

## Poetry Series

**Khristian E. Kay**

**- poems -**

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### **Khristian E. Kay (1962 -)**

Khristian E. Kay is a storyteller; a teacher/poet. Generally considered to be controversial in subject matter because he pursues knowledge as the end all of existence. Khristian's work often stretches the limits of complacency digging into the cracks as it were of what constitutes idealism. While his work appears political and often satirical he utilizes the words as metaphorical rubber bullets: painful and bruising and only lethal at close range. See <A HREF='http://www.khristianekay.com'>khristianekay.com</A>

Although a native of Milwaukee, WI and a systematic product of the inappropriately named 'MidWest' Khristian has lived in many western states and tends to feel a homesickness for the Pacific Northwest. A vocal advocate of education versus schooling, the nobility of educators versus 'teaching', Kay continues within the K-12 and post secondary classrooms teaching everything from English, Science, Multi-Media and Film, the Humanities, IS&T, math, art and just about everything in between. He has performed and lectured all over the country. Kay received a Foundation for the Arts Grant in 1997 to produce a rap version of Othello as written and performed by his adjudicated students at the state run boy's school.

Kay has edited and produced many small press periodicals and journals, and currently oversees the non-profit organization 'KnowB4No.org' An organization dedicated to expanding the education and knowledge base of people concerning the risks of children and the transmission, prevention of AIDS, HIV, and STDs. He has written several books for teachers on teaching diverse student populations, including 'The 3 'Tells' and is also the author of several books and cds of original poetry and spoken word.

#### **Works:**

Gringo's (1991 Morgan Press)  
The Furthering Adventures of Sonny Baretoes (1992 Morgan Press)  
Highway Tourette's by Proxy (2005 SFUMATO Books)  
I wouldn't pay to hear you sing (2007 BadGrrl Press)

### **36 months 3 weeks 4 days 17 and a half hours**

36 months 3 weeks 4 days 17 and a half hours  
I sit here my hat in hand  
this hat worn back and tilted to the side  
made me the dashing - the mack  
the baddest brother on the block  
how stupidly it sits wringing in my hands  
how stupid I sit

36 months 3 weeks 4 days 17 and a half hours

inside  
inside I ain't nobody's bitch

I hold no markers I pay my debts no one is going to own me  
inside I killed a man

I didn't even know him  
with my bare hands these hands  
wringing this stupid hat  
I sit here and I want to say  
'nobody owns me'  
he never did me wrong  
but I killed him cause I hold no markers  
I pay my debts

36 months 3 weeks 4 days 17 and a half hours

look I'm a petty B and E  
broken windows and cheap locks  
I'm not even good at it  
that's why I was in  
a drugstore cowboy for my  
girls desire fix her up fixed her good  
I hold no markers  
I ain't nobody's bitch

they tell me down at the state building  
that a job application is a legal document  
if I lie on it I break the law  
and I go back inside  
if I tell the truth

when I tell the truth  
you dismiss me file me away  
like yesterdays trash - I know what  
you think of me  
of course I do  
but I ain't nobody's bitch

I fought my way  
the petty b & e thief  
37 stitches to close up my face

another 25 across my chest  
3 screws in my jaw  
a pin in my fist  
inside I ain't nobody's bitch

but I sit here begging  
my hat in hand begging  
from a marker from some fat f#ck  
sitting sweating in his ill fitting  
bathrobe  
telling me I owe him

I owe him for this chance  
this opportunity

36 months 3 weeks 4 days 17 and a half hours

inside I ain't nobody's bitch  
outside  
out here  
I'm everybody's bitch

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## **A month of Sundays or I wish I were dead**

It's been a month of Sundays since you touched me  
Even longer since you called me by my name  
It seems so far off outside of us  
Inside I'm still the same

There was a time when you wouldn't leave me  
When you trembled in my arms instead  
It's been a month of Sundays  
that I wish I had been dead

It's been a month of Sundays since you loved me  
Months longer since we danced  
Since we held each other beneath the stars  
Since you reached out for my hand

I wish you'd say you love me I wish you'd find me here  
Recognize my visage through the glass  
It's been a month of Sundays  
that I've paid for this chance

It's been a month of Sundays since you kissed me  
Your lips now pursed in rage  
Your eyes cursed in their vacancy  
Hiding in the fragrance of your hair

It's been a month of Sundays since you touched me  
It's me here inside waiting  
Waiting for you to seek me out  
To take me with your calling

I wish you'd find me sitting here staring from this porch  
Break me from the empty of this bed  
It's been a month of Sundays  
that I wish I had been dead

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## **Adventures of Nerd Boy: Christmas Eve, Milwaukee 2001**

I was standing in her doorway  
through guile, sophistication or seduction  
I knew I was taking advantage of her situation  
She smoked a lady menthol from the kitchen  
her waitress uniform still smartly crisp  
after a long tenuous shift  
I pulled out 2 bills from my clip and placed them  
on the Formica counter in front of her

"I'll pretend to be your husband if  
You pretend to be my wife tonight..."  
Her face twisted from curious whimsy but  
it was nothing she hadn't heard before  
She snubbed her smoke into a dirty plate  
and stuffed the bills down her ample cleavage  
she wagged her finger in my direction almost  
in resignation she said "OK, follow me"  
and I followed her to the bathroom  
she wiggled her pantyhose down  
around her soft shapely thighs  
then hopped up onto the vanity slowly rolling  
the nylon off her long languid legs  
seductively tapping her feet to my  
shoulders, chest and chin

I moved to embrace myself between those legs  
And she dropped down into my arms and turned  
her back dropping her hose into the sink and turning  
on the tap her eyes catching mine in the mirror

"You cheap duplicitous bastard!  
I suppose we're staying in all night too?  
You could at least take me out for a nice dinner."  
She turned off the tap and it continued to drip,  
"And can't you do something about this leak?  
For months drip-drip-drip all night long"  
She let down her hair and turned to me brushing it purposefully  
"Oh that's right you are too busy gallivanting about  
to take care of the essentials like a real man -  
we wouldn't have to live like this  
if you would have done something with your life...  
oh I know - If only: You had a break - If only:  
They appreciated you - If only: Daddy had accepted you...  
Why don't you do something useful and take the garbage out -  
I'm sure you could be successful at that..."

