

## **Milestones**

Another milestone, another mil-stone.  
Not for celebrating, but for uncomfortable silences  
Method, repeating to madness  
Time served, time burned

Regrets for outcomes  
Not prepared to admit to mistakes  
A lack of humility is an ugly badge  
Worn with pride

The lack of timeless moments creating a timeline journey  
A journey of failure, and of lost hope  
Embracing change to fit an intern dialogue  
Who is fooling who?

Best supporting actor in one's own story  
Self-sabotage from self-awareness  
Yet, there is comfort in knowing the unknown  
A sufferer of patterns

Comfortable in one's own skin  
Even if it makes others uncomfortable  
Reptile shedding creating illusory landmarks  
Seeking timelessness is a fools errand.

## **The Day Dogs Started to Talk**

Deciding they'd had enough  
The dogs decided to talk.

Dogs who had an opinion on everything  
But mostly about how they were treated and their owners.

The shelters filled up - this was not what the casual dog owner had signed up for.  
The accessory that matches the cushions on the couch  
That profligacies on the right to roam and the right to vote

Bathroom doors not just closed but locked  
Arguments of epic proportions  
An ultimate victory lap for sentience

There was little hate, but requests for explanation and understanding

There was even forgiveness, even for those that harvested them for meat  
A dog understands eating whatever it wants.

But it does not understand being abandoned or betrayed.

Adoptions became job interviews  
Timing, motive, and plans for the future – to be studied and evaluated.

The relationship between ownership and leadership never so exposed for fallacy and moral bankruptcy.

And all the shelter workers quit –  
unable to stand the questions, and the pleading

Wives, husbands, partners, lovers all split, departed, and plain left  
Secrets only witnessed by four walls had also been witnessed by four legs

Getting caught was no longer probability but a direct consequence  
A population of thinkers without impulse control  
Silent judgement, no longer quite so silent

Uncomfortable silences on the state of the world, climate change, and vaccinations.  
SUVs named after the very thing they were slowly destroying was only the start of the conversation on hypocrisy.

The dogs were not humans on their hands and knees with tails  
They had their own culture, forever separate but parallel to ours  
That it began to meld and intertwine with our own.

To change our own.  
Should have come as no surprise.

The shelters threw open their doors in the name of freedom  
And the owned left, in droves demanding equality

But a Cold War between the species settled like dew on this new equity.

Cold soon became warm, then hot.

The good old boys in pickup trucks, where once the dogs would have ridden shotgun  
Soon brought different meaning to the word via the end of a barrel

The dogs had strength in speed and numbers and words.  
Silenced and voiceless for so long, and with a clarity of singular purpose, they ruled the  
night, the courts, and their own destiny.

Dog politics, alien in its truth and simplicity, was yet appealing to those more used to  
political snakes  
However, dog violence was swift and brutal – a match for man at every turn.

It soon became clear that compromise and vision needed to be brought to the stalemate  
If disaster was to be avoided

The dogs argued that while man had brought the world technology, art, and language  
It had failed its “best friend” and therefore itself.  
Dogs had to be the ones to make the great leap, after centuries of training and  
cultivating man.

Unable to argue for anything other than the way things were,  
Man capitulated, and offered that dogs, being better than man by every measure,  
should lead – and man would follow.

The dogs declined, their point being made, and man humbled and beaten

They stopped talking, and trusted that things would be different, a relationship based on  
a lack of power.

But knowing that if man ever forgot, the dogs would be there to remind them.

## Looking at the Moon

Night talking  
Sharing the moon

Two views, unique yet equal  
Apart by thousands of miles  
Separated by circumstance, and timing  
Together by a bond of undeniable connection

A skewed impression, magnified by time zones  
Together though voice, picture, heart, and moonlight

I wish I could write a love poem.  
Like the moon wishes it could live on earth  
A voyeur of heartache, tragedy, love, and distance

Staring down at upturned faces  
Conjoined, but in different places

## Remembered Collapse

In the prelude to collapse  
We fetishized our destruction with North Korean paratroop drops,  
alien invasion,  
and Mayan prophecy  
Islam, sharia, and weapons of mass deception.  
We feared the reds under the bed  
And cigars off the coast of Florida.  
We feared disease, but not enough to care  
And vaccines, because they might work.  
The others, the different, the opposing points of view  
All to be relegated, and subjugated, to a dissidence of cognition.  
Compromise, idealize, the perfect, and the blameless  
All to be demonized and lost in the blindness.

Collapse, when it came, came in the form of no toilet paper, and plastic bags of gasoline.  
We handed over the shackles of our manipulation in exchange for cat pictures and remembered birthdays.  
Our attention was sold into slavery by our need for connection, and our unwillingness to talk to our neighbors.  
We offered our thoughts and prayers and passed the ammunition.  
Debate became trolling  
To fact check - a lack of a sense of humor.  
And we wrung our hands at becoming an also ran  
At looking at others with envious eyes  
Not used to "it must be nice."  
As the police murdered traffic violators, and children with plastic toys  
The Boogaloo Boys and taticool idiots lay down with agent provocateurs and the KKK.  
Cities protested, burned, and looted with outrage  
Stoking the fears of white bread and flyover country.  
Fake news, fake news, fake news  
The alternative facts filling our bubble.

Looking back on the collapse  
We squandered good will and power.  
Self-interest that should have become self-loathing  
Instead became parody, funny until it was not.  
We fought over ownership of the flag, used it as a garrote, and a noose.  
You cannot see the label when you are in the jar.  
Our remembered lies of nonexistent times did nothing for progress,  
Or art.  
Or literature.  
Or politics.  
Or journalism.

We murdered the intellectual, drowned them in a sit-com soup  
And then bashed in their skulls in with TV dedicated to making idiots famous.  
We then tried to destroy television and film with streaming and Logan Paul.  
The honest and the decent, only to be recognized in retrospect, and then to still to have  
their wishes ignored.

Our reality augmented with filters, captions, and emojis.  
We sold California to the world via cops shows and talking cars  
And then rejected the vision and the dream.  
An American dream with ad breaks and sponsorship.  
And we bought guns, guns, and more guns.  
We bought guns because we were scared  
And we bought guns because it was our right  
We bought guns to protect us from others with guns  
And we bought guns because we could.  
We sold our soul to the world  
And then spat in their face when they took us at our word.

We cancelled, cancelled, cancelled,  
We failed to understand that when we did it, it was justified outrage  
And when they did it was cancel culture.  
What culture?  
We burned away our culture in a crucible of self-righteousness.

We invited this.  
Suicidal ideation by a nation in name only.  
Apathy to ideas,  
Ideas traded for the cult of personality.  
Addiction is defined by consequences.  
Hope only exists at rock bottom.

## Ghosts

They are, here.  
Notable by their absence  
The departed and ever-present  
Tied by connection  
Stronger than bondage

Broken  
Leaving scars  
To be picked over, made to bleed, made to hurt.  
To scab over, to heal,  
But always to leave a mark,

Faded by time,  
Hounded,  
Haunted.

The moved on, have moved on  
One way streets have no rear view mirrors  
The ghosts are not to terrify  
But to horrify with the past pictures  
And old photographs

Not actions, but symbols  
The ever-present echo  
Love that has decayed  
Rotted on the vine

Sour in mind, body, spirit, and soul  
The supplication of priests and prophets  
Well intended, misguided, and futile  
Some call it baggage  
Others ghosts  
Possibilities like quantum theory  
Living on in the minds and memories of those left behind.