

POEMS
FOR
THE
END
OF
THE
WORLD

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Introduction

I was hoping that the title to this booklet would formally be *Wine and Poetry Night Year Two* following the title of my first poetry compilation, but that wonderful event no longer happens around here. In another dimension though, it definitely is called *Wine and Poetry Night Year Two*. That dimension is a better place, the world is much farther away from an untimely demise, cats do not scratch or bite, there are no mosquitoes, and I am drinking more wine by candlelight.

2015 and 2017 met me with traumatic experiences so I am unapologetically going to say that this collection is considerably darker than the last, but maybe some readers will enjoy that. It is a cathartic release, just like reading *Zen in the Art of Writing* while dancing or camping alone in the woods talking to the fire or cutting off all your hair and burying it in the forest or driving for hundreds of miles listening to 90s music are. Sometimes you need to do special things in order to start trusting and feeling again, sometimes they are really strange things, but something, eventually, works; you just need to keep moving, even if you can't feel a thing, even if there is no meaningful direction, even if it seems like the world has ended.

Please note that none of the titles to these poems matter outside of identification purposes. Really, believe me, if you were trying to gain some unique insight into a poem through the title, you won't. In fact, it's probably better that you completely ignore them along with the order in which they appear. You've been warned.

I want to give special thanks to Kendra Cooley for inspiring me to start writing poetry again through our poem-to-poem robot exchanges and for hosting poetry events that are (almost) as cool as Wine and Poetry Night was. It is the sole reason why this compilation of poems has come together. Kendra, you're an extraordinary human being!

Consumption

Today I had a bad day
so diligently ate
each morsel of food
on Earth.

But this made me feel no better,

so I could not help
but drink all
of the ocean's water,

burn every
tree down to
black charcoal,

breathe in
every last bit of air remaining,

and consume planet after planet,
along with the stars,
galaxies,
and gods.

Upon finishing my meal of the universe,
I collapse into indigestion,
and feel terrible.

Good Morning

Reading the signs
of the morning magic rooster,

a cockle-doodle-do.

The door slams and
all the music is replaced by
ocean waves and deep sighs

In and out.

In and out.

In and out.

They say there is a whale
living in these waters
that the land dwellers
point exclamations at.

Over the bridge,
as the whale passes
under the bridge.

I am here,
I am walking up the hill,
I am gone.

Friends

I need to remind myself that there are friends,
there are FRIENDS,
there are "friends,"
there are friends...
there are frieeeeends!
there are frrrrriiends,
there are mmmm friends,
there are ummmm friends,
there are friends,
and then there are stupid piece of shit lousy fucked up
friends.

Road

I questioned the existence of the road thoroughly.
Rocks, pebbles, pot holes, ditches, tires, imprints,
perhaps a deer.
The road moves in curves and mysterious lines.
I am moving the same way the road moves and perhaps I am the road.

Lies

You can either
lie yourself into joy
or you can
lie yourself into suffering.

The choice is yours.

In Watermelon Sugar

The regrettable sigh I release is
deeper
than all of the farmer's
dry wells.

You see,
I'd rather not talk about the moon today
because those tiger eyes light up like fireflies,
like blood is life
and you're not here to teach me arithmetic
but tear this fragile adulthood to mincemeat pieces.

It is morning,
I am ready.

The Problem

Love is:

- ➔ connection
- ➔ vulnerability
- ➔ presence

Capitalism is:

- ➔ the problem

Memory

There was a memory from yesterday
moving so fast in the darkness behind us
being swallowed
and no trace that
the light ever existed.

Trust.

There was trust.

Movement

Perhaps consider that life
began as
small repetitive motions,

a dance in the primordial seas.

And wishing to dance a greater dance,
life grew
and learned to move in union,

into bacteria, fish, rabbits, wolves, elephants.
Into us.

But the dance did not stop there,

we howled together at the moon,
sang songs around the fire,
and celebrated the givings of Earth.

And before we knew it
were a new form of life.

We grew into greater beings
as the trees intermingle into forests,
the birds fly in flocks,
the morning mist collects into clouds,
the planets revolve into solar systems,
and the galaxies swirl into the growing universe,

we dance into our
organism that is community.

And it is our duty
to keep life's momentum growing:

To move
so the great beast may move.
To dance
so the great beast may dance,
To love
so the great beast may love.

Civilization's Forests

Most of civilization
is contained within
sprawling monuments to humanity,
but those people
will never know the ghosts
of great trees they step through.

