

A Poem

I could write a poem.
I could write a love poem.
I could write a dream poem,
An "I'm afraid" poem,
An "I'll save the day" poem.
I could write about politics and war,
Of literature and folklore.
I could sing praises in verse
Or, in aggression, curse.
I could write a freedom poem,
A "we've got to try" poem,
A lazy, daisy, hazy poem.
I could make words to shout abuses!
I could write words of my muses.
I could write an "I love my mom" poem,
An "I've seen the world" poem,
A poem of heartache,
A poem of strength,
A poem that turns stomachs
Or satisfies tastes.

I could write a poem that rhymes
And a poem that dances,
A poem that needs a turn,
A poem for the romances!

I could write a lame poem,
An "I've given up" poem.
I could write a fighter's poem,
An "I believe" poem!
An "I remember my bike" poem.
An "I know half myself" poem.
I could write a poem...

A "mountains are high and valleys are low" poem.
A "to travel is a passion" poem,
And "passion is an art" poem.
An "I believe in God" poem.

An "I've overcome" poem.

I could write a poem about grilled cheese.

I could write a poem for someone who could not find their own words.

I could write a poem.

Tragedy

Tragedy in each generation, there's always one.

Big like mushroom clouds

Or small like a virus.

Tragedy alters lives

And takes some

It challenges beliefs

And recreates them.

We suffer as groups, as a family loses a loved one.

Or as a country, when a figurehead is lost in a fight.

Flashes of gore and pain on the TV screens,

While Bobby fights child obesity

And Jilly's numbers come out backward.

War between nations, faiths and neighbors.

Abuse of children, strangers and brothers.

Rockets in the night sky...

Wishing Daddy would say goodbye.

Mom bares the brunt of family...

Mom cant voice her opinion or show her face publicly.

Brother fights the bullies in school...

Brother stands against the Taliban in Kabul.

Mercy the balance to grief,

Yet, more pain is how we seek relief.

AIDS killing millions.

Billions spent on gasoline.

Balance of good and evil, they say

Balance the checkbook at the end of the day.

Sister ran away from home

Brother runs to the tree house alone

Man to man; man made mouse.

Woman to woman; woman diminished and false.

Images to be seen, but not believed.
NGOs work for the 1st year
Children with missing limbs who've forgotten their fear.
Guns as toys
Cars made weapons
 \$5 per gallon
 \$5 a month in pay
 \$5 for dessert
 \$5 for a good lay!
 \$5 for mascara
 \$5 let my brother stay!

Dinner

Two are angry.
Two are hurt.
2 sets of DNA – and I match them both.
2 sets of eyes.
2 European mutts, who act in German and Irish ways.
2 hands, I have laying dead at my side.
2 feet urging flight.
2 lips too nervous to find words.
2 green eyes searching for a break along the horizon
2 bodies, seen yet unseen, to my right and left.
2 hearts that love me.
2 children they bore.
2 great minds and 2 giving souls.
2 sides to 1 story... the story I will not write.
The story I know too well.
2 shoulders to cry on
2 people to blame.
2 sides to one claim.

Both strong; neither meek.
Both stand quiet, as I speak.

Train Whistle

*The train whistled in the background of my childhood
Forts to be made
Mud in which to be played.
Fire trucks to race
Clouds in the sky setting pace.
Painting with our fingers
A habit that still lingers.
Times and patterns made without knowing
In our adulthood faintly showing.
The ferocity, the bravery
The things more than sensory.*

Sore throughout.

Our nation, its people
 Fundamentals, dreams
 Church and State
 Love and/or hate?
 Far-seeing blindness
 The fat kid is winning
 Food and shelter
 Balance and fight
 With political banter
Who's on the scene, First Responder?
 The child had dreams!
 But no time to ponder
 Slippery slopes
 Mud tracked into the house
 The girlfriend/boyfriend elopes – louder than a mouse.
Our beliefs make divisions stronger.
Spit and fling; muck-racking fiend.
Rats and spiders
 Fitted suits and liars
4,000 lost – how many to gain?
Me or you?
 Over beer and a boardgame.
Education and Justice for all (urban youth, too?)
Read me a bedtime story.
 Flowers fading
 Sometimes while blooming

Power ensnared,
In lust for power, fuming
Light a match – *light my fire!*
Blow it out, left with desire.
Countries differ
Cultures clash
Respect, a grey area,
And Clouds mix with smoke.
Judgment day for whom?
Come what may.
A, B, C, D, E, F, G...
When/where do we learn to be?
Bravery is a story
Fairytale are make-believe
Christ was never at Calvary.
Dictators and Tyrants
“Bad guys” and “criminals”
Drug Lords, Warlords – Lord Almighty! –
Switch off a light switch
Switch on the gun switch
Switch the channel
To the switching winner
Of a switching boundary
Of a switch of morals.
Switch this off.
Madness, no?
Madness? No.
How can so little can be so much.

