

Poetry Series

**David C Probst**  
**- poems -**

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David C Probst()

# Awakening

Tenderly, cautiously, I dip my thirsty toes,  
Then the ball, the sole and heel of one foot.  
My furry calf is next to plunge into the scented fluid —  
My nostrils dilate under the warm spell  
As I immerse my other leg  
And let my senses float for a while —

Like a frail old man I crouch and finally sit down,  
Catching my breath, bewildered by the bemusing haze.  
That is what it must have felt like in my mother's womb  
Ere I was dismissed into this chilly and callous world:  
Lulled, cradled, cared for  
In a cozy, lush and warm pool —

As I sit and let my weary eyes sweep the walls,  
My gaze reaches the ceiling and I let myself slide  
Backwards until the waters engulf my chin.  
Dazed by moist fragrances I sink deeper still,  
Shutting off the world around me for a moment:  
No sound, no smell — just peace and quiet —

If only I had gills to stay down here much longer  
And drift among these tranquil tides!  
I dread my return, but can no longer hold my breath —  
I pierce the elusive liquid and emerge, headfirst.  
My lungs yearn for air, I gasp —  
I'm back again, alive, revived!

Panting I rise and step out of the tub.  
I reach for the towel and rub myself dry.  
In the steamy mirror I spot the reflection  
Of a middle-aged man with greying hair  
And a mellow body shape —  
Yet eyes as vigorous and alert as a boy's.

David C Probst

# Encounter

A breeze  
Whirling through the streets,  
Engulfing me with its cold breath—  
A flash  
Reflected on the glistening pavement.  
A blink of light, gone in a second—  
A smell  
Perfuming damp dust from solid ground,  
Intoxicating me with lost memories—  
A noise  
Of hissing wheels and splashing shoes  
Rushing by in solitary unison—  
I walk  
Incognito, along these open spaces,  
Clinging to the prospect of hearing  
Your voice  
A soothing tune among such speechless crowds.  
A word from you means more to me than books—  
Your smell  
Perfuming warm lust from a solid heart,  
Intoxicating me with secret memories—  
Your look  
Reflecting your smiling soul despite the rain.  
A blink of an eye, lasting for days—  
Your breath  
Whirling through me,  
Engulfing and caressing me, sealed with  
A kiss.

David C Probst

# Lost

I woke up late this morning  
skipped breakfast and rushed to work  
my empty stomach competing  
with the roaring engine of my car.

My boss showed little understanding  
for my repeated excuse  
of my alarm clock failing to get off.

Point is, I've had no alarm clock for two days.  
Since my friend left me  
there's been no-one to wake me.  
She used to rouse me gently  
humming, singing  
faithfully, always on time.

Now that she's gone, I rely on  
my erratic body clock  
constantly resetting itself  
according to my mood and temper.

Yes, she was my loyal companion  
my PA, my metronome.  
She knew my agenda by heart  
and never let me miss an appointment.  
She could name all my friends  
knew their numbers and where they lived.

She was omniscient, unique, ubiquitous:  
my second brain, my soul, my BFF.  
I remember  
her tingly touch in my hand  
her smooth skin on my cheek  
her sensuous warmth against my leg.

All of this is gone and lost —  
but I'll find it again  
on welcoming my new friend:  
she'll come in a box by mail tomorrow.

I will unwrap her  
tell her all my secrets  
and let her lie next to me in bed  
chatting for hours  
before falling asleep eventually.

David C Probst

# Luna

It's cold outside, the night is deep  
Some lonely lights shine from afar  
All sparkling like the Evening star  
To mark where people lie asleep

The day has gone, the world lies still  
Apart from wind and waves no sound  
Of life that could the darkness fill;  
One gloomy desert all around  
That makes my heart feel weak with chill

Yet there! Behind those silent mounts  
A silver shimmer I can see  
Like that of highlit towns at night  
Yet slightly dimmer, soft and white:  
It is the Moon, Her Majesty  
About to rise from unknown grounds –

O Luna! Come and spray your flames  
On fields of dust and cold despair;  
On roofs that cover lust and shame!  
Bring light into this world of doubt  
Where people's souls get lost and shout  
For help from friends who have no names!  
Bring light to those who do not care  
And think that life is just a game!

