

Proof of Life
Original Works by James de Oliveira

Dedicated to All
that have contributed
to my life
and taught me
the How's and Why's
of Being Human

with Love

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A Book of Poems in Four Sections

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Introduction

Each of us is a hostage. We live in the prisons of our thoughts, feelings, and desires, as well as that of our personal history and ancestry. Also, we are burdened by the legacy of the human race and all the brutal, hateful, unforgivable crimes that humans have committed against each other and our planet. Collectively, we are all born with a heritage of hatred, ignorance and greed. We carry the DNA of those who preceded us and the legacy of what they did.

As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "We are inevitably our brother's keeper because we are our brother's brother. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly." As a result, we are collectively born guilty of the crimes and shortsightedness of our ancestors. We are the ancestors of slave owners, murderers and molesters. From the moment we are born, we are branded as violent, untrustworthy and weak. That is our cross to bear, the burden of being human. We carry that guilt like Atlas carries the Earth, the weight of the world on our shoulders.

But with that burden we have been given blessings that are powerful enough to weaken the knees of the most vicious, heartless tyrant. We are also "guilty" of selflessness, heroism, and decency. My mother always told me to count my blessings. Dear Mom, they are: love, compassion, friendship, integrity, honor, bliss. There are many more to count but you get the idea.

When someone is taken hostage, a ransom is sometimes requested. When a person is kidnapped or otherwise taken, the victim is most often someone who is loved by someone else. Before talks of freeing the hostage even begin, negotiators require concrete evidence that the hostage or hostages are alive. They require "proof of life." These poems are proof of my existence, my passions and things that moved me enough to put pen to paper, to type on my laptop or, in some cases, to write with my thumbs on my phone.

If our lives had constant recorded surveillance, we might have some proof that we were here on this planet. Someday we might have a three dimensional reconstruction of environments as they were at certain moments. Even if we had that, we would still lack a record of how we felt at any particular time or from any particular perspective. It would be necessary to direct which camera to watch and decide the most meaningful combination of images and sounds. The story would have to be edited for brevity, clarity and nuance. Perhaps a particular song could serve as the soundtrack in this, the movie scenes of our life.

In Shakespeare's play *As You Like It*, the character Jaques says, "All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players; They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts..." While we "play our many parts," our internal lives are unknown to those that live outside our heads.

Our understanding of what is true evolves over the course of our lives. The same is true for generations of people over time. We could have solved some of the problems in the past if we only knew then what we know now. Our knowledge is flawed, our understanding is limited by default. Hundreds of years from now, people will look back at how we lived and criticize us for whatever choices were the "we should put leeches on people to heal them" of our time. It is

easy to criticize the past while standing in the present. Please forgive us, dear people of the future. We did the best we could with what we were given.

We are forever cursed to be sophomoric (wisely foolish) in our understanding. Sometimes we forget that as people we are, by our very nature, fools. It is at that time that we are at the greatest risk of doing harm. When we acknowledge our inner fools and laugh at ourselves, we expose a better, more humane way of being human.

Our feelings are complex. Sometimes we feel a series of different emotions all mixed and mused with each other. We have experiences in which our thoughts and emotions fire so rapidly that it is impossible to tell which is which. Like a particle accelerator for human experience, poetry has a unique ability to juxtapose, reflect, refract, expose and collide in ways that reveal a more authentic and nuanced experience not accessible with other forms of expression.

Unprecedented technological change has allowed us to think faster, to communicate over greater distances and with more people. New opportunities exist at the intersection of technologies and in the overlap of what was once disparate things. At no time in history has poetry been more relevant.

Some of the ideas explored here started in my first book of poems, *Thumbnail Journeys*. I chose not to repeat any of those poems here because I feel the work I previously wrote can stand to remain as it was when I first wrote them.

Though I write about many different subjects, the work is best thought of as speaking for itself. In fact, the voice in each of my pieces may change from item to item. Sometimes multiple voices speak within the same poem. Each is an encapsulated experience that developed a life of its own and has frozen in time a certain series of events, discussions, discoveries, emotions or aspirations.

Sometimes a poem writes itself. Other times a poem struggles to find its voice and kisses a lot of frogs before it finds its prince. Hopefully my work is more princes than frogs. Either way, I hope you find elements in what I have written that delight and entertain, that both question and confirm your truths, and expand the ways in which you think about your own existence.

For thousands of years, people have shared information and emotions in the form of stories. These stories were intended to record and preserve history, to pass generational knowledge; to inspire, caution and motivate. With this book I intend to preserve emotions, perspectives and ideas for future generations.

