

Fresh Ink

*Poems by DanShaw.com
Volume 2*

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Intimacy a mountain

The red tiger that paces within my rib cage
The heart captive and solitary
Aching as it must to be uncaged
A desire so intense to see not what is
Internal vision so bright it blots out true sight

Impatiently, impatiently waiting
I have foreseen it a hundred thousand different ways
A face with such charisma
Enchants my eyes like some fairy's flower
I am spellbound

Her hair is red or it is black
She is tall or short
Her features are round or narrow
Her gentle words caress the ears

How cruel to hide the key to my prison
In the most remote and guarded court
Of some yet unknown lady's heart
My heart, like some dry inert powder
Finding in you some needed element quickens

Nothing can be seen but you
Miraculously the moon full fills the sky
Your brow becomes a landscape
Under the loving lens

Some hearts like luggage
Have been packed too full
Straining; bursting to open

But the heart opens itself like a light
Radiant and warming
As it pours itself out, it receives more and grows

And any confinement
Would not be too small or dark
To share with my loved one
The universe is in her and a sun

The stir-crazy tiger can be still
And breathe deeply, and content
The air seems honey sweet
No words are needed

Quiet wants to hear her breath
My cheek to feel its warmth

Intimacy a mountain
So magnificent
That its creation is beyond conceiving
And its absence unimaginable

When my eyes first meet hers,
Words may clumsily spill from my mouth
As if escaping from the roiling battlefield of my brain
She will hear what I'm not saying
Unfinished sentences perfectly understood

Griefs shared will weigh lighter
Desserts shared will taste sweeter

The heart-spring opens and
By mixing is enriched irrevocably
No effort can sort out from the heart
What it has once taken in

Two lovers lie motionless, enmeshed
He immersed in a single wrinkle of her skin
And she in the comfort of the sound of his breathing.

Woman

At last, everything is one.
At first, everything is one.
No two ever derived from separate sources
Nor one from the other.
Both originate in the unity.
Both are destined for unity.

Along the way from oneness to oneness
Complementarity breaks down into polarity
The two share an intersection
Which takes on the appearance of a boundary
Instead of a connection

In the molecule we examine ourselves,
Our positive and negative electrical charge balance
That keeps two particles as one compound
Electrical charge which can not be sustained alone
Not alone.

Sorrow resisted seeks deeper sorrow.
Sorrow once embraced fully
Having reached the end of the cave
Turns its face again to the light of joy.

Joy prefers sorrow to the stony-hearted
Sorrow is the lens bent to magnify joy
The chasm between joy and suffering she loves to leap
Joy is so vast that one candle in the hand of joy
Will push back the black night

As much as the sun loves to shine,
It does not love its own rays the most,
But delights in dusk and dawn
When it merges and mixes with shadow
At the edge of illumination

Airy waters fall to earth, seeking the sea's basin.
Rain carries air into the soil
Water in earth as air is in water
And gathers to it minerals and salts.
The seas massage the coast
And know themselves by their shores.

And on a beach two beings walk
Hand in hand
Her left hand fits into his right
His bare feet impress the sand more deeply than hers

His rough skin catches the fog
Her smooth face glows with the light reflected
Off sand and sea

His strength allows her gentleness
Her gentleness may bring out his strength or his gentleness
And let his strength elicit her strength

We know words can only hint and approximate
Strength does not oppose gentleness
True strength is gentle

When strength becomes brutality
Delicacy becomes frailty
Any quality unmoderated by its complement becomes extreme
A hum quiet but incessant becomes deafening

The magnitude of the crime is yet unrealized
Strong men will weep

Two faces of virtue seen Through two eyes
Resolve into one.
Active and passive
We must balance and merge all these
Within ourselves, male and female

Woman, vouch safe your femininity
Do not let your softness harden
Do not wear down your nails or cut your hair
Wear it long and flowing

Daughter, seek out and emulate
Some model of elegance
Sister, cultivate those qualities
We only read about in fairy tales

Women may weld and rivet while men battle
The battle may be won
The home may be lost
Make your boys into men
But not your girls

Confusion is rampant
Men wear long hair and earrings
Women wear short hair and pants

God, preserve the endangered species
Of the feminine woman.
Dress her in bright colors
Enthroned her beside the highest man
Let no man debase her.

