

The Lifting of the Veil

Poems and Such

by Eric Cecil

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Also by Eric Cecil —
A-Train Blues
God's Children

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The Lifting of the Veil
to the Church

Book I, for Heather Marcus

Book II, for David Emery

Book III, for Women

The Lifting of the Veil: The Personnel

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Book I

I think we should dance and I don't really know how, but you can teach me, so on my back deck with the candles lit, the summer is cooling, the stars are sparkling, darkness is falling and God can reflectively sigh, with clouds gathering quickly in the sky, just let me take a breath, while the thunder rumbles and I say let the rain come! let it come I say, but I still think that we should dance and I give a madman howl, let the rain come, let it pour down, let it trail down your face, onto your skin, down your blouse, soaked to the bone, let it wash us away, but let us dance, hand in hand, even though this rain will carry us away, let us dance so a new generation can sing.

Part One

...

Prayer

(I'm afraid)

I can't.
I give up, quit my finite.
I can't accomplish what I want;
I am an insufficient power;
my thoughts and plans consist of
schemes and timely manipulations;
if God will just show up when
and where I want Him...

I look, and eye the rocks below.
My lungs fill with chaos.
My hope fades.
I jump and
feel the darkness
destroying me.

"God help me."

My mind stops peering around the corner of tomorrow;
my heart stops listening to the doubts of my mind.
I stop suffering, feeling fear of failure.

But it passes and I can't.
I'm afraid.
I feel the surety of my fear.
It envelops me.
I call out to God.
I wait and suffer and hope.

This is my life....

...

The Beginning

I was visiting Nashville during the summer of 2001. My friend Beau was in a band and was playing at a bar called Windows on the Cumberland. His band members drove in that day, along with some other people from Eastern Kentucky. There was one guy whose name was T.J.

I had a grand time at the bar, as did the entourage when they played that night.

I woke up at Beau's the next day with a screaming, angry, monster of a hangover. I got up and went into his kitchen, and someone asked "Have you seen T.J.'s head?" No I hadn't. So I go outside and this guy is standing there with this golf ball, and I mean golf ball size knot pulsating from his head. It was like looking at an exotic animal at the zoo. We pooled our thoughts and concluded that he passed out in the van that he came in, got up in the night to pee and fell and hit his head on the curb.

The band people were getting their gear packed and ready to head back to Eastern Kentucky. I was getting some coffee in the kitchen and T.J. came in. He started talking to me and he really didn't make that much sense, but he wanted me to come to Eastern Kentucky, to see him. And I've got this awful hangover, plus I have to drive 2-1/2 hours back to Louisville. But this guy, man, he looked terrible and he just wanted me to visit him. I thought about him going back to Eastern Kentucky and how economically depressed the area is. I thought about what the car ride back would be like, how much pain he was in. His situation just seemed so bleak and hopeless. And in that moment, my heart just went out to him and I felt compassion. It was a powerful experience.

My friend Robin came back into Louisville at the end of that summer. She had been in Spain. I got in touch with her and we went to see the movie *The Others*, starring Nicole Kidman. We were standing outside after the movie was over and I tried to tell her about this experience with T.J. in Nashville. But I just couldn't convey how much it meant. I couldn't get across how I felt moved by his situation.

I also had this other experience concerning my old neighbor who harmed me when I was a child. I wanted to tell her how I talked to him on the phone that summer, and how much that meant to me, how I got peace and closure. It was important to me that she knew these things. But standing outside the movie, I knew I couldn't articulate how much that emancipation meant.

I was driving back to school and was thinking about Robin and everything that had happened that summer, including switching from a registered Republican to an Independent. I thought, what I'll do is get her a card, a thank you card for being such a good friend. That won't work. I drove down the road another 10 miles and thought, well, what about writing a letter... maybe that will work.

...

Wes Montgomery

I come home some winter days, fix hot chocolate and let Wes Montgomery spin on the stereo, melt into the couch and say right on, detached from dreams and tabloid prophecies or by the problems of the world and the spiritual health of society.

I turn on the space heater, listen to Wes, and ponder if there is a limit to God's grace. I have hope for the human race.

I close my eyes, breathe, exhausted, coming to the end of the Obama Administration's first term and it is not the appropriate time for self-pity, saying,

"I wish poetry were easier, not so heart-wrenching and didn't entail so many Saturday nights spent alone in front of a muted television with football on, the stereo playing forgotten songs."

I'm not interested in talking about humanity or writing or elaborating on what I've written or stepping into the limelight or making pretentious statements about art.

It's just words on a page.

It's only poetry.

I still write now and then,

but not all at once,

all the time.

These days,

I'd rather stay home,

listen to jazz

or run the vacuum

do the dishes,

do laundry,

or clean the bathroom.

...

Something, Anything.... Nothing

Economics is not my forte,
but I know what happened in the stock market.
Americans lost their homes and few are now buying.
Americans lost their retirement.
They slept with fear and awakened with anxiety.
Bailouts were sought and a stimulus package happened.
This stopped the bleeding, but...

Politicians don't mention materialism,
or have much to say about greed.

I guess we should learn that we can't finance
The American Dream.

Will we learn that?
Will we learn, something,
anything,...nothing?

...

Untitled

Cloth tears.
Books tatter.
Shoes wear out.
Cars break down.
Metal rusts.
Silver tarnishes.
Gold loses its luster.
Jobs change.
Money comes and goes,
and youth ages;
yet love remains forever.

...

Fairytales

Perhaps we could leave at dawn,
lock the apartment door,
glance to the morning moon,
the disappearing stars
and drive away
with our mended dreams,
with our hope and pain.

We could arrive at Natural Bridge State park,
a little log cabin in the woods,
away from the city streets
the rush hour traffic
and the monotony
of edging out a living.

We could stay in bed until noon,
spend our time between the sheets,
talk about a simple life,
a few children,
with whom we could spend our time
with coloring books,
and fairytales.

...

The New Light of Love

I committed years ago, pursued the Kingdom of God, peace on earth, when enemies set aside hatred and fear for love.

I gave up everything, chasing hopes written when I was arrogance and ego and devolved into insanity.

I got better and we crossed paths, eyes met and love blossomed in my chest. Then she was gone and it was not to be.

I ache for different circumstances after seeing her today and her beauty from within. She was wearing a wedding ring and bliss and looked beautiful. I'm hopeful this longing will pass, the sun will rise in the morning, freeing me from the shadow of heartache, ready for the new light of love.

...

The Most Painful Poem

This is the most painful poem,
the loneliest, the most shameful,
the emptiest poem.

I should go ahead and say it,
but first let me gather the courage,
a quick prayer for strength,
because it's so unacceptable.

It's difficult,
so let me
take a sip of tea,
and take a breath,
breathe....
it will be over
before I know it,
so here it goes:

I've never had a girlfriend (itsmydarkestsecret).

It's over, out there in the open, now please let me explain.

The molestation.

I walked around,
my heart beat,
my lungs drew breath,
but I was dead,
from the ages of 6 until 16.

It just destroyed me as an adolescent.
And when I went through puberty,
the idea of sex was not beautiful
or natural, just shameful.

And I felt that I was more or less physically deformed.
I had red hair, fashioned in a bad haircut,
glasses that I hated
and I was short and awfully skinny.
To say that I was AWKWARD,
is quite an understatement.

The self-hatred grew and grew and grew,
until my first hospitalization.

The violence came to light.
I was discharged and went to a therapist
and as a result had a fairly typical
senior year in high school.
(Except my sister died from cancer.)

The violence still haunted me,
until I found alcohol and drugs
and I tried to kill those
shameful ugly feelings
that I felt for myself.

I was eventually betrayed
by the drink and drug
and it combined with how detestable I thought I was.
It took me under, rolled me over and I couldn't breathe
until I got sober.

There were opportunities for love
in my life, but there was always
something in the way.
A hospitalization here and there.
And alcohol in some instances was more important than
anyone. Then getting sober and pursuing my writings,
which meant getting involved in the Kingdom of God.
Now people my age are married, have kids
and the dating pool has shrunk,
plus my own insecurities.

At family functions, walk with me, sit with me,
as most of my cousins have gotten married,
and I'm Eric, the mentally ill, recovering alcoholic cousin,
that can't get a girl.
Sit with me on Valentine's Day
and ask yourself the perpetual
question of what's wrong with me.

And live in this world alone,
with no one to fall back on
emotionally or financially.

If I were to date,
think about that conversation.
My history, my alcoholism,
my blues, my beliefs,
my writings,
my life without romance.
How do you explain all that?
I haven't an answer,
except that something
has always been in the way.

