

**SELECTED NEW POEMS
PLUS HAIKU**

~

Keith R. Parris

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Black Knight Classic
San Antonio, Texas

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LOVE and LAUGHTER

I love how laughter's wrinkled nose,
And ocean sands we've walked in sandals or with barefoot toes,
Reflect that in our hearts a true affection glows.

I love how winter's dark sky snows,
How springtime fields alive with blooms and you, with hairpin bows,
Reflect that in our hearts a true affection glows.

I love how midnight's starlight shows,
And crystal streams, forever singing with onrushing flows,
Reflect that in our hearts a true affection glows.

So, on it goes, this life we chose.
Each lover knows the highs and lows.
But, still it grows, this love that rose
And fell upon two captive souls oft held within impassioned throws.
O laughter, wrinkle up your nose!

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TIME ENOUGH

Though I'll not again be blessed to gaze upon her face,
Fond memories have saved for me a picture of this place
Where, less in sorrow than in laughter, last I saw her beauty flower,
And ever after when in rest I chance to sleep and dream,
I pray this juncture of the mind's sublime confusion seem
To borrow time enough for her to live but one more hour.

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PRECIOUS LILY

In dreams, I walk in the cool and the calm of the evening air.
I stroll along the peaceful, winding path that leads nowhere
And visit while the tranquil willows seem
To listen as the finch is singing from its hidden tree.
In dreams, I watch the mountain meadow's stream
Meander gently toward the twilight glimmer of the moonlit lake
And linger as I gaze upon a precious lily's purity.
This night, I pray to sleep and dream among the falling leaves,
As they tilt and twirl in the swirling breeze,
Till darkness lifts and dawn begins to break.
It's then I'll see the morning star,
Low on the eastern crest,
Give way to the warmth of the sun's full glare,
And I'll leave the dreams where I paused to rest
And say, before I stray too far,
Farewell to the lily flowering there.

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CLOUDS

These islands hover, misty white,
Aspiring to be much esteemed but only ghosts of light,
Standing vacant and abandoned by all that greets the eye,
Yet, sparkling in the splendor of the unspoiled, summer sky.

But, on occasion, tempest's winds have burst in rolling waves,
To plunder silvered spheres of reverie before the storm front raves,
And as with lovers bound in longing till life's promises are kept,
The clouds have torn their silky gowns in darkness-shrouded-cells
and wept.

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CANDY HEARTS

When I jumped from a rock as high as my knees,
I sailed through the air like a stone with a fling.
With pillows as clouds and bedposts as trees,
I dreamed I had flown like a bird on the wing.
“Oh, silly,” you said, “it was your mind that flew.”
And really, I guess, I think that I knew.

We tasted the cherries that hung from our tree,
As well as spring berries that clung to their vine.
Our secrets were written on hearts made of candy,
And I treasured your love as though it were mine.
“Oh, silly,” you said, “it was your mind that flew.”
And really, I guess, I think that I knew.

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CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

When I was home and but a boy,
I loved the Christmas time of year.
It seemed to be so full of joy,
With Santa and his eight reindeer.

The hearthstones glowed with welcome hue,
While Christmas trees were trimmed with lights
And ornaments, both old and new,
To warm our hearts through winter nights.

Small children danced from room to room,
As laughter filled the festive air,
Along with songs one might assume
The carolers had come to share.

It feels not quite so long ago,
We gathered near dad's favorite chair,
To hear him shout his "HO, HO, HO,"
And pass out presents, wrapped with care.

His calloused hands would grasp each box
And give each gift at least one shake
Before he claimed, "It must be socks,
Or, maybe, something elves can make!"

He'd look aside for mother's smile
To hint that he was doing fine,
And they were certain, all the while,
That none would see their subtle sign.

We'd each await our special gift
And hope that Santa knew our wish.
Anticipation made us shift
And squirm like tadpoles, chased by fish.

Then smiles would break on each child's face
To learn that Santa came once more,
Past all the twinkling stars in space,
And found *our* chimney's fireside door.

Soon, after bows were pulled apart
And Christmas paper torn away,
We learned how Christmas had its start,
And children weren't allowed to play.

