

Poetry Series

M.W. Ketchel
- poems -

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Father. Screenwriter, Playwright, Journalist, Fiction, Poetry.
Flybytheseatofmypants Entrepreneur. Actor. Coach.

For a more personal view, see

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Currently resides near the San Francisco Bay Area.

Barbed Wire Fences

Barbed wire fences,
Rusted and forgotten,
Wrought of winters' winds
Abandoned by Providence,
Castoff and downtrodden
Yet, a remnant remains.
Like old cowhands,
Weathered rough by the worst,
Without expectations or demands.
Standing alone in their world.
Barbed wire fences,
Rusted and forgotten,
Forged of steel from foundries long cold,
Nothing left to prove,
Standing firm and silent in the wind.

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Cape Disappointment

Gaping mouth
without remorse or regret
waiting without feeling
sensing
nothing
prevailing against all who
challenge.
Revenge
in the hands of man
flickers as a candle
in the storm
and yet they still try,
and will.

Poseidon rests uneasy
just under
below the screaming waves.
Souls
trapped in endless flow
relentless in the beating
like quick punches
that never stop,
until dreams shatter
like splinters
and trinkets wash up
along the beach.

Questions mean nothing
for survivors
who ask
the answers swept away
like flotsam
turned back into nothing
as the tides change.
And, still they'll ask,
demand,
beg,
as if something given back
would make it different.

It does not.

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Child's Discovery

She looks down in wonder
at the sight before her young eyes,
as gentle waves that rush to greet her,
and her expression reveals joyful surprise.
The waves are her new friends,
as she splashes and plays in the cool white spray.
In a child's heart, such joy has no end,
and she will forever remember this special summer day.

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Degree Of Difficulty

Sliding in and out of truth
like walking to and from
a toilet stall
too easy
but it's not easy
never was
despite words
coming
like babble
exclaiming victorious
crooked
like bent nails
pounded too hard
until your fists
are bloodied
but don't point
you made this
what it is.

So, guess again, friend
but not all day 'cause
it ain't that hard either
degree of difficulty
prevails
in mind only
and being oblivious
doesn't help
you want an extra minute
or two
to think about it
okay
but don't call it easy
open wounds will bleed
forever sometimes
so don't point.
you made this
what it is.

Extremities Of Virtues Lost

Extremities of virtues lost
protrude from wounds
ripped open by winter's frost.
We cast aside heaven's gates
to peer inside the tomb,
where a cracked mirror awaits,
and judgment is our own.
Where everywhere is your soul
nowhere are your scattered dreams.
Empty visions tell it all,
unmasked, in the darkness of your screams.
And, when the gates finally close,
slammed shut for good,
pray you can still feel the rose
and bleed when pricked by her wood.
Redemption from the fires we create
always leads us back here
and again, we can choose our fate.
Cracked glass is still clear,
yet it will cut so deep
when virtue fades before our eyes,
a cold trophy to keep,
alone, watching, as an angel cries.

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I'M Still Here

Lonely nights I've waited
to hear you call my name.
Other arms can't hold me.
You know it's not the same.
Everything we've been through
ought to make it crystal clear,
that when it's all been said and done,
Well baby, I'm still here.

CHORUS:

Yeah, when it's all been said and done
you know that I'm still here,
waiting for you, honey,
to hold your body near.
No matter where you run, now,
or how far you try to steer,
When it's all been said and done, babe,
It's me who's standing here.

I keep thinking maybe someday
I'll just move on down the line
And try again, take a chance,
on love just one more time.
You'd think that I'd be over you.
That much should be clear.
But when it's all been said and done,
Honey, I'm still here.

REPEAT CHORUS.

1995, rev/ed 2011.
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Like Cowboys In The Movies

In an old forgotten suitcase, I stumbled on your picture.
And seeing you made me wish for yesterdays,
For we once rode together,
Like cowboy in the movies,
And we always knew we'd weather
The stormy times the world might bring our way.

On cool Texas mornings, we'd saddle up and ride.
Sheriff and his deputy, 'gainst the bad guys, side by side.
We'd ride our wooden ponies
like cowboys in the movies,
As close as two friends would ever be.
It seems like only yesterday to me.

And when our country called us, to a war we didn't choose,
We rode on steel winged ponies,
And vowed we'd never lose.
Like cowboys in the movies,
We'd stand and fight till the job was done,
And then we'd just ride off, into the setting sun.

On a long, hot summer night, they took us by surprise
And hell rained down upon us
Till one by one we died.
Like cowboys in the movies
We held on to defend, then held onto each other, and prayed for it to end.