This is
the most
painful
poem.

Part Two

...

Forgiveness

I never felt normal and don't believe that I had a normal childhood and definitely never had a normal adolescence. And normal is a setting on a washing machine, so I mean that I grew up spiritually sick, which grew into a deep self-hatred because I felt so outcast from the tribe and I began to feel completely inferior right around puberty.

My perception of self crumbled from the sexual violence. I prefer that term because it's more accurate and socially acceptable than molestation or abuse. The word molestation is so profane and vile and it makes me feel profane and vile, and shameful and dirty, from just that word. When I first became aware that I had been exposed to this violence, molestation was used to describe what had happened and the event and word were so negatively powerful that I felt that I had lost my self and I felt like I would continue to lose parts of my self. I was so utterly hopeless and lost within the depression and psychosis that I felt like I could never recover from molestation, but I eventually began to recover from violence, even if it's to the soul and the proof is that I can write about this and can talk about it.

This ongoing recovery process is not complete, probably never will be complete, and I can live with that because I am changing. I am not the same short, skinny adolescent boy with thick glasses and red hair, parted like I was running for vice president on the Republican side, who was so scared of life, that only found comfort in books first, then alcohol and drugs.

And for the man who harmed me, like no one has ever harmed me: I don't care about him. I'm indifferent. I'm too busy recovering from the residual effects of his actions to pay him much mind. I don't care if in his afterlife, he resides in hidden Kentucky meadows, awaking with the sunrise and breathing condensation on the green grass of my ancestors. He is a mere shadow, quickly fading in the light of my awakened life.

...

The Magic

When I was in the hospital for the first time in 93 my parents worked with the guidance counselor so that I could get back into high school without too much difficulty. He had a plan about the curriculum that I could take so that I could graduate on time. This was worked out when I went to my homeroom class the morning that I got back into school. The homeroom teacher saw me walk into his classroom, and told me and pretty much everyone in the class that I had dropped out and that only the guidance counselor could admit me back into school. I was sixteen, tremendously self-conscious, and felt humiliated by that scene. This is how I felt most of the time. That and ugly.

But I found the solution when I was seventeen. I was at a friend's house, at a party. Someone had a fake ID and bought alcohol for everyone. I had my first drunk, which is pretty monumental in the life of an alcoholic. I drank Early Times whiskey. I took a few drinks, took some more and some more. And the magic happened. I didn't feel like that self-conscious, ugly, humiliated kid. That night, at that party, I instantly became delusional. I thought I could dance like James Brown and sing like John Lennon. It was wonderful.

That party occurred on the weekend. When school started Monday, I met some friends in the parking lot and I felt "in" for the first time in my life. I'll never forget walking into school, talking about joining a band, despite not having any musical talent. And the feeling of having arrived, of being part of the cool crowd. That was the power of alcohol. That's what it did for me. Later, it stopped doing for me and started doing to me. And I would be seduced by the lie, that I could somehow recapture that glorious experience of my first drunk and capture the magic again.

...

Progression

I was living with my roommates and going to a summer class at UofK in 1999. I ran into a friend who was working as a busboy/dishwasher at Outback steakhouse.

I needed a job so I started working there. People working in restaurants, in general, party. I fit right into the lifestyle with shifts starting in the afternoon and getting off late at night when the bars and clubs get going.

My alcoholism progressed while working there, meaning this:

I went to an Outback party in August, right before school started, right after I got hired. I made friends with a woman named Hope, presenting to her, my character. She laughed as I made jokes. I played the jester, the court fool. (I had to earn your love somehow.) I got mildly intoxicated as I remember, had a great time, with a slight hangover the next day. And alcohol was a social lubricant. It was fun and still exciting. Alcohol made me happy.

But something happened that I cannot explain, because four months later, alcohol and marijuana was physically, mentally, spiritually crushing me, cleaning me out. I was an empty bucket.

The Y2K party was at Joy's house, a server at Outback, and it was well attended. And someone had a Kodak Polaroid. I was trying to avoid the camera as much as I could, because I deeply, passionately, hated myself. I could not stand to look at myself in the mirror to shave, which is why I wore a beard.

Someone took my picture and I had to look at it. And I had to take a drink. I tried to look at the picture, but turned away, because I had two noses and three eyes, and everyone was looking at me. I stood there looking at the Polaroid, humiliated.

And I took another drink, And I was dead inside, decaying and rotting where my soul used to be.

...

Out of Gas

In Lexington, on Sundays, the liquor stores closed and you could only get a drink at a restaurant until 10:30 p.m.

However, downtown there was a hotel with a bar inside called The Big Blue Martini where you could drink until 1:00 a.m.

I got off work one night from serving tables, went to Applebee's, got started there and left to get downtown.

My gas light came on, but I opted out of getting gas. The Big Blue Martini was the place to be and it would be hard to get a drink because the crowd crammed around the bar like pigs at the trough.

I got to the bar, drank more than usual, so much so that the people I was with wouldn't let me drive home. I went back to someone's house, drank more, blacked-out and came to the next day. Someone gave me a ride back to the hotel garage. I found my car, drove it out onto the street and it immediately ran out of gas.

This occurred in January and it was painfully cold as I walked to the gas station with an unbelievable hangover. I bought a red plastic container and filled it with some gas. I walked down the street, back to the car, smoking a cigarette. I passed two people walking down the street who pointed out that I was carrying gas and smoking a cigarette. I was in so much pain that...

I kept walking, smoking, defiantly carrying the gas because I couldn't have cared if I lived or died.

•••

Addiction

I'm quivering from addiction,
staring into the mirror,
searching my gaunt face,
circled eyes that see death
coming in the clouds,
holding the reins
of one thousand
thundering stallions.

My memories and hopes
have been scalped and lay wasted
in saddlebags.

I'm skeleton now.
My spirit is broken.
I only exist,
hammering out
the hours of the day,
listening to the seduction,
fuming death,
rotting from the inside out.

I've been addicted,
breathing for years,
escaping, and being dragged back
into hell; growing
more despondent
until death's thunder seems
the hand of mercy.

I'm shaking,
eyes tearing,
lips quivering,
sighing with despair
as I pick up the fix
and hope
for something different.

...

Addict

I generally don't identify as being a drug addict. I did experiment with some pills here and there, but I never really got into that particular high. Can you become addicted to marijuana? All I can tell you is that I had to have it, preferably daily. But let me tell you a story about my addiction.

When someone needs pot like I did, you try not to run out, at all cost. However, from time to time, my supplier would not have it or could not come by so...

I had a glass bowl, which had colors that intensified the more that it was smoked. When I would run out of pot, I would take the bowl and boil it in a pan of water. The resin from the bowl would float to the top of the water. I would then filter the water through a coffee filter, leaving the resin. I would take the filter and put it in the oven, to dry the resin out. I would then smoke it and try to get high. It never worked very well, but gave me the hope of getting high.

I have tried to get high without drugs another way and it involves Malcolm X. I think that it is in his autobiography, and I know it is in the movie. When Malcolm goes to prison, he is coming off heroin, and is given nutmeg to take the edge off. So one night when I was out of pot, I went to Kroger and bought some nutmeg and tried to get high off that. I mixed it with water and drank it, but it didn't work very well either, though it made me think of eggnog.

...

Ominous Warning

My life went to hell during my spring semester, year 2000. I flunked all my classes because I couldn't get out of bed. I was the guy that answered last call with "I'll take two." I would come to the next day, would feel the hangover. I tried to stay in bed because of the pain, would roll around in the covers, and listen for the sound of the air conditioner to come on; if it came on I knew I had electricity. I would get out of bed, take a shower and would immediately smoke some pot. Strictly for medicinal purposes. I remember sitting on my couch in a bathrobe, getting high, hoping for oblivion because I knew that I should have been in class that morning and here I was, not able to meet my responsibilities as a student. So I got high. I would come down, check the Clear Eyes, and go wait tables. I would get off that night, say I was just going to have a few drinks, typically drove home drunk at three of four in the morning and start the whole cycle over again the next day.

I went home after the semester ended, away from Lexington. I lied to my parents about my grades; they never saw the report card. I tried to get myself together working at the golf course. Abstinence from pot and alcohol was uncalled for; I just needed to cut down. I went back to school Fall 2000 and had something to prove since I flunked the previous semester. But as school started I got sick.

At Outback there was a male server that gave me the creeps. I can't explain it, he just freaked me out. Plus the Middle East was starting to smolder and I was getting sick. And there was a girl that I really liked and I was getting sick. My parents picked up on it. They tried to talk to me, but I was getting sick. My mother drove to Lexington, to talk to me, but I wouldn't listen. Well, the next day my father showed up and asked me to get some help. I agreed. And I really put them through hell, because my decision to get help or not determined if they slept when this was going on.

