

THE BLACK PRINCE

Collected Verse

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Cover Art: 'A Knight Rode Forth' by John Bauer

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Table of Contents

[The Black Prince](#)

The King and His Daughter

The Prodigal Returns

The End of Sorrows

Young and Old

Noon Wine

Sea Foam

Two Lovers

Violet Blue

Golden Chain

[Fade Away](#)

Sea of Love

Eyes of a Stranger

Black Pearl

Twilight

Snowflake

Dreamboat

The Quiet Room

Muddy Waters

Limbo

[Nightfall](#)

Tread Lightly

Stream Scene

The Birdbath

Sugar Daddy

Salty Sea

Heart of Wood

Moccasin

In the Know

The White Dress

[Fall of the Queen](#)

Old Timey

Tip of the Iceberg

The Valley

Garden in the Lane

Autumn Leaves

Ode to a Babe

The Beast

Cinderella

Joyful Noise
[Boy in the Well](#)
The Gray Area
Planet Earth
Mausoleum
Hearth of Stone
Dear Mother
Star Gazing
What Am I?
The Golden Girl
Poison Ivy
[The Nightingale](#)
Up the Stairwell
Criminal Kind
Turtle Song
Tree of Life
Summer Dreams
Mouse in the House
Away, Away
The Shadow
Somebody, Somewhere
[Death Spell](#)
Ice Palace
Color of the Crow
Sunrise
Light at the Edge of the World
Fools Rush In
Weeping Angel
Golden Child
A Patch of Green
Wait for Me
[Whisper](#)
Mother's Milk
Wade into the Waters
Come Quiet
Mirror, Mirror
Time
Buried My Heart
Thin Black Veil
Samara's Last Day
The Wayward Heart
[Smoke and Mirrors](#)

The Lost Children
Castle by the Sea
Grand Canyon
High and Low
Snow White
Ever After
[The Wishing Well](#)
The Steadfast Heart
White as Snow
Everything and Nothing
[True Believer](#)

THE BLACK PRINCE

The King and His Daughter

Long ago and faraway
Before this world or any other
Before the fire and the water
Lived an old king and his daughter

They lived in royal splendor high
In a kingdom near the sky
Which had always been their home
For neither recalled being born

'Til one day in the courtyard there
Appeared a stranger from nowhere
Who spoke the sweetest, strangest words
That the daughter ever heard

He was tall with jet black hair
That hung in ringlets down to there
His eyes so radiant and bright
She loved him at the very sight

Alas, though beautiful and smart
The prince possessed a jealous heart
And launched a plot against the king
To steal both kingdom and offspring

But every little thought has wings
And even lions set to spring
Are no match for a wise old king
Who sees and hears most everything

The Prodigal Returns

So the Black Prince was driven out
To moan and curse and flail about
While the girl with golden hair
Cried her eyes out on the stairs

Meanwhile, the old king sat and thought
Upon their sad and mutual loss
And finally devised a plan
To fetch her lover and his son

I shall plant a garden which
Should satisfy their every wish
But when they start to feel at home
They'll have to leave each other's arms

So they found their paradise
And for a while it seemed to last
Up until the long tomorrow
Came to bring fresh grief and sorrow

The Black Prince wanted nothing more
Than to walk inside the door
Of the great white marble hall
But not the way he'd done before

The End of Sorrows

For many years the daughter prayed
And planted flowers on a grave
Where she would sit all afternoon
Before she walked back to her room

Her father to his palace kept
A watch and though he never left
He sent a doctor that one day
Walked past her sitting near the grave

The doctor thought he'd never seen
A mad girl looking so serene
For in truth, he was none other
Than her prince condemned to wander

For many years he passed her thus
Never once telling who he was
Often stopping to sit down
Or offering to walk her home

At other times he'd stay away
Imagining himself to blame
Sometimes, crying tears of pity
Because she was so sad and pretty

But he would always come back later
And as she started to get better
He felt his heavy heart grow soft
And all his armor melting off

So it was the wise old king
Sent warm sunshine and healing rain
To make the roses bloom that spring
And never parted them again

YOUNG AND OLD

Too old to live, too young to die
Too deep for words, too sad to cry
Poetry is not a hobby
It is love without a body

NOON WINE

The grapes in yonder vineyard
Are low and hanging down
So heavy and so ripe the juice
Is dripping on the ground

Go out into the vineyard
And pick some off the vine
To bring me back a basket full
Before it's dinnertime

Put the grapes into a press
And make a nice, sweet wine
To pour in goblets for our guests
When they sit down to dine

I am a vine that's laden
With fruit that will in time
Be harvested and pressed into
A bottle of sweet wine

And yet, I know that some of it
Is destined to become
A little trail of raisins
Left to dry out in the sun

SEA FOAM

A storm has churned the ocean waves
 Into a foam around my legs
 As I walk aimlessly along
A beach a long way from my home

But then it's carried out again
Into the vast and wide ocean
 Shiny bubbles in the surf
 Floating farther from earth

You love the little children so
The old, the blind, the rich and poor
 The slighted and illiterate
 And every last unfortunate

Papa surely has your love
Mama too and God above
The forests and the deep blue sea
 And everybody else but me

I am but the froth and foam
That comes and goes after a storm
 And walks along a lonely beach
With tangled seaweed on my feet

TWO LOVERS

While waiting for the bus one day
I overheard one lover say
That his suit had gotten soaked
Because his umbrella had broke

His limp sandwich was soggy too
As were his socks because his shoes
Had separated from their soles
And he had lost his overcoat

He felt so old and disappointed
That his nose was out of jointed
Was there a reason to be grateful
On this rainy day in April?

She looked around then faraway
As the crosstown pulled away
And rain made puddles on the walk
That washed away the grime and chalk

'Try to believe' she softly said
'Try to believe, believe instead
Another dollar for a fare
But all real journeys begin there'

Then the bus pulled from the curb
Drove away and disappeared
Merging painfully and slow
Under the arch of a rainbow

VIOLET BLUE

Way up on a mountain high
In a cabin near the sky
There lived a little child who
Had eyes the deepest shade of blue

She liked to wade in shallow creeks
Collecting little rocks and twigs
In her bare feet most every day
And pick up petals on the way

Of wild flowers for her room
To crush them into sweet perfume
And if they crumbled at her touch
She ground them into fairy dust

She hummed her little secret songs
Or sang them if she was alone
While strumming on her little harp
When all was quiet, after dark

Then one day the child died
And with her went her secret life
And all the little joys and tears
She'd kept inside for forty years

GOLDEN CHAIN

My love is like a golden chain
That will not tarnish in the rain
It will not break nor even bend
And you are at the other end

FADE AWAY

I think that I would rather go
And walk across a bed of coals
Or drop myself into the sea
With an anchor tied to me

Than to watch you fade away
Like the dawn fades into day
And all the twinkling, starry skies
Disappear into sunrise

