

Poetry Series

I.J. Benjamin
- poems -

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I.J. Benjamin()

A Girl With A Cigarette

i was sitting on the metal slab
waiting for a train
at 8 am,
minding my own thoughts,
when a girl came up to me,
the sound of worn out heels on the asphalt
gave her away

i barely looked up, i was hunched,
my stare was
frozen like that, like that cold bench that was always
there and i, always waiting for
another train,

i gave her a cigarette, my last one,
i was a fool trapped by her warm breath on my
neck,
thank god the train came, then,
and i got up, hurriedly,
not turning around.

the wheels rolled,
they were going to take me away and
inside, it was quiet, too quiet
i looked up
and i saw her, her cheeks were red she was smoking away in the cold, with my
cigarette
in her mouth....she gave me
a big tired sort of a
puff, a great big puff, that crowded the rest of the crowd and i smiled and she
smiled back.... i never saw that smile again.

I.J. Benjamin

A View From The Window

i am sitting here, watching a family
with three children eating at
six

they have
round plates
and gentle
faces
and they are smiling, and it looks like
a
happy
place

i keep watching,
the children with sauce
around their mouth,
they are laughing and the
adults
eat
slow
like they are thinking

perhaps, they are
not
happy,
perhaps it's all an act
and
the wife has
bruises under the green
dress

yes,
that is why she is
pale
that is why i can see
she does not look at him
she eats in silence
and her eyes are
sad, she can still

smell his drunken
breath on her
lips

i don't look anymore
i have seen
enough,
i go to bed,
alone but
strangely
content

I.J. Benjamin

Be Drunk

i tell you now,
i'll repeat these words,

be drunk,

be drunk with life and all it's
little moments
be drunk when a bird
flies away from a branch and the branch
wobbles a little in the wind.

be drunk
in that quiet space
between us,
the cozy remains
of millions of silvery stars.

be drunk with everything you know is good,
let every word
become another dropp in time,
for if the wise men would speak
they would tell you to
drink.

and to be
drunk
drunk with love,
drunk with poetry,
drunk with nature's beuty.

drunk with everything they thirst,
be it wine, or sex,
because, when the night falls
and we have drunk it all
to the very last,

we will still have so much.

Complete

the grocery boys
and girls
at malls
and my friends
and my foes
they don't know

they don't know
what a mountain
knows
what
sunrise
knows
they don't know
what the
leaves
and the
wind
and the
bees
know.

they have no
clue,
and it is sad for them
and sad for us all
that they don't
know.

because sometimes at
night
when the moon might be
bright,
when everyone is
asleep
it comes out from
somewhere,
from the air and maybe from
me

and for that tiny
glimpse
i know it too and
i feel as never
before,
and though i
am,
i am alone
no more

for that tiny
glimpse
i stand with mountains,
i stand
complete

I.J. Benjamin

Equilibrium

i am nobody and
i am nothing
i merely
exist out of a need

and before i was born
there was too much good or
there was too much bad
i cannot say
and then i became with a single
breath and a single
tear
and it all went back to
nothing, again like a scale
at rest,

not a single thing, now
just imagine the ever
quiet and forever
still

I.J. Benjamin

For A Spectator

i remember the sixth grade
and my teacher, an old gypsy woman with thick, greasy hair,
she would shout at me with a raspy,
liquor scolded voice,
run ben, run
but i would not and the black birds would shriek in fear of her.

i would stay right there in the grass,
in the shadow, but there was no shadow
i would dream for the whole hour,
as a red plastic ball was thrown around,
as the flowers moved in the wind,
as the sweaty children in the yellow uniform lost.

I.J. Benjamin

Goodbye

And now my time has passed,
i have to leave,
for nothing good or bad may
last,
but in my old
age I know,
unlike me,
you will not
fall,
for no matter how hard you try
the fire within you will
never die
for it burns brighter than any Sun
and it has just
begun.

