

Revelry in Reverie

Sand drips
through present solace
into memory
deserts of anarchy
lie before us
clay angels dance
forming from the chaos
finding love
in revelry's chorus
painting pictures of peace
reverie
a preface of irony
this moment at rest
under life's canopy

Journal Excerpt 1.

I stared at the poem. It had arrived just after a knock on the door.

The plain white paper was lying on a concrete step.

My eyes swiveled in all directions, searching for the mysterious poet. All I could see were the two average looking houses lining the country road where I lived. By average, I mean that both houses were built from the same blueprint and painted in a choice of three colors, blue, grey, or, light yellow.

Both had chosen a combination of those three colors, but the overall effect was still uniform.

Nothing.

A lawnmower hummed somewhere in the distance.

Because I had finished mowing my own lawn only moments before, the smell of wet grass washed over my senses.

A cluster of purple flowers exploded before me.

Faint memories stirred within. I suppressed them.

A slight ripple of wind rustled through the leaves of the trees growing in my yard. Above its gnarled branches, there lurked the light bulb of the sun, illuminating a sky of crystal blue.

Back on earth, my mind was focused on one question.

A drop of sweat slid down my face.

Where had the poem come from?

Revelry in Reverie

by
Kelvin Bueckert

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A Word from the Author.

It is quite simple really. This book is a collection of some of my previously published poetry. Is that all? No. I have also included some other, previously unpublished, poems. I have also woven a previously unpublished short story into the fabric of the poetry.

The story is titled, "*The Casualty is Innocence*." Yes, the story is a work of fiction. Therefore, I have added notes at the end about what my original thoughts were in writing the poetry.

In certain cases I have changed the title, or modified the poem slightly from the originally published version.

The subject matter is wide, the language is varied, and each word is waiting to be read. Therefore, I will leave you to it.

Thank you for joining my reverie....

Kelvin



Journal Excerpt 2.

*He examines her words
searching for more
finding little
grasping less
then a heart's guess
is this news
the headline of the day
confusion haunts
they go their way*

A feminine giggle tickled at my ear follicles.

My head shifted, searching....

That had been the second time in the span of half an hour that a poem had interrupted my solitary existence.

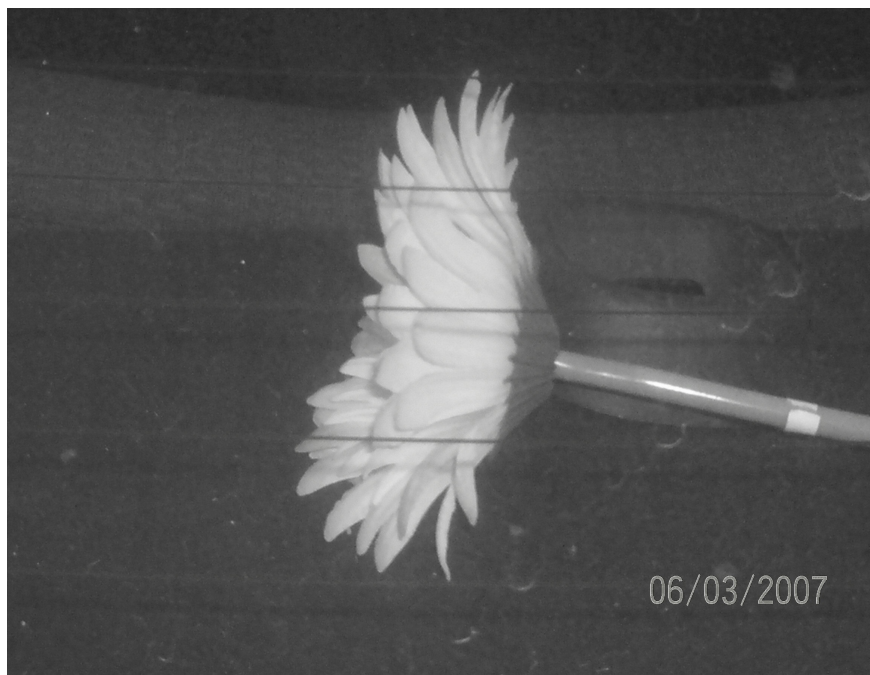
The concrete steps pressed against my feet as I stumbled down to the lawn. The bumbling buzz of a bee spiraled around my head as I traveled forward.

A dirt driveway ran beside my feet. Yellow birds chattered and pecked at the feeder hanging beside it.

Waves of heat rippled up from the ground.

My head swiveled, searching for something, someone.

The situation reminded me of...of...I dared not think of it.



Journal Excerpt 3.

"Aha!" My voice wailed like a foghorn.

A slender young woman was sitting on the short green grass behind my house. Her blue jeans were faded, her white shirt was smudged, and a writing tablet was clenched in her delicate fist.

"So the mysterious poet is also a beautiful poet. Would you care to explain yourself?"

Her blue eyes were wide as she stared at me.

Oh my...It was like looking into the past...My hands rested on the hips of my finely tailored suit pants. As I spoke, I tried to project more confidence than I felt.

"Don't be frightened...I'm curious, not offended. Why all the mystery? It was a pleasant surprise to be sure...it is not everyday that a beautiful young woman leaves poetry upon my doorstep. The question remains..." My hands spread apart in an expression of openness.

The lips, oh my, her lips were cherry red and so delicately formed. She looked so young, so innocent. A smile began to form, showing her slightly crooked teeth.

She reminded me so much of someone I once knew...before the war...before my life had changed forever...It couldn't be, those sands of time had passed through the hourglass long ago.

Behind her was the sight of white flower petals bursting open around a yellow pupil.

The truth was growing within my soul.

My hands trembled.

This couldn't be real. It was impossible.