O Moon! You seem too far away  
To watch and care 'bout worldly mourn;  
It would look odd and strange to you  
If you could see what people do:  
You'd face a paradise forlorn,  
A world that's close to Judgement Day

So then, when I behold you grace  
Your simple beauty gliding high  
I often wish I could embrace  
Your dignity, your alibi  
Your pale and ever-changing face

You don't know hate, revenge or war;  
Tranquillity and poise are yours –  
And still you'll turn on restless course  
When Man won't be no more

David C Probst



# New Year's Eve

Waves washing rocks of sore memories in futile replication  
Rendering them more slippery with each lapping.  
Church bells proclaiming the festive season  
Irrespective of wordly misery and woe.  
People pretending affinities through useless gifts  
Regardless of the recipient's real needs.  
An extorted air of peace and harmony sweeps the dirty streets  
Pulling masks of frozen smiles over teary eyes.

My chest aches, my head spins, my heart stings.  
My love sees it in my looks but asks not why. She knows.  
I'm too drained to refute her suggestion to invite some friends.  
A common meal with people who have things in common  
Can't hurt — even though all my mind craves for is some rest.

And so I give in, put on my mask,  
Pretending affinities with people I don't really know,  
Regardless of my body's real needs.  
The music played during the feast  
Washes away my sorrows for a while.  
Why spoil the evening with my selfish woes?  
My dearest ones are near me at this annual day of judgment.  
What else could I ask for? My blessing is safe.

David C Probst

# Paris

I've come here to find and pick up the flowers  
Of beauty and strength so divine  
But all I can do is walk 'round for hours  
Looking for you all the time.  
Whatever I do, whatever I see  
Looks boring and empty to me  
And the sunlight is dimmed by my fears.

I've come here to find and breathe in the glory  
Of culture and wealth so immense  
But all I can do is sit down and worry  
Trying to make up a sense.  
Whatever I see, whatever I do  
Is lifeless and sad without you  
And the moonlight is dimmed by my tears.

David C Probst

# Pharos

On top of the rock he stands, stiff and stern,  
Watching the glistening surface of the sea  
And supertankers sluggishly return  
To far-off lands that he will never see.  
The ceaseless sound of waves his ears discern,  
Whereas his neck prevents him bitterly  
From bending and catching a glimpse of the sight  
Of foaming water slosh the rock with might.

At dusk his glassy eye turns into flame,  
Perpetually keeping watch around his spine  
Like an owl that scans the dark in hope of game.  
His dazzling gaze revolves without a sign  
Of weariness or mercy for the shamed  
And ship-wrecked sailor running out of time.  
Superior, he scorns the living soul  
And stays unmoved and frigid as a pole.

His blazing beams may humble every star,  
His steady toil impress the fiercest swot,  
But none of these perfections truly mar  
The beauty of the sky, a lifetime's plot.  
Resistance is not made from stone and tar,  
But courage, conviction and action on the trot.  
And inspiration is akin to fire,  
Not fed on fuel, but intellectual desire.

David C Probst

# Prelude

It's that time of year again  
When trees flare up, then strip their gown  
And cloak the grass with withered leaves  
Like memories to be dismissed.

It's that time of year again  
When morning mist conceals our view  
And blurs our senses for the world  
Surrounding us remorselessly.

The sun, exhausted from laborious hours,  
Defers his rising day by day  
And gets his rest precociously  
Regardless of our need for warmth.

The wind, revitalised and swift,  
Caresses our hair and necks  
And sweeps the streets more thoroughly  
Than any virtuous sweeper can.

It's that time of year again  
When hope flares up, then vanishes  
And leaves us with a barren glow  
Of memories detached and grey.

It's that time of year again  
When sadness creeps into our hearts  
And blurs our senses for the good  
And fruitful world surrounding us.