And though there will be times of pain,
times when you are
sad, i'll watch over you,
my beautiful child,
i will be the wind in the chimney or the
rain outside,
i'll be a boy on the
swings
or a girl in the
park,
who puts a flower in your hair
who makes you smile,
i'll be the moon and the stars
forever in stillness
waving

goodbye.

I.J. Benjamin

He Is Not There

he is not there,
you may think you saw him
standing there
you may think he even looked
sad standing there
alone, by himself.

but that is not him,
so glance away,
do glance away
or else you may feel
like he is really there
you may even feel his pain

you don't want that
so glance away.

there,
isn't that better
like that, to be
dead.

I.J. Benjamin

Heartside Out

The asphalt is warm
and red
and I am happy
being normal,
sipping coffee
smiling
at girls
and they're smiling
back
in their normal
ways
with all the beauty of
their yellow teeth
and coffee drenched breath
and those thoughts
ideas and shapes-
frozen just like that
under roads,
under banks
under suits and under death
that's much worse than death
in a bottomless pit,
in a pit that ends
in my heart, just below
where the asphalt is cold,
and all is well

I.J. Benjamin

Hello, Are You There?

hey there,
i don't wanna disturb, well
i do,
but i know you're out
there,
you might be crawling out of your
bed right
now and that's ok,
you sleepy
head

you might be brushing your teeth
or you might not have any,
you might be ten or a
hundred
you might be poor as a mouse
or you might be small as a mouse
or rich, real
much and you might live in a
real big fancy
house

but hey it's ok,
it don't matter,
because
i know you're out there,
so don't be afraid to come out
to peek
out
and say Hi
or Holla
or Ni hao

i know it might look like a
real scary place,
where you get to use your heart
and you get to give a little
back
but you can do it,

it will be great,
it will be the Best thing you will ever do,
and when you die they might even print a
postcard with your name on too

all the while,
if there is a god
you'll stand in her palm
and she'll say,
with your mother's voice
and your mother's care
i thank you, for the life you led
was trully
great

I.J. Benjamin

How Sad It Is That We Are Strangers Still

Every time I try to type a few decent words
I am hoping,
no! i am praying they are better
Than the last, though they rarely
are

I know I can only come so close to The
Truth,
I know that I don't know truth and that
I never will
and realising this
Is the hardest part of it

And *it* is everything I have
Without *it* it we would not be.

We
you and me, strangers at 3 am
at the train station and
I am trying to sell you my uncertain heart

And *it* just looks from the dark,
Smiling wryly

But it still is worth it, in the
End, when all the looks have been forgotten when all the
Kisses vanish with
you.

I.J. Benjamin

I Am Not A Poet

it would just be me
and him
and we would sit on the cold floor of the side walk
and he would draw shapes in the grass with a broken
stick
and i would watch him, his eyes
were like sunken black marbles

I.J. Benjamin

Just Do It

you might think you're
free,
but you're not

from the second you're
born
they own you, and they lure
you to join their lot

and then
when you are about
sixteen,
filled with hormones
you get a choice:

you can say
hey, look at me and
take off all your clothes
(preferreably in a quiet place,
like at a school, when you sit
the exams)

and then run, real fast
and suddenly those back
streets will come alight
and park benches will
feel
just
fine

they must

I.J. Benjamin

Kanalia .

I was with a girl named Kanalia
with good curves, she explained that it's Hawaiian
and that it means
beauty within a shining star
and she smiled
and i looked at her and
looked at her some more,
i said so what?

she looked shocked,
offended even, I said, my name is Ben, i hate my name
and do you ever think
that the sea and the mountains are ugly and boring?

she looked surprised and laughed, of course not
they're beauuuuutiful, she said
and then she drawled on with her white teeth some more about her
name and she said
she liked mine.

Oh well, you can't have everything.

Later, we went home and had sex, and in the morning,
like all stars,
she was gone.

