

Poetry Series

Josh Terpening
- poems -

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Josh Terpening(9/24/1983)

A Whisper Flutters On The Wind

A whisper flutters on the wind.
Point of no return
I have come again.

Follow the drifter in plight of salvation
As Heaven traces the reckoning.
He meditates on the suffixes of closing life
To seek after an undiluted meaning
To find an untamed rest for the unfamiliar
To suffocate the blazing questions
That cannot even cease smoldering.

Wrapped in tattered toga,
He stepped into the ashen glow of moon
To mock his smug attire.

Silence.
To pull thoughtlessness under
The apex of bewilderment.

And like a wave of delight
Sodden in truth and answer,
The hearer willingly engulfed
By the gravity of enlightenment
Heels held captivated by the undertow
Of emanating Love.

Drowned in the words of some unknown sage
Chinks exposed and fallacies disclosed
By the simple polish of pristine lucidity.

High in the Universal Infinite
Through the golden hues of the final sunset
Beyond the sapphire sea shimmering in ecstasy,
Listen.
To the violet winds beneath the skin.
It is a whisper.

Josh Terpening

At Night I Prepare For Sleep In A Soft Bed

At night I prepare for sleep in a soft bed
The moonlight beams dance all night
Long on the ground, I dig, a slave
Shackled to my shovel grasped so tight—
In the end I collapsed, dead in my grave.

(Never neglect these gifts)
as I feel the illusion of time unfolding—
and swiftly strive to shift and sway
in synchronicity with the rhythmic currents—
still ever gracious
these desires shall subside.
Persevering phases and waves of phases
There, there
Clinging on to self-sacrifice and surrender
Your internal gift shining
Blindingly you will see it.

Getting closer to apathy than ever before
Baptized in these lies
I despise your wicked cries
And endlessly I flee
Seemingly from sympathy.

And still, my humble skiff keeps me alive
By never destroying, never weakening.
This is the ultimate ride.
Oh, my chemical hurricane has ravaged
My philosophical oars, my poetic palms,
And each brilliant sunrise, each pallid moonlight
My heart still forces wounded blood
To every burning muscle fiber and back again.
Yet still, I can feel the sea consuming me.

Whirlwind of sounds
Amorphous and pounding rhythmic
Between my temples,
And consuming the quiet—

(the gentle monotones of my thoughts)
invariably yielding a sweet surfacing subconscious;
In this I produced this.

Josh Terpening

Burn, Your Eyes

Burn your eyes with frozen smiles
Bring the lost souls to bed;
When the steps sink make your while
Into the desert's red.

There lives a world of experiences
Between sunlight and shadow

I witnessed the prey
Transformed into the predator.

Ten thousand kisses inside visionary eyes.

My mind exploded and
Life was vaporized.

The universe imploded
And everything disappeared.

Sitting on a sidewalk in a prickly city with the dimmest of eyes, I became immune to the chaos. I began to fade away, to dissipate into a drowsy but sleepless dream. I envisioned a beautiful marriage of an ocean and a beach by the sun radiating bright yellow unto the surfaces of both land and sea. The tiny, piercing, white sparkles on the water sincerely loved each granule of sand that glittered like a star. My eyes then stepped back into my mind revealing a new kind of cosmos.

O, BLINDED RESPLENDENCE (MY FUTURE)
BEQUEATH YOUR SHAMEFUL WOES,
FOR THIS YEAR'S GLOOM DID HIBERNATE
BEFORE THE BLOOM
AND WRESTED ABYSMAL FLOWS

OF HOPE AND ITS RESEMBLANCE!

