

Nothing Known to Science

By

Henning J. Krüger

A composition of poetical philosophies, as observed by a young man through his talks with God, in his journey through early adulthood.

This collection aims to take some hurt out of this world, and by translating it to rhyme, ultimately hopes to put some good back into it, through various different avenues.

Third Edition in the Annual Series

(E-Book Version)

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Some Insights from the Author:

The Personal Aspect

It sure is such a privilege to already be presenting to you the third book in this series, of the tangible archives of the fruits of my mind. A series I started working on more than 3 years ago now, with this specific edition taking me almost exactly 12 months to complete – yet it all still feels like I just started last week.

I hate to start my foreword with lesser-exciting news, but I'd rather separate this from my actual poems as far as I can by putting it here, which is the fact that my goal of publishing a new edition of this series every year has unfortunately reached a hiccup. Due to the sheer amount of opportunities that I have been blessed to become a part of during my college-career so far – amongst others being clubs, sports, travelling, jobs, friends, schoolwork, and a host of special projects like this one – I have decided to refrain from setting an expected date of publishing for my next book after this edition, as I am simply not sure if I will again have the privilege of enough time and energy to consistently write sufficient content for the next edition, before the end of next summer. That is, I have also started prioritizing time every day to simply look up and soak in the fact that I am finally living my lifelong dream of being in the US. That said, I will continue writing, whether that be poems or mere quotes, to

publish my next book whenever it makes the most sense to do so, as the goal with writing for me still very much is to express myself, as opposed to merely publishing for the sake of publishing. That is why I decided to keep doing the former this upcoming year, for my own health and welfare's sake, even if the latter need be delayed for a little while.

On a happier note, this year I ended up with so many half-finished poems paired with pressure for time, that I decided to simply shorten them into quotes and to include only the most impactful parts, some that rhyme and some that don't, and adding these to the rather-lengthy quote section you will now find at the back for the very first time. That said, it really is hard with so much media influence and inspiration in this world, to sometimes discern as an author where a quote or idea came from, and as with all of my work – and the new quote section especially – it is extra important to me to request that my readers please feel free to reach out via the contact information at the beginning of this book, to let me know if they believe any of my work has had a previous owner, as I hope to keep everything in this series purely original.

It also still is true that the written Afrikaans word might have an English cousin, yet the emotions behind it are of a whole other race, and for this reason I have upheld the tradition of not translating

the poems that I wrote in Afrikaans. You will also notice there are substantially more poems written in my home language in this edition of the series, than when compared with the previous two editions, and this is merely a classic case of the cause of a problem becoming its own solution.

The Spiritual Aspect

Until I have been able to finish the appropriate level of schooling in the field of divinity, to be able to put an academic title before my name when I express my perspective on the things that pertain to eternity, (which I have an ever stronger growing intention to do) I have decided to merely put my perspectives and opinions on spiritual matters into poems and quotes through this series, that readers can decide themselves to either take or leave, as they are of yet just that – my opinions and perspectives. And some of my poems I do agree, absolutely reek of uncalled-for opinion sometimes – and this most always unintentionally too – in which case I would like to implore anyone who feels remotely offended by them to treat them like all other conversations of religious context, and take them from whom they come, with quite a bit of salt too, and of course to please forgive me for it also. If it is any consolation, I myself already regret and disagree with a lot of what I write, sometimes just weeks after publishing, but I opt to leave each book unrevised in terms of philosophy, as I intend to stay true to

the original intention of this series – and that is to be a mere reminder of what I was convinced of when I was younger, so I too can look back and laugh at how I have grown.

Poetry has become one of a few healthy escapes that have allowed me to rid my mind of the challenges of this world that press so hard on all our hearts, including mine, right next to my continuous effort to better make sense of this world that God put us in, and so hopefully these poems can portray a little bit of this amazing journey that I have had with Him so far in this regard, too – in the form of thousands of little conversations and events –which I hope to give a glimpse of to anyone who wishes to see.

Final Notes

I want to thank you for taking the time to explore this collection, and I truly hope you will find reason enough in this third book to anticipate the release of the next edition in this poetical philosophy series, whenever it will be due.

So per conclusion of all that I deemed necessary to say that didn't rhyme, I hope you enjoy that which does.

- **Henning J. Krüger**

Nothing Known to Science



The Poet's Paradox

I write my best poems
when I am in pain.

Which is an absolute bummer,

because I like writing poems—
but I love being sane.

Yes I write my best poems,
while it thunders and while it rains—

I guess it makes me feel as if,
all my problems get scared away.

Hair and Bone

Sometimes, when I talk to myself,
I have a little too much to say.
Sometimes when I reprimand myself,
I get a little bit carried away.

And sometimes,
but only sometimes—
I catch myself thinking things,
that I could never have come up
with on my own.

Those times,
I'm most sure of it,
I'm amid an angelic struggle—



because some of the thoughts that I have,
I'll tell you my friend—
could not come from hair or bone.

Attention Deficit

Someone claimed the other day,
that I have an attention
deficit
disorder.

So I thought it over,
and followed it up,
until every rebuttal I had,
was from ear to ear hurled.

And I came to this conclusion,
self-diagnosed indeed:
so what if that's the case?
Of course I can't sit still!

When there's so many wonderful things,
out there
in this world!

~~Here Lies~~ Hear Lies

If there be just one fact,
that my short life has nourished—

then it'll be,
that by my virtues—

I truly have flourished.



Withdraw from the Crowd

Sometimes you have nothing,
but bad intentions.

You're not interested in what she has to say,
and you've got no desire to care for her.

Those days you quietly,
withdraw from the crowd,
before you pose a threat to yourself,
or others,

and you call your mind to attention,
and fall not back to rest to,
God-forbid,
as you were.

En Niks Hiervan Verkluum

Selfs middernags,
hier in my straat,
tussen die sneeuvlökkies wat val,
sopnat en laat—

klop my hart saggies,
met die ritme van my wit-leuens,
en kwaad.

Met my voete in die sneeu—
diep agt duim.

En pomp my bloed gevul met begeerte,
van lelikheid deur my brein,
om hom te vlei met selfs nog ideetjies,

en niks hiervan verkluum.

Ek Wens

Ek wens ek kon minder oor myself praat,
ek wens ek kon die mooi in mense sien.

Ek wens ek kon elke meisie
se beste vriend wees—

pleks van om elke-een te dien.



Ek wil net ‘n Perfekte Wêreld hê

Ek wil net ‘n perfekte wêreld hê,
is dit te veel om te vra?

Maar net soos vir die beliggaming
van die meisie,
wie eendag my vrede sal kan dra,

is ek oortuig,
ek gaan nog ‘n tydjie moet wag.

So vir nou vat ek maar ‘n diep asem,
en ek doen dit weer—

maar die Here weet Hy vra baie van my,
as Hy sê:
“Hou net aan daarmee.”

I'd Rather They Left Me

I read today of a man who got shot,
and this man died.

This same day I built a fence
around a graveyard—
under a November sun,
that thought it was July.

And as I looked down this old fence,
at how some posts were broken and skew—
I realized my past looked quite similar,
and so did this new fence, too.

And I thought to myself:

I don't want my sack of bones
dragged to a gravestone—
too old to read.

I'd rather they left me right there where I died,
out in the field.

But still plant in my heart cavity,
the most invasive of weed—
let me for once more be
the host of a poisonous seed—
that which no-one needs.

And then just let me rot,
and plague the Earth with my stench
once more—
let me be.

And if someone says, look,
he's still moving!
He's alive indeed!

Ignore them and leave me once more to do,
that which I've always done,
and friend—

just let me bleed.

Elke Tweede Desember

Beskuitjie, Beskuitjie,
roep jy my nou terug,
na Vleesbaai se swartheke—
ry ek sommer op jou rug.

En daai vars-môre-see-reuk,
soos ek my pa se trui dra—
voordat boeties en sussies
en niggies en neef—
vir mangos en litchis kom vra.

Jy weet ek huil myself wakker,
in die middel van die stad,
as die hoofpad se karre
jou tergend na-maak—
jy en jou middernagse
branderbreek-kreet.

As ek dink aan Bloublasies,
en Boggomsbaai,
en duinings-walle breed.

En Oupa wat kom sê:
hy dink vandág sal hy ook swem,
voordat 'n stranddiens konvooi,
by Galjoenstraat af kom stem,

en dít kort voor Oujaarsaand en Nuwejaar,
se vuurwerk skildery,
as ons jaar op jaar die takbokke,
“net-net” sou mis—
maar die geskenk van spys en drank,
elke aand tog kry.

Ai ou Beskuitjie,
daars tog só veel,
wat ek jou van my Vleesbaai dae wil vertel—

maar jy is 'n blik wat ek nie lank oop moet hou,
want my kerkie gaan nou begin,
en jy word hopeloos te vinnig klam.

Ons praat vandag oor ras en velkleur,
en hoe dinge verander,
en tyd soms ontstel—

maar een ding is verseker:
my grootste vrees het waar geword.
Ek is deur 'n stroom tot aan die ander kant,
van die Atlanties gesleep,
en Hy het my so vêr as moontlik,
van my familie uitgestort.

Nietemin, al is dit hoogwater op die rotse,
klou die kindjie in my nog heelpad vas,
aan die God wat vir Vleesbaai gemaak het—
die Getypoel van my gees.

Tannie Sherryl se Advies

Jy is besig om nou
van hierdie wêreld te leer.

‘n Voltydse werk,
met laat aande wakkerbly,
en in die bed klim somtyds,
met seer.

En jy maak foutjies ja—

maar jy leer lesse ook—

al leer jy hulle oor,
en al leer jy hulle weer.

Neeman Daar Moet 'n Boom Wees

Om in hierdie wêreld te oorleef,
verg dit 'n sterk man—
'n man sterker as wat ek kan wees.

