

A young girl with long dark hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and dark pants, is sitting on a swing set. The swing set is made of metal and has a black seat. The background is a desolate, hazy landscape with a red octagonal stop sign on a metal post. The overall scene is very faded and has a dreamlike quality.

**snow in the summer
and the playground
is closed**

**Poems: Jack Henry
a cc&d 2008 chapbook**

acknowledgements

some of the poems in this collection have been previously published or are upcoming. my thanks to oak bend review, red fez, mad swirl, poetry cemetery and instant pussy

my thanks to rob plath, john dorsey, michael grover, lisa latourette, misti rainwater-lites & billy burgos for inspiration. also, eviscerator heaven, gloom cupboard, kill poet, off beat pulp, static movement, cp journal & zygote in my coffee - all small presses that keep it going.

contents

underneath	4
waste	5
bitter circus	7
suicide	9
uncle willie's t ravelin' r oad show	10
wait for whispers	12
hesitation	13
meaningless in the margins	14
i stand corrected	16
crimes w/in a passion	18
arlington, virginia	19
motor lodge behind the diner on main st.	20
buzzing spring	21
why poetry?	22
place your bet	23
soulful sand	24
mosquitoes awaiting life	25
meager	26
destroyed by hope	28
so. jersey	29
asthmatic love songs	30
rules of a game	31

underneath

i am standing
underneath
green leaves of a
coral tree
orange blossoms
unfold and die
and fall
under blue skies

gravel paths
crunch beneath
my dirty shoes
as koi eat mosquitoes
atop still water

blackbirds laze
on thin wires
as soft winds
breeze through
bending limbs

i am riding above
mountains
through clouds
vast space landscapes
simple visions
anchored by
indemnified hope

standing
before green leaves
of a coral tree
orange blossoms
fall gentle
like rain and
i close my eyes
at last

waste

i stand under
half-light,
words eager
to please
but my lips
numbed by
indifference.

a careless walk
brought me there.

a friend of a friend
of someone i never met
suggested that
i come read
my fervent words.

open mic, he said.

open mic.

i fumbled through
scattered sheets
filled with an idiots
rant.

searching.

nothing
new to say,
no bright light
shining through
scattered clouds
slapped atop
sheltering skies,
i dug deep,

back to the passages
before i cared
or
knew
or tried to sling anything
more than the miasmic
shit that cluttered
my simple mind;

utter nonsense,
line after line after line.

you get my point, right?

nothing stuck to my
gritty hands, nothing
sprang to life with more
than a sputtering cough,
oozing puss,
open wounds that never scab,
never heal

under the half-light
i parted my lips,
as if to speak,
as if to begin,

but i stopped,

stepped down
and walked out the door.

no sense in wasting
their time
when my time's

a waste.

bitter circus

short skirt, black heels,
a voice an octave too low -
her head hangs down in a
drink that never empties

ah, the bitter circus,
back in town,
she's at center ring,
fighting for attention

faces never linger, pause
or offer simple explanation -
they reflect, biometric
calculations,
tasks toward survival -
a means to an inglorious end

we speak in fragments,
lost amidst ruins,
reclamation for the rich
while the poor suck up dust

heat rises through
scarlet foundations,
whip snap anecdotes
on a welfare check -
she twitches slightly,
Morse code dot & dash
signs of life

love bleeds black
in a starving belly -
her eyes glazed over,
drinking w/the dead
for now she is alive

i say hello in a
muted salutation,
she smiles thin
and bleak
knowing the offer
about to come

we find darkness
in a stall of a
public restroom,
i fuck her without
passion - it only makes
breathing worse

she hangs her head low,
another drink,
never ending,
we part without comfort -
alone again and
not transformed

suicide

i stare back through a cowards mirror
the only pain that's real
starts right here

a straight edge razor sits on the corner of my renters sink -
basin filled, cool blue water

light bulb dangles from a single wire
painted tile sits cracked
under my feet

roaches scurry from garden corners,
silver fish roar free
across porcelain tides

neighbors upstairs fuck with mad abandon - a gunshot sounds out
on the streets

outside the moon rides nightscape
Saturn spins as Mercury weeps

a preacher at a church
around the corner
makes a deal with satan
a mute man suddenly speaks