Josh Terpening

Cyclic

Stammering, a contorted mouth with many questions
Captured an ancient verse to stamp on my thigh
Or on heart inscribe.
It is beyond me, the weightlessness of a needy newborn,
Swaddled in current conditionings to crush infinite possibilities.
The cyclic circle, the progressions concedes
And continues carousel-like, vague descriptions, misinterpreted meanings,
None can relinquish conclusions. There is no stopping
The perpetual motion of what will be ... infantility.
Instinctual murmurs for more
Insatiable wants swallowing just enough of the needs,
Opaque in the fringed frailties,
(the toddler reaches out to touch the mother
with an intuitive knowledge blooming that she is the outlet of answer) .
Visible, long delay of still premature digestion of solid food
And mental nourishment
New eyes glistening and I am listening to the pain-soaked screams
Of dull teeth sprouting.
By now the formulation of an unfrozen language is swirling
And floating upon a green sea of desire.
Clouds take shape and the child learns the names of them,
Even the rainbow is veiled in its separation, this one is red, that one blue.
Every word is a thought, every thought a hue.
The unfolding of time, rose petals fall away.
A new view after swiped eyes widen,
My vision shifts, a golden scale tips, scars once scarce
Now abound around an aged heart resistant to correction
And hesitant to rejection.
Just a single sunbeam can redeem the decay of yesterday's dream.
No fierce, mad, crooked spasms of swatting reflections
Pronouncing rippling waves glistening, gleaming, shimmering
By sacred light of an aged soul settling finally
Encircling all too humanistic tendencies to grasp divisive insanities.
In the corrosive wake, the sage's wisdom
Has effaced the sufferings of middle-aged scientific methods.
Trial and error yielding practical magic,
A minefield free-swept, debugged, clean awakening.
The light of life resurfaces laughing on a wrinkled face,
Misidentified and nameless,

Gravity plucks silver and white, a jesting reminder of physical escape.
Toothless drooling and silent, the body leaves in paralleled unison
With its arrival.
The dried eyes close alas
Cold desiccated release glorious exhalation, the breath
Returns to its source.
No thing is wasted.
This trip begins completely finished.

Josh Terpening

Freedom From Self

On a stale and stagnant night
Suspended between clear and clouded consciousness
I invented a straightway to heaven
Having surpassed the treachery and fright
Of the dark wood
And from the continuous stepping in and out
Of the blinding light

Becoming lovers with the shadows
The slavery in which I wrapped my whole being
With amorphous translucent shackles
That was pure torture
Very visibly indicated by my tired face—
It was lifted off of me and I was free finally
For my design was flawlessly executed...
These were my last thoughts
Before my heart stopped sighing
Forever.

Josh Terpening

It Is Happening Quickly

It is happening quickly,
Please ascend with me.
Let us go unbound in this rapture of impetuous freedom.
Reigning as subjects reign.
Do not be afraid of what others fear.
Their left and their right pull them apart.
O Listener, you are more than two opposites!
O Beautiful Revelation!
When we die we do not end.
You cannot be done away with.
Here we are, such divine pieces
Experiencing this life in this way,
And tomorrow it will be on to the next.
Ah, all that I could say, I cannot say!
You must experience it for yourself.
Do you yet see how The One has favored you?
The Creator is well pleased in It's creation.

Josh Terpening

My Peace

Here is

A bold slant at something precise:

I have wearied my mind on an un-trodden trail to this avail.

And I have pried my eyes wide to see the unseen.

All the forms have taken shape,

Molded by molten memories that burn like the surfaces of stars!

The newness of each fresh step intoxicated the pleasure-seeker within,

(This trajectory was fore-ordained

This flight was mapped in the mind of the map Maker)

And I flowed with the substances of God...

Words became alive and I have had conversations with them.

Skies opened up to me and I have listened to their cries.

My soul shook the hands of trees as they swayed greetings in the breeze.

O the mysterious depths of life!

O the heart that beats to the rhythm of life!

Look carefully

Everywhere, everywhere creation holds truth in its palms, reaching.

The atoms of love are spaced perfectly

To walk on consciously inside the heart of Spirit.

Josh Terpening

Passers-By

How

Greetings go the response to strangers

In the street,

With such a superficial exchange of words

Every time they meet.

A paradoxical and peculiar thing it seems to me,

That they announce their lives to these replies

So optimistically...

For after they part ways, even before they turn around,

Gloomily the mind strays and their hearts are on the ground.

Josh Terpening

Pillowly Adrenal Glands

Cotton snowflake white
And two nasal collections
Yippee
No need in deciphering equivocality
Lovely feelings
Great momentum
Down in the lowly bizarre troughs
I do like to tread in the velvety sands
Of a false sense of well being.

