

Around The Corner

Poetry

By Steve Cavin

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Dedication

To Cassandra and Loc Tran, whose poetry inspired me to keep on going.

To The Reader

In the 16th century, the Age of Enlightenment, great scientists and philosophers created the discipline of true science. Unfortunately, in the process, they split the conscious world into the rational and the intuitive, creating a schism that has endured to this day.

There are many ways to look at the world, but there is only one world. Let us reconcile Art and Science, and become whole once more.

Life And Death

Across The Water

In summer and in winter,
Over water, sand and stone,
You and I have fished together,
Now you're ready to go home.

Through tender eyes of childhood,
And years of memories bright,
I see your face, still smiling,
As I held your hand so tight!

I can lean on you no longer,
I alone must find my way.
You have gone across the water
To a place where I can't stay.

I still see you in my mirror.
I can hear you when I speak.
But you've left a hole behind you,
And it seems my heart must break.

From fishing I learned patience,
And with patience, I will wait.
'Till my journey takes me thither,
And you meet me at the gate.

Bodhi

Six-thirty, sign-up ceremony,
Faces, voices, shuffling past.
Bodhi walks in, gently smiling
And the room is lit at last.

So many of them heavy burdened,
So many bruised, so many wronged.
But everything is easily settled
When Bodhi sings her song.

Who knows why we came here?
Who knows when we're through?
Bodhi knows who she is, now.
Perhaps she'll tell me, too.

The words are clear, and right, and wise.
The voice is clean, and free of hate.
All you have to do is listen.
Bodhi tells the story straight.

Looking for something I can't remember
Working on something I can't say.
Bodhi's done the work already.
She's always just a hug away.

The cat's in the aviary
And Susan's revolving in the air.

Stand and find your own way
Bodhi sits in God's empty chair

The Book Of Waking Dreams

Between the daily wide awake
And nightly fade to black.
Amid the things you might have done,
And things you can't take back.
There lies the book of waking dreams,
And stories half-remembered.
When all the fires of the day,
Have cooled to glowing embers.

No daydreams for an afternoon,
Nor terrors of the night.
No monstrous nightmares, half-believed.
Nor stories that delight.
But dreams that often seem so real,
You'd think you were awake.
A blend of what you think and feel,
Whose truth is what's at stake.

I've seen a place I'd like to be,
And walked the yard outside.
I folded space, and climbed a tree.
Took bubbles for a ride.
I've hidden from a murderous mob,
Stood naked in a crowd.
I've flown and fallen, broken rules,
Exceeding what's allowed.

To awaken from a dream, and find
That things are not quite right.
Then wake again, a second time,
In bed, at morning light.
You ask yourself, which one is real?
And which is make-believe?
How many more, has God in store?
And what's that up his sleeve?

You have to wonder, is it so?
It's slippery at best.
To question what you cannot know,
Put reality to the test.
A lucid dream, or concrete fact?
How far does it go?
You have to guess, until you act,
You'll never really know.

Candle

A candle could
Be said to be
A bit of string and wax.
But a child will tell you
Straight away
It's light the candle lacks.

No one draws
A candlestick
Without a crown of flame.
And if it flickers
Or is blown out
The candle's not to blame.

Once lit it can't
Forever last
But slowly will melt down.
A candle that
Is never lit
Isn't worth the keeping 'round.

Don't you think
It passing strange
By nature's own decree.
A candle
Must consume itself
To fully come to be.

Christian

Do you know Jesus?
You say you believe in Jesus,
But what do you believe, exactly?
Can you believe something without knowing it?
Can you know something without understanding it?
Have you heard what Jesus said?
Have you lived what Jesus taught?
Do you know Jesus?

Do you know Jesus?
Jesus talked with thieves and prostitutes.
You talk to someone who isn't there.
Jesus healed strangers, for free.
You won't pay for your neighbor's health care.
Jesus asked everyone not to kill anyone.
You send your children to kill people you don't even know.
Do you know Jesus?

Do you know Jesus?
Where does he live?
Does he have brown eyes?
Does he have any brothers or sisters?
Does he like fast food?
Does he have a sense of humor?
You know your friends.
Do you know Jesus?

Do you know Jesus?
Jesus blessed the poor, the meek.
Jesus forgave those who hurt him.
Jesus loved everyone, every one.
Jesus refused to lie, even to save himself.
Jesus worshipped God,
But you worship Jesus.
Do you know Jesus?

Joy And Sorrow

Dead Horse

Those who won't take "no" for an answer
Aren't really listening.
To fail at getting what you want
Involves a sort of christening.
You might keep trying, anyhow,
But find you don't know when,
"No" means you should stop right now,
And start all over again

Determination gets things done,
You'd be a fool to quit.
But only a fool can't give up,
And that's the truth of it.
Life cannot be lived by rules
Or vows that one must keep.
A wise man seeks another way
When the river gets too deep.

Comes the time it can't be done,
The obstacle won't yield.
When trying harder doesn't help
The damage can't be healed.
When "no" is no, and can't be changed
You need a kind of grace.
To give it up, and let it go
With a smile upon your face.