Our parents read of Jesus' birth,
Of manger scenes and three wise men,
Of angels singing, "Peace on Earth,"
And how He came to bear our sin.

We cherish dear this humble gift
He gave without complaint or hate,
And as the season's spirits lift,
We have His birth to celebrate.

Yet, still, what we remember most,
When Christmas brings us homeward bound
And we have passed the last mile post,
Are family and friends all round.

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CHOICE

I traveled on trodden paths.
I trampled through fields of snow.
All seemed to lead
Where I had need to go.

I saw a hare and hungry fox
Scurry along their way,
But neither paused to say hello
Or greet the newborn day.

I passed both ox and farmer's cart.
I passed a merchant's rig.
The first was filled with sheaves of grain
And the squeals of a fattened pig.

The next came laden with sickles and scythes
And kegs of salt and crates of sharpened knives.
The pig should have known how fat he'd grown
And feared for his life before his worth had shown.

I watched the roll of iron-rimmed wheels
And stepped aside to yield,
As if I'd struck some sacred deals,
Before I leapt from path to field.

My footsteps fell like drifting flakes,
That found their way upon the ground
And lay, but for the briefest time
Without so much as care or sound,

Upon the tattered leaves and crumpled twigs
And blades of grass and grime,
That hardly noticed when I came, or when I passed,
And treated both the same as any other thoughtless crime.

Some days I whistled, soft and low.
Some days I sang a tune,
And those who learned my voice,
As soon forgot the words I'd croon.

Some days I walked a narrow lane.
Some days I chose to run,
And though some steps were washed in rain,
While others bathed in sun,

Both trodden paths and snowy fields
Were destined much the same.
And, yet, I found, though fortune seldom yields,
My choice had made a difference, if only how I came.

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RANGE WAR

Gaunt winter wind invites itself to trample in
And gnaw upon the knotted face of boot-scarred floors.
Folks rub their stiff and calloused skin
And curse the cold that slams their doors.

Blown snow piles deep and sleeps against land's unseen hills,
As farmers join in prayer around a neighbor's pyre.
Armed cowpokes ride, with hardened wills,
To find and cut new-strung barbed wire.

Fresh-broken fences witness hate's unquestioned claim,
On rowdy souls whose guns are spoiling for a fight.
Dawn breaks and anger seeks to blame.
Dusk falls and sorrow blinds men's sight.

In life, at war they stand. In death, at peace they lie.
Each sundown casts brief calm upon their boot-staked hill.
A restive horse, a nervous sigh,
A shiver turns away the chill.

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OUR PATHS WILL CROSS

Whether we trod on cobbled trails,
Or cross the sea on billowed sails,
Whether we toil without fanfare,
Or seize the stage with stardom's flair,
Whether we're true or have no friend,
Our paths will cross when near the end.

Whether we fail to capture fame,
Or win each time we play the game,
Whether we lead the bugled charge,
Or fall behind both small and large,
Whether we're poor or born to spend,
Our paths will cross when near the end.

Whether we pass or nicely mend,
Our paths will cross when near the end.

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HOLDING ON THROUGH 1969

A Tribute to the Sixties

Throughout those sixties years,
We had our season, played our tambourine.
While Mama dreamed aloud,
We sang about the California scene.
And Monday morning came,
But Monday morning couldn't guarantee,
That we could trust the day.
It gave no warning of what was to be.

Tuesday, we marched beneath our battle flags.
Wednesday, we sailed across the sea.
Thursday, we fell among the lily fields.
Friday, we died to make men free.

It's hard to tell of how,
How homeward bound was where we wished to be,
Where love lies waiting silently.
And Monday morning came,
But Monday morning couldn't guarantee
That the world would ever see
What a better place
A peaceful world could be.

Some dared to march upon the square,
Wore flowers in their hair.
While music played both day and night,
War had no end in sight.

We left our campus, left our stage.
We faced a new dawn's age.
Some found true love, learned life moves on,
Just like a rolling stone.
The season of the tambourine,

The California scene,
And every stranger's face in sight,
Were casualties of war each night.

Yet, hear those silent, whispered words,
Telling of what can be,
Still, speaking their words of wisdom,
Let it be, let it be.