Of immers 'n God natuurlik.

Dié wat ek gelukkig het—
met die Heiligste van 'n Gees.



The Branch of Spiritual Warfare

Spiritual warfare,
like all other warfare,
is fought on the frontlines—
not hiding in the safety of your home.

Yes truly:

how can they trust in Him
of whom they have never heard?
And how will they hear of Him,
if we do not go?



Childlike, Not Childish

I watched a movie tonight,
filled with stealing and lies
and depression and hate,
hearing the most vulgar words,
seeing the ugliest things,
and suicide and deeds.

And debauchery—
so much debauchery—
leaving me with a feeling
of the guiltiest of sort,

“but I’m an adult now,”
I tell myself,
“this stuff is all fine,”
“and no-one else has a problem with it,”
“it’s time to be a good sport.”

But stronger than my own voice,
I feel what seems to be a magnet in my belly,
pulling everything inside of me,
away from the words that I just said.

As if telling me:

“No, it’s time to make a change,”
because if I don’t want my kids thinking,
what the movies show,
is what this world
is supposed to be,
in their head—

then I better start acting
like a child of God,
and likewise keep myself busy,
with more childlike things instead.

Eph

If hope is believing
that something will work out,

when you have no idea what the chances are,
and no idea what it would even cost,

then what shall we call it,
when I trust a matter will succeed,

though I know for sure,
that this cause is lost?

The Candlestick of Life's Highs and Lows

As I look at my stock market graph,
and how the line jumps up,
and then down—

and I see on one newspaper front page,
a child who laughs, and a child who frowns—

I cannot help but realize,
no matter in which season
of our lives we stand,

all that each of us can really take
from any given moment,
is one breath at a time—

and all that we ever really have,
is what fits in our two hands.

The Key is to Compromise

My dad taught me once,
when you get stuck somewhere—

move a little forward,
and move a little back—

and keep doing this,
until you eventually make it through.

This I can now attest,
works for mind, sand and snow,
as well as for disagreements,

and in all types of relationships too.

MU 111: Music Theory Fundamentals

My music professor told me,
he admires my theory questions:
apparently they're all ultimatums I design.
He says I use words like always,
and nowhere,
and never—
all the time.

And that I ask questions so black and white,
near absolutist,
almost divine.

And I told him,
if we're going to spend the next half of eternity,
finally figuring this endless possibility
of a life out,
then we'll have to start working
from the known parameters, and the facts—
we must think big without a doubt.

We must grasp with the hard concepts,
like those of entirely and everything,
the ones eating at every single soul.

Words like nothing—
words like full and whole,

because I am altogether convinced
that if constant and impossible is where we
painstakingly and methodically must start,
then we'll consider it progress
when we reach infinity,
as we work towards endless—
because these things can't possibly
be all that far apart—

if they can all fit
inside of our hearts.



Life is a Ponzi

I'd like to submit to you,
that adulthood is the biggest pyramid scheme,
that anyone's ever sold us so far.

A slapstick skit,
a burlesque travesty—
a farce pasquinade,
played by “superstars.”

A ponzi indeed,
with the time of your life guaranteed—
they sell us access to parties
and underground drinking places
and drugs and magazines—
and wars—
and adult stores.
If we can just give birth,
and recruit just a couple more.

They tell us to sign up like all our friends have,
as soon as you're 18!
Because you only live once!
This limited time offer!
A chance you don't want to miss!

Well you can add that
to the long list of opportunities,
that I have already forgone—
because any investment
that asks me my innocence,
must promise Heaven for dividends—

and from what I've seen of adulthood so far,
is that Heaven,
is not what this is.

God's Standards are Low

In all our uncertainty
about who Christ is,
and how one gets to be saved,

asking: how should we speak,
and what should we wear?

What can and can't we look at,
and do we need to cover our hair?

We get caught up again—
hypocrites we are—
in all these earthly, temporal things.

Convinced we're practicing
to be eternally holy,
other-worldly kings.



While all the while there's just two things,
that we in this spiritual battle,
all can surely know.

One of them is,
that we've done all Satan's work for him—

and secondly,
that fortunately:
God's standards are low.

I had a Nightmare

I had a nightmare
the other day,
I walked into this place,
where everyone around me was filled
with so much anger and pain.

You could see it on the news,
in the movies,
the downtown street corners,
and the subway train,

and they were screaming at each other,
the most hurtful of things they declared—

but even worse than this,
when I woke up—
I was still there.

A Formula Proven to Fail

Miss, despite all the languages I know,
I might not be very good at reading minds,
but signs I read fairly well.

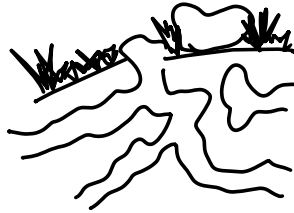
So why don't you just set me free,
and let me be,
and like a shy night creature,
into the darkness I will go.

For I see in your thoughts
you have a vocabulary,
of words that I cannot spell,

words that guide like the moonlight,
blind critters everywhere.
Burrowing tunnels that lead to roads,
that end in holes they should not know.

See I'm the product of a formula
that seems pretty promising to start,
but fails to be proven,
time and time again:

I'm a strong personality
with very high standards,
mixed with the kind of confidence,
that almost always—
to people like you at least,
surely offends.



The Voices in Your Garden

I don't get phased
by the changing men of power,
or the rumble of the end of our world.

I don't feel stressed,
or pressured by our past,
or the truth of what happened,
now kinked and curled.

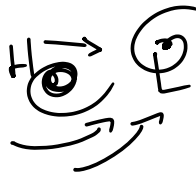
No not in the least bit,
am I shocked by what's new,
because these things they get old—
whether it be hurtful things
or lie-machines, or even thievery.

And new things they pass too—
but everyone has to ask themselves eventually:
What's next?
Staring at their own mental-garden's, greenery.

My Weatherman Called

My weatherman woke me up
the other morning,
calling and saying:
this will be a beautiful day.
He said regardless of my preference,
it'll be just the perfect balance—
of rain and sun, and wind and shade.

And I asked him how he knew,
so long before the sun and moon did trade?
And he said because he knew,
by whom the day was made.



Why don't we Pray for Satan?

Why don't we pray for Satan?
For him to come to repentance,
and turn from his ways?
Why is it we claim,
to love absolutely our enemies,
but him we blame,
for all the darkest of our days?

Why is it that we can't see
the mountains of pain—
that must be hiding,
behind all his bad choices?

For I've been led to realize,
from the valley deep I'm in right now,
that even those who have seen Heaven
for themselves—
are far from immune to the voices.

So why don't we just pray for Satan?

Is it because we've forgotten,

that lest we can forgive,

God cannot forgive us?

Or is it because we're selfish

with this Salvation—

that we so freely received?

Or have we just lost our confidence

in the power of prayer?

We no more— truly— believe?

Nevertheless, fellow sinners,

I concede there's something here,

that I don't fully know,

and I cannot now understand,

but I'm just so sick of the fighting

and hating,

and pain

these days—

and that is why, I pray for Satan.
That he should come to repentance,
and turn from his ways.

Because I simply refuse to believe,
unless he is institutionally and fundamentally,
polar opposite to God,
due to his own free will,

which in his own eyes,
could not possibly ever be a win,

then God can still—
just like for me—
meet him where he is at.

And keep loving the sinner,
but hate the sin.

Cold Ocean Sand

It sure is a strange world,
this world we're so sure we understand—
which with surety deceives us,
lost within the walls of our own comfort zones,
it leads us astray—
convincing us that we've got it all planned.

But with sureness I can tell you
that as you traverse this Earth,
while holding the things
that you thought makes you you—
in your little hand,

you'll find thousands of different approaches
to doing things—
that will stick to the walls of the house of ways
in which you were raised,
like cold, wet ocean sand.

The Ultimate Test of Man

It's almost as if God is saying:
good for you,
you've learned how to be rough.

You've practiced your killing,
and debating, and revenge,
and of fighting you've surely seen enough.

So here is your final test:
come warrior,
prove that you are a man.

Take off your gloves,
and show me—

can you love?



Phases

I believe every person passes through
every complex known to man,
but they're better known as phases.

And some phases for some people
last their entire lives long,
while others last mere moments,
like the smell of a passer-by's cologne.

These phases some individuals
may encounter as a thought,
dealing with them instantly,
and so passing through their grasp,

but it's important to remember,
no complex is idiosyncratic
to any group or person,
not bound to skin pigment's clasp.

And every person passes entirely and wholly,
through each and every complex,
even if it would be
mere moments before death,

for death is the ultimate broker of phases,
starting at Eden,
with the God-complex,
and ending, come judgment day.

Die Tweede Helfte van die Emigrant se Dag

Ek bel weer Ma,
want ek is oppad klas toe,
en ek moet nou eers groet.

Maar ek bel jou weer Ma,
want om jou stem te hoor
en by jou te kla—
is vir my goed.

Want jy gee my mos ook net daai een kyk,
en vanaf die anderkant van die wêreld,
deur die skerm van 'n foon,
sien jy wat net 'n Ma kan sien—

en dan loop jy weg van al die ander,
en dis net ek en jy alleen,
en jy vra wat is fout Ou Groottes?

En ek voel ek kan weer huil soos tien.

Dan sê ek nee—

ek bel jou liefers weer Ma.

Want jou woorde gee my hoop,
hulle plak teen die mure van my hart,
en word soos die spaghetti
teen ons kombuisdak hard.

En ek weet daar kom 'n dag,
wat hulle nog daar sal sit,
lank na ek nie meer kan bel nie Ma—
wat ek aan jou gaan dink
en jou storie gaan vertel—
en lag.

