old. Certainly too young to be out on her own

in the city.

"Where is your Mommy?"

"I see you." Her voice was both tiny and ominous.

Her tone put me off a bit. Eventually, I smiled and said, "I see you, too!"

I asked her where she lived. She didn't answer me. She just turned and started walking down the sidewalk. It was the direction I needed to go anyway, so I followed her hoping she would lead me to her home or someone who was supposed to be looking after her. She turned left on the sidewalk at the end of the block and I continued to follow her. I rounded the corner of the building and she wasn't there. I was confused and a little concerned. I saw a cab pulling away from

the curb ahead. In my minds eye I envisioned the little girl being sternly, yet lovingly chastised by a young mother as the cabby drove them off to wherever they were going. I shrugged and glanced at my watch then I continued toward my appointment.

As I stood at an intersection waiting for the light to change from "DON'T WALK" to "WALK" I passed the time admiring God's work. In this particular case, God's work was in the form of a very attractive woman standing in front of me and to my right. I wasn't undressing her with my eyes or anything like that. I was looking at her the way a visitor to the Louvre looks at the Mona Lisa. Or, the way my clients look at my custom built basses. It was

appreciation for the art and gratitude towards the artist. I took great care to be discreet and not get caught "appreciating" her. It didn't work. She caught me. I could feel my ears heat up as I smiled, embarrassed. I felt like I was sixteen again. That was the only good thing about the entire episode; feeling sixteen.

"You should be holding her hand."

"Excuse me?"

"You should hold your daughter's hand. It's safer." The woman nodded, pointing down and behind me with her eyes. Everyone started walking except me. I turned around and looked where the woman's eyes had directed me to look.

"I see you."

I was taken aback. It was the same voice. As if I had recorded it when I heard it five minutes ago and played it back now. The little red-headed girl looked up at me with that same expressionless face.

"What is your name?" I asked with more authority than I intended.

I was almost knocked over by the throng that arrived from the opposite side of the street. By the time I regained my composure, she was gone again. I looked in every direction and did not see her. The timer in my head told me I was about to miss the light, so I put my puzzlement on hold and walked quickly across the intersection with two other stragglers. I reached the other side just as the light

changed to “DON’T WALK”.

As I walked I thought about the little girl. I wondered how she could have possibly caught up with me at that last intersection. At the pace I normally walk she could not have kept up with me even if she were right behind me from the beginning. Which, she wasn’t. I remembered the cab and thought if she got into the cab she could have easily ended up at the same intersection waiting for the same traffic signal. But, why would she be allowed to get out of the cab at an intersection? Could she have gotten back into the cab so quickly? Could someone have gotten out of the cab and retrieved her without my seeing it?

I guess that is when I failed to notice

the next "DON'T WALK" light and stepped off the curb right into the path of a bus.

According to the police report, that is what happened. I don't remember stepping off the curb. I do remember thinking about the little girl. I woke up on a gurney being wheeled through a hospital corridor. A woman wearing a green surgeon's cap, a matching mask dangling below her chin, was leaning over me.

"Where are we going?" I croaked through my parched and swollen throat.

"I see you."

"What?"

"Intensive Care Unit." She said, "ICU."

Sin Unto Death

The thing that crept into my window that night had no mercy upon my wicked soul. My hedonistic lifestyle brought me to this evil place. My conscience became a part of the beast within my soul that continuously ate away at my being. My erosion was so gradual that I didn't realize that each day and each time I prayed I had to name one more sin. My prayers became longer and longer and, being so, more and more meaningless. And on that terrible night in the middle of one of those lengthy prayers as I was trying in vain to remember all of my iniquities I realized I was going to die the sin unto death if I did not turn things around. Once again I fell asleep praying, I know this because I never

said amen.

I was awakened by . . . some . . . thing . . . something, indescribable. Or I was awakened by a nightmare, or thirst. Yes, thirst. I was thirsty, I think. My heart pounding, my entire self drenched in sweat. It was a nightmare, now I'm sure. I was awakened by a nightmare. I thought it was, but, the thing in the room with me was not a nightmare. Who could possibly imagine such a horrid thing? Are nightmares born of imagination? Can any thing be in a nightmare that is not imaginable to us? Is any thing imaginable to our subconscious that is not to our conscious self? Surely I had no such demon in my imagination.

It spoke to me! The blasted thing

spoke to me! Panic gripped me as I realized the thing was aware of my presence. As if it were possible that it not be aware of me. Of course it was aware of me. Did it come here to terrorize the lamp beside my bed? I should think not! It had to come for a living thing, that being me, the only living thing in the room. Besides, it . . . him . . . they . . . her . . ., "Who are you?" A shout in my head but a whisper from my lips as the hand of fear gripped my very being and, tightening its grip, choked back my words.