I.J. Benjamin

Mockingbirds

today the day was short

there was little sun

there were clouds

and my mockingbirds were
gone...

did you shoot my hopes?
little things upsetting no one.
destined for nothing but dreaming.

yet you shot them.

i know you did.

how does it feel?

it doesn't matter. they didn't have
long left anyway.

no one does.

it is silent.
again.

i fear it's time.

that time when the tears will not flow no more, the fallen will not fall no more,
deepest depths will not deepen more.
something like that.

but i don't know because
it is not.

it never is.

poems are written about times like those,
grey beards are scratched in these thoughts.
and they never come when you want them to
come,

there is always enough left
to cling to
and the cliff is never there until it is
until you really are old and
bitter
and your liver is failing
and your teeth are cracking
and all the passion has been
sucked out of you.

the world is like a sponge.

and YOU have killed my mockingbirds.

I.J. Benjamin

Not All Loneliness

i left two scars below my feet
and i am reduced to
listening to the wet sand
as the waves lick its wounds
as it moves back to the only state it
knows

oh but i
remember the passion of the
fire
and the warm bedside and the
satin sheets on your breasts
and just how much it would
easier
if only inside of me would
die

when i was a child, i had a view of a
park bench from my bedroom window,
where one drunk would always come and drink
until one night a thick snow fell
and it must have been so quiet and beautiful
that he never woke up

I.J. Benjamin

Ode To A Fly

I saw a
fly
zig
zag
down

and
I wonder
was it
young?
how many
times
did it bathe in soups
and bite off little chunks
of pink steaks
at top
restaurants?

and it's all so
sad,
that little
fly
never more will
buzz
around,
never more will it feel
the thrill of being chased
by sweaty men
as it spoils their lunch
break

i see,
it's family arrive,
gathers round in silence
for a funeral at the bin
in the kitchen
next to a squashed,
brown banana

the relatives
have little flowers in their hands
and a priest is there
as the fly is laid to rest
nestled inches into
uneaten chunks
of chocolate cake

and they're off
to the
widower's
place
where
they'll get drunk
again
and they'll fly again
because that's what they
do
and tomorrow night
they'll sleep in the dumpster
again

I.J. Benjamin

Of Mice And Men

when meaning has faded away
like the dawn resided the day
and you have no sense of purpose
but the loneliness of each second
or the cheap happiness of a
two word rhyme, you'll see
a man smoking, gazing into the sky
fearing, doubting, questioning
what is it, and why?
A life composed of events
bound by not a single thread
and the woman in the blue dress
watching children throwing snowballs
sighing, doubting, knowing
for the ugliness seeks itself a place
where her beauty is unwelcome.

But it wasn't always like this,
oh no,
lost souls were once beacons of more hopeful
seas
and the air between us
was not always cold
nor planted with doubt
and the words once sang loud in the churches
and even louder inside.

And often the realisation that it's gone
is the only thing you have.
And yet,
I can feel the snow on my cheek,
I can feel the wind on my cheek,
It is true, the Gods are cruel but,
that is all i have, and now i ask of you
don't let it slip out of your hands,
no matter how old or young or trembling,
don't be like so many others,
wasted, withering, dying inside,
hold it, feel it, alight it with a flame

let it burn for a second, not more,
only enough,
only so that it would burn a hole
through a heart of those with no
heart.

I.J. Benjamin

On Air

yesterday
as i was sitting in the
shade,
sipping lemonade
as
crowds went
by,
it occurred to me
and the wind
that swept my
face,

i'm just like air
the midnight air,
the stale air
that seems to hang
forever there,
in hidden alleys
and dark
spaces
and lonely, unmarked
graves,
and unexplored,
ghostly ways
that's looked upon with
stone cold hate

and just like that sickly
air,
that sort of stands
there,
i am there,
thinking
watching
dreaming
and no one
cares

People Are Not Good To Each Other

Yesterday,
the most beautiful woman in the world
was going to kiss me, except, the second
before our lips touched, i fell apart
like a shivering coward of a man.

At that moment,
she looked at me
strangely,
like I was some inanimate piece of
rock
and walked off.