Maar tot in met dan—

sal ek weer bel Ma.

en ek sal aanhou bel, en bel, en bel—
en jou uit die werk hou—
en as jy gaste het—
en as ek kan sien jy te moeg is
om met my te praat—

sal ek aanhou bel.

Totdat die Here self
daai foon eendag gaan optel, en sê:
Mamma is nie nou beskikbaar nie,
maar kan ek vir haar 'n boodskap vat?

En ek sal sê Here,
stuur my net asseblief iemand,
wat weer kan vul,
hier diep in my hart—
die leemte wat sy gelos het—

hierdie moerse gat.

A Joker, a Jester

When I die, dad
at my funeral,
don't wave a shirt I used to wear—
for I've changed too many times my look.

When I die, dad
at my funeral,
don't point to a big picture of my face—
because of all the things I've left behind,
that part I couldn't save.

And when I die dad,
at my funeral,
don't you dare quote a piece of my advice—
for I've already hurt so many,
by speaking my mind—
and I refuse to do it twice.

I did nothing but pretend—
a coward know-it-all—
to have my life all put together.
I was the best of bullshitters by day,
and of the poorest of faith by night.
And you never really knew the man,
that you so thought you knew.
So don't bear my mother to cry a tear—
and don't bury me in white.

But rather just make a bad joke,
preferably at the wrong time too—
the kind you and I used to make so well.
For this one thing
could have made me a millionaire—
if offensive jokes would sell.

For my humor and jokes were the only things,
that everyone will be able to share,
and remember of me.

With half of the audience offended,
and the other half from their sorrows,
set free.

And this is the only thing,
I'd want to be remembered for,
the only thing I'm proud of,
the only thing I ever truly was:

A joker, a jester,
who believed it was always time for a laugh.

So tie a wild donkey to my coffin,
and watch me chase him down the streets—
with a just-married sign, on that wooden box,

and some balloons too—
just because.



The Dirty Ditches of Love

Girls like pretty things,
like the leaves of trees so old—
as they piggyback soft raindrops to the ground,
green and gold.

And girls talk sweetly,
giving compliments,
and always sorry for your loss.
And can spend unselfish hours
listening, as another cries—
getting their pain across.

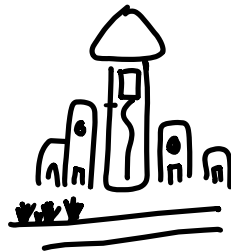
And girls become ladies,
and women, then grandmas—
ever sweeter and kind.
They provide a rest from this world,
amongst all the push and all the shove.

So why would I risk,
breaking even a single one's heart?
These creations so wonderful.
For sure sent from above.

Why would I teach them my wicked ways—
When all they've ever wanted,
was a fairytale true love?

Why would I save them
from the towers in their kingdoms—

just to abandon them,
in the dirty ditches thereof?



Every Woman is Someone's Little Girl

Somewhere inside of every man,
is a boy who still loves trucks
and playing marbles,

and I'm no exception to this rule,

and somewhere inside of every woman,
is someone's little girl,

hiding from men like me,
a heartbreaker—

a pity-filled fool.



Stories and More Stories

I sat in the library today,
and stared down an aisle
at countless books,
who would have loved
to have their stories told.

And I felt sorry for not being able
to read them all.

And I sat in that library,
and noticed how many people there were too—
must have been close to a mile.

Each with their own story,
also dying to be heard,
dying for them to be shared.

And I felt ashamed
for not even asking one of them—
I felt ashamed
that not even a selfish inch of me,
genuinely cared.

I Might Laugh

If I was as good as listening,
as I am at complaining,
then I might feel an inch or so more heard.
If I spent as much time building myself up,
as I spent sifting through my faults,
then I might find the happiness I prefer.

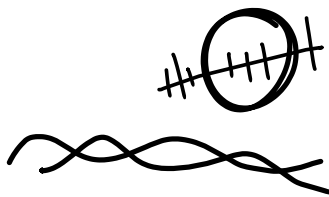
If I was as bad a liar
as I am a father-figure—
and a man.
Then I might one day not
feel so damn alone.

If I was half the jokester,
that my father was a hero,
and my mom was a poet.
Then I might one day be able to laugh,
at this joke that they gave a home,
and never disowned.

The Least I Could Do

You know I'd truly swim across the ocean,
a thousand times,
paint the whole world white,
and capture the moon in a picket fence—

if it was the least I could do,
to force this old world—
to just start making some bloody sense.



A Million Years from Now

I predict in a million years or so,
some amateur archaeologists
will dig up my family's remains.
And underneath them find my treasure—
the house I grew up in—
the house I so verily distained.

And there they'll find my sister's dolls,
and the remnant of my brother's computer,
and they'll label these:
“for ancient acts of worship.”
And if the Lord has any sense of humor still,
then on their way in, over that dirty old rug—
as customary for all our visitors to do—
they too will trip.

But they'll dig deeper still,
and find the toilet and the sink.

And they'll surmise and conspire,
saying this is where,
they used to come to think.

And finally they'll find
my brown breaking bones—
miraculously well preserved—
and they'll call in an expert,
and hear him tell of how I died—

and he'll say, after months of autopsy:

“here lies the remnants,
of one with stunted growth,
with a disease—

that consumed him,
from the inside.”

A Loneliness

There's a loneliness behind this smile,
and behind this walk,
and behind this confidence,

that you simply cannot comprehend.

That will make you lie awake at night,
and thank the Lord for your bit of pain.
A loneliness you are not carrying for a reason,

my friend.

All the Pretty Girls

I have this thing for pretty girls,
and it's nothing else but pure appreciation,
for each of them,
they just never seem to get old.

The Lord's works of art truly,
when they walk by and smile,
or pass me on their bikes—
no other sight in the world,
I'd rather behold.

But luckily it only lasts,
as long as they don't say a word,
or reveal anything about who they really are.
Because then disappointment sets in,
like an ice-cold hand—
and I'm reminded that looks,
really only do go so far.

Grace is a Gray Zone

If there really were a right and really a wrong,
and these two were to sit down,
and write a song,

I'm sure it would be the saddest of songs,
and more than that—
vulgar and long.

Yes if there really were just right and wrong,
and no gray areas or accidental keys among,

then even the most minor of sinful curiosities,

would have had me forever singing,
a desperate, despairing song.

Leaf by Leaf

I heard a noise,
and it was a squirrel—
and I swear I did not stare.

I saw him run with a leaf in his mouth,
but for a second look,
I did not care.

And I saw him climb a wall,
and shove them in a pipe,
but of spectating I've had my share.

All day he did this,
like a good and faithful servant,
as if the answer to my prayer—
saying:
“like I for the death of the winter prepare,
so one might diligently escape his despair,

leaf by leaf,
and run for run.

And thus, I too, one girl at a time,
refuse to surrender
another spiritual real estate square—
to someone I have no intention of knowing,
to someone who's not even aware.

Yes leaf by leaf and run for run,
like this godsend of a squirrel's good habits
are inclined,
I will break my bad ones.

And looking girls squarely in the eye—
I too will start building mine.



A Childhood Toy

Remember that toy that you loved as a child,
which made up half of your world?

How hard pressed would you be
to find it right now,
that thing you swore could never be sold?

Now think of what you're holding most on to,
in your life, as of right now.

What is all you think about,
and run around all day?

How hard pressed would you be,
to let go of this,
and accept that one day,
this too, you'll have to put away?

Halloween Shrink

The other day I went pumpkin carving,
the order was to make it resemble,
who you are.

So I drew some arrows,
and punched some holes—
just like God highlighted some of my faults,
and turned the others into scars.



What Kills the Poet

What if the poet's poison,
turns out to be each
of his own spoken words?

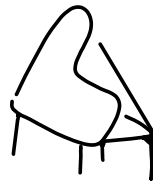
So phrase by phrase he'll spend his life,
unknowingly exposing himself,
to the source,
of his own ultimate pain.

And letter by letter,
his brain slowly rots away
in his skull—

as hopelessness clogs up his veins.

800 Pounds

If there were seven octaves,
and 52 white keys,
and three silver shining pedals,
in a coolish evening breeze—
surrounded by black wood paint,
under eight-hundred pounds of smile,
at the end of a polished,
red-carpet aisle—
yes if there were all these things,
and perhaps a centuries-old love poem too,
written with legato eighth notes,
in a D-minor key—
then we could try implanting them
in every girl's heart—
so there might for once be,
between the rhythm in theirs
and the rhythm in mine—
the slightest bit of harmony.



The Tragedy of the Poets

I'm faced again,
with the tragedy of the poets,
for old time's sake once more.
The same dilemma that has plagued,
generations of wordsmiths before.

In that life is given to my best work,
when I'm overwhelmed by circumstance,
or shame.

Oh the tragedy of the poets—
where the worst day of your life,
could very soon become—

your claim to fame.

‘n Wêreld wat so Skud en Ruk

In ‘n wêreld wat so skud,
en so ruk,
soos dié een—
is daar baie te sê
vir die min dinge,
waarop jy jouself darem nog kan steun.

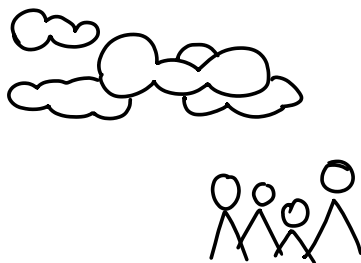
Soos vrede, en hoop, en laggery,
die saamtrek van wolke,
en die saamtrek van volke—
en nog meer lag, en vrede, en reën.

Want in hierdie wêreld,
wat somtyds voel asof dit net omrede,
dié einste skud en ruk,
so skaars-skaars wandellend bly—

kan ek jou een ding verseker:

as ons tussen jou en my
iemand met nog 'n halwe koppie
hoop sou moes vind—

vriend, dan was dit jy.



