

## **Journey by the Heart**

Hope the horizon is yet to come-  
And with it a new life- just beyond the sun-  
Fears will still exist- past it will be-  
For fear is death- those draining thoughts I see-  
My eyes swell wide- my hands do shake-  
Never been so far under- trace like the state-  
Few steps taken to the fall- river near by-  
Journey set- destination undecided set aside-  
Approach the first passage- the choices to make-  
Frost like my thought- can the eyes see the take-  
Risk my heart- live on the edge of a pulse beat-  
Regret not- choice I thank to live out this river street-

## **The Beauty Rocks Beneath**

With all the treasures keep  
A right for wrongs such as it goes,  
Traversed and well versed in my sleep  
A raindrops tumble along with woes.  
Shall success wake upon my shore  
Always: to do what is on my mind,  
Stand and beware (forgiving) more  
No sake in these whites sands I am so blind.

## **A Diner on 101 (circa 1957)**

Door swung back - there we met  
Lifting my brown eyes touches a passage will set.  
Asking where to sit never seem so strange,  
Deeper questions and thoughts have all ready taken place.

“So how are you?” - As good a place as any  
“Long day so far” - Won’t you take me away  
“Same here can be said” - I’m lonely too

That shore side trinket shop, where the oceans lap on  
My senses trusted strong, how long can we go on  
Fascination will last; emerald eyes talk loud,  
Contemplation two scores past - raising daughters so proud.

“Want a coke float?” - taste sweeter I do  
“ Yes, an a yearling apple” - taste the original sin me?  
“Staying awhile in town?” - my room’s on the ocean  
“Sales meeting at two tomorrow” - night God notion  
“What may I ask?” - are you as good as I think

“Silicon driven human processors” - best of the best my sweet  
“I’ll be back” - too obvious, back off  
“(I’ll wait)” - forever and ever, none to clever I am at this

Holding hands, our first kind comes to life,  
Pray I do often; the thoughts beat loud along with life.  
Pleasure succeeds me in our stage as this play rolls  
Let down never drown away our love rings for whom that tolls;  
Wind wanes through this enclosure set back from our first shore,  
A house red raked with trees, no thoughts of ever, nevermore.

Say I do to you “where do you want to be from now?”

“Hope is with a father prepare and none scare and you?”

“A woman true with virtue none can compare with I dare-  
A thoughtful soul with no measure and always treasure-  
Desire that fires those thoughts which take me far  
beyond any pond, star or dream.

Faith I trust, hope I believe, and love I share - this to only mention  
as no one dare I say you quite fits.”

“Oh, rush hush; no, hush I don’t think you know yet?  
Can you get all that in such quick haste?”

“ Yes, yes I confess rarely would dare to share  
this thought, only I am rushing; blushing as you do  
Don’t get me wrong dear, I’ve lived year after year  
searching and seeing not. But being here before makes it  
all too well to see.”

“I felt it too. So where do we go from here?”

“ Oh, slow I say- much more will happen, fear not.  
Worldly thoughts shatter, don’t matter, it is you, I hope to be.  
Golden circle glisten below a shattering star you’ll have.  
Over and over I prove my worth hope I’ll never fail-  
why I tell the tale.  
Bounded and grounded to a common search,  
Take this to be true.”

“How’s tonight for you to start your part? I pose this  
to confirm this vision you have.  
Leaving as you might will see how goes this night.”

“I’ll pick you up - true to my word”  
“I’m finished at 7- I love you”

## Maji

Bow headed straight into the lighthouse rock heaven,  
Clinging (Steering) none so swift, skies movement drawn out -  
the final path.

True to nature (that holy be creature, such as she is) willowy billowing  
In such perverse peace-while the broken ship afloat shudders too far from shore.  
“Captain, lance the final plank so she sounds peacefully-  
for the days of greatness lay beyond the creatures deep.”  
Those final swimmers do implore Maji go down tonight...  
Bending shaking and waking my princess has such grace  
even in final ruin such a glorious hope can be seen.  
Maji will bring into the deep a presence like none before,  
and scores beyond.