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## **Adventures of Nerd Boy: Little Redheaded Girl**

This is kind of like that experience  
that time back at school with Linda Wesner  
You know...

Linda: she was that pretty redheaded girl  
y'know the one who was the raison d'être and bane  
of Charlie Brown's existence  
We all know that girl  
our own pretty redheaded girl  
Maybe she wasn't Linda maybe she didn't have red hair  
and maybe she wasn't a girl at all  
maybe she was that suave chevalier guy - Phil Lee  
The highschool boy who was the raison d'être  
or bane of your existence

This was when the pretty redheaded girl  
smiled at me and so I go to school  
and make a fool out of myself everyday  
because the pretty redheaded girl smiled at me  
And now I'm trying to get her attention  
And really she is a sweet girl  
not meaning to be devious or anything  
and she smiles more laughs at my jokes  
she says something in passing like  
"If I didn't have a boyfriend blah blah blah"  
Then one day she doesn't have her boyfriend  
and I hear this news and go like  
"oh yes! "

In school I do my best jester routines  
for the pretty redheaded girl who smiled at me  
And she sees me and begins to wonder about  
all of this attention being lavished and why  
am I being so weird and then  
it dawns on her: "If I didn't have a blah blah blah"  
And she gets to thinking  
'Did he think I was serious? '  
No? Yes? No... Because see  
she wasn't serious  
this was just something pretty redheaded girls say  
to weird nerd boys  
Knowing it would never come true  
Everybody knew it would never come true  
except obviously nerd boy  
But everyone knows that pretty redheaded girls  
Don't date nerd boys  
Especially nerd boys even though  
They order corsages  
and even though there were two tickets for the  
"You light up my life" or  
"Castles in the Sand"  
themed prom everybody knew

and even though dad had put on his  
best cardigan the hunter green one with the  
burgundy and tan stripe down the left  
side with that crazy 1950s be bop stitching  
fluer de lis everybody knew

I mean why in the world would he ever  
think that she: the pretty redheaded girl  
would find him a suitable suitor  
I mean really  
So even though the pretty redheaded girl  
who smiled at you was a good girl  
(except for that one time under the bleachers with Phil  
But that was just the one isolated incident)  
And she wasn't mean  
And she wasn't devious  
she realizes that she needs to distance herself  
that she needs to devise a plan  
to make nerd boy go away  
since nerd boy could not read the social clues  
And the signs and followed her about  
nipping at her ankles  
She had to distance herself from him

and even though his best friends were hiding behind  
the evergreen shrubs next to the porch  
but out of the light  
and mom whipped up her special  
simulated crab dip with cream cheese and Raasch's  
homemade cocktail sauce fresh from the jar  
nerd boy knew  
that when she made this compliment  
It was not even a half-hearted gesture  
Because everyone in the world knows  
that she would never go out with a nerd boy  
especially nerd boy

so even though he had rented his burgundy tux  
with the hot pink piping from the Sears "Fine Young  
Gentleman's Store" and buffed his  
burgundy and cream platform saddle shoes  
nerd boy knew he wasn't going to the prom  
with the pretty little redheaded girl or  
anyone else

And therefore when the pretty redheaded girls say  
"If I didn't have a boyfriend I would be all over you."

It's just something seems safe to say

yeah this is kind of like that.

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## **Adventures of Nerd Boy: Sabbatical**

I met this woman once  
In a bar in Spokane  
I told her I was a runaway monk  
A long story about taking a sabbatical  
From seminary school  
To hitchhike around the country  
It was a safe cover as any

She took me home

Sometime around noon she rolled over  
Sized me up from under her flop of  
Blonde hair

She sighed  
"I should have gone to work..."

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## **Adventures of Nerd Boy: Them broads was easy**

She called me a misogynist

Me of all people!  
I love women!

I have always been a vocal supporter of women's rights  
I still have my ERA buttons!  
I marched in their damn parades  
went to their male-bashing feminist poetry readings  
My friends would say "Hey!  
Come on out with us were going to the club,  
pick up some chicks..."  
I'd say "no thanks  
I'm going to a woe-myn rally"

They'd shake their heads and spend their cash  
I never spent a dime  
Ok maybe a book or two or another pin  
But I never went home alone

Funny thing about those male bashing feminists  
they always wanted to be on top.