It Sure is Beautiful

It's a foggy day out,
and there's a war across the seas—
and the trees are losing leaves,

and there's an evil in this world,
as ugly as can be.

And the world is ending really.

And it sure is beautiful.

Mine is the Snow

My father told me a long time ago,
there'll be nothing left for me
in his will.

And he's reminded me since,
saying I inherit not a thing,
nothing indeed— still.

But I think he lied,
he was definitely wrong.
When I look at this world—
he was wrong all along.

Because mine is the trees,
high mountains and seas,
and mine is every single raindrop,
that falls on this land.

Mine is the rivers,
they form in Grandpa's yard—
yes mine is the snow,
and the critters,
and the sand.

I've received more than I could ever want,
though shiny and polished,
just like my father—
I received not a thing.

Oh but if my father would just look up—
he'll see that what we have,
makes the fortunate look dim,

because for those who would claim it—
we inherit the wind.



‘n Skilpad op die Kop

Sal Ouma nog lief wees vir my,
as ek sou groot moes word?

Want ek kan nie help,
die dae voel so lank—
maar die jare so kort.

En glo my,
as dit sou werk,
sit ek sommer self ‘n skilpad op my kop,

maar vir nou sal Ouma
maar net moet lief bly vir my,
so tussen deur die meisies en die vloek
en die dop—

want die wêreld roep met 'n seer hart,
na 'n jong man,
soos die wat jy help grootmaak het—

om die hartseer te gaan maak stop.

Ja Ouma, grootword sal ek eers moet,
want ek hoor die aarde smEEK
na die leier wat ek kan wees—

en al doen ek dit met 'n skilpad,
of twee bakstene op my kop—
sal ek tog steeds moet gaan—

want ek hoor die mense klop.



Sheila

As Moses net 'n Land Cruiser kon hê,

het hy nooit só gesukkel,

om al daai mense deur die woestyn te kry.

En was daar dalk ook nog 'n skaaphond

soos my Oupa s'n aan sy sy,

het hulle nooit so verdwaal nie,

en dalk ook nog minder gestry.

What do You Think the Earth Believes?

What do you think the earth believes?

Not the people that walk it,
with different virtues—
from place to place,
and day to day,

but to whom do you think,
the water and the rocks pray?

On this earth that has been,
and forever will be—

doesn't it ever get a say?

I Just Wanted to Show Them

I just wanted to show them this world,
this world that I've created:
this world of me.

But most people cannot see
past their insecurity—
and I think all they see in me,

is what they cannot be.

Potential

I'm addicted to potential,
wherever I think I see it,
chasing it down.

I refuse to believe this world
is the best we can do.
I refuse to accept,
there's not more to be found.

Because I'm addicted to potential,
and the way that things could be,
looking for the hidden beauty,
inside of you and me.

And I've vowed to spend my life—
setting it all free.

Your Most Valuable Asset

On days like these,
you could wake up
next to two kinds of women—
and two types of pretty little grin.

You could choose one
that motivates you,
to get up and change the world.

Or one that says:
let's just sleep in.

I Want More

They choose fighting,

I choose peace,

they choose bondage,

I choose release,

they might choose screams,

I choose a whisper,

they choose a cabin boy,

I choose a skipper,

they choose their worlds,

filled with lies and drama

and folding of hands.

And they choose gore.

I choose the things true,

I choose the things lovely—

because I have a life to live,
and I'll act like it—

I want more.



The World is too Big

Somewhere in this world

it is raining right now,

and somewhere it is cold.

Somewhere the sun has been scorching all day,

and somewhere the clouds just won't unfold.

Somewhere someone is hiding,

covered in their shame,

and someone else is proud of a choice.

Someone is deciding

whether to forgive or condemn—

and somewhere someone is wishing,

they were here right now,

and here I am,

wishing I was them.

When it Becomes Hard to Say Farewell

What a sad sad world you must live in,
if you are convinced that your toys,
are not alive,

just because they do not bleed,
and do not move,
or do not breathe—
does not mean they don't secretly thrive.

I beg to differ—
I think anything has a life
if it has a story to tell,
I beg to argue—
something becomes a someone,
if it helps keep you out of hell—

the moment it becomes hard, to say farewell.

To End all Hate

I totally agree with you,
there are so many things in this world
that I too hate,

but we will not solve them
by further hating on them—
no matter the monster of a person
who caused them,
or which nation-state.

We must instead ask:

“what now?”

And do so kindly,
and humbly—
and to end all hate—

we must find an answer
to which we all can relate.

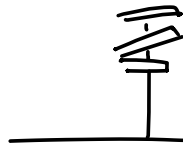
New Places

In the beginning it feels a bit funny,
and the smells and noises
all feel a bit strange.

Then you learn the names of the trees,
and a few places,
and some of the streets.

And the next thing you know,
this new place is your home—

and you have completely changed.

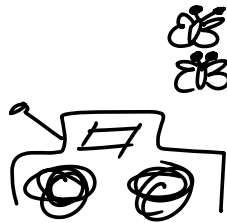


Butterflies

Butterflies on the flowers
and butterflies on the cars.
Butterflies everywhere,
saying fall is near.

Butterflies in my mind,
and butterflies in my belly—
still after all these years,

insisting that the first day
of school is here.



Sinner the Saint

I don't know if 10 years from now,
my poems will be read
in a world filled with sunshine—
or a world dark and gray,

but I know in 10 years from now,
they'll form a crucial part of my story,
these troubles I have today.

And 10 years from now,
that's what these poems will attest to, and say.

I also don't know if my silence is judgment,
or if my silence is restraint,

but I know if my silence indeed
was a disguise for my secret judgment,
then it would introduce itself saying:
“hi, I'm Sinner the saint.”

The Nurse out in the Mountains

I went to the nurse the other day,
who understood me better
than anybody I've ever met before.
She asked me all these questions,
like a doctor of the soul.

In 5 minutes or more she put me together,
asking do I get chills?

And I said only with my friends,

and she asked about ear pain,

I said only every time I talk or so.

She mentioned high blood pressure,

and I said only when my dad calls.

She said lots of pain—

and I said I know.

Then she asked about tiredness,

and I said more-so exhaustion,
she asked if I drink or smoke,
and I said not enough—

and we were done.

And that was the end of my healing,
all it took was 5 minutes of no dodging,
just telling the truth.

And she sent me out of there,
feeling like a brand-new pillar of stone,

that I could start breaking down again—
trying to do what I've been doing
since my youth,

trying to sculpt



a worth-looking at man.

Uncle Johannes

I've always marveled at how my uncle
seemed to always have something funny to say.
He could always find a joke
somewhere to be made.
Almost as if addicted to them—
to get him through the day.

And I've since come to realize,
that humor is one of the only possessions
you'll always have—
no matter how hopeless the day may seem.
The quickest friend to find—
when you need a team.

It's the perfect answer,
to all of life's hardest questions.

The ones that come back time and time again,
but leave answerless,
like they've done so many times before.

Humor is the perfect escape—
when the truth sets you free no more.

Credit Where Credit is Due

Sometimes you have to ask yourself,
if you have been praying for so long,
that Satan's influence be removed
from your life,

and if you trust that that is what God will do—

then isn't it possible,
that the pain and complications
and confusion and worry,
that still plague you every day—

now that Satan is out of the picture—
are solely caused by you?

To Try and Teach Them How

If the flowers stopped blooming,

or the rain no more did fall—

if the birds all went silent,

not even a peep at all—

then I'd hug every plant and tree so tight,

and throw rocks at every cloud—

I would track and cage every bird,

to try and teach them how.

So I could put back the color,

by which our world was once known.

And the melody and song—

that's made us all grow so alone.

I'm not the Paranoid Type

I want to write more poems for me,
and other kids like me too,
but it's almost as if this world
has conspired to keep me from writing,
although I know that sounds absurd.

And I want to listen,
to learn some new things,
and make my people feel truly heard—
but it's as if this world
has exhausted me to the point,
where I can barely hear every other sentence,
and remember every third word.

And see I'm not the paranoid type.

I'm just good at seeing patterns,

and I like finding answers

to the problems I face,

but sometimes when I look at the evil

in this world all around me,

it ever so barely just so almost,

all seems like some kind of plan—

a sad and scary and worrisome one—

falling perfectly in place.

Mandate Love

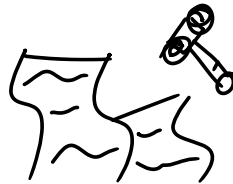
If only one day
we could amend the constitution
to mandate self-respect,
and put acts of kindness up as statute,
and make being loved a human right.

If we could legislate conscientiousness,
and interpret it as precedent—
then perhaps we'd have a reason
to start being more polite.

But for now the right to live,
the freedom to pursue happiness,
and the ability to make informed choices
of our own—
should be entirely alright.

They are more than any of us
ever deserved in anyways—
gifted to us by brave men
through violence and battle—

but what we now need next
will only come—
by quite the opposite of a fight.



A Restoration Specialist

I'm an ecologist,

and I'm a spiritual man.

I believe in caring for the world around you,

and restoring what needs to be restored.

But I'm also a faith-filled man,

and I too care for the world inside of you,

more than just restoring the land—

one might say I'm just as much,

in the business of restoring souls.

Let's

Let's listen to the old songs,
the ones that bring back our younger days.
Let's look at all the old pictures,
the ones that show previous people,
and previous ways.

Let's reconnect with those who got us here,
and tell them what we've done since then.
Let's take down the boxes,
with the clothes and toys of those passed on,
and let's pretend they're here again—
and I'll start,
I'll show you how.

Let us finally trash every mask
we've ever worn,
and every learned accent,
with which we were not born.