In retrospect i have to ask
when exactly did this sense of
hatred for myself come?
when did I lose all self-respect and belief
when did I arrive at the point of looking in
the mirror and wishing the person looking back
dead?

I remember being bullied in school
i remember the bruises and the torn jumpers
i remember the names, and the hateful words, and the
smiles. Oh yes, I remember the smiles, and those gleaming,
glaring eyes of pure hatred the most.

Hatred of what?
of insecurity?
Why does one person do this
to another?

But of course, as one grows old,
one sees it everywhere, except that the shoves
and the pushes
and the evil smiles
are hidden behind false pretences.

All we can do is be good to ourselves.

I.J. Benjamin

Sometimes Rain Rains Right On Time

my love,
i am still here, smelling you in the soil
and the little warmth left on your stone
is all but dead, i sometimes think
have you tully gone, my love?
a man can understand
only so much,
when the midnights still smell of
you,
when the jealous angels will not have me
too.

calendars of winters you have left
with me,
tired clocks and hollow winds,
without you everything is nothing,
and nothing must be
better than this.

and when you cannot sleep, and the water
drips through cracks in walls,
and it goes quiet
you realize,
the walls are falling in,
the walls are falling in,
and the dogs are finally
frozen dead
in snow.

for me, the gods have better things,
lonely mornings and lonely nights,
and fires that do not fire,
and this thing they call life.

so,
i place a beer and a dozen roses
and if i could, i would place myself
next to you.

but the flowers will not pain,
they will have
no pain
and
there will be no tears in heaven,
even though i wait.

I.J. Benjamin

The Best Dream Of All

inside the most desolate of mountains,
where nothing is,
a speck of life, exists, breaths and lives,
the little, little hearts of
purpose beat in sync, between the
redbrick walls, the new and faded walls
with wrinkled yellow paper shedding slowly
off, like you and me,

the homes with lamps with orange lights in
them all sit,
homes of mice and ants, and rats and
dusty trucks and cars and boats and tin and cans,
homes of forks and spoons and hearts, broken, fresh
as any water in the rusted pipes can, and
envy too, as bright as blooming greens and grass,
and love and sand and snowy beaches vast,
for on the pebbles walk again the girls and boys
under moon and water and fire inside the clouds, where children
kissing are, barely sixteen,
think they found their souls,
just before the greatest rain of all, they're singing
in the gentle wind, they're standing there being cold

just to feel the warmth of
the darkness approach, so they're wrapped in blankets, smiles and frowns and
feeling
nice inside, feeling warm,
young again beneath the skies
painted for them, in dreamy pastel brights,

but they are there, and here are we,
the forgotten ones, the unknown ones, the fallen ones, the unsung ones,
we dream,
in our dreams,
the rain carries us away,
it
carries us to the murky depths of river banks, so we may become
a rock

on which the new will build upon, and then we dream the better dream,
though we dare not say, we always know,

and

when we come across another one of us, by accident at
some certain place, some random time of day,
it's that look, only just a glance,
that longs to dream
the best dream of all,
the one of no tomorrow

I.J. Benjamin

The Difference Is I Carry My Umbrella Everywhere

When it's late at night or thick in the afternoon,
or the traffic is the worst, or the toast machine is broken
and you are swimming through waves of sweaty crowds,
notice the squeak of the birds in the sky, the rattle of the pipes, the sound of
everything so easily becoming
unstuck.

The man on the news says that showers are likely tomorrow,
though yesterday he said the same thing, and there weren't any showers,
instead there was a collision on the freeway and four people died as easily as
God breaking a young tree.

Though you might not know it, to somebody you are totally insignificant and
absolutely unordinary. As the days go into years, that list becomes as heavy as
your credit card debt. All it takes, always, is a wrong woman, wrong friends, and
a right pub. Or even to notice the clouds, and the sound that the tires of the bus
make as they roll through the mud.

And if tomorrow doesn't rain you might consider us
lucky.

I.J. Benjamin

The Dying Man

With a bottle in hand
on a park bench, encased by
barbed wire,
not smiling, not frowning,
just sitting.