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## **Adventures of Rat Boy**

you were always a queer little boy  
I mean that in the archaic sense of  
my own historical lexicon meaning  
unique different extra-ordinary the  
words I grew up with as opposed  
to the name you now embrace  
with your tales of super human feats  
and exploits of speed and flight  
and visibility you aligned yourself  
with rats I think you identified  
with the darkness the scurry of time  
and their gentle intelligence  
your flock of hair dark in your eyes  
some or another blanket tied about  
your shoulders derring-do in your  
diapered shorts as you'd land from  
the couch with a "da-ta-da!  
I am Rat Boy! "

now you are not so little  
you are not the queer little boy I  
could hold in the palm of my hand  
rocking you throughout your sleepless  
nights afflicted by some fear or sickness  
that only I could subside by rocking  
and singing low sad songs about your  
blue eyes pale in the twilight  
perhaps this was the darkness you tried  
to hold onto for so many years  
slumbering against my neck  
my hand at once soldiering you and  
caressing your tiny back secure  
and wanted and loved

no you no longer are that little boy  
you are a man forthright still queer  
however now it is on your terms  
the colloquial mantle you carry about you  
in your furthering defense of truth and  
righteousness of becoming  
erect and defined substantiated  
in a society callous and afraid

you are not that queer little boy  
you are my son still wanted and loved

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## **Alienation**

I stand to the side of you  
a spectator in your life  
like an embarrassment  
peering over the railing  
through the fence  
for a glimpse of your life like  
an intrusion but I am not  
one of your friends who laugh  
and play at your words  
even you do not invite  
me include me chastising  
my behavior attitude  
my life which you claim  
you envelope like shadows  
along with your own  
like a part of you but a part you  
leave hanging from the mirror  
with my pictures  
like my clothes that shame you  
I shame you with my heart  
hung out on my sleeve  
and that you strip from me  
to hang in the closet  
like a memory sad and forgotten

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## **An Honest Man**

An Honest Man

You say you want an honest man  
that all of the good men  
are either taken, gay, or  
still living with their mother

You say you want a man who  
speaks the truth a man  
who is strong  
though you see strong men as  
dominating arrogant

You say you want a man  
who opens up to you  
a man who is  
not afraid to cry  
in front of you  
even though you find  
emotional men weak

You want a man who listens  
with compassion,  
with empathy and then  
speaks your mind

You say you want a man who  
will not lie  
A man you can count on  
a man you can trust  
Who will not complain

You say you want an honest man

No you don't

You are an incarnation of Diogenes  
seeking the pure  
the chaste the discriminate  
you are a cynic  
- for men and women  
live a life  
dictated by taboos  
by governed and made up  
rules, definitions

And you do not want an honest man

I am an honest man.  
I will not lie to you.

I will only tell you the truth.  
And because of that you hate me

Because of this because of truth  
you despise me, you hurl insults  
and names - You call me  
a liar,  
a pervert,  
you negate my words  
You negate me  
hate me

But then I am just being honest.

I say men are hedonistic,  
pleasure seekers

This is why we admire dogs so  
Dogs f#ck whatever they come across,  
road kill,  
some bitch, their buddies,  
their offspring

They f#ck furniture legs, couches, chairs  
Your guests' legs

They f#ck the pillow you sleep on  
they leave their mark  
while you are away

They f#ck other animals  
small large it doesn't matter

They f#ck themselves  
I say

We men are dogs  
- if you were to let us be men.

Because Dogs can get head  
whenever  
they want  
however they want

Hey, I am just being honest.

Granted not all men act upon these things  
but We do think them.

These images cross our minds  
in full colour sense-o-round.  
When we first were introduced to you  
We undressed you.  
We did.

Slowly

We imagined the curve  
the heft  
of your breast  
the taper where your thigh  
and calf blend

We visualize those dimples  
at the small of your back where  
our hands fit perfectly neatly

We touch the silk of your neck  
taste the perfumed dew  
from your hips, to your waist  
between your legs

We caress the fall of your belly,  
and trace the freckles  
down and around to the squeeze  
of your ass  
to that little 'She Devil' tattoo  
just above your...

- ok we create what we cannot see -

but we do see you  
all of us do  
- the first time  
we meet you

We envision a threesome  
with Crisco  
and other implements  
of satisfaction  
when you introduce us  
to your friends  
especially that cute one  
y'know the one  
we can't stand but  
the other ones are ok too

We imagine you naked  
before we even know your name

Actually that's not quite all true:

for in our hearts  
we are f#cking you  
you are already on your knees  
panties around your ankles

Because names and nakedness  
are unimportant

But then I am just being honest

You call me a pervert  
"Not all men think this way! " You say.  
Yes.  
They.  
Do.

I argue, your priest, your rabbi,  
your minister therapist boss  
The pizza guy the guy  
fixing your computer  
wants to work  
on your hardware

That pimply faced kid bagging your groceries  
yes he's thinking about  
bagging something else of yours  
and revisits this during his  
15 minutes of fame  
in the company stall

This guy right here  
who just caught your eye,  
that smile,  
that wink  
knowing,  
digesting,  
defiling

- it's already done

- you've just been done

That was pretty good wasn't it?

Your father your brother  
Their thoughts were there oh yes  
at one time or another  
Sometimes more...

We cannot help it  
it is in our nature We are men  
we are programmed to procreate  
to f#ck  
and some of us are better at it  
than others

We seek glimpses,  
your blouse opens just enough  
your skirt falls shyly from your knee  
displaying that soft tender of your flesh  
You've bent over  
to pick up something  
and what you picked up was our imagination, our interest  
You pivot to say something to us and  
we catch your scent  
imagine we feel your hair  
flowing against our flesh

The brush of your hip, your thigh,  
your foot against our body,  
against your naked skin  
Yes we check you out  
however we can whenever we can  
whenever we can

I am just being honest

Do we think you are fat? Yes.  
Do we think you're breasts  
are too small? Yes.  
Your ass too big?  
Of course.  
We find the imperfections you seek,  
you fester about,  
we review,  
and catalogue:

breasts too small,  
ass too big  
hips too wide  
that makeup you wear? too much

and way too damn costly

Do we find beauty in you  
regardless?