My Dad got me into a psychiatrist. And he listened to my parents. He talked to me and his diagnosis was alcoholism and bipolar disorder. A dual diagnosis, a death sentence. He prescribed Lithium and Zyprexa. He told me that I would have to stop drinking and smoking pot immediately. He assured me that I would have another psychotic break if I continued drinking and using. He recommended I go to 12 step meetings. I listened to what he had to say and essentially thought: what does this guy know? He's only been to college for 10 years. I'll take the medication, and try to stop drinking and smoking, but I'm not going to a 12 step meeting. Let's not be extreme.

About a month later I was high and drunk, despite the knowledge. And every time I drank and used, a little voice in the back of my mind would say: you know you're not supposed to be doing this. But, I would drink and use for two more years, and hate myself ever more deeply for doing what was wrong and harmful to me.

...

Remembrance of the Midnight Parking Lot

I ask for one more...
poem and the high,
one more spark of creativity
and I would trade a little sleep
for a light breeze of mania to write with.

I just don't know if I can write anymore,
with the sun shining, blue skies
and not a storm in the forecast.
Nothing disturbs me,
the news no longer bothers me.
I strive for acceptance and
my quest for peace is over.

I turn to God and times certainly have changed,
it's no longer three in the morning,
tossing and turning.
It's close to eleven with the covers rolled back,
on my knees, with my head bowed,
thanking God...

I don't have to chase down my death
in some midnight parking lot,
waiting for a car to pull up
with what I need.

Part Three

...

Junkie

I decided to take the rest of the year off in June 2008. I needed a break, had no material to work with so I slipped into the couch. I stationed my life from there.

I watched CSI Miami,
Law and Order SVU,
CSI New York,
Grey's Anatomy,
WWE wrestling.
Sports took precedent over any show.
I watched the Chicago Cubs on WGN
whenever they came on. I watched...
My control faltered.
I lived life during commercials.
I was a junkie, when I came home from work
and turned on Judge Judy.

I wasn't reading,
exercising
or breathing.

Some people said moderate, cut back, just don't watch so much. But I couldn't control it. I decided after the World Series in October and the Presidential election in November that I would cancel my basic cable.

Now I'm reading Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*.
I've written four poems.
My life is better, more peaceful.
I don't regret my decision
for killing my TV.

...

Obituary

I'll never write anything
that will pass through
quality control.
Are my days as a poet over?
I've thought it before,
but this time it may be true.
I haven't written anything
that moves me in years.
And I really don't try anymore.
I have no obsession.

I've slipped into a mediocre life
with silent ease.
But when the day fades,
I find myself alone,
fidgeting, restless
watching reality TV.
Anesthetized, drowsy, medicated.

Has my life come down to this?
I have wasted yet another day.
The page is blank.
Sedation captures me,
as I think that I should do
something, anything.

So I begin writing my obituary:
"Eric Cecil died when he lost his inspiration at the age of 34.
He was paralyzed with concerns of
'Is this God's will?'
And he never accomplished anything.
He is survived by *A-Train Blues*
and *God's Children*."

...

Waking from the Doldrums

My depression was a process, not an event. It's not like one day I joyfully decided to feel no hope or faith in the future. Nor did I decide to transfer my exhaustion, pain and pessimism to my self-image.

My depression grew, helped by what I perceived as failures, until I had to carry myself to work. I also began sleeping 12 hours a day on the weekends.

When you slowly slide into depression, when you call it life, you say this is just how it is, it becomes the new normal.

My depression was also caused by my inability "to make it." It is very important in our society "to make it," and I certainly have not.

Shortly after New Year's 2011 two things happened. I reached the end of myself. My will ran its course, and money couldn't buy what I wanted. So in desperation I returned to set prayer and meditation. And after 10 years of trying medication, my doctor and I rediscovered the right combination.

My mood has lifted.
I wonder if it will last?

...

Grace

I think... I should have been killed driving down the highway without my headlights on in the fog at the speeds that I was driving...and I think...the high speed chase lasted for thirty miles...someone should have been killed especially when I was driving like I was playing Pole Position.

I've thought about it every day since it happened and when I lie in bed at night before I fall asleep I always see the state trooper breaking the driver's side glass, pulling me to the ground, pinning me to the pavement, putting the handcuffs on me, placing me in the back of the police car and taking me to jail.

And I think...life is such a beautiful thing, because I know that God loves me, that He saved me and the people on the highway that night, and I don't want to squander his grace and love like the prodigal son I once was.

...

Real World Blues

I was originally
an advertising major,
but I was in the grips then.
I had a presentation that I failed
in a prerequisite class.
That ended advertising.
I decided to switch majors to History,
with plans to teach high school.
That was the plan.
Writing and poetry happened.
And I wanted to be a star.
And teaching high school was too small.
Then I got caught up advocating for the mentally ill.
I was going to save the system.
This goes on in my head from time to time.

I thought, I need to be active in the system when God comes through.
So I've stayed on as a case-manager, despite being worn thin.
I don't have the skills to straighten anything out.
I'm not big enough, educated enough or dedicated enough anymore.
And now, after being in the real world, teaching high school feels
right.

•••

Technology

(PUT DOWN THE CELL PHONE AND BE WHERE YOU ARE!)

What has it really achieved but a broken world filled with lonely people, marveling over empty technology that drives us apart and fills the ego with self in a self-obsessed society.

We are not still or patient.

Do you really need to check your machine so that you can make plans, to be somewhere else that you won't be happy with yourself when you get there, to be with people who you offend by the addictive checking of your status?

What about staying in the moment and enjoying the people that you value.

It has its time and place, but unglue your hands from your perceived self-importance.

...

Deviant Behavior

I became dead set against technology during my last year in college and still believe that our technology has far exceeded our morality, which is defined as the ability not to hurt another human being, and to help make someone's life easier. This is what I think of as a moral person. I suppose this definition is flimsy and theologians are better qualified to talk about morals, but it works for me.

Is technology part of the problem? I think it is. Maybe time will prove me wrong, as I often am. Perhaps all the gigabytes, hard drives and whatyamadoodles are a good thing for mankind, we'll see.

I am changing my attitude a little. I learned to text message when I visited my brother in Ohio, naturally wanted to get an iPhone, which I haven't bought because they're expensive. I don't really need one, but texting is very exciting.

I was also on Youtube last weekend and liked an Alicia Keys' song and ended up downloading iTunes. I then talked to my brother about an iPod. I confess I bought one.

I was talking to a friend and she asked if I was on Facebook, which I wasn't, but then thought it over, that maybe I could get an account, reach out. I mulled it over, holding onto my old ideas about technology, wondering what an old college friend would say about my deviant behavior. I'm an anti-technology traitor, but I feel good about joining the 21st century a decade late.

...

The Earth is Worth It

I would lie in bed at night as a child, and wonder where the plume from the smoke stacks goes.

I felt powerless to make a difference.
I'm only one person... yet,
I made a phone call to ask my mother
if I could use her recycling service
because my apartment complex doesn't offer it.
I started by dropping off my recyclables
at her house and...

My Dad bought me those new energy saving light bulbs.
They use less energy... my electric bill.
I replaced every light bulb in my apartment except for two,
cost was around forty dollars.
And I think... the Earth
is worth it.

I made these changes because my conscience was challenged;
it would have been criminal to do nothing.

As residents, our reality is the earth's resiliency has a breaking point
and the only way to gauge that point is to break it and when that
happens...

...

The Journey

Where are the poets?

Are you seeking freedom, wanting to burn it down and build something new, shunning technology, dancing in the sunlight, stepping barefoot into fields, staring at the moon, walking through your living room naked, sleeping in on Sundays and dreading the grind of the coming work-week?

Where are the poets?

Are you just breathing, silently seeking waters of redemption, tired of black and white thinking, from opinions that won't budge, that scream and yell, hoping for compromising shades of gray?

Where are the poets?

Are you in pain, protesting, wishing for a clearer reality, making love with words while feeling her breath on your ear?

Or are you in jail, talking to a lawyer, hoping for a plea deal?

Are you sleepless and medicated, wearing the complimentary hospital pajamas, walking the halls of an institution?

Are you tired of politics that go nowhere, the either or, the partisanship, the discord?

Where are the poets, with your sweet promises, the surety of your words?

Take this weight, take me with you...

From city streets, this nine to five,

To rolling hills and the freedom of the countryside,

From sloping hills to mountain snow,

From dying weeds to renewal,

From this shivering and hopeless cold,

To the bridge spanning over the valley of death,

To the joy of life...to peace.

