

Poetry Series

Chip Schaller
- poems -

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Chip Schaller()

8th Step Struggles

Plucked from the nest, left at the door
No mother's warmth, felt her no more
She did what she had to, was left with no choice
Would never meet her, never hear her voice

□

Adopted, raised by soldiers of care
Directed, disciplined, rigidly fair
Have to's, need to's, always some must
Drowned in the holy water, swept with the dust

Fear and anger both burned from within
A back that was broken with oppression of sin
Guilt trips to nowhere on shoulders of blame
Saddled with guilt, ridden by shame

Always discussions but never with me
Never what I thought or what I could see
Relegated to clown hood, just a dumb joke
Wheeled out to perform, to prod, to poke

Finally found freedom, a way to get out
A sweet escape, an alternate route
A road to destruction, a sure path to hell
But a way to drown out the tolling bell

Stopped all the voices, let me be here
In the now and present, free from the fear
Inherited genes, a loud within voice
Made the bad choices not even a choice

Where's my amends? That's never asked
Who's sorry to me? That ship has passed
Decades of suffering, but there's no amends
Years of dismissal, but no one else bends

Will I hear 'I'm sorry' for all the harm done?
A mea culpa for an abandoned son?
These worn out steps are of no use to me

Zombies of recovery who can't even see

They don't even know me, these steppers of doom
Say 'Go make amends'. For What and to Whom?

* Note - this should not be construed as denouncing AA or any community groups, all of which I support. This is just what I was feeling at the time that I wrote it.

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All The World's A Page

All the world's a Facebook page
A stage with faceless crowds
Cartoon hugs, the only love
In this insipid cloud

Frigid tank of blatherings
Self-indulgent posts
Earthworms, fishing with no bait
All the feels of ghosts

Circling 'round in our fishbowls
Running out of air
Give cold hearts and cool regards
Take the warmth and care

Post a meme before I go
Hoping for reply
Validation flares shot up
Into a callous sky

Just a like to make me feel
As though I matter here
Someone, somewhere following
So I don't disappear

Blithely answering the pleas
Of others in the fray
Too busy calling out for help
Sadly, so are they

Why do we seek approval stamps
From specters on the net?
I'd rather see, to feel and touch
Love flesh, not silhouettes

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Anxiety Sands

Sand storms of panic compressing the air
Pull on the noose, tighten the snare

With trembling lip and tremored hands
Nowhere to run, can't take a stand

Tasting the bitter cold bile of despair
Music has stopped, missed the last chair

Stripped and thrown naked on a lighted stage
Spinning in circles in a hamster cage

Eyes that are judging, jab with their spears
No place to hide from the fear of fear

Cornered, lonely in a crowded room
Squeezed in a box, a closing door tomb

Portray compassion, they only extend
Trite platitudes to a so-called friend

Through floral glasses they can't even see
The crimson stain from a heart amputee

Swallowing blame for pain that's been caused
Choking on shame for lives that have paused

Tear-stained memories of failure and fault
Endlessness anxiousness start it's assault

Redemption's a locked door, no handle, no key
Weeping and gnashing with futility

Needing to have what isn't needed
Want for shouldn't have, always deep-seated

Weak and adrift, trapped at sea
Obsessive thoughts of what could or should be

Anxiously dreading the future to come
The hortator beats on the funeral drum

The ship isn't sinking, do not dismay
Reject the label of lost-cause castaway

Releasing past traumas to gently drift by
Lucidity breezes clear the mind's eye

Free to see all of the goodness inside
Shame fog is lifting, blame blown aside

Sunlighted hope for the future appears
Warm winds of change, drying the tears

Sand softly sifting through an hourglass
Breathe out a deep sigh, this will all pass

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Branded

Chided chains secure the patient
Jurors gather for the show
Judges callously are saying
What you reap is what you sow

Roaring flames from cruel lessons
Kindled by regret with blame
Paper hopes and dreams are burning
Stoke the guilt and fan the shame

Fiery coals from ancient traumas
Glowing with an angry red
Pleas for mercy disregarded
No regard for what was said

