

Los Angeles Poverty Department performs

“FRIED POETRY”

DIRECTED BY RON ALLEN

POETRY and MUSIC

about

SPIRITUALITY and RECOVERY

FRIED POETRY is a skilful of individual and group spoken word pieces and music.

FRIED POETRY director Ron Allen says:

“An addiction is anything that keeps you from expanding and experiencing your deeper self.”

Not limited to drug and alcohol addiction, FRIED POETRY, explores individual and societal addictions wherever we might find them, including those well-known killer addictions to fossil fuels, shopping, and military might.

LAPD’s FRIED POETRY project is made possible with the support of SRO Housing Inc., the National Endowment for the Arts, the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs and the Los Angeles County Arts Commission.

<http://lapovertydept.org>

LAPD 's mission is to create performance work that connects lived experience to the social forces that shape the lives and communities of people living in poverty. LAPD has for years worked with drug recovery programs in Los Angeles and other cities in the US (including Miami, Detroit and Cleveland). In 2001 LAPD initiated its “Agents & Assets” project, which specifically looks at drug policy and the effects of drug policy on individuals and communities in the US and throughout the world.

HISTORY NOTES

History Notes from the past.
Talking about misplaced knowledge.
Knowledge all of you should know.

Portugal went to Africa as enemies.
Then as friends.
Then as manipulators.
Then with the greed of her land
Touching the greed of our chiefton.

Our leaders.
Our fathers.
Our protectors.

From a greed within, they sold us into a life of bondage.
The bondage of chains ships and whips.
The bondage of the mind.
Taking us to the Islands and breaking our spirits.
Making us meek, humble and afraid.
Breaking up thought of ancient African Kingdoms.
They broke our spirits and we toil the soil.
We toil under the field of madness,
the harvest of sadness.

States United for inhumanity.
History notes from the past.
Talking about misplaced knowledge.
Knowledge all of you should know.
History notes about the Emancipation Proclamation.
1863.
The Buffalo soldier fought so you could be free.
April 8, 1865 Lee surrender to Grant.
Five days later they assassinated Lincoln.
Reconstruction came and went.
The south made a deal with the north and we had codes.
We had Black Codes and a new type of bondage.

History notes from the past.
Talking about misplaced knowledge.
Knowledge all of you should know.
Listen to the sound of the drumbeats.
[Drum solo]
The drums are sounding.
They're sounding through the jungle.

Sounding for you.
Sounding for me.
Sounding for unity.
Sounding for you to put the pieces together.

Listen to the voices of W.E.B. Du Bois, George Jackson
and David Walker.
The voices of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King.
The voices of peace.
The voices of freedom are sounding.

You better listen.

Melvin Ishmael Johnson

Obituary

Hop Man died Sunday,
residential hotel room
Sawtelle and Santa Monica.
60 years old.

At end heart attack
caused by overdose
cocaine.
Found by manager,
dead for possibly a week.
Drip through floor.

Ex wife, by phone:
had accomplished many things:
wrote a great poem or two ;
published, reviewed read,
written about,
documented even on TV.

death heart attack cocaine.
Man accomplished many things,
waged an up and down fight
against addiction
many years.

waged conventional war
against guerrilla adversary.

Ex wife said by phone:
he was funny,
could light up a room when sober.

Eventually
every day was a war day
scary and joyless.

When sober, he'd roar,
"I'm not going to let
that demon beat me.

Wrong. The man confused peace with victory.
Sunday peace came to Hop Man.

John Malpede

Obituary

HERE LIES YAI YAMA DUG IN DRUG ADDICTION. SHE STUDIED
BEING BUT IT WOULD HIDE WHAT SHE NEEDED. SHE WAS
CHANGE, BUT CHEMICAL SHIVERS WOULDN'T LET HER WAKE.

SHE WAS SUSTAINED BY FRIENDS WHO MISS HER.

AIDS, HIV AND MUMPS WERE WHAT ADDICTION WAS IN HER LIFE, IT DIDN'T
DISCRIMINATE FOR RISK IN BEING A BROKER HAD WHAT IT HAD TO BRING. SHE
LOOKED AND LOOKED BUT LAKING AND TICKS FROM WITHDRAWL MADE HER. SHE
WAS SHAMING AND CHARMING BUT HER WALKING MADE HER SAKE.

SHE DID FORSAKE AND WE WILL NEVER AGAIN HEAR ABOUT THE GOOD AND THE PLACE
WHERE SHE SITS IN STINT. SHE DIED JANUARY 23, 2006

IN THE VOID OF THE DARK THAT IS THE WINNING OF THE HIT.

"I'M IN..."

SHE WAS ALL RIGHT, IT WAS LIFE THAT SHE'D FORGET. POSTED UP TO GRIP....IT
RAINED OUTSIDE...

MY NAME IS DAE WEI MAE

Patricia Smith

Her Story Twice Told

The children keep asking and saying, tugging
"Mommy, Mommy? What? Are you high?"
I'm seized anew by your amazing powers
To make me wanna throw up and cry
The love you trashed is no excuse
The pain embraced not an alibi
The last time I took you at your word
On how you tried so vainly so die

You loved ones keep saying over again
Is what you're living is an unnatural lie?
Fill me with such blue-toned sorrow
All one can do is slump down and sigh
They had hope but it's all your fault
Now what's left is a long, slow goodbye
This time I want to believe what I see
That gleam I thought I saw flash in your eye

R.C. Mantley

OBITUARY

In the womb I floated freely hoping that when I leave this watery world
I've known for nearly nine months. I will join the rest of the human
race and be productive and lead a meaningful and happy life.

This morning I awoke not feeling too well, I still feel my organs developing
but for some reason, I feel ill and quite weak. I heard the doctor
tell my mother about taking dangerous drugs, whatever that is!. I've
been noticing that my right leg and right foot are not normal as my
left foot, Gee!!!! I sure hope that strong bitter liquid mom passed on to
me is not causing this!. Well, here goes, 9 mos. have passed and I hear
voices...Hey somebody's tugging on my soft head, this must be my birth.

As I entered the world I hear an ear shattering scream and the look on moms
face was scary and chilling. You see, I was born a crack and alcohol baby
deformed and hideous. I went through life craving drugs, drank excessively
and at the tender age 12, rejected by society and family and with severe
liver damage, I dropped dead before my next birthday.

Here lies sister Crystal next to brother Meth, they were good kids.
Crystalmeth, they had their whole life ahead and now they're dead!
Brother Meth sold, bought and used drugs daily as he would drag his drug
deformed body all around town selling it for whatever he could nix for the
next fix. Here lies the remains of what could have been the joy and hope
of the world. His ashes will be thrown into the cosmos and as they turned
away there was, nothing.....nothing to boast. DRUGS KILL..

Chas Jackson

Don't Tell Me What To Do.

I don't want nobody telling me what to do.
I think I'll get high.
you can't tell me what to do,
I think I'll get high.
I'm tired so very tired of what I have to do,
I think I'll get high.
that pissed me off, I think I'll get high.
I'll do what I want to do, and I want to get high.
right now. right here, here I go.
High.

If the whole world was in recovery
all I'd have to do is sit home
waitin
for all the world's muther fuckers
every asshole in the world to come by.
Make amends. Kiss my royal rear end.

i don't have a drinking problem
I drink
I fall down
I black out
no problem.

you got to go with the flow.
I don't mean say no.
That's the only time you got a little somebody
running around inside you trying to direct traffic.
don't do it
don't do it
don't smoke that rock
it'll knock you off your block. Your head. your head.

That's where the torture part comes in.
when you got one voice saying don't do it and the other saying do. It's a preoccupation. it's a struggle. it weighs you down. You never know when an argument gonna break out. One day at a time is a long fuckin time. An eternity. Just when you say I can't hear that voice no more, it's gone away. I am the champion. Bam whap, one second later it's back alive and ticking. do it do it do. Shut the fuck up, shut the fuck up, shut the fuck up. Wait a minute. Hey. I am the champion. Cause of that nobody gonna tell me what to do. Not even you. Little fella. Nevertheless, just for today, just at this precise moment I ain't listening to you. I ain't listening to you or you. I me and myself alone. Ok light it.