Yes.

We see past the imperfections you seek

We have imperfections  
of our own  
some you have to seek  
most of which are  
obvious and then  
some that just don't quite  
measure up

Of course we find you beautiful!  
We know beauty!  
it is in the eye of the beholder  
and as long as we get to be  
holding you  
we find you beautiful  
to our touch to our eyes,  
your voice a song to our ears

We love your mouth  
and how it spreads wide contagious  
in a smile bright enough  
to light up even this room.

How your eyes tell us in a flicker of lash  
that we are the Alpha, that we are the One  
- How your nostrils flair  
- How your breath comes short  
and wet when we touch you  
when we  
kiss you

How your fingers claw into the sheets  
digging, kneading, nesting  
when we take you  
from behind  
take you from inside  
We find you beautiful  
because you say yes  
say yes

I am just being honest

We see all women as girls,  
mothers, grandmothers,  
as objectified bodies  
to please and to be  
pleasured by

Yes we are

checking out their assess  
their tits their legs  
whatever it is we find  
and whatever  
we find  
whether we like it or not  
We still imagine  
We compare we contrast  
and no matter what we find

we still prefer you,

You, the one standing there before us  
not because you are better, but  
because you

are there, standing before us

convenient, willing

And if not, we think about others  
- we do  
all of the time, yes I mean all of the time

I am just being honest

We fantasize about you,  
your body your sex  
we fantasize about having sex  
with you,  
your body and what  
you can do with your body  
and especially  
what you are doing with your body,  
right now  
at this very moment

Sometimes we fantasize about  
other women  
when we are with you  
Sometimes we fantasize about  
your best friend her friends her  
daughter's friends  
We fantasize about that chick  
you hate at work that chick I hate  
at work that chick everyone hates  
down the street  
Sometimes it's your brother's wife, my  
brother's wife but always others  
Sometimes that other woman  
we are fantasizing about

isn't even a woman  
and sometimes most times

that other woman is you

I am just being honest

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## **Backgammon**

You taught me insecurity  
against a rainfall sweet  
and mesmerizing  
to be afraid of myself  
to feel defeat in the win  
of a battle of wits

We would parry around the board  
you played my heart well  
triumphant sipping bedtime  
tea thick w/ honey  
and Edith Piaf live  
floating through the lazy fog

You are a memory I forever cherish

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## Big Bang Theories

Hawking says it begins this way  
a thought expressing itself in the  
darkness of nothing: 'no thing'  
and then exploding itself across the vast expanse of time  
we are composites of these  
deposits - particles shooting  
out our momentary brilliance  
much like the tiny fragments  
leftover from this God's eye  
burning out in our own atmosphere  
a shooting star

I saw a shooting star  
arc its way across the sable tapestry  
which in profundity is a miraculous  
dice game of chance  
some etymological particle left  
from the Big Bang of the universe  
spewing its essence across the  
facade of time

and galactic distance

I should not be surprised then  
by the toying of the universe  
the gamble of irony  
that when I see a shooting star  
the imagery which comprises it  
is that of my old co-worker Duane  
who told me about the time  
he nailed that Russian exchange student Svetlana  
on the rooftop of our building  
hanging over the parapet doggy style  
so they both could see the twilight  
view out across the lake  
drawers dropped around mustard Frye ankle workboots  
and as he put it in this most  
ecstatic twilight vision  
a shooting star burned up its brilliance  
at the exact moment he busted his nut

This is what I am left with  
every time I see a shooting star  
Duane's cleft moon in concert  
with the universe's Big Bang  
both expending themselves in the darkness

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## Bill

I was there at lunch when they hired Bill  
an old man with clothes too big  
holding his hat by the brim  
in timid hands a sign of respect  
belonging to an era long lost.  
He went straight to the foreman  
eyes bright and proud and  
in a soft spoken voice that wavered  
he said 'My boy come in here to work  
doing odd jobs here and there,  
and quit after one day. He say  
the work was hard, dirty and no man  
should be needing to do that kind of work.'

Our foreman looked distant  
trying to form a polite reply  
but the old man continued  
'What I was wanting to know  
then, was if that job then  
is still available? '

Bill worked the broom a soft swish  
swish kicking up oil and dirt in  
neat even piles with ripped greasy gloves  
that he'd splurge on every other paycheck  
to protect his raw arthritic fingers.  
Sometimes during assembly we'd  
make a mess spilling oil across the floor

and with our young important hands  
would dump 'Sta Dri' in wasteful  
clumps to keep the oil off the bottom  
of our shoes and Bill would come running  
muttering in an intelligible murmur.  
His thin hair frenzied gray tufts  
poking out from his ears his nose  
and chin stubbled and flecked with  
bits of metal paint and dirt.  
With his coffee can of 'Sta-Dry'  
flicking with gnarled hands  
admonishing something like 'y'gotta  
feed like chickens boy, like y'feed chickens  
He was a 65 year old errand boy  
carting scrap metal in bins  
wheeling out to the dumpster or  
dollying about his oil drums  
full of that days waste for minimum an hour.

I was still there the winter years later  
when times got rough and they hit us  
with the layoffs. Bill was one

of the first to go  
seems the people who need always  
end up needing. And there's that  
unspoken camaraderie and friendship  
that we lose hunched over our work  
having families of our own to fear for.

But we all felt the emptiness  
when we lost the luxury of Bill.

