

Poetry Series

Ayn Timmerman

- poems -

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Ayn Timmerman

I'm a painter by trade, but when I started flunking chemistry at college, I started writing poems to stay awake. Its a good way to capture the feeling in a moment, and to record what happens in life. I am addicted to reading, and my best friend (who is a writer & poet, who I have yet to read but have faith) re-introduced me to poetry at some point during the school year. Until I met him, I thought poets were extinct. Now I know better, and enjoy reading and writing poetry.

My favorite poets are Jim Carroll, Gary Snyder, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and Henry D. Thoreau (Who wrote poetry before Walden) . I have several writing classes this fall, one of which includes poetry submissions, so I welcome your comments and constructive criticism.

I hope you enjoy reading these as much as I do writing them. I've got a notebook full, so I try to cull it down to what other people might like also. Most are themed either about human nature, real nature, college, the creative process, or random things that actually happen to me.

A Collection of Buildings Surrounding a Library

Take this institution in the name of the
unspeakable nameless, driven here by
every conceivable shred of reason,
and for two weeks I believed in it.
By the third I picked up on
the futility, which may yet prove
a mistake, but by doubting,
I question more. Park-like lawns and
even-spaced trees disguise the quiet
subjection the people take, so that
at the end of their stay, they
will be truly conditioned for a
similar treatment by the land of
economy and commerce. Where is
my holy place? Where can I seek
refuge and shelter from the false?
To dive into the pillars of culture
and virtue, unscathed and unswayed?
Answer the question if you can, but
the response will be incorrect no
doubt, contrived by a lifetime of
here say and examples nailed to
the gates. This being the case,
I would rather subject myself to the
heartless throngs than to die without
a cause.

Ayn Timmerman

A Contest of Wits

Slinky swayback stray,
your beady eyes fixed,
I move, you step
crushing earthballs in
your wake, agitating
dust molecules
looking for a
handout or someone's
dropped garbage,
this has been a battle
of wits- can't you
read the signs?
Your belly rubs the
ground, bloated by
years of charred meat,
and still you are hungry,
an over-fed beggar
no longer able to
pull it off.
Please, stop
this contest,
we should reach an
understanding-
just go home.
(You grin, sideglance,
and move on with
silent feet,
laughing to yourself.)

Ayn Timmerman

A Quiet Mind

Lift up the cover and look
at the things scattering,
hidden, secret things;
the way insects
search for escape
when rocks are upturned.

This is not a quiet mind.

Once,
I thought that I may have seen
the door that a few things
do manage to slip away,
right on through.

But there is still time,
I have to believe,
to share vital information
that could change
worlds,
lives,
and history.

That is precisely why
I refuse to carry a watch.

Ayn Timmerman

After the Fourth, Nothing Really Happens.

Boredom sets in only if you let it,
when you watch a robin trot by
and realize just how dumb a state bird it really is,
but the maples are yellow in the light,
with leaves applauding the cicada's buzzing,
paying homage to another fine day in July.

The breeze sighs in the forest top,
which makes the green ocean wave,
and releases a shower of premature acorns
which are scorned by the squirrels
because they are sour and unripe,
but it is alright with them.

The sky reflects on the lake,
and not only is it up side down, but looks cheesy
with fleecy clouds and a perfect blue tint,
indicating that we needed rain yesterday
which would make the leaves uncurl.
All of this I think about.

Ayn Timmerman

An Introvert's Hell

The dark door is outlined,
a pinprick in the center,
& voices in the hall-
above and arround and outside,
sulfuric glow of a streetlight
on the wall,
cars and talking over the sound
of the old anxieties coming back
but I refuse to let it.
If I give in now,
on the first night,
I know I will snap shut again
and have to deal with it internally.
So I write in the dark,
while the peephole stares back-
If I look through it,
what will I see in the dark?

Ayn Timmerman

Blighted

Push your hand in,
to feel the soft spot
white at the edges,
mold in the damp
fending off tears,

and something else.

Push too hard
and break the barriers,
feel the rank internal mush
and clench it in your palm-

raw emotion.

Ayn Timmerman

Break Loose

I am stuck in a daily circle,
a routine that limits my
energy since I am a part of
a cycle conforming to
everything I stand against
the wall and follow orders
allowing a single bullet to
explode in my forehead
in the place where ideas are
spawned, flowing downwards
through my neck, my chest,
my arms, and out the
pen or brush or whatever
is used to express these
explosions and their aftermath
that plagues me, ideas and
visions worthy of bragging about
around the water cooler, but
most I will keep to myself
to enjoy again at a later
date when hopefully I find
a way to shear through the
circle and break loose.

