

Poetry Series

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**- poems -**

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# A Brief History Of The Universe

Darkness

BANG!

Shine, sparkle

Pop, snap, crackle,

Sputter, fizzle,

POOF!

Darkness

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# A Year Of Living Carlessly

I don't need to get a driving license to walk,  
I never have to circle the block to park my feet,  
There is no waiting in line to gas my sandals and  
No quarterly payments for insurance for my toes.

Someday I may get flat feet, but never have flat tires,  
Every year there is no new models to envy and lust for,  
I can go directly in water, dance a jig or go up 88 stairs,  
And my wife can tickle them to make me giggle with joy.

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# Drive Time

Twenty four miles from work to home,  
I coexist with the smell of dog and leather,  
hints of the former owner: cigarettes, fries,  
a pine tree hanging long ago.

A German engineered decompression chamber  
filled with the chorus of snow tires,  
the rhythm of the windshield wipers,  
EIB or NPR, ZZ Top or Verdi.

Mind rambles, hypnotic trances,  
skewed musings zip by as the landscape  
transforms from cement to corn,  
front yards to back forty.

Familiar landmarks become invisible,  
stringing roadside beads of fast food cartons,  
deer bodies, used diapers, beer cans,  
fast food cartons and election signs.

It is not the same, sitting on a bus, train or plane,  
not driving, a passenger, not in control,  
there you are merely the cargo, not the pilot  
an audience not the player.

After a day entwined with people's lives  
Coursing homeward to the family  
Traveling from one reality to the next.  
I feel that light feeling of not being attached.

So you solve the problems of the world:  
hunger, poverty, racism, war, or fix a leak.  
I build a city, create a drawing,  
foil a plot, and write a poem.

Somewhere between here and there,  
aware but distracted, automatic yet focused,  
navigating in the twilight of mind sparks,  
as I watch the side of the road for clues.

I carefully guide myself between the  
parallel lines that just ahead will separate,  
one the road that leads home,  
and the other that leaves it.

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# Squeegee Guy

Standing in the hot Tuscan sun where roads cross,  
The mustachioed tattered prince of a despised race  
Of centuries of darkness squints at the line of cars arriving  
From the cool countryside queuing up at the red light.

With only a minute to work sparing no extra effort,  
he bypasses a dirty little Ape, a full taxi, the motorini;  
And moves towards the clean new Mercedes,  
the cool driver behind tinted glass staring ahead.

Dripping squeegee dangling from his hand,  
His mission is simple: clean a windshield.  
All he needs is a simple nod, eye contact, a smile  
To improve your view of your daily commute.

The process repeats itself at each change of the light  
New faces but the same expressions: words of disgust,  
Pangs of pity, darts of hate, looks of sympathy,  
And from most – just no looks at all.

His woman fitfully sleeps nearby on a shaded bench, or  
A break from the heat sprawled on the grass of the park.  
Then a brief call on a pay phone to who knows who,  
It's back to the red light, the words, the looks, and small change.

At sunset there is enough for cheap wine and bread.  
Walking to their trailer along of a littered road,  
The clinking of change in their hidden pockets  
Keeping the rhythm of the music in their heads.

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# The Master Of The Blue Bin

His friends amazed at his skill,  
witnessing flesh conquering machine.

He was one with the claw, grasping a  
fuzzy trophy with focused confidence,  
at thirteen, he was at the top of his game.

At thirty-three, he leaves before dawn  
Playing a new game, spread over the medieval city.  
His truck rattles down narrow streets with drawn shutters,  
the long claw-arm tucked in tight behind the cab.

It is the same route revealing new obstacles at each stop:  
Rusty spray-painted city bicycles, locked and chained,  
Small Fiats parked hesitantly, with the flashers on,  
Appliance boxes, pieces of renovation, junk piled high,  
Old bins that should have been replaced long ago.

Via Verdi, his last stop, time running out,  
its residents brewing coffee, brushing teeth,  
washing restless sleep from their swollen eyes,  
as the truck bursting with glass and plastic,  
gathering skeletons of the city's unquenchable thirst,  
taking them to be born again, to be played again.

Atop his throne, strong hands on joysticks and levers,  
the engine straining, pumping hydraulic blood,  
he plays the claw. The first pass hooks the bin, lifting,  
he skillfully positions it over the truck: a jerking shake,  
a little twist, then the loud shower of breaking glass.

Gently tamping with the empty bin compresses and  
flattens the mound of the morning's collection.  
Perfectly placing it on its resting spot by the sidewalk,  
he pulls over the green tarp, adjusting a loose bungee,

Slowly walking his victory lap around the truck,  
inspecting his equipment and the look of his load,  
the final once-over, he climbs up in the cab.

A new high score, a new record time.  
... and a free game, tomorrow.

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# War Baby

There's a sharp spike in population growth  
on and around the middle of April 1946.  
Two bombs on Japan precipitated a new age,  
the punctuation to a long and nasty war.

August fifteenth, VJ day, the Potsdam accords,  
on the USS Missouri fantail, all the Allies rejoiced.  
In noisy Times Square, photographer  
Eisenstaedt froze a sailor's kiss forever.

I can only imagine my father on his hands and knees  
frantically groping through the mothball dark closet,  
Searching for the dusty sealed bottle of rye whiskey  
saved especially for this kind of occasion.

Making a baby during the hardships of wartime  
was never on my parents things to do list.  
Now feeling the reckless abandon of the moment  
they hit the sack with an unrationed lust.

That evening the world took a deep sigh of relief,  
got roaring drunk and jumped into bed.  
From that collective act of conception, nine months later,  
appeared thousands of crying War Babies.

Later we overflowed classrooms, enticed advertisers,  
smoked dope, fought a war nobody wanted.  
We jammed the highways, had lofty ideals  
bought large SUVs and questioned authority.

We preached Peace and Love, opened a Keogh or IRA,  
built huge houses and will drain Social Security.  
So you should eat healthy, take your all your vitamins  
and buy stock in a funeral parlor chain.

St. Peter, you had better order up extra wings and halos,  
build more cloud condominiums and sky golf courses,  
and don't forget to tune and plug in the harp amps,

because ready or not, here we come!

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## Za-Za

In your dream there is that buzzing sound  
near your ear.

They know when you are most vulnerable,  
a forearm on top of a blanket,  
A leg sticking out of the sheets, seeking the cool  
night air.

In the dark tile of the ceiling they wait for  
their prami to be served  
gliding down the thick column of carbon dioxide  
to the warm pulsing  
landscape that gives them their only happiness:  
stabbing, sucking.

Rising up with red dots, the record of their  
night's menu,  
You might be lucky enough to catch a glimpse  
of one in your periphery  
Loaded with the night's work, attracted by the  
bathroom light.

Slow after a full meal, an easy target  
trying to go home,  
You miss the first, the second try; the third  
hits home  
Leaving a red streak on the white wall with  
your DNA written all over it.

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