SEA OF LOVE

The cat got your tongue
But never your soul
So I'm swimming around
In a sea full of songs

I'm swimming and swimming
Towards the horizon
And the words reach as far
As the rays of the sun

How long you were waiting
And watching the clock
Alone and abandoned
On a shore full of rocks

How long I was searching
For my long lost friend
But now I can see
I've been floating on him

Dark fears and emotions
Rose up from the deep
So I thought I was drowning
When I was asleep

The storm it was raging
Far under the sea
Now it comes to the surface
Only to kiss me

EYES OF A STRANGER

You eclipse the whole world
Simply by breathing in it
No matter how hard you try
You cannot escape yourself

Whereas I on the other hand
Can never seem to find myself
Until I see myself once again
In the eyes of a stranger

BLACK PEARL

This pearl is precious unto me
Though it be black as it can be
It is as perfect, smooth and round
As any white one to be found

There was a time I wished to be
As clear and full of purity
As the water from the well
Or a single, snowy pearl

But I took all my wishing back
The day I noticed that the black
Was not from dirt nor dust of coal
But from depths inside my soul

There is a place where angels keep
A vigil quieter than sleep
Because not even dreams may go
Into the twilight of my soul

TWILIGHT

How I wish that you could stay
But it will soon be yesterday
The sun's on the horizon now
Surrounded by a pale, orange glow

SNOWFLAKE

You are but a white snowflake
Drifting downward in the late
Of winter just to melt away
Come the middle of the day

You imagine that you are
As intricate a crystal star
That ever looked bemused upon
The lowly vapor in the dawn

The gentle raindrop on the pond
That falls and falls but never drowns
For it is neither found nor lost
And knows not future from the past

DREAMBOAT

You cannot play in the mud
And expect not to get dirty
Crumble, scatter and blow away
Like dust on the wind

Or the murky, brown waters
Stirred up after a rain
As you float down the river
On a hot summer's day

The heat makes you sleepy
Muddying up your thoughts
As the rising, steamy vapors
Obscure your vision

Then you glance away
For what seems like a moment
Only it must've been longer
For when you look back

It's all just a memory
Like a boat full of dreams
Floating farther downriver
On a hot summer's day

THE QUIET ROOM

Sitting in a quiet room
Bare and silent as a tomb
Walls as pale and pink as shells
And echoes up and down the hall

It seems like only yesterday
Or early in the month of May
That I was leaning in my seat
Against the glass under the heat

Content to watch the grassy hills
Or cattle grazing in the fields
And little towns that almost looked
Like pages in a picture book

When suddenly the quiet scenes
Looked like a canvas in the rain
All the colors dripping down
And melting into muddy brown

While all the passengers inside
Became so frightened for their lives
I heard their voices rise and crack
And scream as we sped off the track

MUDDY WATERS

I am looking through a stream
Of water bubbling from a spring
Gurgling up and trickling past
Transparent as a piece of glass

Now I am looking down a creek
All rust colored and murky deep
From rain that stirred the bottom up
Until the water runs with mud

Sometimes, I am so clear and cool
I know exactly what to do
At other times I am afraid
Of all the cloudy depths and waves

But then I try not to forget
That there is nothing to regret
For I am neither first nor last
But merely watching through a glass

LIMBO

'Where am I?' The woman said
As she stood closer to the edge
Of a gray and murky fog
Leading to a marble wall

Behind her was a barren land
Of starless night and miles of sand
That seemed to stretch as far and wide
As the ocean or the sky

'Where are we?' She raised her voice
Which echoed back as if the noise
Were coming from inside a crypt
As silent as a mummy's lips

'You are neither here nor there'
Replied a figure next to her
Expressionless of eyes and face
As a pillar in its place

'Perhaps a time will come when there
Shall be a stranger at the door
And he shall push it open wide
Enough for you to step outside'

He looked behind and then ahead
Then walked away and disappeared
Into the gray and murky fog
But when she looked again she saw

That deep inside the marble wall
There was a slightly open door
And just the faintest shaft of light
Coming from the other side

NIGHTFALL

Out of the woods before night falls
Comes a stranger dark and tall
A predator who walks upright
And stalks the creatures of the night

Bright and shiny jaws of steel
Spring to wound but not to kill
Little teeth that leave their mark
Upon a stray foot in the dark

It is not for me to say which
Kinds of blood don't wash away
Or even if the stains of tears
Are on the innocents you wear

TREAD LIGHTLY

Of all the kinds of love to seek
There is a kind that's mute and meek
It is not hard to win or know
And treads as light as a falling snow

STREAM SCENE

'Amusing, don't you think it so?'
Inquired a brown and spotted toad
To the creature on a branch
Perching at a cool distance

A beautiful and graceful thing
With sets of great transparent wings
That sparkled in the noonday sun
Making the colors dance around

'Dare to speak to me you fool?'
You are the picture of one too'
The dragonfly sized up the toad
Lounging on his mossy stone

It was true it could be said
The way his eyes sat on his head
And the way his mouth drooped down
Perpetually, into a frown

Side by side or so it seemed
They watched the drama in the stream
One high and regally detached
The other just a part of it

A turtle basked upon the moss
Then a frog leaped from a rock
A school of minnows darted past
Startled by the sudden splash

'Things are not always what they seem'
The toad glanced upwards from the stream
Flicked out his long and sticky tongue
And then the dragonfly was gone

Be wary of the grinning fool
For even when he frowns at you
He may be looking at his lunch
So have the manners not to judge

THE BIRDBATH

A tired old man sat staring off
Into the distance, lost in thought
Upon a chair under the sun
Next to a birdbath on the lawn

'Papa why don't you come in?'
Smiled the fairy up at him
She was beautiful and had
Wings just like a humming bird's

Still for the moment as she was
Perched upon the cement edge
Intently gazing upwards from
The little basin of the pond

'I wouldn't fit in and besides
You are just something in my eye'
'I'm not!' She shouted in reply
And then more gently, 'won't you try?'