An apology (as in *The Apology of Socrates*) traditionally meant an explanation. These poems are my apology (with both the traditional and the more modern "I'm sorry" meaning combined) for my existence.

I have been told that I wear my heart on my sleeve. Assuming that is right, I intend to wear it like a badge of honor. I refuse to be ashamed of my intense emotions. I am what I am partly because of them. I write to exorcise my demons, diagnose complex, multifaceted problems, self-medicate, remediate and heal.

While I encourage each of you to make scrapbooks, keep a collection of shareable memories, and preserve your family's oral, written and pictorial history, it is also important to write original creative works that speak with your own unique voice and preserve your and your

family's emotional, psychological and oral history for future generations. Thank you for taking the time to read my poems, to lend me and my soapbox your no r ears.

With this, I hope to inspire you as I have been inspired by poets, songwriters and people of many other disciplines to compose my own thoughts. May my songs resonate and reverberate through your experiences and enhance and multiply the rhythm and melody of your being. For you, this is my Artist's Prayer... that your life's work be great and your life be your greatest work of art.

I wish that I could give the world's greatest gift to thank and honor all those that shared their wisdom, work, and lives with me. If my words mean anything at all, it is only because I was lucky enough to learn from and stand on the shoulders of giants. I am honored by association and owe a massive debt of gratitude. If you like what I wrote, share it with people you love. I am no giant, but you are welcome to stand on my shoulders. Pay it forward.

And with that thought in mind, I give you what little I have to give...

This is my *Proof of Life*.

Beginnings

A Little Song for Uncle Jamie

At 4:30 am this morning
In a hospital in Albuquerque, New Mexico
A baby girl cried out for the first time.

Spectators called it, "A joy-filled cry,
aching with longing,
drenched in anticipation and hope."

And me, lost in Los Angeles,
engulfed in flashing pictures
on Music Television,
distracted and distraught,
watching hate-mongers and peace-niks
engaged in pointless dialogue
on Jerry Springer.

Disconsolate and inconsolable.
Until I heard the news.

And even if I shout out on my balcony
All the joy and rejuvenation that I feel
"She cries the melody of youth!"
I will get nothing from my neighbors
But a "go back inside and hush."

Good morning, Erin Michelle.
Today is your first great accomplishment,
The first obstacle you have overcome,
Crossing the threshold to life.

To be born and raise your small voice
With petite, weak arms.
To bring order and purpose
To madness.

You will not be small or weak for long.
This is only your first note.

Cry a little song for me.
So I can hear you way out on my balcony.
Cry a little song for Uncle Jamie.

Original Sin

Being Human is Weird.

We are all
expected to be
Human.

But what
Is That?

We are Destructive
by Nature.

We destroy Nature.

If you can Run,
we will eat You.

if you only Grow,
You can be our Food,
or our food's food.

We, as humans,
Seek ways to be
Human
without consuming
the other lives
that give us Life.

There is natural conflict
in needing to Eat to Live
but Knowing there is
an Eternal Guilt
because you Know

you Live
because Someone
or Something
Died.

of Being Human.

I Am

Guilty as Sin.

April 2019

I am My Father

cultivating a mid-section
proud of my forearms
and my forefather
and his fathers
farther back
than I
can remember

proud to be proud

getting thin on top
thinking of settling down, down
expanding my vocabulary
to include words like
insurance
for health and life
responsibility
for children and a wife

dependable, resourceful,
dignified, debaucherous,

I am a bridge
to the future
I stand on the past.

As I settle in myself
I discover
to my chagrin;
I am my father.

Eyes on the Horizon

Blaise through uncharted waters
In a sea of troubles that towers
One thousand feet above our heads
Stand tall
Before you is an admiral-able task
So daunting
Perhaps Pascal could do the math

Even a clown can see
These times require someone
More serious and decent
To navigate uncertainty

Your assignment is clear

Navigate yourself
With competence, character, and compassion
As you learn to serve with honor
So that we may all be safe

You need no luck.
(Luck is for the unskilled, the unprepared)
As you stand at attention
Keep your eyes on the horizon
Stare fear in his face
Find joy in strength
Steady as she goes

Bon voyage, mademoiselle
Follow your passion
Like a piano that plays triumphant,
Anchors Aweigh, my dear.

-- For my niece, Blaise de Oliveira,
In honor of her acceptance into the
United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland

Tomorrow

She feels like tomorrow
When she makes tea
With her back to me
In front of the stove.
Honey is sweeter than sugar.
In the generous cup we share.

