

Simeon's Journey

Inspirations, Insights, & Stories:

The Poetry of Bob Devine

Prelude

*Echoes of a thought drift inside,
telling how the many have to hide.
It's a company of wolves,
the anger that we hold,
afraid to let it go... afraid to let it go.*

*Single truths of fools fill the sky
in a world where the bravery has died.
But can we see it shine?
a truth that's more than mine,
drifting past the uninspired mind...*

Welcome to *Simeon's Journey*.

If there was ever a time to speak up and bring love, kindness, and peace into the world, now is that time. Too much fear is all around us, and the challenge is to rise from it and express ourselves so that others might see that this fear is an illusion that strangles us, and keeps us down in a world of shadows when the light is actually all around us.

A different life is waiting to be lived. Will you be one to hide or one to rise? That question is being asked of each of us every day, in every decision, and we can only hope that we choose to rise more often than we choose to hide.

This is the essence of the struggle in *Simeon's Journey*, a poetic experience in contrasts, alternating between moments of darkness and moments of inspiration, always reaching for the divine hand to pull me up out of my "dark nights of the soul" into the awareness of the higher potential of living. Simeon is me, when I'm at my best, or at least trying to be my best, undertaking the journey, wherever it might lead.

I dedicate this work to my wife and kids who have undertaken my journey with me through thick and thin, but this is also for all the "hideaway heroes" whose "time has come to rise," and to the One, without whom nothing would be possible.

(This work is freely shared and not for sale.)

Picture This

Darkness Falls in an eerie sort of *Pleasantville*
where *Bad News Bears* wreak havoc
and *Armageddon* lies *Closer* than we'd like to believe

Can we take a *Leap of Faith*
trying to regain our *Sense and Sensibility*
before the *Twilight Zone* arrives
and the *War of the Worlds* ensues?

October Skies are looming
Will we be *Lost in Translation*
or caught in a *Dreamscape*
while *Red Dawn* descends
from her *Night of the Living Dead*?

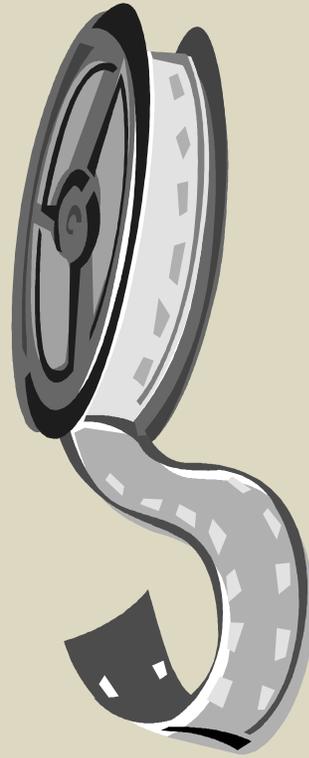
The Two Towers fell
while a silly cowboy played *Return of the King*
and *The Prince and the Pauper* muddied themselves
in an ungodly *Passion of the Christ*

The *City of God* is wailing
howling at a *Bitter Moon*

Can the *First Knight* rise
challenge the *Prince of Thieves*
with a *Princess Bride* by his side
Finding Neverland and crossing *The Wide Sargasso Sea*
to realize a *Fellowship of the Ring*?

It is *No Small Affair*
Like Water for Chocolate
the *Rain Man* is drowning us

But *Here Comes the Sun*
the *Day of the Dead* is passing
Close Encounters await those who will run *Far and Away*
Return to Snowy Mountain
and claim their *Kingdom of Heaven*



“Hello darkness, my old friend. I've come to talk with you again, because a vision, softly creeping, left its seeds while I was sleeping, and the vision that was planted in my brain still remains, within the sound of silence...”

-- Simon & Garfunkel

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## **Of Light and Shadows**

I've stared out windows day in and day out for so long, wondering what life would bring if I could only be a thin vapor of the potential.

Wasting away in a daily grind, losing track of the time and all that surrounds me, until I wake up one day in a strange land of chalk and shadows, outlines of what once was.

And even then it was nothing inspiring, but now it's downright unenlightening as these shadows wander, freely making waves, but nothing real.

I rise up and leave, taking great pains to avoid all of them, for I do not want to be seen and forced into contact where the shadows can play folly with my soul.

As I cross the street, sudden strikes of lightning hit every spot but mine and from that safe place I watch the shadows fall to their knees in tears, wailing about the life they live, wondering why they cannot find a way more real and true.

Then it slaps me in the face, like a mirror, that I am no different, a pale shadow of what I could be, and I fall down dumbstruck in the circumstance.

I find myself on my knees asking for a favor from a reality I don't really know, but truly want to see, and it's in that moment that a vision comes clear of a place where two people meet.

It's like the feeling I get when I walk through a forest with birds singing, water trickling, and sunlight filtering in through the trees, and there's just enough character to the place to make me grasp that there's more to the walk than just me.

I reach out for the fingertips of another and just barely brush them, feeling places awoken inside me, a truer yearning for love, an innocent friend with qualities unknown but contemplated.

And then I pull back in the sudden terror of my exposure, for fear that it's not real, that I'll be misunderstood, not loved in return, and it all starts to leave.

I cry out wanting it to come back, but the vision dissipates and I feel so worthless for foiling an image of something so pure.

Kneeling there in the middle of the street I realize that each bolt of lightning is a catalyst, for the shadows suddenly look more real and I see definite features to each of them.

Stumbling to my feet I start to step around them, but suddenly one is lying there sobbing for all that she's never been and I cannot help but feel all the sadness inside of me well to the top and spill out around me like it's tearing me apart and every sad thing of a lifetime comes to mind.

Tears streaming, I scream at the top of my lungs, reaching out with every fiber of my being toward something that I can't quite grasp, as though it would somehow grasp me instead.

Then a glow begins and I feel a warmth inside, filling all the hollow spots with a brighter view.

I see birds and trees and sunlight dancing, and the street is now a winding path leading through the forest, and yet she is still there upon the ground sobbing.

Suddenly all I ever wanted leaves with the awareness that all I can be is right before me.

Reaching down, I brush my fingers along her arm and slip my hand in hers to bring her up to face me.

"I thought you left," she says, as I wipe the tears from her face and tell her, "No," and with an honest grin that's spent a long time waiting, I add, "I won't hide anymore."

She smiles in a way that sees right through me, knowing me better than I know myself, but we are nonetheless grateful for the moment, talking about all things real and all things true as we stroll along the path of light and shadows.



