

emissions

21 poems
by
M. Richard Smith

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This book is dedicated to my wife, Michelle, who inspires and encourages me through times of doubt and self-defeat; and to my children, who put up with my sometimes absentmindedness while writing.

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Introduction

Dear Reader,

First, I wish to thank you for taking the time to read some of my work. I hope that you will enjoy reading these pieces, as much as I have enjoyed writing and sharing them.

Poetry has always been a sort of letting of the soul for me. I mostly write because there is something inside of me that needs to get out. It could be a single word, a phrase or an image stuck in my head that needs releasing before it drives me mad, so I'll write it down. Once it is written, I'll usually expand on the thoughts or feelings that inspired it and a poem is born.

I have written many poems over the last twenty or more years. Many have been lost, forgotten, or hidden away so well, that they may never again see the light of day. From time to time, however, I do stumble across an old (and usually water-stained) notebook that contains some of the musings of my past. When this happens, I'll often rework a piece or two. Often the Muse will take one of these previously forgotten pieces and make from it something completely different and occasionally, I'll even find a piece that can stand as originally created. Sometimes I'll burn the very page on which it's written, but one thing that nearly always happens is that I become inspired to write again.

These 21 poems are a collection of pieces that have been created sometime between 1996 and 2003. Some have been reworked, while others have been left completely unchanged as originally written. Various themes are explored. Some pieces are dark, some are about love (either lost or found), while others make a comment on society or speak of nature. There are also a few written as tributes or memorials. Though some may cross over and not necessarily fit neatly into a single theme, I have tried to arrange them in a somewhat orderly fashion.

Sincerely,
M. Richard Smith

A Touch of Darkness

Fear Not

Fear not the evil that men may do,
nor the wickedness that dwells
within their hardened hearts.
For they are merely men,
not God.

The Wreck

Turned and twisted, angled steel,
scattered webs of glass.
Numbing pain too deep to feel.
Crimson pools on grass.

Flashing lights of blue and red.
His sight begins to fade.
Wailing echoes in his head,
but deaf to all that's said.

Room so white.
Lights so bright.

He heeds the voices calling.

Searching,
Seeking,

Panic wreaking.

His empty soul is falling.

Then,
Darkness!

Dying

Crawling through the twisted vine,
on hands and knees and out of mind,
he falls.

He reeks of burning, flowing sweat.
His bloodied hair is sopping wet.
He calls.

No one hears his hollow screams.
No one shares his haunted dreams.
He cries.

Tasting tears of sweat and blood,
his soul lay choking in the mud.
He dies.

Time

A child's face,
it shines!

Watching from the shadows of
the corners of my mind.

A different place.
Drowning in the tides of passing time.

Laughter gone
to burning tears.

With no one left to dry the face they're on.

Does anybody care?

Time moves on
and pain fades into numbness over years.

Growing strong
and growing old.

Releasing all that once was held in bond
and shaking free from cold.

Societal Emissions

City Night

Watching shadows
through the moonless night,
catching only glimpses
in the light of passing cars.
The pounding of the ground
beneath my calloused feet,
echoes incomplete
through my existence.

A distant siren sings,
making music in my ears
and sending visions,
somewhat clear, in my
subconsciousness.

Scenes of love,
neglected and abused
and of children dressed
in tattered clothes,
with soiled hands
and messy faces,
eating from a can
of cold soup,
while Mommy
turns a trick
and chases dragons
on the other side of town.

A dog is barking,
not without distinction,
and I wonder what it really means,
what I should be thinking,
when a woman screams in
rhythmic ecstasy, that she

CAN'T
TAKE
ANOTHER
MINUTE
OF
HIS
LOVE!

Soon, gunshots ringing near
incite the fears of my reality
and the haste of my escape.

Then curtly so,
the bitter taste of silence
reverberates
against the thickness
of the sultry
city night.

Afflicted

Affliction drives her hardened heart's intent,
while pity masks the mysteries of her truth
and comforts her with mutated hope.

She contemplates the days gone by,
when the luster of her countenance
concealed the frailty of her dreams.
And visions of escape assail her crowded mind
to suppress the swelling of her fears
and adulterate the bitter taste of her soul.

She veils herself in the coolness
of a dampened cloth
and breathes...

Then she paints her face to cover up her shame and
stuffs the undergarments of her soiled life inside a
tattered sack.

And as she labors for the door,
she hears the stumbling of his graceless steps.

As she nears the threshold of her sovereignty,
she's tempted by the tease of no return,
convinced that someday she could learn
to somehow love herself.