She feels like tomorrow
When we walk the dog
Past the houses
In the good neighborhood

She feels like tomorrow
When she confounds me
With the intensity
of Silence.
With distance and misunderstanding
but still I Stare
Into the future.

She feels like tomorrow
A week from now
With eggs over hard
Zucchini hash browns and coffee.
Walking down the sidewalk
Waiting for the café to commit.
To open its doors and arms
And embrace the morning.

She feels like tomorrow a month from now
Sleeping in the safe enclosure of my arms
This dream I see while awake.

She feels like tomorrow a year from now
When things are all different
But somehow she's the same

She feels like tomorrow a decade away
In robes and slippers
In the warmth of collaborative years

She feels like tomorrow
And tomorrow's tomorrow
Thirty years from now
And the day after that.

I know what tomorrow will offer.
There is no question
What tomorrow will bring.
For all my tomorrows
begin and end
With her.

December 2001

Drafted

When first there was a pitch
and I swung and missed
I thought it magic
to connect
bat to ball.

But yet that elusive magic
drew me
to work harder
to be better
To find the get up and go,
to get up and go, go, go.

I have worked since four:
Four years old
Four in the morning

Four feet deep in mud and sweat.

But I stop short of what I care to say:
I am still in the middle
of a struggle to perform.

I am tired from my forearms
to my last legs.

Fueled by passion,
exhausting work
has made me strong
and thirsty for opportunities
to connect.

If one can dream and achieve
than this is my dream:

That my struggle
will create something more
than I was given.

I will honor those
who believed in me
and cheered me
and consoled me

For every great grounder
or infield-sun-in-your-eyes fly
or diving-off-balance-throwing play

Each at-bat
an opportunity
to connect.

To set example
for future players
to achieve.

I create my future, my destiny,
and live, despite all odds, well.

Tonight was a great beginning
to a life which, despite the struggle,
no, because of the struggle,
is wonderful.

Tonight I started
to build
to live
to achieve
my dream.

I was drafted.

-- Written for my nephew,
Alex Bregman, on the day he was drafted,

June 8th, 2015

Journeys

The Last Taxi Cab in New York

I am standing on a street corner
Waiting for the last taxi cab there is
Lost in internal scolding, I stand,
Sequestered, quarantined.

Maybe he capped his last fare
And clicked off the meter
Making a left instead of a right
tonight...

Maybe his wife is warm
At home waiting
To whisper sweet enticements
After they pull the curtains and shut the light.

And still I wait to see him rounding the corner
On the loveless, pothole-riddled street.
But there is no one.
No "Hey buddy, where to?"

Maybe he wanted to learn
What life had waiting
On some other street,
Or maybe he refused to choose mine.

The street lamp stands obstinate,
It needs no companion.
I stand shivering,
Dampened by the downcast shadows
under the lamp light.

Will there be a taxi to take me
Wherever I dreamed I'd go?
Or will I stand foolishly
hopeful and waiting,
Alone in my pain
and the inconsolable snow.

The Things You Never Said

I love you for all the things you never said
Even when you could have

I love you for the choice you would not make
Even though you should have

To stay with me through thick and thin
Must not have been too easy

You find the good in every bad
The lining on the clouds

And knowing you the way I do
Makes me so damn proud

I love you now for what you are not
As much as what you are

and for the
Things You Never Said.

Borrowed Time

We all live on borrowed time.

You can't walk the same road twice
Things change so fast
There is no bus pass
To get you from here to there
Unscathed.

Either you are walking on a street
on which you have not walked or
The road that you had previously taken
Has changed, evolved, eroded.

It used to be that I had hair
What I had is
No longer there.

We live on Borrowed Time.

Perhaps it is a tit for tat
Maybe I even borrowed That.

The time we have
Is on a loan
There's one thing left
We have left to own

The time we spend
The space we take
Is greater than money we make
It's more than the words we said
It's the stuff that people think
When we are dead.

Our time is disconnected from the future.
Invest what you have and like a suture,
Stitch where we are to where we need to be
The glory is in the journey
Can't you see?

Invest your borrowed balance
In making this world a little kinder
Because we live on Borrowed Time....
What's mine is yours and yours is mine.

Until the grave I cannot take
The greatest things that I could make
My greatest thoughts and prayers or effort
Were designed to make some Thing much better
Like a warm and comfy sweater
I longed to make something
Comforting yet
Enduring

Something like that machine made by Alan Turing

A perfect complete device
That connects the thoughts
and moments in Between
to the things we do not understand
with that I make my Stand

We all live on Borrowed Time.