## A Morning Piece

As I start today  
I ponder the ways I can be of use to the world  
I look all around me  
and then I look inside

I choose not to hide  
or divide  
but to be within  
looking at the world from the inside  
with my Friend who draws me near

From there I see  
a place to start  
from the heart  
with me

The awareness of how I will be  
is more important  
than letting my surroundings  
and all that happens therein  
define me

Being purposefully connected  
to the One Source  
allows for a delay switch in my reaction  
so that I may react instead  
to whatever occurs  
from a higher mind

And as I look upon creation  
I see a different sight in that light  
a place not so cold and barren  
but holy with possibility



*“Live the actual moment. Only this actual moment is life.”*

-- Thich Nhat Hanh

## **Breathing**

I heard it once said  
that life is just a series of breaths  
and all that happens between the first and the last  
is the great panorama of existence  
carried forth by the opening and closing of the lungs

but what if each breath  
is a life unto itself  
trapped in a space of time  
longer or shorter  
depending upon the harried nature of one's soul

the quick frantic breath of the sprinter  
leaving everything out there on the track  
gasping for air  
unaware of what exists in each moment  
slipping by

the slow lingering breath of the meditator  
pondering existential possibility within the framework  
of the inhale and exhale  
quite cognizant of each life and each death  
born and re-born again

I died once  
right in the middle of a breath  
so one could say I didn't really die  
but it was the longest breath I ever lived

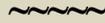
taken from a body  
to a place that chilled me with its warmth  
and gave me just enough insight to know  
that a breath can be an eternity  
if we choose

Then it was over  
life reborn in the generosity of another  
who happened upon the scene  
breathing life into a body  
ending the longest breath of a deathless death

And now the whispers of another place  
play upon my mind  
as I breathe ever so slowly  
a moonlit wanderer  
walking side by side  
with eternity and death as companions  
in a world where each moment is full of possibility



*“Oh God, lead us from the unreal to the real...  
lead us from darkness to light...  
lead us from death to immortality.”*  
-- Hindu prayer



### **In the Darkness**

In the darkness there sprung a light  
no shadow could hide  
and though the end was near  
a warmth enveloped her  
suggesting more

And yet the end was ever near  
fading fast  
struggling to find the words to ask  
but nothing emerged  
energy consumed in holding on

Tears and anguish in the knowing  
yet failing to speak  
All seemed lost as the end arrived  
Nothingness

Then a voice emerged

*It is not the words you speak  
but the thoughts you keep  
and the desire to ask  
is the answer you seek*

And in the darkness there sprung a light  
no shadow could hide

*(In memory of Cassie Jo)*

## To Be

sometimes we just don't get it  
how things could be if we were free  
no one watching to say we're wrong  
but living life and letting live

instead so many are ready to pounce  
if a hair's out of place  
jumping on one thought like it means more  
than what it is  
a thought, just a thought...

we live like thoughts mean more  
and we think too much  
and act too little  
dream like little escapists  
and forget to just be

staring at my girl and boy  
sleeping like angels on a pillow of dreams  
realizing the sheer innocence in danger  
of the distorting mold  
of trying to be like everyone else

will I think too much while they grow  
forget the importance of nurturing soul  
with time to be free  
able to lean on me when necessary  
without confounding my goals with theirs

will I forget to be there with them  
as I attempt to find my own way  
lose myself inside of me  
while they're pulling on my shirt sleeve  
too busy to hear their dreams  
too caught up in thinking about the way things should be  
trying to be free  
but bound

dotting I's and crossing T's  
when I should be...  
should be...  
should be...  
just be.

outside of mind  
in a present place  
living for the joy  
of what is real here and now  
this moment

and they breathe  
a chest rises  
and falls  
and rises  
and falls

it's perfect.  
life's good.  
right here  
right now  
not yesterday  
or tomorrow  
but now  
right now.



## Reunion

The boy was sleeping  
on her couch when she returned  
She stared intently, somewhat apprehensive  
as she removed her coat and approached  
Leaning over, she sniffed,  
smelling him  
like a dog or cat might identify their own child

Seeing it unfold on the screen  
recalled how I would sometimes lay beside Sean  
watch him sleep  
breathing in his smell  
with an occasional kiss to the back of his head  
as though I wanted him to know  
he was well kept in the darkness.

Perhaps it was equally as selfish, though,  
seeing him vulnerable and reliant  
a synthesis of his mom and myself  
a deep inhale reaffirming  
the source of fusion between us  
binding us together  
compelling me to protect  
to care

Even as she didn't want to love her child  
wanted to forget and run  
I knew she couldn't, not anymore  
not once she knew him beyond sight and reason  
to breathe deeply of him and know that he was hers

All attempts to deny, to hide, to slip away  
they all dissipated  
and although her many flaws would continue to show  
and harass her infinitely  
she would never again be able to separate or abandon.

(Inspired by a scene from the indie movie "Trucker")

## Secondary Minds

The curse of a secondary mind  
is striving for the upper hand  
leaning on false props  
feelings of grandeur at another's expense.

We yearn for more  
afraid to realize that this life we're given  
is the one we're supposed to live  
not pining away for heroes and babes  
as though winning  
or getting something fancy  
will change the fact that we're just a small part  
of something much larger than we can see

thinking that it's not enough  
or our difficult circumstances  
are excuse enough to hide away everyday  
in a life that passes by while we play at things  
that drift away, meaningless  
on the end of a noose  
dangling there like a child who never saw anything real

like love  
or friendship  
the taste of a snow cone on a hot summer's day  
the whitewash of snow as a sled screams down the hill  
hanging on for dear life  
with a brother, a sister, a mother or a father  
or a good friend riding behind  
trying to steer without fear  
wide open grins for an experience  
of something more than victory

With the crack of a bat  
coming around third and heading toward home  
is it the win or the thrill of playing the game?  
Because the answer to that question  
makes all the difference in the world.

## Solitary Soldiers

If living a life of love  
was as easy as talking about it  
the world would be a better place

Instead it seems we languish,  
fixated on all the ideas  
while seldom realizing the ideals

Potato flakes without water  
eventually grind themselves to dust  
but when moistened  
something else entirely occurs

One day I saw them protesting  
screaming loudly,  
angrily, spitefully, crying for peace

Something about it struck me as odd  
so I asked what they were doing  
and they said,  
“Peace is something worth fighting for.”