Choose up the lowest woman
Let royalty kiss her feet
More reverently than a Pope
Might kiss the Earth.

Let men smell of sweat
And cover them with dust
Let women compound perfumes
And step on coats over mud

O giver of every gift
Blind me with the radiant sun
Blind me with a blanket of snow
If I ignore your glory in one water droplet
Will you remind me
You will, you will flood me in the next moment
With an ocean
And I will praise your glory in every drop.

Liberator of souls
Pierce my eyes with the sight of a woman
Pierce my heart with a woman
Deafen me with her sweet soft singing

There is nothing I more want to hear
Let a love song be the last thing I hear
It will reverberate and echo
On her song I will feast.

After

When the monks in their orange robes have departed
Incense smoke has dissipated
The horns and symbols have faded
The colored sands have been swept away
We will have to open our eyes and go out.

When the ship unmoored
Puts out to sea
Exuberance springs
From the opening rift

Has the origin been wholly relinquished?
Some unnoticed earth clod carried along
As if caught inadvertently in the tread of a shoe
Or some memento cherished like a relic

My sea-floor is littered with anchors
Anchors dragging leave the sea-bed scarred
Although at times I drifted without
In some storms I have cast them over all sides
Sea-weed clings to the anchor hoisted on deck
Others abandoned will never be retrieved

The hull-cradle wave rocked
Foam-sung lullaby
Destination day-dreams
To make them real
We must awake

To ships miles out at sea
Wind carries
Tropic island fragrance

One grape among a bunch
Prescient of its auspicious fate
Sweetens with such fervor

A grain of sand lusts for the fire
That will fuse it into the wine bottle

Dull routine blindingly polished by anticipation
Plantings tended with more lavish intoxicated merriment
Than a toast to the guest of honor

Your smile, kind word, warm embrace
Poise, sun-like grace
Leave their trace
On my mind

Romance a journey mythic
Navigated by the stars
Informed by the highest ideals
A duet played on new instruments

Arrow-straight arrow
Yearning to be strung, drawn, released.
The harp-bow sends forth a musical missile
Guided by amour and admiration.

Countless envelopes tear open today.
The stacked sum of words
Adds up to nearly nothing, compared to one.
Few notes carry so much yet weigh so lightly.

Let the telephone ring
My voice it is not this time.
Ring, telephone; not this time.
Until I call will you enjoy hoping?

I would have sent you a rose, but could not send just one.
I would have sent a bunch, but
One does not present a flower to a garden.
I would pave your path with petals before you, but
It would be less fragrant than the trail you leave behind

The earth longs to feel your bare feet,
The hardwood floor you make wish it could dance

In me you ignite a spark
But the spark says, "I already exist within you."
"I am immortal, independent."
In one sparkle a conflagration waits in possibility
In the ashes the spark though missing is there.

The still lips of a diva
An inkwell capped
A blank book
These hold the possibility of infinite praise
Everything is cradled in the void,
But one spot may fill it.

Twentysix Winds

The wind that reminds children to bring last year's kite out to the park
The wind that whistles through a window left slightly open
Wind that drives rain sideways, under doors usually dry
Wind that picks up dry, fallen blossoms and dances them across the walk
Wind that cuts through coats, and makes men turn up their collars
Wind that clears away the rain clouds suddenly, making men forget that they arrived with an umbrella
Wind that cools a warm evening after a hot day
Wind that gusts down trees and power lines
Wind that keeps people indoors, postponing the day's errands
Wind that lifts spread wings upward
Wind carrying salty fog inland
Wind that makes your eyes water
Wind carrying the scent of rain-fresh forest leaves
Wind drowning out the shouts of sailors
A wind that subsides, annoying sailors
Wind slamming doors
No wind on a hot, muggy night making people wish for a breeze
A steady wind piling fall leaves all along one side of things
A wind that messes up people's hair
Wind making it hard to light a camp-stove
Wind that troubles fire-fighters and spreads wildfire across fire-lines
Wind that makes people take a deep breath
Wind that whips flags full out noisily and clangs the rope against the pole
Wind that makes you think, it must be really windy at the coast
The wind in the trees that sounds so much like water
The warm wind of the desert