How could I leave those sixties years?
I'd laughed and shed so many tears.
Time never warns of what's to be,
But, those sixties have stayed with me.

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Credits:

Tambourine Man – Bob Dylan (1965) / *California Dreaming* – Mamas and the Papas (1965) / *Monday Monday* – Mamas and the Papas (1966) / *Battle Hymn of the Republic* – Julia Ward Howe (1861) / *Homeward Bound* – Simon and Garfunkel (1967) / *Put a Little Love in Your Heart* – Jackie DeShannon (1969) / *Age of Aquarius* – The 5th Dimension (1969) / *Let It Be* – The Beatles (1970)
Let it Be was the final Beatles album and was released in May of 1970. It marked a fitting end to a turbulent decade of the sixties generation. This poem is dedicated to that generation.

YOUNG WARRIORS AND A LOVELY PLANE

Your skin is chiseled thin as mountain air.
Your song explodes as ocean waves cascading on the siren's coastal rocks.
Wings forged with cambered pinions soar beyond the precipice of
earthbound flocks.

Unbridled thrust propels you through flight's pristine sky
O'er crowded cities with their concrete walls and welded doors.
Uplifted eyes embrace you; hear their voices offer up immortal roars.

Ever higher, ever faster, reaching farther,
You were wrought by man but born of hell's own fire.
You are beauty, rising from the ash of its Egyptian pyre.

Young warriors wake to see you flash
Unchallenged, past the chill of death.
Your dance defies doubt's momentary lapse of breath.

How you thrill to conquer roll and turn!
You give no pardon, yield to no command.
I fear you'd challenge God to raise Creation's hand.

He must, in all His glory, hear you break the calm.
The thunder in the storm of flight is never absent long,
Its tumult seldom silent, lost without its song.

Still, wispy clouds across the firmament all cradle you,
And welcome you as any brother to their band,
Like apparitions welcome home the traveler from far desert sand.

How easily their misty gowns are pushed aside,
Before imploding in majestic wrath!
Their linings trace your silvered path.

How long I've envied you! Desire has filled my soul.

I've prayed to be uplifted on your wind-swept wings
And step, eternal, where the blessed angel sings.

Will you allow youth's brave and true to touch your pulsing heart,
To feel your turbines spinning, hear them whine,
And vault, unburdened, past infinity's unbroken line?

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THE SPY

A foreign lad sat silently apart,
beyond the crush of revelers
cast gray, like sidewalk silhouettes of steam,
gathering near a streetlamp's beam.

Small beads of perspiration claimed his brow,
as breath's beclouding curls of smoke
crept feebly past time's careworn stare;
a sense of longing rested there.

His eyes peered through the distant night,
framed fast by doubt beneath the veil of sight.
His face bore worry's honored mask,
a false façade of shadow-fractured ice.
Unknown to them, he knew too well
a thousand rolls of death's own loaded dice.

His fingers gently held a glass of wine,
his palate, a few bites of fresh-made bread.
His thoughts turned inward, touched his heart;
spied on his lover, unaware.
Unspoken words retreated from his tongue
as memories played, then escaped elsewhere.

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LETTER TO MOM

What joy it must have been to bear a child like me,
To have not one but two and finally three,
To make our meals and mend our clothes,
And Heaven only knows,
How many times a pair of jeans was badly soiled,
Or how on earth the three of us were spoiled!

Each day you pried us from our sleep,
In spite of snow piled three feet deep,
And sent us off like children everywhere,
To start our day with silent prayer.

You knew our friends by face and name;
To you each one was much the same,
And in the summertime you took us to the swimming pool,
Where cannonballs were not so cool.

You taught us all the things a child had need to know,
Like how to ride a bus
And how to buy a ticket to the picture show,
Or even how to let our Grandma make a fuss all over us.

What joy to bear our learning how to drive,
To wait for us and wonder if we would arrive
Back home before the witching hour,
Or if the phone would somehow come alive!

You taught us how to stand and speak,
And how to buy a girlfriend's flower.
You taught us how to dance when we would rather sneak
To where we weren't supposed to be.

There was so much of love I couldn't see;
There were so many days escaped from me,
But all eyes tire and others close to pray,

When loved ones first are called away.