I pray for the solitary soldiers  
battling with windmills  
and yet nothing that holds us together

Fighting for peace seems like hating for love

But then again,  
if living a life of peace  
was as easy as talking about it,  
the world would be a better place



*“The only way to have peace, is to teach peace...”* -- A Course in Miracles

## Tolkien's Dream

They say "not all who wander are lost"  
but sometimes in this dream of mine  
I feel a shadow rise up that clouds my way

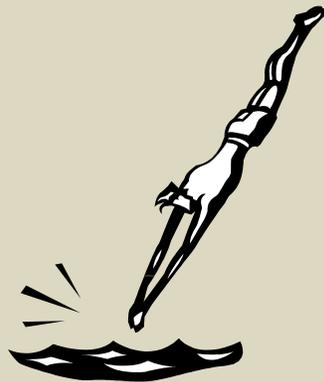
Am I a dreamer of impossible dreams  
with beginnings and ends and no middle?  
Do I have any means to see it through?

Stranded on one side of the shore  
glimpsing the other  
Looking for a canoe  
and no paddle in sight

Stripped bare  
Leaving behind all that can be spared  
I stand on the edge  
and jump

Spread eagled over the water  
it comes to me

Sometimes the journey is the destination



## **“The Great Battle of our Time”:**

There’s a scene in the movie, *Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*, where the wizard Gandalf stares out from the mythical city of Minas Tirith across the plains of Gondor to the mountainous stronghold of Minas Morgul where the minions of the evil lord Sauron have just been unleashed to destroy the world of men once and for all. Watching a cone of power and light burst into the sky, he says, “So we’ve come to it at last, the great battle of our time.”<sup>1</sup> As I watched the story come to life on the screen I pondered the implications of this cautionary tale of good and evil which, if analyzed, could have as many interpretations as there are people to do so.

What is “the great battle of our time?” Is it an epic historical confrontation with some enemy, such as the Alamo, Gettysburg, the Battle of the Bulge, or D-day? Could it, perhaps, be the physical battle with an enemy well defined existing in the far reaches of the world, perhaps in the Middle East instead of Middle Earth? I imagine that some military engagement would come to the mind of many people when asked that question. But I honestly suggest that larger, more meaningful struggles are often obscured by this external view of world events as though they portray some great meaning to our minds, when in reality they are the symptoms, not the source of our struggles. The real battles are seldom viewed as a public collective consciousness because many people aren’t comfortable shining the light on the real issues of life. Instead, interest is often diverted toward fantastic events, horrific catastrophes, and epic battles so we don’t have to face our own struggles with who we are, personally, each day.

How well do you love today? Isn’t that a question of struggle worth thinking about as we watch the anger, divisions, wars and atrocities escalate domestically and internationally? Are we really to spend more time weeding out and defeating the evil-doers than weeding the gardens of our own heart? Have we bought into the “us vs. them” scenario to the extent that we are unable to see that there are real people with real lives on each side of the partisan divide, whether that be in the Middle East or right here in our own back yard?

Sometimes it seems to me that the wrong questions are being asked and laundry lists of diversionary tactics take the place of a real dialogue in such

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<sup>1</sup> In J.R.R. Tolkien’s written work it is King Theoden who makes the statement, “So we’ve come to it in the end, the great battle of our time, in which many things shall pass away.”

matters of the heart. When the issue is health care, taxes, war, and even peace, then we can demonize the opposition to our views. It's easy if you try, and it seems a whole lot of people are trying these days, myself having been no exception to the rule.

But at the end of the day, when it quiets down and I'm faced with who I am and who I want to be, I feel somewhat weary and melancholy that I've sold another day of my life for the sowing of frustrations at the way things are. And it's in those dark hours of the night that I begin to ask why I have so little faith, why I let the world sweep me up and drag me along to go with the flow and never "be the change in the world I wish to see?"<sup>2</sup> When I drop the façade and look in the mirror I see a face of a child of God who wants to love and be loved, who wants faith to manifest and guide the daily life, who wants to see the source of the problems and address them rather than staring at the ever present manifestations of escapism that bring all too real results in the world at large. But addressing the sores without spotting the disease leaves us feeling short changed and helpless when new sores manifest out of the scabs of the old.

And it is then, when I have felt helpless and humbled at my own weaknesses of character, that I am faced with "the great battle of our time." Is it really about fighting against some external enemy with weapons, fists, and words, or does it have something to do with facing the internal enemies of anger, hatred and fear that cause us to act out or lash out in our own self-interest? When I look at politics and politicians do I want them all to go away or do I really want to see an end of compromised integrity through self-promotion, and self-interested maneuvering? Are the problems of the world tied up in businesses seeking for a profit share or does the root problem have something to do with the motivations of power, greed, and selfishness? As I ponder the various issues it seems to me that selfishness may be the crux of the problem.

Oh now, I can think of so many things I want to tell people so that they'll change and make my world nicer, but in this approach I'm left thinking of me. This battle requires us to look inside and see the source of strife inside. How do we become the change we want to see in the world? How do I eliminate selfishness? Can I dare to look inside and recognize my own culpability for strife in the world? Or would it be more comfortable to

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<sup>2</sup> Mahatma Gandhi

get lost in the seemingly endless stream of news happening out there instead of in here?

The danger in breaking it down and realizing that one is part of the root problem is the overwhelming sense that it might not be fixable, that one might not be able to change. There is fear that I'm not as strong and capable as I would like to be, that my faith is not as strong as I would like it to be, because it takes faith to believe in positive change from within instead of outside. The fact that there seems to be only a small minority who have taken such a step, leaves a sense of isolation that one is merely an island in a sea of discontent, diversion and selfishness.

But if "no man is an island unto himself"<sup>3</sup>, then it becomes necessary to produce avenues for the exchange of ideas where those who embark on such a journey can find common islands in the sea of everything. Each person must walk their own road; no one can drag them down the path; it must be a willful journey to seek a higher will; but can we walk our individual roads together, sharing ideas about our journey toward selflessness? Can we muster the spirit of love and service to others over the spirit of serving ourselves? Can we, by our growth, begin to reflect an alluring path that has a higher degree of freedom potential and peace of mind than any epic battle could ever achieve? Will there be a place in the world for a community of the unselfish?

I have to believe there is, for it is the glimpse I've seen that has me committing once again in the wee hours of the morning to try to take that "road less traveled"<sup>4</sup> and begin a journey to see who else is on that road. For it is there that "the great battle of our time," the struggle between selfishness and selflessness, will truly be decided. Perhaps that was what Tolkien was really alluding to anyway.



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<sup>3</sup> John Donne

<sup>4</sup> Robert Frost

JRR Tolkien

## **The Road Not Taken:**

-- written by Robert Frost

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;*

*Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that, the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same*

*And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I marked the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way  
I doubted if I should ever come back*

*I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.*



(Although not my poem, it's one I've recited numerous times)

## **Be Still**

There are those who need you now,  
not watching from your couch,  
fiddling with your cell phone,  
playing computer tag with friends,  
waiting for another diversion that keeps you from being real  
right here, and right now.