"Did you like the poems Travis?" Her melodic voice sang, echoing like the empty melody of my life.

"Of course, but the question remains...Why did you leave them for me?"

I felt like I was running underwater. Everything was moving so slowly...so surreal....

Her voice was a narcotic, pulling me under.

"Think back...let your mind go...Remember....."

Thoughts on a Pier

A Wordsmith pounds clichés
every clank sounding on the anvil ringing empty
without love
or even a touch of you
alone, I remember the moments
sitting in Bombay, waiting for a cab
drinking deep of the ocean rippling
onto the smooth yellow waves before me
with you upon the sand silhouetted under the breaking sun
even then, they were only words and clichés
I spoke to you
without love, or meaning
I could feel the salt sting as you turned away
but still times rotated us together
I can see Madrid and remember
running through the streets
wild and afraid, your hand in mine
until the rain soaked us, dry
was it just the sun seeping through the clouds above you
or was it someone else you had to run to that day
regardless, I faced your rotation once again
without meaning, without love
I now look down at the ticket in my hand
realizing I'll see you before the clock strikes three
here in Morocco, the wind swept land
I heave on my wordsmith and join the quay
there's the taxi I need to fetch the ocean
before a break in this cloudy day

Ocean/Atmosphere

Fish fly
underwater birds in a blue liquid sky
twisting
writhing, like the crabs beneath them
whales roll in crushing waves
gliding through water
this ocean as an atmospheric system
in preservation
the Atlantic finds rhythm
despite the pulse of industry
in the world of the sea
forces spin
complementary

Journal Excerpt 4.

I jerked awake.

The door was silent. I almost wished for another knock, another poem, perhaps...the young woman hadn't been a dream.

Of course, she was a dream! Once again I had fallen asleep before my computer monitor. It was just my bad luck to dream about Roxanne and her poetry. She had always loved poetry, she used to write poems and then leave them for me to find. She was the girl in my dream....

My head shook with violence. Dreams were for fools. I needed to forget them and carry on with my work.

A reflection was watching me from the dark computer screen. The face was obviously in the early thirties. The two blue eyes looked like they belonged to a very old man. His hair had been cut down to the military standard, except for a strong chin cluttered with blonde stubble. All of his facial skin had been beaten and pitted by the elements, giving him a sort of dashing air of daring. Well, he would look dashing if he weren't so obviously at the point of exhaustion.

My hand twitched, moving the mouse.

The reflection faded as the computer screen winked to life.

Writing a six hundred-page book should be officially classified as torture. In fact, that is how I had learned it. My captors loved to force me to write. I suppose I have yet to give up that bad habit.

My overtired mind wandered through the fields of my youth on the farm. This was the location of my first foolish romance, my first and last marriage.

Roxanne had always wanted a Christmas wedding...and she got it. The day was beautiful. How happy I was then...Of course, at the time I didn't know the responsibility I would face.

What had been the point of it all?

The return of Roxanne, the poetic note she had left, were all part of the same dream, but the memories it had awakened were all too real.

Formless Love

As our love became formless
succumbing to the remembrance
evanescence through the spell
or perhaps an Iliad of our existence
regardless, it bound itself to the atmosphere surrounding
formulated from the vapor of our lips in motion
spilling promises into the winter's day
audio into this cathedral like hall
from our mouths the desire for divine connection
visible in the contracted covenant
time now has become our ocean
a destiny beyond you or I
as our two hands, warm their grasp
stepping forward into the past
or what will be
breath from us into we
unison bursting into a single flame
within marriage, a couple inhales emotion
desire from the air
as our love became formless

Journal Excerpt 5.

Farming consumed me in those days, and I loved it like a woman.

There is nothing quite like driving a tractor across a field of freshly plowed dirt. The smell is full, natural, and bursting with life. In contrast, the city seemed to be crafted from sterile plastic.

Roxanne hated city life. She preferred to live in a natural environment at least that is what she told me.

The rumor was that war had been declared, but I didn't really think about it. I was happy with what I was doing.

Roxanne, my new young wife had helped me to learn the joys of world travel. Why would I be tempted to remain in the scorched lands of home, when I could travel with beauty?

I didn't have the life skills necessary to see the rot setting into my life. Now I can see that there was darkness lurking beneath the polished marble exterior.

A wicked seed lurked beneath the dirt that seemed so wholesome. Soon the steady rotation of the wheels of life would bring it to the surface.

Our traveling had begun to affect the farm. Therefore I began to refuse more and more trips and adventures.

That is why I changed my mind about visiting a Mexican dance club for her birthday. Roxanne was upset, but then she had gotten steadily more miserable over the months, so I ignored her.

The hay needed to be cut.

Yes, that was my official word at the time. Yet, secretly, I was planning to join her later in the evening as a surprise. It was her birthday after all. I would have told her, but first had to satisfy the other party in the love triangle, my farm.

It had all started with a gradual communication failure.

I had promised to love and cherish always, but I only did so when it was convenient. That was to be the beginning of my downfall.

Under Surfaces

To go forth
or back
smoothing field
dragging harrow
report to the end
move one slot over
positioning surfaces
dirt of substance
yielding slightly
and then only just
rolling tractor wheels
revolving steady rotation
turning sod
revealing roots
life or something other
under an earthen trap

Journal Excerpt 6.

Roxanne's bright red lips stretched into a smile.

Bewilderment washed over me as I watched the scene unfolding in the crowd.

Roxanne wore a silver mini-skirt over her long, perfectly formed legs. Her slender black blouse was pressed against the uniform of a boyish member of the armed forces.

His head tilted back as he laughed at something known only to them. After the levity had passed, he took her hand and then led her to the dance floor.