Let not the fog be your true gauge:  
It dissipates eventually.  
But praise the sun that timidly  
Sneaks through the layer of mist and wins.

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# Resort

I've heard your call, I'm coming down  
This winding, smooth and silky slope,  
Down to the cabin in the woods  
Where I shall stay and rest a while.

Up here, the air is brisk and clean,  
My lungs inhale the piercing breeze;  
Down there, a cosy scent awaits me  
Enwrapping me with fiery fume.

I'm on my way now, dashing down  
The mountain's chin and neck until  
A flattening slope appeases my verve  
And leaves me time and space to meander.

Ere long, my ride accelerates anew,  
Across a narrow vale between two peaks,  
And down towards a tiny dent  
Surrounded by more dodgy snow.

And then, beyond a final hill,  
I reach the homely woods at last!  
With ease and skill I wag my way  
Straight to the hut down in the dell.

The door's ajar, the fire's on.  
You call my name and ask me in.  
My face flares up in steamy heat.  
We kiss and stay embraced, in peace.

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# Sonnet

A stormy night it was that shook the trees  
Their lofty heads dishevelled by the wind  
Like humans waking from their restless sleep  
Deprived of vigour, diffused in their minds.  
That night the blackbird clinging to its nest  
Attempting to preserve its fragile breed  
From being swept away by zephyr's jest  
Made way to nature's deadly, heedless deed.  
Abandoned and exposed thus did lie  
Two naked eggs the bird was meant to hatch  
Still warm and lulled in false security  
Yet doomed without their parent's soothing thatch -  
And yet, despite such dim imperative  
The weak one died, the stronger one survived!

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# The Pirate

Each day he does his walk along the shore,  
Each step more agonizing than the last,  
He lags his weathered frame so he can cast  
A pensive look out to the sea once more.  
The stretching pier his goal, his daily chore,  
Each balister a station of his past,  
Each plank a tree ring of his old life's mast,  
He steps out to the sea as times before.  
So there he stands, his head held high and proud,  
Defying the unruly gust ahead,  
Indulging in old memories at sea.  
Both ship and mates have vanished from the ground,  
Yet he's alive with pictures in his head  
And riches no one else will have or see.

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# Venerability

My petals, torn and rusty,  
They squeak in agony  
When nudged by careless birds,  
My only visitors.

The lightest breeze, the fiercest storm -  
They move me not.  
Heat and hail have bleached my bloom  
And seasonal strokes leave me untouched.

My strength has vanished with the people.  
With broken arms, a weathered shaft,  
I have become a monument,  
A witness to some long-gone glory.

Across the field I watch them whirl  
Relentlessly, unflinching,  
And listen to their self-complacent,  
Heedless hum and purr.

Their impeccable triple spikes  
Mince and mix the air,  
While I, their squalid ancestor,  
Catch cold in want of motion.

And yet, despite my withered force,  
Despite my wrinkled shape and face,  
I will remain and not be moved,  
For lack of funds and interest.

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## Via Podiensis

Step by step I climb the steep ascent,  
Panting, sweating, longing for some rest.  
Feet that hurt and eyes that scrutinize  
Every inch of stone I tread across.

Pilgrims' traces grace the worn-out path:  
Crumbling cairns rebuilt continuously,  
Names and crosses carved in dateless beams -  
Hopeful messages addressed to God.

Who am I to walk so carelessly,  
Gracelessly along this sacred path?  
Where's my faith, my awe, my humbleness?  
What has made me so insensible?

Crucifixes are religious art,  
Shells but lovely souvenirs to me.  
Pious scribblings are but bad graffiti -  
Artless signs of passage done in haste.

Mother Mary is no use to me -  
Virgin blood runs through my daughters' veins.  
Life can be a burden in itself -  
What can Eve or Adam add to this?

Grateful am I, not deceived by tales,  
Thankful to be healthy and alive.  
Sweat and pain are part of every life,  
Joy and hope need no religious bait.

Drained but glad I reach the mountain's top,  
Look around and quench my worldly thirst.  
Awestruck I take in the splendid view  
Jesus left unnoticed to my right.

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