'You only want to laugh and play
And I have things to do today'
And trailing off just then because
He realized how tired he was

His chest was heavy and his head
Felt dizzy as the words were said
While thinking that he'd never known
A humming bird to come so close

Soon he fell asleep and dreamed
That he was with the fairy queen
And he a fairy who had been
A tired old man once in a dream

SUGAR DADDY

Since that day you had to go
My folks just say 'I told you so
All he wanted was to play
And he never loved you anyway

Are you still barking up that tree
With so many fishes in the sea?'
But sugar sweetens up my tea
And that one was just right for me

If I could buy you at the store
I'd run down there and buy some more
I'd pour my honey from a jar
Or wrapped up like a candy bar

SALTY SEA

You slammed the door behind
As if you had somewhere to go
And left a trail of footprints
That got covered in the snow

So when I went to follow you
I lost my way instead
And I crumbled like a petal
In a wintry flower bed

If you lined up all your lovers
And they cried into the sea
They could not make it saltier
By half as much as me

If you pushed every last one
Into the salty sea
They could never be as sorry
Not by half as much as me

HEART OF WOOD

I sit up late in my old room
Strumming out a sad old tune
And though it makes fingers sore
I still want to play some more

I have a polished, wooden heart
Carved and bowed just like a harp
And strings so finely tuned that they
Just need a sigh to make them play

MOCCASIN

Silently the long black viper
Makes smooth ridges in the water
Filling river banks with dread
With his deadly serpent's head

Come the setting of the sun
Swims the deadly moccasin
A cottonmouth with deadly bite
For which to poison prey tonight

'Come closer' calls the velvet voice
With an oddly hissing noise
The moon reveals his fangs of white
And lidless eyes as black as night

So you wade in like a fool
And let him swim right up to you
Now it's too late to scream or shout
The venom's gone straight to your heart

IN THE KNOW

It isn't always who you know
Nor is it somewhere else to go
A slope with manufactured snow
Or beach with sunset all aglow

Sometimes you are in the know
When all the world rocks to and fro
And people that you used to know
Just frown and say, 'I told you so'

The radio is on too much
And everyone sounds like a judge
They like to tell you where to go
Because they are not in the know

But God just smiles and is aware
Of who the great pretenders are
On the side or in the show
And who is really in the know

THE WHITE DRESS

When I was green as a young forest
I sewed and bleached a pretty dress
Then neatly folded it away
To wear upon my wedding day

When that happy day arrived
I hardly slept and woke at five
To sprinkled water for to press
The folds and creases from my dress

I took the footpath to the church
And underneath the pines and birch
Slipped on moss and tore my hem
Then a sprinkle turned to rain

Slow and steady to the earth
Making mud puddles in dirt
And as the wind started to rush
I ran into a bramble bush

By the time I got to church
I'd scratched my legs and lost my purse
My hair was just a tangled mess
And I had ruined my pretty dress

Come sit with me just as you are
No matter all the wounds and scars
No matter the unhappiness
Which sheds as easily as a dress

FALL OF THE QUEEN

My enemies encircle me
Beyond and all around
Expectant, hungry vultures
Gliding closer to the ground

Like a viper slithering
Through the cracks along the wall
Or past a sleeper on his guard
Who's left the gate ajar

How I long to talk to someone
But the spies are everywhere
Lurking, waiting in the dark
To listen and ensnare

Oh how I dread their coming
If but for my children's sake
Will passive turn to active
When they have not me to hate?

Daydreams wrap around my thoughts
Just like a soft dawn mist
But lessons are as cold and hard
As opportunities missed

OLD TIMEY

I have a green and yellow house
With roses twining all around
Yellow, purple, pink and red
Climbing up a chain link fence

Some nights when it is nice and cool
I walk barefoot upon the dew
Covering my cold, damp lawn
All dark but for the porch light on

The neighbors have all gone to bed
But I have words inside my head
Of old time songs of love so deep
It never wants to go to sleep

TIP OF THE ICEBERG

There once lived a lonely iceberg
Who floated in deep and frigid waters
As he waited to be discovered
Like a constellation of stars

On the dark side of a universe
Or a rough slab of marble
Waiting for hammer and chisel
To reveal a beautiful sculpture

Because most of the iceberg
Lay submerged under the sea
He had always felt misunderstood
And every passing year

Only increased his desperation
To feel known and appreciated
Yet, whoever came near enough
To observe an iceberg?

Let alone see his great depths
Or chip away at his many secrets
Centuries came and they went
Still, the iceberg felt helpless

To aid in his own discovery
Until the tall, majestic iceberg
Who had always been so aloof
And given such cool breezes

Began to weep tears of despair
Over his sad and pathetic numbness
Until he gradually began to
Melt, break up and float away

But, it took a great many years
Of constant, inconsolable weeping
For the last remaining chunks
Of frozen vanity and pride

To finally dissolve into the sea
Until the humbled iceberg found
That he no longer felt so superior
To the rest of the vast ocean

When he had all but melted away
And only his poor, frozen heart
Bobbed hopelessly upon the waves
He apologized for his haughtiness

Then bade a tearful farewell
For surely these must be
His final moments on the sea
Yet, as his heart began to melt

A strange thing happened
When the sea started to warm up
To the temperature of salty tears
And a mermaid swimming by

Discovered a lonely god
Swimming in a warm, pleasant sea
On his way to the shore
Of an undiscovered paradise

THE VALLEY

Who knows when or where
Came this curious phenomenon
Of being carried away in the process
Of worship or being worshiped

The loftiest of goals and desires
Being the latter of course
As you perform worshipful duties
On your way up the mountain

Only to find on the summit how
You have been cruelly tricked
For there is only an empty cave
And it is so lonely at the top

Friends and acquaintances made
During your ascent to the pinnacle
Gone in pursuit of ascents of their own
Or dropped off the edge of a cliff

Prudently sacrificed to light travel
And if perchance you see them
It is not quite the same as before
Though they may try to conceal it

So, you sell your belongings
Save only the barest essentials
For your slow descent down
Only it's nothing like your ascent

You get worried smiles and glances
Well meaning lectures and advice
And those are the polite ones
Still, every now and again

An encouraging word or two
Or a knowing smile from a stranger
But as you keep descending
Even those begin to fade away

And yet, it no longer matters
As you get closer to a sweet memory
Of someone who loved you
Long before anyone else thought of it

GARDEN IN THE LANE

A little angel made of stone
Stares from a corner all alone
Standing on a garden lawn
Under a willow near a pond

Sealed in brick and iron chains
On a dark and narrow lane
And for the rarest of all plants
A little greenhouse made of glass

So every night and every day
The plant sits in its pot of clay
Staring through the panes of glass
Away from all the other plants

Always at a cool distance
No wonder she's so ignorant
But love survives in chills and drafts
And even houses made of glass

AUTUMN LEAVES

One fall day while walking home
I spied a stranger all alone
Against a rock and in the grass
Under some leaves next to a path

His hair was matted to his head
In dried up blood and grimy sweat
His arms were covered up in scabs
And blood was trickling from his hands

A coarse old shirt clung to his back
Attracting all the flies and gnats
His feet were cut up and exposed
Red rivulets flowing from the soles

'Excuse me, but it's nearly dusk'
I stammered, glancing at the sun
The moon's outline shown in the sky
As my throat went tight and dry

'It's getting cold and it might rain
And you'll need something for the pain'
He hesitated, tried to stand
And shuddered as I took his hands

'My house is just behind that grove
I'll make a fire in the stove
To heat some water for a bath
And for some soup before your nap'

ODE TO A BABE

I know a house with cement walls
Rows and rows of iron stalls
And metal slats inside a cage
Where it is neither night nor day

Then one day the men with prods
Come walking down the long, dark halls
To goad onto a truck en route
To an even darker house

In the winter some get stuck
Frozen to the metal truck
Or panting in the summer's heat
Days on end without a drink

No room to breathe or even lie
There is not even room to die
Standing in their muck and filth
And yet, those are the fortunate

Some are dying, some are dead
By the time their journey ends
The first time they will see the sun
Or even have a chance to run

Will be into a bloody house
Hung by one leg upside down
While cursing men in bloody coats
Slip through rows of dripping throats

None is so blind as he who won't
See you being torn apart
Shoved and scalded while alive
So long as you are ham by five

I'll weep for you and what I know
And for your corpses in a row
Why would I eat such grief and pain
So neatly wrapped in cellophane?