Roxanne swished her short blonde hair as he slowly twirled her around and through the mob in motion.

The energetic fingers of a Spanish guitarist fluttered along the strings of his guitar. The tribal beat began to build. Primary colors washed over the dancers, painting them in shades of joy.

I felt so alone, so out of place sitting at my table in the back of the dance club. Obviously, I had arrived too late.

"What are you drinking tonight?"

I looked up to face the Latin featured waitress staring down at me. Her lips were bursting with crimson, her tan face had been slathered with makeup, her green eyes held the stain of impatience.

"I'm sorry...I don't drink...I never have." I shouted. Forcing myself to be heard over the intricate guitar work and driving rhythms.

"If you are not drinking, and you are not dancing, then you best be moving yourself out of here. There is a line up to get in. We are the hottest party in town!"

"Okay...get me...a whisky on the rocks."

The waitress shrugged, and then nodded. Soon she had vanished into the human stew of constant revelry.

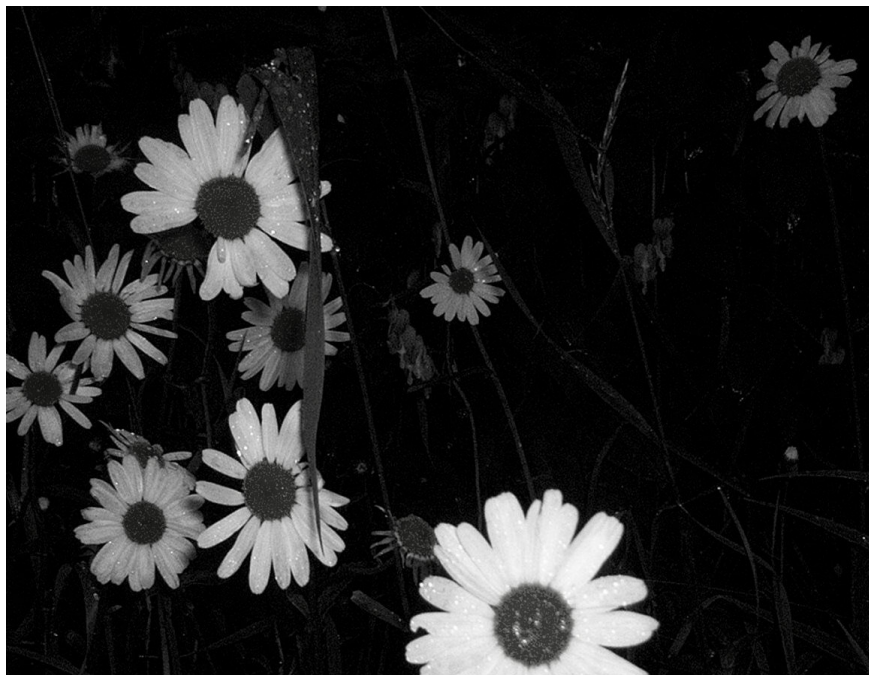
I had wanted to celebrate the birthday of my wife. I had wanted to reignite the spark in a failing marriage. Now all I could think of was the solitude of my farm.

Pain stabbed through me. I had trusted her. I had loved her, and now...Now it was time to face my competition. Perhaps there was still hope.

It was time for a crescendo, a confrontation.

The Guitarist

From f waltzing into c
descending minor note
staggering progression
evening fingers dancing
under thrall at the crimson hall
turning of the key
shimmering arpeggio
vibration
from paper
sound
from trembling
audio
gyrate to his composition
cue strings
pluck her guitar like body
feel the tension
as the crescendo ends
this session



Communication Downfall

Dancing on the outside
on the edge of visible horizon
she waits
encased in flaming atmosphere
working machinations of science
where his presence envelopes the helium
a weight as heavy as suffocation
two articles of machina
empty as clockwork
but driven in instruction
revolving in shooting arcs

one inside this dying world orbit
one within the gaseous orb
speed like intertwining pendulum
ricochet from one side
to the crystal bell of warning
bleeping whose beats per measure are increasing
like an impending supernova
malfunction
divorce harms even the marriage of machines
in action versus inaction
the communication downfall
like the antenna that ripped away
resulting in contact broken
crackling the mutual sequence code
wobbling the flow, warping the paths
engines revolt against the dissolution
so far too late
lost all guided motivation
he and her spiral in opposite direction
down into the consuming light
becoming one in rapid combustion
quickly divided into fractions
corrupted by the splitting of an atom
a whirlwind from within
or from without, as was the object of their study
for them the relationship faded
just before the glowing red planet imploded
two lost satellites via drunken communication
never really finding meaning in their exploration



Factory Farm

A red painted barn
a simple shelter
one door
each end is graced with
an exit
and an entrance
service to the incoming calves
and outgoing cows
while snorting horses pull the rope
feed begins to rise
for the raising of livestock
this factory of farming
production of sustenance
within this simple red barn
a factory still works
in simplicity machines
organic and cheap
barn painted red
a shelter simply
a door
from complexity an exit
end

Journal Excerpt 7.

The red barn was simple. Its uses were so easy to understand. Yet, it was about to fade into my past.

Divorce settlements are just the thing to change a life.

My idyllic haven in the country had been blown apart and shown to be hollow on the inside. There was nothing for me here. It had all been a lie. Why hadn't I seen that before it was too late?

Roxanne had never returned after that night in the club. She had seen me approach, whispered into the ear of her military squeeze, and shortly afterwards my path had been blocked by a squad of his husky comrades.

I knew that was the end. She had enough of being the other woman. I left her there a fog of color, returning to my farm in a grey curtain of rain.

The divorce papers had arrived soon after. I didn't fight it, I knew that she deserved to be with someone who loved her.

What was next?