Ayn Timmerman

Cerulean Blue

With one finger
I paint a
Cerulean blue streak

from the center
of my forehead
down to the tip
of my nose

for no reason
other than as an
iconic memorial for the
hue of the Mediterranean sea

that I have not
seen personally yet,
so I pay homage
from afar, in a

celebration of an
open third eye,
an open passport
and an open mind

with a roving foot
and a riveted foot
which to heed?

Ayn Timmerman

Conventions

The conversation always begins with
a question, sometimes asking what
happened to it, whatever changed?
But the frustration was too great
to bear, so it was crumpled up
and lit by a single ignited
match, or wrapped in chains
so it landed softly on the
bottom, was cut with
scissors and a knife, held
too close to the fire so
it melted in my hands,
leaving only an occasional
memory, meaning when I'm
old, I will be able to say
that moss grows towards
culture, and civilization has
forgotten what a tree is, or
even how to go about the
cultivation of individual things
not found in the file, out of
conventions sponsored by uniform
thinkers, so that when the
memory stirs, sadness follows,
possibly because I saw that
all signs pointed towards it,
right before my eyes, and I
kept walking,
walking down the path not made for
my shoes, but I listened
to the wrong speakers
and forgot to be true
to my soul, which died
the day I could not remember
what it all meant.

Ayn Timmerman

Currency

Dog-tired worn August
moves poplars like
silver dollars flashing,
green currency that is
worthless unless you
have paid your
debts to the muse.

Ayn Timmerman

Did You Catch It?

Abstractions of me,
a view from every
possible angle will
reveal more than
what meets the
approval of the
group, for distortions
are not always
readily accepted,
and often prove
confusing if seen
from a compromised
prospective audience.

Never the less,
I bask in the
grudgingly indulgent
applause, and give
another spin just
in case you missed
the meaning of
this message
the first time.

Ayn Timmerman

Ecology

I.

The sun has brought
the temperature up to
lukewarm, inviting
rusty-green algae to bloom
and be stirred, dripping
wet on the end of
a stick held in the hands of
a little boy,
who drops the stick
in damp sand, perfect conditions
for one gene coded wrong
to send down one
exploratory root, while the
others die in the heat,
a single white thread followed
by others, while a water germ
that was grazing in the mass
finds itself on dry land,
which presents new dilemmas
to be overcome by locomotion,
and takes advantage of the
new land algae under the sun,
and divides itself, populating this new place,
until the green scum
climbs upward upon others,
and the germ sprouts legs
that can climb the stalk,
which increases in size
each year, as the germs,
germ no longer, but animal,
preying on the algae-plant
under the heat of the sun,
while the pool dries up
to the boy's disappointment.

II.

Driving by the shore
on a moonlit summer night,
the teen finishes his beer
and the empty can hurtles
out the window, caught in a
breeze, and rolls to a stop
next to a clump of dune grass
in the sand, which blows
against the can, immobilizing it,
allowing a small mouse
to stuff it with dried grasses,
which create a soft place
to rear a family, in the shelter

of the aluminum, which it returns to
each year, creating a population
of can-dwelling beach mice,
occasionally falling prey to sea-hawks,
dogs, and the tires on the road near the
shore and the pool with the stick
lying nearby in the bug filled grass.

III.

Miles upshore, near a city,
a man follows orders
and pulls the lever,
releasing thousands of gallons
of tainted water into the lake,
which diffuses downshore, near
where the hawk built a nest
high up in the tree, overlooking
a litter strewn beach,
offering access to mice and fish,
fish that filter the water through gills,
trapping oxygen and
chemicals in their veins, which
build up in the muscles and
fins that the hawk feeds to his mate
lying patiently on eggs
with paper thin shells, which
will break on the next rough landing,
exposing premature chicks
to the elements, and below
the mouse feeds her brood
in the shelter of the metal,
lined with the grass from near the
pool, while miles upshore,
a man turns on the television
to watch the discovery channel
while his family settles in for the night,
tired from a long day spent at the beach,
the same beach he played as a boy.

IV.

He turns to his wife,
sunburned and glowing;
'there used to be hawks there.'

Ayn Timmerman

Farm Sketch

Driving in the farmland
that silo belongs in
Piza- I hear they
have a thing for
leaning towers.
In Conklin, all we
have is lazy farmers.

Ayn Timmerman

Feel It, Believe It

I pause, each time one brushes by,
determining the force of the message,
processing sometimes obscure meanings that
may alter the entire course of events,
leaving me powerless to change.

Line and form dance before me,
with color lending mood to the scene,
objects leap with purpose, attempting
sometimes to impart their reason on me.