And though we know that Heaven has a place
For one so fair, so filled with grace,
We bow our heads to mourn our loss
Until we find that greatest piece of land
And meet with bat and ball in hand
To holler out, "Mom, you want to play a game of toss?"

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USEFULNESS

The spot where our patio furniture grew old
is empty now, looking like a familiar face
that's seen without its customary eye glasses.
I watched our stuff being carted off
to be sandblasted and painted with powder
at temperatures I can't begin to imagine.
After cooling, the chaise and other chairs
will be restrung with darker vinyl strapping
than was used before, if I understand the plan correctly.
For the most part, this furniture spent its days attracting insects,
which, as nature would have it, attracted spiders,
and which, in their own way, attracted a great many birds.
I almost always took a few moments of each day
to watch their unscripted operas unfold,
never quite realizing that some use, if one could call it that,
was better than its rusting away with no use at all.
Nevertheless, that's why the patio is temporarily
without furniture and why my routine
is temporarily out of its usual routine.
The furniture will be returned within a few weeks,
assuming all goes well, but the insects and the spiders and birds
will likely take longer to reestablish their relationships.
I suspect this will be the case, at any rate, and I
also suspect that the next time the patio says good-bye to its furniture
will be the day someone is carting me off
because some part of me, which I can't do without,
has rusted beyond repair and ceased its customary routine.
I could purchase a cover for the furniture and try
to protect it from nature's elements. Doing so
might preserve it longer than doing nothing,
but I can't say that any such measure
would do much for its usefulness.

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CHILDREN OF THE TIGRIS AND EUPHRATES

Only their rage remains.
Its roots are spread by word and deed.
From their fathers' fear have come both bitterness and spite.
Distrust, though born in times of distant past, belies a common soul.
Here, many are prisoners,
Held like the dead, entombed by long dark nights
Piled high: as if a wall, a mound of earth and quarried stone.
These people, torn by rage, exist half-seen.
Some raise immortal armies for their cause,
While others build tall battlements that brim with ax and spear.
Yet, their fortress turns against their hand,
And masses suffer in its ill decay.
A society in ruin cedes youth's paradise,
And floods of tears that carve into the sands of time
Rush from its blinded eyes.
The ancient world is shattered by such force.
Its creatures vanish, far from reach and mind.
An avalanche of thieves, immoderate bound men, rolls down
Demanding order fall upon its knees.
The veil of brotherhood is pulled forever from illusion's face.
Nothing's born; nothing's blest.
Nothing thrives within this boiling caldron's brew.
A garden has become Eden's wasteland.
The limits of its borders are unknown to bird or fish or plant or beast.
The brave are cast aside, their grace and goodness lost.
Emptiness is standing fast in every shop and home.
The dispossessed children of the Tigris and Euphrates retreat,
But through their ceaseless wandering around oppression's labyrinth,
The voiceless wait impatiently
To sew their fallow land with sleepless dreams,
Imagined in the silence of their unremitting night.

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WHAT DREAM

When the hollow dogs of the dark city
clash with the beasts of the raging jungle
for the last rib in the body of nations,
and when vast treasures of seminal works,
along with the whole of life's history,
are piled high and their ashes scattered among
the departing footsteps of civilization,
what dream will emerge to replace untold madness?

The answer dares not condemn life's spirit,
for neither death nor torment shall intrude
on that innocent dawn,
and the twisted turmoil of mankind's vanity
shall fade and lie undisturbed,
beneath the silent fabric of time.

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ALL RISE FOR RAYMOND LEE

(With sincere apologies to William Wordsworth's *To the Daisy*)

A king *in crown* and golden *vest*,
Great wealth has come to thee.
The richest man among us is the *best*.
Thy name is Raymond Lee.

So *unassuming, commonplace*,
No poor man has a coarser *face*.
Though not *so fair as many are*,
I see the glitter from afar.

Like a star, with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air thou seems to rest
Or move with practiced flight and *grace*
To weave with Heaven's threads thy silent trace.

Of things that in the wide world be,
Where most have little wealth to see
And little more to own beyond a name,
Thou sees *the humor in life's game*.