The cause of our trouble, my farm had been sold...I remember walking through it early one morning. The brilliant red sun was creeping slowly over the horizon, and I was pleased.

I was ready for the war. I needed a good war to release the tension inside of me.

The red barn, covered with fresh grey shingles, filled my eyes. There was a factory for life, for hope. Soon it would belong to someone else; I had lost faith in everything it symbolized. I was ready for something new, something destructive.

Any sense of trust had vanished in my simple soul. I had tried my best as a farmer and then failed at being a husband. The army had won round one.

What would the war be like?



Becoming the Robot

Slipping through to the slipstream
like an alien I awake inside the world of dreams
computers and wires control my thoughts
all the images in my head
I've almost died but still not arrived
experiments in brain wave therapy
combined in sine wave theory
keep me alive and on the edge
pushing through barriers in research
all for the preservation of a man
love of life, who knew it could be so tough
but it's not enough
encased in tubular constructions, sensor me
as they're ripping through to my cerebellum
speaking commands in synthesis
no not, know not
I've been erased
do not, have not
being replaced by a mind so alien
to become one with the machine
one with the universal robot
the trunk of my body feels like tin
my head like lightening in a jar
electrified and taking me over
heart of steel now empty and alive
where once it was flesh and dead
switch me on
turn the dial
watch the master needle
there on the lighted control console
like the machine I've become
a slave of what's to come
from man into robot

Journal Excerpt 8.

*Reversing
innocence
youth fades from
an empty heart*

I stared at the note without comprehension. It was only one four-line poem crudely written onto a grimy paper. Who was around to give me a poem?

My body shivered as the clammy chill of the early morning crept along my skin. All around me was death grey fog. A faint ball of yellow marked a spot of hope in the east. The sun was alive and well, even if I wasn't.

War is a wonderful teacher; it had taught me how to simplify my life.

Thorns pricked my back as I sat on the wet grass. I jerked as pain pierced my flesh, and then promptly shifted away from the rose bush.

Roxanne seemed so far away, so unreal...A quiet chuckle escaped my mouth. How futile it was to think of her. She was far away from the misery of my life.

After I escaped the ambush, I had slowly made my way to the appointed rendezvous point.

Concentration would be necessary to escape this forest with a pulse still beating in my chest. Roxanne was an unnecessary distraction.

I was a machine, trained to survive and kill another day.

Where was the rest of my unit? That was the real issue that needed to be dealt with. Everything else was pure irony.

I'll never forget the look of horror in the boy's eyes when he realized I was leaving him to die. They called him the boy because of his innocence. What good is innocence? We were being overrun.

I needed to escape.

Well, to be perfectly honest, I would have gone back for him if my Captain hadn't ordered me to fall back.

A chain of machine gun bullets punched the life out of him soon after. Such is the irony of life. If the bullets had killed the

Captain two minutes sooner, I could have saved Johnny....

Funny isn't it? I would have saved him even though he had stolen Roxanne from me. The military had taught me well. I had learned to save my comrades, no matter their sins.

I curled into a ball and trembled as fear slithered into my consciousness. I hoped that I would be safely hidden from sight until the helicopter flew in for the pickup.

How I wished the fog would lift so I could see my surroundings, but then the enemy could also see me.

They would be hunting with bloodthirsty resolve.

Not that I was much to look at, I was twenty eight, had short blond hair, and looked a bit like an unshaven Colin Ferrell in a filthy army uniform.

Our unit had been ordered to raid an enemy cave system. The cave system had turned into a death trap. Luckily, I had found a side tunnel leading to the surface.

Too bad that I hadn't been able to drag Johnny to the escape route. I had told him to wait for me after all...If only that fool Captain hadn't distracted me.

A voice mumbled somewhere in the mist. At least, I thought it was a voice. I couldn't be sure...

My finger caressed the trigger of my rifle. My weapon, the only barrier between death and me.

Time passed, my resolve faded. Mental darkness descended.

I awoke suddenly, nervously glancing around me. Nothing had changed while I slept, perhaps I was still safe.

My weary eyelids bounced.

A new note lay on the ground beside me. I picked it up and then stared at its contents.

The poem fell as I leapt up like a lion searching for its prey. I swung my rifle around in a circle, straining to see a target. There was nothing visible except grey fog and a few solemn black tree trunks.

I could see faint flickers of orange somewhere in the distance. There was acrid smell of smoke in the air. The tendrils of fog were beginning to clear.

Where had the sinister note come from?

I felt my back... Yes, my uniform was torn. I could feel

dried blood where the thorn had pricked. I was still alive. I wasn't hallucinating.

An enemy soldier wouldn't waste time toying with me, would he? No, he would leap out and kill me without another thought. That was what our propaganda told me.

Propaganda would never lie, would it?

Surely, a man from my own unit wouldn't find the time to play such games. We had just escaped a death trap! We wouldn't be in the mood for fooling around.

I thought of creeping away, but then thought better of it.

Where could I run?

A cunning plan entered my mind. I sat upright and then slowly pretended to fall asleep with my hands firmly gripping my weapon.

Time passed like the pages of a book on a lazy afternoon. It took about an hour before I noticed movement in the brightening haze. I watched through slightly open eyes as the boy appeared.

His right hand held a grimy white paper. At first glance he looked normal. Yet there was something different about him. Tendrils of death had wrapped themselves around his face, contorting it like a mask.

My head lifted as my rifle swiveled toward the boy. "Halt!" I shouted with every ounce of harshness that I could muster.

Innocent Johnny shouldn't have made it here. There was something very evil in the air. Johnny's dark eyes glittered from the twin holes embedded in the mask of his face.

A memory of Roxanne's betrayal stabbed through me.