Lend me your ears, your hearts and minds.
Let me borrow yours
and I will let you borrow mine.

-- For my mother, Joan M. de Oliveira

November 2019

Tattoo Me, Tattoo You

Imagine if when you walked
and every step you took
created
a dot
or a line
or a stroke.

Imagine if there was a record of
everything you said or spoke.

From every action an inked impression.

Like a tattoo carved into the land
On the ground on which you stand,
a permanent record that you cannot erase.

Be careful that the print you write,
the crumbs you Spread
will be that by which you will be remembered
when you're Dead.

The things you do will make a pattern,
and be true from here to Saturn.

Tattoo me, tattoo you,
Make an imprint,
Make a stamp.
It is your job, you tramp.

Your life is nothing but a stint,
an example of the path you took.
Your choices are things that can't be shook.

Be careful of the path you take
Of the choices that you make.

Tattoo me, tattoo you
So we will respect
Where we have been
What we have done
Until our time
on our planet
is Done.

-- For my son, Kevin Vladimir Baca,
and All His Tattoos

July 2019

The Day the Towers Fell

The day the Towers fell...

I watched amazed

My worst dream
Come True.

the day that would not be
Was.

I watched, I sat,

I wanted to
Do Something.

I wanted to
Be Something.

I just Sat

and Watched

the Day the

Towers Fell.

Sept. 15, 2001

Be Connected

There is one thing to
get inside your Head,
don't live your life Alone,
Be Connected instead.

It isn't the Internet
It isn't your song
It's the way you've thought of it
All along

We are not disconnected
Even when we are alone
It seems so plain to see
We are brothers and sisters
And husbands and mothers
Dad and drones
Let's all eat scones with butter,
Can't you see?

We're slip-ry sliding
Somehow colliding
Toward the future
Together

Let's pile Up
Let's say enough

Love is where we're meant to Be.
Come join Us!
Let's come Together.

Be Connected,
You won't be Rejected,
It's better Together you'll see.

Burned Boy

There is a Boy that Burned,
as in, his Flesh melted
Because Adults could not Agree
who Suffered more

the child himself
is Innocent
of the Wrongs
the Adults
caused

Who will take
Responsibility
for the Boy
that Burned

Each of us wants to speak
our Thoughts
as we Witness their Creation

but a Pause
a Moment to Reflect
to Discern
to Digest
to Disambiguate

a Moment
is Warranted.

For every Burned Boy
we Know
there are a Thousand more.

Heal One
and He or She will Speak,
and then Watch...

the World will See
that One Burned Boy
though Challenged by

his Injury
showed Us
Why We need to Care
and what We need to Be

in a Broken
and Disenchanted World
a New Hope
deserves a Moment

to Speak and be Heard.

there is a Story to Tell
so that

One Burned Boy
could help Us Understand

Where we Are
and Where
We Need to Be.

Let not
One Burned Boy
be Wasted

in our Struggle to be Free.

Feb 2021

Inevitable

Anyone who read
The Grapes of Wrath
knows that Steinbeck
liked Contrast

pitting Black against White
Rich versus Poor
Us versus Them
Amen

He did not invite Conflict
but praised Acceptance.

his Story did not Moralize
but Dramatized.

He made an Antidote to Hate
and a Chance for someone Petit
to be Great

like Greta Thunberg.

one Small Voice
can engage the Masses.

when the Voice gets Echoed
through the Crowd
and starts to be LOUD.

Change Becomes

Inevitable.

Sept 2020

June 2019

Atomic Change

“Take the world in a love embrace
Fire all of your guns at once
And explode into space
Like a true nature's child
We were born, born to be wild”
- Steppenwolf

let the Record
like a mic Drop
or an Atomic Bomb, pop
exploding all our Notions
of the Atoms of the World...

Ground Zero.

It's a slight shift,
a Binary Flip,
from a Zero to a One,
the Seachange has Begun.

Change is changing Faster
it could Spell Disaster
If and when we Fail to See
the Future is Now.

When the World was built of Atoms,
the Lego blocks of Matter,
having More was the way to Play,
Whoever owns the best Toys wins!

Molecule Makers
and their Bastard Bankers
determined what
Things were Worth.

but Matter does not Matter
nearly as Much as it once did.
Software was starving
so it Ate the World.

Everything is Changing
Rearranging
Molecules in Mayhem,
like Thanos snapping,
disappearing Things into Digital Dust.

see it in the Air we Breathe,
the Earth we Occupy,
on Streets made of Walls,
like a Church where Money prays,
Some people are born in,
Others are left Out.

