



A Party
with the
Grim Reaper

M. Brandon Robbins

Scarf Publications
2006 chapbook

To My Family,
who always love and care.

To Mom,
who taught me selflessness.

To Grandma,
who taught me how to tell stories.

To Girl,
who taught me how to speak my mind..

To Uncle Tim,
who taught me how to be humble.

To Jake,
who is braver than I could ever be.

To Papa,
who would have thought this little book was right good,
as far as books like this go.

Contents

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Prelude: A Greeting | 4 |
| Beautiful Venom | 5 |
| Falcon | 6 |
| Fairy Girl | 7 |
| Unashamed | 8 |
| Angel Side of Me | 9 |
| The Awkward Silence | 10 |
| Nearing Mid-Life Crisis..... | 11 |
| Home | 12 |
| A Party with the Grim Reaper | 13 |
| And Then There Was None | 14 |
| The Writer..... | 15 |
| One Mortal Race | 16 |
| Heartbeat | 17 |
| Drowning..... | 18 |
| Watching the Angels Sleep | 19 |
| This I Ask | 20 |
| 'Til Death Do Us Bind | 21 |
| Words..... | 22 |
| Edge | 23 |
| The Ascent | 24 |
| Promise | 25 |
| Nocturne: A Goodbye..... | 26 |
| About the Author | 27 |

*From childhood's hour I have not been
As other were; I have not seen
As others saw; I could not bring
My passions from a common spring.*

-from "Alone" by Edgar Allan Poe

PRELUDE : A GREETING

There's a girl right now contemplating suicide. She's the youngest child of three. Her oldest sibling, a good-looking boy, is the captain of the high school football team. Her sister, the middle child, is junior class president. She's just flunked algebra and her parents have spent the evening calling her a failure. This little girl is begging, pleading, for someone to stop her, but nobody is giving her a reason.

There's a man in love with his neighbor. He sees her every morning when she gets her morning paper. He sees her every night when she comes home from work. Every day he speaks to her. Every day she ignores him. She's never smiled at him, never let him help her change her oil (he's offered three times), and she's never accepted a cold glass of lemonade from him on a hot summer day. But he can't stop thinking about her; he can't stop thinking about her.

There's a man who has lost his job, and can't figure out how to tell his family that the home that he's worked so hard to give them is about to be lost. He's already figuring out what he can sell to afford an apartment in the city.

A bird of prey is swooping down in front of a pedestrian on an empty sidewalk on a college campus, establishing its dominance over what it sees an inferior being. That pedestrian is thinking one of two things: either "If I had my shotgun you'd be on my wall" or "What a beautiful creature." Or, they're not thinking about anything. Maybe they could care less about animals, or maybe they're too preoccupied with their student loan payments, or the fact that they just got a call saying that their parents are splitting up, or maybe they themselves are starting to work through a break-up; or a new relationship.

There's a girl on her knees in front of an altar, asking why God has ignored her yet again. There's a pastor telling her that God hasn't forgotten her, he's just working in his own mysterious way.

There a lonely young man lying in bed and listening to his iPod, wishing he had someone to share this sad, romantic song with.

There's a boy who has been through more in ten years than some of us have been through in a lifetime. He's been in and out of hospitals, have watched his parents go through a divorce, has been beaten and neglected, and is now in a foster home.

But he sees hope.

He holds onto the simple fact that it can only get so bad.

He holds onto the idea that when it's at its worst, it can only get better.

He holds onto hope.

He holds onto the hope of somehow, someday, it will get better.

It has to get better.

Beautiful Venom

You are so beautiful to me.
You're seeping into my veins.
You're taking away my heart
Eating away at my brain.
You're killing me inside.
Stripping away my soul.
But I will follow you
Until my blood runs cold.
You are my poison that tastes like honey.
My beautiful venom
My twisted medicine.

Falcon

Rip.
Tear.
No one allowed near.
A hunter.
True hunter.
His eyes,
His beak,
His talons,
His wings,
The suicide dive,
His call,
Remind me how small
I am.

Fairy Girl

I saw you once.
Just a glimpse.
Your hair, dark as night
That falls upon your forest
At the day's fading.
Skin as white
As the snow that blankets your
Wood in the dead season.
Eyes, summer-leaf green
One moment,
Then gray as winter stone the next.