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## Coyote Speaks

I know that look  
I have seen that look  
so, so many times before  
You eye me up from across the distance  
wary frightened desirous  
the lines of your face  
momentarily flicker,  
your smile forced wavering  
pupils dilated heightened  
eyes wide breath short  
nostrils flared repugnant  
heart skipping interrupted  
I know how you watch wanting hunting  
fear restrained abated and  
I know how you watch me  
I know that look

Your eyes belie your charm  
And I fall under your spell  
You call to me  
befriending in your approach  
calling me closer  
with a smile, a laugh, a tear  
a cry out belonging to the feral  
want inside your breast  
The fear from my approach  
The fear of my sniffing around your legs  
But it's not me stealing the eggs  
from your hen house  
No they are brought to me  
Warm and steaming and  
fed to me by the hands of your children  
But still you blame me for your desires  
Cautious in your approach befriending

You've had me in your sights and I stop  
Seek you out laughing  
Howling my joy  
I've held your eyes  
Sniff your fear pregnant in the wind  
I have eyed you up the barrel of your gun

this is when I write my best  
fevered words  
    caught in the crosshairs  
    misaligned through some  
malignant ideal of truth  
of virtue of righteousness  
    lost between the fear  
    of your desire

and your loss of control

as you draw your bead  
You look upon me  
The phantom of your desire  
The child of your thoughts  
Even as you pull the trigger

You know our eyes shall meet again

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## **Crackers in Bed**

You have taken all my heroes  
slaughtered them  
as blighted cattle  
and hung them out the window  
to eradicate their smell

carved  
like a piece of my soul  
malignant and rotting

but I love them  
cherish them  
for the lessons  
they have brought to me

those were my heroes  
you cut away

and I  
chew on them  
devour  
their essence

at night while you dream

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## **Darwin got it wrong**

Did you know we are the only species  
on the planet  
Whose total extinction would actually  
Benefit every other species?  
Everyone benefits when we are gone...

That is one hell of a parting line

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## **Even if they have pictures**

No matter what they tell you  
No matter how they beg  
Do not – I repeat – Do Not  
tell people the truth  
People do not really  
want to know the truth  
Lie - make up shit if you have to  
But do not ever tell them the truth  
They prefer their fantasies  
They prefer their make-believe  
safety net webbed about them  
suffocating tightly  
like the larder of a spider

If you tell people the truth  
they'll just crucify you  
hang you from some tree  
and then  
make shit up about you

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## Full Lips

Do you believe in love?  
Of course not  
you are a pedestaled woman  
created wholly  
to be admired not touched,  
fondled, manipulated  
by the callous fingers of love  
you are not meant for those like me  
who want to define you  
instead you covet the adoration  
of soft cheeks  
dimpled rubs against  
your flowing sable hair  
caressing lips that kiss  
your porcelain  
alabaster cheek  
and gentle fingers that brush paint  
on your full red lips

through hindsight recourse  
I fell into you  
your ruddy heart pursed mouth  
spitting out my love

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## Government Cheese

Government cheese don't melt  
the trick is to slice it up in little matchstick pieces  
then chop those up into little bits  
the cubes mix with watery macaroni  
that way with powdered milk  
at least you have the illusion of blending

You are forced to be creative  
rice is a formidable staple there  
must be 1001 ways to eat rice  
add cinnamon, sugar and hot water  
and again powdered milk -  
breakfast! or add a package  
of dehydrated mushroom soup mix  
and - wild mushroom pilaf!  
or a mystery can of vegetables  
a can of cream of chicken soup  
powdered milk - a chicken casserole  
fit for the king

Fresh salmon is a newly opened can  
you can mix that with instant  
mashed potatoes and powdered milk  
heat some bacon grease in the pan  
and fry up some salmon cakes

And cakes! pancakes and grape jam  
mainstays of the hungry cupboard  
as are eggs eggs incomparable only to rice  
in its many incarnations  
fried egg sandwiches, egg salad  
sandwiches, hard boiled - soft boiled  
poached and shirred with toast

There is no such thing as stale or  
leftover bread crust and heels  
are delicacies slathered with grape jam  
or chopped and mixed into a meat  
loaf to make the hamburger  
stretch across meals  
with ketchup and two slices of  
white bread and a slice  
of Government cheese

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**'hey how come you're not watching the game? '**

'hey how come you're not watching the game? '

it's difficult to make out who is who  
in the slip of blood and mud  
where my hand ends and the  
flesh of my brothers begin

we all are numb  
from the visage from the  
play this time around we are not  
privy to the shots

I find this fact interesting

how at one time we had people  
volunteer their service their  
lives as war  
correspondents

how we watched the bodies and  
bravado come home  
in boxes draped with flags  
rows of boxes football fields long

Our children  
our fathers  
our brothers  
and now, now...

there is no solemn taps or dance  
we envision this  
the caskets lowered in reverence  
each draped with the universal symbol of American Democracy  
American Freedom  
the representative service men  
providing the appropriate starched  
creased salutation

no they are not lowered by the hands of their companions  
they are lowered teamster like  
crates lifted with a Wisconsin Lift fork truck  
moved from plane to dock  
cataloged by an exhausted yawning electronic clipboard  
like we were signing for some plain wrapped package  
from eBay

'hey how come you're not watching the game? '