"You made it! Just calm down and everything will be fine...trust me." Johnny crept slowly closer, his eyes focused steadily on mine.

It was like a snake hypnotizing its victim before it bites.

The boy had been captured and promised his freedom if he led the enemy to the rendezvous. Any minute now, the forest would be swarming with enemy troops. I vowed to shoot the traitor first if it came to that. My finger tightened on the trigger.

"Stop right there!" I ordered with a calmness I didn't feel. The boy obeyed. He was close enough now that I could count his freckles if I was so inclined. Oh, those wholesome freckles and boyish dimples that made the country girls swoon like the fools

they were.

He looked innocent, but he wasn't as innocent in the ways of women. He knew how to play to his audience.

"I escaped just like you; I...found another tunnel...."

"What are you playing at?" I interrupted.

The boy shifted his weight, staring at the ground. "What do you mean?"

I raised my rifle and sighted down the barrel. "Speak up boy, I can't hear you." I heard myself snarling with the tension of an executioner about to swing the axe.

"You know, I would have gone back for you. But the Captain ordered me to stand my ground...By the time I could change course. It was too late. Remember that after you turn me over."

Johnny fingered his clean uniform as a guilty look entered his face. He glanced back at...something...someone?

Warning signals raced like electrical shock through my nerves. I pulled the trigger.

Click. Angrily I pumped the trigger like a fool smashing his head against a concrete wall.

I had been careless. The gun had been emptied while I slept.

My past had come back to betray me. This time I had done nothing to deserve it.

What next?

My arms were seized from behind and then gripped with the force of a hydraulic vise.

"Why?" I screamed bitterly at the boy as he shuffled off into the ragged remnants of the fog.

The boy paused, turned and then wiped a patch of blood from his otherwise, clean face.

"Does it matter why? As you always say, everything is meaningless. This wasn't my choice...I thought you had left me to die...If I had known what your situation was...then perhaps I wouldn't have told them about Roxanne and the poetry...I...I'm sorry...."

"I knew you were a traitor from the minute you stepped out of the fog!"

"How?"

"Your uniform was clean; you can't stay clean in war... If you would have fought your way out, you..." My voice trailed off.

Johnny blinked once, shook his head, and then was led away by two black uniformed soldiers.

My heart sank through the soles of my army issue boots. Shadowy black figures of enemy troops swarmed around me. Hostile faces peered at me as if I was a specimen in a butcher shop.

"Good afternoon soldier. I do admit that tormenting you with poetry was a vanity on my part. Call me a sadist, but I do love to see my prisoners in uncomfortable situations." An authoritative voice had boomed out these statements. I couldn't see the speaker of them.

The ground slammed into my body. Rough hands began to frisk my prostrate form for weapons.

"Do you write?"

"No."

Excellent! We will have many months together to learn. I especially enjoy reading the work of my prisoners. I find that torture is an excellent cure for writers block. Don't you agree? "

Powerful hands heaved me into a standing position. A heavy boot smashed into my back.

"Now move it!" The voice bellowed.

Adrenaline forced sweat from my dirt-covered pores.

I had had always dreamed of being a best selling author by thirty-five. The only way I could achieve that was to do the same thing I had done about the problem of my farm.

Run.

My throat rasped as I struggled for breath. They thought I was weak. Johnny had gotten my wife without a fight. This time he wouldn't win.

I charged forward into the forest. Orders screamed behind my back. Bullets whined over my head, shattering branches all around my fragile body.

My boots slipped as I scrambled up a hill. The voices of my pursuers were fading. This time I would beat the odds and take control of my life. The future was before me.

1914

A man, or is it a man
a creature of the night it remains
gliding softly in footfalls of the past
through the grey shaded garden
toward the concrete staircase
up toward the door and window
beating its cane against the glass
over the doorway numbers are carved
nineteen fourteen
the time of creation
the moment of construction
stattico taps the number sequence
nine hits added to ten
then fourteen
always fourteen
cursed again
numbers equal memories but gain no admittance
to this house of stone
of brick and mortar
beaten from history

1914 (continued....)

Into a future blurred
bound into each other
not as a lover
but as memories hated
all that remains to be done, is
as shadow robes moves a ticking hand
slowly, steadily and without recourse
nine taps added to ten
so sets the candle
like clock wraiths
writhing
growing the flame
equation
in glass pupils
as what was
exists
becoming
time driven
car crashing
war hawking
conflagration

Journal Excerpt 9.

I had reached the top of the hill. Far below there was only forest.

A forest of death that had claimed the lives of everyone else in my unit. If I didn't want to join them, I needed to keep moving.

My feet carried me downward slowly, carefully, silently.

The growth in the forest was slowly thinning, perhaps I would soon be able to find my way. According to the charts we had memorized before the mission, there was a river somewhere close by.

If I could find the river, it would lead me back.

The wild natural chatter of the forest faded.

Crunch. Swish. My boots carried me forward.

The smell of rotten wood began to overwhelm me. Then the glint of...was that water? I began to run.

I never heard the shot that sent a bullet into my back. All I can remember is the sight of my hands reaching toward the grass that I was falling toward.

My time had run out.

"Oh Roxanne..." I gasped as my eyes fell shut.