...

Hints of Spring

I'm filled with such joy because it is Saturday, February 20th, the temperature has climbed past 50 degrees, snow is melting, warm weather is around the corner, another winter is almost over and God is bringing me to another Spring.

Perhaps I've never been so hopeful, so ready for change and determined to take action in my life. I've let years go by, sitting on my couch, praying, hoping, ignoring that faith without works is dead, waiting for God to do for me what I can do for myself and as a result, well, years have passed, and now it's 2010 and I'm ready,

prepared, to relish in the possibility of peace, to become a poet again, to shake off the depression of past failures, to no longer be so lonesome, so unlovable, isolated, and untouchable.

Part Four

...

Glory Days

I was talking to someone about America and Wal-Mart and they talked about the glory days of the fifties and the material prosperity before manufacturing jobs got shipped overseas. I replied that the fifties must have been great if you were white, but if you were African-American you still lived in a segregated society where separate meant unequal and the Civil Rights Act was a great ideal and dream, but it was never given the blueprint for economic justice.

And what has really changed?

In 2012, it still has to do with skin color and wealth means being born in the right socio-economic background. Poverty is generational and if you're born poor in a world where 1/6 of humanity is hungry every night, you're likely to die barefoot and starving, with tears rolling down your face and flies and buzzards circling.

The way that America will regain its soul is by not listening to the fanatics on the radio, but by reaching out to those who have slipped through the cracks, by strengthening social services and investing in education because science and mathematics is our future. But this will never happen as long as pimply-faced boys die in wars to protect what boardrooms believe is theirs and not ours.

I place my faith in the Almighty, who holds the promise of a sunrise breaking for a renewed world, who has love for redeemed people. Stars will dance, as angels sing of fulfilled dreams and poets will guide the conscience of systems of power so that blood is never again shed for the wants and whims of the few, while the needs of the many go unmet.

...

Commercial

Everything is a game, a competition between physically beautiful people. I would cancel my cable, but this is the Cubs' year.

I watch politics on C-SPAN. The Republicans and Democrats bicker like spoiled children. The house is on fire and politicians are watching the blaze, arguing about the color of the wallpaper. Who are the lesser of two evils? Opinions vary.

I doubt the country will again reach middle ground.

We need term limits on senators and representatives. Elected officials should receive a social worker's salary; should be publicly audited each year, and if they won't comply...

Let's turn our government over to firefighters like in a commercial I recently saw.

•••

Love Left Standing

I.

I stand over the beaten body of America,
knocked to the canvass,
seeing stars, hearing ringing in its ears,
ribs aching, face swollen, eyes cut and bleeding,
wheezing, having difficulty breathing,
once the hope of humanity,
being counted out...

One... two... three...

II.

When I was a child my Dad
used to tweak his voice
and you could hear pride
when he said America.

“In America
you can be anything
you want to be.
We’re free,
but in Russia,
an aptitude test determined
what you do
for the rest of your life,
but in America you can choose.”

“In a democracy,
the power is the people,
everyone is equal
and can vote
for whoever they choose,
but in other countries
you can be jailed

or have your legs broken
if you vote wrong.
But in America,
that will never happen
because we hold free elections.”

Four... five...

III.

America was innocence,
with motives beyond question when I was a kid.

I stood with hand on heart when the National Anthem
was sung during baseball games,
lit fireworks on the family farm,
ate apple pie and ice cream on the Fourth of July,
and on Memorial Day, the stars and stripes
flapped peacefully in the breeze.

I loved Super Man... “Truth, Justice and the American Way.”

And Hulk Hogan with his theme song,
“You have to fight for your right,
because I am a real American.”

I was also naïve, believed:
the Pilgrims met the Native Americans,
cooked food, lived happily ever after,
and the country was settled non-violently
through fair, friendly treaties.

Six... seven...

IV.

I opened my eyes in college,
saw how cotton became king
on the back of slave labor.
The country was really built by

human bondage
and we freed the slaves,
but legalized segregation.

And today...

Politicians segregate from the people...
pharmaceutical and oil companies
rule the world...
the middle class is vanishing...
my generation does nothing...
the youth sits back,
pacified, listening to John Mayer's
"Waiting for the World to Change."

Eight...

V.

It doesn't matter
who the figure head is,
it's still sweaty handshakes
made in backroom deals
with special interests
followed by slaps on the back,
whiskey and cigars.

Nine...

This is the way of the world...

Ten...

VI.

I assure you,
the hour has already passed,
the first will be last,
the power of the few will be smashed,
there is a sunrise:

with an end to senseless misery,
love is given freely,
the hopeless succeed,
the chained are freed,
the poor are blessed,
the tired rest,
there are dreams for the oppressed,
where the humble are exalted,
and the broken hearted are consoled.

I pray on these things, they will pass
into being, so that blood never again
fills the God-shaped-hole within
the souls of men. Amen.

•••

Staying Radical

I'm semi-retired nowadays. I would like to capture the lightning again, but it left me burned and broken and my job leaves me exhausted.

Perhaps it's my addiction to television that leaves me with a bad taste for humanity. It could be this melancholy and my unanswered prayers (not yet, not yet and He has a better plan). Or lack of a muse.

My life is just not that exciting anymore. No more institutions or symptoms. No more semi-delusional relationships. I'm a tax-paying-law-abiding citizen now. I could write about politics, become a pundit, but it seems so useless.

Liberal or Conservative? Republican or Democrat? Is that really my options? To love one and hate the other. The TEA party?

How obnoxious.

I watch MSNBC and FOX News, both are so extreme and so polarizing that in order to remain truly radical I've become a moderate.

I believe in low taxes, but know that 95% of the wealth is controlled by 5% of the people. I work with the sick and the poor in systems stacked against them; they have no justice and I owe them so much and usually it's Republicans with a voice of selfishness that disparages people on that "good disability money."

But should I just go along with the Democrats and out of control spending and debt which begs this question: When is the Chinese government (Free Tibet!) going to take up permanent residence in Washington D.C. since they own so much of the country from buying T-bills?

...

Vacillating

I had a framed painting of the American flag over my computer when I first started writing in August 2001.

War broke out, Afghanistan.

I took it down when I moved out of my apartment in Lexington.

War broke out, Iraq.

I didn't put it back up when I moved into my new apartment.

Maybe I should hang it on my wall?

Or maybe not.

Maybe I should...

Or not.

Maybe....

...

Don't Call Me a Liberal or a Republican

I don't believe that laws and legislation will bring peace or protect the vulnerable from the vultures, but love through grace will, and God is sufficient. I've been told that I'm un-American for several reasons, but currently because I think that the country has been purchased by corporate fat cats who pay politicians so that they can get their fur stroked.

I cringe at the thought of being called a liberal or a Republican. Sometimes, I'll give you a pass for calling me a liberal because of their social platform, but when you call me a Republican for listening to the propaganda on the radio, "How dare you sir! Have you no decency!"

I watch FOX, MSNBC and too much TV in general, but when the NBA Finals end, I'm through with pop culture and the phenomenon of reality TV and caring about the lives of celebrities. Pardon me, I have to ask: Is life that hard, sitting on fortunes, wasting your life away, caught up within yourself, staring at the camera?

I'll become the recluse from the world that I want to be, and get back to writing poetry that has meaning for me. I need to get healthier; maybe I can find the self that I've lost in this world of madness.

...

Scare

I had a scare the other day driving on the Watterson, coming back from having my car fixed by my cousin when I noticed a white SUV pulled up beside me at a stop light. It was a Homeland Security van. I recently sent a poem out on email to a group of poets and other parties that could have been construed as incendiary and unpatriotic. But what could be more patriotic than utilizing rights given by God, which are only taken away by man.

When I saw the SUV I thought, what if one day they just knock on your door and say, "Mr. Cecil, can we come in and talk to you about some of your activities."

I sent "A Letter from a Previously Unknown Region of My Soul" to a few Supreme Court Justices and to Laura Bush after September 11th. They were concerned about the apathy of the youth so I felt compelled to respond and when I did I thought *Am I going to get put on a list somewhere?*

I know a guy in the mental health movement who is convinced that if you have ever been in a mental institution that you automatically get put on a list. So I may be on one already, but not for writing.

Question...

Doesn't a government by the people, for the people, need to be fundamentally changed when a citizen can't address the said person's government without fear of being put on a list?

I look out my blinds. So far no one has knocked on my door. I'm really not that important.

...

Patriot

The biggest misconception you have of me is that I don't love my country. This is true because when we met, you said, "and I love my country." I know that you implied that I don't.