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## House of Poems

The rafters burn last  
but they also burn hottest  
their brittle and aged supports  
old couplets stored for  
keepsake in antiquated stanzas  
tinder for the flames  
like morning glory tendrils  
reaching up and out  
feasting metered in dissonance  
breaching dormer windows  
Ash falls thick grey flakes  
drifting lazily in the night  
against the inferno updrafts  
sable clipper sailcloth  
billowing under full rig  
Each window glows its last  
fiery breath a light a beacon  
for traveling wordsmiths  
in the distance warning away  
do not venture to this house  
as walls like pages in a book  
curl on edge in burnt discord ply  
upward and inward smoldering  
the glued words and separating  
their meaning extinguished in allusion  
There is nothing here but conceit  
burning rhymes lit and brilliant all  
but forgotten in the scattered rhythm  
ash white and glowing in the night  
falling gently towards the ground  
Oblivious of the soot streaked faces  
faces belonging to these embers  
the poet points to the flakes  
the final residue of semantics and says  
"look momma, snow"

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## **It's not polite to stare**

Emmett's mother had it right  
Not letting her son go quietly  
She made a stand opening the casket  
Showing her mutilated son  
Showing the humanity of it all  
"Look! " Look at what they did to my son! "  
"Look! "

Some of us did  
Out of fear – conformity  
Some out of spite  
Some concern  
But most of us turned our backs on Emmett's mother

All mothers who seek justice  
For the killing of their children.

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## **like spent heroes**

we all have heroes  
even some we don't understand

so I found myself spent  
when I heard Marvin had died  
both of us home for the holidays

I saw that fight

shot by his father

I've seen that argument

fathers seem to have a way  
for killing off talent

I know I'm a father

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## **Love**

most times  
I lie awake  
and think of  
the many ways  
you could die

but then  
there you are

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## Our Collected Media Consciousness

We live in a world of media consciousness  
Our collected media consciousness  
All seeing all being  
We do not care about truth we care  
About what is perceived as truth  
What is fed to us as truth  
What people think or say  
Against us  
"D'ya think I'm sexy? "  
We are sound bites  
With collected identities  
phrases quotes without miniscule identities  
We don't even care who said things anymore  
Instead We now quote the collector of these quotes  
"and words are all I have to prove"

We have Bill to thank for that  
Not Billy Bob  
I mean he was the president of the United States  
The president  
And the president said a blowjob did not  
Constitute as having sex with another person  
Therefore I'm not cheating darling  
because I am not having sex with that other person  
The president said so

No, I mean Bill "Microsoft is my operating system  
I shall not want  
Yea though I stumble through the valley of silicone  
I shall fear no open source coders  
for I have bug fixes and security patches  
and the power of Windows  
for ever and ever. Amen" Gates  
That Bill  
He gave us intellectual property rights  
which means anything and everything you think about  
concerning these words right now or hereafter  
belongs to me  
I take cash: Euro, whiskey: American or boutique cigars

"D'ya think I'm disco? "  
How's that for irreverent 'regionalistic' allusion?  
You are either in or you are out  
"I started a joke"  
But somewhere someone is laughing  
And You are not  
That can only mean they are laughing at you

Our collected laugh track playing on a soundtrack of  
Dictated music - music we are told we love told  
We enjoy it becomes the background  
Of everything we do

Played out by the latest classic rock 'n roll radio station  
Isn't commercial radio the complete antichrist to  
Alan Freed's Rock n roll?

"They say that we're too young and we don't know..."  
What happened to us? "Us and Them"  
US the collective  
The standard bearer of freedom  
Of peace and revolution  
"you say you want a revolution"  
Sex Drugs and Rock 'n Roll!  
It is kind of redundant isn't it?  
Or is it worth repeating?  
Since rock n roll was black cultural euphemisms  
For sex  
Music So hip so trendy so organic  
that it could only be described  
As the composer conductor of the ritualistic mating dance  
"Well I know that you are in love with him  
'Cause I saw you dancing in the gym  
You both kicked off your shoes,  
man I dig them rhythm and blues"  
Tell me: rock music is supposed to be  
The antithesis of conformity, of acceptance  
The anarchical epitaph of angst of raging  
Against the machine of uniformity  
The rebel yell of youth inviolate and repressed  
By the status quo by the regime of adulthood and  
Conservatism rock 'n roll is supposed to be  
The outward screaming extroverted voice of the uncontrollable  
Of the youth of all days the hip the trendy the  
Happening baby - tell me how is this  
Iconoclastic assemblage of  
Modern day angst and rebellion the  
Epitome of hip  
The exaggeration of rebellious freedom  
The voice of today's youth  
The responsibilities and expectations  
Here and now  
Represented in an adulterous grandfather  
Whose corporate sponsorships politics and steadfast  
Capitalism rising on the DOW  
And whose most curious defiance was merely  
Sympathizing With the devil?  
Where's the sexy in that?

You know it is written  
That when the revolution comes  
"We will become Them"

Hey wake up!  
It is your world we are defiling

seize your crown, reclaim the glory of youth  
rebel against the norm take back what belongs to you  
by your birthright, by your altruism  
you are Kings and Queens all  
act accordingly

because  
we are just pissing it away  
through our incontinence  
leaving you to clean out our bedpans

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## **Planned Obsolescence**

Marriage is nothing more  
than planned obsolescence  
A method of stimulating  
a lover's demand through  
promises broken and  
worn out from  
monotony or monogamy  
whichever comes first  
in outmoded and  
overused desires  
or limited use  
incorporating relational  
features that will  
certainly fade or wear  
thin of favor and  
patience in a shortness  
of time inducing lovers  
to consume their love:  
wit, soul and presence  
and most unequivocally  
shop around for  
a newer, different  
more efficient  
guileful lying model