Progress has gaping San Andreas Faults
that spell Imminent Disaster.
Hurricanes of Change are forming
with tempers rising, a Tempest waits
to Rain down Oceans,
so says Bill Gates.

with Ships, Trucks and Automobiles,
Propelled by thirsty, oil-drunk machines,
a World of Atoms continues to swell,
with Icebergs melting faster,
in a Basket, we're going to Hell.

take one strategic Quantum Leap:
let's Fall on our Knees
and pray for an Angel Investor
to Finance the Dreams
of the ninety-nine point nine percent.

Speak your Peace,
do what Now demands,
let Pieces fall where they may.
Unchain the People
from their Undercompensated Plight,
free their Unrequited Economic Might.

Our lives are Entangled.
The Superposition has changed.
It's time to Spin Up.

In a Blip.
Flip.

June 2019

Endings

Boys Don't Cry

Today is Your Day, Dad,
Let's Bury the Past.

When your Sister was taken
from You
while you were still Young,
the Other Men said You
were not very Brave
when they told You
how Not to Behave.

They said "Boys Don't Cry."

I cannot Deny,
like You told Me,
"Boys Don't Cry."

I Cried out Loud
and I am Proud...

But it's alright,
I am a Man.

do Boys Feel?
are they Persons?

if Boys Don't Cry,
would it be Better if they Did?

and I have Decided
that Boys Do Not Cry Enough

I am Crying Now.

I am Crying Out Loud.

Still, I Am Proud.

maybe Boys Do Not Cry...

but I have News for You, Dad,

Men Do.

I am a Man, the Man that You helped Create.

As a Man I choose my Destiny, my Path and Destination.

I am Yours.

I am True.

I am What I Am Because

You are Part of Me and

I am Part of You.

Dear Dad, Goodbye.

I Love

You.

Boys Don't Cry

but I am Man Enough

to Cry

for You.

-- For my father,

Dr. Joseph Armando de Oliveira

October 2019

Letter of Appreciation

Dear Dorothy
I wrote this for you:

You asked me what
I liked about you.
I was not prepared
With an answer.

I write
to tell you
an Answer..

There are not words precise enough.
There are not phrases elaborate enough.
To describe what I feel.
But humor me for a moment.
I will try.

I have never known someone
Who knew so plainly
How to inspire rage
And other passion so intense
That I felt like I would
break, explode, or dissolve.

But I did not.
I can not.
I am not broken,
I am not strewn in pieces on the floor,
I am not dissolved or softened or even diluted.

I never knew someone
Who challenged me
to be
more.

I am more.

By knowing you
I know my strength
I know my passion
I am not afraid.

Perhaps you think some demon
or other evil force
has contrived a plan
to trick me into caring.
Perhaps I am misguided.
Or otherwise distraught.

Nothing could be further
From Truth.

Truth is,
Simply put,
I love you.

That is all there is.
No expectation for what I give
To be returned.
No obligation on your part
To act.

No need for you to be
Anyone other than who
or what you are.
No hope that you will become
Different
From how you are at this moment
Or the next.

No judgement.
No regret.
You expand my idea
of who I can become.
Strong and independent.
Sensitive and sweet.
Kind not condescending.
Complete.

With this thought
I leave you:

Know now that someone
Sometime
Somewhere
Loved you
And will always love you.
Not for anything you said or did.

Simply for who you are.

Love accepts without judgment.
Love expands without limit.
Love is truth, and hope, and light.
Love needs no excuse.
Love is its own reward.
Love is simply given.
And this I give.
To you.

October 2002

Over

It's over
between you
and I.

Tear my heart
with your finger tips
why don't you

don't crack
your twisted smile
or admit
that you care
don't you dare

delete the message
from your voicemail
that says that we're together
because I'm falling apart.

pull out my good teeth
forget the novocaine
I prefer pain

disconnect and disable
all the little circuits
that worked
so well
together

dislocate my spinal cord
paralyze pleasure
and detach my nerves
from yours

It's no one's fault
what got between us.
And though the quake shook us
pretty bad,

I'll pretend
it never happened.

Except when I reminisce.

tonight

tonight was the night
i sang "summertime"
with my lungs
open wide
as if i died

tonight was the night
the pieces fell
as pieces fall
into a puzzle

tonight was the night
i never thought
i'd hear myself say

tonight was the night
i felt complete

tonight was my night
and there doesn't have
to be
any other.

The Bottom of the Bottle

“The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation,
and go to the grave with the song still in them.”

— Henry David Thoreau

at the bottom of the Bottle
is the Answer
that I seek.

