

Aw, shucks

**It's just
a little thing
I call a
poem.
Hope y'all agree**



*Poems by DanShaw.com
Volume 1*

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The Logic of Dreams, my second sunrise

Somewhere along a highway
Among palm trees
I had pulled over for the night
With a travel partner
Familiar but unidentifiable
In the morning light
We saw a monument
In a semi-classical style
To brave boys on one side
And on the right, a dove attacked a battle.
A visitor said, "I don't understand it."
I said, "Yes, I would prefer it to be more inclusive."
Wrapped only in a sheet,
I took off my shoes
As I spoke to a guide.
"Since you are a teacher," she said,
"Perhaps you can explain what happened to the atoll."
"The what?"
"Atoll," she said, and pointed off-shore,
"It used to be rented to the Thors."
I wondered if she meant Heyerdahl, the explorer.
"And it had a waterfall."
"Technically, it's called subsidence," I said.
And going through one exit
I hobbled across gravel
And found one shoe
Then another
And went through another exit
With a feeling of having been here before.
Awaking to my second sunrise
Maine's birds loudly and insistently chimed the hour.

The Creatrix Sings

The people here
Remember the time before creation
The Creatrix sits in perfect equipose
Self-fulfilled
Reveling in pure potential

When, running her hands through her radiant gray hair,
A single perfect strand
Exactly the length of her arm
Fell away into the void
Creating the first rift as it fell
As it fell
This one radiant Goddess-hair all space and time dividing
Through the first difference, above and below,
It split the void in two, then it split in two.
One side of the hair turned white, the other black.
The white hair grew longer and longer,
While the black hair became shorter and shorter.
The white hair is still today growing,
And the black still shrinking
As these two hairs now fall through space through rushing winds unknowable
The hair sings the same song the Creatrix sings
But in unimagined harmonies...

Remind me again

Artists
Remind me
Of the beauty
In a browned blade of grass
A muddy puddle
The colors of rusting metal
Peeling paint
Decrepit decaying
Brick buildings
Burnt out and boarded up windows
I forget
Poets remind me
What comes before A.

Home Sweet Moon

Chris Columbus had it easy
He didn't have to bring his own air with him
"Isabella, India can be found
The other way around
If I go left instead of right"
He was famously and fabulously wrong
Christopher we need you now.

Dr. Everyday Scales Mt. Complexman

I have come for relief from this pain
I can no longer stand
How long have you borne it
Were you born with it?
Vaguely to me it seems
There was a time before
And you did not come to me sooner because...
Then I was less weak
And pain felt slight and muted
And seemed to subside
If I did this or that or an aspirin
But pain did not stop there
As my days progressed pain the shadow grew
What followed then
I became numb
I blamed myself
My habits the things I did and did not do
And I postponed seeing you
And work and play
And wallet got in the way
And now I fear
There is no cure
But I am here
I may not do as you will say
But Doctor please give it a name
And I will pay
Fill in this form
And take this test
We will see how much you weigh
And I will do my best
Does it hurt when I do this
I can give you things we can't pronounce
If we could read Rx anyway
Our time is up
Please see the nurse
I will see you another day
And God will find a way.

waters in perpetuity

I see my life now
As a waterway
Partially and somewhat badly charted
Sometimes seemingly vast
Other times apparently constricted
Am I carried by the current
Do I struggle to make headway
Only rarely have I climbed
To headlands where the view reveals
I do not know how deep
I do not know where I am going
Often I have met fellow travelers
Often they have muddied my waters
Poisoned even
Tiny actions stir ripples into infinity
Rarely on occasion
The sirens have sung sweetly
Have lured me to a place of serenity
A few crucial mentors have cast in their pebbles
Their influence has calmed the waters in perpetuity
They will always be remembered
Though they may know it never
I am ever grateful
Their influence has given meaning
Given order and mapped a path
Through rapids
To pools of calm

knitting with old hands

My hands are old
My eyesight is poor
My eyes see differently from any other eyes.
I am knitting as I sit
And talk with friends.
Each stitch is a prayer
I am knitting an afghan for someone I love.
As I knit
I ask my friends to help choose the colors.
Each person is a thread in the afghan of my life
I am knitting with old hands
New afghans.
I am beginning to see
Others can learn
Can see anew
By looking through these, my old eyes

