

“Behind the Scenes”

**The door had been left just slightly ajar
To the backstage section of the theater,
But before I could travel very far,
I was asked to leave by a stern greeter.**

**No one's allowed to see behind the scenes;
It would ruin the magic of the show.
You have to be content with other means
Of finding out what you would like to know.**

**The door was then promptly shut in my face;
No backstage tour was to me extended.
Still I hoped I would somewhere find a trace
Of truth beyond that which was pretended.**

**Her eyes, so piercingly stunning and blue,
Glist'ning with spiritual wanderlust.
His face, colored in an innocent hue,
Mad that into adulthood he was thrust.**

**No one's allowed to see behind the scenes;
It would ruin the magic of the show.
You have to be content with other means
Of finding out what you would like to know.**

**If only there was something I could say,
Some enticing bribe my heart could offer.
But the greeter said it don't work that way;
No gold of mine's welcome in their coffer.**

**Does she feel lost on this hostile Earth?
Would one word of love suffice as a map?
Does he feel lonely and drained of all mirth?
Would one kind gesture save him from gloom's trap?**

**No one's allowed to see behind the scenes;
It would ruin the magic of the show.
You have to be content with other means
Of finding out what you would like to know.**

“Life Goes On”

**Just when you think everything’s screwed,
You meet an eight-year-old kid learning to tie his shoes,
Rambling about the Minecraft tokens he’s accrued
Or letting an early bedtime blow his fuse.**

**And you say to yourself:
Life goes on.**

**There are children on the playgrounds and five-foot snowmounds
Arguing about a foul four-square play,
Listening to the latest Jim Gill sounds
While wond’ring, “What snack will Mom make today?”**

**And you say to yourself:
Life goes on.**

**All too often are we caught up in strife
Regarding things far beyond our control,
Chipping away at our joy with a knife,
Half-emptying every glass that’s half full.**

**So let us look to shoelaces and swings,
Snowball fights on the First of December,
Ice cream cones purchased to blot out bee stings,
Each remembrance that helps us remember:**

**Life goes on
And it’s still beautiful.**

“The Dream”

**Somewhere you walk in and kick off your shoes
Without worrying about whose is whose.**

**Somewhere that “How are you?” means “How are you?”
And cannot simply be answered on cue.**

**Somewhere far
But somehow always close.**

**Somewhere beyond “Welcome in, well, goodbye!”
Or “Have you given this product a try?”**

**Somewhere you talk and shut up all the same,
Free from playing the now-it’s-your-turn game.**

**Somewhere close,
But somehow still far.**

**The half-eyed man sitting limp on a bench,
Accustomed to a less-than-ideal stench.**

**The half-dressed girl clinging to a tall pole,
Attempting to fill a lonely heart’s hole.**

**The half-somethings from the have-nots and haves,
Only e’er knowing how to accept halves,
Searching for somewhere they might hear a song
Bookended by the lyrics: “*You belong.*”**

“If I Had Known That It Was the Last Time”

**She stepped forward for her trademark embrace,
Saying bye with see-you-later lightness,
Not even a tear on her nor my face,
Our arms unconscious of urgent tightness.**

**If I had known that it was the last time,
I would have held on a tad bit longer.
If I'd known our song reached its final rhyme,
I would have let my gaze dance along her.**

**But no one has foresight beyond today
Despite how much we enjoy making plans,
Merely assuming all shall be okay
And eating consolations out of cans.**

**Though one can always hope for a sequel,
It's best to treat now as without equal.**

“A Dad Who Loved His Son”

**He was taking a break from his post-college wandering
And decided to stop by his childhood home,
Hoping he wouldn't be accused of squandering
All the time he'd been given to roam.**

**Sitting in a sofa next to the TV
Was the man who helped steer him from crib to real world,
Hinting affection through “Hey there, Stevie,
Let's see what your blithe travels have unfurled.”**

**Just a dad who loved his son,
When it was easy and when it weren't fun,
Always there even when he couldn't be,
Always warm even at his most icy.**

**They exchanged a half hug, half handshake,
Then started filling in the six-month gap,
Discerning when “I'm fine” was fake,
Working to avoid controversy's trap.**

**One was on the Left, the other on the Right,
Although both thought they were right.
The older said insensitive things that made the younger cringe;
The younger said naïve things that made the older cringe.**

**But all cringing aside, there was just a dad who loved his son,
When it was easy, and when it weren't fun,
Always there even when he couldn't be,
Always warm even at his most icy.**

**A scent quite like Home Depot
Wafted slowly through their minds
With an image of a boy shouting, “Please no!”
Dragged along to buy new bedroom blinds.**

**Oh, they chuckled, and they cried
In a hidden sort of way
As old tensions briefly died
While the scene tried to convey:**

**Just a dad who loved his son
And a son who loved his Daddy.**