

## Against the Wind



Poems by Jesse McDaniel

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### A Piece of Me

Piece by piece,  
I have put myself  
together: a mosaic  
of sorts. Fragments  
of the past grow  
into things I know.  
In all of my years,  
tears dropped,  
and some memories  
lost. Tossed out.  
The day I break  
will be the day  
I meet my fate.  
At any rate, I piece  
it all together.  
Forever, I will be  
at peace. Each  
day, I give you  
a piece of me,  
so one day, I can  
set myself free.

## How to: Write a Poem

Sit down. Close  
Your eyes. Feel  
Emotions wash  
Over your soul.  
Sit for a while.  
Run a mile  
In your mind.  
Return to  
Your body. Pick  
Up your pen.  
Then, lay down  
Your journal.  
Look internally,  
Eternally. Let  
Words flow  
On the page.  
Break free  
From the cage  
Causing you  
Rage. Release  
The pain inside  
And find  
That silver line  
In each rhyme.  
Rid yourself  
Of the stress -

Put to rest  
The weight  
You carry  
In your chest.  
Write with no  
End in sight.  
Wrong or right,  
Live a life  
Worth writing  
About before  
Your pen's ink  
Runs out.

## The Drop Off

The  
drop off is steep. You can  
slip and  
fall.

Once you are done  
falling,  
rise and pick up  
right where  
you left off.

Watch for the  
drop off.

Listen for the signs.

Expect it.

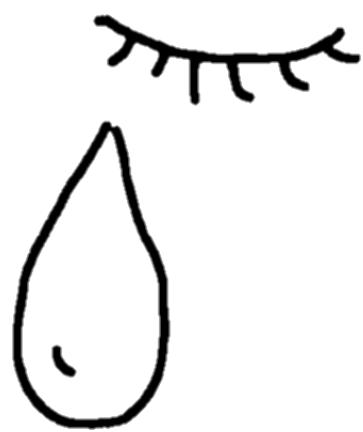
And, don't be tense.

Soon, the  
drop off will be past tense.

When the  
drop off comes. Don't run.  
Your journey has just  
begun.

## Boys Don't Cry

Don't believe me when I say  
that boys don't cry. They do.  
Those who don't cry need to.  
The weight of tears will hold  
you down. Release the tears  
that have remained hidden  
for all of these years. Boys  
cry; so do men. Well, at least  
they should. Life is heavy  
within this setting. It is  
unsettling when boys don't  
cry. Let it go; cry alone. Cry  
now, later, or whenever -  
whatever weather. Cry  
because it is out of love.  
Cry because you're hurt.  
Cry because you're happy.  
Let the tears drop, so that  
the pain can stop. Just cry  
because you have this life.



### Beneath the Sea

Sailors, fish, and ships  
dance and sing beneath  
the sea. All that sunk  
now resides beside  
a rushing tide. Far  
beneath the sea.

Sailors, fish, and ships  
have ended their trips.

Many have been put  
to rest after completing  
their quest. Life roams  
free beneath the sea.

We cannot see beyond  
the reef. Sailors, fish,  
and ships are at ease  
beneath the sea.

## Cannonball

I'm here to make a splash.  
I want to create a wave.  
Look how calm the water  
is. It's perfectly still, silent.  
It's been like that for years.  
Complacency is what comes  
to mind. I'm tired of waiting.  
I'm looking to jump from  
one life to another. I'm here  
to make a splash and create  
a wave - for Neptune's sake.

## The Top

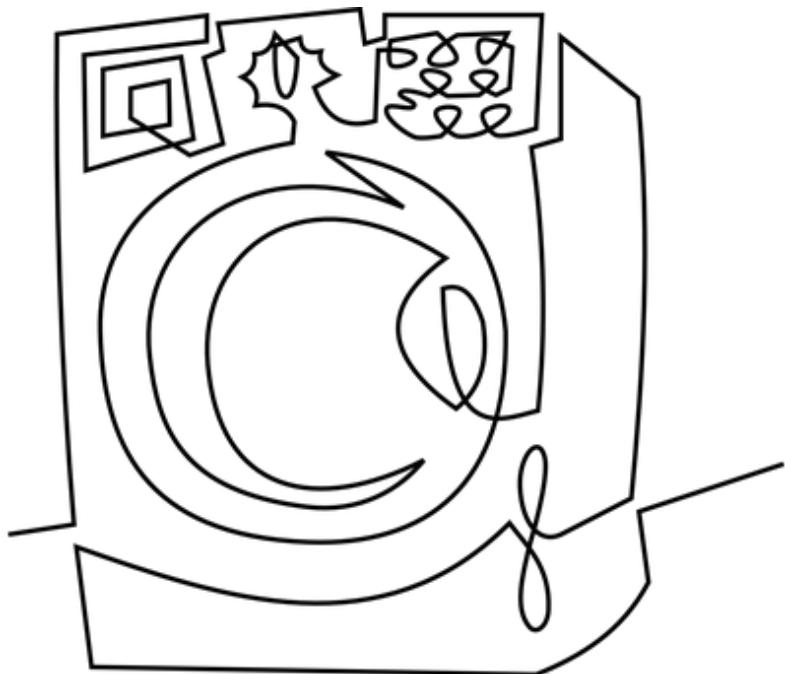
Up and away  
To the top. You  
And I don't stop  
Until we get  
To the top.  
There is no need  
To pack anything.  
We aren't coming  
Back. We explore  
This steep hill  
And its wrath.  
We push on  
Despite the pain.  
So much to gain  
In our journey.  
With each step,  
We move past  
Regret. We climb  
Out deep holes  
That were carved  
Inside our souls.  
We rise. Heading  
To the very top:  
A better setting.