I do love America, however complicated my feelings are. I think that we offer the world the best and sometimes the worst, with our democracy, an ideal that perhaps has been tarnished by self interested hands.

I've been disappointed the past 12 years or so because I believe that we are better than pre-emptive strikes and Guantanamo Bay. We're better than the violence and sex soaked culture that young minds are drowning in. We're better than our impoverished inner cities. We're better than our failing education system.

And I guess that I believe that we're better than our politics.

•••

Decline

I stand unheard,
ten miles past my prime,
waiting for my life to change
with magnetized eyes,
holding a remote control.

My ideas pass into the unknown,
my life unfolds on the couch.

I still envision a better America,
know a better America,
a more compassionate America,
as I watch FOX News.

I see you, remember you on the street,
wearing a camouflage Army jacket
with a tattered flag.

You seem lost, old,
hunger pained,
brittle boned,
shivering in the cold,
while pneumonia grows.

I think of you;
you have radiance for humanity
and you will shine again,
once we see the other side
of our decline.

Part Five

...

Job Change

I have anxiety.

I changed jobs, overwhelmed and by Friday...

I stop for Chinese take-out, watch “professional” wrestling,
forget reality and the strain from meditating
on peace,
America’s role,
politics
and

the Kingdom of God.

I’m rested at nine on Saturday,
meet my mother for coffee at ten,
head to Tai Chi at noon,
meet a few friends at two,
stop off for a movie,
come home around four,
stay in and clean my apartment
and water my plants.

I put on a pot of coffee and attempt to write.

I sleep and lounge on Sunday morning,
watch the Baptists on TV,
go to the grocery store
and watch football.

I don’t get out much.
I read or pray,
listen to music,
or meditate or exercise,
but I’m not lonely and bored.

...

I Think They're Crazy...

Call it what you want, use liberty with words:

The Kingdom of God.

A New Age.

Paradise.

A New World,

ruled by love in our hearts,

peace in our minds,

and sanity in our actions.

Yet...

They talk of Judgment,
with judgment.

And of being chosen.

And of being saved.

Then they talk of wrath.

And punishment.

And hell, with fire

falling from the sky.

They talk of damnation,

and say I'm beyond...

the grace of God.

I think they're crazy...

for wanting...

a world

cleansed with vengeance,

rather than healed by love.

God will tenderly touch the ills

of the human heart,

replace a few faulty internal parts,

rather than destroying the whole.

...

Disturbed

I'm just so sick of the world, religion, politics and the self-righteous who believe that they have the answers to everything. Everyone is an expert. And I tire of listening to people who tell me what God is, then express some non-loving, intolerant point of view. I'm not saying that I have any answers.

I get lost on a fairly regular basis and I am prone to do something apart from what I believe that God wants and let's not talk about the purity of my thoughts...

But come on people, are you serious, just because someone has a different religion or belief system doesn't make them anything less than your brother and sister. People are not demons if they practice faith differently. We are meant to live in love and peace. This is what God intended for humanity. If you're Christian what about turning the other cheek. If you can't live with "do unto others as you would want them to do unto you," don't call yourself a Christian.

And if you don't seek peace and don't strive for peace, and see God in all people then you don't really know God. I'm just so tired of the madness and fear. I listen to some music, but the world has me so disturbed that I can't stand it.

•••

Mega-Church Blues

When will I pull myself out of it, and start writing again? I have nothing left to give and after waiting all these years for *The Miracle on 34th Street*,

I'm just worn thin. I just don't see the importance of it anymore. I don't get anything out of it, nothing really inspires me. What's the point, in this crazy world where fanatics get the press, when politicians become gods, pundits have their minions, and the youth are plugged in and mindless? What's the point?

I turn on TBN and watch a fundamentalist preacher, who I find a little deranged and slightly entertaining. I don't want to hurt his feelings and ruin his day but God, who so loved the world...is not going to allow 1/3 of mankind to die in some apocalyptic war. I'm not enough in his eyes, but I am in God's.

So listen:

I hear the message of mega-churches, the health and wealth gospel of capitalistic Christianity, like we are here for God to serve us and give to us; a religion of let's make a deal and how can we cash in.

Whatever happened to serving the poor?

...

The Proper Use of the Word Crazy

Driving down Westport road to the used bookstore
I realized
that I've
lightened up
on using the word
crazy.

I still find it offensive
to refer to someone
with a mental illness
as crazy, rather than sick or ill.

However,
when I call
fundamentalists
crazy,
balanced people
typically
shake their heads in agreement.

So I feel
this is
the proper use
of the word.

...

All People

Fundamentalism... fundamentalism, fundamentalism, as if saying it three times would make it go away.

We need to listen to people who aren't cut from the same cloth, because they are not expendable, cannot be distanced from God because they have the wrong hair cut, have body parts pierced or arms tattooed.

Or the "wrong" beliefs.

Maybe the forsaken have too many questions and doubts or not as high of an I.Q., or file in a lower tax bracket and don't have a college degree, have homelessness under their nails, whiskey on their breath, sickness in their bodies, or SECRETS in their souls
and maybe they didn't make the right connections
at the county correctional facility
or have spent a little time
on the wrong side
of a psychiatric institution.

I listen to people's hate and judgments concerning race, sexuality and gender. I feel exclusion and discrimination especially when you try and sell me your church that doesn't include all people.

...

Apology

I always feel like I should apologize for my writings, like I should constantly begin with this:

I'm sorry that my poetry makes you feel uncomfortable. I know that I should just tone it down, and not be so concerned about war and humanity. I should not be troubled by the future of America and what our role is in the world.

I apologize for not settling for second best from my country. We have more to offer than military might and I am sorry for thinking this.

If I've made you uneasy...for being hopeful, certain that armed conflicts will end, and it won't come through diplomats working at the U.N., but through God's grace...I'm sorry.

And if I offended you for mentioning God, I'm sure He is issuing His own statement of apology, because He doesn't quite live up to your standards.

You know, His whole unwavering, unconditional love thing. That inconvenient, "I'm not going to leave you no matter what" attitude of His. It seems like He sides with the poor a little too much, and has unwarranted concerns about the sick.

So He apologizes for all the sermons that He ruins on Sundays, especially when certain preachers get going about Muslims. And gay people. And the people who don't pay income taxes like the disabled. And the people in jails and prisons.

Perhaps the most unfortunate aspect of God writing his apologies every week...
is that He has to write so many.

...

Inner Peace

If the only way to inner peace
is by walking a path with God;
if God's real concern is
humanity;
if the only way to world peace is
justice for the sick and the poor,
then I'm going to continue working
until people are looked at as people
instead of as a dollar
or as a cost analysis
because God sees their goodness,
not their poverty.
He looks at the sick and sees
their suffering, not the disease.

You can tell me to stop dreaming,
wasting my time
STOP FIGHTING
but I've heard it before
by people who gave up on
demonstrating their ideals.

Maybe one day I will give up on humanity,
not see any love in the world,
but I don't think that will happen
as long as people can look
into each other's eyes,
see their hopes reflected
in another soul and fall in love.

...

Letter to a Journalism Student at the University of Kentucky

Ms. Herrington,

I was a student at the University of Kentucky when the terrorist attacks happened on September 11, 2001 and it goes without saying that the impact that those events had on my life were profound and life changing. I remember very distinctly leaving my apartment that morning, walking to my Middle Eastern history class, ready to go to any length for a more peaceful world. Like so many, I looked inward on that day and became determined to find a better way to deal with violence and conflict.

I decided to reach out to college students as I was preparing to publish my writings. College is a very special time, one where young people are free to find their beliefs and principles that will guide them throughout their lives. It is a time to find out what you value and make choices accordingly.

I found your article on wearing the hijab on-line. I am impressed with your dedication in trying to walk in someone else's shoes and the courage it took to challenge people's perceptions concerning the Islamic faith.

Religion is meant to be a way of life that honors the sacredness of human life through a relationship with a loving God. The tragedy is that fundamentalism has created animosity between Christianity and Islam; both are religions that strive to find a greater love for humanity, yet war burns in the Middle East.

God's love will soon wash away our inhumanities, leaving a vacuum within the human heart to be filled.

There are many ministers and priests who believe that God will destroy the earth, that a large percentage of humanity will perish, that the world will fall into fire and chaos. This is what most clergy believe concerning judgment.

God loves all, will bless all and all will know the love of God through grace. I believe that God has a plan for everyone and no one is excluded from this plan; no one is beyond His love. This unconditional love is what makes God who He is, and humanity's failure to strive for this love is the reason that we live in a world of violence and conflict.