He smiles at her in the bliss of his oblivion
and knows that she'll be back.

Losers

Beggars can't be choosers,
although some may say
they choose the life they live,
losing everything to booze,
everything that once
they had to give.

But is it fair
to criticize
those paralyzed
by the fear
of overcoming
their transgressions?

And did I mention that
my own troubles,
welling up
from deep inside,
are just as much
as I can fully bear?

So then I say
it is better he
than me.

Besides,
who ever said
that life was fair?

Vacant Angel

A vacant angel paints
a silhouetted masterpiece
with drunken passion
on black imagined canvas,
creating psychedelic
metaphors of smoke
and sculptured fashion
in aesthetic harmony
with her life
in the surreal.

She smears
experimental messes
with bitter strokes
of broken wings,
that scream through
angry little portraits
of her insecurity.

Another dismal tapestry
of shattered dreams
and sunken hope
that dulls her
dank existence
and lessens the
absurdness of
her own reality.

When she deems the
picture finished
she esteems herself
less futile than she is
and calls it art.

Politicians

Shaking hands
with artificial friends.
and making promises that
they will never keep.

Kissing children,
smiling for the lens,
there's passion in their words,
but talk is cheap.

Repeatedly they
titillate our conscience,
while feeding on our blood,
our pain,
our taxes.

Just like leeches,
nesting deep
in our sub-conscious,
but with a wink,
a nudge,
the rigid law relaxes.

Nothing more
than dirty whores
of influence,
though rather skilled
at influencing whores.

In public,
they lash out at
moral pestilence,
then fornicate
behind their office doors.

I Want To Be

I want to be a rock star,
but I can't sing and I don't play.

I want to be in movies,
but I can't act and I'm not gay.

I want to be an astronaut,
but I'm too fat and scared of heights.

I want to be a lawyer,
but I don't care about your rights.

I want to be a ladies man,
but I'm too bald and not too cool.

I want to be a teacher,
but I'm too dumb and I hate school.

I want to be a protestor,
but I'm too shy to take a stand.

I want to be a preacher,
but I can't love my fellow man.

I want to be a prizefighter,
but I'm too small and not too tough.

I want to be a therapist,
but really, I don't care enough.

I want to be a homerun king,
but I can't cheat and don't get high.

I want to be the president,
but I'm too poor and I can't lie.

I want to be a circus clown,
but I'm too sad and not much fun.

I want to be a soldier,
but I can't fight and don't like guns.

I want to be a sailor,
but I get sick and I can't swim.

I want to be a stockbroker,
but my future's looking dim.

I want to be a brain surgeon,
but my hand shakes and I can't see.

I want to be so many things,
just anything but me.

Some Of Us

Some of us
can never get enough.
We reach for stars
but often falling short,
we tumble hard
and fall until we break
on calloused earth.

Some of us
are really not that tough.
We hide the scars
that show the hurt
and leave us marred
and lacking in ourselves,
a sense of worth.

Sunrise - Sunset

Night Traveler

Of darkened sky,
the gentle moon akin,
as angry clouds march by,
on the breath of evil wind.

And shedding light, through night,
to guide through darkness, cold and long.
Shadows playing at his side,
his companionship 'til morn.

Life decays beneath his feet,
as distant music fills his head.
He keeps the rhythm, holds his beat
and disavows the road ahead.

Soon the sounds of morning light,
the traveler thinks he hears.
Beyond the hills,
to kill the night,
the spilling sun appears.

Desert Eve

In burning shades of red,
the sun will shed its light,
and fade through whispering clouds
as night whisks in, so proud,
to melt away the day as planned.

And screaming ravens soar
in hovered flight,
seeking cover from the night,
across the brilliant painted sky,
so high above the cooling desert sand.

And soon, so full, the summer moon
will cast a lighted hue
with hinted tints of almost blue,
across the open vastness of this
thirsty, barren land.

On Love

I Wonder, Will You Cry?

When the sun sits low upon my day
and my sky begins to fill with grey,
when my dear mother kneels to pray,
I wonder, will you cry?

When laughter ceases to amuse
and Angels sing to me the blues,
when the time has come to pay my dues,
I wonder, will you cry?

When darkness dwells within my eyes
and Maker I cannot deny,
when it is time for me to die,
I wonder, will you cry?

Yesterlove

If you profess your love for me,
will then you turn and leave?
When hearts, as ours, belong as one
will you be strong enough to cleave?