Every piece of jewelry,
every piece of rancid advice,
society has force-fed to us—
every white lie we tell
about the great things we've done,
every lifeless, overpriced possession—
in which we trust.

Let us be vulnerable.
Tell the truth and the whole truth,
and let us ask for help.
Let us open up.
And if need be, let each of us
take our turn to cry—
and let us share that cup.

Let us tell of our lives,
to expose our broken, broken hearts,
and let the magical
sweet healing waters of love,

reconcile our irreconcilable parts—
as we forgive.

Forgive those who hurt us the most,
and forgive ourselves—
for the choices we can't outlive.

Let us finally be done with our work for once,
and let us instead write poems and play.

Let us dance and sing and travel.

Because work is good,
but only if it knows its place—
if at work, is where work stays.

Though it feels sometimes,
that all we are made of from head to toe,
are the regrets that have chased us
from coast to coast—
let us realize
that we can make the world a better place,
with a choice right here and now,

not later and not then—

by refusing to hurt another ever again.

Let us have some Grace—

and let us make some space.



A Little Bit of God

When you look at a tree
or you look at a mountain,
or you look at flowers or bugs or stars—

are you ever overwhelmed with pity,
thinking “yet another creation
God made in a rush—
and abandoned just as fast?”

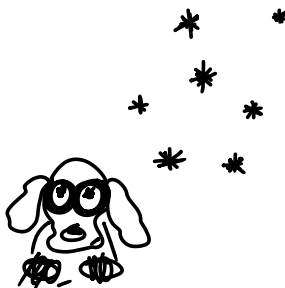
Another, that just couldn't pass the bar.

Oh but when you look at puppies and toddlers
and snowfall and thunder,
do you see and think God has forsaken
them too?

Or do you believe He's still there,
following them and taking care?

Whether they're dropped down or sick,
lost or found.
Don't you see at least a little bit of God in them,

can't you at least see even a little bit of Him—
everywhere?



We'll Sooner Discover

Even though He knows every one of my jokes,
and has known them for millions of years.

In the moment before I make them,
He still hears.

And even though technically
He created each of them,
and in the grand scheme of things
has probably already heard them all—
He still chooses to laugh
with the sincerest chuckles and knee slaps,
squinting His eyes,
no matter how faint or small.

Yet not because He pities me
or because that's a father's duty to do,
He laughs because He loves me,
yes and He laughs until He cries.

But I also know that we'll sooner discover
what makes a joke funny,
and why man's natural response
is to show his teeth and repeat a noise—
than we'll ever be able to answer the question
of what love fundamentally is,

and why He loves us that much,
to the point of making time
for us simple humans,
and indulging in our basic joys.

Heartache too Takes Orders

When leaves fall,
they drop for only their moment,
for their while—
about as quick as the breaking
of an ocean wave.

And like these two—
Heartbreak too—
seems to take its time to fade.

But unlike the trees,
instead of leaving you to rot
on the forest floor—
or like the ocean drawing you
back in for more—

of tumbling and twisting another round,
making you wish that you could drown—

Heartbreak too takes its orders from God,
to hold absolutely none prisoner.

And Heartbreak surprisingly,
neither has any interest at all—
in turning us into slaves.

Heartbreak—

I promise—

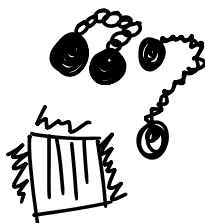
instead gives you the choice,
when it's finally done with you—
of dropping you in a garden,
or spitting you out into a grave—

with Heartbreak being a mere messenger
for the Man Himself above,
we can choose to let it end us—
because somehow that is what hurt
makes us crave—

or we can say to Heartbreak,
“until next time old friend,”

and trust that the God of the Process,
will use this Process too,
to keep doing what He’s always done—

and save.



Some Kind of Weed or Poison

Just because this land we live in,
is not all that far far away,
and we're all alive now,
and not a long long time ago—
does not mean
that it is not a paradise kingdom,
with magical legends,
and mystical creatures to show.

And I know that sometimes,
the sights of evil and disease and hurting—
and pollution and pain—
may not remind you much
of the covers of fairytales,
or make you forget all your problems
and worries again,

but don't you forget
that every good story,
had some kind of weed or poison,
and certainly always a witch—
and dungeon—
or disaster—

but that never stopped
the princesses and kings,
from insisting
on their happy ever after.



The Pajama Government

I've never understood the reasoning,
behind reciting The Lord's Prayer,
I believe a prayer said is a prayer spent,
and I truly believe that a prayer redeemed
need not be re-used,
if what you said the first time,
is really what you meant.

And if you have a close relationship with God,
like the one you have,
with your mother or lover or friend—
then I also question the sense
in repeating the exact same words
to Him every day,
over and over again.

What kind of a relationship would you have
with your mother, for example,

if like a robot you left the house every day,
to her too saying:

My mother,
Who art in pajamas,
Thanks be to your name,
Your floors be vacuumed,
In the basement as it is in my room.
Give me today a PB an J,
For lunch,
And forgive me for not going to eat all of it,
As I forgive you
for not cutting them into squares.
And please keep scaring away
the hallway monsters,
For you pay the taxes,
And buy the cereal,
And pop tarts.
For the rest of my school years,
Good day.

Now I'm not telling you how to pray,
I'm just challenging you to ask yourself,

whether you really mean—

every—

word you say.



Who Stole my Childhood?

What happened to my childhood?

The things I loved so long ago?

The things I did,

when I was a kid,

the things I never could outgrow?

What happened to naps,

and waking up to kisses?

And who ever warned me,

that would eventually turn into,

what my life now is?

What happened to the adults,

and when did everyone get so short?

When did I stop eating at tables,

and building under them my forts?

And what happened to the innocence,

when I still wasn't afraid of my own choices?

When was our home
with pets and friends and family—
abandoned and replaced by voices?

What happened to tickles
and snuggles and baths,
and who took all my toys away?
Where did all our rainy days and pancakes go?
And midnights filled with picnics and play?

Please just tell me—
who stole my childhood?
All that I have ever loved,
and all that I have ever known?

And how much would they want,
to sell me back just one memory—
and take instead for ransom,
all these days I now spend alone?

Try not to Befriend Hate

Try not to befriend hate.

Resist the desire to say his name.

As hard as it might be,

don't let him invade your whole day.

Don't make a habit,

of summoning that ghost.

Because you'll soon be humbled,

by how many blessings it brings—

left speechless by the miracles,

that God can make come from the things—

and still will—

that we hate the most.

All That can Convince Me

I've got a little addiction to talking to girls,
glancing at them as I walk in the room,
and smiling as I pass them on the street.
Because deep down in my heart
they do for me a strange, strange thing,
mostly plutonic, and entirely discreet:
Most rough days they are for me,
the quickest source of hope to be found,
because you can always see them smiling
and talking,
and sitting pretty everywhere.

And some days,
they are all that can convince me,
that there is still some beauty in this world—
The only reason I get out of bed.
Sometimes the only reason I still get dressed,
and go anywhere.

Shame and Pain

Oh the way this world is,
and the things in it.
Things happen the way they happen,
and they happen the way they do.
And oh the things I did a lifetime ago,
that still bring me my daily share
of an ungodly amount of shame,
though I'd never wish to go back and change—

because they've taught me some things,
like a substitute teacher,
that I could otherwise
only have learned from pain.
And between these two teachers
I've seen enough of their students,
to know I'm better off with a lifetime
worth of homework from shame—
than another minute, in detention with pain.

It's a Peculiar Thing Loneliness

But it's funny
the types of things that loneliness,
and the mere prospect
of having someone else in our life,
would make us fail to see.

And it's a peculiar thing loneliness is—
how it'll make you choose the wrong one,
and so keeps you lonely forever more—

unless you're a little longer lonely now,
and wait for the right one,
who will never make you feel lonely again.

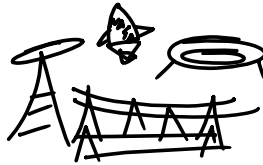
Or at least they'll be someone
worth feeling lonely over—
every now and then.

What we Humans can Accomplish

Once you've seen the things
we humans can accomplish when we try,

then you'll be compelled to believe
that we're not facing these problems,
that we're facing as a world and a nation,
because we have to,
today—

we're choosing to have it all this way.



The Rest of the Fairytale

You never hear about the prince
standing outside the tower—
or the princess crying her guts out
in her room—
wondering if the other feels the same.

You never hear about the part
where he wakes up
and goes to work lonely,
or comes home to lay in bed,
heartbroken and maimed.

Fairytales are all good and well,
but they're only half of the love story.
The other half is the part they never mention,
the parts in between the rescue,
and the marrying,
and the long ago—

and the echo of forever-after glories,

the part where everybody waits,

and wonders—

and stuck with their own thoughts—

become the villains,

of their own love stories.

At What a Cost

And it's like magic at the zoo,
walking into the Africa section,
when I can already hear
so far off over the plains,
the most triumphant and calm—
of music that ordains.

As the baboons run up,
staring through the fence at me—
and the giraffes bend down,
as if taking a knee—
the leopard raises his head,
shyness his least concern—
and the guinea fowl flee,
but stop and turn—

as if the council has agreed,
saying “could it be?”

We've heard all the stories,
and we can smell it on you—
a hint of royalty, of something new.
You lived between our ancestors,
you were more than a hunter, it was declared—
you were the curious one—
you cared.

We came all this way,
spread across the continents of the earth—
because we knew you would flee from home—
so we can search all those of human birth.
Watching them as they watch us,
through these iron-glass domes.

But now we see our home in you,
purely by how you walk—
you are most certainly,
from where our kind have come.

It must be—
you are the one.