This is my ephemeral land
A moment to savor the flavor of the circling sun
To catch a partial reflection
In the watery psyche
The breadth of young feathers
Shiny as a tar-dripping sickle.

Where are your azure hues
Now that I must leave this place (page)
I must enter some eerie room
Where it matters not if your eyes are green or blue

Foaming furious are the waves
Of the uncharted sea residing inside of me
The greatest anticipation follows your entrails
And quite pale.

Willfully wrong
So exhausted obscure sight
So lugubrious the flight
No tiny hostile ballet dancers on my shoulders
No mammoth-handed monster squeezing my heel
Frail laser lightening bolted nerves
Internal green neon ooze
No one knows.

Josh Terpening

Reflecting

waxing mirrors
in the rain,
have i gone insane?

stout, fearsome, mad, and ablaze
he conjures, super-crazed, these nefarious creations

until cool, mellow wells of comfort
bubble out and into a sappy finish

because she sings to me a silent symphony

after our brilliant conversation on love in love
shifted, like a dream
like ice that melts to the warmth,

towards tomorrow's frozen hues.

Josh Terpening

Secrets Of The Rising Sun

This morning my soul
Mirrors the sky.
Brilliant are we,
heaven and me.
Blending on this generous ride
I reflect to confide
in the orange sky.
In every florescent word I spilled,
Bluer the horizon filled.
At last the world revealed to me
A glorious image
Of colored truth and honesty!

Josh Terpening

Spry Praise

Open fields swaying in the springtime breeze
And blessed Flora raises sweet scented life,
Calling her progenies by color.
And they shout for attention (but we cannot hear them) .
I am always enchanted in the blooming of the natural divinity
As each plant builds its own temple
To spend its life worshipping the Sun and the Rain.
Observe the lesson with perception:
The birth of life rises, defying gravity,
Upward, upward toward the celestial sphere,
Toward heaven and all its light energy.
What ancient universal cryptic secret flows
Between chlorophyll that does not flow
Between blood?

Josh Terpening

Star-Gazing Creatures

We are stargazing creatures
With suns in our eyes.
In the blackness of nights
There always shines twilights,
Swirling within our invisible features.

Like yellow, billowy smoke from
A fiery weeping willow, her words
Rose as she spoke,
'The sky cries in vain from unbridled pain,
And the stars are but infinite scars—an
Eternal reminder for internal restrain! '

Suddenly the mirror became clearer
And the reflection of sure perfection
Both blessed and haunted me
Year after year.

Josh Terpening

The Black Bird

I respect you,
Little black bird on a branch, cold and alone
Still singing praises to God today

Josh Terpening

The Longest, Hottest Summer

Weeks of sweltering heat
And I recall chocolate melting
A relief of rain or wind
Exchanged sweat for sweet
The hottest day of the year
Exhaled vaporous sighs
A flashback to autumn's crisp tear
So to return to vanquish highs
Come on cool views
Replace hazy hues
My good ole dog did disappear
On the hottest day of the year

My fanned flames mock the proximity of the sun!
Yes, you guessed correctly—
The path is a pattern of yet another wretched, wasted season.

Josh Terpening

The Mind Is A Cloud

You needn't voluntarily twinge
A single muscle fiber.
No,
All one needs to do is willingly
Swallow a microscope.
Explore one's internal cavern.
Investigate every nook and cranny.
Leave no stone unturned.
Sift through one's self layer by layer.

The beautiful, arduous journey into the deep
Requires stillness not motion.
Calm, quiet, patient, surrendering absolutely,
Absolutely compassionate, sinking into one's bottom
Like a pebble cast into a pond,
Yet thoroughly examining the essence
In every crack and crevice,
Your treasure will find you!

Precious jewels and gems will abound,
Yet their gleam will be weak.
For you will be amongst stars, galaxies, universes!
You will illuminate forevermore,
Peaceful, lucid, humble,
An inward smile fixated upon your face,
Your eyes twinkling to mirror the constellations,
To be in love with everything and wholly aware of the
Oneness of everything,
You have now reached the apex.
This is enlightenment.
This is the kingdom of heaven.