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## Poem for woman hanging wash

There's a stray of hair whipped free  
by the wind  
plays inattentive across your cheek  
as your hands dance supple against  
the calico and hemp  
arranging with operative precision  
like the sun gleam  
against your alabaster cheek  
golden in your eyes shining

With deliberate passion your hands  
clip the multi colored cloth waving  
like a message from a waning ship  
as if you could just reach out and pluck  
it from the waves like child's play

You reach back tying the strands  
back wrapping the errant pieces into a  
careful knot tight each  
belonging in its place  
like ships sailing  
flagging their unanswered calls

wanting and just out of reach

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## **psychos on the pipe**

We don't sell our bodies to the highest  
Or only bidder to feed children  
We don't feed the children  
We feed our need  
Whatever that may be  
Our need for love  
Our need for desire  
Our need for the poison in our veins

We feed our children to the abuse of strangers  
that institutionalized reform of the intellect  
to score crystallized rock  
to score refined gold  
which we wear around our ego  
in display of our grandeur and scheming  
until we can shoot it through our barrels  
to fill the empty of our souls

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## Rustic Roads

I wish you  
had seen the flurry of orange carpet take flight  
drifting a lazy smoke of Sulphur Moths  
twirling a slow motion whirling dervish  
alight in the dust devil updrafts waning and  
coating my view breaking waves afore me  
with some invisible prow and then closing  
in around pounding a fluttering encircling embrace  
encompassing like of a salt water surf  
still-life surfing at the epicenter of a wake like  
a mad butterfly equinox

I wish you  
had witnessed the amorous skunks taking the Beatles  
to heart propagating in the early morning sun oblivious  
to the man made rumble of fossil fuel combustion  
in a civil evolutionary fusion in the crunch of gravel  
paws padding gentle nest making patters  
low mews imperceptible in the sequential candescence  
the double backed white stripe  
pointing a different path down the highway  
one taken many times but each unique and  
singular in their moments

I wish you  
had ridden with me the sinewy roads through the kettles  
winding and serpentine under the deciduousness  
and nettles of a Wisconsin autumn  
your arms across my chest more embrace than  
security a symmetrical gyro in pirouette  
wheeling the heated congress of flexing rubber  
onto the lithe impassioned tarmac  
the wind a lover tearing and pulling at your hair  
wafting crisp like fermenting apples sweet and  
chilled in the kiss of cider

I wish you  
had experienced the thrill of one hundred thirty mile winds  
on top a steel steed rocket slaloming the center line  
a streaming consciousness provoking poetic  
the western dusk driven skies  
through a thousand years of glacier etched  
pointillism landscapes painted with  
the staccato brush of prairie grass and cattails  
and river rust clay a retronym shaped and formed  
with a willowing sallow breath as I ride  
alone off into the sunset

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## **She**

She once told me ...  
She tells me a lot  
I never get a word in edgewise  
She tells me what to think  
what to say - who to say it to  
She tells me what to wear  
Instructs me on how to cut my hair  
when to laugh when to cry  
when to stand steadfast  
She directs my every move  
in the kitchen - garage - in the  
yard and in bed  
She is my muse  
my bane of existence  
She makes me write  
forces me to transcribe  
her words in detail with no  
forethought or insight of my own  
She is poetry

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## **She asked me if I was a government agent**

She asked me if I was a government agent  
I was taken aback by that  
I mean how do you answer a question like that?  
Truthfully?  
I answered as any good agent would  
incredulous and through evasatory tactics  
I answered question for question quid pro quo  
good interrogation technique or  
so I've heard  
"Aren't we all? "

And I did not mean to sound facitious  
for we live Stalinesque in our freedom our choice  
I thought about how we reward people  
for informing on others  
we provide them with excuses or choices  
And it is not about the truth because  
we reward as long as there is information  
right - wrong; fictitious, or otherwise derived  
We reward our children for telling on their peers  
for tattling, nancing - we used to condemn them  
for that practice now we reward them for turning in  
their friends, we tell them that these friends  
'really are not their friends anyway'  
We tell them 'your friend in the next room,  
he told us all about you, that it was your idea  
- now who should we believe them or you? '  
We ask them about what their parents do  
or say or drink or what books their parents read who  
their parents see and what shows are they watching  
we reward them for this information  
'You are a good citizen' we say and we hand them  
a certificate a star a scholarship that says so  
'Be a good neighbor' and watch  
Watch your block and tell us the going ons  
tell us about those two guys who share that house  
you know which one or the mixed family on the corner  
or those foreign people who lives above the store  
and especially... especially tell us about your teachers  
'Are they good citizens? Tell us what you see, what  
You hear what you think you heard everything  
anything - make up something if you need to  
because 'you want to be a good citizen  
don't you? '

She asked me if I was a government agent  
'You know' I thought 'I like her plan this plan'  
asking everyone upfront straight away  
if they were agents of deception  
I thought I would do that should do that too  
ask everyone I meet

"Are you now or have you ever been a government agent? "  
But I do not like being lied to nor  
do I care to put people in that position  
having to lie

If I don't ask then you won't have to lie to me

She said if I was a government agent I would have to tell her  
Truthfully  
because she had asked me  
because she was a law abiding citizen  
because that is the law

I asked her when the last time it was  
that our government had abided by the law

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## **So Dreams amerika**

I was just a waif  
the son of a soldier  
whose life was scarred and reputed  
by a war  
that we lost  
But that's impossible  
    (all lies!)  
- accept  
for the truth is hard  
from the bitter scars  
in the boys we laid to rest

