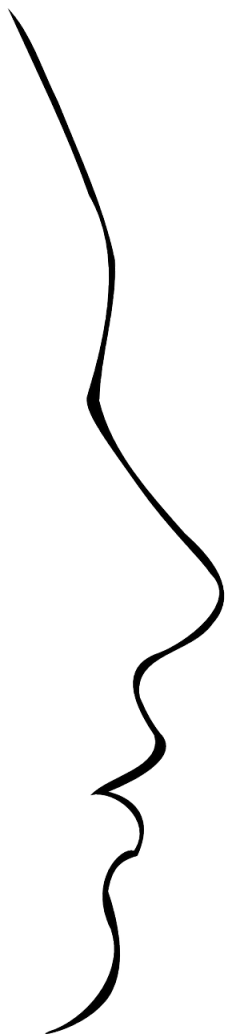


Just Another Face



Poems by Jesse McDaniel

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## **A Better Me**

I want to be a better me.  
I want to change, evolve.  
    There are mysteries  
        I need to solve.  
Stronger, wiser, better -  
    I want to be sunny  
        weather. I can see  
a better me in the days  
    ahead. I want to be  
well-read, well-spoken:  
    well said. I want to be  
well. One day, believe,  
you will see a better me.

## **Blue Rain**

The blue rain came.  
The sky spit and spat.  
Raindrops drizzled  
right in the middle  
of a sun-shiny day.  
The rain continued;  
it kept coming -  
as if God left  
the faucet running -  
and said "screw it;  
learn to swim or  
learn to grow  
gills or fins."  
The blue rain sang  
and said: "hello" -  
before washing away  
another bad day.

## **Just Wait**

Don't hesitate to wait. Good things  
come to those who wait. Divine  
powers scour at those who rush.

Those who rush can lose touch  
of the things that mean the most.

Just wait. You will see a new start.

You will write many more pages,  
poems, letters, and texts about,  
and to all the people you knew.

Patience is a virtue, so just wait  
for tomorrow to come. Just wait  
until this day is done because  
the best part has yet to come.

## **The Tall Trees**

They stand tall. They shouldn't fall.

The tall trees started as seeds.

They've helped me write and read.

They stand tall, and most of all,

they help all life: big or small.

These tall trees make me drop

to my knees and ask: "Please,

please don't ever leave" -

I search high and low to know

which direction you will go.

Like a long arm, your branch

points to a dark path.

"That way?" I say as I laugh.

You shake your leaves and make

me believe that I will succeed.

I visited the tall trees and left

feeling euphoric. I was feeling

myself, again. A breeze pushed

me toward a new world.

I thanked the tall trees

for being the strength I need.

## **The Other Way**

I went the other way. Away from the light of day. I went to see what it was like to climb the tallest peak. I waved and wished luck to those going the other way. They were happy to go. So was I. Away, I went, on a path that was new and scary. Light ran the other way. I pushed on, past the darkest path.

When I arrived at the hill, I sprinted up to the top. I didn't stop; I stomped my foot, yelling: "Look, I found the peak!" I was high enough to see what we've been looking for.

I found our lost village. I don't know why I went the other way. I just knew there was more to be seen. I went the other way to find a forgotten place - once erased.

## **The Escape Artist**

I slide through a window.  
Dropping two stories to  
the ground. I run around  
trying to find a place  
to escape. I am gone;  
I am free from the past  
and the shadow it casts.  
I run down the street  
with the toughest feet.  
Barefoot and confused:  
the moon is my muse.  
I was free - a simple sign  
To escape again. I escape  
to find the perfect rhyme -  
words that define my life.



## **Tough Skin**

Calloused and rough, tough  
skin cuts when touched.

Tough skin worn by men.

Holding axes, shovels, and  
tools make you tough.

Sometimes, it is enough.

Other times, the man hides  
behind his tough skin.

It is not manly to be soft.

Have you heard this before?

Women can't be tough.

It is not womanly to chop  
down a tree. Women must  
plant seeds. Who says I can't

be soft? I am tired of being  
tough. I think men should be

sensitive, too. All men's tears  
should water the seeds, while

women tear weeds. We must  
break free from norms and

set forms that used to be.

We can be tough, rough, soft,  
or hard. We can live together

with our skin and talk about  
the places we have been.