I saw you once.
Just a glimpse.
And then you were gone.
I've tried to enter your woods again,
To catch another glimpse.
But I can never find you again.
The woods, lovely and dark
They may be,
Hold many secrets.
And you are one of them.
A secret once known.
A secret now lost to me.

Unashamed

This is not the way I chose to be
It's written in the blood that's in my veins.
I may not be your idea of perfect
But I am unashamed.

I may not speak your language
Or eat at your table—
Drink the wine from your cup.
I may not be your mirror,
But I am unashamed

You try to hide your darkness
And you struggle with your pain.
But by refusing to be a shadow
I am unashamed.

I will not hide who I am
I will not change my face.
I don't care for your standards
Of myself I'm not ashamed.

Angel Side of Me

My ugly side is showing,
Please turn around don't look.
I don't want you to see me this way.
I only want you to know
The side of me that smiles,

I don't want you to see the monsters
That scare me and those I love.
Only the pretty face is for you.
Only the heart not painted black,
Not the tears as hot as flame.

Yes my ugly side is showing
And if you don't turn away
Then I will love you until the end of days.

But if you do don't be ashamed.
You wouldn't be the first or last
To only want the
Angel side of me.

The Awkward Silence

Before you say I love you
And after you say goodbye.
Following a goodnight kiss
Beneath a moonlit sky.

As knuckles brush and palms sweat
Before fingers intertwine.
And in the sacred darkness, as
Skin brushes with skin and breaths
Come not but in sighs.

After words that cut like barbed wire,
After is a door is slammed shut—
In between forgiveness begged for
And forgiveness that is gained.

At the graveside in the rain
Under a cold and stone-gray sky,
Resting between memories and
Among tears and dreams—
An awkward silence hides.

Nearing Mid-Life Crisis

I remember what its like,
To live wild and care-free.
Cutting class and skipping town,
Flirting with the campus tease.
Getting drunk with my frat buddies,
A new lady every night.
I pulled some pretty crazy stunts,
I was young, it was my right.
I remember fall football games
And baseball in the spring.
Staying up to ungodly hours
To get the work of a semester
Done before the morning light.
But now I am a man,
With a wife, a child, a mortgage.
Held captive by my duty,
No longer free to roam.
The wild nights end at ten now
When they used to end at three.
The sun is setting on my life,
And the night will last forever.

Home

I'm afraid to go back home.
I fear that I'm not missed.
I don't want to show my face
In a place that nobody
Wants to see it.
They begged me to stay.
I begged to take leave.
Now I'm lost, I'm cold,
I never thought that living on my own
Would be living life alone.
Now I want a place to lay my head
And sleep warm in the night,
But I'm so scared to come back home.
Afraid they left me when I was gone.

A Party with the Grim Reaper

He's throwing a party,
But he's the only one here.
Got refreshments for everyone,
But he's the only guest.
I know I'm uninvited,
He's half-hoping I show up,
Although he won't complain if I'm late.
You see, this is his farewell bash.
I show up, and it's time to leave.
So come young man,
I don't understand why you want to leave,
But I'll take you away just the same.
And maybe by time we reach that place,
We'll both have learned a little more.
If you change your mind, I'll just leave
With no questions asked and no regrets.
If not, then I'll be your ride home.
With no questions asked and no regrets.
I'm tapping at your window,
I'm knocking at your door.

And Then There Was None

There once were unbroken families,
Fathers, mothers, husbands, and wives.
And then there was none.
There once were young men,
Full of potential and hope.
Their whole life ahead of them,
With promise of fortune.
And then there was none.
Green fields, white picket fences,
Skies void of threat.
Life, love, happiness, calm.
And then there was none.
Children unafraid.
Wives not alone.
Shirts without yellow ribbons.
A hope to find peace,
And then there was none.
Bloodless fields.
Smokeless skies.
Empty graveyards.
And then there was none.

The Writer

He does not accept
What he is given, or tries
To analyze what is there.
He takes it apart,
Like a boy does a Tonka truck,
To see what makes it work.
As for thinking outside of the box,
He expands the box's size.
While others shop for pots and pans,
Everyday practical stuff,
The Writer is shopping for toys, games.
Stuff to make life fun.