John Malpede

IN

I HEAR WORDS
I COVER WITH FAT
I HEAR HATE
I COVER WITH FAT
I COVER WITH FAT, MORE FAT

I GRAB, THEN GRAB, SLAG, THEN GRAB
THOUGHT AGAIN, THEN GRAB, WAIT AGAIN, THEN GRAB
FULL A LITTLE, EMPTY, THEN GRAB
GRAB TO GRIN
GRAB TO GRIND
GRABBED TO LEARN HOW TO GIVE
GRABBED TO EAT THE LIES
GRABBED TO FEEL ATE
GRABBED TO FEEL INATE

PLAIN FACED
I BREAK UP AND SIT
DRAGGED AND DRAGGED

IT IS DEBATE
AND I EAT AGAIN

Patricia Smith

Addiction

Why why why

Addiction has been with me a long time
I keep doing the same things, going nowhere
I seem to do the same game to myself, why
These street drugs will bring you down
I know there is No Future in ANY ADDICTION

Why Do I repeat the same street
Picture it bringing sickness, pain
A person who holds a pipe, or a needle
Is going to self-destruct

What up with that
Going to jail, behind a street drug, slowly dying sad
It ain't no fun sleeping on the ground
Ain't no fun being dirt, not taking a shower
Ain't it a shame Ain't it a shame man, ain't it a shame.

Howard L. Young, Jr.

ADDICTION

I'm stuck, got to have this, got to have that, I want all I saw as I sat.
I gather things that catch my eye, Lord really knows, I need not buy.

Addiction addition, and unpleasant obsession now my house overflows with
these miserable possessions. Still stuck, this life sure sucks!

Chas Jackson

Addiction

It starts hurting
In my thumb
This one spot
That burns
Screams
This emotion
Is too strong
It burns like fire in my bone

I pinch my thumb
Squeeze that spot
I need to
Now
Cigarette

Out – No!

I want to feel this
Moment
This fire makes it real
This pain
My soul my thumb

It is too much
It's gotta stop
Give me a cigarette
I need a way out
There is no comfort
I am alone
I need to calm down
Let it go

I'll ruin my lungs
And die slow

Henriette Brouwers

Break Me Off

I'm here to get paid
So break me off
My rhymes are inlaid
So break me off
With silver and gold
So break me off
My verse is already priceless
So break me off
While your stuff is just lifeless
So break me off
My life has been sold
So break me off
On the auction block of old
You just got broke off
Just fork out those ducats
So break me off
In gallons and buckets
So break me off
Got no time for this bull
Just break me off
When my pockets ain't full
Just break me off
Got no time to sit around
Just break me off
When there's money on the ground
I got to be broke off
Got no time to just create
Just break me off
Unless it's to really procreate
And I get broke off
By Uncle Sugar or John the Man
Makes no difference to me, you understand
Just so long as I get broke off, something proper

R.C. Mantley

Freedom from Self

The truth is mankind is obsessed with self.
Self centered, self-obsessed, selfish, selfish and selfish.
All we think about most of the time is:

Me, me, me, me, me, good old me, no, no, no, me, me, me.

Obsessed how we look.
Obsessed how we sound.
Obsessed how we smell.
Obsessed how successful we are.
Obsessed with what we have accomplished.

Consumed by thoughts of yesterday, today and tomorrow.
All we think about is good old me, good old me.
Freedom occurs when one divorces oneself from self.
When one sacrifices self and thinks about others.

Mankind you are not created to be served but to serve.
The more you serve the freer you will be from self.
As they say, you must die in order to live.
Freedom does not occur free.

So be humble thy self, and serve others, and you will surely be free.

Aklilu Kahsai

Hidden in Paradise

Hidin' out, can't nobody see me?
In a program, damn, can't nobody see me
Hidin' in dark alleys, snitches all around
Can't find no papers
Ain't got high for a week
Mother fuckin' guilt eatin' me up
LEAVE ME THE FUCK ALONE!

Thinkin' about Paradise
Gotta go now, waitin' for my plane
Hidin', waitin' for my plane all by myself
Just me and paradise
Waitin' for my plane
Hidin' can't nobody see me

Desperate for the feelin' in paradise

Paradise...Paradise...I live for Paradise

Pam Walls

Pay Me, or Pay Me No Attention

Bewilders wild chile
With a whole lotta style
You talk b
My hair was always free
Dyed layer to the side

Pain, that's what I was running from
The substance, the whatever, the addiction
Became a runner, always on a mission
Hey, I got used to a certain condition
Addicted to more than just alcohol, smoke, or the dope
I was even addicted to a false sense of hope
Constantly changing clothes so you can't see the pain
I'm in trouble deep down inside
Trapped, just can't cope with bondage inside

I was living a real big fat lie
Not willing to work at trying to live
No, that's too much work
And you say there's nowhere for me I can run to
Living a real big lie too afraid to live
Too afraid, too coward, just gave up, don't want to try

On the wall, police drive outside on the wall
There I go, acting like it's legal
Oh, I know, I'll get high
Too afraid to die
"Hey girl, don't you have children? Go call them!"
No, I don't want to try, I'll just abandon them for this drug
I think I am giving to myself this image I have portrayed
I'm not willing to die

Sashae Siatui

I Skinned My Thumb

I pick the skin around my thumbs
I do
I do it
I do it frequently actually
I cannot seem to stop this picking
It's turned to obsession
Resolutions expire year after year
How much time would I free with control of this fixation?
I am sitting there calmly, not reading, just sitting
When suddenly I notice it reaching
My index finger starts to rub as if thinking
It goes deeper, this finger, as it starts to focus
The spot it has claimed has ridges, loose edges, something untidy
And I've got to clear this unseemly completely

This picking creates a rhythm, which slowly takes over
Rip, pick, small tear,
5, 10, 15 minutes, an hour
I do not care who sees me
I am alive with this burning need to make clean
I wish I could pick at strings on a banjo
And simple melodies strum
Quiet evenings on a park bench marking the twilight
With chords E flat C major and D
Floating with a firefly's yellow engine
Into nearly evening

But I circle and I circle and these circles grow wider
I travel up and down my ever-lastin' thumb
Tender, pink skin bleeds as I worry it round
For a moment I am remorseful as I stand sucking
What, oh what, have I gone and done?

I miss the world around me, the palm trees and the Sundays
I promise myself that once I've reclaimed virgin territory
I can rest easy, relaxed, and hang up my picks and pulls
And clip my nails serenely
The scenery hovers, coming gently into focus
Tall oaks and baby-blue sky
Drift magnolia smells towards me
This awakens the spirit of my world warrior
Who fights battles in the world outside her
My problems become much less magnified
I will sit and I might ponder or I might let time pass idly by
Magenta toes just painted reflect purple sunsets
Crickets chitter and nightingales call
I can feel the light descending
As I mark the days close with a burst of language
And pluck the stars appearing one by one

Melina Bielefelt

Poetry Out Denial

What I like about writing poetry
is
you focus on the form
and then
the content sneaks itself in.

I can't even look at the formica
countertop
next to the stove.

A pot
something hot
rubbed up against it
melted a crescent
just on the edge.

It's not much
but stands out
in pretty much pristine
kitchen.

I saw it
for first time 4
now maybe 5 days ago.

How come
I didn't see it before?
As it stands out
noticeable in
otherwise pristine
kitchen surrounds.

Was it there when we came to stay
some 2 weeks ago?

How come I didn't see it
right away?
did I?

Was it put there week ago Friday or so
when coming home late
after rehearsal
I fried up some chard?

Had something else going
on another burner--
pasta or something.

I remember switching burners
in rapid moment
flame on high
trading pans
so nothing burned but all got done
more or less same time.

Frying in a wok
using other fry pan
for the non-existent lid.

Could I a backed it off burner
rested against edge of
miserable, melting
faux wood formica?

Then how come I didn't see it
nasty melted
crescent brand
on edge of counter.

The mark of Cain
a curse
absolutely unexplainable
humiliating
unexplainable to
friend
who gingerly,
apprehensively
graciously
extended hospitality,
invitation and key
to his bare bones
but pristine,
small and sublime
minimal and architectural
sun bright apartment.

The blemish
the stain
the ignominy
the unexcusable curse
out out damn spot
--you can't out a melted spot.

The enigma:
how could it have been there all along
without my / our noticing?

How could I/ or we
--a backed up tea pot perhaps--
have done this minor but horrific damage
without knowing it immediately?

don't tell me you could do the dishes,
clean the counter
after the meal
and not notice
AT THAT VERY MOMENT
that some thing had changed:
burnt
melted
been desecrated
a disaster.
How could that be possible?

Acknowledgement of sin
is the first step to redemption.

OK, but suppose it was there all along
from the moment of our arrival
a painful moment
already suffered
by someone else:
"damn --so stupid"
my friend suffering
as much
even more than I
at the moment of meltdown.

And of course such melt down cannot take place
without attendant toxic plumes
of choking smoke
acrid smells
carcinogenic release.

In that case how come
how come
ya how come I
didn't notice nothing wrong at all
til 3 or 4 or 5 days ago---when I haven't cooked nothing?