THE BEAST

Cruel jaws that open wide
To drip saliva, blood and lies
Pigs are bacon, cows are beef
And who are they to disagree?

People go to church and pray
Then barbecue every Sunday
But why should I care more for them
Than my chickens, geese and lambs?

CINDERELLA

Long and hard the daily grinds
 Into the grassy ground
Until my clothes are stained in green
 And streaked a muddy brown

Rough and red are my two hands
From washing clothes in winter
 Black and dirty are my feet
From sleeping in the cinders

Long and loud do my complaints
 Fall on this weary world
Try the patience of the saints
 And of the devil too

One morning a long time ago
 I heard a pretty song
And found a new religion
But by midnight he was gone

JOYFUL NOISE

One night I saw a lion
Hanging high upon a tree
A bloody spear piercing his side
And crimson running free

Creatures of both hoof and claw
Crept onto the pasture lawn
Or ran down from the tree tops
As the cocks crowed in the dawn

They gathered close together
'Round the body of the beast
And stared in frozen silence
At his paws and all his teeth

They gazed in awe and wonder
As the blood turned into wine
And the Lord himself climbed out
And started beating time

All at once they started singing
Such a loud and joyful noise
That mother woke up from her sleep
And begged to come and join

They danced until the sun had set
And then until it rose
As rivulets of purple swirled
Around their twirling toes

BOY IN THE WELL

One night while playing pranks
Next to a dark and haunted well
A boy tripped on a rotted log
And down and down he fell

His sweetheart called for him all day
Around the neighborhood
Then asked directions from a tree
Who pointed to a wood

That night as she lay sleeping
With her ear next to the ground
She heard the faintest crying
And the most pathetic sounds

She dug through moss and dirt
With but her little garden spade
And then with nails and fingers
When a stone broke off the blade

But when finally she reached him
He looked so contrite and thin
She found her scoldings fading
Like an echo in the wind

THE GRAY AREA

The road to happiness
Is often paved by unhappiness
One must experience darkness
In order to see the light

Then there are the gray areas
Depots of endless waiting
Sitting on wooden benches
And clutching tickets in hand

Places where it matters not
If you are laughing or crying
Rich, poor, famous or obscure
Because you are alone

So you think until you notice
Between the light and dark
Others are also waiting
Gripping luggage and tickets

In their sweaty palms
Glancing nervously around
As it's understandably difficult
To give their full attention

Yet, it is an indisputable
And simple truth that
Everybody must eventually
Catch their train

PLANET EARTH

There once was a magical place
Where everyone rose with the dawn
Retired with the moon and stars
And slept right next to the animals

Where there was no such thing
As too early or late for anything
Nobody thought about God
They assumed He was everywhere

So, they did not wonder aloud
Ask each other where God might be
Nor wander around the earth
Starting silly arguments

If they wanted to know something
They thought about for awhile
Or asked the person next to them
Until a terrible thing happened

Rather a series of terrible things
Now most people believe that
It is supposed to be this way
It is madness to argue with them

They know everything now
Peace is an abstract concept
Harmony a daydream or fantasy
Like flying around in an airplane

Under the ocean in a submarine
Inside a rocket ship to the moon
Seeing moving pictures on a screen
Talking on a telephone

Or anything else they can't imagine
Or do not understand
Even the sun, moon and stars
Planet earth and every earthling

Were only abstract concepts
Daydreams and fantasies once
And they are only jealous because
They didn't think of them first

MAUSOLEUM

On a corner near my home
Sits a palace made of stone
Smooth and white with heavy doors
Carved in oak with marble floors

Every Sunday draws a crowd
All dressed up in their finest shrouds
Reciting prayers inside the tomb
With bluish lips and rattling bones

Upon a crimson carpet step
A most decrepit corpse is dressed
In flowing robes and solemn looks
While reading from a large black book

Next door to me there lives a dog
Tied to his porch rain, shine or fog
I sneak him treats and scratch his ears
For he's been there so many years

I worry for him when it rains
Because I am his only friend
His owner cannot see his soul
As his died a long time ago

No one hears him howl or cry
For they have busy, busy lives
They rush around but not ahead
For they are very, very dead

One night I had the strangest dream
Of wandering through a mausoleum
Either a ghost or still alive
Then I awoke, or didn't I?

HEARTH OF STONE

As I sweep this hearth stone
All I see is tarnished gold
Velvet drapes that hang in tatters
Only love can last or matter

One last dusty, weary sigh
Then it's time to say goodbye
For it was nothing but a dream
A castle that was never clean

DEAR MOTHER

Somebody has dug me a grave
Then laid me inside it
As the echoes of my words
Bounce off the walls of my crypt

Yet, I am not alone here
Squeals, moos, bleats and squawks
Of pigs, cows, sheep and chickens
In crates, cement and wire prisons

The dark is alive with cries for help
Or whispering to me as I sleep
'Mother! Mother!' Cry the calves
Deprived of their mother's milk

We are one in the same pit
For I cannot leave my innocents
Even as my voice grows weak
Articulating their despair

I send urgent telegrams
Messages in bottles! Pony express!
Oh where is the help
That should have arrived yesterday?

I scour the horizon and check my mail
Aha! An answer at last!
'Dear Mother Nature,' it begins hopefully
'We regret to convey at this time

Our faintest praise, deepest apathy
And most sincere condescension
After careful thought and consideration
We as a corporate body must

Firmly adhere to our policy
Of raping and pillaging yours
We do however wish to thank you
For your interest in humanity'

STAR GAZING

'It's afternoon and close to four
And time to wander back indoors'
I heard her calling to the wind
Softly trailing off and then

'Come back to me!' I heard her say
'Do you never tire of play?
It's getting close to half past four
Or don't you love me anymore?'

She then let out a quiet sigh
Gazed into the darkening sky
Then slowly back down at the porch
As tears dropped softly on the boards

Every night almost the same
And then the next played out again
Always hoping, always waiting
Like a moon that's never waning

Some may say he is long gone
Or that there never was no one
And like a rain drop in the sun
Love should dry up and move on

While others say each little hope
Is like a flower reaching up
To touch a corresponding star
That waits and watches from afar

WHAT AM I?