Two Truths and a Lie

The man who is least confident
Is apt to be the most boastful
He can least muster the courage to be humble
Since his ego is at constant risk of feeling humiliated
The one who feels in his small heart inferior
Is most likely to act superior
Had Napoleon grown taller
He might have felt less need to conquer
And make proclamations and erect monuments.
The smaller a man's ego, the bigger his chateau
The more elaborate and shiny his frippery.
The insecure woman can never wear enough jewelry
Some of the holiest men and women walk naked.

Western Man does not value subtlety
His brash loyalties are obvious
Just look to the flagpoles
The "Golden Arches" are displayed on a pole
The same height as the national colors
The white man treats culture the same as he treats white milk
The milk of thousands of cows is blended together,
Homogenized, obviously we value uniformity
How terribly fortunate we are
For some places have escaped the Procrustean bed of the culture police
Through the French countryside
Some villages still hold the power to charm
Small cottages arranged around a church-spire
At all points the villagers know where they stand
And are reminded to what they aspire.

In the pastoral midwest U.S.,
Life depends on irrigation, and the water-tower rises above all.
In an industrial town, the smokestacks dominate the skyline;
In an age of democracy, or plutocracy,
All look up to the capital dome

And in this modern dark age,
When politicians are bought and sold,
Nothing rises higher than the banks and trading centers.
Ancient man revered the mountain tops
Apparently without the need to memorialize themselves
The altar stones they placed were unhewn
No less did they revere the low points
What could be more impotent than the rock of the Father
Without the cave of the Mother?
In this age of unbridled power
Electric lines and cooling towers blot the sky

The Tour d'Eiffel is just a trifle
Sites historic and pre-historic
Could not resist the coffin nails of free speech, the cell-phone towers
What flag do you need to raise above the tree-tops?

Captain Bliss

Every 13,000 years the sun moves through the 12 constellations
every 52,000 years the sun reaches a 'station'
relative to earth's position.
Even that is brief consideration.
so far earth's lifespan
is an even more staggering 5 billion.

Would you expect the sun to rise over Stonehenge in mid-June
How would people neolithic
learn the trick?
Time and the elements
Could not erode their monuments

If I were named Demosthenes
Would the schoolboys bully and tease?
Would I find my sanctuary in the dusty scrolls of the libraries?
If I could roam the tomes so rare
At the Alexandrian libraire
Would I observe the shadow of a stick
Or would a pyramid or an obelisk do the trick?

Elation -- I am awed by the magnificence of creation
the divine architect deserves more respect
If the conquistadors hadn't made such wrecks
and left a few more Codex's
we mighta had a Renaissance

If I can help preserve something,
I can help learn something

Somewhere in a hole
lies a stone
a "new rosetta stone"
it's lying face down, naturally
and a geologist will turn it over eventually.

In a cave that used to be dark, dry and cold
the warm, wet breath of the tourists
peels paint three millenia old
that is, what hasn't been carried away and sold.

Somewhere in a tomb
thousands have been spent on restoration
tourists are forbidden
miles away we affect the water table
now salt crystals
destroy the murals

One day I will scuba dive
It will be the thrill of my life
Unless I learn some basic facts
I'll have few stories to bring back

Somewhere on the ocean floor
There's some places I've yet to explore
exotic fish glow eerie hues
and where tectonic plates are spreading
microbes are happily breeding there too
we'll have to redesign our zoo.

The Hawaiian's say, "Beware of the Goddess Pélé
don't take any lava away"
There are beaches where the sand is black
my brother Larry put some in his shoes to take back
he seemed to be alright.
I never wondered why most beaches are white.
(Quartzite is hard, and light.)