I did not Think
and had one Drink
and then an Other
'cause there were Sorrows,
things that could not Speak,
worries that Think
and make me Drink,
drowning Hopes and Dreams,
a pathetic puddle of Despair.

there's no Bottom
to this Bottle,
there is no Bottom
to this Glass,
anyone who says Otherwise
can kiss my M-n-F-in' Ass.

seriously, it has been an
Extraordinary year, month, day!
So filled with extreme emotion.

What else can I say!

a sip to muffle anger
two to numb some pain
a little more to medicate my demons
as I slowly go Insane

from the bottom of this bottle
to the pinnacle of joy,
this thirst that Stops at Nothing,
as I raise and Drain my glass,
somehow feeling Empty
makes me so Complete
from the gravity of perfect longings
both unFullFilled and deep.

in my Inside Space
Emptiness is Everything
and Nothing is what's There,
from the bottom of the Bottle
to the Top of the World,
a one-man rolling Coaster,
twirling and laughing and falling
in a not-so-funHouse,
down an ever-deeper hole.

Welcome to the
Bottom of the Bottle.

I'm There.

July 2020

Legacy

Dear Pseudonym

Dear Pseudonym, may I call you that?
your Words are honest and raw,
reporting on things you saw,
a Challenge to the Status, bro.

you say some Things that some might think
are prickly points, Original as Sin,
Intentions Best, above the Rest,
like a Jester serving Justice,
your Play's the thing that proves one Thought,
your Conscience can't be Bought.

Powers that Be might be Distraught,
considering they might get Caught,
'cause they're Full of One Thing
[a vicious lie that rhymes with "It!"]
if the World knew what's underneath
it'd kick those Powers in the teeth.

Things you say Inspire and Challenge,
Disrupt, Dissect, Delineate,
you Un-Incarcerate our Thoughts,
you're an Anti-pathetic Antidote to Antipathy,
so much you say demands Attention.

Hopeful,
never Spiteful,
Divinely Insightful,
deliriously, deliciously Delightful.
you Rave, Rattle, Rant
like Immanuel Kant
(believe me, he Would if he Could)
you'd give a start to René Descarte
like Liberace singing Piagliacci
"I Drink therefore I Am."

[But I Digress.]

let the world Know who You are
don't be Anonymous,
Why be Pseudonymous
be the care-drenched Wrench
that turns and tightens Logic's Nut,
twisting and turning the thought-filled Snap
that cuts the Current pervasive Crap
and explains what needs Explaining.

disconnect your mask and cape
stop Clandestine persuading
patiently Crusade your case,
Educate the blissful masses
Articulate, Inundate, Inoculate.

you speak Truth's Tongue
without hesitation, it needs not translation,
of That we mince no Words.
It's time we sat Down,
somewhere downTown,
tell your Theories we should Talk.

the World is now upon the Brink
in need of Reconstructive Think.
Share your Dream like Dr. King,
Imagine Lennon's World as One,
Make a list, go shopping.
Peace on Earth, good will to All,
on which Aisle can we buy That?

tell your People
who's behind the Peephole
let Us in, We all Win.

your Spotlight is Patient
your Soapbox at Attention
your Necessary Notions
your Oratory Excellence
your Challenge to the Things we Think
Speak your Kool-Aid. We'll drink, get Drunk.

Dear Pseudonym, I call you out,
don't make me Shout,
your Audience is Waiting.

-- Dedicated to Satoshi Nakamoto and all of the other artists,
journalists, and hacktivists that work without recognition or
reward to make our world a stronger, safer, kinder and more
decent place.

June 2019

Impressive Wall

There is a rock,
A wall of rock
It's called
"The Captain".
It is
The world's
most
Impressive
Rock.

Someday
I
will
climb
it
and
be
free.

To climb a rock
is no big deal.

No reason
to publish,
No thing
of which
to tell.

There is an
Ignorance
of Pain
of Suffering
of Longing
for More.

I seek
something
Solid,
something
Permanent.

something
Pertinent
and True.

There is truth in Climbing
in Surmounting
in Becoming the One
who Did.

I climb because
the Rock is there.

I climb to Overcome.

I climb to BE.

More than I ever thought

I could Become.

I climb to be Free.

to make an Impression.

-- Based on first impressions while watching the
wonderful documentary called "Free Solo."

April 2019

Brother Hong Kong

“We are inevitably our brother's keeper
because we are our brother's brother.
Whatever affects one directly
affects all indirectly.”

-- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

How are you Brother across the Water?
Waves of Umbrellas became a Monster Monsoon
You forgot your proper British past
as your Tantrum plays in our Living Room.

As the Big Red Center tests your Temper,
do not hold nor restrain your Tongue
speak your Peace and tell the Planet
make bold-lettered Banners
that plainly Shout

Freedom is Not a Dirty Word.

Justice knows no borders.
She may be blind but is
neither Deaf nor Dumb.
Her Scales are unbalanced
when one side is pressured
with a finger or a Big Fat Thumb.

Churchill said Democratic Ways
really were not Best.
Democracy is the
Worst Form of Government,
Except for All the Rest.

Democracy's Foundation
Erodes and slips like quicksand.
Watch as it dips and drags and shifts.
What will be Left when your People's Rights
collapse and dissolve in a slippery-sloping-Landslide
Underneath your feet?

and Yes, you like me, were not There
when they mowed your Brothers and Sisters.
How did the government bury the Dead
but not the Memory of
Tiananmen Square?

a River of black shirts Flows through your streets
with Facemasks that cannot prevent
Salted Teargas Tears from raining
on your Peaceful Parade
like bouncing beanbags and rubber bullets flying
in a noxious-cotton-candy-cloud of pepper spray.

Mandela the Prisoner-President
worked by a different precedent
Forgiving all his trespassers,
“...vision with action can change the world.”

Millions clog your veins and venues
threatening your youthful healthy Heart
you'll pay the price to raise your Voice
when you sing karaoke of “Queen's Road East”
Freedom is Not Free, you must pay the cover,
Fight for Rights they try to Take,
Choose which laws the government
Can, and also Cannot, Make.

tell President Xi
It's Time to tear down the Chinese Wall.
not the Great One,
but the one that made the
One Country, Two Systems Trap!
We all know it is a load of Crap!
with one decree
set Hong Kong Free!

Beware the Wolf in Lam's clothing
Tethered by her pulling strings
perhaps she forgot to do the Math
and will suffer the people's Wrath.

when your Masses swelled and swaggered
voicing Truth that really Mattered
to support your Existential Fight,
Brother, Brother, be Brave and True,
Enjoy your Honking Hong Kong Summer
spinning and turning in a lovely Dance.
No need to think deep, long and hard,
a Peace-Filled Revolution is in your cards!

When India was in the hands of the Brits,
as you yourselves once were,
Peaceful Change Became Default
when Gandhi walked to the Ocean
and prepared himself some Salt.

What's that you say...
You "Love the Future" and
are not afraid of Ai Wei Wei?

Awaken from your domestic slumber
an unFree future is fraught and perilous
the Executive Extraditionor must step down
and use her Broom to sweep the Town.

She and her Big Red Wolves conjured a flame
that caught people in their Criss-Cross-Hairs.
make no mistake which Witch is which
for Justice and for Heaven's Sake,
Stand Strong, Brother Hong Kong,
Do Not Stand Down,
lest they burn Freedom
at the Stake.

-- Based on the 2019 peaceful protests in Hong Kong.
#HongKongProtest
#StandWithHongKong
#HongKongStrong

June 2019

Foolish Manifest

“Drop your socks and grab your Crocs.
We’re about to get wet on this ride.”

“Tony Stark,” *Iron Man 2*

[Drop everything, Juggler,
hear my Foolish Thoughts
Assembled
like a House of Cards,
a simple, silly, Scripted Manifest,
that ties together Thoughts,
in a Twisted Logic Memorandum.]

Fool with a Capital F

They call Me.

I’m a Sophomoric Apologist
who’s Rant is full of Jest.
Do Not Fear what’s scribbled Here
with Grains of Salt, let’s be clear,
Is how it is read Best.

I am the Fool that Knows
this Life is more than fodder,
more than shrapnell
for Corporate Cannons
to Blast and Spew.

this Life that Now is Lived
is All that truly Matters.

What kind of Fool am I?

I’m an inarticulate,
incomprehensible,
catastrophic,
Unnatural Disaster.
Here’s what I’m after:
As a Jack-of-All-Trades,
I am a Master.

now come with Me
and Forget Yourself
but remember
whose Foolish Shoes you filled,
in whose sandals you walked,
whose Stories you learned,
Told and reTold.

Honor thy ancestors
thy parents
thy teachers
thy caregivers
thy Huddled Masses
thy Never-Do-Wells
thy Abused, Tortured and Forgotten.

Sing to the Heavens
as One People,
the People of the World,

Demand Your First Amendment Right.