They walk by and glance or not
Or wrinkle noses in disgust
Some may even try to claim
That I don't feel any pain

Or that I do not need to eat
Though I am so very weak
My only weapons taped up tight
Still I back up and try to fight

A monster with a hairy hand
Reaching out for me again
Until I am the very last
In a prison made of glass

I might have lived a hundred years
Had I not been trapped in here
The whole wide ocean is my home
And yet, I choose to live alone

THE GOLDEN GIRL

Once upon an evening sun
A golden little girl was born
She was bright as a golden spark
And as happy as a lark

'Til the day she slipped and fell
To the bottom of a well
Where she drowned in her own tears
When she was only 18 years

It's not so hard to live or die
Life's a smile then a cry
But to have to breathe this ether
When you know that you are neither

Love never fails and always saves
Even from a living grave
Or the nether, nether worlds
Of broken dreams of little girls

POISON IVY

Walking on ahead of you
Along a country avenue
So engrossed in my own thoughts
I notice not the violets

Sprouting purple on the edge
Of a thick and thorny hedge
Or a tangled brier patch
And roses peeking through the cracks

An old stone wall has creeper vines
And honeysuckle intertwined
While overhead the willow trees
Make an arch of hanging leaves

Falling softly all around
To make a carpet on the ground
Yet even here my enemy
Seeks me out and follows me

I hear his whisper in the breeze
And feel his gaze behind the trees
Like a poison ivy vine
Perfection preys upon my mind

THE NIGHTINGALE

I felt a little ashamed
Of my secret foolish love
So I began to look away
And felt a little splash of rain

From a lachrymose cloud
Shedding tears ever since
Pouring lyrics and melodies
Into creeks and rivers of despair

Streaming down the cheeks
Of a poor fallen angel
Directing vast choirs of voices
From high atop a mountain

Or trying to serenade me from
A branch outside of my window
Like a wounded nightingale
Bleeding from his throat

UP THE STAIRWELL

That one whom you loved the most
Why she is nothing but a ghost
Dead and gone so long ago
That I cannot remember how

Yet, the fable rightly said
A kiss may waken from the dead
So continue with my story
Up the stairs from purgatory

Up the stairwell from the hole
Climbing, climbing to my soul
Though each step may cause me pain
I cannot go down again

I've walked many kinds of roads
And traveled long enough to know
The only one that ever ends
Is the road back to my friend

CRIMINAL KIND

I have walked a path of nails
Yet, never stepped upon a snail
Never left a wounded bird
And always tried to keep my word

So why this cold and dismal cell
When I am not a criminal?
Always watching, always lying
So now I do it without trying

TURTLE SONG

Turtle, turtle in your shell
I can see you very well
All your armor cannot hide
The understanding heart inside

I only wanted to have fun
Not to cry nor hurt no one
I wouldn't have to scream or shout
If you did not shut me out

First it's yes and then it's no
I may be fast but you're too slow
So up and down this road we'll crawl
To play this game, win, lose or draw

TREE OF LIFE

Long ago and far away
I had a pretty place to play
No ma, no pa nor even teacher
Yet, I was the envy of every creature

Until the day I had to go
And leave my pretty shady grove
For a forest of dead trees
And not a soul to comfort me

Tree of Life! Tree of Life!
Cut my heart out with a knife
Long are nights and cold the days
When you cannot find your way

He took one road and I the other
When I lost my friend and lover
Paradise and all, except
I love him more than when I left

SUMMER DREAMS

A long, long time ago
I shut the door of my heart
After a long, long time
Of slowly drifting away

The air had turned cold
The leaves shriveled up and died
And I gradually forgot summer
Because that is the way life is

Or so everybody told me
Except for one person
To whom I had whispered
All of my hopes and dreams

Only he never believed me
Which wasn't too surprising
Since nobody else did either
And then he turned out to be

Only a summer dream himself
Or so I thought, until one day
A stranger stepped out from
The stark trees and dead leaves

Of a cold and barren wood
His face dripping with blood
From bashing it against a door
And I stared for a long, long time

In shocked concern and horror
Before it dawned on me
That a long, long time ago
I had been somebody's dream

MOUSE IN THE HOUSE

If I were a little mouse
I would crawl inside your house
And find a place under the stairs
So small you'd never find me there

Then I could watch you every day
Or as you sleep the night away
And eat whatever crumbs you left
At night after you went to bed

AWAY, AWAY

Away, away like a falling leaf
Caught in a summer breeze
Carried away in a gust of wind
Over the tops of trees

Away, away I went one day
As fast as my boat would carry
And left him standing at the dock
Looking at the ferry

THE SHADOW

Head lights flicker past and shine
Making patterns on the blinds
While two little moth in flight
Hover' round a kitchen light

Sometimes I think I see you there
Straight and solemn on your chair
Sitting up and looking down
Like Lucifer upon his throne

But it has been a hundred years
Since the day I saw you near
A hundred years or maybe more
As I lost count sometime ago

SOMEBODY, SOMEWHERE

As gentle as an ocean breeze
Somebody, somewhere is praying for me
The world spins me around and round
But just before I hit the ground

Sweet as grass after a rain
Somebody catches me again
The path is winding, narrow and steep
But somebody, somewhere is watching for me

DEATH SPELL

Roaming, roaming all alone
Getting further from my home
The wind is whispering my name
But I am tired and going lame

Somebody's knocking at my door
And I have seen that face before
When trumpets sound and angels sing
Rest you death where is thy sting?

Earth and water, fire and air
Are making for a strange affair
Yet, I see heaven from this hell
So see oh death, where is thy spell?

ICE PALACE

I live in a palace made of ice
Where everyone is very nice
So polite, sometimes they smile
As I sit crying all the while

They look at me as if to say
'What's the matter, anyway?'
And yet, how can I speak my mind
When they are so concerned and kind?

I am neither good nor smart
But I have loved with all my heart
Better to burn in the fires love
Than to die a sad, caged dove

COLOR OF THE CROW

I write a poem about my sorrow
So I won't have to cry tomorrow
Read it to myself and say
'That was past and this today

Put that chapter on the shelf'
Is what I like to tell myself
And who's to say it will not work?
Or that I would be the first

To catch a dream and wake again
To find I'm locked out in the rain
Like a fallen star from heaven
One flash of light and then, forever

So many years since I last saw
The one I traded my heart for
But I can no more love another
Than a crow can change his color

SUNRISE

Over the waves and into the west
Are all the colors that I love best
Painted on a vast sunset
As perfect as the day we met

Then dusk descends to darken all
Just like an ax about to fall
So calm, so quick and so serene
Sharp as the blade of a guillotine

Here it comes to have my head
And yet, I'm never really dead
My heart still beats and breaks in two
My mind still wanders back to you

I do so many things in folly
And then I always say 'I'm sorry'
But whether you believe or not
You are the sunrise of my heart

LIGHT AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

There once was a sad
And lonely young girl
Who decided to walk
To the edge of the world

She thought as she walked
With a long somber sigh
'I suppose if there's nothing
I'll jump off and die'

What use are the seasons
Spring, summer and fall?
Every day feels like winter
When you've no one at all'

But as she approached
The far edge of the world
A bright light shone down
On the poor lonely girl

She looked up and smiled
And the light smiled down
And they both cried at once
To be finally found

FOOLS RUSH IN

You always seem so good and bright
I thought you always must be right
But wise old words to sad old songs
Can't make things right if they are wrong

Foolish hearts with sleepy heads
Rush in where angels fear to tread
Blinded by the glaring light
And running off into the night

But if I'd stayed in my sad home
I would still be all alone
Better to fly and break your wing
Than never to hear an angel sing

WEEPING ANGEL

I would have vanished long ago
Had you not held my hand
And that would have been sad
If not overly surprising

For what is one more nobody
Never to be heard from again?
After one too many wrong turns
In such a sad, unfortunate world?