Can you release your yesterlove
for those who've come before,
escape the wounds upon your heart
scarred when your innocence was torn?

Are you now free to share your love
with me, without concern?
Or must you quell the mighty fire
of your passion as it burns?

Am I to you, like all the rest,
who've let you drown in sorrow?
Or will you heed your heart's desire
and remain with me 'til morrow?

Do not confess your love for me
if hence, you must then leave.
Just lay here silent in my arms
and I'll just listen to you breathe.

Who

Who can feel the rhythm of your heart?
Who can share your passion?
Who can win the love you have to share?

Tell me that it's me,
who knows these things of you.

Who lights the flame within you?
Who warms you when you're alone?
Who holds you through the cold?

Tell me that it's me,
who does these things for you.

Who is it that you think of when you're sad?
Who is it that comforts you through fear?
Who is it that stands before your enemies?

Tell me that it's me,
who makes your dreams come true.

Who do you see when you close your eyes?
Who do you hear through silence?
Who do you taste, so sweet upon your lips?

Tell me, is it me?
If not, please tell me who.

Winter Night

On a quiet winter night,
before the fire burning bright,
I just hold you in my arms.
And I whisper in your ear,
I love you.
We watch the embers flying free
and in the amber glow I see
the contentment in your eyes.
And I whisper in your ear,
I love you.

On a quiet winter night,
bathing in the warming light
I can feel your soothing breath.
And I whisper in your ear,
I love you.
With the children long asleep,
your pleasant company, I keep
wishing night would never end.
And I whisper in your ear,
I love you.

On a quiet winter night,
as we hold each other tight,
there's no place I'd rather be.
And I whisper in your ear,
I love you.

Do You Hear?

Do you hear
the whispers of my heart?
And feel their tiny breaths,
so warm and sweetly scented,
as they land like falling feathers
on your rose petal cheek?
Many little kisses as you sleep,
confessing all the things I dare not say.

Do you hear
the chorus of my heart?
It sings so ever gently
and strums a quiet melody
to the rhythm of your breath.
Like tiny footsteps dancing softly
at the doorway to your love,
professing true, the musings of my soul.

In Remembrance

Reflection

I saw his face within my own,
beyond the water's edge.
A peace within his eyes, alone.
Within my heart, I bled.

Gasping as I tried to breathe,
the tears trailed down my face.
Skimming stones from on his knee,
this was once our special place.

But now the colored autumn leaves,
are but lonely shades of grey.
The pain, so deep, too great to ease,
there's so much I'd left unsaid.

The sun on us that used to shine,
so quickly had dissolved.
We grew apart, through passing time,
now I wish I'd stayed involved.

I failed to show at his time of need,
though I was all he had.
Trapped amongst these tangled weeds,
I say goodbye to Dad.

Remember

Where were you that dreadful day,
Do you still remember?
Did you pause to kneel and pray,
that morning in September?

Were you seated at your desk,
watching history unfold?
With eyes glued to the TV set
to witness stories, yet untold?

So much horror, so much pain,
came with such surprise.
The world we knew, forever changed
right before our eyes.

Heroes humbly gave their all,
to rescue those inside.
While watching treasured towers fall,
a wounded nation cried.

Nineteen demons died in vain,
the others innocently perished.
But in our hearts they shall remain.
May their memory be cherished!

So let us not forget for long,
our brethren who have died.
Their sacrifices making strong
a nation once untied.

Where were you that dreadful day?
I hope you still remember
those with loved ones torn away,
that morning in September.

Dear Poet

I have not read you for some time,
though no real reason comes to mind.

I guess the rote of day to day,
is enough to lead my time astray.

Your inner voice, which I have heard,
through the image of your words,
I keep with me from morning start
in a hidden pocket of my heart.

I have not told you in a while,
how your musings make me smile.
But rest assured they're still alive,
inspiring my soul to thrive.

So if you do not hear from me
and my thank-you, you don't see,
please don't let your ink-pen fall
because I'm with you after all.

Please don't stop when I don't read
for soon, for sure I'll have a need
to feel your pain or passion deep
and your sweet emissions I will keep.

So don't forget me while I'm gone.
You, my friend, must carry on.
If you're not there when I return
my situation, worse may turn.

About the Author

M. Richard Smith writes poetry, fiction, drama and non-fiction. He currently lives in the High Desert area of Southern California with his wife and three daughters.

“My favorite type of writing is poetry. So much can be said with relatively few words. When another person relates to some of the fears, the passion, or the pain in a piece I create, it makes the world seem smaller and a much more common place“.

