

On dimmer path, the grasshopper slows.
Sleepily, Sun rests in her westward flight.
Yellow sails float the day,
But here, always night.
Cold and unmoving pass the years;
Eras rise, fall and fade;
Faraway stars confused;
Gone – loving hands that bade.
The spiral is past, the target was gained;
Indelibly marked, were conscience – and brain.
Tears – pain - in mist they are gone.
Oceans are dried; but in space, stream flows on.

David G

Better Days

Sometimes trouble seem so very tall,
And from the highest peaks we fall,
When our soul is tired and worn,
When any type of advancement is forlorn.
When you feel like your world ignites,
And that you have lost your sight.
That trouble is all that lays at your feet,
In every part of life, you see defeat.
Your difficulties feel so steep,
And regret into every part of your life seep.
Any positive is too hard to be found,
Every problem is worse than it sounds.
Negative is the only thing that is near,
When you've seen hell there is nothing to fear.
This is when you must get up and fight,
And bring your light to the darkness of night.
Just starting the journey means you won,
And change has now begun.
The separation between good and bad is not so wide,
Keep moving forward and you will gain your stride.
As you climb you will see the past below,
But the sun will cast your shadow in a glow.

The path at times seems so long,

Don't forget to put the smile where it belongs.

You are greater than the trials you have seen,

Better than the places you have been.

So, give yourself some grace when your feet move back,

Remind yourself you're still on track.

Daniel G W
adult category

The Legend of Sorghum Ridge

(With Apologies to
Washington Irving)

I knew him well for many years,

The one with no fears.

He was my friend and a wild child,

and the night he died the wind howled.

The son of snake charmers

and poison drinkers

and talkers in tongues so strange

His heart cried out for a change.

Reared in that little white

Pentecostal ^{church} ~~church~~ nestled

in the coal fields of West Virginia

In the hills of Appalachia.

He wanted no more of their

angry and vengeful god

Thousands of miles away

to a place of warm sand and blue sky
His soul yearned to be!
He told me of his plans to roll so free
from Wheeling, West Virginia to the California sea.
Trapped within the pistons of his engine,
but there was nowhere else he wanted to be.

One night he kicked up the kickstand.
His fine-tuned engine roared.
Off to see blonde bikini girls,
where his wild side could unfurl.
He wore no helmet on his head,
when he met his tragic end.
But nothing could have kept his head on
when he hit that Peterbilt head on!
His brain was battered and splattered
after wild and fatal midnight ride.
But Nothing could have kept his brains inside

When he hit the pavement
Going 95
Even the Angels of Hell cried!
Seems my friend made the front page;
torn in half at an early age!
His family never found his head.

His kinfolk buried what was left of him
On Sorghum Ridge he lies buried.
Now He rests Beneath West Virginia ground.
His headless body safe from the Devil or hungry hounds.
The faithful said heart felt words of prayer,
but it couldn't stop the evil that followed!
When the full moon is at its height,
on a cloudless night,
I can hear that ungodly roar
and my friend's shrieking laughter.
He's a bounty hunter now

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for the Devil below.

Claiming all the lost souls at night
who strayed too far from the light!

Be afraid, he's coming to your city!

He'll kick your door down and drag you off without pity.

Just a few more souls claimed he gets his head back.

Mend your ways or its to Hell so fiery!

My friends, if you cheat and harm your neighbor,

Or treat your loved ones or faithful spouse like a stranger!

You may hear that engine roar once again,

and see a trail of fire from his chopper.

His Black Harley ablaze from end to end.

Choking Smoke, Fire and Laughter you cannot
comprehend!

A blast from both barrels will send you to Hell!

But don't believe me; it's just some hillbilly legend.

Jorja R

adult

il.com

When God does not think I am Beautiful

He knew me before I was born. He knew each hair on my head. He created this form and called it good.

I bathe the feet of the loveless, defend the shameful and meek of the earth, and care for the downtrodden. My work is not enough because I am not worthy to be loved. I was born to love a form that looks like mine. I am not deserving of the same care I bestow on others. I must walk alone, imprisoned by something I have no power to change.

Invisible demons I struggle to fight plague me. Breath comes too fast, and I am without hope. I am lost in the shadow Everest casts over my garden, and locomotion seems impossible. To "get over it" is a fool's errand because God does give me more than I can handle. I am broken, and all the jagged pieces you cannot see will never fit back together. Beauty does not reach the soul of the fractured.

My brain was scrambled when I was nothing more than a divided egg. The evil potions I was born addicted to haunt my soul. I cannot control my speech or my body. I betray my family, my community, and myself. I am not worthy of love because I cannot control how I engage with space. I will not be repentant, and therefore, I am to take the blame for my passive nonconsent.

Born in the wrong body, I am scorned for the draping that adorns it now. A kilt and a skirt are fundamentally different. One is embraced, and one is hated. Starting with the man in the mirror is impossible when the woman I am is not in the reflection. I wear a mask, praying that it protects against the phantasmic whispers that inevitably make it through. I am an abomination, not a child of God.