Please read the books that I have enclosed. If you wish for more verification concerning who I am please contact me.... It is a very long story that I will be glad to share with you at your convenience.

Your humble and obedient servant...

...

Letter to Mr. Parham

Dear Mr. Parham,

I became aware of your organization after an article that you wrote was published on-line following the Glenn Beck rally that took place in the summer 2010. I share your concerns about the rising political-religious fundamentalism that seems to be gripping our country. I am disturbed how the poor are perceived. In this country we seem to have traded one of the central messages of the Bible, helping the poor through social justice, for the health and wealth gospel of capitalistic Christianity.

In our country, one is judged good according to his wealth and one is deemed evil according to his poverty. One is blessed if you're healthy and one is demonized if you're sick. I find it interesting that religious people shun the ways of this world, yet seem to glorify the material rewards from working its ways.

I am a social worker and work with the mentally ill, who are often impoverished and physically sick. All of my clients were chronically homeless, but are now in housing. I work directly with them and find that they have enriched my life and have given me the opportunity to live out the principles that I believe in. I have not found any of my clients to be bad people, but have found them to have mental and physical illness that need love and care.

Unfortunately, we do not see the spiritual value in helping the sick and the poor. We fail to look through poverty to see our brother or sister. This is the reason the world has fallen into a society that values violence and material success. I myself am not opposed to material success as long as it does not take food or shelter from someone who is starving and homeless.

I have enclosed my books for you and hope that you will read them.

To accept the fullness of God's grace we must work to uplift the most impoverished people in our society, which as a whole the mentally ill must be considered, due to the stigma of mental illness, the lack of supports in communities to treat mental illness, and the disability system, which traps someone into poverty by trading health insurance for the ability to make a wage above the poverty level.

While I wish to remain anonymous, and live quietly, I don't believe that this is God's will and I hear a challenge from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, "a time comes when silence is betrayal." That time has come for me.

Your humble and obedient servant...

•••

Letter to Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Dear friends at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law,

Enclosed please find *God's Children*, written for the mentally ill. This was published in July 2008 and sent to various mental health advocacy organizations throughout the country. I thought that the book might interest you, since it is essentially an advocacy book aimed at weakening the stigma of having a mental illness.

I was working at Kentucky Consumer Advocacy Network (KYCAN) located in Louisville Kentucky, when I wrote the drafts.

I didn't understand the stigma of having mental illness when I graduated college. I was diagnosed when I was twenty-three with bipolar disorder and alcoholism. Both have been in remission since October 2002.

My first "real job" was working at KYCAN. When I worked there I began to think of myself as a *consumer*. This had a detrimental effect on my personality. *God's Children* is an expression of that, to be seen as more than a diagnosis and it contains advocacy issues that continue to persist in the mental health field and in society as a whole.

I hope that you read the book, and believe that the stigma of having a mental illness is in its death throes.

Please feel free to contact me with comments.

Poetically....

•••

Hope

We will face our challenges of the twenty-first century, together, as one people with the goal of sustaining peaceful relations with giving and grace.

We will reconcile with God by renewing our relationship with each other in an atmosphere of mutual forgiveness.

We will build upon our similarities and see that the dreams we have for our children in America are universal elsewhere in the world.

We all want our children to live in an atmosphere of peace and love and our best gift to them is parents who ensure that a peaceful world exists.

...

Despair and Doubt

Fall has come and I can't help being depressed, feeling a little hopeless with the darkened clouds, the falling temperature and the silent wind speaking to no one.

I still have my dreams, clutching them close, they haven't yet died and I hope that I will soon be in a position to finally do something.

But I become more reclusive and feel more isolated while waiting. And I feel so lost, just hanging on, making it through another day. Sometimes I feel nothing but doubt and I think this despair will go on forever.

I just don't know what to do with my life. I feel like I don't have a purpose. I'm not achieving anything. I wait around for God to show up.

Tell me what to do, what to be, where to go, but I know nothing.

Maybe it is all delusion, all coincidence, these last years. It was blind luck that pulled me through my darkest nights. It was my manic imagination, and not my God, that has given me guidance and purpose for my life.

...

Questioning

It's the same song: I don't have the motivation to write anything. Depression grows a little more when I realize my ineffectiveness. And I want to stand out, write something beautiful, but what's the point. No one wants to read anything that I've written and I don't even know if non-violence and God are even relevant anymore, plus I'm tired of putting myself out there with high hopes. The columnist at UofK and the Baptist Minister were the last straw. My last hope died when they didn't respond. And so I just wallow a little more in this winter season. But I did make an effort to reach out, first to college professors, then to advocacy organizations, to the church and they all just sort of looked at my writings and said that's great, but let me go back to my life. I have a mental illness and I can't really think that they were going to believe me about worldly and spiritual matters. It's all so depressing and God says nothing. I go through the motions with prayer and meditation and He is silent. I just feel like I've put myself on the line; have followed what came out of Caritas. I've sought the Kingdom of God, and have only disappointment and depression to show for my efforts. Also, the world is not exactly on a roll. Society seems to get worse every day. What we accept in our culture becomes more and more violent and prideful. Greed is everywhere. Lust is good salesmanship. What a mess! The character defect for the day is bitterness and I have to guard against cynicism. I have to keep my hopes up and not give up on a peaceful world, although it is getting more and more difficult each day. I have done my best to turn my life and will over and I am more successful at it now, because I realize that I don't have the power to steer my own ship and I don't have the insight to plan the voyage so I just try and let things go and tell myself that God's in charge, though I am questioning that.

...

Self-Pity

It's Sunday night, nothing is going on,
or been going on.
My life...

There is no desire
for
much of anything.
I lay in bed on the weekends,
sleeping ten, twelve hours.
I feel purposeless, trapped in a
[cage].

I concentrate on my facade.
What you see, is that really
how I feel?

I have been led here, to suffer
ineffectually, to believe
the impossible, to keep
secrets that can't be told. To be
ignored.

I am self-
pity, selfishness
as an art-form.

...

Wishful Thinking

I sleep at night, so what do I care about what you say, concerning things you don't understand? I did my part and did nothing wrong, but write from the heart.

I don't want to explain it to anyone, anymore.

I'm moving on and you missed everything.
Who's right, when violence is wrong?
By the way, I didn't spread fear or shout
war from the mountain top or lack the
courage to write about that.

I don't care.

It just doesn't matter to me anymore. It really doesn't. It's just not my concern. I've retired, have walked away and have never looked back. I don't want my life to be an open book. Life is too short not to move forward. I have a three year plan for graduate school. And how about starting a normal life, with typical concerns? What about dating?

...

Epilogue

I know that He is with me, that He lives within my spirit. I didn't always believe this or know this. I was an agnostic for much of my life and God was irrelevant. But despite my lack of knowledge, God has always been with me, and He is always with you. Where else would He be? Perhaps I can best tell you about God's plan and presence with this story.

My sister passed away on May 26, 1995. I got ready for high school that morning. I walked into the family room as I had done in the days and weeks previous. I checked if she was still breathing. She was, but just barely, as she had a death rattle caused from water filling her lungs. I went to school and had always envisioned that the guidance counselor would pull me out of class and I would have to go home. It would have been very dramatic I'm sure, but nothing happened during the day.

When I got home there were a lot of family and friends at the house, as there had been. At that point we were strangely concerned, not about Molly living, but in her dying, in her suffering to finally be alleviated. So the hospice nurse was telling us that in some instances people need a little privacy to pass. And that since she was surrounded by a lot of people, that it might be best if some people left. Perhaps in retrospect we would have done things differently, but because of this advice my brother went to work and I decided that I would go out that night with friends, because we wanted to give her some space. My brother worked right up the street and if something happened he could be there in five minutes. This was before cell phones, but I had a pager, which was actually my sister's, and if something happened my parents could page me.

So I went out with my friends that Friday night, mindful that I could be paged and would get home if something happened. We ended up at Denny's. My parents knew this is where I would be because that was where my friends and I hung-out. While there, I got a little nervous and decided to call home. The phone was strangely busy, which caused some alarm. I went back to the table with my friends and sat down. A few minutes later the waitress came over and asked for Eric Cecil. She said that I had a phone call. It was my Dad and he told me to come home and to drive carefully. I knew, even though he didn't say, that she had died. I told my friends that I had to go. My friend Keri insisted that she go with me, that I could drop her off at the Kmart on the way. I numbly agreed. Looking back, she

just didn't want me to be alone, so she accompanied me until Kmart. I dropped her off there and hit the gas.