So I left behind the promises  
with a pocketful of truths  
whose bonds were sacred and empty  
in the eyes of the troops  
they call "civilized"  
We try and yet  
with the games we play  
in our serenades  
all is lost  
and our independence pays the cost

Here we stand in our solitude  
fighters in our scorn  
losing the battles  
of countless ruthless raging wars  
Searching for an answer  
to the loneliness we hide  
of the sorrows which we wrought

I am just a sailor  
enchanted by salty seas  
A crazed hypnotic dreamer  
charted by  
unguiding stars  
and never reaching them  
    (All lies!)  
- except  
the facts are shown  
the innocence we've known  
as it seems  
was clearly not meant to be

Thus I write me emotions  
dreaming by the lore  
(a lonesome reminiscing)  
who lies and cheats  
to hide himself  
from disturbing memories  
memories

it's a lonely way to go

In the mirror stands a shadow  
of a dream some wish to give  
just a quiet reminder  
of those fool enough to live  
in search of harmony  
(or just wanting to)  
but to do it honestly  
love is the answer  
but the questions fade  
into the poetry we make

All rhymes of lust  
for a man believes  
what he will believe  
though the words we write  
are honest ones

It's a lonely race y'know

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## **The Lioness Belongs on her Knees**

Call to the floor that redheaded one  
the smart Roma with the virulent wit  
bring with her her defensive weapon of choice  
and a bathos dress, stringed instrument and voice  
Make her dance in slow gyrating gypsy tones  
debase her gitana conceit through submissiveness  
corroding and eschewing at her noble passion  
And toss coins of derision at her bangled feet  
with a pretense of jaded ovation  
to further cheapen her supplication

I am the verbose (verbiage) king  
And have declared this dissertation  
this hierarchical tautology  
throughout this hyperbolic jungle of poesy  
for the lioness belongs on her knees

No? Then call to the center ring that jester  
That malaprop of poetic loquaciousness  
Who armed with lascivious pedantic neologism  
carves jovial idiolect in his soliloquaciousness  
And have him encapsulate or perhaps ornately elaborate  
the events of this pernicious acquiescence  
this engagement of verbal pescado de perder  
It is an austere salacious amusement yes wry  
innocuous in any any implication derived

I am the verbose (verbiage) king  
as the jester shall duly recapitulate  
the zeugma of this premise  
this argumentative yet poetic treatise  
for the lioness belongs on her knees

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## What will you say when they come for me?

First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out because I was not a communist.  
Then they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist.  
Then they came for the labor leaders, but I did not speak out because I was not a unionist.  
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew.  
As one day became another and others disappeared, gypsies, mentally retarded, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, criminals, anti-socials and emigrants, I remained silent because I was not one of them.  
Then it was they came for me, but no one spoke for me because by then there was no one left to speak.  
Martin Niemoller, 1945.

What will you say when they come for me?

Niemoller did not speak out  
because he was not threatened  
his beliefs, ideologies, sex was  
of no concern to others  
at first

I speak out not because I am threatened  
but because  
So many are

And In doing so  
I have pulled back these curtains  
lifted the blinds a peek  
to let you see in these windows  
to give you a glimpse of mine  
of these demons we try to keep hidden  
in the dark of our souls

It is a statement of recursive  
hindsight this  
I find myself often standing as Voltaire  
standing up for what is right  
What is honorable, what is true  
Even though often what is right  
And what is true  
is not what you do and  
"it is dangerous to be right when the government is wrong"

And among you I stand alone

for you prefer to keep your shades  
drawn tight, as if permanence  
can be exuded through your denial  
your demons you pretend are  
a phantom temptation you  
hope to will away through penance

prayer you can will away  
by closing your eyes,  
by closing your heart

but you can never close your soul

I ask of you:  
are we good souls tempted by evil?  
Or are we evil souls struggling to be good?

And I am often afraid  
Not of the demons we try to hide  
nor those we allow to escape  
but because of the fear that drives  
Your thoughts  
The fear that drives your will  
The fear that denies the truth  
I am afraid of what you fear  
and often what you fear is me

I have loved you and  
in loving you I allow you to possess  
these truths which have come to  
define me which have come to drive me  
which have come to frighten you

Your demons possess you  
and you say it is not you but something else  
and you believe that you can hide from them  
that they are not a part of you  
that they are not a part of you - you embrace  
a part of you - you indulge in  
you fancy and dally with  
on the outskirts of your temptation  
so you close your eyes in denial  
seeking comforting in the dark  
a darkness that frightens you  
because there - there are no demons  
only you alone with your own personal thoughts

And you say that those something elses  
Those plays of darkness  
Those images incarnate inherent  
are not a part of you

I have entrusted in your care now  
My secrets  
You have become the caretaker of the truth  
My soul  
And now I fear you  
not because there is no one to speak up for me  
I have you

not because there is no one to stand up with me  
for I have you

I fear you  
Because you are afraid of the dark  
Because you are afraid of what they will say

I fear you  
Not because you will not speak up for me  
but rather

What you will say to make them come for me

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## **You scare me**

The visions are increasing  
You haunt my thoughts  
Images perceived or real or desired  
I shake them like a woolen rug  
Flung over the rail  
Pieces or fragments  
Of my being dropping off  
Floating away  
Twisting in the wind  
Lost in the earth  
Some tangible in my breath  
Bits of my soul become  
Foreign objects lodged in my lungs  
Collapsing them collapsing my reason  
Stealing my breath  
Stilling my heart

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