John Malpede

WHEN I ASKED

I WAS YOUNG
POKING, POKING, POKING, AND WHINE
I ASK AND THEY SHRIEK

SHAKE YOUR HEAD TO MEET THE PROIDGY
WHEN I ASKED TO HELP, TAKING MY TIME
KNOWING WHAT I KNEW SO THAT I CAN'T WHY

IT WAS THE THEY LOOKED SURPRISED, AND
THE SHAKING OF THE HEAD TOLD WHY

HOW TO SPELL, HOW TO SAY, HOW TO USE,
HOW TODAY
IT IS ACHE WHEN YA TRY, AND ITS COOKING
LIKE ITS ON HIGH

HAD TO GO SOMEWHERE ELSE, LOOKING
INTO THE LIMP, PEERING INTO THE CREATIVE

FIGURE OUT IS WEE
SO I WENT TO ANOTHER WHERE, WHERE
I DID NOTHING TO STARE

WHERE WHEN WAS A DOOR TO GO TO
ANOTHER PLACE
I HAD TO TRADE LINE FOR LINE, BUT I HAD
TO HEAR SLIGHT
THE SLIGHT MADE AND
IT MADE YOU SWAY AND IT HIT YOU IN THE
GUT ANYWAY

THE SLIGHT WAS THE FEAR, THE SLIGHT
MADE THE TEAR AND THE SLIGHT MAKES
YA FEEL SINCERE.
ALL I HAVE IN SLIGHT HAS BEEN TALKED AND
NOTE, BUT WHAT I HAVE YET TO SPEAK HAS
YET TO BE SPOKE. SLIGHT MAKES YA WHOLE
SO I WALKED INTO WHY UNTIL I FOUND MY
HINTS STANDING HIGH...

FIGURE OUT IS WEE..

Patricia Smith

Spirit of Recovery

Spirit of Recovery, Spirit of Recovery, Spirit of Recovery

What are you doing on the ground, human
Ain't nothing on the ground, man its going to kill you
Hay rock what are you doing to the American
People

Making us unhappy, in the name of Jesus go
You cause me sickness and pain
Heartache

The way you think, no good, you're not welcome
Satan you want my mind, well you not going
To get it

There's something about our life
We will move Forward as Respectable people
In prayer we as people will prevail

PRAYER PRAYER PRAYER People

The Rock has no home with us
You mean that Little tiny No good For
Nothing Guest What
You are not going to have Nothing
Quit playing with your life in
God created All things, not Satan Satan, But God

Howard L. Young, Jr.

RECOVERY

Good morning! good? why or how is it good? although the sun is up and
warms the air, it is true that I'm really here?

I remember my flesh had fallen asleep into the void my thoughts did seep.
Spirit of mine a higher state of as I drifted off it could wait.

Onward and upward it rose with delight knowing I would sleep if just for the night.

As the flesh dies daily and rises anew, the spirit must return as it will
discern my desire to live with such yearn. I opened my eyes and observed
the morn, I arose a fresh creature with spirit reborn.

Chas Jackson

Excess

This world needs to recover
from TV's, toys, jeans, trousers
TV junky, new couch junky, I-pod junky, junk food, car junk
Junk, junk, junk, junk
Things!
all the colors, tastes and smells
too many choices:
cereals, food, medicine
Stop producing, start living!
too much sugar, coffee, thee and oil
West can't live without goods from East
Now West is feasting
No feast for East,
no goodness
Enough IS enough
Stop this NOISE!
Beyond the horizon is up to us
Stop extracting, start giving!
Stop producing, start living!
Clean up
Water, air, earth,
Governments!
Listen up
here are the experts
we have taken too much cause we got too little!
We are outside
And fight the fight
We know what it takes
Recovery,
Change!

Henriette Brouwers

Under The Gun

We're on the run
We're on the move
We hit our stride
We're in the groove

We've set the pace
We're on the track
We're in the race
Not on our backs

We fling the sweat
We pound the beat
We break the tape
The smell is sweet

We flash the V
We clasp our hands
We brace for life
Not in the stands

R.C. Mantley

DISRECOVERY

The bird is trying to push itself through a whole
You see it pushing
The bird is trying to push itself through a whole
Its head sticks out, but its body won't flow
The bird you see, is trying to push itself through a whole
The bird pushes and pushes
Its feet spin and spin hitting that ground
The bird pushes and pushes, its body is stuck
The bird keeps pushing and the body doesn't move out
The bird keeps pushing and pushing
I see its body aching. I feel the ache
I ache as I see the bird pushing and pushing
Its feet don't spin no more
The bird keeps pushing and pushing
All I did was bleed from sores
The bird kept pushing and pushing
The bird losses breath to pushing
The bird doesn't push anymore
The bird was me and it is free.

Ibrahim Saba

Drinkin'

Hypnotic, robotic, walk in a trance
Hennessey you see is me
Indeed Corona, 211, eight ball in my head
Jim? Joey? Cisco, let's go!
Dreamin' about it
Got to have it
Go down smooth
Night Train callin'
Silk Satin crawlin' under my skin
I love you I suck on you all the daylong
Remy Martin, Alice-Cobra Magnum strong
Start to stumblin' keeps me fumblin' for some more change
Liquor store tryin' to close
Reachin' for the Vodka
Margarita, my tequila
I can't live withoutcha

Pam Walls

Freedom Again

Freedom again, freedom again and again and again
My train rolls over the tracks of forgiveness
Grave winds blow and storm clouds scatter
I have wished for this tide that has washed our building
Fresh-pressed plaids and white cotton blouses
We are waiting for our clean starts with tied-together schoolbooks

The instant we felt recognition
My past fell limp
I saw myself rising, un-tethered as if in a parade
My fears could have swallowed me
But this new level ground buried my past in its tan sands

This ostrich has ducked its neck no longer
My big blue eye has seen

But what of my family?
A three-legged cart wobbles, certain to fall
But it is not falling in love
This forgiveness comes more slowly
Brick walls build the castle that began in sand

The sand was so freeing
Young-fit-father-man becomes boy-like to match my child-spirit
As we scoop and burrow and climb
My spirits fly
I run and feel I can touch the sky
Wind mixes water with salt air
We clamber all over the world we are creating in tandem
Clear-pitched giggles cut through families' gurgling murmurs
Vanilla crème cookie sandwiches and pastel seashells
Are treasures in this universe
We lick the icing slowly

My father spirit comes to me suddenly
As thick mists of childhood memory descend
Snap-shots of riding on Dad's handle bars
and hunting Easter eggs and shiny racecars
My heart strains to open as freely as it did then
I think I have seen and been recognized
But efforts to create togetherness have collapsed
Under the weight of my tide rushing forward

"We will come again tomorrow,"
My father says as he takes my hand
We gather our shovels slowly
"But what if the weather is black and cloudy?"
Then we will build our castles in the camel-colored shag carpet
And create a breakfront with the coffee table
We will pile books to create levies
And levy text to create understanding
We will sow the winds of change
So freely
That this gift of words will whisper new beginnings

Stacks of peanut-butter crackers on high stools
Structure kitchen companionship after school-time
We sisters wait for our completion
What will grown-up feel like?

I burrow within these sheets of time
My cats paw persistently for entry
I let them in-they settle
Curling their limbs inward
Soft furry balls tucking their heads to complete the circle
They are so conscious of my every sound
My breathing and my stillness
Father-man-boy-child
Have you come to me?
Are we growing towards each other slowly?
I want to trust my heart is open
I want to trust the way is clear
I want to trust and sit in silence
But I am growing towards it slowly

I lurch
Looks mean nothing when not backed with kindness
And kindness not backed with follow-through
Hello, I say
Hello, could I know you?
My petals unfold, unraveling like a silk balloon in springtime
Bright ties fluttering in the soft new breezes that surround me
I breathe and wonder if I'm capable of receiving
I have been so long in this cocoon

Stamens and carpels, they fit together
And together they produce a beautifully strange fruit
Which becomes a hybrid of lifetimes intertwining
Red roses, green branches, sharp, sticky thorns and all
These are the lifetimes that breed forgiveness
And out of this forgiveness comes the stillness
That I'm craving
It was there all along, and it's not a cavern, I just couldn't see clearly
It's an iris, a tiger lily, a simple daisy
It's a dandelion and its wishes are blowing in the wind

Melina Bielefeld

SUBWAY SURFING

WALT WHITMAN SAID IT,

"I DIDN'T KNOW HOW MUCH BEAUTY
I HAD INSIDE ME."
--TIL I CRIED
CRIED FROM JOY.

NOW,
I'VE GOT SO MUCH TO DO
I DON'T FEEL A THING.
I GOT TO BREATHE DOWN
INTO MY BELLY.

WHEN MY HEAD WAS BIG AS A BASKETBALL
FULL OF TOXICITY,
I KNEW HOW TO DO IT.

BREATHE IT DOWN
MY SPINE ---> LET IT FILL
MY WHOLE BODY.
FEEL THAT PAIN
LIKE A FLOWER!
LIKE THE FLOWER IT IS.