black tears fall from my tired eyes
angels cough from too much smoke

my hand trembles
as i make the first cut
but the warmth of dying
carries me home

uncle willie's t ravelin' roadshow

rolling through day light -
ambiguous storm clouds
litter pale blue skies
& thunder impacts
a final crescendo
as the road calls
3000 miles from home

washington's burning
thick honey sunsets
skies too heavy yet
nothing will fall

maryland makes me smile
people seem friendly
a prostitute spreads
her wings and
i feel like captured bait

angels lay in heaps
along black asphalt highways
their wings in tatters
they used to cry to heaven
but tears have all dried

jersey's a hormone
pulsing through my black blood
veins -
ocean city flashback in
room 23

new york, a blur, wistful contemplation -
only time for
pissing and
a forty oz. malt liquor

hudson valley melodies
linger thick across my lips

connecticut surprises
middletown beatitudes
i read to save my life
but nearly slit my throat

there's passion and fire
in the midst of millions
they burn the fantastic
and i'm suddenly alone

back down the turnpike
90 miles per hour
plus and climbing

virginia is a bad handjob
from a hag in the corner
she's got no teeth, no vision
but a five's all i got

nine minutes until sunrise
when i bump back to
los angeles
i gather my bag
and make sure i kiss the dust

wait for whispers

bench warrant Sunday
sitting in the last pew
awaiting the final out
before tripping through
narrow hallways
filled with secrets, lust
and paramour night vision

she's there with her big teeth,
big eyes, big fuck you stare
as my tongue winks at bursting
yarn stretch marks across
store bought convenience

a nicotine bracelet circles
my ankle, blinks red when i
get too far out of line,
there's only so much i can
take before an alarm sounds,

my throat closes and
they push me to the back
of the line

tender word sound bites
fall free from disco trees
little birds lay limp
from a haberdasher's stare
i linger in long hallways
wait for whispers
they know i'm coming
they leave me alone

hesitation

long day / night
walking empty streets
chase lamplights as they flicker
between verve and immortality

i stray beneath your fame,
moments after my departure
memory fresh / acid etched
to fevered limbs

your words flow
bounce between my bones
i cannot wipe your smile when
i finally close my eyes

strange passage
to where we are
where we stand and lie
side to side

i see you in windows
eyes drive atop eastern skies,
a single gesture pulls me back

stairways carry me toward
breathless arms
you wrap around my skeleton
whisper “i love you”

laugh

because you always laugh
when you are truly
sad

meaningless in the margins

sunday morning
and dexter the cat sleeps
on my back
our snoring mixes together
as frogs go back to bed

she left trances
for the forensics team
an early departure that made no sound

my dreams must have included
a variety of oddities
my head hurts
and it's not from
lust

the dog ate a ceramic garden troll
and coughs up blood
i'd put her down but it's not my choice

i move slow
to my place on the back porch
coyotes are playing tonight
but i've seen that show before

we witness a blue gray sunrise
buried in hubris borrowed
from pointless transgressions

i know she loves me
i read it in a note

we crawl back to bed
the cat and i
and watch stories
of jesus and his cohorts
on the history channel
the cat cleans his ass
as i contemplate
space and time

the ache in my heart
concedes to the ache in my gut
dexter rides shotgun
as we drive to a diner
he sleeps in the back window
as i make my way in

there are countless old bandits
alone and in pairs
we flirt with the waitresses
and wait for our eggs

i stand corrected

there's a bar at the end of a road
that's marked with a 'one way, no exit sign'

how appropriate

it's a low-light, low-life
scum-of-the-earth,
whores-giving-head-in-
the-bathroom kind of place

my place
a friendly place
where no one knows my name
and no one gives a fuck
ever

drink, get drunk
move on

i'm sucking back cheap whiskey
shot by shot
counting time
and placing bets
on the time and day death
pulls my tag

when this woman with fuck me eyes
a wonder bra and six inch heels
walks in close and sits
up tight
at the bar

i taste her lips
drink her eyes
my imagination a cacophony of
indelicate poses

i buy her a drink
and toast her cleavage

when i ask her name
she says names aren't important
and i think, this is a good sign

i can see the sirens
up on the rocks
calling my name with
that sad same song
closer and closer
until the heat reaches from
the tips of her fingers up
to the base of my cock

there's no time for formalities
in the backseat of a cab
i make my peace with the sway
of her ass and follow her up
the walk, into her soul