Heaven without Stars

Beyond all reason I am enamored of you...
In my sight you are the most feminine woman ever
Surely you must note my awkward stare
If you knew how irrationally I admire you!
Your voice and laugh I relish like water in a desert...
It evaporates too quickly
While I am not a perfect man, I imagine that I am a perfect match for someone
I have to stretch my self-esteem to imagine that I could be right for you,
I have imagined you are perfect
Your slightest imperfection could crush me like a snowflake
For weeks now you have inspired my awe
Like in some fantastic nightmare where I can find no words
Your name is the closest the alphabet can come to evoking your beauty.
I have told you I want to date you; what do I mean?
In my wildest fantasies we share a moment of silence
And I gaze at you through the steam of a cup of tea.
I am in no hurry to compose a lifetime
As I approach a mountain, I savor the view
Anticipation, longing for the summit snaps at my heels
But I tread slowly, enjoying the progress, the incremental advance.
Magic is of two kinds, spoken and unspoken.
Wishes spoken are sometimes strengthened, sometimes diluted.
If I remain silent, you will understand it is not because I am not thinking of you.
On the contrary, feelings strongly felt know no words
But the mind loses feelings in the translation to thought and word.
My heart is the vault of heaven without stars
Blackness beyond description, infinite expanse
A sparkling star thousands of years away
Sieves the eyes, fixes the focus.
My life sweet and full saves room for one ingredient
One heart could shift everything
One tender feeling could fill the night sky
The moon smiles gently on hopeful courtship
Hope holds the hand of the uncertain first steps of love
Possibility dances between the razors
Unseen attendants applaud the considered daring boldness
Forgive my presumption for speaking to you so intimately
Intimacy is the consummation of two open hearts
Scorched in the furnace of blazing singularity.
My heart peeled like a fruit – yours wrapped like a gift.

Two

Two varieties of grapes
From different regions
Ripened to perfection
-- fermented --
-- blended --
Each contributing its distinct bouquet

Two trees, planted separately
In morning
One shades the other
At dusk, the opposite
They grow together

Two colors
Yellow and blue

Blue wants to know blue-blue
and green and yellow
Yellow wants to know yellow-yellow
and green and blue
Pour them together
On a vast canvas
And mix slowly

Two people
There is no greater journey
There is no prince and princess
There is only happily ever after

Two souls
Totally committed to their relationship to the divine source
Seeing that source in themselves
Seeing no separation between themselves and their beloved
Kneeling down and kissing the feet
-- Namaste --
Treating each other as angels
When I forget
Promise to put my head in your lap and remind me

Two souls - dots - particles
Careening on a journey
Between worlds and lives and states
Balance and stabilize

Two minds - two hearts - two actors, poet, singer
One.

Into the mouth of cannons

My trusted brother gave the order
I thought I clearly understood
I raised my sword, I led the charge
Six hundred loyal men followed

Into the mouth of cannons
With deafening cannon-bursts from both sides
I rode through the mayhem.
If I had died, my hell might have been to ride through that volley for all eternity
But somehow surviving,
I reached the enemy lines
And through the smoke and blood
I saw the face of the opposing officer

It was a man I had known
And I recalled the pleasant social hours in his company
The memory momentarily but completely yanked me from the battlefield

I turned my horse and led the retreat
Back through the fallen and dying.
My brigade decimated,
I found I had misunderstood my command.