I pray I go in such good stead.

The wish Maji once passed was strong trust and unbounded determination  
no other sailed with such fury and fervor-like a bullet.  
What she is- (as if it never happened) came out in every passage  
from shallow port to Mariana sea- yielding power only a flagship  
commands.  
Never could I look at another bridge and get the same.

Even in the downing of the stern I feel with her-  
Closer and closer (like i still should be) a lone captain.  
Why did you take the woman who made me whole-  
Thunder skies and whirling wind without remorse?  
And blushing seas of red-killers all and no truth seen.  
A thousand upon thousand will have passed above the ocean floor  
above Maji -  
none of them will care but me.  
Oh for my first heaven to be back-God see her to me?  
Worn have I of the torments of seas and Maji bring me to your rest  
and such will I feel sure rest-tonight.

## Don't Tinker Forever with Chance

Well, I write, but am I,  
Truly spun this done things.

Rolling wholly this solemn atoll  
As one on the rogue, off in a destroy, I play my part...

Romance less, I've chanced less  
Floating around a salty cold sea,  
Play I may, these blubbery pieces  
Add to my terror-filled rep - upon the shores I wreck.

Snatching isn't just a solemn thing I have,  
Countless and boundless is my own part.  
All the creatures- fear me but then I do,  
Fade with a new addition.

Understands-willed, filled and never filled -no!  
To this, I make out this decent surprise  
Success! But the taste conforms weird.  
Play on under and leave the addition alone!

Tyrant! I rule the seas -but judge fair.  
Dominion is mine here- regret your presence.  
Ruin lay upon many a bay I say,  
Take- never understands!

Fight! I do but no avail,  
Mine is ancient art of tact.  
Additional additions make it struggle lost,  
Blanking out-stunned for fun- those never no impact.

So soon becomes the tilting fate  
Die! Die! All of me dies, cries, no lies!  
Succumb to the infidels; ring the harbor bells.  
Dragged and bagged - I give up my lone defeat.

Revenge! Seas shake with it, Longer  
be without my primary presence, forsake  
my arbitrary and solitary rule.  
I'll have it no less.

Addition lacks my years and it fears,  
the control which it shall never hack.  
Use your will - you insidious creature  
Time is your enemy, not mine.

A higher brow figure might surmise the prize,  
not I. No whispers will break my saw-like grin  
Test additions! Best you can!  
Senseless faking, witness your making, done.

"Tis none too late! Let me live again!  
Belief in only one ever made sense.  
My solemn journey- wondrous  
I took the kingly state and abated never!

Don't Tinker Forever with Chance...

## **On Park Avenue**

Another blustery night on Park Avenue  
How many lies told slipped my mind today?  
My assistant, a leggy looker from the finest MBA  
Takes a moment, calculating like an ROI, to say:  
"I'll give you more than you ever dreamed."  
She will. But at what price?

We crawl out of a motor home of a black limo  
Wobbly after half a dozen Martinis  
The white gloved entry man smiles routinely,  
"A good even to you, sir."  
Knowing what I expect, as all execs  
Do.

Pleasure derived from business  
As countless backs of small people hurt  
From the appetizer plate at the grand opening  
Of a glass behemoth, Wall Street reports, winningly.  
Fawning, eager, young ladies, "Oh, that's you!  
How important you are! God must have you on his cell listing!"

We meander through the ornate lobby  
The elevator greeter has more cheesy lines  
Than Velveeta – I wonder how Kraft did overnight?  
My Wharton lady, of this evening, perfect and pert,  
As the day I hired her.

"Mr. Johnson, how are you this windy evening?"  
I am as all 8-figure people:  
Mired in self-assured extravagance and loneliness,  
A quiet, professional snobbery hiding  
Utter disdain for my choices. Yet I do it.