Matter constantly streams by, unseen,
but faith and instinct tell you something
is there, that you believe without the
benefit of knowing why the atoms take up space.

Minute particles dock in respectively learned
positions that identify with an object,
also unseen but evoking memory,
hunger pangs for something from your past.

The trick is to go slow, savor it
and not bolt it down thoughtlessly,
and also to be thankful regardless
of the effort it took to make it.

The patter of drops is sad, like the
wind sighing above you, as bells toll
in celebration and life, we are
blessed with the thought of other's thoughts.

From some cranial recesses the flow
of unconscious urgings and spontaneous
convulsions act as a collaboration of the
soul and heart, driving a few towards madness.

Some lust for knowing why we have the
ability to question and wonder, why do we
feel and act, the reason for hope
fear joy sorrow and even, why we
are cursed to express this to the
ones tied down and unknowing,
unenlightened to the reason for everything

Ayn Timmerman

G. R.

In Calder's city
you test yourself by
parallel parking on Lyon Hill,
which bisects the old homes
of the lumber barons,
three blocks from
a less gilded 'hood,
and steel beams
stab the sky on Medical Hill
where someday they will cure cancer
based on the tissues
of white lab rats,
while out on the sidewalk
people pass by to their places,
looking to the right and the left
but never right at you,
so they can complete their daily circle
on the surprisingly clean streets,
free of 99.9% of homelessness
so close to City Hall,
where the flags are
at half mast
because in the West Side
someone shot a cop,
and the plaza is empty,
swept clean,
awaiting the next festival
that is to take place
in Calder's City.

Ayn Timmerman

I Been Down So Long

The russack is not for sale,
holy holy holy rabbit's feet,
Feta cheese and lamb,
Grossos is an anarchist,
(Silent G) wandering in
the void of
Cornell.

Green knee-socks slipped,
A hunting horn on the wall,
Cuba is for lovers, but
then, so is Hell.

Sow the seeds and study
your physics;

In the end it all looks up.

Ayn Timmerman

Insects

Japanese beetle lace
hangs as delicately
as moth-eaten curtains
shrouding the field
where I overstepped
the other hacks
and despite this by
findings were inconclusive.
No one can be
sure of maggot-eaten
haunches off a grasshopper,
it is not their nature.

The bluebottle hospital
is overflowing.

Ayn Timmerman

Masses

Low buzzing
car and voice
pollution of space
anonymous
in a crowd
loud,
fickle,
looming faces,
heavy,
broken,
daily races,
measure up,
pay me no heed
while I compress.

Ayn Timmerman

Nukes

One hundred years from now,
we will probably all be ash
drifting across the landscape.

When I picture earth for
my grandchildren, fire death,
and ruin
are the only things to be
certain of.

Green will be a memory,
life devoid of higher purpose,
lonely scavengers sort
through the rubble of man.

All of this is certain.
until the last ray of sun
disappears behind the haze,
and the final apocalyptic curse
is uttered from between cracked lips.

Heavy clouds will flood the world,
washing away the filth,
clearing the way for a new age,
all at the press of a button.

Ayn Timmerman

Paths

I.
Pick up on the thread,
follow it from end to end,
leading in to a wild place
undiscovered save for in the mind,
where you get confused
over motives,
used for your strengths,
picked first or second or third
to play in the game,
where the rules are not set,
but made up- so it goes,
and only a few see the
value of this, and the
consequence,
the gravity that comes with
this law of indefinable
momentum that takes you
with it;
ride it out or brace for
the impact,
but choose wisely.

II.
Balk at the spine of a horse,
shy away and you might
just overlook the intent
of the line drawn from
one side to the other.
The groan of gears will
set the undertones for
the next performance,
set to play whether you
are prepared or not
for what it yearns
to say.

III.
The spool unwinds,
the road spins away
faster- you can almost
hear it screaming,
a beckoning siren call
that draws you in
to better understand
and hear what it
has to tell you.
So listen, and you'll
know.

Ayn Timmerman

Phobia?

I'm not sure if this is in my head, but-
today a man talked to me
in rehearsed tones;
legs as thin as the cigarette
hanging limp from lips that pout,
blue jeans cut-off shirt,
pocket square with the pack of afore mentioned cigs,
sandy hair
shifting blue eyes that noticed the close proximity
of other people,
eyes that took it all in,
assessed the situation,
poised in waiting,
it is all planned out;
ready to steal, ready to rape.

So lock the windows,
bar the doors-
keep the dog nearby!
tell someone where you are
because soon you'll be found
in a blue tarp deep in the woods
by a german shepard
trained to sniff out the scent of death,
and they will find wild warnings,
frantically written,
a license plate number even,

and you watch
as a red chevy pulls slowly away,
and today you are not in it.