## **The Blind Butterfly**

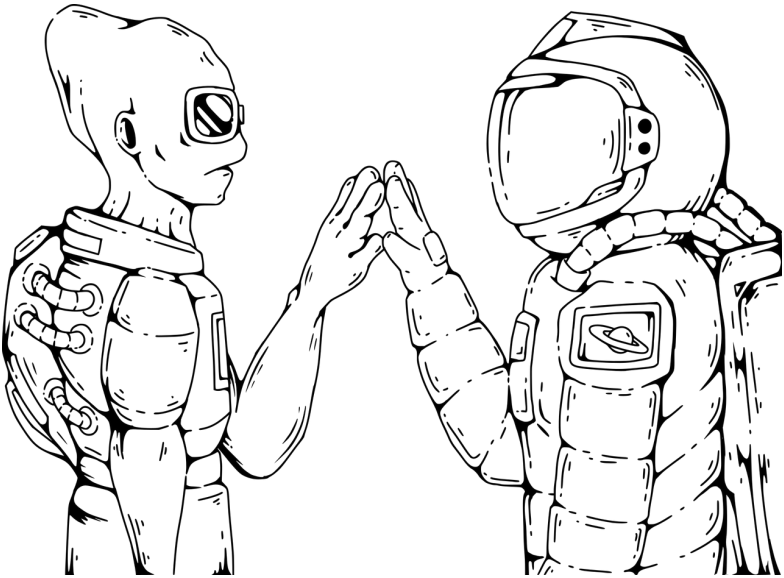
This butterfly is blind, but he flew just fine.  
Around and around, this butterfly went.  
Without his vision, the butterfly listened.  
The other butterflies didn't know their  
friend was blind - nonetheless - they all knew  
he was blessed. His blindness helped him  
hear sounds and noises close and far.  
He could almost see sounds that were lost  
and tossed out. The blind butterfly loved  
his life and never felt the need to feel  
bad for himself. He didn't know what  
he didn't know, and luckily for him,  
he didn't know where he's been.  
He just flew, breathed, and weaved  
through the air that was shared  
by butterflies like himself. He liked  
himself, as we all should. The blind  
butterfly didn't need to see other  
butterflies to know he wasn't alone.

## Down to Earth

Bring me down to Earth;  
I lost my sense of gravity.  
I am losing touch rapidly.  
Floating and flying, I look  
down and hope to land  
safely on the ground.  
My head is in the clouds,  
away from distant crowds.  
I look around to see birds  
flocking, gliding, and hiding  
from an Earth that's dying.  
I have seen enough; I'm  
ready to hit the ground.  
Bring me down to Earth;  
I want to help restore  
order and peace. I wish  
to land and hold Mother  
Nature's hand. I know  
things will get better  
down on Earth because  
it cannot get worse when  
we are down to Earth.

## **Alien-nation**

We live in a space station.  
Welcome to Alien-nation.  
It's just us for miles and miles.  
We have cabinets with files  
on each Earthling: something  
that helps the Alien-nation.  
We're here and we're there -  
learning new information.  
We wait until the night  
and prepare beams of light.  
Before you know, we float  
into the sky and fly away  
to be seen another day.  
The Alien-nation takes trips  
on spaceships. We, the Alien-  
nation, live in alienation.  
We prefer it this way. We  
must give others their space.  
Who knows? Someday, Aliens  
might face the human race.



## **Damaged Goods**

Broken, worn-down, damaged:  
We're damaged goods. We became  
good after we were damaged.  
It's tragic - fantastic. All the same.  
We had to fight to become good.  
We created light the best we could.  
The damage was bad. Fires spread  
and burned our spirits and homes.  
Flames engulfed all life in sight.  
Fires spread and we fled. Damage  
was done. It wasn't good. We ran  
to a new place to call home base.  
We rebuilt our home in the woods  
and became some damaged goods.

## **Her Island**

She's happy on her island.

She has made it her own.

She has more than shown.

Her love supplies the sky

with sunlight. Her eyes

see a life she wants: life

by the sea. Who can

blame her? She is free

on her island. The plants

are healthy. The animals

are healthy, too. She made

the island that way. Life

thrives on her island

and I wanted to visit.

I swam across the water.

I arrived. I looked around

to find her. Not after long,

I ran into a dog that led me

to her - to you. I found you.

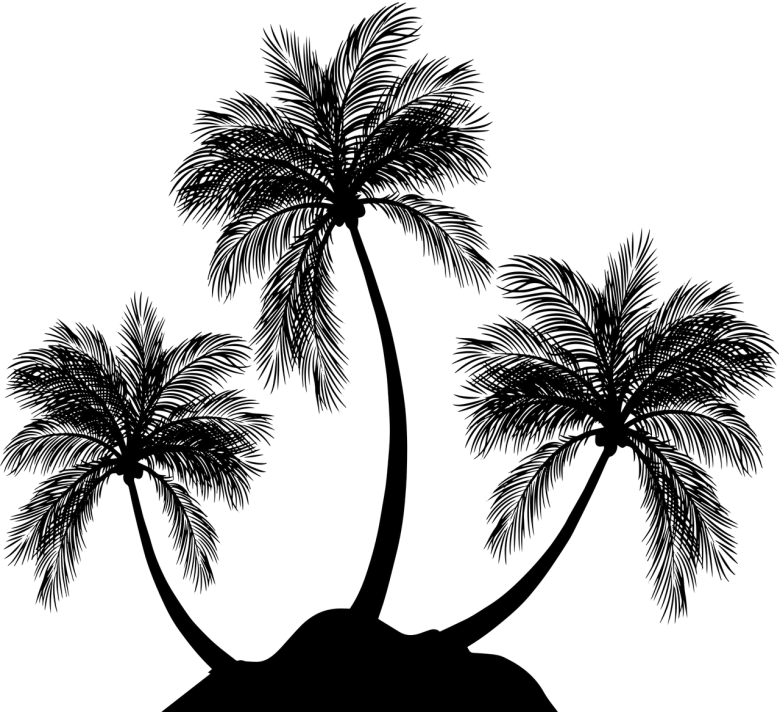
I thank you for letting me

on your island. I will stay

for as long as you want me.