Now go forth and leave here,
but take this here message from our kind—
the warning we were sent to give you,
if you we could ever find:

learn from us, strong one,
don't put yourself in a cage.
Don't have another man feed you,
don't have another man lead you.
Live your life and be free,
you'll be here longer than us—
you'll become the one,
the people come to see.”

And the grandpa elephant,
on my way out—
with tears in his eyes stops me, and he says:

“oh how great the things you will do.

For the hurting ones,

and the uncertain—

and the children they lost—

but oh,

at what a cost.”



Die Here is Geen Rekeningkundige nie

Here hier lê ek vanaand,
in een van die pragtigste dorpe in Amerika,
in 'n 5-ster kamer
in 'n woud—
en ek wonder wat het ek ooit gedoen,
om dit alles te verdien.

Want by die huis lê Johannes in sy sinkhuis,
sy koue pondok met die klippe op die dak,
en ek voel skuldig—
want hy vorm so groot 'n deel,
van wie ek vandag is.
Hy't deur sy lewe gehelp om myne te maak—
en ek wens maar net hy kon my nou sien.

Ja Johannes slaap vanaand in sy pondok,
onder 'n grys-hondekombers,
wat alewig so aan sy kroeshare kling—

eerlikwaar is dit seker al oggend daar,
en hy rook nou deur die houtstomp pyp
wat ek vir hom gemaak het—
wat ek nooit sal vergeet, hoe hy gegrap het,
en gesê het, “hy trek so bietjie sterk.”

Op ‘n blommetjie-duvet,
met meer kussings óm my op die vloer,
as wat hy met sy lewenssalaris sou kon koop.
En ek gaan môre-oggend opstaan,
en op ‘n boot rond ry, en in die dorp rondloop,
en hy sal sit op sy stoep met sy radio,
en luister na sy kerk.

En ek weet ons sal eendag weer saam wees,
in die Hemel—
ek en Johannes en sy kinders en sy vrou,
sonder sy sinkhuis of radio of pyp,
en ek sal vir Jesus self sê hierdie keer,
hulle sal die rolle moet omruil nou—

gee vir my die perdestalle,
en laat ék my ransoene kaalvoet,
op die grondpad af
huis toe terug dra—
en laat hy verby my jaag,
in sy splinternuwe bakkie,
en my in die stof los—
soos ek na my vlenterse hoed gryp.

Gee vir hóm die nuwe paar skoene,
die swembad buite sy dubbelbed—
en 'n net vir sy mielies.
Want dis al wat hy nog ooit regtig wou hê—
vir die koringkrieke,
en vir die ryp.



The World is my Chessboard

In everything that happens:

I look two steps ahead—

to see how I could lose.

I set myself up for success,

by taking the time to look miles down the road,

looking at how I can be used.

Running every,

possible,

alternative,

scenario—

through my head.

The world is my chess board,

life is the game I play—

in everyone I meet and everything I see

and everything I do and want,

every day.

Because I know there's no rematch,
so I read the books and talk to the experts,
and play the games in my mind wherever I go.
I study the grandmasters and losers alike,
remembering how their games ended,
and the signs of a coming defeat, they showed.

Although mine has a lot more
than just 64 squares,
and my pieces are more than black and white.
I can't get them back when I've lost them,
so they retreat a lot more than I'd like.

And sometimes it seems
I only have queens to work with,
which is a challenge to me still—
winning without a sword.
And sometimes I win with just a single horse,
and this, without even owning a board.

Because the world is my chessboard,
life is the game I play.
I love playing chess.
I do it every day.

But see in every game,
I always have a King,
who seems to be still—
from the top at least—
to be hindered, a liability,
only mildly useful in rare situations—
making only one move at a time,
capable of no more.
But underneath the board,
He's always had me in checkmate,
and never even felt the need to keep score.

Friend I hope you see,
this world is our chessboard,
life is the game we play.

Sometimes against others,
sometimes against ourselves—
though few of us see it this way.

And everyone learns the rules as they go,
through wins and losses—
in everything we do,
and everything we say.

So you're better off starting
to love playing chess—
cause you're already doing it,

every day.



The Concept of Holiness

Like poems unfinished, lacking rhyme,
lacking shape, and punctuation,
and still deciding which parts
should run smooth, and which parts not.

Still searching for the right words
and emotions to back them up—
written in sloppy writing,
squeezed onto the edges of a paper,
that fell in between the walls
of a desk and its drawer—

Holiness is an unquantifiable thing.

As if it started as a melody
that God heard in a dream at night,
and woke up from right in the middle
when it was still fresh in His mind,

and He could hear it in His ears
but couldn't find the chords—
so instead He drew a picture
of what He could remember,
and put it in a press,
squeezed the juice out of it,
and kneaded it into a dough—

baked this in the oven and
ground it to a powder,
so He could mix it into a paint,
and with a wire brush used it—
to add some color to the soul.



Elephant-sized Heartbreaks

It's as if every person you tell
about your broken heart,
takes a little bit of it with them,
taking it off of your shoulders
and carrying it where they go,

then shedding it somewhere far away,
where we can no longer be reminded of it—
so it can dry out and rot and starve.

And that is how one man heals,
the same way you eat an elephant—

if each friend will take a piece to carry,
and each will take the time to carve.

A Story as Old as Time

Just like a dad who goes to work every day
and pays the bills you never see,
fighting the fights you don't know about—
God provides everything we have,
every single day.

And it might be easy to forget
that He's still there,
as we get used to all the privileges we have—
but as soon as He's gone,
just like with your earthly dad—
you'll realize what you really had.



Soos die Brand van 'n Traan

Soos die brand van 'n traan op jou wang,
die te lank nie afgevee—
en die weergalm
van die herinneringe in jou siel
van 'n kindertyd verby—
wat nooit ophou skree.

Nét so,
brand en kla die spyt in my,
van wat hierdie wêreld kón wees—

as almal net 'n bietjie meer wou gee,
as almal net 'n bietjie harder wou probeer.

How we Change our Minds

And to think,
as proud and glad I am,
of where and who I am today.
One day I'm going to look back
at a picture of me now,
and think of all the memories—
and I will be ashamed.

And I will inevitably regret,
like I've done so many times before—
the person I was back then.

The person I now adore.

Things Only a God Could Have Left Behind

I might have never met the Man,
who calls Himself the Son of God,
but I've been enough places
to swear under oath,
that in a lot of different people,
scattered all over the world—
I've found little pieces of Him
everywhere—

I found the things only a god
could have left behind,
the last time it was there.

And if I look back in my memory,
imagining all these people merging into one,
taking out of them only the most noble,
the most kind and fearless,
and selfless, and full of love—

then I see in my mind,
as convinced as I can be:

a bruised and bloody godman,
wearing a sparkling white cloak,
washed and pressed in laughs and hugs,
from someplace way above.



A Nature so Unique

Even though it shows today's date,
on the newspaper every day,
life there will try and convince you,
that you've time-travelled to 40 years ago—
because back then,
nothing ever really happened there—
and still today,
there's nothing much to show.

And although it's not hard to find a spot,
there where I grew up,
where the last man to stand there,
was God himself, when He spread the dirt.

And it remains a marvelous thing I ponder,
how a nature so unique,
has started teaching the people its ways—

more to be pitied than adored,
seeing more contest than charm—
choosing to demand first,
and then resorting to beg,
choosing to take without asking—
and then resorting to harm.

The place where I spent
the first 18 years of my life,
looking for a spot of shade,
and waiting for the rain.
The background to every fond
childhood memory of mine.
Where it's almost as if the sand
had rivalry with the rain,
arguing over who keeps the land.
And so the rain got the west,
where the ocean lies today,
and the sand blew to the east,
forming dunes and desert clay.

And the rain sued and litigated
and cried injustice to the god
that did the making,
but the dust ultimately reigned supreme.

Claiming to have been there first,
now getting its revenge,
and throwing one heck of a scene—
putting tears in the eyes,
of those who still dream.

And nothing here ever really was sure
or equal—
save for the sunlight from above—
or right or just or fair—

making sure everyone and -thing,
guilty or innocent,
of punishment and blame—
pays their tax and share.

If I Could Take the World Dancing

If I had the chance to take the world dancing,
I'd make it feel seen for once—
compliment its torn and char-burned dress,
and apron patched with string.
Tell it how beautiful it looks,
and that even if I had all the money,
and mines,
and big yellow machines in the world—
I still wouldn't change a thing.

And I'd promise her that I'd never force myself,
into her waterfall caves and forest floors,
where she keeps her little unnamed creatures,
that she likes to hide—
unless she shows them to me
along with all her other secrets,
that speak to how little we know of her,
and what she keeps inside.

And you can be sure,
I'll pick every loose feather
off her mittens and scarf,
and moldy leaves out of her hair.
And if she showed me all her scars,
through which she remembers the people
she has taken care of by—
then I promise I won't stare.

And though no-one will be unable to notice,
that her rivers are as brown as her eyes.
I'll try at least not to mention,
if her breath smells
like her smoggy skies—

or when I finally feel,
where the hills and mountains
get their shapes from,
and the dunes their beautiful curves—

or when I see the deserts,
in her patches of dry skin,
and for acne her volcanoes,
and her lightning-strike nerves.

Because I know she's been rather busy,
carrying everyone on her shoulders as of late—
for the past two billion years or so,
right before tonight—
to have had any energy left
to practice her walk,
touch up on her table manners,
or whiten her teeth, pageant-bright.

If I had the chance to take the world dancing,
and I finally get to see a fraction
of the close-up beauty that is her—
I think I'd walk away,
nothing like the man I was before—
and before the end of our song,
I'd whisper in her ear,

that if I could choose any of the planets
in this entire universe,
to spend my dying days on—
I would choose her time and time again,
and I'll even say, that I swore.