One Mortal Race

We are but grass
Blown away by the wind.
Minor characters in this drama,
Fleeting images in this mural.
When we are dust and ash,
And forgot,
The mountain,
The sea,
The tree,
Will live on.
When we are but dried blood and brittle bone,
The wind and the waves will live on.
When we are gone;
Not but empty shells
Polluting the soil with our rotting mortal coils,
All else will live on.

Heartbeat

I can't hear your heartbeat.
That means you're too far away.
I want to call you back to me
But those words I can't
Bring my self to say.
I know you have a life outside of me,
And you can't always be near.
But to freeze our time together
And to shut out all the sounds.
So I could hear your heartbeat,
And know that you're right here.

Drowning

It's too late for me to turn back
I'm too far gone.
I've made you so much a part of me
If I sever you away, I'll die.

I know I'm drowning in you.

Everything about you is me.
You are like a specter taking me,
Controlling me, Possessing me,
And I'm letting you.

I know I'm choking on you.
If you cut me then I'll bleed you.
I have swallowed you.
I'm drowning in you.

Watching the Angels Sleep

Are we just watching the angels sleep?
Or did we put them all to bed?
Did we even try to wake them up,
Or give them sleeping pills instead?

Are we just watching the angels cry?
As they look up this stain
Left by what was to be the
Crown of creation,
But was instead its bane?

Are we just watching the angels bleed?
Cut by our words and deeds?
Did we bandage up their ravished skin
Or leave their wounds to grow infected
And make them sick?

Are we just watching the angels sleep?
Or did we put them all to bed?
Did we even try to wake them up,
Or give them sleeping pills instead?

THIS I ASK

Will you make my sun shine brighter,
And my nighttime not so dark?
Will you make the rains much sweeter,
Then make the rain clouds part?
Will you lay with me for eternity;
Into The Wilderness by my side
Would you walk?

'Til Death Do Us Bind

In life we are one.
In life beyond, part of
 A greater one.
My darling, my love,
'Til Death do us bind.

In life we share a bed,
In life beyond we still lay
 Side by side.
My sweetheart, my angel,
'Til Death do us bind.

In life we create
in life beyond we make anew.
My heart, my meaning,
'Til Death do us bind.

My one, My only,
My lover, My friend,
My blood and bones,
My soul and mind.
'Til Death do us bind.

My death, if you die.
My fall, if you break.
My anger if you rage—
My hurt if you cry.
'Til Death do us bind.

In life we held hands
And walked amongst the flesh.
In life beyond we walk among
 The Faceless
Who led those hands to join.

My reflection.
My mirror.
My guardian.
My ward.
That what was once missing—
'Til Death do us bind.

Words

These words I hold inside,
If into them I could breathe life,
Like a flock of ravens into the night-sky,
They would take flight—
Calling, dancing, blending into that vast expanse.

But would those words find a place to stay?
Like a bird without a nest would they just stay suspended in flight,
Never staying long enough in one place
To even know if it belonged?

Edge

I could play now and pay later
But the cost is much too dear.
For the payment is not with wealth
But blood and skin, organ and bone.

And far beyond the havoc wreaked,
Upon this mortal coil,
The mind will break and shatter like
Water crushing glass.

There will be demons in my head
And monsters deep inside my soul.
Rats clawing at my insides,
And bugs under the walls
Of ever room I step foot in.

I could vomit up the suffering
And sweat away the pain.
Claw at the wallpaper
Until my fingers bleed.

I could wreak havoc on those I love.
Become a raging bull or a reclusive beast
Who loves only the very thing
That's burning me slowly from the inside.

That is if I'm able to stop
The storm before it overwhelms,
And I'm left cold and alone
Counting my own breaths.

I could play now and pay later
But the cost is much too dear.
There is no cost to walk the edge
So walk the edge I will.

The Ascent

The light is faint and fading fast
So high above my head,
My body's tired, my soul is weak,
My heart beats slow and still.

There's blood under my fingernails,
And all my tears are spent.
My chest is heaving,
My lungs—they burn.
My bones cry out with pain.

My will is breaking,
My resolve folds,
My eyes refuse to open
When closed.

But the light is faint and fading fast
So high above my head.
I've searched for a way out
Of this place for so long,
Now all I need do is climb.

Now all I need do—
Climb.