The vile thing spoke with a rumbling, evil rasp that grated even the plaster on the ceiling and walls. The beast's hot breath filled the room with a stench the likes I could never have imagined existed.

Not even in my days working on a chicken farm, having cornered and angered a skunk by pelting it with eggs, I had been thoroughly sprayed by the soulless creature. Then, as I stumbled knee deep in the chicken excrement to remove myself from the barn, vomited and fell in it. I smelled of lilacs and honeysuckle on that day of my youth compared to the creature in my presence now. Each time the creature spoke, panic welled up in me. My head throbbed and the nausea reeked havoc on my strength, of which I hadn't much left. I could barely rally my thoughts enough to wonder how long I would have to endure the agony the beast brought with it.

The hellish beast spoke to me again

and my head felt as though it was spinning one way and then another and my insides felt as if they were being pulled out through my rectum. In spite of the indescribable pain, I could feel the tugging on my tongue and I tried not to swallow it. I tried to scream but the sound was beat out by the clump coming up from my stomach. My primitive mind thought there would come some relief with the ejected bile, but from my insides came a mouth full of writhing maggots. I tried to eject them but they fought their way back down my throat and choked me. Just as I thought mercy would come in the form of unconsciousness my torturer pulled my head back by my hair, forcing my mouth open, then shoved his claw-like hand

down my throat and cleared my airway. As I gasped for air I could feel chunks of my scalp tearing loose. My tormentor breathed his acidic breath on my gaping wounds intent on increasing my agony.

After a length of time, how long I am uncertain, I had passed through insanity and into an endless pit beyond. Seeking escape, I thrust myself toward the open window. Not having the strength to get out, I hung myself at the waist half in and half out of it. The outside was not on the other side; instead it was another room not unlike mine. I recognized the scene therein as that of which I had just experienced. And the man in that other room was recognizable to me. Not that I knew him, but that I knew *of* him. I had

read about him, had despised him and his evil doings. He was the great brain-washer and slaughterer of millions. He had been blindly followed by his minions. To say he was the devil himself would be to credit him with too much intelligence, but would be an accurate description of the depth of evil that thrived in his soul. I thought only his teeth remained, but apparently his soul also remains. Damned to this place, having realized his maximum potential for evil and died the sin unto death. I knew then what that place was.

As unworthy and undeserving of salvation as I was, and still am, I remain a believer and so, at that time I called on His name and was delivered. I awoke from my sleep, if I were asleep. I sit bolt upright

and reached for my Sword and with it

began to prod my children so that they will

know and that having taught them I also

will know. And, now knowing, both they

and I will not die the sin unto death.

The Hatch

Where am I? It is dark, damp. How did I . . . *Who* am I? *What* am I? I think. I feel. I have . . . What has happened to me? I remember . . . nothing. I can't . . . I can't move! Wait! I can *move* I just can't . . . *spread* myself out. I am constrained by . . . what? I must get out! I . . . must . . . get . . . out! It is hopeless. I feel . . . I feel . . . something hard, in front of me. No. *On* me! It is . . . part of me! This thing is . . . is attached to me! Get it off! I must get it off! I feel . . . it. I feel . . . *me*! I feel . . . hungry. I feel *hungry*. I must . . . I must . . . eat. I feel . . . pain! Inside myself I feel pain! It must have talons, claws! This pain drives me . . . drives me to . . . to . . . get out! I must get out!! I must . . . eat!! How? Why?

This pain claws at me, claws my insides . . .

It claws my insides! It . . . claws . . . my . . .

insides. It *claws* my . . . Claw! I must claw!

No. I can't . . . claw. I must . . . I must . . .

beat. Beat . . . what? I must beat this thing

that confines me! This darkness that blinds

me . . . Beat! . . . . Beat! . . . Beat! . . .

Beat!! Beat, beat, beat, peck, peck, peck,

peck, peck, peck, peck, peck . . . Light!

Light!! I must . . . get out. Peck, peck . . .

Movement! I can stretch myself out! I can

see! I can . . . eat? I can eat! Open . . .

mouth? Open . . . beak! Stretch out . . .

neck skyward open beak. Feed me!

Peep. Peep. Chirp! Chirp! Chirp!!

PAGES FOR

NOTES

I've often wished for paper and pen while reading, having been inspired, moved, or otherwise compelled to write. Here I've provided the paper, the pen is up to you!

Words of a feather mock together.

Non omnis moriar. -Horace