Ayn Timmerman

Radio

With a flick of a switch
I discovered the entire
world had jumped without me.

The first station began talking
of solid ground, hope, and
Him.

Trying again, this time
bombings, genocide,
and numbers of dead.

Both stations hours before-
were streaming hit after hit,
wailing of timeless emotions
of love, rage, and addiction.

Now, in its place, testimony
of the existence of heaven and hell,

where before brainless notes
half-heartedly stimulated a numb mind.

Then I moved the switch
to FM and forgot
what I heard just then.

Ayn Timmerman

Reconstruction

Broken soul glass
works the shards in deep
a guarded heart forgets
how to beat in the
noise of silence.

The more I lean against
this, the harder it will be
to pull back into myself,
and forgive and forget,
complete my business and
leave me to my thoughts.

A sigh, an understatement,
so I roll these lost lids
back and strain to see
my own reflection,
but it snuck away when
I forgot just who it was.

Piecing it together takes
as long as it will,
and pierces the sides when
needle sharp edges move
back together.

The process is harder to
reverse and revise than
it was to identify the
sources and reasoning.

I forgot just how this goes,
how the truth is sometimes
fake, just how easily
we loose sight and dropp it
in the confusion.

Ayn Timmerman

Reverse Genesis

On that day, the
trees will lean
gladly into the axe,
birds will have the
ability to fly through
closed windows and
somewhere in Iowa a
kid will throw stones
at the passing cars
until one stops and
he runs away.

On that day, the
sun will not move
but stay fixed
in the sky, and
every bicycle in
China will break,
halting the economy,
and a flower will
bloom for the
first time in
a hundred years.

On that day, the
wind will rage
though the sky
is clear and blue,
a ship will sink
and none survive,
and the long shadow
of a tower
will betray it.

On this day, the
dogs will howl
for joy at the
sight of all of
the dead cats,
and every oil well
will run dry but
continue to pump
in vain because
they are beheaded
snakes in the ground.

On this day, the
lonely Alaskan moose
will bellow a call
that draws to it
a million moths
that mistake it

for a light,
and nothing, no
animal, human, or
seed will be born,
no new life begin.

On this day, the
last word will be
uttered from the lips
that witnessed it,
the lips that are
still moving silent-

when the last
light goes out
in the world.

Ayn Timmerman

Sheep

Bone weary lie a while, still
counting sheep in the ceiling tiles,
monotonous, long-faced bleaters,
legs flailing over a cobbled fence
that separates fact from fiction
and falls flat at the barest
nick of a hoof, so they mingle
and no distinction can be made.

Ayn Timmerman

Sometimes I Can Hear The Confusion and Sorrow

The television buzzes and pops
and the dishes loom in their piles
while the dog looks up from
her empty water dish,
the laundry is folded in sorted piles
yet to be claimed by the household,
and the internet is on
so nobody calls,
and under the three remaining bulbs
a yellow light is cast,
thrown among crusty plates,
and the papers are spread out
in categorized piles to show
if we can afford to just throw away
the spaghetti hardening in the pot,
while the cat yowls at the doorknob,
but nobody hears
over the sound of things falling apart
while the television drones on
about tornadoes.

Ayn Timmerman

Step One:

On the subject of being alone, I think one should take note of the heartbeat tempo deep in the ears of those who listen to silence for silence's sake. They are lucky indeed, they not only hear it fluxing in the canal, but those that heed it feel a rush in their thoughts, and a quickening of pace that moves you to calm your fears and move on to the next topic. The agenda of every day is to take it, crumple it into a ball, and make a perfect hook shot into some unlikely target.

The applause is all in your head, a team of one that can do anything, short of outright miracles. If ever you are approached by another, promptly take out the prepackaged image they have manufactured for you on the subject of you, and torch it. Let them watch it burn, then smile and say it was an accident, though you know full well the intentions of your heart. When they get the picture, tune back in and wait for further rhythm and instruction.

Once you have made your decision, proceed on to Step Two.

Ayn Timmerman

The Bird

Society holds the bird
in greedy hands,
cupped palms together
hidden from view,
while a muse in rags
spews jazz upon the multitudes
from a concrete stage,
his cup collecting spare change
and invokeing fleeting sparks
of appreciation
for a man with a gift
who, like all
creates only for themselves
and their own joy,
the soul drives them mad,
with visions of nirvana,
and the crowd shuffles by
some leaving a token in passing,
or a smile,
which is worth more in the end,
when you ask yourself
if the bird is
alive or dead.

