

Against the Wind



Poems by Jesse McDaniel

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A Piece of Me

Piece by piece,
I have put myself
together: a mosaic
of sorts. Fragments
of the past grow
into things I know.
In all of my years,
tears dropped,
and some memories
lost. Tossed out.
The day I break
will be the day
I meet my fate.
At any rate, I piece
it all together.
Forever, I will be
at peace. Each
day, I give you
a piece of me,
so one day, I can
set myself free.

How to: Write a Poem

Sit down. Close
Your eyes. Feel
Emotions wash
Over your soul.
Sit for a while.
Run a mile
In your mind.
Return to
Your body. Pick
Up your pen.
Then, lay down
Your journal.
Look internally,
Eternally. Let
Words flow
On the page.
Break free
From the cage
Causing you
Rage. Release
The pain inside
And find
That silver line
In each rhyme.
Rid yourself
Of the stress -

Put to rest
The weight
You carry
In your chest.
Write with no
End in sight.
Wrong or right,
Live a life
Worth writing
About before
Your pen's ink
Runs out.

The Drop Off

The
drop off is steep. You can
slip and
fall.

Once you are done
falling,
rise and pick up
right where
you left off.

Watch for the
drop off.

Listen for the signs.
Expect it.

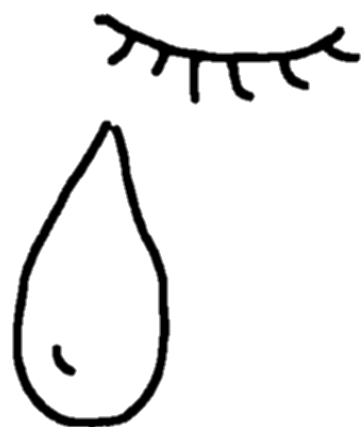
And, don't be tense.

Soon, the
drop off will be past tense.

When the
drop off comes. Don't run.
Your journey has just
begun.

Boys Don't Cry

Don't believe me when I say
that boys don't cry. They do.
Those who don't cry need to.
The weight of tears will hold
you down. Release the tears
that have remained hidden
for all of these years. Boys
cry; so do men. Well, at least
they should. Life is heavy
within this setting. It is
unsettling when boys don't
cry. Let it go; cry alone. Cry
now, later, or whenever -
whatever weather. Cry
because it is out of love.
Cry because you're hurt.
Cry because you're happy.
Let the tears drop, so that
the pain can stop. Just cry
because you have this life.



Beneath the Sea

Sailors, fish, and ships
dance and sing beneath
the sea. All that sunk
now resides beside
a rushing tide. Far
beneath the sea.

Sailors, fish, and ships
have ended their trips.
Many have been put
to rest after completing
their quest. Life roams
free beneath the sea.
We cannot see beyond
the reef. Sailors, fish,
and ships are at ease
beneath the sea.

Cannonball

I'm here to make a splash.
I want to create a wave.
Look how calm the water
is. It's perfectly still, silent.
It's been like that for years.
Complacency is what comes
to mind. I'm tired of waiting.
I'm looking to jump from
one life to another. I'm here
to make a splash and create
a wave - for Neptune's sake.

The Top

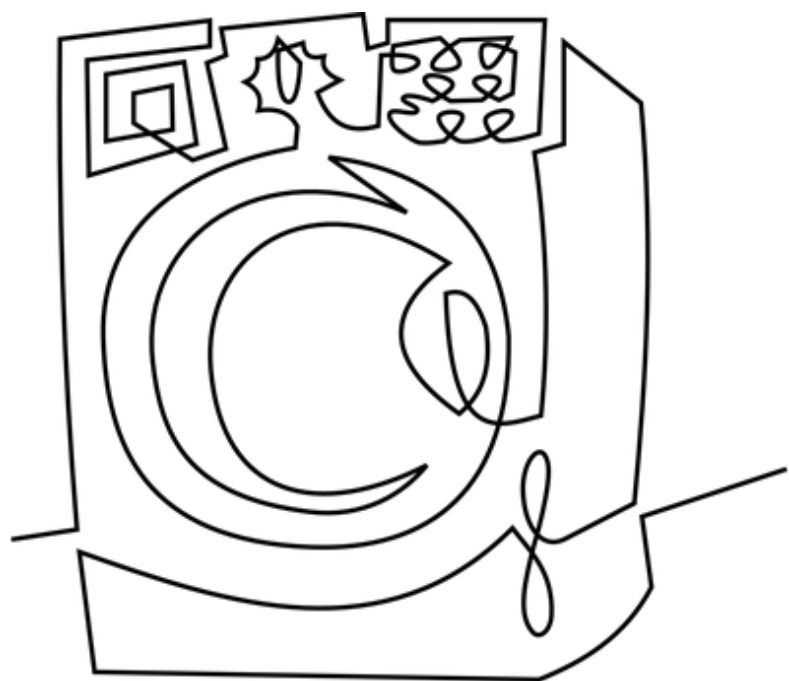
Up and away
To the top. You
And I don't stop
Until we get
To the top.
There is no need
To pack anything.
We aren't coming
Back. We explore
This steep hill
And its wrath.
We push on
Despite the pain.
So much to gain
In our journey.
With each step,
We move past
Regret. We climb
Out deep holes
That were carved
Inside our souls.
We rise. Heading
To the very top:
A better setting.