You know, it always seems to me
this valley is as beautiful as Yosemite
I wonder how it compares vis-a-vis
the geology?

O California,
all the geologic gems that adorn ya'
with riches you are flush and fine
one need only recall the gold rush of forty-nine.
Don't drain Mono Lake away
to pipe the water to L.A.

If we listen to all the alarmists
We'll need a quick trip to the pharmacist's
ecoterrorists are alarming
global warming! the ice caps are melting
the ozone is thinning! killer bees swarming
DNA harming! Bovine growth farming
pesticide resistant hay
I could go on rhyming this way.
It's not too late to save the day

Captain Bliss is ignorance personified
under a black flag setting sail against the tide
Says he, "I'll be your guide"
and "How d'ye like my sharp cutlass?"
Like it's "How do you do?"
it was encrusted with diamonds that wouldn't scratch glass
So saying he stuck the wrong end of the telescope in his eye
and sailed away from his shoe.

"I'm glad you asked me about Stonehenge," (You didn't)
Merlin must have brought them, or
They were of Cyclopean construction
Water on Mars? Let's talk about architecture.
if the magnetic pole shifts have the anti-gravity lift craft ready
and the photon belt shift -- did I say that already?

Sort the true from the new age
Let your heart be your gauge
Don't let your IQ equal your age.
I'm glad I read every page.

Without geology there'd be no petroleum,
no granite for the mausoleum
what would the good be of a degree in geography
if I could not recognize porphyry?
and when it comes to erosion I'm your man
I'm a big alluvial fan

Who can not be moved to see
a girl living in a tree?

The jade professor's eye doth say,
"This is the only paper that rhymes this way
Meter may not be his strength,
It is a tedious three page length,
but still I think I'll give an A"

Moss from the Skull of the Hanged Man

Two tones I had known since my youth
Or rather, thought I had known and grown accustomed to --
In a Beethoven sonata
Reformed, fell open,
Unhinged before a flood tide
I sank down through the liquid earth
Gratefully abducted from the symphony hall,
Immediately forgotten and lost
If not for the two angel-tones
Sheltering my frailty
Demons would have instantly crazed me.
By some gift I did not deserve,
Through the wing-feathers I glimpsed
The torments of the inferno.
Each murmur burnt mortal ears perpetually,
Poor unjust souls each scorched in their proportion
Howling noiselessly, mutely,
Futilely writhing to turn against the source of their dismal reward.
Though tears of compassion pour forth,
My eyes would not shut against this vision.
With my guardians beside,
We careened downward still further
To a blazing apex
My mind told me would dash my fragile carcass.
I felt the spike tear into my ribs,
But not blood but red rose perfume poured forth
And we safely trespassed into the opposite realm.
Flaming color tones dazzling on the surface
Of a symphonic sea
Swept an adamantine shore.
Each wave, each ripple resounded
With a harmony overwhelming --
I think then I fainted!
I missed a moment of ecstasy!
Which now I would gladly trade
For my impoverished daily life.
Waking in the gentle support of my two chaperones
The sun brighter than the sun
Melted my icy heart
Nothing was left of the paltry ego
I had indulged since birth.
We plunged into the wave crests
Sparkling loud hallelujahs.
The submarine pressure absolved me.
Sunlight penetrated to the rainbow sea bottom
and my whole being shone transparent to the divine brilliance.
The winged journey had erased memory and foresight,

But at the moment I was gripped by the dread
That my pilgrimage would cease,
the winged musicians dissolved into a blare of clatter
and my vision -- my audition -- ended,
and my body shuddered.
Beethoven's sonata continued,
The symphony hall seemed unaffected.
The musicians played on as if they had not noticed
the two pearly notes that had transported me,
and I collapsed into a reverie
Oddly tinged with remorse.

Adversity

My childhood was spent in luxury
I never knew adversity
Nothing seemed to challenge me
I was as bored as I could be.

Three years at the university
Very nearly suffocated me
I needed more than A, B, C
What I needed was to feel free.