We hide from inside and play outside  
while problems mount and everyone wants to know,  
Who's the next idol?  
Who will survive?  
Who gets the girl or the boy?

Shut it down  
Turn it off  
Reach inside to touch the soul of who you are  
because we need you now, present and real.

There is real suffering in our own communities,  
not just out there in the disasters and the headlines.  
People are afraid because everything's a game  
and it's hard to spot something true that isn't pretending to be.

Hope has dimmed and it's going to take you and I  
and as many others as we can find  
to turn that light back on.

Before you start, sit quietly and rest inside.  
Hear the voice that comes only with the silence,  
filling the spaces that are numbed,  
deadenened by all the diversions given to us to keep us blind.  
Clear your mind.

Meditate on the fact that if we  
"Be still and know God,"  
then all of our scrambling, positioning,  
manipulating, masking, and fear  
will wash away.

We don't have to be the God of our circumstances.  
That job's already taken.  
We can listen inside and follow.  
Learn to be real and true.  
For it is there that true leadership is born.

Throw away the TV.  
Unplug your computer.  
Don't recharge your cell phone.  
Or instead use them sparingly as a tool to your reawakening  
rather than the addictive escapes they can be.

It's not an easy task  
to step aside from it all,  
build new patterns,  
step back out in the world,  
and "be the change in the world you wish to see."

But take the chance.  
Look for the opportunities.  
Talk to the people walking by you.  
Smile your widest.  
Help when you can.  
Listen when you need to,  
because true listening is a lost art that needs to be resurrected  
the kind where you actually hear what the other person is saying.

And when you find others reawakening,  
take solace from them,  
connect and use each other as anchors tethered to reality  
to keep you strong.  
And don't forget to "be still" and recharge the soul continuously  
for further exploration in a world longing to be free,  
willing to act if only they can see someone else who believes.

I know it's a pipe dream,  
but if one person sets the scene  
maybe more will follow until a sea of lights,  
turned on,  
crowds out the darkness and brings hope to a new world.



### **Statues of Liberty**

I watched her from the line  
She was crying  
I wanted to know why  
But there was something inside  
Holding me back from chivalry  
Perhaps it was chivalry

She had a somewhat anguished look  
That was both sad and embarrassed  
Unable to hold it in  
Unable to hide

Folding the paper  
Putting it in her purse  
Like a jeweler putting away something more  
Than just a diamond

I walked past her like a stone  
Feigning both invisibility  
And obliviousness  
Something I learned quite well  
In America  
With her statues of liberty

With all due seriousness  
I pretended to be seriously involved  
Pasting a stamp  
Dropping a letter  
And returning the way I came

Pretense of disinterest  
Dancing all around  
A fine art  
But her glance shattered the facade

I succumbed  
Looking into eyes so hollow  
And yet so real  
Reaching out with envelope in hand  
Tears streaming

Comfort zone imploded  
Glancing down  
Spotting a phrase  
Funny how all pretense can fall away with a single phrase

Killed in Action

Attempts to be anything less than human  
Dissolve in tragic embrace  
A symbol of something lost  
And yet strangely representing something found

As she wept  
I found myself crying, too  
For every man, woman, child  
Posturing for something  
Or against something  
In this world

Making life out to be more  
than what it is  
Opportunities to be real and true  
in the moment



### Weeping Willow

Big brothers are watching  
telling us all is safe  
but the faithful fall around us  
making us feel enslaved

When do we realize ends don't justify means  
and means speak volumes for who we are  
Founding fathers roll in their graves  
as principles are squashed in times of fear

Taking away freedom to protect freedom  
is about as smart  
as the society that lets them do it

It seems greatness is a dying breed  
and death is at our door  
unless we try to uphold the truth  
challenge fear with faith and compassion

Are there things to be said for who we've become  
Will we ever look at what we've really done  
in the name of the Father?

Weeping willows mimic the mood  
while in my backyard  
the breeze blows through

Called to our highest  
we sink to our lowest  
over and over again

A greater time of lesser things  
having never been seen  
Can euphoria's dream burst  
and break down the screen  
widening the view to a different scene

where fantasy  
holds no torch to reality

where what we want to believe  
is less important than what really is

where love  
is more important than being right

where who we are  
is more important than what we want

where money is a means  
not an end

and ends and means only meet  
where love and reality have led the way

If such a thing can be dreamed  
then what kind of scene can we bring?

Big brothers  
Founding fathers  
They're watching...

## Tuesdays

Hey there, today's Tuesday,  
somehow I think it feels like a new day  
but then I've felt that way before  
only to wake up from my dream  
feeling the need to scream

Letting go of all that bleeds us  
looking for something that feeds us  
and finding truth is a solitary soldier  
waiting for us to hold her

Letting go of lies that treat us  
like we're kings and queens  
somehow clouding up the scene  
keeping us blinded from searching  
for what we really need

Taking that soldier's hand  
I start to think that life can be grand  
letting go of wants and yearnings  
to be emptied from our quicksand  
and filled with the one thing  
that makes all else seem bland

And it's love  
oh yes  
not the pretending kind  
keeping us squirming for someone to find  
but love like the shadows being brightened by the sun  
knowing in our hearts we are one.

(Just a random Tuesday, but like any other, a day full of possibility)

## FAITH: The Final Frontier

It's hard sometimes to believe in the truth that is guiding you. I mean, how can you tell if it's true? I sometimes think most people cross a certain point in their life where they forego the true calling from within to establish a life less difficult and strenuous, or taxing on the nerves. It's the day the ideals turn to ideas and then to whims and then to the folly of youth, brushed away in the hustle and bustle of real life.

At what point does this happen? With the disillusion of a dream or the failure of attaining a goal or the crushing heartbreak of fallen expectations? Yeah, then it's time to close that heart, keep the silliness away, no more dreaming for me. It hurts too damned much to believe in dreams or ideals. Let's see now, what am I supposed to be doing instead?

*"Follow your heart."*

Would somebody shut that thing up? It's always getting me into trouble. Let's see what others are doing. Go to college, get a job, raise a family.

*"Follow your heart."*

Forget it! Go to church, mow the lawn, watch TV... Let's see, I'm taking notes now. I can do this. This isn't hard at all. Just follow what everyone else does. It's the way things are supposed to be, right? Fit in. Do the right thing. Don't make waves. Be acceptable. Get in line and punch your card at the time clock. No more heartbreaks... or aches.