The problem is, you'll never know
How close you were to winning.
You might have actually won the game
Had you played another inning.
You only know the choice you made
And the choice that you did not.
Second thoughts, and old regrets
Are better off forgot.

Excuse Me

Excuse me.

I was just thinking,
I mean, I thought you might,
I guess I shouldn't have.

Excuse me.

Excuse me.

I was just saying,
I mean, I said we could
I guess I shouldn't have.

Excuse me.

Excuse me.

I was just doing,
I mean, I did what felt right,
I guess I shouldn't have.

Excuse me.

Excuse me.

I was just being,
I mean, I was trying to show you
I guess I shouldn't have.

You see?

For Nothing

Imagine
Just for a moment,
A life other than your own.
And ask yourself why
Would you ever spend
Your time that way.

Just imagine
Collecting other people's garbage,
Cleaning other people's toilets,
Preparing other people's meals.
Trimming other people's yards,
Building other people's roads.

Really, imagine
Teaching other people's children,
Fixing other people's cars,
Healing other people's illnesses,
Protecting other people's homes,
Listening to other people's problems.

I imagine
That you've always been right there.
Turning people into profits,
Gardens into graveyards,
Children into chattel,
And misery into money.

Thanks.
Thanks for nothing.

Heroes

One who kills is not a hero.
A hero defends those in danger.
One who says great things is not a hero.
A hero's words turn away anger.

One who starves is not a hero.
A hero brings starving to an end.
One who defeats enemies is not a hero.
A hero turns an enemy into a friend.

One who wins is not a hero.
A hero inspires others to do their best.
One who serves his country is not a hero.
To do what's right is the real test.

One who dies is not a hero.
A hero prevents another's fall.
One who destroys bad things is not a hero.
A hero creates good things for all.

One who achieves excellence is not a hero.
A hero forgives the faults of others.
One who is strong is not a hero.
A hero finds strength among his brothers.

One who holds on is not a hero.
A hero gives all he has, for free.

One who cares for the world is not a hero.
A hero cares for his family.

One who faces death is not a hero.
A hero keeps others from the flame.
One who becomes famous is not a hero.
A hero doesn't have a name.

Holes

When something arises, it requires a place.
Of various sizes, nonetheless, space.
A simple location, a source you can trace./p>
To even be noticed at all.
If it's not one thing, it's another they say./p>
Every day turns to night, every night into day.
Things come and go, in much the same way.
Whether huge or very small.

In fact, you yourself, hold a space that you fill.
Into it you pour your effort and skill.
Anyone could, but no one else will.
It's entirely up to you.
If you didn't do it, then someone else would.
If you didn't say it, then someone else could.
If you didn't think it, someone else should.
So be thoughtful of what you do.

Machinery

Who drives the car?
Who sweeps the floor?
Who plays the guitar?
Who opens the door?

Air-conditioner, or a shady tree.
Water pipes, or a river flowing.
The radio, or songs for free.
A motorcar, or bare feet going.

Turn off your stove, and light a fire.
Turn off your television, and tell a story.
Turn off your lamp, and the moon admire.
Turn on your brain, and take inventory!

Drop the fence, and share the land.
Drop the law, and trust what's good.
Take hold now of my outstretched hand.
Take what you need, not what you could.

Keep what doesn't run away.
Accept what comes without a price.
Trust what they do, not what they say.
Take it all, not just a slice.

Triumph And Disaster

No Doubt

No doubt, there's a heaven above us.
No doubt, there's a prize at the end.
No doubt, there's a Father to love us.
And help will arrive from a friend.

Surely, this world has a reason.
Surely, hard work will yield gain.
Surely, suffering has its reward.
There's paradise after the pain.

Of course, we don't understand it.
Of course, it's part of the plan.
Of course, we need to be patient.
We'd change it, but nobody can.

Have faith, and God will protect you.
Have faith, and you've nothing to fear.
Have faith, it's all as it should be.
Your prayers will be answered, next year.

Ask why, and wait for the the answer.
Ask why, and think carefully.
Ask why, and you might come to notice.
There's no reason not to be free.

Pornography

I like to watch them flash and flirt.
I like to watch them suck and spurt!
Or even wrestle in the dirt.
But I do not like Pornography.

I like to look at tits and ass.
Cocks and cunts and pubic grass!
Fore to aft, and first to last.
But I do not like Pornography.

It doesn't matter what they say
Nature always finds a way!
Timid, slutty, straight, or gay!
But I do not like Pornography.

Scenes of death are not reviled.
And naked flesh, by war defiled.
The charred civilian, legless child.
But I do not like Pornography.

It's only sex, just sex, you see.
Not what should or shouldn't be.
When others play, they don't harm me.
But I do not like Pornography.

I keep my mind beneath my hair.
It's up to me what I keep there.

What I may think, why do you care?
But I do not like Pornography.