Promise

While blood is in my veins,
And marrow in my bones,
While breath I draw
And tears I spill—
While sinew holds
And skin tears when cut—

You will not stand alone.

NOCTURNE : A GOODBYE

That road before you may be dark and twisting, with no end in sight. You may be scared to death and not know if you're ready for it or not. You might want to turn around and try again, but all the same know that there's no way you can. You might just want to find the deepest, darkest, blackest lake you can and just let the water take you in, take you in until there is nothing but the comforting nothingness of quietness.

I'm asking you not to.

I'm asking you to speak to me.

I'm asking you to let me record your words, to cry on my shoulder, to let me hold you and walk beside you.

I'm not a preacher. I'm not a counselor. I'm not a doctor or a therapist or a politician. I'm not a businessman, I'm not a professor.

I'm a poet, a writer, a storyteller.

I've been at the end of that road, I've looked down it, I've seen that path that cuts deep into the woods that once seemed so inviting but now play host to something more sinister.

I walk that road every time I pick up my pen.

I walk it for you.

I walk it for you, so that you might know the way.

Take my hand. Let's walk.

M· Brandon Robbins is a graduate of Goldsboro High School and holds a B.A. In English from Mount Olive College. He is a contributor to the renowned video game website WomenGamers.com and writes graphic novel reviews for Library Journal in addition to having short fiction published in The Olive Branch, the literary magazine of his alma mater, and another work forthcoming in Down in the Dirt magazine from Scars Publications. Brandon lives in his hometown, Goldsboro, with his family and is working on a novel.

A Party with the Grim Reaper

M · Brandon Robbins

scars 

Editor@scars.tv
<http://scars.tv>

Freedom & Strength Press



the Copyright for the written pieces is retained by the author
Design Copyright © 2006 Scars Publications and Design

other publications from Scars:

Books: Hope Chest in the Attic , the Window, Close Cover Before Striking , (Woman.) , Autumn Reason , Contents Under Pressure , the Average Guy's Guide (to Feminism) , Changing Gears, the Key to Believing, Domestic Blisters, Etc., Oeuvre, Exara Versus, L'arte, The Other Side, Duality, Seeing Things Differently, Change/Rearrange, Death Comes in Threes, Moving Performances, Six Eleven, Live At Cafe Aloha, Dreams, Rough Mixes, TheEntropy Project, The Other Side (2006 Edition), Stop, Sing Your Life, Sulphur and Sawdust, Slate and Mar row, Blister and Burn, Rinse and Repeat , Survive and Thrive, (not so) Warm and Fuzzy, Torture and Triumph, Oh., the Elements, Side A/Side B, Balance, Chaos Theory, Infamous in our Prime, Anais Nin: an Understanding of her Art , the Electronic Windmill , Changing Woman, the swan road, the Significance of the Frontier, The Svetasvatara Upanishad, Harvest of Gems, the Little Monk, Death in Málaga, Momento Mori, In the Palace of Creation, R.I.P., Bob the Bumble Bee, Remnants and Shadows, I Saw This

Compact Discs: *Mom's Favorite Vase* the demo tapes, *Kuyppers* the final (MFVInclusive), *Weeds and Flowers* the beauty & the desolation, *The Second Axing* Something is Sweating, *The Second Axing* Live in Alaska, *Pettus & Kuyppers* Live at Cafe Aloha, *Pointless Orchestra* Rough Mixes, *Kuyppers* Seeing Things Differently, *SD/SD* Tick Tock, *Kuyppers* Change Rearrange, *Order From Chaos* The Entropy Project, *Kuyppers* Six One One, *Kuyppers* Stop., *Kuyppers* Masterful Performances mp3 CD, *Kuyppers* Death Comes in Threes, *Kuyppers* Changing Gears, *Kuyppers* Dreams, *Kuyppers* How Do I Get There?, *Kuyppers* Contact•Conflict•Control, *the DMJArt Connection* the DMJArt Connection (2 CD set), *Kuyppers* Questions in a World Without Answers, *Kuyppers* SIN, *Kuyppers* WZRDRadio (2 CD set), *Mom's Favorite Vase* and *The Second Axing* These Truths, *Kuyppers* Oh. audio CD, *assorted artists* String Theory, *Kuyppers* Live at the Cafe (3 CD set).