These moments are alive at every moment in my life transfixed
As they must be in every man's life
Just as we are all exiles in Egypt, all the prodigal son, all Job, all Cassandra.
We all take part in the misunderstood order
And loyalties abused.
And when we see ourselves in the faces of our opponents,
Then will we stop killing.

Hell Looked Like Paradise to Me

I went to Hell
I actually expected to see flames
Hell looked like Paradise to me
God was there
But nobody could see

I went to Purgatory
It was no Hell
Each person had as much joy as they could stand
We actually have to get re-accustomed to ecstatic bliss
Before our inevitable ascension

I went to Heaven
It looked just like Earth
Except
Rainbows have extra colors there
Every color has all the colors in it
In Heaven every tear melts an icy heart
God feels our every Joy
In Heaven...We are all already there.

Never

Promises were never kept
snow never fell, or if it did it never melted
the phone never rang
we never woke up together in the morning
time never stood still
doors never unlocked, or if they did they never opened
seeds never sprouted
buds never blossomed
fruit never ripened
eyes never closed
muscles never relaxed
gifts never unwrapped
stars never shined
the sun never set.
We never met
at least, not yet

SOU Clubs

If you don't know what to do
I think we have a club for you
In Ashland at SOU
There is so much you could do
It's hard to know just where to start
If you want to feel more safe
Why not learn a martial art?
Kenpo, judo or aikido
Will teach you how to punch and throw
If you'd rather let something throw you
Why not join the rodeo?

Clubs for those who like to scuba
One club just came back from Cuba
If you're gay or lesbian
Black, Chinese or Native American

Clubs for Criminology and Anthropology
The Naked Frogs is for biology
There is a club for those pre-law
And one called, "living in the raw"

One club event that's most bizarre,
The Physics club hosts a race of edible cars
Teams make cars of potatoes and carrots
Teams make cars of chocolate
When the cars have made the jump
The judges measure just how far
But the race is far from done
To determine who has won
The winning teams must eat their cars.

If you love philosophy,
If you'd rather be playing rugby,
If you want Tibet to be free,
If you believe in anarchy,
If you just want to rant on K-S-O-C

Clubs if you want to learn to act
One called, "quantum maniacs"
A club for German, one for French
One for those who promote hemp

Muslim, Catholic or Baha'i
Or if you came from Hawai'i

If you didn't hear one right for you
Remember there are 72.
You can always start one, too.

Untitled

To the painter, a painting needs no title
To the sleeper, a dream needs no interpretation
For lovers, a kiss needs no translation
The heart has no use for critics and editors
Poetry can live without grammar
Museum is to folk art what the zoo is to gazelles
The divine does not depend on churches and temples
Inspiration does not wait for a convenient time

Lightning is required to apply to the government for permission
The flower to bloom must renew its permit each year
Gravity would repel upward if we let it
The moon refuses to set without an audience
The Alps would rise up in protest if we left the national borders un-armed
We must set a price on the Earth, the water and air
How could people value truth if we did not sell it?
The darkness is a powerful teacher
The peaceful must subdue the warriors.

Two Dragons Not Separate

The anticipations and fulfilment of a lonely lifetime
Compressed into a few days
The meeting with an ordinary woman
Embodiment and receptacle of a lifetime's imaginings
The sudden justification of a marathon of solitude
Respite momentary in the still centrepiece of the volcanic tornado
Collision and dual orbit of two asteroids
Ripping heart-wrench of each moment's separation
Terrifying mind fear of missed appointments
Vacuous throngs of rushing zombies in the central Square
Love, the inverse of blind judgment
Every woman not you, not you
Delayed return to the village, the cottage empty in your absence
The keenest guttural silence of love's grasp released
Distrustful terror of opportunity unseized
Crush of sounds all noise without your voice
Crazing wait without your clasp for your return
Trust, trust the Universe and Angels and you and me
To guide you home to my arms
The wretched ugliness and disfigurement of every woman not you not you
Falling short of your height, your hair, your smile
Why did I depart? Why did I not carry you along on my minor errands?
You were my passport to Avalon
Our hearts are nothing but tears of joy and grief
Afraid to look away from my window -- what if I missed you passing by?
What if you distrust my sincerity for even an instant?
Can our brief encounter sustain us through all hellish adversity?
Eternity collapses like some exhausted Sun
Into the blackest light-engulfing hole of each endless moment
Come home come home mon ami
The Gods in me struggle to overcome the despair of your absence
Sleep is insufficient oblivion to ease the turmoil of waiting
I pray for the reassurance of dreams
Fitful waiting... how did Love consume the present and future so instantly and completely?
Let these rantings be a sufficient prayer for our reuniting and soon!
My heart is coiled so tight, so ready to leap!