You think he looks
sad sitting there
alone, by himself, you may feel
an illusion of thought,
an emotion for:

'The dying man' the poster says,
in bright shades of red,
and you think you feel
his pain.

They tell you to walk away,
men in grey suits,
and women in flowery dresses
and children sucking lollipops,
the show is over, they say,
don't stay, they say,
but you stay,

you sit under that shade
you sit there, alone,
because you've learned that to
be alone is not the worst thing
of all.

and time passes and goes,
people pass by,
they watch the dying man
and you,
and you now know,
what you've known before,
that there is no choice, and it's
just a show, it's just a ride,

it's just you and him,
looking at the dead looking
in

I.J. Benjamin

The Ever Gone

The ever still we are - the ever in love are still in love,
the ever in hate are still in hate and the ever poor still smile.
And their smile is still the same and
still, the very worst off feel good some days.

Still the same children play in the same parks
And still the same old men gather over the same chess board,
And the same horns still horn for the same newlyweds
And as before, the ever gone are still gone,

Nobody bothers with the ever gone,
Everyone has let them get away.
And now they have wondered off somewhere, almost certainly to a place of
darkness and fear and death but still
there are a few that look for them.

The ones who succeed, will have books written about them,
and you'll never see them again for they will never walk these streets again
But the best of the best of the few, won't have a name on their tomb
You won't know them, and you probably won't meet them, but they are the
ones who make forever great- The Ever Gone themselves.

I.J. Benjamin

The Fountain

Our past, like the way a seed, a particular sort of seed sort of curves out at the tip, so it doesn't fall out of a beak from a bird that carries it, a specific kind of bird, that lives in a certain place. A certain country, where a certain bird flies over certain patch of soil. Like a town in East Europe. It's just there, never to be extinguished, only retraced. Like cement that sets, it cannot be unset, without it cracking, without the house falling apart.

We are nothing but the sum of all our parts, the present and the past, and only now matters, only now counts. It is impossible to start anew, that's the tragedy of time. Still there'll be those who'll travel south, or go someplace where it's cold, go to the Alps, and go farthest North and they'll try to escape, they'll run to Space but their seeds and their plants won't let them. They'll say, hey, come back. You are mine, and I am yours, and that's just the way it goes.

I.J. Benjamin

The Most Beautiful Smile

There is no smile more human and rare
than one of acceptance for what is there,
than one of compassion when life is not fair.

(A true gift of Gods who have made us care)

And all the passion two lovers may share,
all the kisses and roses that ever were,
to a sad smile will never compare.

I.J. Benjamin

The Night Laughs And I Am Thinking Of You

If I could just sleep,
If I could just leave day where it belongs with
you, with your teeth and your skin
that is smooth and smells of honey
but the spring of death bores flowers,
bores mountains and grass and bees and
it doesn't let go.

The sheets dance a slow dance,
and it is in the smoke of an oil lamp,
a whisper of an old friend
who reminds me that
the flowers and the mountains and the moon and the
stars will
never give you
back to
me.

I.J. Benjamin

The Treehouse

When I was eleven,
there was a treehouse up on the neighbour's tree.
It was my sole envy, it was all I wanted, but my father,
he said,
'Tomorrow, we'll build it together'
but we never did.

Some months later we heard that the kid next door had passed away.
His mother was crying, and my mother, poor thing,
held her as tight as she could, at the doorstep of the
yellow house with a red 'welcome' mat
and a faint smell of cigars.

Every sunday I was allowed up there,
I'd watch the smoke and the leaves dancing in the wind,
I'd watch a man at the ATM, i'd watch ducks at the pond,
and the way people walked.

And at seven my father staggered to the tree to yell at me,
'Get the hell down here'
but I stayed up there.

I was drunk in love and he
couldn't climb.