Elasticity

And here I stand, like so many before me:
On the cliff
By the water
Looking beyond the horizon
Through tears

You know this feeling.
I wouldn't be writing so publicly if you did not.
You've stood,

Perhaps not on this cliff,
But on a cliff of your own making:
 The hot, hot shower
 Covering the sounds of your cries
 The temperature something tangible

 The long runs that carry us miles and miles before we feel pain
 Hurt we can control

The beach
The sand
Sitting at waves edge
Staring miles into the distance
Of wave and sunlight
 The bed that wrapped around you
 When your loved one would not
 The pillow that wiped your tears
 The blankets that warmed you

Yes, I write this because I know this universal feeling.
It hits us all so personally,
In our own way, right and need.
Though, we never ask for it. We never seek it.
It comes.

The hurting heart transcends language.
It is understood across boundaries and customs.
But, this feeling is not solely contained in the word "heartbreak."

There is rarely a break.
It is the loss of something that touched an untouchable part of who you are
inside.
It is the deep ache of foolishness;
Letting the wrong one in.
The silence echoes from the hollowness of your chest.

No, our hearts do not break.
They are not solid, as stone,
Or hard, as iron.

No, our hearts are soft,

Malleable, open.
We like to welcome, to nurture, to protect...
And for this reason, when things go array
And tears and pain seep into this holy place,
We sob.

We hurt in a crippling way.

We feel betrayed –
And in the worst way:
Betrayed by ourselves.

If our hearts were solid,
This pressure would break us.
Break off pieces,
Split and be lost forever.

Instead, the elasticity of a person's love
Allows us to push.
Allows our tears to escape.
And through the heat, the pressure, the pain,
Though, tears may scar and burn,
Our hearts will never break.
They will be changed,
But will maintain the same weight,
The same substance.

Eventually it will heal.
A different shape, perhaps.

These are the things you do
That you will not encourage in your children.
These are the thoughts you pray
They never have.
These are the weaknesses you will forget you had
Deny you had
Or blame on youth and stupidity.
These are not the choices of which you are proud.

These are not the decisions for which you will be praised.

These are the moments you learn that though your wall was high,
Someone else's was higher.

Or worse, you realize someone from within betrayed you.

That someone who said to work hard

To be honest

To push through

To not quit...

forgot to say when this advice does not apply.

They forgot to tell you to rest,

To make good decisions so that honesty comes naturally,

To push for graciousness, not for pride

And not to quit because you were made for a purpose,
not an award.

We knew what was expected of us

But there were times we didn't understand why.

We were blindsided by determination

(lacking a goal)

and strength

(lacking a heart)

And pride

(lacking love)

and honesty

(lacking substance).

These are the results of those obtuse instructions.

Oh, how our elders groaned, moaned,

"We did the best we could...we told them all we knew..."

but in these moments it is not what we were taught,

but rather, what we were never allowed to learn.

They protected us from insecurity,

But did not teach us faith.

They told us to be honest

But did not mention caliber of personhood.

They stressed triumph

never explained what it is to be victorious.

Our hearts were young and our lusts were strong.

These are the moments they were too ashamed to admit to us.
With us.
Their own faults, mishaps and weaknesses.
We are a generation of sheltered lives.
Reality colored to fit into our television screens.
Pains dulled by overindulgence.
The truth of existence was hidden from us, early on.
What are we here for?

Those childish questions of,
"What's that?"
"why? Why? WHY?"
Now resonate in our almost mature minds.
How did it get this off track?
Aren't we intelligent, capable people?
Why do we not see how much the rain and our tears have in common?

Instead, each generation, like the one before,
Make the same mistakes over and over again.
Each generation has its fall backs
And forgets to teach the next how to avoid the same.
How to mend a broken heart...
How to expand ones self image...
How to stretch intellect and wisdom...
How consideration and love coincide into perfection...

Pride will be my downfall.
Pride will take me down.
Pride will keep me from running back to you.

They never told me that reason was so painful.
They never explained the poverty in self denial.

I could write a poem.
An "I don't live here" poem,
An "I'm a person of the world" poem,
An "I sleep naked" poem,
An "I feel naked" poem,

An "I can't go back to him" poem,
A "freedom lives" poem.
I could write a poem of flowers, nature and pollen,
Shades of yellow, blue and red.

I can't breath, Poem.
I don't know right and wrong, Poem!
My heart is wasted, Poem.
There so many and much to love, Poem.
Free me from fate, Poem!
When it's all said and done, Poem,
I'll seize the day, Poem.

Oh, I could write a poem...
If only my life was a bit less complicated.

I just wrote a poem.