buried forever there
and gasping for air

crimes w/in a passion

i melt all my fears
w/ trembling hands,
past visions spiral
up toward an ambivalent
sun, vapor trails
trickle across asphalt
roads divided by barriers
made of teeth

she never offered love,
only pornography
and taunts to raise my
cock, her lying smile
leaves me awash atop
jagged rocks, throat cut,
blood rivers fill
ponds of dying fish

left alone w/blue veins
filled w/salt,
my hungry teases ambitious
thoughts - signs in Arabic
caution my progress but i
left reality well before
i found you

wicked winds gentle
across backlit stars,
my timing suffers
from malnutrition and i
think for a moment,
perhaps she meant me

arlington, virginia

quick stop
pit stop
1 & ? star motor inn

beer by the bucket
a hooker named cindy
too drunk for the fucking

seems i can't win

she's a nice girl
w/tattoos, a cheap wig
and chronic fatigue syndrome

born, found, and lost
from small town ambition
temptation keeps her near

she laughs at my misery
erectile dysfunction
we talk about baseball
and watch my color tv

seems i can't win

a sudden surprise
just before midnight
we pound through infomercials

gone before the crows
6 am flight, i'm leaving
i find myself scratching

seems i just can't win

motor lodge behind the diner on main st.

Passport Inn, Ocean City, NJ
23 rooms

two good beds w/plenty of
bounce
a good bounce
helps
when an old man
fucks

pillow joint,
each room
echoes
similar call signs

tides dance
on rocky
shoals

i've the sound
same as my own

she laughs
rolls of smiling
bouncing
stops

and i finally sleep

buzzing spring

flies buzz
circles around my head
dance through
ringlets of smoke
and fear

water runs loud
pond out back
koi drift
warm sun linger

skeletons stretch
from baskets of bones
closet door opens
dust drifts soft

words lay dead
flaccid offer
she smiles
nods

departs

winds rise
green leaves cover blue sky
orange blossoms
coral tree
feint perfume
spring bellows

eyes shut
tired memory
flies buzz
circles
around my head

why poetry?

somebody asked me
why i picked poetry

i thought a moment
and realized

you can't pick poetry
it picks you

it's like birth
you can't pick mom or dad

sometimes i wish i had been aborted
that way the whip wouldn't crack

sorrow wouldn't blur through tears
words wouldn't hang on the edge

of salvation, teasing me, as always

i wonder what life would be like
if fame and fortune picked me

instead of poetry
maybe then someone might

call me back

place your bet

i respect jesus
because he knew how to cheat

why cast a line,
when a basket can be filled w/
a cough?

why bake a loaf,
when you wink the bin full?

why open a winery,
when you just blink at a glass?

if i had the same skill as
that, i wouldn't be so noble

instead of fish, it'd be steak
instead of bread, a hooker named betsy
instead of wine, it'd be whiskey

we all have our needs,
i guess the world's better off
that i am jack and not jesus

soulful sand

she sits on soulful sand
watching waves
crash loud against
buried rocks

a petulant smile
whispers to my lips
as she arches to
the sun

heaven calls freedom
but a demon's spirit
whisper's tepid lies

a tide's struggle
keeps me whole
as i watch the world
tumble down

mosquitoes awaiting life

she said she loved me but i wonder
as i stand in a courtyard surrounded
by tall trees and golden flowers
music drifts languid and dry
through hedgerow sentinels

water falls cool into timid pools
yellow and orange fish peck at thick pockets of mosquitoes awaiting life
birds sing high atop twisted branches
i stutter as i speak when no one's around

memories tear at my throat,
black blood splatters atop
white rocks and i am unbound
of my mortality
springtime blooms, purple,
red, and pink –
i taste coils of sorrow burn bright
down my spine & yesterday hums forgiveness

icy finger touch pushes me
back through gray sky floating
and i see a thousand
incantations of spontaneous defeat
words cannot sound in a vacuum
desert playground, just as life
cannot linger on a field
no longer known

meager

a shadow etches across cracked glass
spilt milk spoils
and rots on stapled concrete
my eyes reflect starlight
as i sit stooped in a corner

she sits low, broken piano
wire noose dangles
cupboards clatter,
a maze of pretension lights
doorways and torn canopies

transcendence denies entrance,
gates of hell
shiny from blood
and allegory
sometimes i try too hard,
but at least my feet
fit thrift store shoes

its been two days,
a little more
since crackling vines
danced electric waves
across cilia transceivers
knotted to pink flesh menageries