But when to all that life *cleaves fast*,
There comes the day when all thy *reveries are past*,
I pray thou dost not own the sun and air,
For who among us would be worthy to receive a share?

A king *in crown* and golden *vest*,
Great wealth has come to thee,
The richest man among us is the *best*.
Thy name is Raymond Lee.

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PERHAPS, THE TREES WON'T MIND

You say, "The trees must know by now,"
but I think not, not yet.
No tree has seen the rust on silent, orphaned blades,
unused and hung like salted pork
on winter rafters no one climbs or swings.
No tree could understand that readers changed so much
of what you do and how you live.
The trees we cut and drag and pile in heaps,
to wither by the road until their timber's hauled and milled,
don't have your eyes, your ears or thoughts.
They stand. Their roots defy the wind and drink the rain.
Their leaves provide them nourishment,
consume the warming sun and breathe the smog-filled air,
but few will talk to trees
and fewer still will listen to their cries.
We're all too wrapped in selfish worlds
to think of notifying trees
when loggers won't be coming back
because the reader doesn't feed on paper sheets,
not like our printed books and magazines.
The trees will likely never comprehend how readers work.
I doubt they'll ever know these tablets saved their lives.
Some day I'll take the time to walk the pathless, forest glen
and pause among the tall, unnumbered trees.
I'll see if you still drive the spikes beneath their bark
in case the loggers bring their blades to life again.
I think, perhaps, the trees won't mind my touch,
or bend away from words I dare to speak.

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ORDER

What's death when life has crawled away
On calloused hands and knees,
Or strayed down darker paths
Before the final cross is borne?

I took so little care of life,
As youth slipped from my grasp,
Till its successor knocked
And cared not what I wished or prayed.

I'd hoped the white-hot ash of faith
Would fall upon my soul
And burn away the doubt
That waits to toll my passage home,

But doubt seems faith's eternal foe,
A curse on weaker men
Whose fear is seldom tamed
And strengthens as the flame burns low.

It's come to me, as footsteps fall
On paths once unforeseen,
That life will yield its place,
As ordered in the scheme of time.

So, I have bound both faith and doubt
To follow close, along
Whatever path I choose,
And left, I trust, the grip of fear
To those who toil as slaves
Behind translucent doors,
Until the flame of life grows cold
And order claims both me and time.

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THE LARGE WHITE HOUSE

(A Poem for Our President on Inauguration Day)

When you embarked for shores beyond yesterday's horizon,
were you certain your passage would lead to the large white house?
Perhaps, but you were plainly young. You lacked experience,
and you sailed on a troubled tide that coursed a rocky shoal.
Your ship carried you to sea, beneath heaven's chiseled sky,
on an even keel and fast beams born from towering oak.
In your wisdom, you must have known
that shrouds aboard this ship of state
not only reach atop the tallest mast
but cover the corpses of our fallen
sons and daughters. This vessel smells of sweat
and captured cargoes that once took passage
against all natural reason and will.
The newest and oldest of our people,
with their calloused hands and pensive brows,
have raised and sustained the pillars of our house.
The large white house has cried proud tears of joy,
too often overcome by tears of sacrifice.
Its walls have belched with the ache of laughter,
and been pounded by the anger of betrayal.
This house has been besieged, pillaged and burned,
but its foundations have never been forsaken.
Solemn footsteps have worn the rugs upon its floors
while anguish tossed about through sleepless fits
in the embrace of untold loneliness.
Go! Grab a nap before the klaxons growl
at the guests huddled around your door.
In that stolen hour of solitude,
what will be revealed of hidden treasures,
and what will be concealed of human faults?
What will you retain from when you wore common robes?
Can you, you who sought and agreed to this,
can you endure distrust and yet hold to trust yourself,