I AM BEAUTIFUL WHEN I BREATHE INTO THAT PAIN

AND IT ROLLS
ROARS
LIKE A WAVE:
BREAKS,
TURNS ITSELF INSIDE OUT:
WHITE FOAM.
THE LAST WILL BE FIRST
THE FIRST WILL BE LAST.

IF YOU DON'T SIT UP RIGHT
YOU CAN'T BREATHE TO YOUR BELLY
THE ENERGY GETS STOPPED.

WHEN YOU'RE IN HARMONY
ALL THE EMOTIONS ARE RIGHT TOGETHER
PACKED TIGHT LIKE SARDINES
IN AN ELEVATOR
ON THE SUBWAY.

SUBWAY SURFING
READY TO MOVE
ANY DIRECTION.
SADNESS TOUCHING FEAR
FEAR RUBBING UP AGAINST ECSTASY
WEEP FOR JOY.

OK NOW;
HERE'S HOW YOU DO IT.
SUBWAY SURFING.
LET'S GO.
GET ON THE TRAIN,
BROOKLYN BOUND D
OR B.
GET ON AT HOUSTON -BROADWAY
SECOND AVENUE
OR DELANCY.
"NEXT STOP EAST BROADWAY CHINATOWN".
THEN THE MANHATTAN BRIDGE TO
"HIGH STREET BROOKLYN"
THE F TRAIN AND THE A GO UNDERGROUND
THROUGH THE TUNNEL
TO BROOKLYN.
BUT THE B AND THE D TAKE THE BRIDGE.

IT'S MALIBU,
THE BIG ISLAND
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT
MANHATTAN BEACH.
BEST PLACE IN THE WORLD FOR
SUBWAY SURFING.
THE TRAIN PULL OUT DELANCY
GET FRONT OF THE FRONT CAR.
RIGHT BEHIND THE POLE.
HANG ON
LIKE EVERYONE NORMAL WITH ANY
SENSE.
THEN LET GO.
LOOK MOM NO HANDS.

TRAIN EMERGING FROM UNDERGROUND
VIBRATION,
GYRATION
ME UPRIGHT
RIDIN THAT WAVE.

WHOLE TRAIN FLOOR MY BOOGIE BOARD
ARMS OUT FOR BALANCE
HAWAIIAN SHIRT FLAPPIN
LEAN IN
LIST-IN
RESPONDING
WHOLE BODY LISTENING,
RIDIN
THAT
WAVE.

SUN RISING OVER BROOKLYN.
HOME OF WALT WHITMAN
CARPENTER
JOURNALIST
PUBLISHER
POET
SURFING ENDLESS WAVE
TO HIGH STREET
I ARRIVE BROOKLYN
RIDIN THE CURL,
SPRAY IN MY HAIR

"I DIDN'T KNOW HOW MUCH BEAUTY I AM."
NEXT STOP: BODY ELECTRIC

John Malpede

YOU WANT PIPING

YOU ARE RAIN

(EVERYBODY) LUMMMM

YOU ARE RAIN

(EVERYBODY) MUM, MUM, MUM, MUM
MUM, MUM, MUM,
MUM, MUM, MUM

WE ARE FAME
AND I AM FAME
AND I AM FIND
I REAL, I SLICK

LIKE THE LOVE
LIKE THE LOVE
LIKE THE LOVE

AND I AM VERY MUCH IN FAME, I AM

I HAVE LOVE

FAKING IS VERY MUCH STUPID
AND THEY WILL SHOOT TO FILM
AND I AM VERY MUCH UGLY

VERY MUCH UGLY
VERY MUCH UGLY
VERY MUCH UGLY
VERY MUCH UGLY

AND I AM VERY MUCH RIGGING

AND I AM VERY MUCH
AND I AM VERY MUCH
AND I AM VERY MUCH
AND I AM VERY MUCH

AND VERY
AND VERY
AND VERY

AND
AND
AND

FOR UNRIGGED LINES

AND NOW I AM FAME
AND NOW I AM FAME
AND NOW I AM FAME
AND NOW I AM FAME

AND I AM FAME
UMM, UMM, OH, OH, OH,
UM, UM, UM, UM, OH, OH, OH
AHEM, AHEM, AHEM
AND I AM FEEL
 I AM FAME, I AM FAME
 I AM FAME, I AM FAME
 FAME, FAME, FAME, FAME

AND I FEEL FAME
AINT I OOOH, AINT I OOOH
OOH, OOH, OOH, OOH
OOOH, OOH, OOH, OOH,
OOH, OOOOH

AND HOW UGLY
AINT IT LICK
UMM, UMM
UMM, UMM

Patricia Smith

I feel

I am very pleased with my life as I speak
But when I speak! I know there are places
I sometimes wonder
 I am a tree that feels the wind
As a tree I would help people stay warm
 If they don't cut me down
I will help save the ozone
 I am the water that runs down the
Mountaintop, in which I move through cracks
 Making my way through Life
I, we are, so blessed to be alive
I am the land, you can see so far away
The wonderful creation of God
I often say to my self, there is a voice
 That is inside of me, saying
Believe in me, I feel so good that I am able to stand
 Clear of all Earthly matter.

Howard L. Young, Jr.

INNER BEAUTY

ALMIGHTY GOD created of me warm molten clay, and image of HIM ruled the day. Fragile and perfect and eager to live, the most beautiful gifts the FATHER could give. The inner beauty I now possess, I vow to share for HE has given HIS very best. Love and mercy it doth shine, I promise to practice this inner beauty of mine.

Chas Jackson

I breathe in, reach up
Great spirit
Father
melt down, soft and heavy
Mother earth
rock my body in your cradle
soften the curve of my spine
air between my bones
muscles long and strong

Aiii, spirits of the North
where nothingness holds everything possible
I am born again
this morning
greet the sun in the east
feel my strength and smile
filled with expectations
white light makes everything pure
I tremble with joy
and grow
expand in heat of midday South sun
I can hear all over the world
Glow
Woman, dance!

And I bow to the West
Blue see
tears
heal my body
my soul
I am grateful
for these legs, this hide
this body
these spirits

and I float in nothingness again

Henriette Brouwers

Beauty Beyond The Gimlet's Eye

The indelicate strawberries that bloom from the cracked walkways
With hardened husks for dermal coverings ravaged by time
Already seen in red-rimmed eyes ringed by kole-encrusted eyelids is the stained longing for love
Yet they've let others violate the essence of it all and take possessions of memories where intimacy once
burst like ripened fruit with seeds of joy and declarations of meaning
All for nickels and dimes worth of trammeled bliss amounting to nothingness
They blew their smoke away and watched themselves be blown off and spit out when pleasure had been
wrested from them in full or partial measure
These apparitions are objects of desire no matter how bedraggled, befuddled, bothered or not
They will bother you and peel themselves open for you and sell themselves to be hit by you for another hit
from you and say to you if you want your fantasies to come true then let me fly low under the radar for you
and be an angel for you cast out of the kingdom by you and stuck with no hope of redemption from you and
no wings that can be plucked like ruffled feathers by you or melted like wax on the pipe for you and what
else in the world do I want from you except a real, false moment from you that matters only in time and the
feeling I don't get from you but from that alabaster bitch who don't give a shit about me or you.

That's the moral of this story; how beautiful with resilience

R. C. Mantley

"YOU, THE FLOWER AND THE GARDEN"

I am here because you brought me here.
I am the flower that you planted in your garden,
in your man made garden.
Look around you men.
See? your sister, daughter, girlfriend and mom.
See? the birth, beauty, nurture and warmth.
See? the sweat, the iron, the soap, the recipe.
See? the second hand citizen, salaries and status lower than yours.
See? the shoving around, her weakness, violence upon her,
the drugs placed between her mouth and her children, the punishment.
She doesn't want to be like you,
all she wants is for you to remember the flower in the garden,
the flower that lives inside of you;
to nourish it, to make sure it grows and blossoms and inspire beauty;
the beauty of taking care of each other;
you, the flower and the garden.

Ibrahim Saba

Doris is leaving

Doris is leaving .

The surfing women
are returning home.

I'm waking up.
coffee
orange
yesterday's news.
Way too early
alarmed
from dream.

Doris is leaving
got to go
Venice
Thousand Oaks
LAX
10:30.

Hair wet surfing women
carry their boards
back from the beach.

In dream
in Holland
post performance
Agents & Assets.
"Did you know
6 British
security forces
sent squads
to mainland to deal with
the situation.

Real situation
recapped
in Agents & Assets."

Always something
undone
incomplete
more to do
research
say
inadequate.

If only had known
coulda-woulda
call woman from London
don't know her name
Get there.
Do it over
again
investigate, research.

Doris is leaving
I called to confirm:
9 A.M. pick-up

"Good son, I
won't worry.
Good son."
Good son.