I was almost home, speeding through my neighborhood. About a mile before I got home, blue and red lights started flashing. I was probably doing 45 in a 25. I honestly thought about not pulling over, but I did. The police officer got out of his car and said,

“This must be your lucky night.”

He paused dramatically and it seemed like all the air got sucked out of the universe. I couldn't believe the cruelty.

He then said that his radar gun was not turned on and that he would have to let me go. I explained that I was trying to get home, because my sister had just died.

He let me go and I drove the final mile home. I jumped out of my car, ran down the drive and into the house. Everyone was there waiting for me. I looked at her body and immediately saw that she wasn't breathing. My brother came from behind me, turned me and we hugged and cried.

I'll always remember that night. But what sticks out to me today, were the words of the police officer, “This must be your lucky night.”

I asked my sister to watch over me when she was on her deathbed. Several years later of course, I embarked on a journey of recovery, but before I could start this journey I had to go down my own path, which included a high speed police chase. I saw the lights flashing behind me and that time, I continued to drive, endangering everyone on that highway. Considering the countless blessings that have followed, that was my “lucky night,” when I believe that my sister's presence was especially strong in protecting her baby brother.

That's why it's important to have some type of Higher Power, some type of conception of God, to see the connections, to forge the relationship. I know that in one of my darkest hours, when my sister died, when I was pulled over for speeding, that God was with me, even if I didn't understand; I didn't recognize His voice. He was with me again, speeding again, and it would only be years later, with days of reflection before I realized that my “lucky night” was over 7 years deferred.

Book II

This book looks at a specific section of “Conscience Alone” (found in the Appendix), a wonderfully manic writing that I wrote in October 2002 and was published in *A-Train Blues*.

I have been trying to get free from “Conscience Alone” for awhile now. In order to be free from the obsession of the components of its parts, which are documented in the following pages, I needed to paradoxically embrace those parts, which I have and will soon be free from them.

You will have to decide for yourself if these components are significant, do they have meaning, or are they merely coincidental and meaningless.

This book is about acceptance, rather than understanding. What I have logically described is logically impossible to comprehend. At least it has been for me. I have tried to explain it the best I can, but I realize that it can only be explained through faith and spirituality.

...

From "Conscience Alone"

rc = reason

Regime change would entail U.S. responsibility to establish a democracy in a region where a large minority (or slight majority) of the population is unable to read and would be unable to understand its rights. If Rousseau believed the first inequality of man arose from the rate men evolved muscle and instinct to intellect and reason, then the first inequality for modern woman is the denial to the ability to read, and if you can't read, you're a slave to another mind. You can be told anything. If you can't read, a sentence looks like this:

EFEVRAI...nwdahsallisreinotawneronizohrednuhchiwenmndawne
moweepthiwtourrowsoraestfleecitvreinhteesyfolatehnusthiglillw
eboiprveddybhteeraizlatnoifoLOVE.

If you can't read, you would never know that sentence means this:

If ever a dawn shall rise into a new horizon under which men and women weep without sorrow, tears reflective in the eyes of all, the sunlight will be provided by the realization of LOVE.

...

*A Note to the English Graduate School Professors
at Eastern Kentucky University*

I was at an art show at the Speed Museum in Louisville, KY on October 7th, 2011. The event was to raise mental health awareness. I was one of three panelists that discussed various issues surrounding mental health. I also was selling my books at this event. A young woman walked past my table and said that she had heard about *A-Train Blues* when she was a graduate student at ECU. She said that she heard from her professor that *A-Train Blues* is an example of poetry that matters. Her comments are the reason that I am reaching out to the English Graduate School professors at ECU.

I don't know why I'm doing so. It gets expensive. I could buy some new fall clothes with the money that it takes to make copies of the enclosed material. There is the cost of postage. But I am reaching out anyway, because the message is worth the effort and money that I've invested. I hope that some good comes from it. I am sending a new edition of *A-Train Blues*, revised this year. The writing was tightened up and I also added "Face Everything and Recover" as well as "Theoretical Violence." I have included *God's Children*, published in 2008, revised in 2011.

Enclosed are 10 writings that are companions to *A-Train Blues* and are focused on "Conscience Alone." I met with my old therapist three years ago concerning the matter that is enclosed. He told me that I should not try to prove the existence of God, that I should rather, talk about the love of God which is what I hope I have done.

I have thought quite a lot about "Conscience Alone." I think it is blunt and not very poetic. By focusing so much attention on "Conscience Alone" some of the beauty of *A-Train Blues* is over looked. This has kept my hopes for peace alive, from "In Memory of Martin Luther King, Jr.": "Never despair; a weary sun will set on ancient hatreds. In the words of Abraham Lincoln's most famous decree, all men and all women will finally be forever free. And on the day that the promises of the prophets' become the realities of today, the broken-winged angels will sing. And so let them sing from the foothills of the Appalachians to the heavenly heights of the Himalayas."

Let them sing indeed....

...

Apology

One of my regrets is that I didn't respect the sacrifice of the soldiers who went to fight in Afghanistan. I was prideful to pass judgment on them because of my views as someone who believes in non-violence. I strongly disapprove of violence, but that doesn't mean that I also can't respect people for doing what they feel is right, even if I am opposed. After all, a soldier is the tool, not the hand or circumstances that guides him or her. I feel that my arrogance especially shone through in "A New World: September 12, 2001." So I apologize.

I took a stand for non-violence because my heart demanded it. Non-violence is a way of life and this is the reason I am asking for forgiveness, because I know that my attitude toward soldiers may have somehow injured their spirits, and my philosophical snobbery dismissed the sacrifice of their families, which injures them indirectly and it also diminished me for holding such an attitude.

I don't know if I was realistic or not. I know that to object to going to war against the terrorists that attacked the United States seemed outrageous, but the belief that violence leads to violence is imprinted in my being, like a baby born with fingerprints. We all know that one war turned into two, which is why I was compelled to let my conscience speak in the first place. There is no hope in violence, just its perpetuation. I don't regret objecting to war and violence, or believing in the power of love and non-violence. To object was to offer up a prayer and a petition to God. I believed that I could be heard and had the youthful hope that I would get an answer.

...

Reflections on “A Letter to the University Christians”

I went back to school a week or two early in August 2001. I felt rested and peaceful. I was drinking non-alcoholic beer because I had “quit.” I remember that I even curled up under a tree with a book on campus because it seemed the thing to do. I felt like the typical college student.

But below the surface there was always the feeling that something just wasn't quite right with the world. I was a History major and it seemed that peace always fell into war. It seemed that one group of people had always struggled for their right to determine, to choose their own destiny. In America it had been African slaves and then the civil rights movement. Women, Gay people and today's most disenfranchised group, the mentally ill.

This awareness of something being slightly off, hit me again in late August, early September 2001. I was sitting on the Classroom Building wall at UofK, reading the student newspaper. I turned to a page that showed a woman standing on a pile of rubble, holding a bomb fragment. The caption said that it was from the U.S. I sat there on the wall while it drizzled rain and was so moved and saddened that I cried a few tears.

Then, a day or two later, I was walking through campus and got the University Christian newspaper. I wrote them because I felt like I needed to do something. I was tired of thinly veiled hate and intolerance. I was fairly outraged and King's work and writings gave me permission to take some action, even if it was only writing a letter. I mailed it about a week to 10 days before September 11th. The sentence that haunted me was, “When hatred pollutes justice, men such as Timothy McVeigh blow up children, women, men and oh yes even buildings.”

...

The Graduate

I began thinking about poetry on the advice of a friend during my last semester of school. I wrote an unpublished poem called “Heartache,” then “An Innocent Day Dream,” “Blues in E Minor” and “Reincarnation.” I thought quite a bit about Edgar Allen Poe’s “The Raven”:

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered weak and weary.

I would repeat it over in my head and count the syllables. I would then add more words and see how syllables changed the rhyme structure. I also began drinking and smoking more marijuana. I did not think this then, but drinking and using detracted from my writing, because it began to damage the source. I was also taking lithium for bi-polar, and the hangover from alcohol, and strangely from pot, were debilitating. Pot would get my mind going and I would stay up, tossing and turning, thinking about what I was working on.

I graduated college in May 2002 and went to live at my Dad’s in Louisville. My parents wanted me to get a “real” job, but I had different plans. I decided that I wanted to write poetry and instead of being distracted by work that you had to use mental capabilities for, I got my old job at the golf course back, which involved manual labor. I had only written 4 poems, and “Heartache” was so disturbing that it was not publishable, but I thought of myself as a poet. I tried to write poetry, but had little success. I also kept some late hours, writing. I had my breakthrough during one of these sessions.