Where people eat and sleep
And rush around all day
Only to scurry home again
In time to watch the news

Oftentimes sadly wondering
Why the world is so unfortunate?
And the only angels they ever see
Are carved out of stone?

Their heads bent in sorrow
Over hands clasp in prayer
As they embrace cold, marble tombs
In their gently folded wings

Never daring to smile
Nor rise off their stone knees
And yet, everybody knows that
Angels aren't really made of stone

Nor do are they sadly weep
Over cold, marble tombs
Because all tombs are empty
So hardly worth weeping over

GOLDEN CHILD

Today I rise up with the dawn
All my troubles and trials gone
Like petals floating out to sea
Away from me, away from me

No more heavy, wooden crosses
No more gains and no more losses
Just a morning sweet and mild
As a sleepy, golden child

A PATCH OF GREEN

In a forest by a stream
There is a little patch of green
And in a little cottage there
Resides a girl with flaxen hair

When she is done with all her chores
She sits and rocks upon her porch
And gazes out beyond the green
While trying to remember him

Butterflies with rainbow wings
And honeybees that have no stings
Cannot distract her steady gaze
Nor put a smile on her face

WAIT FOR ME

How can I dance before I walk?
How can I sing before I talk?
Don't stray so far ahead of me
Wait for me, wait for me

Come and walk beside the sea
Wait for me and walk with me
Sit by me upon the shore
And be my love forever more

Heaven's just a thought away
We can be there in a day
In an hour, in a minute
Now you're here and I am in it

WHISPER

What you must understand
Is that the world spins backwards
And everyone in it is dead
Or not alive enough to matter

Save those who really are dead
Therefore past longing for
A breath of fresh air
A patch of clover to chew on

Or a simple act of kindness
As they are crushed beneath
The combined cruelty and apathy
Of both science and religion

They being far too preoccupied
Arguing over which is superior
As if it makes any difference
Or is anywhere near

As alive as my pet chickens
Such inquisitive little creatures
And yet, almost all of them
Are treated like living garbage

While the dead are adored
Because their cold lips are sealed
So their stories can be told
Without a whisper of protest

MOTHER'S MILK

The poor little male chick
Peeps in distress for his mother
Seconds before being ground up
Suffocated or simply discarded

Mother cow moos pathetically
For the calf stolen from her
Dead by now or worse yet
Chained inside of a dark crate

Her milk sold to a stranger
Never to know her great sacrifice
Nor wordless grief pouring out
Of one little bottle of milk

WADE INTO THE WATERS

Framed in pines and misty clouds
A ferry moves across the sound
Crossing waters deep and wide
Slowly to the other side

Far off on some distant shore
A fire breathing dragon roars
Valleys steep to mountains high
Echoing his lonely cry

Fire and ashes fill the air
Searching for his lover's lair
Until the dragon starts to weep
Because he cannot get to sleep

Dry your eyes and don't despair
For all in love and war is fair
And when you tire of breathing fire
Come and wade into the waters

COME QUIET

Rushing, rushing til it seems
Like I am running out of steam
Running up a flight of stairs
Or down again to get nowhere

I'd walk barefoot on broken glass
If quiet only came at last
Oxygen and warm sunshine
To every corner of my mind

What kind of awful love is this
That sinks into a black abyss?
So deep and dark I cannot see
The face that always buries me

Step into the morning air
Nobody shall disturb us there
We are alone as you can see
And all is quiet as can be

MIRROR, MIRROR

Is this image really mine
Or somebody I left behind?
Cloudy, gray pools from the past
Staring from a looking glass

Mirror, mirror on the wall
Lips may lie but eyes tell all
When I see another face
From another time and place

Is it a fancy or a fact?
That the one who's looking back
May be my own heart and soul
Looking through a glass window

Mirror, mirror on the wall
I am neither dark nor tall
And yet, sometimes I think I am
Because I feel your joy and pain

TIME

I must sing my silly song
Whether I am right or wrong
A little verse, a little rhyme
When I have my troubled time

Praise me or give me the blame
How can I but feel the same?
You are like an cask of wine
Getting better all the time

I space out good heaven knows
Next I'm blooming like arose
But I can always feel your mind
I've got you and I've got time

BURIED MY HEART

He never cried nor made a sound
When I put him in the ground
Placed his heart right next to mine
And dug a grave inside my mind

Why oh why, moon in the sky
Did I believe that love could die?
Be forgotten or lie down
To sleep inside the cold, cold ground

THIN BLACK VEIL

The deepest, darkest weeping
Fallen from the brightest day
Fretting even while he's sleeping
In a tower locked away

Praying while he's pacing
Up and down the empty halls
While the sharks lurk in the moat
That guard the castle walls

I was looking but not seeing
From behind a thin black veil
Because he is so different
From an indifferent world

Where I am but the buzzing
Of a fly upon a wall
A faint noise in the distance
Or noticed not at all

Like some minor irritation
Bothering a pleasant sleep
And yet I barely raise my voice
Before he starts to bleed

Often what we think and feel
Is all we see and hear
Never bothering to look
Behind the thin black veil

SAMARA'S LAST DAY

One gloomy and overcast day
For it was always gloomy
And overcast in those days
I was standing next to a well

Singing a little song to myself
When I heard a crunching
Of leaves directly behind me
And before I knew it

I was falling over the edge
Then floating in the dark
Gulping in water, gasping
And clawing the slippery rocks

I screamed for many a day
And into the lonely nights
Before I finally sank down into
A deep, dark and silent grief

Oddly, things went on as before
Except I always felt so cold
Cold, empty and alone
And everything felt far away

Voices seemed to echo
Off the stones around me
So now and again I attempted
To claw my way back up

For I knew deep in my heart
That I had never escaped
Only to feel a momentary breeze
Or ray of sunshine before

Sliding back down again
More forlorn than before
So I finally gave up
For perhaps everyone is secretly

Trapped inside of a well
But too polite to mention it
So I would talk to myself
Or cry to myself

Or write to myself
Or even sing to myself
As days turned into weeks
Months, years and decades