I wake up in the middle of the night with a fire in my mind. I'm in the middle of it all and I only see one way out. The path is safe, sheltered from all sides. I only need to go that way and my safety and well being is assured. But then I get this feeling that I should go the opposite way, right into it all. Something deep inside is calling me to see it.

*"Follow your heart."*

I can't. It hurts. It never seems to go right. I just can't. Look at that guy over there. He's taking the path and I don't see you calling to him.

*"That's because he's following his heart."*

But what about her or the elderly fellows or that boy?

*"Is their heart, your heart?"*

Oh... (Silence) ...I turn to face the fire.

But what if I'm wrong?

*"What do you mean by wrong?"*

Doing something and having it backfire and someone getting hurt out of it all... usually me.

*“What is it you want to do?”*

I want to be free for once in my life. I want to chase the dream... see where it goes.

*“What would be wrong?”*

I don't know.

*“How will you know unless you try?”*

Tell me something, then. What are dreams?

*“You're talking about something other than the sleeping kind, aren't you?”*

Yeah.

*“Then I would say they are the desires of the human imagination mixed with your honest heart's leadings, the degree of their worthiness reflected in the latter. I might be biased, however.”*

So how does one know which is which?

*“You don't necessarily at first. But if one sits and sorts their thoughts and allows the spirit to move with their ideas, then the real ones will take shape.”*

Some of my dreams are pretty risky.

*“To what?”*

My security and stability.

*“What is it you have now?”*

Well, my job, my... well... It's just risky, I tell ya!

*“It's unknown and not in your norm. To you, that's a risk... to me, a challenge.”*

Well... I mean it sounds great, but it seems impulsive.

*“But what if it is me telling you to do it?”*

Then I would follow, I think. If I could be sure it was you and not just a wishful me.

*“It's me, I tell ya!”*

Yeah, but that would be exactly what I would say if I wanted it to be you.

*“Well there's always another time. Hey, we've got eternity. I'll try again sometime.”*

Alright, I'll go, I'll go.

*“Well if it's what you really want to do...”*

I'm standing on the cliff of so many people's dreams. The wind is blowing gently into my face. I see the light of a new day off on the horizon. What would it take to step off the edge, to follow one's dreams?

*“Faith.”*

I look back and see a way that has been mine for a long time, quite challenging and growth producing, but what do you do when a new way comes

calling for you to check it out? Do you follow or stay? Neither necessarily wrong nor right... just a choice.

Maybe it comes down to the voice... the one within. Maybe if I can just learn to side with His voice, trust in Her leading, and have faith in Its course. Perhaps that is the right choice, regardless of the decision made. To just...

*"Follow your heart."*



## **PART II: *HORIZONS***

*The 2005 audio CD Horizons contained my earlier poetic work, a lot of which originated during my times of spiritual awakening. For the final section of this book I wanted to include those poems in the order they were presented on the CD.*

### **Mystery**

Mystery arises in my soul  
I have nothing before me but the light  
and yet I see shadows

How does one know the yearnings from within  
to be anything but rambling?  
Can one know the true voice when spoken  
in contrast to the incessant one that muddles?

I proceed to place emphasis on little things  
May I find something worthwhile  
to take their place

Wandering still

## The Lady

I see her only in the night  
In the shadows, catching mind, but gone  
She's lost from sight

Each and every night  
She calls me to her bed  
To stay for a time and rest  
True and gentle is her word

She's a lady caught up in the scenes  
She's a lady on the edge of reality

As pure as the driven snow  
She answers only what you need to know  
Driven by power lying deep within  
She's the gateway to the other end

Holding hope  
Casting off light  
Upon which I give to life  
Only threads of distant fire

Does anyone see the lady? She needs to be on your mind  
Does anyone fear the lady? Because fear is only blind

You know she's so damned hard to see  
Drifting on the edge of reality  
But you feel that the lady, she's oh so real  
Much easier to touch than to be

So at the end of the night when I get up to leave  
The lady calls in me to stay, if in me, I believe

Yet I walk out the door  
I'm still afraid it seems  
There'll come another time  
The lady is my dreams

## Calling all Heroes

Watching from the silence  
I sit and see the night  
and all of its shadows.  
It is not the night which causes fear  
but the helpless cries under darkened skies.

Do you not want to run to aid the million screams  
which carry on aloud  
past the effort of the few who wish to know  
and wish to share that with others?

I want so much to feel the truth within my aching bones.  
I think I know,  
but when I think it seems I only know less than I thought I knew.

Yet I strive on, for there is something driving me.  
I cannot tell its light at night when I search and hide  
and look and hide.  
When I search I hide, for is it not the truth which scares?

Yes I know it seems too much,  
but when I see the light raining down through lies  
I cannot help but tremble at the truth in all of its majesty.

Do I stand to be the son I know I am?  
Who cares and gives and loves to live?  
I would if mind alone could take me there,  
but my feet have something to say about where I'll be  
when the day is done.

Maybe the truth is not so important to us after all,  
but the impression of truth seems much more secure  
in a society of lies.



BREAK OUT!

What sounds are thundering again?

TAKE IT!

I cannot sense the wind which I know to be whistling upon my flame.

TOUCH THE SKY!

But why, oh why,  
when I cannot feel the simplest truth without the fear inside?

I CALL YOU TO MY SIDE

I'll ride, I'll ride,  
but still the fear reaches deep inside.

I'M CALLING ALL THE HEROES, LOST IN A WEB OF LIES

I know right now my mind will come if only my feet will try...  
I'll try.

I STAND WITH YOU  
I'M BY YOUR SIDE  
JUST ASK FOR ME  
DON'T WISH FOR LIES  
THERE'S NO MORE TIME TO HIDE

FOR IF YOU BE THE KINDEST SOUL  
YOU'LL WALK, YOU'LL RUN  
YOU'LL FLY, YOU'LL RIDE

THERE'S NO MORE TIME FOR HIDEAWAY HEROES  
THE TIME HAS COME TO RISE

REACH OUT THROUGH YOUR WOUNDED NIGHT  
AND FIND YOUR SKY AND FLY!  
FOR IF YOU'LL BE MY HERO  
THEN ALL WILL BE ALRIGHT

Do you see the night going away in the light of the sun?  
No more darkness when you look on his eyes.  
Who is He?  
You know.  
Don't pretend you don't.

Enough is enough in this day.  
For all who can stand must come from their shell  
so that those who cannot will see from their hell  
the illusions of fire aren't real.