Undone

Is this city the culmination of millenia of evolution?
A few stars are visible in a narrow strip of sky
Between rows of decaying edifices
Where groves of trees remain, they are fenced in, or off
As if their wildness threatens to escape.
Every rushing pedestrian wears a furrowed brow
Jostling from there to there.
No moment of silent reprieve between traffic and sirens
The church is surrounded by neglected tombstones and filled too with grisly remains
The ancient stones have been pulled down, or forgotten
Or encircled with wire, a gift shop and toll booth.
Museums filled with spoils of war
Obelisks proudly "captured" by the British army
Gold dredged up from the once-sacred Cenote,
Guardian spirit statues kidnapped from their shrines
Men take what little comfort they can
In pints in pubs with music or ball games too loud to permit a social exchange of words
In the square where men had gathered for speech and strength
Monuments stand to warriors and dominators
And fountains now make such gatherings impossible.
It is safer to avert the eyes and ignore a stranger asking for directions
Even the rain cannot wash the city clean.
The common man may dream of seeing a Sequoia.
Though beautiful, women return my gaze with a glare
Making me feel a guilty lecher.
Rather than pluck out my own eyes
I find beauty in unlikely places
The textures of the old bricks and street-hole covers
The street-light shining on raindrops rolling down the window
Like so many falling stars
What attractions or demons can bring the multitudes
To such an overcrowded prison?
What key to release them but calamity?
How many prayers unanswered? How many prayers unprayed?
Merciful death, kind blindness, escape into insanity
The blessing where the pavement ends.

And she blushed again

She thought she was a normal girl
She knew she wanted to be treated like a princess
One day she met an ordinary boy
Except he liked to bow and kiss her feet.
One day she awoke to her own divinity
It no longer felt odd, it was natural
Then she realized it was not a boy
It was an angel, a god
Who was kneeling down to her
And she blushed again
That she had ever blushed before.

Beaches are made for running

It's a beautiful day at the beach this morning.
I want you to come with me.
If we go to the beach, I won't want to come back.
Beaches are made for running.
Don't hold back.
Jump on my back and hold on tight!
Hold me close Lady Liberty
Closer.

Don't Know When

I shoulda stopped and got gas in the last town
Nothing to do now but keep driving
Can't go back now
Just gotta keep going
Nothing out here for a long ways
Just folks going past at a tragic speed
Can't see past the headlights
If I'd known what a long dark road
I would have savored that cool water
I shoulda spent more time soaking in the laughter of friends, real friends
No place to rest now, don't know when
And as far as I can see the tank's just gonna get emptier and emptier
Nothing on the radio but noise
And in my head these thoughts I've thought a thousand times before
What right have I to hope?
I have abandoned my angels
No years in caves could purify
No proof, no evidence that the sun will rise
It is all I can do to drive on, drive on

Another man's work

Men marching off to fields, factories and offices,
Men lining up for stadium hotdogs,
Dejectedly following a wife around a shopping mall.
After an early clock alarm
A family moment sometimes as long as a cup of caffeine
And off to do a day of another man's work
With a resignation letter and a resumé in the top drawer
And a beer with the boys at the sports bar on the way home
And the few who do not march off?
They are called mad by the mad
And starting sane in an insane world
Some go insane
And some deliver a gift so stark
The echo echoes louder and louder