Only I never really believed
That anybody remembered me
Or the way I used to be
Before I fell into the well

So imagine my shock
To find I was never alone
And that you were listening
To my every single word

THE WAYWARD HEART

Once upon some time ago
There lived a silly wayward girl
Who followed a long trail of tears
That went for miles and lasted years

Many times she thought she had
Come upon the end at last
Just to find another dream
Another street without a name

Finally spent and all alone
She dragged her tired body home
Sat down in a little park
And started swinging until dark

Then as she began to cry
A stranger walked up from behind
Asked her if she felt alright
And could he walk her home tonight

She looked up and to her surprise
Saw the kind forgiving eyes
Of someone whom she used to know
When she was a wayward girl

SMOKE AND MIRRORS

Sometimes I feel like I am lost
Inside a house of mirrors and smoke
Gray mist swirling all around
A carnival of sights and sounds

So when I try to talk with you
It's like an arrow shot into
The middle of a cloudy night
Without a moon or stars to guide

Or someone with a blindfold on
Forced to walk a plank at dawn
Do I fall onto jagged rocks
Or be fed to hungry sharks?

You hide away and then complain
Of jealousy for all of them
All around and in between
Then you won't sit next to me

It's just so hard to realize
When you blow smoke into my eyes
When I want to see because
The more I see the more I love

THE LOST CHILDREN

They are the lost children
Of a dark father and dead mother
Wandering the earth like gypsies
Playing their little gypsy violins

Beating time on their tambourines
Staring up with pale, haunted faces
And eyes that resemble dark bruises
Just like their father has

He forbids them even to smile
Forcing them to sing only Lachrymose
Laments, elegies and dirges
Or the most mournful love songs

For he believes anything else might
Be disrespectful and forgetful
Of their poor, dead mother
Lying on the dining room table

On top of a snow white cloth
Surrounded by fresh cut flowers
Replaced every single day of the year
Even in the dead of winter

And yet, it is not always winter
For these dark little creatures?
The lost progeny of a dark father
Who keeps vigil day and night

For he refuses to believe she's dead
Surely, she only sleeps and dreams
And will soon open her eyes
Surprised and confused to be sure

Still, none the less awake for it
Things will sort out in time, dear
Still, I wonder at these strange children
As they haunt my dreams with the most

Unearthly of words and melodies
Singing only the most lachrymose
Laments, elegies and dirges
Or the most mournful love songs

Why do I find these dark ones
So much more comforting than
The bright smiles and white teeth
Of a world of lighthearted children?

CASTLE BY THE SEA

I had been following
A narrow trickle of a brook
For a thousand miles
Only to find myself suddenly

Staring out at a vast blue ocean
Stretching far as the eye can see
Knowing I will never have to
Wander the earth ever again

What a provincial suburb
The world always was
Next to your enormous castle
Which I have only begun to explore

GRAND CANYON

A long, long time ago
I set out on a long, long trip
Sometimes catching buses
Then transferring onto trains

Making right turns leading into
Bustling and interesting cities
Or quaint little towns
Sometimes missing connections

Or making wrong turns
Into dark alleys and dead ends
Always wondering when
Or where my destination lie

For surely I would recognize it
As it would recognize me
As I meditated by the ocean
Or high up in the mountains

In quiet ashrams and temples
All the while diligently searching
For the end of myself
So it is no small wonder that

By the time I arrived
I was utterly exhausted
As I stared down in awe
At a deep and yawning abyss

Only rather than feel elated
I wept tears of disappointment
At the empty nothingness
For I had seen it all

Or done it all before
While more depressing still
Everything which before had
Seemed so fresh and new

Exotic, mysterious and deep
Only bored me to tears
As I stood on the edge
Contemplating the long drop

When I noticed something
Or somebody waving frantically
From across the canyon
As if motioning for me over

Because it wasn't the end at all
It was only the beginning
Because the end of me
Is the beginning of you

HIGH AND LOW

I have dirt upon my knees
And red upon my nose and cheeks
From kneeling on the cold, hard ground
And staring all day at the sun

While gazing into outer space
I can always see your face
And when I touch a blade of grass
I can feel your cheek at last

You are so close and yet so far
In the stone and in the star
High and mighty, meek and low
Is the way back to my soul

SNOW WHITE

Lurking, keeping out of sight
In the shadows of the night
Watching sad and happy scenes
Like a dream within a dream

Blind and crippled by our grief
And happiness just out of reach
Like a wave come rolling in
Only to roll out again

Or orphans trying to keep warm
Huddled in a kitchen door
Imagining a fireside
On a snow white winter night

A smile is a clever guise
To cover cracks inside the ice
But to cry I had to find
A way to wake my soul again

Feel the heat upon my face
And melt away the ignorance
Like a coffin made of ice
Under the fire in your eyes

EVER AFTER

There once was an aging couple
Who lacked only one thing
But on the day he was born
His mother fell into a decline

She died soon afterwords
And her husband in his grief
Showered all of the tenderness
Of his aching and broken heart

Onto his perfect little son
Who would play in his room
Or any other part of the house
Or grounds he desired with his

Toys, trains and other gadgets
Ordering the servants about
Many of them employed
Only to cater to his whims

Because his grieving father
Could never bring himself
To correct or discipline his son
Until, one morning the old man

Was found dead in his bed
Having died in his sleep
Indeed, he had been sleeping
For a great many years

Neglecting practical affairs
And letting his estate fall to ruin
In favor of spoiling the son
Who was in turn, now helpless

To comprehend the calamity
Of being left penniless
And to add to the folly
The poor, unfortunate son

Was doomed to misunderstand
Everything he looked upon
Causing perfect strangers to
Stare in utter bewilderment

Point their fingers and laugh
Now and then the poor boy
Would even take a beating
For his habit of treating all

Like his own personal servants
Waiting to do his bidding
Until, the day finally came
When he could sink no lower

His tattered, filthy garments
Stuck to his lacerated flesh
And he felt weak with hunger
So he limped to a nearby stream

At least to wash himself
And launder his dirty clothing
Yet, upon seeing his reflection
He only burst into tears

For the very first time
He sobbed for his dead father
And mother he'd never known
When he heard a little gasp

Come from the opposite bank
'Oh!' A girl exclaimed excitedly
'You have only just arrived too!
Is that why you are crying?'

The surprised boy stared at her
And opened his mouth to answer
But his eyes began to tear up
And he fainted to the ground instead

When he awoke he saw the girl
Sitting quietly beside him
His wounds had been bathed
And bound with strips of petticoat

She shared some sandwiches
From her little picnic basket
And soup from her little thermos
And in a short while he felt better

Much better than he had felt
In such a very long while
So when she asked him to walk
To her home in the woods

To fetch some clean clothes
Naturally, he agreed to come
For his clothes were only rags
They walked half a mile or so

All the time holding hands
Only hers kept getting colder
And the closer to the house
The colder her hand became

'I don't know what else to do
Nor where else to go' she said
' So, I just stay here and do
Just as I've always done

'I finish my chores every day
Try not to dream too much
Nor bother anybody, although
They hardly seem to notice'

Just then, he felt almost as if
He was looking through the girl
Sure enough, nobody looked
Nor seemed to notice them at all

Because, this was her sad fate
So little note was taken of her
How could she ever be sure
Of who or where she was?