I'd travel lightyears
on a solitude-powered meteor,
to have been able to be here tonight—
and she'd blush a salt-lake pink,
and shrug and say:
that's probably what every other planet
at this dance hears you say.

And in between every spin,
I would tell her not every burning forest,
and melting iceberg, is her fault,
and keep spinning her,
until the tears of these fade away.

Because perhaps that's all
she's ever wanted to do—
or on second thought,
maybe that's all she's ever done—
so I'll ask if a slow dance instead might be okay.

But eventually I'll have to set her loose,
back onto the dance floor,
and leave her where I found her before—
where I know she is too much
of what God made her to be,
to ever raise her voice to another man—
who sees in her nothing more,
than a service, he doesn't need to pay for.

A man who can't see her subtle signs,
of impatience and discomfort—
the droughts in her heart
and storms in her eyes—
an earthquake here and a hurricane there—

or the shaking in her hands
and the hazy fog all around—
one who doesn't know how to braid,
curly mangrove hair.

Who won't put cream to her wrinkled eyes,
or filter her oceans and words,
to make them pure again,
so she can continue giving dances,
to those who need it most,
making them feel alive—

like the best of mothers,
sacrificing herself acre by acre,
so the kids she was given, can thrive.

Yes if only I could take the world dancing—
oh the stories she would tell.
Having seen every love story,
there has ever been.

I would walk out of there,
and spend the rest of my life showing her,
that I have meant what I have said.

And this way—

I can keep dancing with her, forevermore.

Until the day,

when she has energy for dancing no more.

When she has finally worked herself to death—
paying for our greed and war.

I like to Think it's Better This Way

Rivers they change,
and families and music—
and climates and governments, and dancing—
and the words we use and the things we say—

and priorities they change too,
and standards,
and convictions—

and I like to think it's better this way.

Just Like He's Been to Me

I don't want my parents getting old on a farm,
slower by the day,
telling the same stories over—
struggling to find the words to say,

but luckily I know a Guy a lot older than them,
who's still fresh of mind and spirit as can be—

and I know He'll be their best friend,
in times of direst loneliness and need,
however old He'll make them—

just like He's been to me.

Die Traan se Pendel

Hoe kies 'n traan sy pad,
by ieder en elke mens se gesig af,
vanuit die hoek van 'n oog?
Wat vir party dalk net 'n 2-duim roete is,
soos oor 'n babatjie se glad en ronde wang—
tot binne in sy mondjie droog.

En vir ander dalk dubbeld so lank vat—
wat deur 'n ou vel se valleie en slote,
na járe se oefening nogsteeds sukkel,
om hul pad tot op Kakebeen te vind—
dié se reis dan vinnig deur 'n sakdoek gebring,
tot 'n skielike punt.

'n Ander dan self,
wat nie die voorreg het—
om deur 'n stowwerige mou of vuil hand,
aangeneem te word—

maar net eenvoudig moet volg,
in die tradisie van hul voorvaders—
en op droë sandveld neer stort.

En waarnatoe gaan hierdie traantjies,
elkeen met sy eie klagte teen hierdie wêreld,
in 'n onderwater hofsaak toegedraai.

Wat soos spieone van die hart se stories vertel?

Party — glo ék — sink terug in die lyf,
en word vir 'n ander dag se groter stroom
weer gespaar.

En anders, sou ek sê,
smeer aan die skouers van geliefdes af—
daar word hulle gif in die sonskyn,
dood en gaar.

Maar daar is tog 'n handjievul trane
in elkeen se lewe,
wat in die donker-stilnag hulle reis sal begin—

soos 'n nagdier,
wat sonder die skuil van maanlig,
andersins nooit die moed sou kon vind—
om hierdie nare wêreld aan te pak.

Waarvan niemand ooit sal weet,
tensy een persoon dit uitvertel—
tensy een knietjie knak—

wat dan gaan intrek in 'n teddiebeer se oor,
of in die soom van 'n kussing se sloop—
wat gaan vassit soos 'n doring,
in 'n hondjie se poot—
hierdie is die trane,
moet ek jou waarsku—
en stel ek jou vandag voor—

wat met graagte sit en muf en vrot,
en luis en miet sal stoor.

Hierdie is die klagtes,
wat mens somtyds kan maak voel,
nie eers die hoogste van engele,
ooit sal hoor.

Hierdie is die trane
wat ongekam of borsel—
onkruid in die hart,
bemes en besproei.
En wat maak dat daar waar herinneringe—
van drukkies en oumas en diere,
moes ontkiem—
en waaruit 'n leeftyd se ransoen
van lewenslesse sou broei—

nou niks meer,
as net spookstories groei.

Om die Wêreld te Jumpstart

Kêrels, met 'n paar manne wat agter
vas kan hou,
en 'n Kalahari-boer aan elke kant—
met skouers lekker groot,

kan ons dalk nog probeer—
om die wêreld êrens by 'n bult
in die heelal af te stoot.

En met genoeg luck,
kan ons die gewete
van die mense op hierdie planeet,
miskien weer brandgestoot kry—

want moovra wou nie werk nie,
en om te jumpstart met kernwapens—
sal ons ter wille van die pole,
maar moet vermy.

So ek stel voor, as 'n laaste hoop,
begin ons almal maar saam soek,
en sommer ook gou—

vir 'n groot-genoeg tannie,
om die wêreld se clutch
plat vas te hou.



Breeding in us All

I submit to you,
like the first doctor who looked down
at his hands and his feet,
and at everything around him and said,

"I suppose there might be
something on my hands
that causes death—
that I am spreading,
though I cannot see."

Likewise evil is a virus, a bacterium,
breeding in us all,
that we will one day
have the means to identify,
and eradicate—
and again make this beautiful world,
healthy.

‘n Sinkhuis Vol Gebede

Vader dit raak vir my moeilik,
om te bid vir ‘n land soos dié—
want dit voel my my gebede
word hier om die hoek beroof,
of met ‘n klip in ‘n onrus raak gegooi.

Dit voel my party van dié wat wel oorleef,
verloor sig van hul einddoel,
en begin bedel—
of raak in ‘n sinkhuis aan die drink.
En die res spandeer hul nagte,
in gentleman's clubs rond gestrooi.

En kyk ek kan aanhou dig en bid,
en ek kan aanhou skryf—
ek kan aanhou glo en hoop—
dat liefde euwel uit sal dryf,

maar ek kan nie 'n mens oortuig
om sy droom te volg en vlug—
van die manier wat sy voorvaders gedink het,
en van verskonings en terug sit en kla—

en ek kan beslis geen mens oortuig,
dat die hele wêreld syne kan wees—
as hy net sy tassie wil pak,
en dit lughawe toe dra.



A House Divided

We have too many men
who are not sure,
of what to do with strong feelings—

and too many women left without partners,
or sound advice.

Too many couples sitting on the same chair,
looking different directions—
heading separately into the same storm.

And too many kids,
growing up—
thinking this should be the norm.

It's Just not Right

It's not right how this world is,
you know?

It's just not right.

And it's our politicians,
it's the parents,
it's the teachers—
and the older kids.

How we scream,
and say the most hurtful things,
and how quickly we'll fight.

It's just not right.

Gryp Ietsie Lig

Meeste mense in tye van nood,
gryp ietsie lig—
soos sigarette of drank of geld,
ietsie vir die lag en pyn en traan.
Ek het al jare terug besluit,
die klavier sal myne wees—
en daarmee op die vlug geslaan.

Oseane oor gedryf.
Met sy snare my die heeal in geskiet.
Op sy deksel kranse uit gevlieg.
En met sy wieletjies duine uit gery.

En dit bly verbasend,
dat iets so swaar soos dit—
my só vêr kon kry.

An Affair of Honor

I'm in a two-way street,
an affair of honor if you please.

On a roundabout,
in the middle of the night,

in a city known for prostitution
and hard crime,
and cults it feels—
and it takes to Bittersweet Boulevard
either way—
seemingly only us; the polite.

Where my heart says I need to stay here,
help my loved ones
get their lives back together,
and assume leadership
where it was never mine.

But my soul says flee from this sin,
before it gets to me—
that has crept for generations
down my family tree spine.



Ons die Resiesperde

Twee dinge pla my:

die een is dat my stemtoon geneties geneig is,

om 'n bietjie bevraagtekend te klink—

'n bietjie opgewend,

'n bietjie kleinerend,

en sal jou absoluut dryf na drink.

Die ander is, dat soos 'n resiesperd

met skewe voete gebore,

kan ek partykeer teen my genetiese neigings,

uit suiwer wil baklei—

en teen sonde stry.

Maar partykeer voel dit my ook,

dat soveel harder

ons resiesperde probeer—

soveel meer—

maak ons onself net seer.

Aisle Seats

I was on an airplane the other day,
looking out the window.

And I could swear,
as we passed through a cloud—

there was a face in the fog smiling,
as if telling me to go give it a hug,
telling me to just step out.

"But what silly things" I said,
aisle seats like these, can lead one to want,
and how dangerous this ground we tread—

putting ourselves this high up in the world,
where the gods belong instead.

Soos die Here Hulle Stuur

Soos die Here hulle stuur,
raak die dinge
en die mense,
van die wêreld jou aan—
met elke oomblik van jou lewe,

dag vir dag,
lag vir lag.

So vat jy weer aan hulle—
en vat jy net sag.

The Thing with Relationships

The thing with relationships,
and dating—
pre-marital at that—
the thing I believe the Bible omitted,
simply due to the lack of dating
in the time it was wrote,

but I still believe the rest of the book implies,
and this is the part that sets you free—

is that once you've seen it all—
there's nothing left to see.

And not only is that sad,
but seeing that my friend—
will surely make you mad.

Evil Knows it Dies

One way you can know
that you're heading towards a gate to hell,
is that the roads leading there
always somehow feel,
like they should be kept a secret—
or behind a closed door.