By the idea of freedom I became obsessed
By my possessions I felt possessed
It was such a relief that day
When all I owned I sold, or gave away.

For miles on foot I journeyed through the forest
With worn out shoes and blistered feet
I marched all day in searing heat
Until, exhausted, I stopped to rest.

But then the night chilled to the bone
And sleepless I waited for the day's hot sun
To ignite wet moss, I wasted matches
Cursed when the last of my food dropped in the ashes.

On humid nights I lay sleepless, sweating
Wishing for mosquito netting
My mouth so dry I could not spit
I drank my fill from a muddy pit.

Make your camp while it's still light
Or you may spend a sleepless night.
You can't pitch a tent in shifting sand
And remember to look out for ants!

Trails gave way to unpaved street
My kingdom for a place to eat!
I want a hot meal at any cost
I asked directions, and still got lost.

Waited for a ride all night in the rain
This bus must be wrong
It's circling town again
Took a cab and got short-changed.

At long last I reached the sea
The salty air was medicine to me
I boarded ship, the crew set sail

We were beset by a fearsome gale
Tempest-tossed my faced turned pale.

When I reached that foreign shore
I stared, stunned at what lay before
An endless expanse of glassy sand
No way across but camel caravan.

I braved the heat, I suffered cold
And other trials I haven't told
I would do it all again, my dear,
Because, you see, it brought me here.

Half a chance

Be my romance
Give me half a chance
Teach me how to dance
I'd rather touch your heart
Than touch your hand.

They say the age of romance is past
The "M" word just won't last
They say it's too much to ask
So don't ask.
That's what they say.

I just want to sit by the fire
With my bride by my side by the fire
That's about all I require
By the fireside with bride I'd retire
By firelight my bride I'll admire

From July to June
I'll pay obeisance to the moon
This humble love song I will croon
As we gaze upon the moon.

I don't care how long
I have to sing this courtship song
I could go on and on and on
I feel I've known you all along

Underneath the sunny sky
As the lovers wander by
They may hear me sigh
As I gaze into your eye

As we float along the stream
I feel as in a dream
That's exactly how it seemed
Da da de de de de dee

In the summer when it's hot
We will travel quite a lot
Off to some secluded spot
Where the world is forgot

I will take you on a cruise
We'll go anywhere you choose
We'll kick off our shoes
And take a snoozy-snooze

I'll cook all the food
It might not be so good
I'll chop all the wood
I won't look under the hood.

Your job is to sing to me
And to let me tell you what you mean to me
You're sea to shining sea to me
America the Free to me.

It's easy to see us ten years hence
White horses behind a sturdy fence
With a modicum of some horse sense
You'd see right through all my nonsense

You should have seen me ten years ago
I thought I was such a Romeo
I would wander to and fro
I had no idea where to go

I can hear you asking, "So?"
Let me say before I go
There's one thing I've come to know
To live is to grow.

Strong Suit

An astute young tutor from Tudor
Took pursuit of the good king's daughter
The kind king never told 'er what she ought'er
She could marry whoever would suit her

The more the suitor's pursuit
The more she refused
The more she refused
The more he'd pursue
Till at last her refusal
He couldn't refute

Dakini

Bearing garlands
among the sea weed and drift wood
you, goddess, step lightly
no fog could veil your brilliance

If I had not seen you
if I had only seen the imprint of your foot in the sand
before the wave erased it
I might have known so much

From the distance I could not at first see your face
it was the way you stood still
it was the bend of the arm

In the next moment I knew that somehow you
were more at the beach than I was
suddenly I felt salt in my nose
and sand beneath my feet
the waves crash-echoed at my ears

This moment pivots so many years
I am drawn nearer and
I force myself to approach
you now ride a tiger

Bearing gifts in my left hand
among sea weed and drift wood
I step lightly
No beast could dissuade me

If I had not seen your face
If I had only heard your voice --

Goddess, I can only adore and worship you
from your body the earth, the seas poured forth
allow me to follow you
I will open in myself a vast crater
to catch the droplets
you shake from your hair
and I will be filled.