or will you seek revelations in the table wine?
Our people, people around the world, seek inspiration.
We are your advocates. We are united by kinship.
We love and respect this bountiful land where hope grows tall.
We sing this nation's songs and hymns, our hands upon our hearts.
Many of the oppressed have been liberated,
marched in parades and sung our National Anthem,
but many are far removed from your crowded halls
and the constant voices that vie to claim your ear.
Our nation's intelligence doesn't come from nameless, foreign cells,
nor is the sanctity of our freedom and cherished dreams
protected by gallant knights in the court of Camelot.
Our dreams are swept by raging streams that scale their banks.
Howling winds tear at the roots of our lives,
and wildfires sweep down upon the fabric
of everything not drowned or dragged away.
Even so, our thoughts are not of outrage.
Humble men remember the beauty of their lover's youth.
Children reach out their hands and volunteer a precious smile.
Caution gathers near to every call to arms
that promises a new and better world.
War's sharpened claws and fiery breath
bury hope in the cold ash heaps
of decaying cities that reek of long neglect
and hot blood spilled by reckless words
quickly spat out as doors slammed shut.
It's time to open new doors to a brighter path,
to step past hardened positions,
which serve only self or ancient and intemperate ends.
Leaders don't look to see if their master is following,
or pause to sniff the wind with constantly searching nostrils.
Step away from the slow grind of power.
Look down from the hill, past the tall iron fence,
onto prairies and into valleys of spring clover
where cattle labor to chew their cud
and the engines of industry clamor.
Come! Descend from the large white house

where you preside over battles
to stem the tide of panic and unspeakable devastation.
Tell yourself and the whole nation,
“Today is not the day to worry about fortune or failure.
Today, mindful of our diversity and attuned to our music’s harmony,
we join together and journey onward, ever onward.”

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THE DIFFERENCE IS MADE OF DREAMS

Dreams are the part of life
that can't be stilled and swept away,
any more than laughter can be hushed after its voice is heard.
In dreams, nothing is forbidden. Here,
there is no need to wear a mask or disguise of any kind.
Dreams add so much to life
that any thought of never realizing them is simply unacceptable.
Before someone or some force
from the outer regions of the universe
attempts to rearrange our dreams,
and those unspoiled moments of fantasy and desire vanish,
we are obliged to take our shot at hope, as if happiness demands it.
Though frequently terrified by the uncertainty of our dreams,
we gulp down fear and breathe in courage,
along with whatever good air we chance to find,
and make promises to ourselves and our friends and family.
Some who dare to dream richly are richly rewarded, while
many can but stand in admiration or guarded, watchful keeping.
As life's seasons unfold, we reconcile the fact and fiction of our lives
and find purpose in the smallest pleasures.
Life learns to cling to the small, as well as the large, gifts received
and it is this holding on that leaves a trace of our having been.
On the dawn of each tomorrow, life reawakens,
and in the early hours of each young day, life comes forth anew.
There is diversity to each of life's renewals,
and the difference is made of dreams.

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SHE WAS MY LIFE, MY POETRY

I hear her voice, carried upon the winds that blow,
And see her face, smiling among the drifts of snow.
I feel her touch, when darkness falls,
And tread with empty heart through empty halls.

She was my life, my poetry.
She was my soul, love's memory.
She was the best of all that came to me.
I'd trade the rest of all that life might be,
Just to hold her close.
She was my life. She was my soul.
She was the best I'll ever know.
I'd trade the rest of all that life might be,
Just to hold her close.

Of all the tears and all the pride,
Of all the wrongs I tried to hide,
She saw it all through eyes more true,
And through the years our union grew.

She was my life, my poetry.
She was my soul, love's memory.
She was the best of all that came to me.
I'd trade the rest of all that life might be,
Just to hold her close.
She was my life. She was my soul.
She was the best I'll ever know.
I'd trade the rest of all that life might be,
Just to hold her close.

I hear her voice, carried upon the winds that blow,
And see her face, smiling among the drifts of snow.
I feel her touch, when darkness falls,
And tread with empty heart through empty halls.

She was my life, my poetry.
She was my soul, love's memory.
She was the best of all that came to me.
I'd trade the rest of all that life might be,
Just to hold her close,
And if I could find a way, I'd say, "I promise you," again,
But here I'll stay until the day I hold her close once more in Heaven.

Lyrics by: Keith R. Parris
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STREET SWEEPER

His street sweeper crawls past my vacant stare,
giant brushes intruding upon time.
My eyes consume not one morsel of life,
while he wipes up yesterday's leftovers.

Leaves, from the storm that stole last night's silence
and felled countless cells, cables and networks,
are shredded and sucked into the beast's lungs,
woven shrouds surrounded by steely flesh.