Perhaps, the boy was an angel
Who would kindly direct her
To wherever heaven might be
Or at least tell her what to do

Angels are often wounded
Or so she thought to herself
As they walked back to the stream
The girl's hand warmed up

The boy's brow cooled down
And from then on he tried to be
The angel she thought he was
And so they lived or died

Very happily ever after
For once you find your heaven
Such things no longer matter
Nor seem very important

THE WISHING WELL

One day I wished on a penny
Then dropped it in a well
Where it sank to the bottom
Turned green and was forgotten

Like thousands of other pennies
All sunk to the bottom
Turned green and forgotten
By thousands of other people

Who had long since forgotten
What they'd even wished for
Sometimes you feel as if
Nothing could possibly matter

It's never going to be enough
Or it's going to be too much
Or it's going to be wrong
Or it's going to be right

But nobody is going to care
So you let yourself sink
Not because you cannot swim
Because it's too much trouble

I forgot my wish anyway
'Til now I guess, because
I'd rather turn green with you
Than fly to the moon with anyone else

THE STEADFAST HEART

You must not think it isn't kind
To walk the gray halls of the blind
Explaining rivers, trees and falls
To eyes that only see stone walls

I know the sun exists somewhere
Because you told me it was there
It lurks behind the clouds and rain
Waiting to shine down again

I know the sea and sky are blue
Because you told me it was true
I know that goodness will prevail
Because you promised that it shall

How tedious it all must seem
To visit someone else's dream
Just to find a dreary prison
Full of monsters, ghosts and demons

You think she finally comprehends
Just to watch her drown again
Gulping in the salty sea
Pulled down by her own empathy

So I cannot help but wonder
Why you take on such a bother?
When all your hopes dry up and wither
And everyone says to forget her

Somehow, you always soldier on
Just like the steadfast heart you are
The lines upon your patient face
Carved deeper with each passing day

WHITE AS SNOW

Behind me lay a barren stretch of desert
Full of sand, scrub and thistle
Decaying plans, mistakes and regrets
Lay there like bloated, rotting corpses

Though weary of pressing forward
I could hardly bear to turn around
Or even stand still for long
Due to the horrible stench of it

In front of me lay a dark wood
Eerie, sinister and full of traps
Hovering above were ominous clouds
A thick layer of fog obscured the way

As I stood staring into the abyss
I made out shadowy outlines of trees
Outstretched branches poised to snag me
And bare twisted roots to trip me

As the sun set and temperatures fell
I thought to succumb to the frozen darkness
Until I saw my sister the moon
And resolved to keep walking

By morning the dark rain clouds
Had turned to a misty blue gray
And the first flakes of snow
Seemed to wash away my numbness

When the sun finally broke through
I could see my path clearly before me
Whilst the path behind me had vanished
Beneath a clean white blanket of snow

EVERYTHING AND NOTHING

There once lived an erudite young man
So gifted in every subject
Family, friends and neighbors sought him
And strangers traveled to consult him

Whether the subject be philosophy
Science, music or mathematics
He seemed to excel at everything
And possess great potential for the rest

As a child he was a precocious prodigy
Impressing teachers and peers alike
Without exciting envy or animosity
Being charming and engaging as well

'One day he shall travel the world
And achieve wondrous things in it'
They knowingly confided in each other
'And we can say we knew him first'

Just as the rose was set to bloom
The fickle hand of fate struck most cruelly
When the young man lost his ambition
And sank into a void of despondency

Now and again he would endeavor
To pull himself out of his apathy
Only to fall deeper into what seemed
Like a dark and gaping wound

A laceration in the fabric of his soul
His great gifts were powerless to mend
Perhaps because everything came so easily
Nothing had the means to satisfy

Until, in the midst of his darkest despair
The fickle hand of fate struck once again
To be sure, she was nothing like him
And yet, perhaps this was the beauty of it

Like a snow white sheet of paper
On which words had yet to be written
She was an enthusiastic student at first
And seemed to thrive under his tutelage

Listening attentively to his every word
And taking great interest in her studies
The challenge seemed to rally him as well
Out of his boredom and dissatisfaction

Until inexplicably and without cause
She herself grew bored and dissatisfied
'For all your knowing,' she declared one day
'You hardly bother to know me

Do never you wonder why I tolerate
Your incessant endeavors to mold me?'
The boy was taken aback at the words
But even more so at the tone

Which implied exasperation on her part
Over provoking ignorance on his part
Nonetheless, a strange and curious feeling
Compelled him to ask her why

As her answer tumbled out
In a confusing torrent of emotion
The painful hollowness in his chest
Began to fill with something indescribable

In that moment he forgot all about
The novel he had been writing
The music he was composing
And all the stories, equations and theories

As the universe and everything in it
Gently melted into a great nothingness
Like a snow white sheet of paper
On which words had yet to be written

Indeed, he seemed to forget everything
He had heretofore been so certain of
Until he realized to his great relief
That he really knew nothing at all

TRUE BELIEVER

If I had a hundred thousand years
And a hundred thousand rag mops
I could not swab up all the buckets
Of blood, sweat and tears

Shed by all the true believers
In their seeming limitless capacity
For self-inflicted pain and misery
And though their collective grievances

Cries and complaints are so deafening
As to drown out nearly everything else
The world is very large, after all
And filled with a myriad of creatures

Each and every one being unique
And interesting in their own way
And who though humble and mute
Would also have our attention

Instead, they are mostly ill used
Imprisoned, butchered, hunted, trapped
Skinned, exterminated, experimented on
Marginalized and disregarded

Like God, they require human voices
To speak upon their behalf
Though many would speak for God
How few would speak for them

Because the moment one does
They are marginalized and disregarded
One might as well be a bleating goat
Or a cow bellowing for her stolen calf

For all the world listens or cares
Still, the true believer is particularly harsh
Caring mostly for riddles and mysteries
To be studied and pondered over

In his incessant quest for happiness
But happiness is not hard to understand
Behold, the uncomplaining creatures
How content they are despite their troubles

They do not grieve over their past
Fret over poverty or future lack
Nor fight over lands or whatever else
They can greedily lay their hands upon

Though their needs be simple and few
Even these are usually denied
How many shall escape a violent death?
And who shall remember them in prayer?

Surely, only the silly and misguided
Could care for the bleeding pig
Or the pitiful, squeaking rat
Dying in its trap for the sin of existing?

Behold, the true believer
Eyes firmly fixed upon the heavens
Or busily deciphering his scripture
Whilst ignoring the tragedy of his own making