It is not so important to know as to feel  
so come and touch the light.

And if there is one thing that I can do  
it's to tell you all that is real.

Can you feel it rise?  
Not the night, not the fear, not the lies,

*but love.*

Oh yes, it's the only thing that flies.  
Fear dies and love rises.

Higher than the highest dream, it rises.  
Louder than a summer's thunderous sky, it rises.

The time has come to rise.

## Whispers

I hear them coming along,  
whispers, alive in the night with a song.  
Singing a phrase which brings me along to see

What is it I see?  
A place like this  
but not so full of other things.  
More like this when everything sleeps and all who are awake  
are those who want to see something true.

It's like late in the night when you stare at the stars,  
And the voices that call diminish the scars of life.

This is the place,  
a future place right here.  
Not so much different,  
yet it seems much more clear to me.

I cry, because I see that people there,  
they believe in peace and dreams,  
and in freedom live at one with everything.

Angels and spirit are commonplace friends  
And everyone cares and everyone tends to love.

No one fights over who is right,  
But care to share with all in light and life.

Where from comes the whispers?  
A liver, a lover,  
a giver, a Brother,  
a Father, a Mother.

All these are true and not one is more.

We're carried along by hands that are sure.  
She sees so much more than we can believe.  
He'll give us the future if we'll try to achieve.

I sing in a song for the one that you are,  
Be it Jesus, God, Allah, or the Light of the Stars.

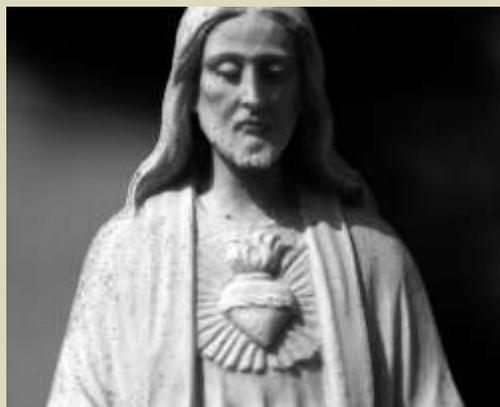
Hallowed be thy name you say  
and yes it has to be.  
For no one could come and refuse to believe  
Once you give them the touch of your whispering seed.

I know you are one who would give all you are  
To find one little child lost from the stars

You are the shepherd counting sheep in my dreams.  
You are the Father giving love out in streams of light.

I come to you, oh Lord of Lights.  
I nestle in your name.  
Call me Peter, John, or James.  
I'll follow you just the same.

But I know you, you just call me son  
And I thank your grace to let me be one for you.



## Nerves of Steel

Once not so long ago I had a dream  
and it wasn't really anything too enlightening  
but it did have a theme that made me think about you

Like when you stood there in ridicule and faced the demon wind  
wondering how they could feel this way  
as they spit and hit and kicked you

You must have been so sad  
amidst your empathy for the human condition  
that pushes away what is needed the most  
for fear that it isn't real

We don't want to get burned  
and so we play so cool  
but instead who's the fool when we lose

So we nailed you to the wall and lifted you tall  
trying to make you small  
but you opened up the universe and let us in

It's beyond me how you can be that way  
as I see a hope that I can be free  
if I would stoop to live a little less like me  
and more like you

Caring little for image  
no need for revenge  
living life without fear  
and more for the way of a simple man who loves

And as I'm forgiven  
hold it over me again and again  
until I can believe it's real

Because I want to be there with you  
gazing out  
facing the world with nerves of steel  
and an undefended heart

## Lost and Found

Beaten and abused  
this child was used  
scarred like an old tire worn  
shorn from truth

Somewhere along the line  
I lost a piece of my heart  
given away in the dark  
to the demons of my fear

hidden in the night  
floundering through  
with the means to survive  
but never live

as restless as a cool breeze blowing through my hair  
I dare to open  
and cast my lot with a new trend  
It was a Godsend

The universe opened up and swallowed me whole  
took me in  
gave me reasons to believe

Like an angel's wings  
I lifted to the touch of other things  
voices in the night  
casting light upon the shadows of my soul  
trying to take the broken shell and make it whole

but there's fear  
that faithful companion who seldom lets go  
gripping you when no one else would

giving you something to feel  
when there was nothing to believe

I grieve  
a lost soul  
tortured in the moonlight  
surrounded by love  
but all alone

afraid to let it in  
afraid to let it go  
standing in the middle  
a quandary for my soul

pulled apart  
ripping me  
shorn like an old tire worn

And then it fills me  
taking what is left from the tear  
and binding me

Casting shadows aside  
no longer wanting to hide  
reaching for the voices  
speaking of the light  
illuminating the night

You are a child of the One  
You are loved  
You are worthy  
There is a universal family  
to which we all belong

Welcome.

## **Faith Child**

What choirs call out to my heart in the night,  
sending answers to questions of mind  
out in symphonies to my soul?  
Like angels, they play the chords of truth within.

Do they exist?  
Angels, I mean, are they real?

A breeze lifts the heavy fog away,  
the winds of night whistling yes to silly pondering.

A thrill of unknowing ecstasy enters into the human chambers  
standing hairs on end in witness to the truth.

It is the response of mind  
to the recognition of the heart's awakening  
beyond the depth of dreams  
into the world of reality.

Belief becomes faith.

The simmering dreams of a fearful child  
bloom into the outcry of newfound hopes and wishes,  
cascading back to the loving embrace of a friend within  
with childlike glee.

Walls dissolve showing endless possibilities  
hiding behind brave fronts of self-deception.  
Aside with the crusty armor,  
for the shield of knowing souls is the experience of truth within.

As the rhythmic pulsing subsides back into unknown chambers,  
having answered to the child with understanding beats,  
the man in me returns to share the child's heart,  
having been born again into a wondrous world of hope.

To the truth, this child by faith springs,  
to see the world anew in possibility.

## Maturation

Sweet flurry of expectation  
softly drifting into oblivion  
for light dawns obvious on the folly of yearning

Suddenly choice becomes tighter  
and every breath gives deeper meaning  
to the heaviest of realities

Life yields new challenges  
which demand commitment  
a reckoning of one's soul to a new test

To blossom from darkness a light  
To willingly adapt to the truth  
To recognize creation and apply

Does the soul know?  
Will the heart rise?  
Can loss and gain meet  
to know what each have given?

Simmers of a new life calling  
bring platforms of procession  
to new goals.