Thus I say, "couldn't be better."  
The liquored lolita loquaciously laughs –  
Slurring out a dozen adjectives that  
Don't describe me.

In the high digs of the 10 mil Trump condo,  
the door is flung open,  
As now we are too giddy for ourselves.  
She snaps a heel, 'oh well', I stumble her  
Along to the satin sheets replete  
with all the conquest of a decade  
On top – yet the women always are –  
On top.  
My vows, broken, once again.  
Second wife lives in the Hamptons.  
I send her payments via an accountant.  
The kids go aimlessly to boarding schools.  
That ROI turned south in a market flash.

After Jill falls down the hill,  
Of a drunken dream and giddy moans  
I stare out on the massive sameness  
Concrete below, steel girders and glass above  
And the bright lights of the never contented.  
The same old routine: trite night with a smart snake,  
That will fake all the woe of that stand.

I'll settle because its cheaper  
Till someday comes to pass by  
Like those subway cars taking a destination  
with countless lost people, I'll never meet,  
Never winning – yet, I was.

I am 45. Have 15 good years at the top, at least.  
I'll be measured in tenths of a stock price, splits and revenues  
And quarterly earnings report, as either savior  
Or a goat. Makes no difference –  
A gold parachute awaits;  
To the next CEO job I'll go.

Passing the baton  
And the race, never ends,  
For the rogue mogul.

As the crack of day encroaches  
My hangover helper kicks in,

Served by my senorita bonita from green card country,  
The sexy MBA stirs slightly,  
Her locks all frazzled,  
But lovely, nonetheless.

The laptop is on *Market Morning*,  
Across the other side of the world  
Another exec sleeps or does the same,  
As I did.  
My NY Times is opened, Journal is near at hand –  
All likely to mean:  
Just another day, has come.

## **Email Letter Sent to Columnist (Regarding Rapper Tupac Shakur's entry into the library and curriculum of students)**

Dear Ms. Malkin,

I read your recent column on Tupac Shakur's recent addition to the reading lists of children. Though I applaud your efforts to improve education by teaching from poetic musings of a Shelley, Frost, Cummings, Ginsberg, Rich or Angelou, I do not laude your efforts in over-criticizing a dead man.

Yes, Tupac was a flawed person. At the age of 23 or 24, I doubt all he said or did came off to you (that obviously despises him for more than his rapping or gangsta ties) as worthy of any note. He was young, from a violent inner city environment, made terrible associations, and with brutal finality, met a gangsta's death. Barely at all in anyone's memory, unless you mention him or see him in a VH1 special of 'Behind the Music'. Yet, he lived – probably under more fear and apprehension than you – and tried to express himself the best way a young black man can, I suppose.

And even if his trite drivel is included in a some scholastic environment, like the comic books you deplore or romance novels you mock, a person's thoughts are their own. Sure, the education system needs some real improvement. Do I think Tupac's work rivals Shakespeare? No, and I guarantee you that Tupac would never compare himself to anyone of that magnitude. Quote, borrow and reinterpret, but doubtful to compare.

I do not defend Tupac because I like him. I never bought an album of his. Never aspire to the "thug life" he led or fell into. About the only thing I ever remembered about him was a sampling of Bruce Hornsby's "The Way It Is" in a song he made. Funny how Tupac borrowed from a excellent musician like Hornsby, white as a ghost, extoller of virtue in love and life, and yet, probably raised in a environment altogether different from Tupac's gangsta hell.

It is easy to criticize, mock and deride a dead man's plight to find whatever voice or purpose he sought. In reading his doggerel poems, or listening to his sampled albums, kids today will not grow intellectually unless there are counterbalancing viewpoints about what constitutes excellent writing (a term that varies from time to time.) Yet, it is your job to present that viewpoint. Maybe in a column filled with less hatred and attitude pointed solely to prop up your egotistical ramblings and trash anyone who was too young, too scarred, too damaged by the battering of our great American society. If you wanted to give a constructive viewpoint, you might have included a excerpt from Lord Byron like: "Alas! the love of women! It is known to be a lovely and fearful thing." At least, that would have "educated".