## Blind Spots

90 on the freeway.  
Fast lane cruising.  
Chasing a sun some  
run away from.  
Burning gas and day  
light. No time to waste.  
Just money to make.  
Tunnel vision - no time  
to look back. Staying  
in the fast lane. Not  
in vain - just avoiding  
pain. Reach top speed  
and succeed. Pushing  
the pace, it's a race.  
90 on the freeway.  
It is my escape. Away  
from slowing down,  
I push toward new life:  
another opening door.  
In your blind spot,  
I show myself before  
I am somewhere else.  
Don't mind me. I am  
gone: a fading song.

## Washing Away

Life, before my eyes,  
has been washing away.  
The vast ocean takes  
what I took for granted.  
The vast ocean makes  
me stay in my place.  
On the edge of the beach,  
I feel water beneath me.  
I look ahead and I see  
life, before my eyes,  
washing away. Nothing is  
here to stay. Life comes.  
It goes before the water  
hits my toes - all the same.  
Many have washed away  
after dancing in the rain.  
After all, I can't complain;  
We all endure some pain  
inside the same hurricane.



### Before I Die

I want to fly  
across the world.  
I want to see  
leaves of green  
fall across the sky.  
Before I die,  
I want to breathe  
carefree air.  
I want to be  
the ocean breeze  
that is warmer  
than it seems.  
I want to freeze  
time. I want  
to seize - believe.  
I want to rise -  
reach new highs.  
I just want to live  
before I die.

## Don't Grow Up

Be a kid for as long  
as you can. Don't grow up.  
Be a kid; dream big dreams.  
Some say, "don't kid yourself"  
Some are not kids themselves.  
Tell me - you won't grow up.  
Be a kid. Be a squid. Be a lid.  
Be anything you want to be  
before life really begins.  
Be an actor - a ballplayer.  
Be an astronaut - a farmer.  
Be a president - a politician.  
Be what you want to be.  
Be free, and don't grow up  
because having youth  
beats being a grown-up.  
Be anything you want to be:  
a person your kid self  
would be excited to meet.

### The Bucket

Today is just a drop in the bucket.  
How full must the bucket get for me  
to tip it over or to karate kick it?  
There's no telling the amount of rain  
that will come. The drops will fill  
buckets - faster than eyes blink -  
but slower than brains think -  
definitely faster than ships sink.  
Today is just a drop in the bucket:  
a drop sending ripples through  
untouched waters I once knew.  
Buckets hold life; we hold buckets.  
That is something I cannot forget.

## Frozen Roses

It can be a cold world.  
I don't have to tell you  
that. We know this.  
Events, people, places  
can stop us in our tracks.  
It can get chilly. Life can  
freeze almost all things:  
just not time. Not this  
time. We must carry  
the warmth needed  
to keep us heated.  
We must survive this  
snowstorm that keeps  
most frozen. Pedals  
from your frozen roses  
remind me to find truth -  
to remain warm: alive.  
Your frozen roses remind  
me to search and find  
love I have left behind.

### Darkness Ensues

My darkest day has not come.  
When the candles burn out,  
when the stars fade to black,  
when my spirit starts to slack,  
when the grim reaper attacks,  
when nightmares become real,  
when my fate becomes sealed,  
when my skin forgets to feel,  
my darkest day will come.  
Until then, I will spend my life  
spreading light before darkness  
ensues; I have no time to lose.

## Find Something

Find something to do -  
to keep you busy -  
to keep you sane.

Find anything to do -  
just don't do nothing.

Nothing can keep you  
from doing something.

Anything is better than  
nothing. Don't stay  
still - fill your time  
finding something  
to do: *be quick, but  
don't hurry.* Don't  
worry. You will find  
your way: yourself.

You will find some -  
thing that keeps you  
going - living. You  
will find something  
that will become  
nothing. You must  
create resistance,  
listen, and lessen  
the distance between  
Hell and Heaven.

### Amusement

I am a muse: a cathartic character  
in this game of life. A muse meant to be  
amused - confused - used. Amusement  
to be in this sea of foreign scenery.  
I am a missionary and a visionary.  
Rarely, do I barely feel too care-free.  
I am a fuse: a non-fiction addition  
to the attrition of living and giving.  
I must be a muse with nothing to lose -  
everything to gain. It's all the same  
when we live with the same pain  
under the same rain. I am amusement  
to be; a soul dancing free  
beneath a sky doubling in size.

## A Poet's Dream

A Poet's Dream is to be heard and not seen. A Poet's Dream is to create, to wait, and to discover one's own fate.

A Poet's Dream manifests itself in words, sounds, and mounds of half-written ideas found under the surface: underground.

A Poet dreams a dream brighter than the sunlight and better than a good night under the stars inviting sight. A Poet's Dream is to change the world - to rearrange things to release one's hidden pain. Just like ghosts, Poets do not show themselves, but they do know themselves. A Poet's Dream is to live a life that can manifest itself before and during the night.

## Remember When

*Remember when things were different?*

The sky was a different color. It was a different day with different weather.

*Remember when we would laugh on the back of the bus? Remember when we wished for this day to appear out of thin air? All we wanted to do was grow up. Do you remember when we were young and naïve?*

We never thought our youth would leave. Beneath a tree, we wished for a better world: brighter skies.

*Remember when life was simple?*

Me neither, but I try to imagine a time back then that must've been some of our better days.

*Anyways, remember when life was not a maze or a haze that would stay? Remember when all was well? Do you remember when we thought life was easy? We can't forget where all the time went.*

We must remember when before the next story begins.