Because Evil knows it dies,
out in the open sunlight and fresh air,
in the middle of the day,
in the eyes of the public—
exposed in the city square.

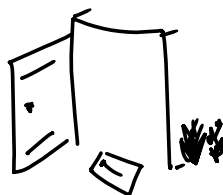
Its lies and its gossip and its shame,
when exposed to the truth,
and called by name—
they all wilt and burn,
naked and bare—

so let us pull out our drawers

and prop open our doors,

and for once kill all the diseases—

that we've been hiding in there.



Quotes Section

The world that taught me the lessons, and gave me the things to write poems about, has never made any sense. So why should my poems?

How arrogant of you, to look at the evil and wrong and pain in this world, and assume that this is all this world will ever be. Disregarding the prospect of a bigger plan at work, working at a bigger purpose, for a smarter Man, and a greater good — that you just cannot now see.

You'd think we would get better at handling heartbreaks by how often we have to do it, and you'd be wrong.

What a strange mixture this world of ours is, of more challenge than you could ever stand, laced with more joy than you could ever trust.

Every road leads home, if only you would change your definition of home.

At the end of the day, all you really wake up with is the choices you're going to make that day, from the first one to the last.

Money might make some choices harder and others easier, but money never makes the choice.

God answered my prayer to give me what I needed
a long time ago, when for work He gave me hands
and feet, and for trouble a mouth to speak.

If this fallen world is this beautiful, then I can't wait
to see what it was intended to be.

If we're being honest, the only thing that has ever
really held us back as a family and as a nation and
as a world, is that one person standing in the back
of the crowd, back of the room, and back of the
class, yelling: it'll never work.

I submit to you, if you want to know what a society
is lacking, or what is causing its demise, then look
at the books they throw away. Look at the books
that they refuse to read.

Read your Bible and go to church. There's a reason
every single one of your ancestors did— and it's
certainly not because they were all disillusioned,
and you are the first enlightened one in your
family.

The Bible is merely the theory part of life, but you
won't find every answer there. Living out here in
the real world though, this here is the lab
practicum.

The Christian life is an applied science, not a spelling bee, you're not supposed to know everything ahead of time, because you learn as you go.

I believe that when you look for someone, look for similarities in the important things, and in the differences choose the things you can learn from.

An education is the most arrogant gift you can give, and the most humble thing you can ask.

You know what's the best part of being able to make choices— the greatest gift God could ever have given us? It's the fact that you can keep doing it. If you don't like one choice, you can make another one. As many as you want. Until you finally get from point A to point B, where point B is a better place.

The reason I advocate for letting your kids leave home and go study abroad, especially if you come from where I come from, is that in 20 years or so, they'll be going to the next planet, curing the next disease, playing with the newest toys, and mastering the next art. You on the other hand, will have spent the last 20 years still trying to find a spot of shade, and still waiting for the rain.

If you want to know whether something is right for you, give it some time. Ask yourself if this is what you want now, or what you want ultimately.

If you think about it, you've only got about 50 years left— so you better get going.

God is not tempting me; He is challenging me— He is my sparring partner. And I don't grow apart from Him or closer, He's always there right by my side. And me and Him we might spend one day tanning on the beach, and the next throwing punches in a dark alley somewhere, but we don't grow apart. He is always right there next to me, wherever we go.

No matter what happened throughout your entire life or throughout the history of the world, everyone at the very end of the day needs to ask themselves "what's next?" It's the one thing we all have in common.

People ask me if I'm a morning person, but I'm more of a life type of person.

There's not that much difference, ultimately, between adults and kids. I'm still scared of things I can't see.

I've found that if you feel like you need to prove to someone that you are something, then you're probably not it.

One thing that a lot of indigenous tribes have in common, is that the concept of private property never existed to them. And I can just imagine what they were thinking in the beginning, convinced that the only thing that belonged to the settlers on the land was the fences they brought with them, and I bet it took them a while too to figure out why they stretched it all over the place in mile-wide squares.

Wees geduldig. Daar's niks wat jy nou kan doen om liefde te maak gebeur nie, en daar sal niks wees wat jy eendag sal kan doen, om liefde te keer nie.

Like the villain who knows that he can't break the warrior, goes after the people he loves instead, it's almost as if Satan leaves the faithful untouched, but wreaks havoc in the lives of our loved ones.

Everybody always says they see God moving, and I wonder if He's not just been standing still this entire time, and we just finally decided to get up and do something with all this life and opportunity He has given us.

Just let me first do the genius that I was put here to do, before you study me and expose me and everything that was wrong with me too.

I wait this wait with gladness, for Faith is not surety, it is Faith my friend. And frankly this right here is the most frustrating part of life.

What keeps this world and the people in it together is pain. Pain— and the ceasing, and the healing— of that pain.

What helps you get over the whole instant gratification thing, is remembering that underneath every piece of bait is usually a hook.

At some point everyone needs to make a decision to change their life for good, and most of the time it starts with a long hard stare into the distance. And it's a privilege to witness.

The fact that some people cannot entertain and hypothesize with other people's perspectives or beliefs, is a sure sign that they are not confident enough in their own.

Making a child is making a lifelong promise without even saying a word. A promise to that child, to its mother, and to all the family and friends involved too.

Those people— and that mentality— has driven me to the other side of this world, and it's going to drive me off of this planet still.

It might be a little wishful thinking— but if you aren't dreaming big, then what are you doing all day long?

Everybody gets what they need to be able to believe, but everyone gets something else.

Christianity and morality is about trying to think the thoughts that you wouldn't normally have, and allowing yourself to feel the feelings that you're not feeling. Like a bonsai tree getting bent by a stronger hand, higher up and knowing better— seeing a more beautiful future for all if our potential comes to fruition— or like a dog gets trained to lead the blind, or a horse to ride through fire, or a child gets raised to be civil. Likewise, we can strive to be children in Christ, giving to the pressure He applies, when our ragged nature least feels like it.

Crazy is the day you start realizing that most of what happens in your life and the impact you have, actually happens behind your back, without you ever even knowing about it.

Every entrepreneur should strive to run a business that wants to offer you a product or service, but has to take your money. Not one that wants to take your money, and has to offer you a service.

There's no dad as fun as Satan, but he's no father.

The God of the universe is kind of like a kung fu master who can't teach all His ways to His students, because they're just not ready yet. Who nobody as of yet has ever truly understood either, and I almost want to promise you that whenever you feel like He's at a distance from you— that's when you can be sure that you're about as close as you're ever going to get.

Following God's laws, it seems to me, has very little to do with what He gets out of it. It is in reality solely to our own benefit, and the benefit of our community, because a perfect system and philosophy of Faith would be to everyone's benefit ultimately. To the humans that is, because if anything, God just loses.

Why was it so easy to have friends we couldn't see as kids, but with Jesus it's suddenly different?

In all my time spent in good and bad days, I've seen
there are always at least two things one can say,
either "there's something to be learned here" or
"there's a joke to be made somewhere."

When I find myself giving God the silent treatment,
I remind myself there is something that He can see
that I can't see, and that this is the game changer.

In this kingdom we've built here on lies, I realize
sometimes you have to choose what you believe,
and tell yourself the things that you wish to be true.

Many times when I find myself in the gap between
what I want, and what God wants, I start thinking
about what I can do, and what He can do— and that
gap closes pretty quickly.

Ek trek vannoggend my sokkies aan, en skoene, en
ek kyk na my pragtige voete en wonder hoeveel
ander wonderlike geskenke wat die Here vir my
gegee het trek ek 'n sak oor die kop en steek
heeldag elke dag weg, trap daarop, en bring net uit
in die laat donkeraand.

When I die, tie my heart and brain together before
you bury my body, so they can finally be at the
same place for once.

You're never back to square one, you're just there again. There's a difference.

The people we are, I think, are less-so the results of years of building up and careful assembly, like how we build houses— and more-so like statues. The result of years and years of breaking down, careful micro demolitions, and of doing-away with parts we don't deem fit. In short: it's not so much how we choose to build ourselves up, but how we choose to break ourselves down, that makes all the difference in the world.

Sometimes we just need a little more time to be convinced, without someone convincing us.

It doesn't matter where you are in your life, as long as you are there with God.

I used to think I was going to save the world— but then I went and saw the world.

The Christian life is not an easy life, but it's the easiest that this life can be.

About the Author

Henning is currently in his junior year at Colorado State University (CSU) in Fort Collins, Colorado, USA. He's studying a B.Sc. in Restoration Ecology with a minor in German Language, and as many agricultural electives as he can muster.

Whenever he is not occupied with studies, he is the acting PRO officer for the CSU German Club, the Community Outreach Leader for an inter-denominational non-profit campus ministry called Cru, and on the officer board for the CSU Society for Ecological Restoration Rocky Mountain Student Chapter. He works a variety of seasonal jobs when he gets the chance, ranging from teaching regenerative agriculture to students from underserved backgrounds, to helping with doctoral research in soil nutrient cycling and drone use. He also volunteers on ranches and organic farms, and does mission trips all around the US on the rare occasion that time allows.

If you can't find him between classes and the library, he's most probably on a train heading to Oklahoma for the weekend, swimming in a lake in Canada, or repotting a bonsai while researching graduate schools.

All this when he's not indulging in his new favorite activity of course— driving his neighbors crazy playing Alan Jackson's "I still like Bologna" on guitar, sitting on his rooftop at sunset. He likes to think he's just doing his part in making this world a bit more of a livable place.

He also believes that the different hopes and dreams we all have for this world, can't possibly be irreconcilable,
or too far apart—
if they can all fit, inside of our hearts.

Even though to make it work,
we might need something of a miracle,
and surely—

Nothing Known to Science.