Weapon

Brown stained wood
as a pole
supports transmission
grey stainless wire
as a soul
exhorts the flow of ammunition
electrons divide in fission
the weapon melts its goals
wood by wire, hangs
dangling, swaying
sent to its grey stainless prison
as explosive light
pulsing fades
consumed by the once empty hole
now brown stained wood
supports the only remains of ambition

Remembrance Day

Wrecked and blown
humanity crumpled in a wasted heap
battlefields bleeding cries from men
romantics while waging war
in love with ideals and ideas we went looking for
waiting not to die
knowing we will
wishing all we could've written
knowing what would come
sooner than we thought, it did
breath rasps heavy
hearts pulsing hot
pounding conflict worn guns
we could pray
instead of cursing the pain
trying to replace memories
highlights of the farewell kiss
lost on the express train
brakes slip
engines stall
waiting for us to catch up
suspended on remembrances
how will it feel cutting them away
we could have written
one last line or something of the kind
our last day to remember
only the first to forget
marching as a soldier must
every dream falling lost
staring back
a city of glittering heaven
mirrors reflecting our flickering hell
words swirling smoke
obscuring ashes
what future remains
on our remembrance day

Over Distance

Morsels
of my words
tantalize
your thoughts
once secret
hidden in shyness
when you were my poetry
released with a kiss
one intertwining flame
separated
rapidly
distant
yet our two hands
touching faith
we will again be one
still over space
my emptiness
speaks
reveries of you

Journal Excerpt 10.

Life in the prison camp made me into the man I am today. In a way, it finished the process started with Roxanne, continued by the military, and given the final push by Johnny.

I finally learned to appreciate the puppet strings of life.

Everyone knew that they had to look out for themselves, there were no unrealistic expectations. Either we survived, or our corpses were thrown into the crocodile infested river flowing past the prison camp.

Life was pleasantly simple.

I never saw Johnny again. Not that I would have done anything about him. He had only done what he needed to do to survive. It was understandable.

The price of lost innocence is terrible. I had left innocence during the loss of my farm, Johnny, despite his womanizing ways, probably left the last of his innocence in that forest of death.

Johnny...I wonder whatever happened to him. He probably had received some reward for leading the enemy to our rendezvous. Traitors usually live well enough....

Roxanne...Roxanne... I can still see her face in every dream, in every reflection...oh how I wish I could go back to those days together on the farm, but they are gone forever.

Life in all its irony had molded me into a best-selling author of military fiction.

The commander of our camp wasn't joking when he said that he enjoyed reading the works of his prisoners. We had to write something new everyday, or else we didn't get our food ration.

Beatings were given generously if what we wrote was not up to his expectation. Therefore, it came to pass that we learned our trade until the war ended and we were released at last.

Sometimes it is so hard to get motivated in peacetime. Yet, what else could I do? I had learned to write. Work...That is what I needed to do, if only to distract myself from the memory that had sustained me throughout my imprisonment.

Roxanne....

The telephone blasted, forcing me from my daydream. I reached across my filthy desk to grab the receiver.

"Yeah!" I mumbled, still drunk with slumber.

"How's the book coming?"

"It isn't as long as I'm talking to you!"

Rebecca, my agent, was used to wrangling ornery authors, which explained the lack of emotion in her voice.

"Well, I just thought I would call you. This is the third time the company has pushed the deadline back for you. Is everything okay?"

A curse hovered at the edge of my lips, but I swallowed it.

Rebecca's voice took on an air of compassion. "Look I know what you went through in the war...Everybody does...that's why they love your books. Your life experience makes them real. You can be real with me. I'm here to help you...."

"This book will be my last."

"What?"

"You heard me. After this book is completed, my contract will be fulfilled. I will not be signing another."

"But why? You said you would. I trusted you...I..." Were the last words I heard before I hung up on her.

Why indeed?

My doctor informed me that I was suffering from post traumatic stress disorder. Apparently, war isn't good for a man's mental health.

I needed to relieve the pressure before I imploded.

Therefore, I needed to quit writing. I needed to stop mining the very past that had made me so successful.

Perhaps if I went outside for a while....

A canopy of empty blue splashed with all the brilliant colors of the sunset hung above me.

My gaze dropped to earth and onto the plain white swing in my back yard. There was no one there.

Once Roxanne had enjoyed sitting in the grass and writing poems for me. Sometimes she would leave them on the step and hide...I never paid attention to her poems in those days.

I had a farm to run.

In return for my weakness, Johnny had helped turn those

poems against me. The devious warden of our prison loved to leave poems for me.

Even as I recovered from my gunshot wound, he would leave behind evil verses to torture my memory of better days.

There was no way back. Although, if I apologized to Rebecca, I might be able to halt another cycle before it began. If I have learned anything from my past, it is that the lines of communication must remain open.

I hoped that Rebecca had left one open for me. I couldn't afford to be without a writing contract. I had spoken out of frustration.

My head stared up at the smothering blanket of the universe. There was so much darkness under my skin, but no lights to glitter within it.

The sun glowed beautiful over my tormented head.

My life experience had made me rich, but I would sacrifice every penny of my royalties if I could return to the simple days on the farm with Roxanne.

One of her favorite tricks used to be to knock on the door and leave a poem behind for me....

Spacethoughts

Suspension
at one in the formulary
this eternal void
a scattering of stardust
remains only to fill oceans
divided by light years
twinkling frenzy
and we go deep
drowning
abandoning desire
searching for the divine
weaving winds
lightbulb sun
a painter streaking
smudging watercolors
abstract and sometimes evil grey
blurring under examination
scientific understanding
hung by a thread
within refuge of atmosphere
we swim storm cursed seas
on rare occasions breaking surface
knowledge is not our enemy
but it puts us under
into the stars
as we paddle to wisdom
realizing
without God, there is no meaning
as we stare
awestruck at our galaxy
while within
mortal skin
lurks degeneration

Journal Excerpt 11.

A sigh fluttered from my lips as my eyes stared straight ahead.

The white glare from the computer monitor illuminated my face in the darkness of my empty house.

Only a few moments would be enough to finish the manuscript and I was thankful. An idea for another book had already entered my mind.

The soft sprinkle of rain pattered against the roof.