Where we once rode together, I laid you down to rest
And cursed that damned war for taking so many of our best.
We thought we'd live forever,
Like cowboys in the movies.
We'd never really die.
Instead, we'd gently fade away into the Western sky.

In an old forgotten suitcase,
I stumbled on your picture...

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Metropolis

bright neon light
pierces the dark grey shroud
the will of the gods are flashed
from the pinnacles of dark monoliths
while in the depths
the multitude
pay homage
gods view the swarm
scurrying below
on the watch
searching for a trace of rebellion
as neon flashes in the night
just a reminder.

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Need The Rain

Cracked flesh and broken fingernails
strumming slow and easy
a voice as hard as steel rails
from a soul that needs the rain
calls out to you only
and wants you to listen
not hear
listening is different
harder
because the truth is harder
the words come out low
they scream
a lesson from many voices
but yours is the loudest
so don't turn away
we all need the rain
to wash us clean
and dissolve our sins
like teardrops in the ocean.

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Old Man On A Park Bench

The old man stops and exhales life,
sitting down on a park bench, if but for a moment to rest.
He ponders the decades, his many years of strife,
and his heart grows weary in his chest.

The elder reflects on his better years,
and happier times that have passed him by.
What remains now is loneliness, some tears,
and memories of a time when he might ask, why?

Age and wisdom, he looks across the park to watch the children play
and he smiles a private, sad, but tender smile.
Was it so long ago or only yesterday?
He closes his eyes in the sun, and decides to stay awhile.

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Quest

Sun's bright rays gently envelope me
as soft tropical breezes roll toward shore.
My mainsail is set for the unknown sea,
and I grow restless, my soul a storm.

The ocean's waves carry o'er the days
while solitary nights beckon the soul to search for truth.
The sight of the sea at dawn make me sing out in praise,
and my mind's eye recalls scenes of innocence and youth.

There is a thrill of simply being
where beginning and end are joined, the circle complete.
This worthy vessel shall sail on, my soul not fearing,
for this ship knows her course, and I am finding peace.

Life's searching draws one closer to the source,
and each must find the path into his own destiny.
So sail on, my friend, and steer a true course,
for the sea will beckon, and you will be what you will be.

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Reflections Among The Tombs

What tales could these deep rooms hold?
Each slab and plot a story untold,
Of children laughing and crying,
Of families and lovers living and dying.
Oh, look not upon this place with fear,
For death's dark shroud for all is near.
That death is but a bridge to be crossed
Which leads to life anew, ergo nothing lost.
What peace is found in such repose
For those who suffer and touch this rose.

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Reverie

Welcome again
elusive friend.
Oh peaceful calm,
like the eye of a tempest,
a fleeting interlude,
clutched at desperately
to rest the mind,
and soothe the soul,
to find shelter from the storm,
a safe harbor,
and place of refuge,
a respite from the battle,
if only for a moment.
Welcome again,
elusive friend.

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Stage In Solitude

Soft lights on the barren stage
cast a dim glow upon empty seats
who wait patiently.

It's quiet,
like a church before revival
the stage an altar of old boards,
worn but steady
waiting silently,
in anticipation.

Strange site an empty stage,
filled with dreams,
some fulfilled, while others not.
Unfair? The stage doesn't choose.
Amazing Grace, it is said,
may be heard from time to time
when all is still,
as if spawned of many souls,
resurrected of the past,
who,
refusing to depart completely,
find special refuge here,
alone,
on the solitary stage.

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The Pugilist

Standing on weary legs,
the pugilist,
with fists raised
moves into the battle
once again.
The roar of the crowd
curses,
encourages,
blasphemes,
blesses,
its heroes,
willing combatants.
They fight battles
others would flee from,
without regret.
Not fearing punches
thrown from anger
coiled like truck springs
suddenly released,
finding their mark,
the pugilist fights on.
He neither gives nor begs
for quarter.
And if he falls,
if he fails,
he will rise
from bloodstained canvas
as often and as long
as his heart will bear.
Winning is a bonus.
That he stepped into the ring,
made him a hero.
If he leaves victorious,
he is a god,
in that moment
none can take away
from the pugilist.

Winterdance

Snow
falls steadily now
crystals
cast from heaven's bosom
dance
upon winter's breath
through evergreen limbs
that reach
for God's face
with fingers outstretched
touching barely angels' wings.
These ancient spirits
cannot resist
joining
in the dance,
until all becomes still
once again.
And then,
in crystalline splendor
the forest
shall remember
these moments which
pass so quickly.
And so, too,
she will remember
the winterdance.

(In memory of Hilly Elkins)

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