Down my coffee
out the door
1-minute shower
her visit
success.

John Malpede

FREEDOM

I ran for days not knowing where to go
When I came to, I realize that I was on the ground.
FREEDOM FREEDOM
I didn't like how I was feeling, knowing I could be in jail.
For the first time, I am not in jail, FREEDOM FREEDOM
People were running around looking crazy with their drugs in their hand.
Selling dope, I say to myself.
Do I really want to go through this world being a user?
Letting my life go, Something came over me, I kept telling myself,
What would I do to overcome this madness.
Stop, stop, stop
It came to me at 3:00 in the morning, something is
Wrong with the street when we know about all the
Bad thing.
The Drug don't have a mind
It don't have a heart
Drugs don't care about you
Don't you want to be FREE with FREEDOM
Loving yourself

Howard L. Young, Jr.

I STEP ON THE FLOOR BAREFOOT,
DANCING, AND MY KIDS RUN IN
AND THEY SAY, "MOM, WHAT YA DOING?"
AWWW.....

"DANCING ON THE CUPCAKE THAT I SAW, AINT IT GOOD. I SAW JELLY AND SAW IT WAS
GUNKING UP..."

ITS THE GRAPES THAT DRAPE OF THE WALLED PALACE THAT MAKES ME SPEW INK AT
THE MOANS

CAUSE YA JEALOUS

I DIPPED MY FOOT IN THE STAR IN THE FLOOR, AND MY KIDS WENT, AND MY CARROTS
WENT, I LIKE DENTYNE AND I GET GRIN WHEN I SIT. THINKING AND DEEDS DONE
DRIVING, EATING DONUT HOLES THAT MY

KIDS HIDE TO DO NOTHING BUT BINK....

I STICK MY FOOT BACK INTO THE STAR IN THE FLOOR, ITS WATERS FEEL LIKE ALCOHOL

THEN I HEARD MY DAUGHTER CRY, "HE'S PUSHING ME..." AND I
HUNGER FOR THE QUIET THAT DATE CAKES TAKES TO BAKE.

MY TOES ARE SULLEN AND IN STROKE.
FOR THE FINE IS NOSE OOOH, OOOH, OOOH, AND EVERYTHING IS TOES.

Patricia Smith

What you see is what you get

Ordinary folks like me cry out for God's love, wisdom, knowledge and freedom from evil.
Sinful folks, intoxicated folks, conniving and steeling folks, lying folks, adulteress folks,
Weak folks, full fear folks, sick folks, outcaste folks, meaningless folks, manes to society
Folks, down and out folks and rejected folks.
It in it strange God would use this kind of folks to free others.
It in it strange God would use this fools to expose the so-called wise.

What you see is what you get.
What you see is what you get.
What you see is what you get.

If you truly want freedom ask God.
Because he is the freedom, He is the source of freedom.
I mean the true, true master or freedom.

Aklilu Kabsai

Beauty

"I don't think about"
I don't think about God in my bliss
When I huff and puff on this
I know dey gon say, that's you temple

Weed, Weed, sounds like music and so simple
I don't think what God might see
When I crumble, roll and breathe
Mighty funny
He talks to me at my highest
Oh Lord Please
Tells me stuff like "I'm still here when you need me"
"I'll be here for you, just believe me"
No I don't think about God
'Cuz I know what he gon' say
Let me get my buzz on
"I still love you any way"
I got problems weigh me down
He says they don't have to, I'm around
Could I just sin for a minute
I'll talk to you later, let me get in it
I know you're everywhere, but I just wanna smoke
I know you tryin' to help me cuz Lord you ain't no joke

But I've given you some time, OK?
And now this buds for me
I go to church, sing in the choir
So Lord, just let me be.
Now you got me thinkin', thinkin', 'bout my life
I ain't hurtin' nobody sittin' wit dis joint
But Lord, I understand, maybe you got a point

You want to use me to tell the world that you will never leave them
Ok, ok, I got you now
My joint is down, I finally obeyed

Pam Walls

My smile is a frown turned upside down. When you see I'm just clowning around. I had to make myself live here in this pit, this black hole, the smell of FOGG smoke. Weed. Live weed is walking up to Welfare people calling out, "What's up Bill?" Calling real women Heffas.

But wait, I can't go outside
Let you see my pain
I make some coffee and a little white stuff
No sugar of course
But it makes me small, inhale the white

So now my frown is turned upside down
I walk up outside pain

Spiritual Ballads Love
Up, up with the Spirit

I hop to it and get on the good foot
It's not what goes in, it's how it's cooked
It's not what so I'm the defeb c man
What coupons on the outside
How I stand
So it doesn't matter
I what you see how
Look I'm all
Not what goes in because then again
I'm hooked
But what what's
It's what comes out the place
It's how it's cooked

So now my frown is turned upside down

Sashae Siatui

Beauty Is As Beauty Does

Cans of perfectly sliced peaches nestled together
Brightly colored gumballs under glass
Then there are the jeans we pack ourselves into
True Meaning, True Religion, The Gap
Of course the deepest concepts have the highest price tags
Most of us fall into that gap and stay there feeling bewildered
Medium beings that don't fit quite into sizes

We look to the television to show us acceptance
Tiny models spin their hair round
Much like the plastic dolls used to on our childhood jewel cases
We want to make ourselves over instantly like in High School
"Do Over" we call as the ball just misses the basket
It takes time to watch the powder settle and change the water's color

I wish I could picture inner happiness and turn it into a magazine
A shiny, bright, infectious confection

I am struggling with a funny laugh and family heirlooms of identity
Why does this pink lipstick not outline compassion?
Frail slivers of thought pierce confidence
I am nothing
I am not beautiful
I will be exactly like my mother

Why do I not care how I look when I think I am not seen
I remember running on the beach in my childhood so freely
Sun-bleached hair with red-and-blue trimmed cardigan
My fingers reaching in the sun

I squint closely and do not recognize myself
I am at sea in a pattern of lies
And I eat them like candy
I will always be alone
There is no one to love me
My widest smile will gain the largest audience

Tall wood telephone poles extend across barren landscapes
Hiding marked notches in tall frames
That plot the horizon at regular intervals
We were meant to fit together, why does no one see that?

Homogeneity promises an open resounding
A no-friction, placid environment
Which we turn into Disneyland-like Teflon
It's such a beautiful word
So many pieces make the whole sound
Surely some of them are crooked
Surely some of them defy understanding

"Step on a crack, you break your mother's back"
Round and round the jump rope goes
I used to jump the highest when I thought no one was watching
Inside I knew I wouldn't falter
Why do I not care how I look when I think I am not seen?

I need to braid my own rope
And I need to hold it closely
When I am ready I will drop it out the window
Letting it dangle there slowly
Letting it catch the sunlight of compassion
This breeze will feel wonderful
And I will blow words
Which will float down over any who will hear them
Heart, truth, joy, goodness
These are the hallmarks of beauty I must come to

And once I have, I will know fullness
And I will share with others
We will turn the rope more kindly together
We are connected, our lives are equal

1-2-3

we know we are free

4-5-6

we lay down our sticks

7-8-9

your mother's spine is fine

10-11-12

the sounds we make are our selves

Melina Bielefelt

FREEDOM (liberdad)

Free to move as does the universe in a smooth and rhythmic dance throughout the cosmos. Unbound, exploding with horrific energy and mystical sound. When I was a child, yet bound and tethered by my earthly surroundings I yearned to be free. Although trapped in this lump of clay, I freely allowed myself to escape into tomorrow where nobody goes but me, so I thought.....

Hey! there's dad, thoughts of mom when they were single and free w/out a care in the world. Oh and there's sis, a strong and handsome guy on her are with children of their own. Ah yes freedom!. Freedom to touch, see and feel and oh yeah, freedom to travel if only just for a short, a nod or two. But the best freedom is to be free.....TO BE ME!!!!.

Chas Jackson

Freedom and Nothingness

If you have nothing left to lose then you're free from all want
If you have nothing left to give then you're free from all pain
If you have nothing in such plentiful amounts then you now have the capacity to receive
If you have nothing no one else wants then you're free to give of yourself
If you have nothing more to say then the velvet has become threadbare
If you have nothing that you've just subtracted from nothing then you are the sum total of all free men

R. C. Mantley

Swadba

Free
jumping from star to star
and back again to planet earth
freedom
White spirit
my Swadjiba
fast as wind
we are One
one movement
one thought
wind blows tears in my eyes
you carry me, I carry you
I am your thoughts, your eyes, your ears, your smell
we see like the eagle
See every obstacle
And jump and curve and dive
With speed of light
So light
Light we are

Henriette Brouwers

Freedom

Freedom
Mind opening
Worlds shifting
Thoughts colliding into nothingness
I am alone for a moment
I sit, needing to take it slowly
Be Where You Are
My soul chimes soundlessly
Being where you are implies acceptance
Acceptance turns to letting go
My mind wanders, grabbing quickly and holding fast
I am one in a universe of my own making
Which also holds truth and understanding
With forgiveness and completion becoming circles that are moving
I am one in a universe of my own making
Mind opening
Worlds shifting
Is this what freedom looks like?