The baby pushes against my soft roundness and giggles when it does precisely as Newton predicted. I stop her joy because my sloth and gluttony embarrass me. Indeed, these deadly sins must be my vice, or I would not look the way I do. Taking up space is a sin. The brilliant way I shine is not enough to supersede the genes that decide what size my jeans should be.

Skin the rich color of burnt umber. Hair tightly coiling in on itself. I rise until invisible forces slam me back to the ground and take my breath away. Claws scrape the rock as I climb, but my efforts affront those awarded wings to complement their golden locks. Once again, I cannot breathe, and my mother cries. Outrage is not allowed.

I did not choose this existence; yet, I am trapped in it. God knew me like the stars in the night sky. He did not protect me from the circumstances of my birth. He does not glorify me. If God created me in His own image and called it good, then why must I burn? God does not think I am beautiful.

Native aunt sisters looking over us all

Little rabbit foot what do you feel of the winds “i feel my
aunt sisters and aunt brothers talking to
me. Mother bear teaches me how to eat berries. and when
my back itches mother bear
teaches me how to itch. brother eagle gives me fish to eat
for hibernation and a lot he gives some to mama bear
mama bear gives some to my second older sister and my
big brother.

i’m the youngest in the family all my brothers and sisters
are adopted my mama bear gave me
because she was sick my real mama bear could not take
care of me. she picked a random
person and now i’m in a better place so god put me in a
better place my adopted mom did not want me to have
any friends or go to any church. Every church i went god
spoke to me and not my mom i felt god's presence every
single church. but every church mom goes to she dislikes
Every church we go to.

By: Sarah Si

Alicia Cole

Age Group: Adult

Phone#:

Title: Does it Really Matter?

What will it matter when all are forgotten?

Every enemy and friend?

When there's no one left to dwell, bask, or marvel

What will it matter in the end?

When all life will one day be reaped and every soul disbursed

What does it matter which bill I pay first?

When the light goes out and the world gets cold who is going to care whether I grew old?

I cringe and mourn things I've done and said

My cruel words may still steep in my child's head

But why linger in dismay? Will they even matter once I'm dead?

Suffice it to say,

What matters tomorrow need not always influence today.

Love and joy, smiles and praise,

That is what matters today

The smell on the breeze

Warmth of a sun ray

Suffice it to say, that is what matters today

I may be old,

I may be wrinkled and grey

With no more tomorrows

But I still have today

The Adventures of Luciano and Auntie Connie

"The Cabin of Sweets"

Luciano and Auntie Connie were freed from the Jungles of home. They set outside and are now free to roam. They hopped in Auntie's Monster Truck, his name is "Fordie"; They drove through mud, dirt and vines, so he could not be Sportie.

They drove over hills and mountains to find Auntie's "Cabin of Sweets", Luciano knew Auntie had the best treats. "Quick run..." Auntie yelled and screamed, "The Mommie Monster is here to take the Candy away from you and me!"

We jumped out the window to hide our escape, but Auntie gave us away, when she screamed from tripping over a rock. I went back for Auntie as she yelled "Go leave me behind," I said "Without you Auntie 'The Cabin of Sweets', I can not find!"

I helped Auntie up, and we made a quick get away, But Mommie Monster was not on our trails, she was here to stay. We jumped into Fordie and we sped off in a flash, Now it was gonna be a Monster Mash.

Fordie was quick to drive forever fast, but mommie Monster had her Monster Truck, named "Brutus Blast!"

Me, Auntie and Fordie made quick sharp turns, But Mommie Monster and Brutus Blast were there at all the turns.

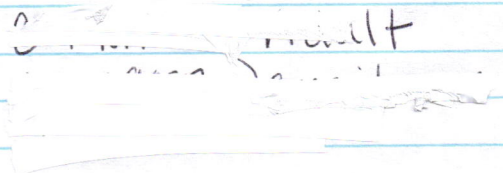
We thought the tricks of sharp turns we would lose them now, but we were now sure we couldn't lose her any how. We raced the Jungle, but Mommie Monster caught us in the end. And Auntie Connie told me...

"Tomorrow I will pick you up and all the gold I have for Candy, we will spend!"

By Christina M...

Dedicated to My Son & Sister!

April 30, 2024



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Don't Change My Mind (Christmas Version)

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NOTE: PROBABLY SPENT TIME

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Nothingness

True songs are sung
About the power
Of a mother's love
Ocean tide that it is
But let us not forget
The pleading crying
Of the boy who watches
His mother's casket
Lowered into the ground
How his tears
Outnumber the stars
As he falls to his knees
Wondering what
He had ever done
So wrong
That he should ever be left
So alone
In a black suit
Under a black sun
Exposing the
Black hole in his heart
That will never be filled
For, while he will eventually
Walk away from the graveyard,
He will never leave it
No matter where he goes,
What he does, or who he meets
The weight
Of the emptiness of that whole
Will always crush him
Into exploding nothingness
And that undeniable void
Is the space where,
When he struggles
When he succeeds
When he fails
When he
Shivers in the dark,
That whole is
The space in the air
That would have been filled
By mom hugging him
And saying,
"I love you."

Jack Lee

Adult