Branding iron lays in waiting
Stigma stamp a scorching white
Insult adds to shattered spirit
Label adding to the plight

Throw the chains that cause the binding
Kick the iron with a scream
Refuse accepting any label
Fight to hold the self-esteem

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Call Me Survivor

My last name isn't alcoholic
Addict not my middle name
Why should addiction pre-define me?
Won't accept some branded shame

I'm a person, not a stigma
Wanting self-respect like you
If you're predisposed to labels
Survivor is the one I use

Infected by trite typecasting
Assuming, pigeon-holing minds
Persuaded by this caustic branding
Judgmental glasses make them blind

We all see life through different fishbowls
Theirs is a departure from mine
They can't swim in their tight schools
Then draw me with a chalk outline

Keep your name of alcoholic
Recovery sheep who blindly see
Stamp yourself with scorching stigmas
Your tired steps no use to me

Can't empathy be the leading horse?
Pointing the way to affinity?
Instead of a mule, reined off the course
Pulled by the nose away from reality

I will not call me alcoholic
Forget about drug addict too
I'm a person with thoughts, with feelings
A human being just like you

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Heart Igloo

Weary from fighting the personal conflicts
Battling all of the children within
Always a struggle to maintain composure
Walking away from the firing pin

Stiff upper lip is just stiff from the gagging
Choking on sorrow and tasting the bile
Beaten and bruised, persecuted, forgotten
Always convicted, forever on trial

How can I repay your omiscient advisement?
All the world's wisdom will perish with you
Try out a mile in my suffering sadness
Take a brisk run in my anguish-filled shoe

Don't talk to me about stout resolution
Withering words about strengthened resolve
Blathering on about character building
Easy to say with no problems to solve

Sermons are belched out from ivory towers
Rose colored lenses make seeing a dream
Try out the world from my crystal perspective
Cover my ears while I wait for your scream

Hearing of things such as pleasant surprises
All that change brings is more burden or loss
Groaning hello's and the sobbing departures
Shifting the weight just to carry more cross

Fiction and fantasy, dreaming and hoping
Phantom leg jogging is fool's reverie
Stormy despair brought the need for the igloo
Surrounding my heart while I'm stranded at sea

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How Do I Look?

Bathroom stop before class started
Found the glass to see the face
Checked the look, smiled approval
Hair was perfect, in it's place

Third time busted, hanging judges
Victims having too much fun
Pleaded guilty for escaping
A bar to hide, a place to run

Couldn't help the over-serving
Loved the kiss of lime and salt
Was no cause for search and seizure
Made example, not at fault

Man then talked about a problem
Just didn't see it quite that way
Drink and fall, pass out, no worries
Having fun was no foul play

Being ordered to these groups
That or jail was all they gave
Lecturing their ways of living
Talking fools of early grave

Finished hearing lame sob stories
Blew the sorry class of crime
Afterwards, went home, got ready
Primed the pump for party time

They took the license, not the freedom
Didn't stop the toasted train
On the way to wasted stardom
First, a kiss from Mary Jane

Bar time bell toll, went too quickly
Last call ordered, just one more
Finished every drop of comfort
Found the keys, then out the door

Things were double, vision blurry
One eye covered, acting straight
Watching for the man of justice
Test the fickle hand of fate

Searching for the bowl and lighter
Didn't hear the squealing sound
Dreams exploding in an instant
Lost and never would be found

Resting with still arms enfolded
On the walnut bed of wood
In the front pew, people whispered
All agreed on looking good

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Mama's Sacrifice

Picked up her girls from school on that day
Sang their favorite songs on the way

Rounded the corner and opened the door
Someone was laying in pools on the floor

She saw through the glass it was her soul mate
The gun and the whiskey had sealed his sad fate

Anguish erupted with bile aftertaste
Her love and dreams in an instant erased

She suffered in circles of emotional pain
Haunted by visions of dark crimson stains

She couldn't allow his daughters to see
Whisked them away but had nowhere to flee

Left with no choice but return to her dad's home
A widowed disaster, afraid and alone