Swish and swirl, swish and swirl, it creeps along
a line some laser reads while I write down
a few disconnected thoughts that promise
freedom but deliver liberty's death.

Its passage grinds into oblivion.
Without warrant or waver, this monster
moves beyond what my window looks out on
and what I would witness if I dared see.

Swing, click, sway, clack tells of the pendulum's
journey into the same confined future
as that beckoning this sweeper's steersman,
"Come; claim your bottle of forgetfulness!"

"I have my writing," I whisper aloud,
knowing he cannot hear my trifling tongue,
but I fear my despair terrorizes
more completely than the thieves he crawls past.

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AN UNFINISHED LETTER

What happened to the world I knew,
Where I'd wake, lying next to you?
I followed the boys, marching off to wage youth's war,
Left the woman I loved for another man's chore.
It seems unfair how lives are suddenly changed,
How all of life's plans are at once rearranged!

I see your face when I dream at night.
I hear your voice charm the birds from flight.
We walk in the rain, sing our favorite song.
You laugh out loud; then I laugh along.
You're as real in my dreams as I've known,
Except, when I dream, my love, I dream alone.

At dawn's first light, where moon and stars embrace
The sun's returning rays, which slowly chase
Them from their perch on heaven's lofty stage,
I place my pen on an imperfect page
That carries heartfelt love to the love I dearly miss;
Then I think to write, "Enclosed, please find a treasured kiss."

I see your face when I dream at night.
I hear your voice charm the birds from flight.
We walk in the rain, sing our favorite song.
You laugh out loud; then I laugh along.
You're as real in my dreams as I've known,
Except, when I dream, my love, I dream alone.

In the heat of the day, in the windblown sand,
I think of your smile, reach out with my hand.
It's these thoughts that remain so clearly portrayed,
They could be taken to Broadway and played
As often as Shakespeare or Eugene O'Neill,
And people would see that thoughts can be real.

I see your face when I dream at night.
I hear your voice charm the birds from flight.
We walk in the rain, sing our favorite song.
You laugh out loud; then I laugh along.
You're as real in my dreams as I've known,
Except, when I dream, my love, I dream alone.

As dusk surrounds all I have seen,
And frees the unheard sounds that hide between
The beginning and end of an uncertain day,
I search for words that somehow seem to stray
Just when there's a moment to tell
How I clung to your card until I fell... *to s l e e p.*

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DROUGHT

Spring flowers wither on their stem;
fruit dries upon its limb.
Marsh grass lies parched on tortured ground,
while leaves fall all around.

An ill wind coughs a fitful gust,
its breath but ageless dust.
Birds watch, aligned on tethered wire,
as butterflies expire.

Small streams withdraw from orphaned banks;
they're bridged by weathered planks.
Young children ask with vacant stares,
"Can't heaven hear our prayers?"

A smile is offered in return;
such ways the children learn,
That drought will flood our homes and stores,
till rain, in pity, pours.

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REBELLION

Yesterday, they were possessed by hope.
They believed that freedom would triumph over unbearable madness.
Now, in the dark solitude of silent stares,
The only thing they cling to is time,
And time brings its own, uncertain, madness.

THE SCOUNDREL

By night, I woo queens.
In the dawn's frail light, I weep,
"Darkness, our lives fade!"

LIFE WELL-LIVED

Souls who share good wine,
And warm bread from gladsome hearths,
Hear not winter's knock.

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SUMMER HEAT

Within my touch, she sleeps.
Soft breasts and lips with moisture weep,
Beyond reach.

SPRING

Clouds reign in the sky
When thunder awakens earth
To hush winter's cry.

WOUNDED EARTH

Tortured skies reveal
Once fertile soil betrayed by
Grave wounds from cold steel.

NEGLECTED INNOCENCE

Young flowers ill-kept
Will find their first love in beds
Where virgins once slept.

Cont.

DEADLINES

Caught by time's constraint,
Tempers from their hot beds rise,
As daylight falls faint.

BEDTIME

Each night as time arrives for bed,
The children, by their mother's hand, are led,
But when their father bids them mind,
Impatient footsteps often trail behind.

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