Dust settles, words blow
I am holding onto nothingness
And this defies understanding
My mind is a sieve
A bright metal trap that contains habits and fears and misconceptions
It holds them tightly, willing their concreteness
Refusing to bestow a breath of kindness

I walk in the still breezes of a beautiful twilight
It has come to this
My day has tumbled forward
Landing so lightly, settling into itself
Like a blanket tucking it's soft edges
My writing has faltered, concepts floating, words unyielding
But the streetlights turn on like clockwork
Burning brightly, trimming blue night's corners
With warm orange and incandescent greens and violet
This is what freedom feels like
Mind opening
Worlds shifting
Thoughts collapsing into nothingness
This aliveness is like a great cloak
Which sits strongly upon our shoulders
And it sits there regardless of how we feel about it
I find this quite a mystery

I stand silently for a moment
Then tie the tassels more tightly round me
This commitment is what I'm making
This commitment is of my understanding
I am alive and protected
And this freedom is what surrounds me

Melina Bielefelt

"CAREFREE-DOM"

If my hands become a fist
If I write up to my wrist
CAREFREE-DOM
If my president speaks Chinese
If I return home in one piece
CAREFREE-DOM
If I eat a bowl of news
If intelligence carries no cues
CAREFREE-DOM
If the Earth spins west
If you wear a protected vest
CAREFREE-DOM
If my head spins east
If I'm invited to the feast
CAREFREE-DOM
If your Rolex says is ten
If my overtime says pain
CAREFREE-DOM
If you scream in the dark
If I learn how to bark

CAREFREE-DOM
If good is bad and bad is good
If you sleep well with no food
CAREFREE-DOM
If I came first and you last
If your brain stops in the past
CAREFREE-DOM
If hope finds a niche
If man's world is a bitch
CAREFREE-DOM
If being a despot makes you win
If not knowing God is a sin
CAREFREE-DOM
If abusing children is a chore
If cashing millions is a bore
CAREFREE-DOM
If Mars is around the corner
If only the sun makes you warmer
CAREFREE-DOM
If I spit up and rain comes down
If you speak up and end out of town
CAREFREE-DOM
If I plea for harmony and peace
If a flea skips my tears
CAREFREE-DOM
If innocence is out of the picture
If the child inside lives injured
CAREFREE-DOM
If I end this poem now
If I continue till I die
CAREFREE-DOM
If freedom gives me power
If stopping means you'll follow
CAREFREE-DOM
If all that matters is existence
If freedom gives life in an instance
CAREFREE-DOM
If you really want to stop me
All you have to be is
CAREFREE-DOM.

Ibrahim Saba

Freedom

is a bird, wild and beautiful
it flies high in the sky
and dives deep in the waters
it can live everywhere on this earth
is always near us
You can see it shine in the sunlight
glide under the moon
hear its song in the dark
It has been hunted by many people
who put it in a cage
where it dies
slowly but surely

this bird came to me one time
and started to weep
and I wept with it
because I could feel its pain
 'I have been painted in many colors
 it said
 and gold and silver
 adorned with diamonds
 And I was happy
 I thought the people of this earth
 where coming together
 Now my name is on banners
 and official documents
 but many of my brothers and sisters are dead
 They dug deep holes in the earth
 to take out the diamonds and gold
 Now the earth is hurting too
 food is scarce

 People caught my song
 and sell it for much gold
 but they don't see
 They don't hear
 that I sing a different song all the time'

and I said
 'sweet bird
 take me on your back
 my arms are not strong enough to carry me
 let us leave this world
 It does not let me be

 this world needs a new start
 a new language

too much hurt has been done in your name
maybe one day we can come back
bring a straw, a seed
maybe **than** they will see
maybe **that's** what we need'

the bird closed my eyes
rapped her big wings around me
I smelled her
fresh and warm

'I cannot take you
you are too many
you're not the only one
this is where you belong
this is where the work is done
listen to the wind and the sea
sing their song
let it come and go'

than she opened her wings
and flew away
I cried

'Don't go!
please stay!'

She looked back
And in the distance I heard:

'I too obey the laws of gravity
I am a bird

see the hurt that has been done
love and don't ask back
take it in and let it go
no need to question
you are part of a whole

there is space
and order

there is plenty
learn to see
what is enough
and you will be free'

Henriette Brouwers

METAPHOR 1

I am house ooooh I feel a mouse scampering across my floor, oh how I abhor.
Stepping and running up and down my step oh how my glass ears heard it creep
pots and pans with ears of wall, eyes of window peering into the streets
and the community, running down my scalp of thatch as termites eat their
eggs that hatch.

Turn me on hot and cold warm water fills my bowls, lay in me and bathe
awhile I'm strong enough to hold you.

Chas Jackson

METAPHOR 2

My head is of thatch, my feet are of stair my eyes are of window, my arms
are of door, enter me behold I offer the weary traveler the comfort and
relief off the road of the heavy-laden, body, mind and soul. My head of
thatch will protect you from the rain, my eyes of window will watch over
you. Feel free to step my stairs as you might ascend to the place where
I will cover you as you sleep for my arms of door welcome you in this
place of warmth. Come now, turn me on hot and cold warm water fills me up,
lay back in me and bathe, for I am strong enough to hold you. Soap for the
cleansing, towel for drying, stay awhile for you, I shall not beguile!

Chas Jackson

Nickel-odean

Take One, Scene One

Action!

The boom crane swoops from the Hollywood hills into the valley below

Hovering over the lowest point in the city

Lower than sea level

almost as low as the grave

Send in the set designers

Don't bother they're here

on the streets and in the shelters, glimpsed through the tinted windows

of a commuter's vision where despair reign supreme

where you will be mugged by the smells flowing from

exposed appendages all the way to the sea

deposited by gaping orifices on the denuded garden path

stabbed by the madness in the ears by ice-pick sounds from the ground

all the while shunning the leper's touch, their unwashed, layered appearance

They are the set designers unchosen

Who double as the extras in this scene

Scene One takes place soon after the sun stands like a circus performer square atop our heads
The Sanitation Men arrive in their orange overalls
Riding high in the saddle of their dirty yellow bulldozers and dump trucks
Their backhoes sporting their hard hats and shovels
Escorted by those sworn to uphold order over chaos
So strike down the set they must and they will
Take your makeshift, jerrybuilt castles to another sound stage
A block away from this one
Rebuild your unstructured lives
Reconstitute the set for another scene, another take, the director's cut
Wildness needs to be tamed by the director of your choice

R. C. Mantley

Cry from Joy

I.

Every time
I hear from
Kentucky:
somebody died
house burned down
critical condition
NEEDS YOUR PRAYERS.

I say;
I'm thinking of you.
little me:
You're in my thoughts.
infinitesimally small,
I'm thinking of you.
heartfelt response
somehow rendered anemic.
Emanating from me
like
smallest piece of whaleshit
in bottom of the ocean.

II.

Every time
I hear from Skid Row
"Are you Saved"
"Are you saved, Brother?"
well, 'I'm ready to meet my maker."
let's just say.
"I AM ready to meet my maker."

Praise the Lord!
Hallelujah!
Praise the Lord.
Let's just say:
Cry from Joy!

John Malpede

the broken record
its at the tone
head and learned to make you mind
same and tone
find the great to stop the grind
its about feel
whine and its broke
make a dent
it docks and calms
its alms and bites in cars
make the ear
stress and worry
blame is something to take
for, for, for
waste is not a need
working is swig of gin
like the spirit, baking
I am ainting
I am a megging
cry to get a lick
bob and go home
the drum roll at the tone
stretch and wrath
negate debate

it, the comment with love

Patricia Smith

SPIRITUALITY

I walk by FAITH and not by sight, my soul is well within HIS sight.
This world is what of all I know among these creatures here below.
As I live life the roads ahead I know not where they lead but this I know for sure
indeed that HE will fulfill my every need.

Oh soul of mine renew the clay spring up and hasten too, for while it slept
it died, they wept a day and FAITH was born anew.