Bookstores

When you walk
out of the bookstore,
you wonder if
you left part
of yourself behind,
trapped between the
pages and spaces of
words,
punctuation,
dreams.

Hope

I find little
pieces of hope
hidden
under rocks and
in between cracks
as the universe
screams at me.

Thought

Maybe
that is it,
you are the mysterious god
and I am the periodic occurrence.

There Are A Lot Of Things I Wish I Were Doing

There are a lot of things I wish I were doing,
like howling at the full moon,
or falling in love with you.

But I have to take my medicine.
It is necessary and bitter
alone with Father Time
at the forest's first sprout of life.

Better Start Digging

Those unsaid words buried deep below
If we can only dig
through these layers of
malice, ego, and regret,
maybe then the ores will be refined:

The gold will gleam,
the silver will shine,
the rubies will ring until
“I'm sorry” stands
“I love you” leaps
and “thank you” transcends what has passed.

We had better start digging.

A Gang of Silence

What if the sound from all you loved went silent?
How can a silence become deeper than quiet?
Only if the mouths of many SHUT with a Violence.

The Gang has spoken,
an orchestrated pause to the music of life,
the heart beat will fade at a rate unknown to science.

Won't the sound please come back with a loving vengeance?

Wrinkles

She said,
"wrinkles are formed
so the blood
doesn't
drip
into
your
eyes."

Bone's Word

There is a word
hidden in my bones.
I must snap each two hundred and six apart
to spell it out.

The first is excruciating.
The second uncomfortable.
The third tickles.
The thirteenth feels like biting into toast.
The twenty-seventh has the crunch of cereal.
The fifty-first is a memory of heartbreak on a cold day.
The seventy-eighth might be a clue.
The ninety-ninth dreamed of sunflowers.
The one-hundred and thirty-sixth resembles a powerful queen.
The one-hundred and eighty-ninth is where I stored my childhood.
The two-hundredth feels like a really great accomplishment.
The two-hundredth and third is hard to remember.

On two-hundred and six my body is a crunchy jelly
as I read the word:
_____ (Love).

I Want You

I want connection
The sort of connection
that weaves bridges
between mind body soul spirit.

I want to know you
intimately underneath
the veils of scars
of chores
of adult bullshit
and share a drink from the
chalice of who you really are.

I want to fall asleep and
meet you in our dream,
to speak in tangible
tones of music and
share a moment with your
best friend,
the ghost of a meteorite
who met the meaning of life
at strides with stars.

I want you to continue
loving everyone and everything
around you as much as you love
the steam rising from a cup of tea,
the first sprouts of Spring,
the cracks in paved cement that prove
change comes at variable speed.

And when someone
pulls the trigger,
the guillotine falls,
the siren blares,
the silence ensues,

When the end is coming soon,

I want for us to smile.

Rock Bottom

The goal
is not
to hit rock bottom gracefully
so that you can
crawl back out again to your old self;
the goal
is to
hit rock bottom so hard
you explode through
to the other side in fiery glory,
to your new life.

Split

To _____

I have a question...

Do you exist?

Because I feel that at any moment you might disappear,
leaving no trace that you were ever here at all.

It's as if you are a shadow,
midnight burned to daylight's jagged surface.
Holding you I hold a ghost,
like someone stole you away,
young, innocent.

I love what I think exists
in those moments between
waking up to see you peacefully asleep,
in that five string harmony of an orgasm,
in the small details concerned only
with the biggest brightest smile.

But then I wonder why,
your moon is but a shadow of the sun in its past
and the whistle from your bellows holds no church.

Did you find enlightenment?
A vessel for gods above?
The beginning of the end?
The end of the beginning?

I don't think so.
You are merely a glass jar,

and the only way I can fill you up
is by emptying myself out.

I hope that by my leaving,
our bodies separating
our minds untangling,
that you find an inspiration
in the energy of an atom splitting
or an egg cracking
something wholesome
powerful
substantial
beneath the layers of strands we wove together

An explosion of existence.

The likelihood of us being rejoined is
improbable to say the least, but
I believe
in your capacity
to create
a whole new universe.

Goodbye,

Signed _____

Robot

I've been mingling with robots
my whole life
Whispering into their ears
They into mine

A giant mechanical beast rolls by
Who are you? I whisper.
You.

Hands

Put your hands side by side
they are entirely different,
touched different things
had different experiences
loved differently,
but they compliment each other.
Together they are your hands.