I.J. Benjamin

The Very Worst Of The Thoughts Of A Romantic Fool

They just be floatin'
up there, all grey and
as if resting on air
but that air might be smoke,
a jealousy's veil
or it might be hate-
on the very worst of days, but still
there'll be
clouds up there
like love, my
love will be
forever brighter
then all that shimmered
air, forever warmer than
today, when it's really cold,
and you're not in my arms
and i'm all alone with rain.

I.J. Benjamin

There's A Sadness In My Heart

i don't know if it will ever depart

I.J. Benjamin

Thoughts Of A Boy By A Lonely Sea

i wonder if i shall ask her
for her heart
with her hand in my
hand,
i wonder
if her eyes will be on
mine, and i wonder if she
knows
about the few stars
left there, from the past
and that
the sun has set
at
eleven forty
five over a lonely
coast last March and that
tonight
the seagulls will
fly, as if sad and
slow,
as if they know that
tonight,
the moon will come out for
us, and it will stay and mourn with us,
to comfort my
heart,
and the wind will
swell up and the skies will go
as bright as they can, and
i fear with time, with
her hand on mine
there'll be a sunrise

I.J. Benjamin

Through The Muddy Roads Of Christmassy Towns

Do you ever wonder what happens
To the little trains that puff at the sides and the little
Red Cars that do twelve volts a mile and the little
Trucks that knock over old ladies as they try to hide?

I.J. Benjamin

True Love

Here is a poem to true love
this poem will not rhyme
there will be no full moons or serenades
this poem will be read with a snack
watching TV out loud.

This poem will slowly fade with
the coming of dementia
until it's remembered each day
for it's heart will be of compassion
snoring loudly by your side.

Thought this poem is long and often boring
and no one can sing this grey monster out
still, you will love me for writing it
because that's what true love is about.

I.J. Benjamin

When It's The Worst

It's the worst at one to five

the frozen stares of strangers on the
subways, the train operators in their blue dresses waving to each other like
bored housewives. Waving across the shit stained stations, across bodies of dogs
mad from heat.

And inside, to the left, where the booth is, the old men with red woolen scarves
and their splashing beer bottles and blood shot eyes try to push in.

no ticket, no entry
no ticket, no
entry

a bum pisses onto a lemon tree outside

no ticket, no entry

The baton is ready to be drawn, the police man holds it steady and strong, like a
long,
thick, black cock he secretly craves.

And the drunks try to stand up tall, but they want to fall, they try to spit but their
mouths are dry, they try to yell but their voice is hoarse.

More hordes of the same crowds pass by.

Spoiled children, beaten wives, deadbeat husbands. They're all walking
somewhere. The whores and the faggots, the killers and the nuns, the teachers
and pedophiles, as one.

I am no better, I am no worse. My eyes lust for the tight, pink, jailbait warmth
that strolls across. But there is no time.

The clock chimes and the oldest drunk with the biggest gut, lies down, and he
falls hard. His head bleeds, his mouth bleeds. He might be dead,

But the train is never dead.

it leaves

it becomes quiet.

the drunks don't bicker any more, the sun doesn't burn, the sky doesn't open,
god doesn't flop down dead.

It's unbearable

I.J. Benjamin

You Can Hear It Go

you can hear it go
inside a
house
when the water drips down
walls
and the walls are frozen
but not quite,
they're falling in
like wind battered
asphalt
dust

and
even when it's spring
and all is
pink
and little girls run down rose covered
ways
and they bathe and they
swim
in the fresh mountain
springs,
you might never know
but still,
still it goes

so what do you do?
you ignore
and
soon
the plastic is
torn
the family is here,
and it's christmas
and bright lights
are to be
enjoyed

all the while,

though,
it still goes

it's been so
long,
you're tired and
your
bones
ache and your soil,
once rich and black has
turned into
sand
and you wonder
when?
but nothing comes,
only the brown of
the fall,
how moist and
how
cold

and no one runs down
those
alleys, and those
springs
and the girls and those
boys
have long gone,
and you're alone
sitting in a brown chair,
sipping tea
and smoking,
hearing it still
go:

tap
tap
tap

like an old
friend