Chas Jackson

I don't believe in god
I don't
don't believe in god
no creator
no person
He was not made in our own image
It's not he
nor she
It's not high up there
It's right here
I don't believe
I know
humbly
I'm part of
always changing intricate streams of
rhythm
energy
It's up to me

Henriette Brouwers

Salvation in the Streets

Every Sunday morning lives debauched on Saturday night
Can find redemption on Towne Street
In the power of the blood, the wonder working power
On Towne Street the folding chairs are marked with colored crosses
On Towne Street our Savior holds forth Salvation
And a sack lunch
And a plate of beans and rice without benefit of a service
Food for the body, mind, and soul
The Lord giveth in the form of legal tender from the one note priest
The Lord taketh away sinful dreams and wishes for more to do less
Hand made burritos are dispensed with love and prayer
Fruit juices quench the thirst that threatens to parch diminished hearts
Minds are set to stay on the crooked, narrow way to non-everlasting life
But the traffic monitors are in place
To offer us the chance to detour
They will not wash our weary, blistered feet
These jackleg missionaries
Only comforting words to sooth incipient savagery for communion
And now let us go forth and sin no more, por favor

R. C. Mantley

Trapped
Desolate
Deprived
Degraded
Degenerate
Deprivation
Separate
Detached from the light
Separate from reality
Desperate, unable to determine day from night
Finding always the wording not doing what's right
Trapped, can't break these chains
Bondage because this stuff has me held hostage

Now I'll get to real deal
I'm on a mission not to feel
Can't be real now
I can't believe that she can't be that way
She so... sad
Can't smell the flowers cause every time you turn around
You are in twin towers

Trapped
Disillusioned, can't separate day from night
Running from reality, yours in a
Manic, desperate fright
Can't look in the mirror
Cause you know what you are
A thriller
You's a baby killer
 What?
Say, hey, you want to play?
My way it's got to be
You or me.
I want to get your destiny
Pretending you want to play
Got that white girl going

Walking all night, wake up at 10 a.m.
@ midnight it's on mission
dark side that's @ that ten Best
You 123 You blast off now
No more weekend
I'm in control, yeah, as long as the bowl
Strong now because strong man and I don't know her

Sashae Siatui

“Blue Skies”

Do you know what freedom is like? Taste like? Be like? Feel like?
Layin' in my mama's backyard thinkin' bout freedom.
Trees swayin' to me, sayin' to me,
Blue skies nothin' but—

Now the grass between my toes, here we go, everybody knows
Freedom is or freedom ain't
That bird is free, or is it?
Betta' not land on the ground with a cat nearby

Blue skies, nothin' but—
Breezy days, ooh baby, watchoo say?
I'm dancin' in the wind 'cuz I'm free
Or am I?
I betta not say the wrong thing, do the wrong thing
Cuz bracelets will be my jewelry
Blue skies, nothin' but—

Flyin' a kite, sippin' on a Sprite
A tisket, a tasket, a pit bulls' bite sends him to the big house in the sky
Free he was, but no, no mo' owner forgot
Told him people ain't food

Swing low, sweet—
Blue skies, nothin' but—
Lady bugs zoomin' pretty flowers bloomin'
sun shinin' bright, butterflies' flight
I hope you like this tune I wrote
'Cuz freedom you see ain't free indeed
'Cuz everything comes at a price
If you keep your eyes open while you jump ropin'
Everything'll be alright

So don't let the Blue Skies drop down on your contacts
And make you feel like the clown
'Cuz nothin' but blue skies—
Are only in the movies or Disneyland's Toon Town
So you have the paintbrush Executive
Pour to make the stuff go down
So dip it and aim it bright yellow
And you claim it green, orange, pink and brown

So blue skies become my skies or your skies and our skies
Whatever you might say
'Cuz it's my life, not your life
And freedom feels good today
Blue skies nothin' but—

Pam Walls

FREEDOM

As I walked outside at night
I could remember coming for the
Feeling real cool

Demon on the grass
The smell of roses

Stolen moments all alone
Feeling just one moment
Free feeling of being independent, on my own
Smell of a night that swells and aroma in haies
As I look, try to find starlight
Walking through the country quite calm
Moments letting me as I lay on the beach
Letting the waves pass over me
I felt so much liberty
The feeling of questions unknowing
As I go to the back you feel my feet in the sand
Plant a tree, what is grown in the water
The grown becomes knowing
Freedom is to know, and not knowing
To be encouraged
Freedom liberates
Lone, but not alone
Uninhibited, just flowery

Dat boy, dat girl or PS my Mom, Good Job
Wobble not. I felt great when
Sharing is caring
Gratitude without attitude
That feeling of calmness
Non non-confiding, not rushing because
Freedom when I'm not dealing

My freedom is I've seen my children
The smile on their faces
Watching those trees flow and blow in the wind
Know that their mother was on right
Able to love, man to sent

Sashae Siatui

PLANET

pushing tripping surmising in configured molecules sub-adept in baiting material blathering by
incorporated rides thronging string thorns stinting radian imaginary

I
deploying rikings enthralling like roaming dematerializing vestiges arresting models

enlisted retiming reloading reminding obliteration irradiation witness stymie reordering black unwinding
banging licking blending timing boink tinkering with inept

with blubberings initiated blindness carefully designed pleasant singings stiving baffled benign ruckings
sunshine rolling fibrillating carbon hydrogen iron plopping deriding reiteration rendering menial thoughtful
mindful being thine, thou hast maddest things wide.

Patricia Smith

Spiritually dead or alive

Would you say our nation is spiritually dead or alive?

Are we being numb every day to the spiritual principles that our forefathers installed in us?

Spiritual principles like:

Honesty, integrity, willingness, humility, commitment, perseverance, faith, trust, love,
forgiveness, selflessness, steadfastness and truth.

We sold and trade these spiritual principles for material gain, property and prestige.

We trade them for gold, cash, drugs, business and material gain.

Have no care for our brothers and sisters in this planet earth or for our children's future.

It is so sad, all we think about is get it, consume it and accumulate it now.

We do not have care for others well-being.

Spiritual principles out of the window.

Rule and rained by lower power.

We need help from a supreme being, higher power or God.

God please help us to wake up our spirit.

Aklilu Kahsai

911 AND A CRY FOR HELP

It's your fault that 911 happened.

Does anybody care?

Where Eagles dare.

Mad men's at the control.

Seeking destruction for all.

Like a 911 call.

A ball of confusion.

Echoes of the cross, the crescent

and the six point star.

Tearing up the world.

Near and far.

Talking about peace.

A piece of this. A piece of that.
The oneness of god
Have you forgotten about that?
This is a mad, mad world.
This world is angry and people are going mad.
Seeking destruction for all.
Like a 911 call.
A cry for help.

Does anybody care?
Where Eagles dare?

People are mad at all those ex-revolutionaries.
Who forgot about the revolution.
The revolution of the mind this time.
A hi-tech revolution.

I am mad as hell about 911.
Mad at the hi-jackers who hi-jack the mind.
Get high off this.
Get high off that.
Sex, money and drugs.
That's where it's at.

I am mad at the hi-jackers.
They hi-jack the prices so I can't eat.
Hi-jack the rent.
Leaving me homeless with no place to sleep.

Hi-jackers.
Hi-jacking all the time.
Hi-jack the religion with idol worshiping concepts.
Hi-jack the history books and give it to somebody else.

It's your fault that 911 happened.

Divided among yourself and divided from each other.
Until you unify as one.
You will remain under the gun.
In a society that can split the atom, travel to the moon
and clone a living cell.
Yet there is more poverty, hate and disease than ever before.
Stick your head out of the window and scream.

I AM MAD AS HELL AND I AM NOT GOING TO TAKE IT ANY MORE.

Melvin Ishmael Johnson

A TWO-WAY TRAVELER ON A ONE-WAY STREET

O Timeless Traveler.
Do you have self-delusional thoughts of madness?
Like a two-way traveler on a one-way street.
One way in.
One way out.

Packing for a trip and leaving your baggage behind.

O Time Traveler with too many moments of sadness.
That's just your self-delusional thought of madness.
Do you want some gladness?
Then dwell within and listen to the voice of the spirit.

Like a raindrop upon the ocean.
Many travelers on the ultimate trip.
Traveling both ways.
But the path to God is a one-way street.

A two-way traveler is a human spirit under the karmatic effect
Of the material world.

Your goodness transcends passion, ignorance and shed the body
Of the physical form and become One with God.

Melvin Ishmael Johnson

NIGHT RIDERS

In my hood the vampires come out at night.
They suck the life-blood of the community.
Not like Buffy,
Bella La-go-sky
or Count Dracula.

It's tic-tac-toes
and dominoes.
Processed minds and jerry curl heads.
Gang bangers.
Drug dealers
and sexual freaks.
Pagan and idol worshippers.
Su-bur-mu-nites, capitalist and child molesters.

Silent saints during the day.
Screaming madness into the night.
Junkies tripping clean out of sight.
Baby's shouts turned into whispers.
Jailers trying to cage our soul.

Whips, chain, rape, maimed.
Babies killed in the night.
People striving to endure.
To carry on the fight.
Into the night.

Teach love, not hate.
Teach the children.
To pass the baton of life.

