

Humanity

Daddy Sing Me that Song about Butterflies

She was just nine, a will-o-the-wisp
With dreams of a Rat and his friend Mole
An imaginary world that guided her life
Friendship was loyal and steadied her soul

People walked by on her sidewalk of life
A front porch, a swing, and a good storybook
They all lived together in her dreaming years
Those hobbits and elves she never forsook

Toadstools for fairies arranged in a circle
Mother nature protected their fanciful flights
As star-lite and daisies draped over her head
Memories were built in cool summer nights

Fireflies in fruit-jars would light up her room
Protection from dragons hiding under her bed
Understanding of life oozed out of her genes
She'd been here before, the fortune-teller said

Life is an angel that rides on her shoulder
A fairyland friend that squelches her fears
Imagination lives in the minds of the blessed
And butterfly wings wipe away their tears

Sing me a song, daddy, rock me to sleep
I want to drift away where the red fern grows
Where lazy old bumblebees hang in the air
And the butterfly feeds with a long curly nose

“Butterfly, butterfly, dancing in the wind
Will you ever come back; will I see you again?”

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Domino Players Reunion

Knarled, liver-spotted hands gripped his cane
As it sliced through hot, muggy air
“Tomorrow, I wanna go play dominoes
Lord knows they need a good player”

Life still darted through his clear blue eyes
Like swallows across wind-swept skies
Snuff spit painted lines in his chin
He'll dip that stuff til the day he dies

Age wrecked this body, meant for going places
Yet God and nature never slowed his soul
Weathered muscle and bone gave up the fight
Now the voice was left alone to control

Complaints creaked from the wheels of his chair
As he slowly made his way into supper
Bland food served with a handful of pills
Help for the pain and his worn-out thumper

Both the peeing and the chair hurt his pride
But his eyes and his voice just laughed
Because he knew when he woke, he'd play
Another game with his friends from the past.

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Hanging Out with Jesus

I've been hanging out with Jesus
Since I was just sixteen
But I don't go to church on Sunday
No need to primp and preen

My pew's an old oak stump
Left standing in the garden
Birds and squirrels preach to me
Wind and sun grant my pardon

Introducing me to friends of his
Buddha, Muhammad, Abraham
He asks if I will stand with him
And if I really give a damn

Never raised his hand in war, but
Stopped the moneychangers bid
He laughs and then forgives me
For all the things I did

While eating mud in Vietnam
Still wet behind the ears
He hung with me on recon
And stilled my raging fears

He screams at me in nighttime
To stop the Holy Wars
Then I try to drown the message
In honky tonks and bars

You can't make a better world
When you kill the golden goose
The tears he sheds are bitter
As we turn the poisons loose

Still, we lock away the peaceniks
And let the greedy demon's feed
He wonders why I'm locked away
Just cause I smoked a little weed

Is it all a senseless, hate-filled joke?

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Folks killing in his name
Then he holds my hand and asks
Do I know the one to blame?

The mirror shows the fatted calf
That hides behind the bar
Or flits around the countryside
In their shiny guzzling car

He asks with lightning tongue
Why folks don't seek the truth
But pass along the slanted lies
Painted on their toilet booth

He walks with me on wooded hills
He talks with me at dawn
The light he holds for everyone
So, our life is not alone

Keep telling folks the truth
Leaving out the easy lies
You can't really lie to folks
They see it in your eyes

When hanging out with Jesus
You're searching for the truth
On salty shores or woody hills
Or some old diner booth

No matter where you live or die
His message hangs like glue
Walk with peace, unite in love
He's reaching out to you

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Little Necessities

Front porch sagged on the Southern corner
Dry winds whipped up dust
Pecan leaves curled in the late summer sun
Old man's trying not to cuss

Rust stains splotched on the old tin roof
Windowpanes etched with time
Sideboards grayed by a thousand rains
No children left here to whine

Sand road winds up to this laughter-less home
Rutted by their old model T
Few folks come to visit them much anymore
Most times just Mama and me

Old folks living on cornbread and molasses
Milk cows long since dry
Preacher comes by to pray sometimes on Sunday
Other folks don't even try

Uncle Ted was a hunter before age slowed him up
Even legends answer the call
Winter-night music of a coonhounds sweet baying
Bird dogs point'n in the fall

Hunter's pride and respect he took in his dogs
Substitute kids Daddy used to say
Dead-eye and Cutter and other hair-raising names
Now only ol' Bessie's alive today

These thoughts and memories cut through my mind
This summer of my fourteenth year
Barefoot I walked through the dirty hot sand
My throat choked a tingling fear

Uncle Ted needed help with something at home
A necessary job needed doing
Mama said he'd never asked for help before
Wondered what he had brewing

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Aunt Jodie brought me a dipper of cool clear water
Drawn from a hundred foot well
Uncle Ted slowly rocked in the shade of the porch
Snuff spit dried on the rail

He said son ol' Bessie had a litter of puppies
Up under the porch last week
Now Bessie can't raise no ten hungry young'uns
Necessity was making him speak

Ol' Bessie stood up from her place by his chair
Dried tits had nothing to give
Sad watered eyes seemed to beg for my help
Starving puppies won't ever live

Cracked lips trembled and he knew I understood
Unbearable pain must rest
Mind-numbing gloom was filling my head
Somehow, I'd do my best

Got an old cornsack from out by the barn
Baling wire to tie it at the top
Crawled under the porch just like I was asked
The sound of my heart wouldn't stop

Took that sack full of puppies, just barely alive
Down to the watering trough
Just God and me, with ol' Bessie looking on
Witnessed their very last cough

Uncle Ted took a shovel and we buried them then
In a shady grove out back
In deadly hot summers I think of it still
Ten puppies in an old cornsack

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My Tribe

I hear their voices calling
From a million years ago
Screams of fear and terror
And whispers soft and low

They drift across the land
Like music in the wind
Sounds guide the family
So, they can live again

Cries are cold and deadly
And chill me to the bone
My family stood together
Now they're dead and gone

Life is just a blink of light
That flickers for awhile
My tribe is all humanity
Trying hard to stay alive