Rebecca had been understanding and forgiving...She would negotiate a new contract for me. She had been sincere in expressing her thanks, which she should, considering that she takes in ten percent of every best seller that I write. Yes, the new contract will be a big one for both of us.

Still, I was alone. I couldn't escape that fact. However, I had learned from my past.

I had at last succeeded in taking control of my future. Now My every thought, my only hope is that someday revelry will return to my reverie.

Backward Glances Wisdom

Staring at words
with faltering dim
as the
in the
twisting screw
slowly tightened
incandescence waits
as the dusk slowly swelters
rain crawls
creeping down
sprinkles sputtering yellow
clashing
clinking chains of inspiration
the ease of the simple burden
with trembling grasp
only to engage the string
unleashing the wisdom
of the revealed past



Comments and Credits.

Revelry in Reverie, page 1. *This is a new, previously unpublished poem that I wrote specifically as preface to this book.*

Thoughts on a Pier, page 10. *What can I say? A man, a woman. Loss... One of my first published poems. Previously published in, "Lyrica: Webzine of Romantic Fiction", and, "A Priceless Christmas."*

Ocean/Atmosphere, page 11. *This poem started with when I heard about an idea that a South American Indian tribe had about fish being birds flying in their own sky...Meanings of this poem? The environment continues to survive despite the best efforts of humankind...Previously unpublished.*

Formless Love, page 13. *Another love poem...Obviously. An abstract picture of marriage...love...Previously published in, "Lyrica: Webzine of Romantic Fiction", and, "A Priceless Christmas."*

Under Surfaces, page 15. *I wrote this in my mind while I was working on a field...driving back and forth over a lifeless surface...yet beneath...is...life? Previously published in, "The Green Muse."*

The Guitarist, page 17. *The love affair between a musician and his instrument...Strangely, I wrote the rough version of this while sitting in a church pew...Why? I don't know...There were no guitars in sight. Previously published in, "The Green Muse."*

Factory Farm, page 21. *A word picture of the farm as a factory. Previously published in, "The Pen Point View."*

Over Distance, page 35. *I wrote this for consideration by a greeting card company who wanted poetry...They didn't take it...Therefore it appears here. A nice ironic touch to the story, don't you think? Previously unpublished.*

Weapon, page 33. *War is fun, isn't it? Not really...It certain cases it may be necessary, however, it always involves pain. Ironically, many times the goal is destroyed in the process of fighting for it. Have ever seen a picture of battlefield? Previously published in, "Tamafyr Mountain Poetry. "*

Remembrance Day, page 34. *In Canada we have a holiday honoring veterans. I wrote this poem with that day in mind. What would a dying soldier be thinking of as he lay in the mud? Previously unpublished.*

1914, page 30, 31. *Comments: 1914 was the year that the First World War began...is this only a memory...or the future? It was originally one poem, but I split it up so it would fit this book better. Previously published in, "Mo-nu-ment."*

Becoming the Robot, page 24. *Molded by the media...Becoming a mental clone...Previously published in, The Fifth Dimension.*

Communication Downfall, page 18. *One of my personal favorites. Corrupt communication corrupts relationships...Previously published in, "The Martian Wave."*

Spacethoughts, page 39. *Staring at the sky. Looking within...Realizing God provides the only meaning in life. Slightly modified from the version published in, "Dragons, Knights and Angels."*

Backward Glances Wisdom, page 41. *Learning from the past can turn the light on in your head. Make sense? Previously published in, "Inscribed", and, "The Best of Inscribed Vol.1."*

The Casualty is Innocence, page 1-40. *One mistake can lead to so much more than a person has ever dreamed. However, this cycle can be halted by looking back and learning...The story was written around the poetry...*

The Ocean Shore, page 46. *My first somewhat serious effort at writing poetry. Written when I was a wee lad...My my it is tragic, isn't it? Previously published in the, Immortal Verses Series.*

Photographs throughout the book, by Janice, Charlene, and Elizabeth Bueckert.

The Ocean Shore

Waves crashing, twisting turning
sun fiery burning, descending to
the watery horizon

Darkness falling, moon emerging
my mind is churning, my heart is yearning
for the one, who left me here

By the oceans shore, lonely forevermore
for my love has left, and my joy is gone
doomed now to remain forevermore
on this ocean shore



Kelvin currently lives and writes from the prairie clad plains of Manitoba, Canada. He has been published in The Pedestal Magazine. com, Writer Online.us, Horizon Magazine, and many others. Acting, music, and strangely enough, farming are all part of Kelvin's adventures outside of the literary world. Awards include, winner of the compo10 song contest, 4th place in Spinetinglers writing contest, Honorable Mention in the, Unscrambled Eggs poetry contest, and others. That being said, I think that this is a wrap for this book and bio... Although, as you might have guessed, you can always read more at, www.kelvinbueckert.com

Beauty in a Scorched Land

3

Stories

2

Continents

1

Message

So different, so much the same....

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Mary Dyck, a lonely young woman, was oppressed by the burden of her imagination. Her friend Susan was about to be engaged. Jason, the neighbor boy, had found a semblance of love in alcohol. Her father, a preacher, had numbed all feeling in order to fulfill his love for his church.

What if there is something more?

That question haunted her even as storm clouds formed, raindrops fell, and hope seemed to fade. The more she searched, the more it seemed as if everything she had believed in was an empty lie. Her soul was parched for truth. What was it?

Sudden death arrived like a lightning bolt flashing in the tempest.

A new flowering hope appeared in Abe, a handsome young man with romance on his mind. He seemed perfect. Yet, lurking within his soul was a deeply personal secret.