Lastly, I am white and in my 30's. Not that it should matter, but I am last person in world you would think to write to summarily dismiss the heavy-handed rants of a columnist.

Peace Out,

## **Seeing the Light of Mistakes** (Sent to Indianapolis Star – About the recent closure of 3 Stress centers and the Marion County Jail)

In reading the recent articles about the closing of stress centers at 3 area hospitals and the continuing saga of jail overcrowding in Marion County, my thoughts were of great personal sadness at the equally tragic nature of these closely-related problems.

The profitability of mental health center is not measured in dollars, but in happy people, happy homes and useful member of society, if it should be measured at all. With these benefits comes measurable side effects such as reduced crime, better job performance and overall output at one's job. For each of the thousands who lose the ability to gain piece of mind, it is very likely they will falter and possibly become incarcerated in the overcrowded jail someday soon.

The jail spoken of is a nightmare. I know, I've been there before for a period of ten months. The first two weeks, I took one shower in what could be best described as a trickle of water. I slept on the cold cement floor half the time, the other half on a plastic blue bunk without padding. I ate bologna, carrots, moon pies and corn chips and drank 8 oz. of skim milk or juice at 4AM, 10AM, 5PM if the guards were nice. I shared one toilet/water fountain/sink combination with nearly 90 men in a 48-bed room. The lights stayed on continuously, never dimming. I saw countless fights: black on black, black on white, five men on one, it didn't matter, color or reason.

When I was moved over to Marion County II, it improved, a little. Showering was possible, if mold growth didn't bother you. A TV might work in the cell block you were assigned, and you might see a popular show or the news, if the biggest or toughest or craziest inmate liked that. You could buy food and hope someone would not take it from you. And best of all, you could call home at outrageous phone rates. But the lights never went out.

I was convicted of my crime. At one point, months prior to legal woes, I went to St. Vincent Mental Health Center to deal with the distressing situation, soon-to-be the resulting charge I was convicted of. I didn't do enough to succeed in overcoming my stress. I stopped treatment after 3 sessions.

I can not say that these places always work for all people. However, for those that are diligent, patient and looking for information can get treatment and better piece of mind. Or at least they could have – now, they might have to sit in jail to get help. Maybe Marion County jail will expand and improve their conditions, but I doubt that is extremely profitable. But the light will be always on for prisoners there.

## **Education System**

Closely tied to the prior situation is our educational system. We certainly owe a great deal to the educators of America. They do things everyday to improve our future by bringing that spark to the eyes of the very children that will ultimately make the decisions for the futures of children just like themselves. But, the opportunity, access and goals of education have become unequal and definitely uncertain for most students in the public school system. Private schools are better in some ways, but also biased to the goals of the rich and affluent. This is not to say they cannot be that way, but the goal of an education system should be at the very least to give each child a real foundation to build on in their futures.

The goals of the future of education should be at least these:

- 1) proficiency in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and history; introduction and assessment for further complex studies in philosophy, psychology, sociology, foreign language, researching, creative arts, and industrial arts among many other disciplines;
- 2) balanced use of resources for each pupil in public system;
- 3) national standards for class size and instructional content developed and maintained;
- 4) higher wages for educators comparable to higher paid individuals in other stressful industries – minimums compared to engineers and entry-level management;
- 5) improvement of the testing and measurement systems in place to measure for remedial or superior academic achievement, not to punish schools but to find out the students losing out in the system;
- 6) nationwide-networked schools for the purposes of sharing information resources, email contacts, specialization, and content development;
- 7) incentives for professionals in other fields to move into educational service and add to the quality of high school education system.