Invite me to your ceremony
let me be your consort, your devotee
I will praise thee
let us approach imperceptibly

Let us touch orange sparks
we will rest on the waters of bliss
rivers of light bathe the marrow
closure opens; the giver receives; the solid flows
in an instantaneous eternity, enlightenment.

Cool light of moon

When I let my fantasy come true
You came to me
Glowing
I bow down to kiss your feet
Poor Goddess, you just want to be an ordinary girl
I know you imagined me, too
More than you know I adore you
More feminine than the moon
Dancing across the stars
Night has become my day
In you the whole universe I love
Glow ecstasy dance universe
Goddess moon Venus beyond
Every ray of sun cherishes you
Love-drunk lovers, and yet the cup is still full
The body loves the hot rays of the sun
And the eye loves the cool light of moon
Humble hopes small daily gifts
Of halting words like these
And deeds
Bring us closer
To Earth and Heaven



Mosaic Moe

painted hubcaps
plastic grapes
pink flamingoes
whirlygigs

Moe let his lawn become overgrown with weeds
It started with a novelty mailbox
Moses built the manger scene all out of bottle caps
Red white and blue stripes and targets
by August there were more than 100 wooden cows
-- then he painted the whole house white with black spots
even the satellite dish
His neighbors built fences

He covered his car with beer labels
When he got tired of washing his silverware,
He'd throw 'em out the window into the pond.

When the muffler shop closed down.
He put the 20-foot-tall muffler man and woman
Next to the hubcab totem poles.
It looked like a mini golf course

When the planning commission got involved
He built a 10-foot sign that said,
"Catholic Bastards run city hall"
and a few other inflammatory remarks,
with upside-down 7's
When he ran out of L's.



He just wore down the city planners
And the blackberries grew over the sign.

Some folks drove the long way around to avoid it
Some folks came miles out of their way to see it.

He'd ride through the streets on his bike at two miles an hour
Specially equipped with a self-adjusting system of cables and training wheels
Covered with reflectors... and baskets
And he'd stop to pickup any scrap, and inspect it, and take it back home
For art supplies.

Moe believed in the right to free association
When Princess Di died
He built a 3-ton perfume bottle
Covered in Happy Meals toys

When the garage was full of individually labeled, paper maché figures
from American history
And his wife wouldn't let them into the house
He divorced her

The miniature colonial village
Was almost completely covered in golf balls
When his lumbago started acting up

If you brought him something he liked,
He'd say, "Betty Ford thanks you,"
Or whatever figure he was working on.

Some neighbors brought buckets of paint
"The more paint ya put on the stronger it is," explained Moe.
If he didn't like what you brought
He could lecture on and on
About people who don't understand art,
Like those Catholic Bastards at City Hall.
I guess he was kind of lonely.

On Independence Day
He had some extra red white and blue paint
So he painted stripes on the Virgin and three wise men
On Halloween they were orange and black

After Moe was gone
Some people said,
"Turn it into a museum."
But it's condos now

If you go down to the railroad tracks
You can see two of Moe's creatures
Still standing in the tall weeds
Bigger than the world's largest groundhog.
Standing 12 feet high and made of more than four tons of adobe
and 110,000 toothbrushes and lighters,
Popeye and Nelson Mandela armwrestling.

Moe's been gone seven years
And I finally threw out my collection of old toothbrushes I was saving for him

But I still go down to the railroad tracks,
And sometimes I'll pick up a rusted bit of scrap,
And bring it home.

wind bending tall grass

A heart-shaped stone
Too big to carry home.
No path through these woods
Just the wind bending tall grass
Until the rabbits ran through
Winding over sumptuous ridges
Moonlight throws shifting shadows
Deer hooves tread delicately
Owl rests watchfully.

First rays of daylight
Catch on dewy bristles
Night creatures retreat to their dens.

Let rodents blaze your trail
They know how to run with the earth
Follow no trails
Leave no trace
Blaze your own trails.