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A Priceless Christmas

“Dear Reader. One Christmas Eve, two mysterious letters arrived in Gladstone. They both gave directions to one million dollars in cash. Why were the letters sent? Who sent them? These were some of the questions that would be answered once the truth was finally revealed. In the end, two strangers were to discover the true gift of Christmas. But at what cost?”

A Summer of Secrets

An old enemy had returned.

Early morning is never the best time to find a corpse beside the highway. Well, to be honest, finding a corpse is never convenient. Luckily, the question Candace had to face was simple. How had the body arrived beside the road already reeking of decay?

Vengeance was in the air.

When you have a day off, the last thing you want to do is search for stolen sleeping pills. Especially when your wife is missing. As if that wasn't enough, Jason was about to meet Mabel, an eccentric old woman with a secret.

Could Jason and Candace find truth in a summer of secrets?

A Priceless Christmas/A Summer of Secrets

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An Interview with Kelvin

Q. What inspired you to write, "Love from the Crucible?"

A: I was inspired to write it after I heard my grandparents tell me the story of how they met. Although, to be clear, I enhanced that story a lot. Therefore, the book shouldn't be taken as a reflection of my grandparent's story.

Q. Would you call it a personal story?

A: Ahhh...Not that I would admit it! Ha-ha. No, seriously...I wouldn't say it is very autobiographical. Of course, there are elements of me in it, but my goal wasn't to talk about myself. I wanted to write an entertaining story, and I think that is what happened. A lot of the book had its roots in real life though...I will say that...

Q. Your own life?

A: Not really...Mostly incidents I have seen and heard about over the years. I modified and disguised them as I worked them in. So please don't try to figure out which happened to who, where...Real life was a heavy influence on this book...but it is still a fiction story.

Q. What was your goal in writing, Love from the Crucible?

A: My goal? Hmmm...Entertainment for sure. I believe that is my business...However, I do have something to say in this book. I don't want to give away the story though...Generally, the story is about learning to look outside of yourself and your own problems...Oh, and finding love...But I tried to give love a little deeper twist than the usual boy meets girl thing...although the boy/girl element is definitely a part of the story...I guess it's about finding goodness in tragedy...Love from the Crucible.

Q. Was this book easier or harder to write than your others?

A: Definitely harder...I started in 2004...and it has been a long and difficult journey until now. I'm just relieved that it is available at last...

Q. What's next in your writing schedule?

A: I'm working on a sequel to, A Priceless Christmas. That should be available...sooner than later hopefully. I think it will lean more toward the mystery genre but it isn't finished yet...so you never know.

Q. What is Beauty in a Scorched Land?

A: For me the title can mean a few different things...Ah, the book is about Africa...which is not just a continent of war and famine, it is also a land of beautiful scenery and wonderful people. So there is that angle...In a more poetic angle...the thrust of the book is targeted at the west...hmm...When you think of it, our society has been scorched and desensitized by the media. Are we still capable of compassion? Is there still beauty in a scorched land?

Q. What were your goals in writing this book?

A: There were a couple...We wanted to raise money for African aid and at the same time raise awareness and participation. Personally, I didn't want to write yet another book about those poor little children over there...Although, they are poor and over there...I wanted the book to be about us, about the similarities in the human family...

Q. The human family?

A: Okay, maybe that sounds a bit strange...but what I mean is...Well, I think that people are the same...no matter how much money, what color skin or anything else that affects the external. I think it's convenient to put people in compartments and minimize them...You know how it is; the problem is over there in that box.

We don't need to worry about that... My point is that the problem isn't over there; with them, it's with humanity collectively. With us all. Make sense?

Q. Who is Charlene?

A: Charlene is my sister, and the co-author of *Beauty in a Scorched Land*. She also came up with the title and contributed pictures taken during a trip into Zambia. She worked in Zambia as a nurse for part of 2006, and came back with a new perspective. She shares some of that perspective in the book. Incidentally...any profits from the book will go to the organization she went to Zambia with...MATE...www.matefcc.org

Q. Woah, it sounds like a serious book!

A: It is a serious book. However, don't panic! I worked hard to make the book entertaining. I didn't want it to be another dry sermon. There is romance and humor where I could fit it in. As I said, I wanted it to be human. Not just about the bleakness! People in Africa have many of the same desires that anyone else does...They are not living on some other planet. They joke, they love, and they feel...Just like anybody else.

Q. Any last words?

A: Hey, you can download the book free...but please buy it. Maybe put a copy in your church/school/tree house ect...You will help spread the word, and we will put 100% of the profits toward African relief work. It is a win win situation, with Africa as the winner. Thanks a lot for your help.

Q. Give us an overview of, *Revelry in Reverie*

A: Hmm...*Revelry in Reverie* is a collection of poetry. Most of it had been previously published in different and diverse places, so I thought; why not collect some of it in one place? With that in mind I picked some out some suitable poems, and then added some unpublished ones to the mix...I wanted to fill out the book a bit...so

I wrote a short story around the poetry.

Q. What do you mean around the poetry?

A: Ahh...so that the story and the poems fit together. Yes, I wrote the story to fit with the themes in the poems. Therefore, the story explains the poems, and the poems continue the story, or fit together with it, depending on the situation.

Q. What is the book about?

A: Life, love, loss, war...it is about a guy who answers a knock at the door and finds a poem that brings back memories that he would rather forget. I don't really want to say any more about it...

Q. Have your original meanings been sacrificed for the story?

A: Yeah I thought of that...in the back of the book, I put comments on every poem along with the previous publication credits. I think the story gives the poems different angles that I hadn't thought of during the original writing. Yeah...It was interesting to explore them again in a different light. The original thoughts are in the comments section...Pick your meaning...Enjoy...

Q. Do you work all the time?

A: Pretty much. That is one advantage of having no life! Ha-ha. Speaking of work...I better go...there's things to do you know....