A Multiple-Choice Poem

As I
Cried / sipped a steaming cup of oolong tea / lay dying
I thought back to
Yesterday / May 8th / my first kiss
Now it all seems like a
Dream come true / nightmare / badly dubbed foreign film

In the distance I hear
Churchbells / sirens / symphonies
How I
Miss / adore / bore of
Those
Quiet moments / rare moments / interruptions
When everything seemed as if it
Could go on forever / would never end / never happened

The day I
Stood in the waves / danced on your grave / missed my train
I thought my life
Was over / just beginning / in vain

But now in the clear light of
Spring / the moon / the neon vacancy sign
I have
Changed my mind / lost all motive / dyed my hair

And when I
Leave this place / see you one last time / squint through the misty window
I
Know / fear / hope
That you will
Remember me kindly / forgive me that 20 bucks I owe you / save me some ice
cream and pie

Nothing

I approached the Goddess May
Delicately, reverently
I made offerings of flowers
And professions of love true
On the altar of love in a thousand joyful ways I sacrificed myself
But May was fearful
Of hot love growing cold
“You don’t love me like you used to”
And there was nothing I could say or do.

I did not know June could be so different.
In the first moments I held back
But then I asked myself, “Why?”
If I hold back, how will she know how much I desire and love?
So I promised myself not to hold back... and not to push.

My greatest desire was to lose myself in her
I could not know
Her greatest fear was to lose herself in me.

And so she said, “I’m just not that into you”
And sadly June withdrew
And there was nothing I could say or do.

Heroes

When will I
Be satisfied?
When I'm
On the cover of *Time*
When I'm deafened by applause
When the Statue of Liberty is wrapped in pink gauze
When I golf across Mongolia
When children are staying
Up all night playing
In the light of the full moon
When I've flown in a lawn-chair aloft with balloons

When will I be content?
When the yard's filled with lawn ornaments
Heisman, Pulitzer, Stanley, Nobel
How will I polish them all?

Dance until my ankles bleed
Paint for days and forget to eat
Don't give a shit about what people think

I'm
Years ahead of my time
My heroes have always been people who
Speak the unpopular view
Make the teachers cry
By always asking "Why?"
Neat little notebooks, and scrap-stuffed drawers
Full of improbable ideas and inventions

Search for sunken treasure
Build sculptures out of icicles
Do something nobody's done before
Do what thou will

People will gossip misunderstand ridicule
Or heroes are unknown
Living in a world of ideas
One precept defines and guides their whole being
Could never achieve their idealistic dreams
Always dissatisfied

I am willing to sail over the edge to find out, if necessary

Patchwork Hearts

I have skinned my knees
Stitched together
Fabrics from many eons
Family treasures

Photo books have broken apart
There is no opening a broken heart

My past my path my future
Has sheared off
I am left standing on a precipice
The next step in any direction
Looks a long long way down
Down

And yet the smoldering fumes of destruction
Some small fleeting part
Rises up to the Heavens
And circles the Earth freely

Salty tears shed all over the Earth
Wind down merciful creeks
And join the wise ocean

Two tiny snowflakes in a blizzard
Cling together
Falling a long long way down
Gently.

Vision

Come with me now
Little one
It is time

All you will need
Is this blanket
Your Mother wove over the years
You will need this blanket

You will find your place
On the mountain
Alone

Far below we will be drumming
We will be waiting

Listen to the wind
For Spirit speaks with the voice of the wind
And the voice of water
And the voices of all wild things

But until you hear them for yourself,
It is no use for me to tell you so.

Come sit still
Under the slow, dancing clouds
Slow down 'til
The Sun slows down

Then
You will be given your vision
You are ready
You will hear Owl
Speak with your own inner voice

It is time
Put away your toys for now
Be still
Do not shout louder than ant
You will hear

And young man
When you return
We will all celebrate
Hushed, listening
As you sing thunderously.