We can sit on the beach,

with the sea within reach.





## **20/20 Vision**

I see clearly. My 20/20  
is on point. No, really,  
through the darkness,  
I can see beams of light.  
We've been put through  
a test. It is tough as we  
don't have any answers.  
Still, my vision is sharp.

I am aware. I do care,  
just not enough to share.

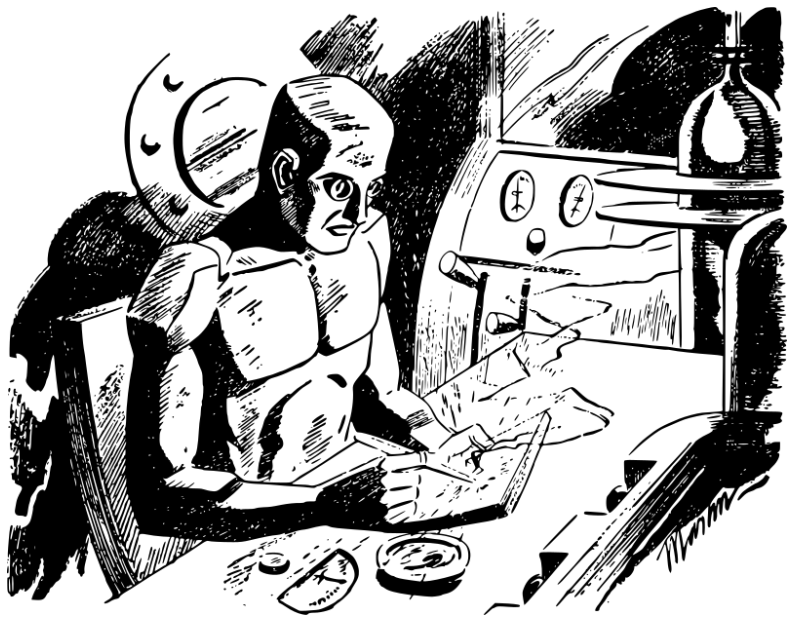
Clearly, I see a mess  
that 2020 has left. I see  
us cleaning this up  
and having fun in 2021.

## **Ugly Sweater**

Reap what you sow. Live life  
and be the light. Tonight,  
sow a new sweater. The one  
you are wearing now  
is ugly and doesn't fit you.  
Let's sow a new sweater.  
This new one will represent  
a new start to a happy life.  
Each thread and fiber  
in your new sweater  
will make you feel better.  
Reap what you sow; maybe,  
it'll be the beauty that shows.

## Swamped

Engulfed in life,  
work;  
there is hardly time  
to play. Most of us  
don't see the signs.  
Flooded with emotions -  
swamped  
with stress. The day  
leaves us  
drenched, and we must  
dry off  
before the next morning.  
Soaked and sad,  
we can't help to feel  
bad. We do our best  
to avoid  
drowning in life's sea.  
I don't choose to carry  
this weight. It must  
be fate.  
Swamped.  
Drenched. Flooded.  
I choose to not run  
from the water that  
always comes.



## **Be Kind: Rewind**

VHS tapes. Timestamps.  
Old footage. New smiles.  
Old cars. More miles.  
New styles. Old fashion.  
New years. Old days.  
Old views. New plays.  
The VHS player  
is a time machine,  
and the tapes help  
me escape. Years ago,  
I wanted to grow  
- get old. I was young.  
Now, I got what  
I wanted. I am older.  
I put in an old tape.  
I rewind it. I remind  
myself of who I was  
as I press play and  
get lost in an old day.

## **Darker Days**

All days grow dark.  
Some filled with pain.  
I never look forward  
to the darker days.  
I can't avoid feeling  
down and dull  
now and again.  
Light blocked.  
System shocked.  
I hold onto the hope  
I have left. Darker  
days don't stay away.  
I close my eyes  
and see better times.

**Life is \_\_\_\_\_**

Life is  
what you want  
it to be.

Life is  
pain. Somedays,  
life is  
great. Life is  
life. I can't  
tell you what  
life means.

I just hope  
to climb  
life's rope.

Life is  
hard. Life is  
full of surprises  
with many  
sunrises. Life is  
us. We are  
life. We are  
spirits  
carrying light.