Returned to his daily, drunken abuse
She had no escape, felt there was no use

Beaten and battered in alcohol rants
Her girls tucked in hiding like terrified ants

She searched for, discovered disastrous release
To stop the voice, make the tolling bell cease

A place she could run to, where she could hide
Kindred spirits flowed in glasses inside

She once had her beauty, but she forgot
Her thoughts were entangled in limitless knots

A man sat down next to her with crystal eyes
She returned his gaze with trembling thighs

His words were enchanting, graceful and fine
She danced with chaos, escape fueled by wine

He swept her away in a satin embrace
Her head raced in circles, a lost paper chase

Months passed on by from that one night affair
A son grew inside her, a gift of despair

Shamed by a bar parking conception stain
But her love for him could not be restrained

She wanted him to live, to be set free
To receive a present of new destiny

Not doomed to suffer with her in that cell
Sentenced to a live out a bottomless hell

At birth, she sobbingly gave him away
A living abortion, a love castaway

The rest of her life spent in tortured wonder
What ever happened to her boy blunder?

Decades past by, then a stranger's letter
She hoped for once it was something better

She fainted when she had absorbed the note
Emotion dripped from the heartfelt quotes

Her son, the warm, plaintive passage began
Had grown up a happy, family man

Concluded with love, that he hoped would suffice
"Thank you, Mama, for your sacrifice"

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The Ghost In Black

Broken hopes and shattered dreams
Despair starts it's cruel attack
Faceless fears and voiceless screams
Ushered by the ghost in black

Abandoned at birth to a foster cage
Rejection fear, his only friend
A living abortion on a lonely stage
Exiled to a cell in a life without end

Raised by pretentious pretenders of care
His higher needs were brushed aside
Hijacked by scorn with no wing or prayer
Relayed his pain to his expectant bride

Married their mistake, divorced his ambitions
The flask he hated but never laid down
A fish in a bowl, confined to perdition
Escape and suffocate or stop swimming and drown

He built a wall and decomposed
All or nothing thoughts left no way out
Depression welcomed, unopposed
Bones picked clean by vultures of doubt

He threw desire to change away
Sped the erosion, his collapse
Routine boredom's fast decay
Made yesterday's traps today's relapse

Five years gone, a wasted plight
This straw on his back, these latest fears
One more drink to purge the sight
Of hurt and sadness in her tears

His wife and child were late fall grass
Their little girl, the apple of his red eye
On a ship in a bottle with a half empty glass
He'd never get a chance to say goodbye

Three years now since they found their life
Face down dead in their living room
His mournful eyes revealed his strife
His toxic blood had sealed his doom

No way to support them or reason to bother
A stack of bills, unable to pay
Moved back in with her abusive father
Crying on her bed each day

Her white picket fence passed away
Where were her dreams and plans?
All collapsing on that day
They died beside her only man

The doctor's script brought her relief
Numbed the hurt and soothed the pain
She took them to erase the grief
Nothing to lose, nothing to gain

Tortured with her only child
hiding, crying, trembling with fear
Her tragic loss unreconciled
Too much pain to form a tear

A tub of warmth, some pharmacy friends
A way to escape, to turn a blind eye
No way she could ever make amends
She'd never get a chance to say goodbye

Ten years had passed since mama's death
Thirteen since her father's wake
She hid the needle under her breath
The tracks showed a life she had to fake

She got her wings, a sweet escape
A prison break from an inherent cell
A pleasant diversion, a way to undrape
To drown out the endless tolling bell

Anguish and anger's burning voices

Guilt trips to nowhere on shoulders of shame
On this path she had no choices
Saddled with sorrow, ridden by blame

So many partners, no way to know
Who the father was, no way to be sure
The life inside her continued to grow
Would be dependent on more than her

Fought the thoughts of her unborn's pain
She wanted to live and begged to die
A dime's worth of lost love in her vein
She'd never get a chance to say goodbye

In the foster home, the baby was crying
Alone but bundled with detached care
Obscured from sight, eagerly smiling
The ghost in black was waiting there

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