Perfect.

Josh Terpening

Typewriter Blues

THROUGHOUT GHOSTLY VISIONS in a vacant
Room that swirled with birds that swooped
Tighter and tighter until they entered my brain
Blue and black beaks penetrated my eardrums
causing a permanent dark blue reality of flight

my salmon colored heels have eroded by surreptitiously
traveling on the ocean floor still yet just shallow enough
to bleed sea green from slicing feet on conk shells
sharks only exist in the mind

seven nights I slept on tattered sheets on broken beds and pillows stuffed with
lead

painful lessons: "WE MAKE OUR OWN BEDS," said Ms. Max Mortal

frost bitten fingertips bleed onto the keys I squeeze
releasing some frosty red ink, glistening in the light of context.
Please, miss mortal, when you open your eyes wide be sure to look away

Yearning to be free
My heart sings to me—
Yet I am its slave
and it is my master.
In here, a whip is logic
And my pen is
Redemption.
These words bleed out of me
Because my truth is injurious.
My god,
I am leaving red fingerprints
All over these pages.
Very little need to investigate now.

Josh Terpening

Unholy Feminine Saviour

Unholy Feminine Savior

Pale, white lightening shatters traceable trails and patterns - these are instantaneous flashes of pathways of pain, wrapped rather hideously in a pleasurable package. We split our backs and bruised our knees and clasped our chapped palms

And kissed the dirt mount ground.

Lift your weary head, Son, and smile that muddy smile.

You've been blessed now by our homemade god from scratch. The divine murderer,

The heavenly rapist, the sacred thief - and just then the ground rumbled

And there split a fault line; ten million lost souls sang like wounded cicadas!

"HE IS COMING AGAIN! " They shouted in disharmony.

"Who is this Spiritual beast? And what shall I call His Highness when I see Him face to face? "

A sweet voice from within whispered clearly as if in a lullaby,

"I am Euphoria. You know me well."

Josh Terpening

Upon Haughty Shoulders

The clustered squeeze of tomorrow's empty promises,
Feign the old squabbles of yesterday's dreams—
Upon haughty shoulders she wore her delicate deceit.

I quoted a few lines from "We Are Star-gazing Creatures":
Saying, "The sky cries in vain from our unbridled pain, and you see those
stars are but infinite scars... an eternal reminder for our internal restraint!"

O descending gloom!
How you come on strong—
Strong enough to yield one's vessel
Shipwrecked!
Strong enough to force the dive overboard
Head-first and calling oneself the anchor!
Risking life and limb
In the belligerent wake, raw with war
And sickness!

O descending gloom!
O impending doom!
Fraught with tasseled thoughts,
You keep me secluded in a web of discomfort.
Though I lay prostrate
And roll like the sea,
You cease not to obliterate hopeful maneuverings.
But I respect you.
Fair in your malice,
You are both punishment and consequence.

Josh Terpening

Worlds Of Words

Keen and scouring for hours
In Between a visionary cipher clean,
The banal wisps striving like scratching bubbles.
Yet this swirling ink text must evince squalor,
Amid flyleaf or fresh canvas,
Innocently shining immaculate
In their most beautiful blankness.
Thus dismissing words and worlds
As intruders of languor unclean
If indeed the artist is in love
With the Pristine Palace of Perfection.

To labor in the fertile fields of language,
Surrender the scythe,
And uproot the brakes and briers
With a dull hand
If indeed the artist yearns
To know what lush, verdant Soul Crops
Yield from the ineffable
Lands within.

I am cultivating
The hushed lands of Tathagata.
Pulling the gray binds
That baleful words have entwined.
I see thick, golden fruits
Hanging, suspended
Against a creaseless azure sheet.
And silver spices
Twinkling after melon-sky sunsets.
O blessed Flora!
Open swells keep holding
Firmly planted feet,
Whether on or off levitation,
The Leviathan holds still
In awe
Convinced of freedom
In season ripe

For plucking the sweet fruit!

Josh Terpening