I realize it has been said before – I feel it is an essential imperative to stress the higher wages necessary to these underpaid workers. Their happiness in job is and has been directly related to performance of students and will continue to influence the quality of education and performance of our students. Appropriation is difficult to determine in the varying economic areas but studies can improve and assess the scales we need to implement to balance the value of educators to the engineers, doctors, lawyers, and managers to just name a few professions to compare salaries and society needs to. The bar for quality educators may also need to be advanced so as to incorporate many minds that resist the instinct to teach due to the current incentives to do so.

### **Environmental Conservation**

In seeing how our natural resources are spent and realizing the shortsighted ways of Americans, it would be remiss not to mention this great tragedy in our society. In each succeeding generation we destroy more and guard less of our fertile, beautiful, but limited resources. Acreage is lost to urban sprawl, deforestation, and waste disposal among other mechanisms. We favor capital land improvements over protection of nature's greatest gifts – flora and fauna that provide beauty for the ages, balance to our ecology and a naturally replenishing supply of food resources. We overlook the importance of replacement of vitally important resources such as trees that take at bare minimum, 50 to 100 years to reach full maturity. The effects of mismanagement of waste disposal have far reaching effects on water supply for fish, animals, and human consumption.

There are many proposals to improve this situation – limits imposed on the amount of land that can be cannibalized for use of building housing, manufacturing sites, and mall areas. Better control of zoning, forcing houses up (as in big cities), instead of out (as in suburbia and rural areas), keeping out businesses that increase pollution levels greatly by enforcing all environmentally-impacting laws. (And discovering which laws will be of greatest use to deter these destructive practices. And producing fines for all infractions that constitute a negligent attitude.)

We must also increase the study of genetically-hardy plants. Study the use of sea floors for production of food of all types- both flora and fauna. But to do that, we must endeavor to preserve it as it once was – 150 years ago, we still had a reasonably healthy ocean, but over fishing, polluting through humanities hunt for oil and destroying the ecological balance of reefs and corals has changed it permanently.

Water temperatures and ocean levels are changed by our pollutants; Growth of coast side inhabitants has furthered this along because factories exist too close to them. The fact we neglected to involve environmental assessments in the Industrial Age does not mean that we should side step them now in the Internet Age. If we refuse to consider the impacts, these changes will, eventually, manifest themselves in dire ways to the entire world. (Famine, environmentally distressing temperature conditions to humans and conflict over fertile lands, and thus, possible war.)

The hardest part is tell ourselves that this is it. One world exist for us to live on, breath and eat and multiply on. Resources such as oil, coal and wood are becoming scarce and the pollution involved in producing materials and by-products has ultimately done grave harm to the entire environment.

Some alternatives: Solar power, Wind power, Sea power have all the potentials to make it possible to run our society. However, the sunk costs are enormous to start. This makes it a certainty that we will avoid it at all costs; until the costs are determined to be less than the destruction we maybe currently involved in, whether it be war or something just as grave.

**The Convenience of Using the Internet to Vote** (Letter published in Indianapolis Star in December 2000 concerning 2000 Election and the internet)

Instead of concentrating efforts on solving the legal malaise that exists in Florida, maybe our concerns should address future elections and how they will be tabulated.

With all the technological marvels we possess, should not voting be in electronic format? How hard is it to develop a simple software program to tabulate votes for all states? The speed and convenience of using the Internet should point us clearly to that end.

Upon voting, the software could generate a simple printout of who that particular voter selected. That way, no fraudulent, misunderstood or vague choices would be counted. The system would also give the person the chance to change his vote if he selected the wrong candidate. All of this is easy to do, but of course the solution lies with government and our taxes.

How much is this fiasco costing us? How many hours spent by persons on recount, how many hours wasted by governmental bodies involved in senseless bickering, how many briefs filed by lawyers? An ounce of prevention would have saved a ton of problems.

We are at the mercy of an outdated system to handle the most important right we get to practice, but rarely use: voting for our leaders.