Quotes

The past and future exist only in your mind.
You have a choice. In fact, that is all you ever had.
If you haven't done it, you don't know it.
The world contains more than can be said.
Not everything that is true, can be proved.
To kiss someone, you must be kissed.
"I don't know" is a very good answer.
Success teaches me what works. Failure teaches me what doesn't.
When in doubt, give yourself to love.
You can't hate the future, and you can't fear the past.
Everything that exists is unique. So what?
I am not you.

The customer may not know what they want.
You don't know what you don't know.
Fear cancels thought, and prevents action.
Delay may or may not improve a decision.
Think what is best, do what is good enough.
You can't change anyone.
If you want something, ask for it.
Give more than you take.
Relaxation is more effective than tension.
Ideas exist in general. Things exist in specific.
Some things just happen. It happens more often than you think.

Riddle #1

In lake or river,
Look there and you'll see.
I take all you have
But I'm utterly free.
I'm lost in the darkness,
But found easily.
I'm never without you,
But need help to be.

Satisfaction 44

Satisfaction
Wealth contraction
Mass confusion
Truth extrusion

Rebel faction
Blast impaction
Self-importance
Word discordance

False disussion
Brain concussion
Wrong conclusion
Mass delusion

Teen depression
Senate session
Obselescance
Clueless peasants

Non-essential
Preferential
Sin confessing
Social messing

Secret mission
Statistician

Constitution
Absolution

Blind religion
Tunnel vision
Holy virgin
Armed incursion

Hate conception
Smooth deception
Blanket bombing
Second coming

Law suspension
Growing tension
Lame epistles
Guided missiles

Greedy hoarding
Water boarding
Emasculation
Degradation

Troop reduction
Cosmic suction
No reaction
Satisfaction

Stillness

Stillness
In a bus stop
Tranquility
At the train station
Listening
For a raindrop
Settling
Of perspiration

Pause
As thoughts end
Far away
A distant hill
Recall
An afternoon with a friend
Brace
Against the winter chill

Why
The ever-present question
How
To fill the book of days
Where
To go, a slight suggestion
Who
Decides between the ways

Being
Free without a purpose
Now
Is all I have to face
Here
Upon the world's surface
I
Sit beside the human race

Faith And Doubt

Tokyo Train

The Tokyo train
Is running late.
She sits, half asleep,
Her edge worn, and dull,
A face with no expression.

On the other side
The Korean bachelor,
From time to time,
Steals a glance,
Then looks at his watch.

The Tokyo train
Is running late.
She no longer remembers,
Or tries to forget,
Why she is here.

The fresh young women
Firm, smooth flesh.
High boots, stockings,
And short, short skirts,
Stride confidently to their seats.

The Tokyo train
Is running late.
It's been running late for years.
A dying race. a fading culture,
Hurries to extinction.

So buoyant their voices
Chirping echoes in the tunnels.
Half asleep, and half-awake
They sway and nod,
Waiting for their stop.

True Or False

You cannot make,
Something true,
By wanting it to be.
No matter how many tears you cry,
Only true is true,
And nothing else will do.

You cannot make,
Something true,
By believing it to be.
No matter how many books you write,
Only true is true,
And nothing else will do.

You cannot make,
Something true,
By telling it to be.
No matter how many words you say,
Only true is true,
And nothing else will do.

You cannot make,
Something true,
By forcing it to be.
No matter how many people you hurt,
Only true is true,
And nothing else will do.

We

They live in the air we breathe,
We kill them off with medicine and antibodies.

They live in the ground we walk on,
We step on them on our way to work.

They make nests in the trees,
We cut down trees and put up buildings.

They swim in the waters,
We dump garbage into the waters.

They hunt for food in the wild,
We tame the wild, and put up fences.
They live in captivity, and make babies,
We feed them, and eat their babies.

They settle in foreign countries,
We take their resources, and bomb them.
They give all they have to make a living,
We take all they have and make a fortune.
They watch their children suffer,
We watch movies, and take vacations.

It's not about right and wrong,
It's about us and them.
It's not about good and bad.
It's about who we are, and who we aren't.
It's not about those that don't matter,
It's about those that do.

For the few, there is little difference
Between microbes, or ants,
Birds or fish, wolves or cattle,
Poor people abroad, or poor people at home.
If you are not one of us, then you are one of them.
You simply don't matter at all.

About The Author

Steve Cavin grew up in a small town in southeast Michigan, about an hour north of Detroit. At the age of 17, he began camping out in the backyard, testing out his tent, sleeping bag, and stove. At 18, he left home with fifty-seven dollars, and began hitchhiking west around the world. Four years and 30,000 miles later he returned, with eleven dollars and a Chinese fiancée.

Mr. Cavin has worked many different jobs, crewing sailboats in California, picking fruit in Australia, teaching English in Hong Kong, fishing in the Israeli desert, and packing coffee in England. He now works as a software engineer in Silicon Valley, where he lives with his wife and three sons. He practices archery, runs meditation retreats in the mountains, and hosts an open microphone in the local coffee shop, where he tells stories and reads his poetry.