

## NOVEMBER 28: A BEAUTIFUL DAY

### Paul - California Central Coast

What is the beauty of today?

No time for sun salutations,  
The Lions game is on!  
And for the first time, in a long time,  
They will not make me lose my appetite.

A Jewish Thanksgiving?  
That's a first.  
But I can't go kosher,  
Nothing beats pig skin on Turkey Day!

What is the beauty of today?

A feast like no other!  
Hot Plate, Cold Plate,  
Matzo Ball Soup.  
Horseradish Mash  
Beside a stuffed bird.

The children are sheltered from the sound of the Turkey's suffering,  
Yet all know exactly what a fox would say.

Plum Wine and Pictionary,  
Late into the evening.  
Two empty seats at the game table.  
One for Elijah,  
The other for my Sister-in-Law.

We salute her and all the rest of the troops.  
The fearless Target, Walmart and Best Buy employees,  
Protecting our freedoms:  
Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Lower Prices.

## Yuko - Tokyo

What is the beauty of today?

Shibuya crossing is only at low-to-moderate density,  
That cuts the probability of getting groped in half.

And it's not the kind of "whoops! sorry about that" grope,  
It's more of a "sexually frustrated teenager living out his fantasy" thing.

What's a Harajuku girl to do?  
Closet her leg-warmers, skirts and lash extensions?  
Hardly!  
Just throw back a few Johnny Walkers and laugh it off.

What is the beauty of today?

I'm less fat,  
Thanks to a three-day diet of Tsukemono.  
I have to prep my body for the Christmas Chicken Dinner.

This time next month, I will be stuffing my chubby head,  
With fried goodies, mochi and love stories.  
I might have to binge for a change,  
Or else I might be too fat, even to grope, in the new year.

**Barbara - Richmond District, SF**

What is the beauty of today?

A bit of sun for a change.  
For the first time in forever,  
I can see the Golden Gate from my bedroom window.

Egg Nog Lattes at Starbucks!  
They make a great mixer for my morning bourbon.

And no smell seeping into my loft!  
Even the orientals take off to give thanks.  
I, for one, am *thankful* they aren't cooking stinky tofu.

What is the beauty of today?

I am alive and breathing...  
But who knows how long that will continue.  
Affordable care my ass!  
Denied from my insurance provider,  
Angie at Walgreens tells me they want \$100 a week for Warfarin!  
That means no lobby bag service,  
And say goodbye to organics.

What is the beauty of today?

Dozens of family members.  
Although none of them are present.  
Gabby and the kids are in Chicago,  
Theo is in the Philippines, doing some kind of relief work.  
And my beloved Sheldon,  
Who is here with me now.  
But can't hear my rantings,  
From inside his ceramic vase.

## **Guerrilla Jack - Detroit**

What is the beauty of today?

Battling for sunlight,  
Among the surrounding buildings and overpasses,  
The Vegetable beds are thriving!

Speaking of beds...  
Wish I had one.  
But don't feel sorry for me!  
I spend my energy for tomorrow's harvest,  
Not for property rights.

The giant Rutabagas let me know that our soil, and soul, is poised for a comeback.  
The raging dinosaur Kale reminds me of the health of our community.

As I downshift my life, my standards,  
I sustain myself -- I invest in me and mine.

What is the beauty of today?

I see more green than graffiti,  
More bicycles than berrettas.

The compost is warm, dark brown and full of shit,  
I guess we have much in common.

The whole world is watching us today!  
The mighty Megatron gonna show 'em what we are really made of.  
He stands tall,  
And, despite being double teamed and cheated,  
He always finds a way to come out on top.  
To survive another day.

## **Chin - Pyongyang, DRNK**

What is the beauty of today?

A letter from father,  
From the re-education camp.

Buddhism has kept him sane,  
While caged with social deviants and American Bastards.

He tells me to not be like him,  
Don't resist the call.  
Don't forget the Buddha,  
But Nationalism takes priority.  
Be strong, family needs you.  
Be strong, Korea must prosper.

What is the beauty of today?

I am aging well,  
Like a three week Kimchi,  
Slightly sour, but full of depth and flavor.

Food is plentiful these days,  
Large rations of rice, vegetables and fish,  
And none of it from the West.

Like the mighty Chollima,  
We will fly high.  
And thrive in Juche Year 103!

**Lakshmi - Dharavi, Mumbai**

What is the beauty of today?

As I wake from my doubled-up cardboard bed,  
I hear joyful chatter from outside my room.

A sea of men,  
clawing for position.  
A nudge here, a push there -- Namaste everywhere.

Thursday mornings are as pleasant as budding lotus flowers.  
The West Toilet is drained,  
Community water tanks are filled,  
And the tannery clouds are taking a snooze.

What is the beauty of today?

Lord Ganesha has blessed this house:  
Thirty-five empty Limca bottles,  
Eighty single-use poly bags,  
And four mangled Triple A batteries.

Strangers called "Hipsters" came to deliver unworn shoes for my kids.  
If Vishnu wills it, they will return tomorrow with TB vaccines or food.

## Issa - Yaoundé Central Prison

What is the beauty of today?

The slashes on my back are fading,  
But they have left a deep scar in my soul.

I would tell you it could be worse,  
But that would be in vain.

Being a gay male is not always easy,  
Especially in Cameroon,  
Where one's *flagrant* expression of self can be criminal.

Imagine...  
A G-rated walk down a market street,  
Leading to beatings on the way to a windowless cell.  
No trial in sight -- no bleeding heart lawyer in tow.

What is the beauty of today?  
Rock bottom has it's perks.  
No use in hiding my identity any more.  
I am pitied by most -- hated by some,  
But I am finally *me*.

With the cold floor pressed against my back,  
I spread my arms out wide.  
I may be locked up, but I am as free as a bird.

## **Abdullah - Aleppo**

What is the beauty of today?

Although our community is in ruin,  
Shadows of chemical poison,  
Dead infants in crying arms,  
Haunting me daily,  
I remain able and whole.

I remain a peaceful soldier of God's army,  
Working as his hands,  
Repairing our shattered people.

What is the beauty of today?

I am the source of hope and joy for millions,  
My life is not only my own,  
And, for that fact, I am very thankful.

For, while I donate my essence,  
Others around the globe get FAT.  
Fat from ego,  
Fat from plates overflowing,  
Fat from an inward focus.

To Allah is my life!  
To the people, my life.  
The less life I hold tight,  
The more beauty I see.