Cyclic Thoughts

Like the explosion of flowers in spring,
or cozy discovery of blankets in winter,
or the faithful leap into the cool water of summer,
or bountiful harvest of fall.

These are some of the things to think about
while dying and being reborn.

Staring Into The Eyes of Robots

I leave it on
so I can burn
a small hole
in my mind.

The
iridescent glow
follows me,
a needle stuck
into my eye,
dripping light
and color out,
painting the imagination
and past
into blurry vignettes
on brick walls,
rain drops,
and passing strangers.

Dream Leaf

In the morning I find
a leaf in my bed.

It must have slipped
out of my dreams
as I walked
through the forest
of stout turquoise trees
and green goldfish.

I Did Not Start A War This Year

I did not start a war this year.

I did not attempt to save my old crumbling home,
tear apart that illogical hypocrisy
or make a single poster to raise eyebrows.

I did not start a war this year.

I did not save the country from tyrants,
tell that woman what a piece of shit she is,
or say that I love you dearly.

I did not cry foul to bad science,
bad spirituality,
or bad food.

I did not start a war this year.

I did not throw the cat off my lap,
drown the rat,
or catch a single shimmering fish.

I did not tell the people what I think of them,
tell myself what I think of me,
or expose the truth about you.

I did not start a war this year.

Not a drop of blood,
broken bone,
argument,

or arson.

I kept silent,
I stayed alone,
and I maintained peace.

I did not start a war this year,
and I will always regret it.

Living Hope

Everything appears dead
but
there are
signs of
life returning.

I like that time.

Trick of the Eyes

You just do until you feel awake,
forget you are sleeping.
You aren't actually awake,
yet,
all distractions
point you away
from that subtle truth.

I Remember The Golden Empire Well

I remember the Golden Empire well,

In the catacombs locked doors of rusty robots and
such obscure treasures coldly inlaid with gears and fine threads.

Up the stairs

The main hall connected kitchen and cozy couch to
lazily fill the belly with a laugh
through the vortexes of late night.

Up the stairs

The first living quarters was inhabited by a whale watching sleepy
demigods experiment with
strange powders and sexual desires.

Up the stairs

The second floor of beds championed the eyes of a unicorn
leading straight into the helm of the ocean
which listened to the most secret of stories.

Up the stairs

The attic spoke of ghosts
but the tower's peak pervaded a musty darkness
well met with glowing fireflies bedazzling quiet eyes.

Up the stairs

The rooftop precariously overlooked the whole city into sunset and
lighting of bedrooms come night,
let us sing to our roots.

I remember the Golden Empire well,

Down the stairs

The bloodstained wars with rats.
She slipped in the poison
for health.

Down the stairs

The woman hung herself here,
with a rope,
with a sadness.

Down the stairs

The angry messengers
so kind until the suits of Mars visit
to light the fuse.

Down the stairs

The Kitchen Witch
rearranging jars and scrubbing with a glare,
singing her despair.

Down the stairs

The lying lazy man
vying for power in a thick darkness
cackling into the crumbling cracks.

I remember the Golden Empire well,
and I remember its demise.

Dehumanized

Business dehumanized me.
In the crinkled folds of another business report.
In the emotional void of another sale.
In the...

No, heartbreak dehumanized me.
In the losing streak of vulnerability.
In the un-tuned love chords playing rubbish.

No, capitalism dehumanized me.
In the hours spent accomplishing nothing.
In the vampiric exchange of blood for money

No, fear,
fear dehumanized me.
In the tingling darkness scattered with knives.
In the thought of action thoroughly destroying action.

No,
I know what did it,
it was the rats
who dehumanized me.

Gardens of the Old

Prune the roses.
Water the petunias.
Rake the leaves.

The old pay me a million
dollars an hour
to hide death from them.

Just as they hide
their mirrors
and wrinkles

they instruct me,
not a wilted lilac,
brown patch of grass,
nor frayed branch.
I use my hands and machines
to round up the bodies,
cut off the heads,
rip apart the limbs,
and drag them all away

to burn,
to tuck in the corners,
to clean any stains,

but death
always
comes back.

And isn't it funny?

The other day
I saw flowers and trees and life
sprouting from last year's decay.

I smirk
as the old pay me a million
dollars an hour
to hide death from them.

* * *



Sage Liskey is an author, poet, workshop presenter, mental health advocate, and artist. He founded the Rad Cat Press in 2010 and is based out of Oregon. The Rad Cat Press is devoted to creating life-changing and accessible publications for the modern world.

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