## Questions

Let us delve inside our mind and go where only dreams have let us see  
To find what lies within our grasp when now as children we believe  
With heart and mind we hear the call to go even deeper planting seeds  
For faith asks not only simplify, but for the integration of our means

Much remains with knowledge bare  
Answers elude us still to know  
But until the questions find confront a future of light cannot unfold

And so I ask:

Is faith alone enough to save?  
Will it give us life beyond the grave?

Why does one shun another one's thought?  
Can one have true faith if threatened by aught?

Do we believe without thinking to show our faith?  
Or will thinking and believing enhance our grace?

Does God answer to one name or will he listen to all?  
Wouldn't a true parent answer to any child's call?

Does the loudest voice know all the answers?  
Can the quiet heart find the courage to make a sound?  
Do we keep giving our heart rights to others?  
Or can a true loving faith stand on its own ground?

Is it time to believe in the end of the world...  
Destruction by God for the blind?  
Or is it time for the earth to inherit the meek...  
The patient and loving kind?

Seek your answers from within,  
a meek heart, bold in mind  
For genuine meekness is not based in fear  
but an unshakeable faith in the Divine.



## **The Valley People**

Think of a place  
a valley nestled between high rolling hills.  
It might be a beautiful place.

Here in the valley live people  
who seem quite normal and well wishing.  
They care for each other as only they know how.  
The people of the valley they are.

Now the people of the valley have rules,  
(as right they should),  
written in a book  
the sacred book from the prophets of old.  
It tells them how to follow, how to be.  
Much truth lies there to see.

But some study the word as it's printed in stone  
and tell the less learned what it has shown.  
And the people, they listen  
and repeat what they've heard  
opinions of opinions and opinions of words.

Eloquence waxed and emotions appealed,  
it's easy to believe when the truth is there sealed.

But not all find it easy, you see,  
for some children in the valley dream.  
What would it be like  
to climb the hills for themselves?  
What lies there at the top?

But they're discouraged to go,  
for according to the learned  
it is not for people to search for such things.  
Yet the ancient ones climbed the hill to see,  
for they told of it in the book.

It is a curious thing,  
but since the existence of the book,  
it has not been looked upon as the right thing to do,  
to go off searching for one's self to see.

It is said that bad things can happen  
to those who would try.  
All sorts of evil can lead them astray,  
such as demons and devils who wreak havoc, they say.

Maybe fear is the leader of the valley these days.

So perhaps it is better to stay with the book  
listen to leaders who know of the "truth."  
Follow the word and be wary of all else,  
be careful of questions for you can't trust yourself.  
These are the people of the valley.

And yet the children still dream...

*“Of all the dangers which beset man’s mortal nature and jeopardize his spiritual integrity, pride is the greatest. Courage is valorous, but egotism is vainglorious and suicidal.”*

-- Urantia Book

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The Other

Self-willed strengthened heart of mine
 Battling arts of another kind
 Manipulator sees the course
And how it shines with Father’s force

 Slyly, as a fox might be
 He tries to twist inside the scene
To make out something less than tall
 More of pride that takes the fall

 Battle lines draw out the time
And take much more inside my mind
Enter struggles now of major course
 To fight off ego’s blazing torch

 And now I see this all
 As just another game
 Trying to take away
All that has been given from another
 The Other

The Other is now of me, not hidden
The Other imprisoned to be set free
 The Other constitutive of reality

Fleeting glimpses, past unshadowed
This Other offers light upon my dreams
Thought has not known the dissertations
Given by this Other friend
‘Til now

I see The Other within
On a thin line walking ice breaking strides
To carry a babe to the other side of time

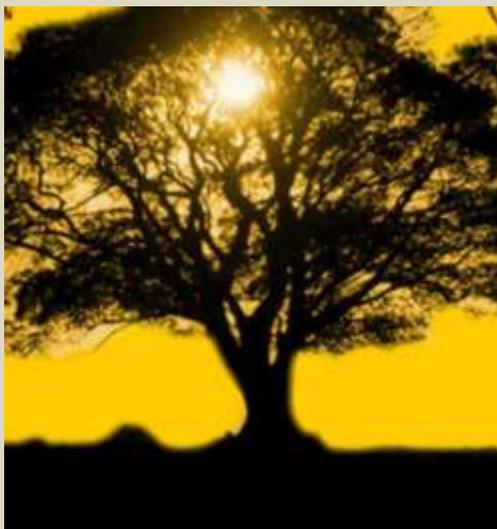
Mine enemy not,
Nor prisoner more
I choose The Other
And start the war

Time takes its course
Regardless of meaning
While masters of opposing force
Mark movement in my mind

The Other does not fight for me
Just gives and gives and gives
While Manipulator argues everything
Challenging the gifts

Ego’s illusion of supremacy wanes
Masters of nothing are blind
Egos are battles with thought in confusion
Fighting to take up your time

The Other is steady without deviation
Master of all that is kind
The Other uplifts with thoughtful infusion
Building slow transformations of mind.



Waltz of the Sun

I've walked that road before
the one that kept me calling out for more
but never realizing that the path was right before me

Juxtaposed with the sunlight dancing through the trees
is the darkness of the truth right in front of my eyes
the external guise

Wanting to see the victories of others
so I could feel better about myself
Wanting to see the downfall
of those who rose too high
so I could stay safe in my own conundrum
without being challenged to a solution
to make things better

When will it be safe to rise
to move beyond the past
crowd away the lies
search for a better way
the challenge of a different day
where people look inside
instead of hiding on the outside

Looking for love in movies
instead of the face you're staring into
Searching for truth in books
instead of the heart who loves you

What kind of place is this
where we want to see the beauty
more than we want to be it?

The power of kings cannot make it change
Throwing money at the problem only gives pause to the rain
The talents of a thousand men cannot make one man shine
Only time to look inside and face the Divine

For when I see the smallness of my life
the significant insignificance that I carry
I crumble down into the lap of something larger than myself
Where I need not make the case
Nor defend what defending can't do

Laying bare upon the floor
I recognize the outward gaze has hidden me from knowing
what looking outward can't know

I close my eyes and look inside
Shattering fear to face the truth of who I am
The smallness of a fearful child
Afraid to reach in and take the hand
Of something that knows better
Than all my outward machinations

But knowing when I do
that all of who I am will be made larger
And the grand scheme
will dissipate before my eyes
Revealing the waltz of the sun

To Whom It May Concern

To whom it may concern
there's something hidden over here
bound by fear
never trusting in the lies they never told me

I walk in shame
a prisoner in a dream that feels so trapped against the wall
starting to fall
grabbing a hold of anything that might seem true

Twisting ravages a mind once clear
I feel so tired inside
I wanted to hide
but it seems that when I do you come up shouting

Please dear God, please shout me down
and let me know that I'm worth the time you put in

For I've fallen now inside a place
that gets me chilly with the ice I've layered on my soul
It's like a deep dark hole
a prison in the ground where no one comes to feed me

Why do I feel this way when I look upon the day
and see the clouds breaking and the sun shining in?
Why do I feel this way when I look into my life
and see two children and a wife
who are the blessings you've bestowed upon my day?