Any rock lays unremarkable
Until gloriously appreciated.
Paths paved with small kind deeds
.....and cookie crumbs
Need not lead anywhere in particular
As long as the fog breaks
And the sun breaks through.
Pompador Bluff stands as an island proud
.....in a valley of mist.

Two paths came together in a wood.

Blank

Eight and a half by eleven
Is too flat and small
Words too thin and overused
Numberless verbs clamor for attention
Too many words clog the shelves and air
My eyes and ears are full numb

Before truth was certain
It shouted itself hoarse
Now by standing still and silent
Virtue stands out above the seething stew

Gratitude gave up
Trying to find words sufficient, fittingly eloquent, elegant

The poet lives not in handshakes and howdy's
But the poet lives in an inner oasis
Invisible from the outer desert
A distant oasis.
I rhymed a map
The names were changed because
I hope you'll find your own

The ceaseless crash of wave upon wave
Upon the expansive shore
Pauses for a moment...
...

Elastic stretched, strains to return
To that resting place
Stretched too far or too long
I feel brittle and fear I'll snap apart

I searched a dictionary in vain
For a word that was worth the ink
No tree was so rude or base
That I could ennoble it with a pen

Searching the outer world
I found no phrase I wished I had written
I found no item to inspire my tongue

Searching my heart
I found understanding hungry
To be heard without speech and
The mute voice of my soul

The soul pronounces a silent mantra tirelessly

Even a thought or feeling
Which weighs less than the lightest word
Cumulates, accretes like a luminescent pearl
No, like a wall of pearls, a reef
Harboring a private bay
Breaking the surf to calming ripples

The surf, the surf of manic sound
The blindness from clash of neon
Painters desperate for recognition
Wasting pigment on a canvas
Which was so much more festive white
If even one was brave enough not to paint.

Vintage

This vine once stood in the sun-soaked soil
In Mediterannea's salty air and rocky hill
Bearing sweet fruit to be crushed and stashed
Coolly, in cellars cut deep and dark
Each year's fermented harvest unique
Stored for celebrations of future years.
When families gathered together their belongings
They brought with them cuttings
Took root in new soil new air new hill
Harvested crushed fermented new grapes
Harvests celebrated after years of tending
Fruition hard wrought from the indiscernible
Victory of growth in elements harsh, hot; and cold
Hard, rocky unrelenting, inhospitable
Grew green, vines shading, cooling
Rains permeated the earth, roots grew down
Drew nutrients from mineral moisture
Grapes grew and hung in bunches
Gathered by thousands, gathered by thousands
Crushed, blended, fermented
Uncorked and poured into bulbous glass
Red celebration tipping
To meet your red lips intoxicating.

***Some things take so long to ripen,
or
Try some of this***

For best results,
Use a pencil as sharp as a Ginsu knife

Plan your meal around
The choicest local words available at the market
Select an assortment of verbiage
With varying colors and textures

Let the Good Housekeeping Cookbook be your Thoreau
Linger over the rhythm of the recipes
Season your kitchen like Walden

Chop your ingredients into distinctive shapes
Warm over a steady flame with close attention
Garnish with some hint of surprising spice
Some cooling aromatic herbs

Arrange the settings on tablecloth
As an artist does on his tableau
Serve each course at leisure
Enjoy each in its proper sequence
Take care to refill the glass before it empties.

Play a score that will soothe
Two candles will be light enough.

Compose each plate as carefully
As a songwriter each verse

When the grapes have been plucked
The stem has served its purpose

The space between courses
Is as important to the poem
As is the emptiness of a stomach
To a healthy appetite.

Save some room
For the sweet punchline.

Can I pour you some dark import?
Can you taste the cinnamon?

Mmm, I love it when people appreciate my cooking.
It was made with love.

There are some words left over
So I'll just wrap them up
And put them in the fridge for tomorrow
I can't tell you the recipe exactly
It comes out different every time

A good honest home-made poem
Is so nourishing and fulfilling
You just feel like laying down after.
Spoon me.