butterflies taste the sweet nectar,
from deepened folds
stamens make connections,
as gentle winds lift lies
and dandelions wastrels
across burning fields
of simple grandeur

my miner's lamp sputters
through inky black departures
spelunking through caverns,
butterflies linger and
follow me down

i watch dreams tear at my future,
hearts chopped
thin with dullards axe,
my bag of gold empties
at the feet of desolate angels,
their grimy eyes smile

its been two days,
a little more
the torment of my sorrow softened
with the cadence of your voice

destroyed by hope

i watch the sun rise
through green leaves.
dogs bark, birds sing,
cars race along the road.
my mind races w/o pause,
neurons snap through fissures
that beg forgiveness when
my fingers caress the rope.

she offered promise, desire
fulfilled, yet the sentence
announced perpetual miscalculation -
i stood before christ
and pushed in the blade.

unbound from my heart,
crows peck at the remains -
i drift slowly through
vapors of heat rising
from black asphalt -
her smile burns my flesh
as simple as chance
destroys my soul.

so. jersey

long empty roads across
green fields, dense forests
filled with old homes
that sit silent at
the edge of a road

bounce along flowing w/
traffic, mosquitoes slam
against windshields
endless cigarettes kill
time

perfect serenity at each
mile marker i pass
almost forgetting foreclosed
homes, boarded up businesses
and people laughing through
pain

bars fill w/locals, welcome
me like heaven, just like my home
we fight misery one mile
marker at a time

asthmatic love songs

i lay on the lip of your last lie
folded into spasms of faded reality
complicated by dead voice screams
mother the children are dying echoes
from the television

two flies fuck, neither up or down,
yet, somehow, side to side, flagrantly tossed by bellows winds, intent on
completion, and i know i'm not like that

yet your visceral delusions bring me
nothing but weak phases and tired
turning of rumored recovery, it's written here somewhere – maybe not

i read your bible verse, posted on
a refrigerator door, covering trashcan advertisements - free tune up, free
estimate, 10 dollars off w/purchase, but wait there's more

we slide down though a yearning abyss, tempted by thrust and shove
moments, hesitant to change the channel w/out a remote
burned in asthmatic love songs

rules of a game

i don't live a christ centered life,
or, wash my feet before i enter a mosque, or, stay away from pork, or, caffeine or heroin

i don't cross a street when black teenagers walk up the same sidewalk as me

i don't avert my eyes when a homeless man reaches out to me with dirty hands, or, when a recovering addict asks for donations in front of a grocery store

i don't work for a chemical company that's only interested in profits and not the environment,
or, a oil company that insists current profits are fair,
or, a government that believes that torture and war are resolutions to disagreement

i don't vote because all the candidates are paper plates,
and the point escapes me when they say change and the only change is the player when the games remain the same

i don't remember your name, or, keep your picture, or hold onto the memory of false promises, lies, and truths designed to placate my passion

i don't listen to radio to hear the news because i see the news on my street every day, or watch the television because i no longer care if britney flashes her cunt or lindsey is a lesbian or if paris is going to prison for ten days when the rest of us get life

i don't love her now that i realized she never loved me, or, fuck with passion because i paid too much,
or, drink when i know the gutter will be my bed

i don't wander aimlessly any more than i normally do, or, run with friends that see nothing but the moment, or, chase dreams because cost has become too much

i don't watch others kiss, or, breath in perfume of a beautiful woman, or, look at the light coming from the eyes of a passing saint, or, wistfully reflect on what could have been

i don't say no when offered a needle, or a pipe, or a fat round joint, or a hand job without commitment, or a blowjob by a crackwhore

i don't live life like the brochure offered, or live on a street where kings and queens reside, or play like my heart sometimes remembers

i don't tune out the sounds of lovers fucking in the apartment above my, or masturbate because the effort is too much

i don't call the police when a gunshot sounds and the body drops with an ominous thud, or when a man in a black ski mask robs a liquor store at gunpoint, or when a mugger takes my meager funds

i don't listen to gospel music, or rock and roll, or the blues, especially the blues because that music rings in my ears 24/7 already

i don't wake up with anyone i know, or, want to know, that would just be the first step toward departure

i don't say nice things when a preacher offers salvation, or a bartender offers on the house, or when my last friend needs comfort

i don't know who i am, or who i will be, or, where i am from

i don't walk in crowds, or go to the theatre, or, spit on the sidewalk,
or, piss on the back walls
of a sacred place