Blind Spots

90 on the freeway.
Fast lane cruising.
Chasing a sun some
run away from.
Burning gas and day
light. No time to waste.
Just money to make.
Tunnel vision - no time
to look back. Staying
in the fast lane. Not
in vain - just avoiding
pain. Reach top speed
and succeed. Pushing
the pace, it's a race.
90 on the freeway.
It is my escape. Away
from slowing down,
I push toward new life:
another opening door.
In your blind spot,
I show myself before
I am somewhere else.
Don't mind me. I am
gone: a fading song.

Washing Away

Life, before my eyes,
has been washing away.
The vast ocean takes
what I took for granted.
The vast ocean makes
me stay in my place.
On the edge of the beach,
I feel water beneath me.
I look ahead and I see
life, before my eyes,
washing away. Nothing is
here to stay. Life comes.
It goes before the water
hits my toes - all the same.
Many have washed away
after dancing in the rain.
After all, I can't complain;
We all endure some pain
inside the same hurricane.



Before I Die

I want to fly
across the world.
I want to see
leaves of green
fall across the sky.
Before I die,
I want to breathe
carefree air.
I want to be
the ocean breeze
that is warmer
than it seems.
I want to freeze
time. I want
to seize - believe.
I want to rise -
reach new highs.
I just want to live
before I die.

Don't Grow Up

Be a kid for as long
as you can. Don't grow up.
Be a kid; dream big dreams.
Some say, "don't kid yourself"
Some are not kids themselves.
Tell me - you won't grow up.
Be a kid. Be a squid. Be a lid.
Be anything you want to be
before life really begins.
Be an actor - a ballplayer.
Be an astronaut -a farmer.
Be a president - a politician.
Be what you want to be.
Be free, and don't grow up
because having youth
beats being a grown-up.
Be anything you want to be:
a person your kid self
would be excited to meet.

The Bucket

Today is just a drop in the bucket.
How full must the bucket get for me
to tip it over or to karate kick it?
There's no telling the amount of rain
that will come. The drops will fill
buckets - faster than eyes blink -
but slower than brains think -
definitely faster than ships sink.
Today is just a drop in the bucket:
a drop sending ripples through
untouched waters I once knew.
Buckets hold life; we hold buckets.
That is something I cannot forget.

Frozen Roses

It can be a cold world.
I don't have to tell you
that. We know this.
Events, people, places
can stop us in our tracks.
It can get chilly. Life can
freeze almost all things:
just not time. Not this
time. We must carry
the warmth needed
to keep us heated.
We must survive this
snowstorm that keeps
most frozen. Pedals
from your frozen roses
remind me to find truth -
to remain warm: alive.
Your frozen roses remind
me to search and find
love I have left behind.

Darkness Ensues

My darkest day has not come.

When the candles burn out,
when the stars fade to black,
when my spirit starts to slack,
when the grim reaper attacks,
when nightmares become real,
when my fate becomes sealed,
when my skin forgets to feel,
my darkest day will come.

Until then, I will spend my life
spreading light before darkness
ensues; I have no time to lose.

Find Something

Find something to do -
to keep you busy -
to keep you sane.
Find anything to do -
just don't do nothing.
Nothing can keep you
from doing something.
Anything is better than
nothing. Don't stay
still - fill your time
finding something
to do: *be quick, but
don't hurry*. Don't
worry. You will find
your way: yourself.
You will find some -
thing that keeps you
going - living. You
will find something
that will become
nothing. You must
create resistance,
listen, and lessen
the distance between
Hell and Heaven.

Amusement

I am a muse: a cathartic character
in this game of life. A muse meant to be
amused - confused - used. Amusement
to be in this sea of foreign scenery.
I am a missionary and a visionary.
Rarely, do I barely feel too care-free.
I am a fuse: a non-fiction addition
to the attrition of living and giving.
I must be a muse with nothing to lose -
everything to gain. It's all the same
when we live with the same pain
under the same rain. I am amuse-
ment to be; a soul dancing free
beneath a sky doubling in size.

A Poet's Dream

A Poet's Dream is to be heard
and not seen. A Poet's Dream
is to create, to wait, and to
discover one's own fate.

A Poet's Dream manifests itself
in words, sounds, and mounds
of half-written ideas found
under the surface: underground.

A Poet dreams a dream brighter
than the sunlight and better than
a good night under the stars
inviting sight. A Poet's Dream

is to change the world -
to rearrange things to release
one's hidden pain. Just like
ghosts, Poets do not show them-
selves, but they do know them-
selves. A Poet's Dream

is to live a life that can manifest
itself before and during the night.

Remember When

*Remember when things were different?
The sky was a different color. It was
a different day with different weather.
Remember when we would laugh on
the back of the bus? Remember when
we wished for this day to appear
out of thin air? All we wanted to do
was grow up. Do you remember
when we were young and naïve?
We never thought our youth would
leave. Beneath a tree, we wished
for a better world: brighter skies.
Remember when life was simple?
Me neither, but I try to imagine
a time back then that must've
been some of our better days.
Anyways, remember when
life was not a maze or a haze
that would stay? Remember
when all was well? Do you
remember when we thought
life was easy? We can't forget
where all the time went.
We must remember when
before the next story begins.*