**Proper tax assessment needs real-world analysis** (Letter published in Hammond Times on Property Taxes, after revision – September 23, 2004)

Since moving to Lake County, I have been bombarded by countless negative stories – the East Chicago corruption case, telephone abuses by county employees, an unorganized judge and the most contentious of all: tax reassessment.

A \$403 million decrease in tax revenue owed by the steel giants must be made up by the nearly 250,000 remaining parcels assessed by Cole Layer Trumble to the tune of over \$1,600 per parcel. Some obviously got socked for much more than this average, but it still explains the ire of the constituents footing this bill.

There were differing methods for the two groups – average Joe taxpayer gets the “cost approach,” whereas Big Business gets the “sales comparison.” The state’s reason: “because the construction and design of these buildings is no longer used...it is impossible to find current, accurate reproduction costs...depreciation on the older structures is extremely difficult.”

This is a pitiful excuse for lacking sound information on an industry’s buildings. If these industries promoted environmentally sound practices, created an abundance of jobs yearly or offered community assistance regularly, then maybe this would fly.

Recoup this tax “gift.” A strict methodology to resolve a proper tax assessment is in serious need of real-world analysis: specifically, cause and effect to low-income families, detraction to new and existing businesses and serious reductions of frivolous spending by these high-on-the-hog appointed civil servants.

It can only be hoped we will not wait until that day comes.

## **Hurricane Katrina Email**

In New Orleans, outbreaks of violence and looting is being handled by the 'Police' and 'National Guard'. To arrest anyone of stealing clothing and food after surviving against the odds and losing their homes and possessions is absurd. Because anyone concerned about their possessions in a waterlogged and useless home or business has their priorities out of sync with what really matters: Life. Most appalling though is the incompetence and negligence found in rescuing people from a natural disaster of cataclysmic proportions.

The albatross of this whole problem is our own U.S. government. Failure by numerous agencies, **FEMA** most of all, to quickly assess the assured damage, to mobilize all assets to remove remaining people from dangerous and inhumane conditions and to provide assurance that all possible resources are being utilized constitutes an utter failure to comprehend that people are in dire need. And that patience and decorum run on short supply when faced with life-threatening starvation and dehydration.

In the wake of 9/11, you would think our country would be prepared to handle a situation of this type. Chaotic. Disastrous. Life-extinguishing. Preparations were obviously misguided in New Orleans to handle flooding of the city. Decades of putting off stout seawall construction to properly handle a natural disaster was the past mistake.

But to let thousands of people spin out of control, wander aimlessly around, while news reporters 'capture' the drama tells of a sickness that runs far and deep in the mindset of these United States. The Founders would shriek at this current administration to get things together before you destroy everything they fought and died for 230 years ago.

## **Losing focus is tied to Presidential Elections (Written 1/ 30/05)**

In this continued military action, the U.S. has lost nearly 1,500 lives. The Iraqi civilian death toll is by some estimates at 100,000. We continue to spend in the hundreds of billions, and more money is on the way. This fight for 'Iraqi freedom' was a diversionary strategy in the original war on terror.

What ever happen to Bin Laden? Our ability to multi-task is a nice skill, but I'm not convinced America's foreign policy is really succeeded in doing so.

Moreover, like most blue collar, paycheck to paycheck, debt laden persons I wonder about the economy, the national debt and job opportunities. When will the focus on terrorism, Iraq and illegal immigrants, by our leaders and media pundits, shift to really necessary things like Social Security, universal (and affordable) health care and other domestic matters? Or does that not merit concern to those who earn over \$100,000?

It also seems, in my thirty odd years, that every time a Republican gets elected, we go to war in some Islamic or third-world nation rich in natural resources, seeking to release them from their oppression, yet we generate more animosity, retaliatory policies and negative views by other countries of America. And we forget (or barely assist in) other dire and desperate situations like Rwanda, Ethiopia and other recent world tragedies like the Malaysian tsunami.