Ayn Timmerman

The Change (Fall)

A cold stone sun,
white disc behind
a gray haze-

birds are flocking
in safe masses,
with odd haste
under wing,
early,
& rushed,

at midday, traces
of dawn clung
to the blue earth,
but no rain fell,

the chill is early;
it is only August,
a time of heat
and humid
heaviness,

but this year,
there is orange in the trees,
and the sun
is hidden,

turning it's back
on a cooling month.

Ayn Timmerman

The Horsewoman (For Ellen)

You have honored a timeless bond,
from the time when plastic legs
sounded on the floor, you heard
a tempo that you never lost.

Even in the gully wood,
you always had your hands
on reins, shaking a fetlock
so you could better see
the jump ahead.

Then, when I gave up and
moved on, your time came,
and you proved your equine roots-
that you could make ears heed
and a creature of air and
taunt glossy hide obey.

Through the leather, I watched as you
talked softly down the lines,
weighing your assurance on a bit-
it was magic to watch, and I couldn't
understand what you said.

Patience is something four hooves
and a rebellious snort teaches,
and you learned, and worked through
with kindness and a soft
reassurance in your voice &
under your palms.

You tamed the untamable,
while unleashing a dream and
creating a song in the beats,
the creak of leather, the
moving poetry in the
graceful legs, the arched neck.

Under your eye, they listened,
you are the bringer of the
kind word, the right scratch,
and the grass-filled hands.

Against all odds, the bets
were off, and you proved
that your heart is pure,
your soul is kind, and
the light in soft and intelligent eyes
can speak to a true horsewoman.

Ayn Timmerman

The Meaning of the Word

Shake me-
empty gourd with
dried out seeds,

something
missing the point,
but it drove right in.

In the same state,
for the time being-
distances reel it in.

I'm moving but to where?

Lonely-
does not good
but a letter?
Where are you?

Here I sit,
a new place,
but yet still it is all alike.

So I hope
to accomplish
anything.

I'm down.

Trod on over-
the mute form
on the floor;

easily ignored,

but has much to say.

You stole the key,
and now I'm going.

Ayn Timmerman

The Way Back

I know what I'm not,
and that is half the battle-

completely uphill, hurtling rocks,
liquid lava, fire and brimstone,
confetti landmines and snarling dogs,
internal bullets scream past
and I holler in response.

I will not be beaten,
despite obstacles desperate steps
onward ever onward,
in blind faith blinded
by a promise.

Hostile opposition will be met,
pushing on and up and out
of that hell.

What is worse torture than
forsaking yourself?
Purposefully driving a blade
through my own chest,
bleeding out to hide in the
red foam that frothed from the hole?

I see now that a pose is
almost as bad as suicide,
and the repercussions fight me
every step of the way,
out of the bleak,
clawing my way through

so I may stand as myself
and breathe a sigh of relief.

Ayn Timmerman

To The Reader

To the reader of this poem-
a face in the mass,
with stony gaze, or hollow eyes,
or blessed with a far-away look;
can you see what I place before you?

Color and shape mean nothing without
a firing of imagination on your part,
so take these as you will-
derive no meaning that you cannot defend,
no feeling that you can comprehend, no-

not unless I give you the pieces.
Then you build it all alone;
the yellowed light of the golden hour,
or internal sounds inaudible to other ears,
the sinking and loss of the very soul that beats.

Sole, sole, not to walk over, but maybe,
something holy everyone starts with,
but most misplace,
a whitish vapor inside that
eludes electron rays and the
most sophisticated viewfinders
crafted by human thought.
Can we deny it's existence?
If a tree falls...?

I lost or sold or traded mine,
but found it slightly used
and much folded and wrinkled-
has this happened to you?
Did you ever want to be a maker of music,
a saver of lives, or to leave your
footprints in the white powder of the moon?

What is your passion?
Something that sparks the soul
and makes it jump with life,
a power to act.
Have courage, you are not the first nor the last
to fight this war, some die and others would
feel dead.

But all would give anything to understand why.
So reader! The choice is yours.

Ayn Timmerman

Yeah, I Still See It.

Why do we dream if
our thoughts mean nothing?

Why do we cling if
they are to be ripped away-
a favored toy and
we outgrew it?

Question all,
and nothing makes sense.

Refuse to accept this
at all costs or

you might pay,
and in the end

be spent wholly
with nothing left to hold on to,

so you drown and sink
in the trap the majority
finds themselves unable to

escape
to the places they came from,

a result of a memory
that haunts their thoughts,

a scattering, maddening
in the forehead and soul.

leaking into the vision
as a reflection of

a dream.

Ayn Timmerman