

These hands.

*So this poem was written on a trip that some friends and I took into the mountains.
When we finally got to a decent elevation there was this crazy super eclectic tea spot right, and they were
playing deep house and making Nescafe and Maggi noodles, at 10am. And there were all these families
there just stumbling out of their cars and becoming increasingly discombobulated by this very loud and
assaulting cornucopia of mid-morning side-of-the-road-stimuli.
But the view was amazing. So there I was drinking tea and I started thinking...*

So here I stand, feet upon a precipice.
This is not a metaphor, I'm literally on the edge of a cliff,
and the topography of this plateau extends for miles like a textured tapestry.

Miles of mountains and lakes and cities and valleys and homes and people.

If I could,
I would trade my eyes for hands that could match their scope.
And reach down to the world and read it with my fingertips.
Like a blind God reading braille,
revealing tactile truths, one by one.

And then you can show me where it's happy, and where it hurts.
Teach me about what matters,
and what used to.
Put these arms around the mothers
that have outlived their daughters.
Run these fingers through the hair of children
that cry themselves to sleep.
Lend these fists to the boys baptized by violence,
that they may not have to become men before their time.
And muddy these finger nails with the ash and rubble,
that used to be your homes.

And when night falls,
Take these hands and place them upon the places that grew cold after he left,
before you lead these palms to the streets where the men sleep that no one will touch.

For God's that see all and touch nothing must have problems with intimacy.

But these hands are not a God's hands.

These hands can tell:

bumps from bruises,
scratches from scars,
shakes from shivers,
touches from tears,
wounds from wars.

These hands know things that God's do not:

They know that there is more sincerity in the caressing of palms,
than a hundred psalms.

These hands know how to read the tales told
by the temperature of tears.

These hands know the consistency of blood.

They know that true covenants cannot be kept with words,
for promises are the only things that break from not being held.

These hands have done things that Gods have not.

These hands have sweat.

These hands have burnt bridges and built homes.

These hands have made love and made fists.

These hands have made mistakes.

These hands hold regrets.

These hands... will die.

For I am just a man,

and these are my hands,

and they are small.

And unlike my eyes they cannot reach you.

So here I stand, feet upon this precipice,

a little less than half a significance removed from insignificant.

And stare down rain clouds,

as they rain on me.

Of Sinners and Free Men.

I am the prodigy of the pariah.

I am the seed of homo-sapiens who fucked under a clear night sky
before anyone decided what they were doing was wrong.

I am the great great grandson
of the black man who no Vietcong called nigger.
My great great great grandmother was burned at the stake
for practicing the witchcraft of being an unmarried woman.
And her great granddaughter wouldn't sit at the back of the fucking bus.
My philosophy continues the long line of men who drank hemlock for their honesty and chemical
castration for their love.
My ancestor preached the Mahayana to the monk
who couldn't kill the Buddha on the road,
And his brother created the telescope.
And men who consider fools wise
couldn't cope
with not being the center of the universe,
so they made him apologize.

See I wrote this poem on a mirror.
So I could brand my image a sinner,
and try to see what it is you see, when you see me

And all of those like me.
Brothers and sisters in the Church of Questions
asking "why?"

Lik,e why would an infinite being,
creator of the universe,
the logos that existed before chronos,
rightly diving the light,
and scattering stars into the night
...really care who I fuck?

Or why is it that the men with the most amount of power
are the most afraid of progress?

Or why is it that those who walk the road to destruction
are the most afraid of changing direction?

Or why is it that,
when you are most unhappy with yourself,
do you fear and hate everything that is different?

Why have you made villains of free men?
Till the truth sounds like treason,
and thinking for yourself a crime?
But any state that can't coexist with the truth
is a false state.
And in that state...
I am an enemy of the state.
So if your ignorance wants to press charges
then cuff me I'm guilty,
my words are wanted for assault and battery.
My only regret is that I'm not sharp enough to shoot straight,
or I would have slayed your socially sanctioned form of stupidity
And let those priests on the jury of the court of past prejudices,
try me for premeditated murder.

By the laws written in their books
that poorly recount the words of a dead man's dream.

But when the hour grows late,
as your saints join the sheep in chorus
to keep repeating the song
keep repeating the song
keep repeating the song
keep repeating the song
keep repeating the song

That spirals our civilization
into damnation.

Look for us...
For we are hiding over the horizon
building new cities out of the sunrise.
Transmuting our pain into possibilities,
we are paving roads out of your rejection.
We've built homes for humanity,
Beyond the reach of your hate.

So don't be surprised when you see
how forgiving a free man can be:
Only those who can bear mistakes
walk the path of creation.
Only sinners offer salvation.

Shrivatsa

There are days when the stars,
and the trees,
and the smiles,
and the seas,
all hold promise.

When beauty breaks between white clouds like epiphany and our friends laugh,
and we drink while toasting life's happy coincidences.

And our lovers hold us,
on streets that sing songs in the voice of mad throngs
to the rhythm of the bustle's beats.

And on these days we write of our lovers, and the mad nights.
Of dreams that seem close
and death that seems powerless.
Of how our inspiration will bring salvation
and how destiny holds little sway,
and of dancing.

We write of our divinity and our cosmic souls, and everything we want to be as if we are the prophets of
a new religion.

On these days we write of hope.

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Then there are days bought with struggle, and paid in strife.
When our lives seem thick and heavy.
Days in which we carry our dreams on our backs like great burdens,
and we grope,
and pant,
and stumble.
Days that hurt like air being sucked from our lungs,
and ache like broken bones and buried friends.
Days in which our love grows up,
our vision uncaring,
and the mountains look steep,
the valleys deep,
and the sea; treacherous.

On days like these we write of war.
We write of blood and battles,
of swords and spirits.
Of dragon slayers,
and demon hunters,
and men in arenas.
These days we swim through sweat blood and tears
to tell stories on the shores of ambition;
about love conquering fears.
On these days we write of victory.

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Then some days grow so dark
they leak into our nights.
Nights that run long and sleepless,
as the moon hides itself behind the tears that we are too afraid to shed,
and the stars pretend not to shine.
Nights that hold true terrors.
When our friends are not our friends and our lovers abuse us.
As fate weaves a tapestry of tragedy and swallows souls whole.
Nights when death walks amongst us,
and even the devil is afraid of his demons.

And on nights like these we write of love,
and life,
and dreams,
and death,
in the abstract.
We unearth the words of ancient existentialists and use them to build tombs
that our hearts may rest in peace.
We shed our hopes like rain on the page,
and though the ink is smudged by everything that once was,
and everything that will never be again,
we let the world know that voices are not so easily extinguished.
And so we craft remedies for maladies,
meanings for tragedies
and make sense of cosmic calamities so that our pain cannot rob us of our art.
On nights like these giants lend us their shoulders and we are the greatest writers in history.

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But then come these days that defy sensibility.
Days in which our persecutors have no name and no purpose
and wield wicked weapons with no malice.
Days in which our success is snatched away so fast,
our efforts don't even have time to fall short.
When life and death trade places like they are playing a game that defies design,
or rules,
or drama.
Days of sacrilege.
When the cosmos whispers blasphemies in your ear till you wish that God was dead
but you know he just wasn't invited to the party.
Days that question our humanity.
When the powerful and powerless watch helpless
as chaos crushes civilization the way a shoe crushes an ant;
accidentally.
And hope is irrelevant,
And love is comedy.
And art is dead.

On days like these perhaps we shouldn't write at all.
And if we must...
Let us just write of better days.