i don't remember faces not since the fire took my own, not since time
wore my bones down with insignificant precision

i don't go to doctors, the last one's opinion has become a prophesy

i don't write poetry, or sonnets, or joyful tomes about birds and
butterflies, those words
are taken and mean less each time
repeated

i don't do anything, especially now, especially when the devil has my nuts
in a silk bag, especially when my hands commit the unspeakable,
especially when my eyes see nothing but this

snow in the summer and the playground is closed

Jack Henry

scarsuonpeajjnd

published in conjunction with

cc&d

Children, Churches & Daddies

the unreligious, nonfamily-oriented literary and art magazine

ccandd96@scars.tv

ISSN 1068-5154 INTERNET ISSN #1555-1555

ccandd96@scars.tv <http://scars.tv>

Freedom & Strength Press

the Copyright for the written pieces is retained by the author
Design Copyright © 2008 Scars Publications and Design

other publications from Scars:

Books: Hope Chest in the Attic , the Window, Close Cover Beofre Striking , (Woman.) , Autumn Reason , Contents Under Pressure , the Average Guy's Guide (to Feminism) , Changing Gears, the Key to Believing, Domestic Blisters, Etc., Oeuvre, Exaro Versus, L'arte, The Other Side, The Boss Lady's Editorials, The Boss Lady's Editorials (2005 Expanded Edition), Duality, Seeing Things Differently, Change/Rearrange, Death Comes in Threes, Moving Performances, Six Eleven, Life at Cafe Aloha, Creams, Rough Mixes, The Entropy Project, The Other Side (2006 Edition), Stop., Sing Your Life, The Beauty and the Destruction, cc&d v167.5 (Writing to Honour & Cherish, editor edition), Blister & Burn (the Kuypers edition), S&M, cc&d v170.5 Distinguished Writings editor edition, Living in Chaos, Silent Screams, Taking It All In, It All Comes Down, Rising to the Surface, Galapagos,

Sulphur and Sawdust , Slate and Marrow , 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, Writing To Honour & Cherish, Distinguished Writings, Breaking Silences, Unlocking the Mysteries, the Book of Scars, We The Poets, Life on the Edge, Revealing all your Dirty Little Secrets, Charred Remnants, Decrepit Remains
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, Memento Mori, In the Palace of Creation, R.I.P., Bob the Bumble Bee, Remnants and Shadows, I Saw This, the Drive, Thoma at Tea, Crashing Down Nineteenth, Blue Collar Ballet

Compact Discs: *Mom's Favorite Vase* the demo tapes, *Kuypers* the final (MFV Inclusive), *Weeds and Flowers* the beauty & the desolation, *The Second Axing* Something is Sweating, *The Second Axing* Live in Alaska, *Pettus & Kuypers* Live at Cafe Aloha, *Pointless Orchestra* Rough Mixes, *Kuypers* Seeing Things Differently, *SD/SD* Tick Tock, *Kuypers* Change Rearrange, *Order From Chaos* The Entropy Project, *Kuypers* Six One One, *Kuypers* Stop., *Kuypers* Masterful Performances mp3 CD, *Kuypers* Death Comes in Threes, *Kuypers* Changing Gears, *Kuypers* Dreams, *Kuypers* How Do I Get There?, *Kuypers* Contact • Conflict • Control, *the DMJ Art Connection* the DMJ Art Connection, *Kuypers* Questions in a World Without Answers, *Kuypers* SIN, *Kuypers* WZRD Radio (2 CD set), *Mom's Favorite Vase* and *The Second Axing* These Truths, *assorted artists* String Theory, Oh (audio CD), *Life At The Cafe* (3 CD set), *DMJ Art Connection* Indian Flux, *DMJ Art Connection* Manic Depressive or Something, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #1, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #2, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #3, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #4, *Chaotic Radio* Chaotic Radio Week #5, *Chaotic Radio* The Chaotic Collection Collection #01-05 (5 CD set) etc. (audio CD, 2 CD set), *Chaotic Elements* (2 CD set), *Chaos in Motion* (6 CD set), *SD/SD* Screaching to a Halt, *PB&J* Two for the Price of One, *Kiki, Jake and Haystack* An American Portrait, *Kuypers/The Bastard Trio/Paul Baker/the JoAnne Powlers Trio* Fusion.