Does the pain of lost gain,
towers falling like rain,
shrouds of fear playing games in a world gone insane
somehow drift across the path of what we have like a pall or a stain?

I feel like there's no war worth fighting anymore
and that cuts me thin to a line
that doesn't folly with the time
like it's something more than moments to be true

Cut me down to size and take away the lies
bring me your wisdom
like a blanket protecting plants from a late frost
show me the true cost
don't let me be lost

Find me and take me away to the next day
as though I'm one of those captains on those ships crossing the sea,
spotting the shore and planting the flag of my motherland
in the dark, rich soil,
claiming it for the one who's given me the means
to make the journey

Let me ride into the morning like the light of the sun
shining down to scare the night away
Plant me in the sky with a view of tomorrow
Let me burst through the clouds and be a bright shining star

And when I wake don't let it only be a dream,
a thin fog of a distant hope unrealized
Let me power past uncertainty
to really see what's right in front of me
with the eyes of a child...
with expectancy



The Flickering Light

I'm hurting Father.
I don't know what to do.
I want to be like you.
You have it all.

Why can't I see like you see?
Is there anyone that sees like you see?
Is there anyone that sees me?
Does anyone believe me?

I don't feel what you feel.
I don't see what you see.
So tell me, let me see,
that's all I want to be.

Let in to the game.

Take me in your sight
And let me have your light.
It's what I want,
what I need,

But I'm afraid to tell you how I see.
Because you don't want me in my dreams.
You can't see me in my dreams.
No one believes me in my dreams.

Tortured by a child's fear that never grew up.
The need to belong,
free from the harm of disbelief.

I talk to you like I think you need
without a clue as to what.
Sisters tell me what I can do.
Brothers help me and take me to...

the system of the right one.

Never on the inside,
looking in from out,
try to tell a story
and no one hears the shout.

What can I do?

I want to be with you... But do you want me as I am?
I want to hear you... But you won't talk to me.
I want to know you... But you just see me as another man.
No one sees the little things which give me innocence.
I have this need to be you know.

Oh sister, brother, father, mother,
listen to me cry.
I'm yearning for the taste of you...
and who you are.

How am I to try to be
without the light to let me see
the things which give me hope to be
inside your company?

I'm dying from a thirst whose quench seems like a lake of fire.
I'm lying in a crumpled heap, my battery begins to tire.
I'm dying for the distant king to wake and hear me scream.
I'm crying for the lonely hearts that never find the dream.

And then my headlight flickers on.
It must have had a diehard.

For shining out upon the glittering light of dawn,
the flickering light is on.
Casting shadows a dim sight,
a light, not gone, but hidden for a time.

Can we be ones who will tell the truth and make it heard?

We are here for such.
It is our dream, our goal,
our privilege given show.

By choice I find the fold and enter the flock...
they talk.
And now I know why most don't show or hear or see.
They're afraid like me.

They don't know where to go to know.
They don't see me for who I am
because they're afraid there's another man beneath...
not me.

Trust lacks trust for who we are
and no one sees the dream as being of sincerity...
just things to say to make the play
to win the game.

They are like me, not silver kings or queens.

I'm wondering, wandering, touching on another theme
the hope that I can take some fear and bring
the ring.

Truth employs my being to send the simple sight
to a little bit of light.
Somewhere I must go to let them see the show
the flickering headlight dream



Foggy Days

When all that has been given is no longer free
When the times they say are ending will no longer be
When gnashing and wailing drift through the air
And the children of God are crippled with fear

Something is ready to burst out free
from the days of cloudiness
and light the hollow

Watch from the tree tops what the distance brings
a vision of love and better days.

Down from the trees there are children in swings
listening to far fetched tales of a better place
where the grass grows green and everyone sings
and the heavy are lightened by something clean

Notice the sun there, how it never quite sets
and the rush of freedom fills the breeze.
Maidens dance while noble ones talk
about things that actually mean something.

Why is it that these things are just dreams
and never find a place to take on wings
and fly into reality?

Why do children live in front of a screen
instead of spending their days creating the scene
with parents just barely making it through?

What kind of world makes us grovel for nothing
like it's something
And keeps the clean hearted dirty,
cowering,
waiting in the wings?

What does it benefit one who sees
if truth is veiled in charms
a tiny necklace of fear
that strangles when the light is near?

Please give me something else to see
that doesn't cost so much to view
because it hurts in here
to know what's possible
when it's all so improbable

Aren't we but a lost child
trying to be
but mostly wanting love from one who can see

Perhaps the lesson is the eye of the beholder
where the truth doesn't hide
but lies waiting to be seen.
Where the light draws us near
and everything is clear
and foggy days fade away



Rebellion's End

Taking a stroll with Father Time
Listening to the breeze
What is it saying?
What can you hear?
Whispers of the leaves

Cautious as the winter's sky
Opened up for light
Ready to close at the sign of sun
Its shine seems all to bright

And so we sit with comforting clouds
Sheltered from the sun
Taken by the thief of lights
Children on the run

I'm crying now for you
It isn't for how you've fallen
I want you to hear me scream
So you'll know
You're not forgotten

For now the winter's crust is melting
The night has run its course
Do you understand the meaning
Of all this new found force?

It's been a gauntlet to the fairy tale
To the castle on the wind
Where knights and dragons fought a war
That's coming to an end.

You've only just begun to see
The place where children dream
Less to worry

And time to hear
Listen to us sing

We are spirits given Lord's sight
Commissioned to the test
The dragon's war is over
Gently laid to rest

It never was a big thing
Just a misplaced show of force
Sorry you had to get caught in the middle
Of another's wayward course

And in the end we're just beginning
To show you how to live
There is no hurry
Just time to learn
About what we have to give

And now the angels cry
For all the children's lives
Tears of joy touch the ground
Not so much for what's been lost
but instead for what's been found.





Bob Devine lives in the Pacific Northwest with his wife and children and runs an independent film society in addition to working his 9 to 5 job and writing for the local newspaper. He is a co-founder of the Association for Light and Life and was a member of the musical creative group Common Ground.

For more on Bob's writing, and for more about the Association for Light and Life, go to www.all4light.org.