Exorcise your Demons
'til they Sweat and Regret
the thousand Slings and Arrows
with which they have been
Insulted and Assaulted

this Fool deserves no homage
nothing but a moment's Chance
to let his Thoughts be Spoken.
(Well, that and a swift kick in the pants.)

Forgive me Father
for I have Sinned,
We all have Sinned
(at least that's what I had Heard).

despite our Lack of Courage,
despite our Lack of Faith,
this Patriotic,
Japanese-Speaking,
Expat-Catholic-Pantheist,
Environmental-Active-Pacifist,
Investor-Player-Protestor
is here to
Shoulder Blame.

forgive Us these our Trespasses
that Sullied up our Name.
we are Not Worthy
of Winning at this
Game.

may Peace be with Us always,
Regardless.

[go about your Busy-ness
Write down your Many-Fest,
before your Bucket's Kicked,
your Life deserves a List.
Record your own Record,
an Anthem of Existence,
a way to See Meaning
through these Hazy Days.
drop everything, Juggler,
tell of your Life's Work,
Write it down, you silly Clown,
Tell Everyone on Earth.]

May 2019

Dear Sullivan, Don't Be Blue

Sullivan, as you call yourself,
Know that we ALL are Blue
our county is in Crisis
together we are Screwed.

this country that we LOVE
is divided through and through.
this is not Minor, Major
our Country is at a Crossroads
And, together, we must
Choose.

we must take the Road Less Travelled
And find our own Way through.

As Abraham said,
when he led us to the Promised Land,
a Nation Divided Cannot Stand!

As the casual casualties of
our Nation's progress demands
Reconstruction and Rebirth
require a decent amount of Work.
While we "Stay Hungry, Stay Foolish."
as Jobs said, to do what's needed,
to unlock our Nation's Worth.

in your letter you had said
"my courage does not halt or falter"
then we must not waiver either
lest our dog-tired Nation
when Weakened with Age
division, drugs and devastation
Deviate

with That We Cannot Stand.

there are people that are Hurt,
there are people that are True...
and some that spell Lies
in the "Truths" they tell.

Beyond these thoughts divided
Is one Thing we can agree

whatever one Chooses,
whatever one Decides,
whatever the Consequences
we must all Reside
in the Country We Create
and live With the
Choices that We Make.

perhaps the Best Choices
are the ones that Take
NOT Possibilities Away.
but offer new Chances
to take a Shot,
as Opportunity Knocks,
Marshall [Mathers] our resources,
and "Lose Ourselves"
so others can be Free
with Liberty and Justice.
for All the World to see.

Dear Sullivan, don't worry,
as one of many who Loved
our Nation since its Birth,
Life, Liberty and the movie
The Pursuit of Happiness
(pardon my sappiness),
When there's a Will there's a Way.

Thank you, Major, for your
Strength and Service,
and the Honorable, Dutiful, Ultimate Gift,
made when you took your very last Breath,
sacrificing all you Cherished,
to save the Country
our Founding Fathers built.

Dear Sullivan, don't be Blue.
I wrote this All for You.

-- Loosely referencing
[the story of Sullivan Ballou](#) from 1861.

May 2019

Proof of Life

I could not sleep.

There were things
that bothered,
things that Spoke,
Conspired,
to stop my Sleep
from Sleeping,
my Thoughts held Hostage.

Why is it
How is it
that someone
Who loves me
Could make me
Feel so
Flawed?

[when I balanced
the Spatula on my nose,
you said
“You’re such a Clown.”]

I am.

I have always been
an afterthought,
the fifth and forgotten.

while I'm sure
you love Me,
your intention
was not to hurt,
I have never felt so
Shamed
to Be
the person that I Am
as when you asked me
why I Share
That which is so

Personal.

All the people
of the world
can put
their Faces
in a Book.
Everyone can
"Play the Field,"
but when I share
my innermost Thoughts,

i feel worth Less.

And when I told my mother
I would attend
a College of Fools
she said
“Someday you will get a Real Job.”

Dear Mom, I did.
I write poems
of passion and pride,
to which she replied,
“Can’t you be a clown?”

but this Fool knows
I Determine my Worth.
I Define my Existence.
I Became that which
I Am
Because,
not in spite of,
Conflict.

though
Forces Conspire
to Break Me,
they cannot Take Me
Anywhere I Choose
not Go.

and here
my Personal and Private
Thoughts will be Etched,
like Escher's drawings
on the Stone of Time,
to Make my Mark.

despite what a Fool I've been,
I stand my ground,
speak with My Own Voice
Breaking the Silence of
my Inner Truth
and Write for

Proof of Life.

April 2019