In my hood, the vampires suck
the life-blood of the community.
They come out at night.
Not like Buffy, Bella-la-go-sky
or Count Dracula.
They come out day and night.
The vampires are those that refuse to do right.

Melvin Ishmael Johnson

"Nameless"

Its been a blessing to meet,
when my mind wanted to qui
I found harmony just from being here,
in a room with windows and one ear
The pencil is exhaling with joy,
the words come jumping once more
My freedom reaches out the door,
when once was broken as a whole
I find tears on the wall,
the people are hurting YOU ALL
Can't stop what I have to say,
even by counting zero to ten
Tell me truth I shall eat again,
the cake of love is cooking within
At home no one! At home no one!
My body frozen not of cold but of daring an ache of miserable pain
so worth, so worth, so worth it, I can die again
Shine my graph, shine; shine the graphite, shine
The sun won't mind if your name survives a load of words
just to sit down, take a breath and relax again
I JUST LOVE YOU IN AN INSTANT
I just love you away
When I'm leaving there is no one to stay
I JUST LOVE YOU IN AN INSTANT, I SAID
Something grabs me and it's life itself
If I let go, what is there?
When I let go, I come back
When I come back, I'm gone
All together there
All nowhere here

Me, my pen; pen, my body
body, my life; life my ties
ties, my spirit; spirit me now
Now, lives on, on, No, on.

Ibrahim Saba

FORSAKEN

My god-my god have you forsaken me?
My blighted life's highlights-DECEIT-DESPAIR-SELF INFLICTED MISERY.

Why do I run confused from you into killing fields to die.....By suicide?

(CHORUS)

THE STREET ARE CALLING
THE STREETS ARE CALLING
RESTLESS IRRITABLE DISCONTENT
GOTTA KEEP GETTING HIGH CAUSE THE RENT MONEY SPENT

(1)HOT FLASHES

(2)COLD SWEATS

(3)SKIN CRAWLIN SLAVE

LIL MOMMA DID'NT KNOW I WAS RIDIN THIS WAVE.

LORD! LORD! Please help me I cry,
Just save me this time I gotta get by,
Doomed to live a dope fiend death, I live by a lie.
Saved and forgiven again, one mo hustle I try

(CHORUS)

THE STREETS ARE CALLING
THE STREETS ARE CALLING
RESTLESS IRRITABLE DISCONTENT
GOTTA KEEP GETTING HIGH CAUSE THE RENT MONEY SPENT

(1) HOT FLASHES

(2)COLD SWEATS

(3)SKIN CRAWLIN SLAVE

LIL MOMMA DID'NT KNOW I WAS RIDIN THIS WAVE.

What manner of man spoils his own winning hand?

Token-Smoking- Death on the installment plan

A lonely death would be more than fair

But why death so foul to the many who care?

Ma and Pa feel disgraced

Wife and kids been, been displaced

Colleagues and friends see a terrible waste

Love and sympathy end with a putrid taste.

THE STREETS ARE CALLING

THE STREETS ARE CALLING

RESTLESS IRRITABLE DISCONTENT
GOTTA KEEP GETTING HIGH CAUSE THE RENT MONEY SPENT
(1) HOT FLASHES
(2) COLD SWEATS
(3) SKIN CRAWLIN SLAVE
(4) LIL MOMMA DID'NT KNOW I WAS RIDIN THIS WAVE.

Life worse than death is all that I know
Death on my horizon but on I go.
On Dancer and Prancer—Dander and Vixen
Christmas died long ago,
Gonna keep on fixin.

THE STREETS ARE CALLING
THE STREETS ARE CALLING
THE STREETS ARE CALLING
YOU!!!!

Kevin Michael Key

GOD DON'T LIKE UGLY

Slowly opening my surprising eyes to a world in sobriety
Life lived, one day at a time with blessed recovery.
SUPER FREAK dealin in serenity, can it be?
Me!!
No, but as a power greater than myself becomes my reality, and through my spiritual eye I begin to
see.....

That the GOD I serve—HE don't like ugly.

Monthaftermonth, yearafteryear, nightafternight
A fool!... bringing worldly weapons to a spiritual fight.
Striving to prove, "I'm a man's man",
A pauper and a puppet, to a demonic plan.
"This time it gonna be different," was my battle cry.
The hollow tunnel of my intoxicated brain, ignoring my LOVING family's cry.....
Oh no! Not again, WHY? DADDY WHY?

THE GOD I serve today gives me tranquility that's not an illusion.
Straight sober I see..... a world in confusion.
Harmony, LOVE –Faith, Spirituality killed my drug-induced delusions,
Hatred, fear and greed fuel their sick ass solutions.
Two million imprisoned and jails filled to appease
Hypocritical politicians claiming jail a fix.... for a deadly disease.
Now free from bondage I can clearly see
What THE MOST HIGH GOD WANTED ALL OUR LIVES TO BE,
CAUSE THE GOD I SERVE, HE DON'T LIKE UGLY!!!

Kevin Michael Key

FREEDOM'S SOUL

Freedom lives by grace through an understanding GOD alive in me.
Sustained through trust in a power, that even I can't see.

Faith moves everyday mountains in a true believers eye
Failure folds it's conquered head, defeated it will die,
My soul a dazzling eagle unfettered by the sky.

Dream a dream of endless LOVE
No beginnings, No "It depends."
I'm free today to give LOVE away and that's a wonderful thing
LIFE!
LOVE!
ANTICIPATION.....
THE SONG THAT FREEDOM SINGS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Kevin Michael Key

Welcome to the World Gone Mad

Everybody said she was no good for me
She was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen
Her allure was overpowering
Her sickly-sweet smell, so intoxicating

I paused-waiting for the inevitable pinch
That would awaken me from this crazy dream
I lost track of time and space
I lost track of myself

Welcome to a World Gone Mad
Welcome to a World Gone Mad

The smoke from distant fires burns bridges I have crossed,
Lessons I have yet to learn
Pieces of dreams lie scattered in the empty recesses of a once brilliant mind

Dreams of what can be
Dreams of what might have been
Drowning in the sea of reality that reminds me it is all a dream!

Welcome to a World Gone Mad
Welcome to a World Gone Mad

Tony Parker

Fortress America

Whither the land of
Oh say are you free?
From the dawn's roseate light?
Home of "da Braves and the
Scared wrapped in might
Unos protecte senior
Behind all the barricades
Let the children play
Carefree from our worries
And our pain
From our lust for revenge
Our saturnalia of carnage
Our bacchanalia bathed in blood
Behind all the federal buildings
Let there be business as usual
Let us go about our
Everyday concerns
As usual
There shall be no denial
Of the essential freedoms we share
The essential fear
Clutched behind the chosen door
Our nights crushed in
Sodden dreams
Our days a daze of hidden thoughts
Wondering about
What to worry about next
And then tomorrow

R. C. Mantley

FRIED POETRY

THE WORDS GRIND, GRIT AND GET
THE WORDS SMITE, HIT AND HIT
THE WORDS SMART, STATE AND SIT
IN THE MIND IN HIT
FRIED POETRY
FRAMED
RIBBIN
IN
EVERYDAY
DRIVE
POEMS
ON
EITHER
ROAD
YEA
FRIED POETRY...
YEAH, IT'S GRIT...

Patricia Smith

FRIED POETRY

Purple strings of chicken wings
hot neck bones colored greens and things,
Cryin all night bout the day faced ahead
soul fried poetry is my daily bread.
A lil mo pep in my step, mo glide in my stride
Likes my poetry hot! and it gots ta be fried
Rump shakin-baby makin music in my ear
Momma! Momma! look right der
James Brown-Ramsey Lewis, and my main man, Teddy Bear!
Got a stiff upper lip and some dip in my hips
We ain't goin' under, I'ma gonna tow this here ship!
What YOU SEE ,AIN'T ALL DAT I GOTS,
FRIED POETRY BE SMOKIN AND IT'S COMIN AT YA HOT!!
Hip shakin momma, you finger lickin good
What my poems don't be sayin still be understood.
So fix up yo face and mix some shrimp gumbo in,
We serving soulful fried poetry, to all our country friends

Kevin Michael Key

The meaning of Fried Poetry

Fried poetry is natural herb that intoxicates our soul.

Fried poetry allows us to act or think with out compulsion and be independent, and free.

Fried poetry opens the doors to getting well again, coming or bringing back to consciousness and revival.

Fried poetry causes and guides us to communicate or motivate thoughts and feelings deep with in.

Fried poetry gives us courage, hope or confidence to over come these mountains from our lives.

Fried poetry leads us to a road of determination and firm purpose for life.

Do you want to fry in your mind some of these ingredients like:

Freedom, recovery, independent, encouragement and determination?

Come and indulge in this natural high and gratify your wish.

Aklilu Kahsai