I had one writing rule: never write drunk. I had written drunk once or twice and it was awful. I would write, think something was genius at the time, read it the next day and it was incoherent garbage. However, it was acceptable to write high.

And so I started my path to psychosis writing, while high. I had been working on a very long poem that must have been six or seven pages. I was proofreading it and got disgusted and threw it in the trash. I gave it a few minutes and went to the trash and pulled the poem out. I looked at it and suddenly 3 or 4 different ideas grabbed me. I instantly saw “Blues in the Key of A,” “Tree Lovers” and “Shhh! Peaceful.” I did not sleep that night and was almost immediately hypomanic. After that I worked more, the drug and alcohol use continued and I headed into deeper and more dangerous waters.

...

Question

I would always go to work at the golf course when school let out for the summer. I would come home from Lexington and would lick my wounds there. I was either falling in love at someone and would have to work out their rejection or I would hurt from alcoholism and would rest up that summer. I was never able to quit drinking completely, but to work grounds I needed to be there at 7 am, which put a damper on my drinking. So I made an effort to limit my intake. I always got healthier at the course and the physical exercise was good for the soul.

However, I started to fall apart during the summer 2002, and by autumn I was a mess. I say this without shame because someone with bipolar disorder and untreated alcoholism is bound to fall apart. There was another crucial factor as well: writing.

I learned to write like this: I would get to the course in the morning and start mowing the greens which I always enjoyed. My body and mind got going as I walked briskly behind the mower. My mind would wander and I would get immersed in my thoughts. I obsessed over what I was thinking—writing. I would then try and remember what I was working on in my head throughout the day. I would get home and try and put what I had been working on, on paper, preferably stoned.

I was never where I was during that summer; I was always in a cloud. The obsession about writing, the use of marijuana and alcohol, bipolar disorder, the self-imposed deadline to publish a book, all this pushed me over the edge. I was sunk when a co-worker noticed that I had been cutting the same strip of grass over and over again, too caught up in my head to focus on what I was doing. I missed my psychiatrist appointment that October, because it slipped my mind.

I drafted “Conscience Alone” very easily, though I was in a lot of emotional pain. I was experiencing mood swings. I felt extremely hopeless. But I wrote it nevertheless, and tripped into some insanity, i.e. the high speed police chase.

Please don't let my illness dissuade you from the joy of "Conscience Alone," which is that God loves humanity so much that He would put aside the judgment found in the Book of Revelation, in favor of a judgment of love, grace and mercy. After all, what can come from perfect love, but love?

...

Shame

Now there is one word that "Conscience Alone" is intertwined with. That word is *shame*. It is something to hide under the bed. It is the one piece of writing that I cannot discuss with anyone, because there is an unwritten understanding that it is not to be talked about, because it represents insanity. *A-Train Blues* is shameful as well and I have tried to hide it as best I can, especially from family and friends.

I am not ashamed of "Conscience Alone" per se. It's just that I feel shame in response to the people closest to me, in their attitudes about it.

They disapprove of it. I am not supposed to believe the things that I do. I do so nevertheless and their disapproval makes me feel that I am doing something wrong. This is my issue and not theirs.

I still keep *A-Train Blues* a secret from most people. And the people that know that I am a poet are unaware that I am writing. I don't let anyone read what I am writing because according to them, as expressed in their disapproval, I am not supposed to believe in non-violence, peace and the immediacy of the Kingdom of God. Disapproval and the feeling that I am doing something wrong also comes from the people that I have tried to reach out to and they have rejected my writings.

...

IFEVERA is EFEVRAI

I want to focus on the first three words of the “Conscience Alone” prophesy, which are: if ever a (If ever a dawn shall rise into a new horizon, under which men and women weep without sorrow, tears reflective in the eyes of all, the sunlight will be provided by the realization of Love.”). These three words consist of seven letters (I,F,E,V,E,R,A). It was these letters, in that order, which I wrote on separate pieces of paper, placed them in 7 envelopes, sealed them with wax, and stamped them with XLC, the solution, written in “Conscience Alone” (The Unknown, Love and Conscience). I opened them on December 7 through 13, 2002 and 2003.

These 7 letters, along with the rest of the “Conscience Alone” prophesy, were scrambled to demonstrate what it is like not to be able to read. This was the only purpose for scrambling the letters. My influence for doing this was James Joyce’s *Finnegan’s Wake*. When scrambled they formed EFEVRAI. VRAI is French, meaning truth. This is found on page 64. I attributed this as the Word of God, meaning the mind and will of God (the “Conscience Alone” prophesy). You may ask: how do you know that this is the Word of God since these letters can be scrambled meaninglessly as well? This is a good question; however I believe that the answer is found at the beginning of that section of “Conscience Alone.” It begins “rc = reason...” (rc, meaning regime change).

For years, I did not know why I had written “rc = reason.” I wrote it while getting manic fast and did not understand the “reason” part of this section. The keys seemed to have written it by themselves. I did not edit this out, though I did not understand why it was written.

I was reading Joseph Ratzinger’s (Pope Benedict XVI) *Jesus of Nazareth* after *A-Train Blues* was published. He was writing about Logos and I didn’t exactly know what that meant. I turned to the glossary and discovered that Logos is Greek, meaning, among other things, reason. Logos also means the Word of God. Most Christians are familiar with the Prologue to the Gospel of John: “In the beginning was the Word (Logos): the Word (Logos) was in God’s presence, and the Word (Logos) was God.”

Does reason mean Logos?

...

My Bondage And My Freedom
(IFEVERA)

When I got out of the hospital it was difficult to function intellectually. I was getting sober and going through a clinical depression. I had difficulty reading anything and retaining what I read. It took about 2 years to get back on track. I did read a lot of books during this period nevertheless, even though it felt like an exercise in futility. "Conscience Alone" lists a series of people, "Remember Abraham, Remember David, Remember Jesus"... , so on and so forth. I thought it important to read about the lives of these people. Fredrick Douglass is on this list. His autobiography, titled *My Bondage And My Freedom*, gave me the symbolic meaning of the letter R, which is the letter that corresponds to December 12th. I learned of this meaning months after December 12, 2002, the date when I wrote that Satan was revealed in "IFEVERA" (found in the appendix, published in *A-Train Blues*). Here is the excerpt from *My Bondage And My Freedom*:

For being found in another person's negro quarters, forty lashes; for hunting dogs in the woods, thirty lashes; for being on horseback without the written permission of the master, twenty five lashes; for riding or going abroad in the night, or riding horses in the daytime, without leave, a slave may be whipped, cropped, or branded in the cheek with the letter R, or otherwise punished, such punishment not extended to life, or as to render him unfit for labor.

Douglass is writing about slave codes and laws. Interestingly, *A-Train Blues* mentions slave codes and laws in "The Abstract" (pg.5). "Those slave codes and laws spun by the poisonous spider of slavery caught the south in an unjust legal web that became unique to that region of the country. The slave codes that emerged from Virginia in the 1660's quickly spread. These laws differed only in severity and the regularity in which they were enforced, for their aim was essentially the same: to legalize and perpetuate slavery."

This was a brief paper that I wrote in a class I took on the Old South. The paper was supposed to be about the effect of the cotton gin on the South, but I wanted to write about the legal system of slavery and did so without the professor's knowledge. She gave me an "A" for my efforts. I had this paper on hand when putting *A-Train Blues* together and thought that it was useful.

•••

The Symbolic Significance of the Letter
“A” (IFEVERA)

“Remember Arjuna”
— “Conscience Alone”

Hey!... I'm not doing
all the work
around here.

See the *Bhagavad-Gita*
Chapter 10 verse 33

•••

Untitled (The Lifting of the Veil, Part I)

I tried to capture everything that I knew about “Conscience Alone,” which wasn’t much, a year after I got out of the hospital. I wrote a letter and sent it to my friend Beau. He said it was pretty far out, which was really a great description. It was far out, like a little crazy or beyond the norm, on the outside. And it was all of those things.

That letter became “IFEVERA.” I know that it is not the best letter. I wrote it like no one was ever going to read it. So I wrote about Satan and sealed letters. I even mentioned meeting in the Kingdom of God. I really put myself out there when I published *A-Train Blues* in July of 2006. I thought that no one would believe me, and no one does. But I internally maintained that what had happened was true; that I had seen things with my own eyes, had heard things with my own ears. I just didn’t talk to anyone about it, and no one wanted to talk to me about it. But I still like Beau’s response, it’s pretty far out. Like Thelonious Monk far out.

And so the reason for writing Book II, is to let you know that there is a second Word of God. And this word is VERA, which is Latin for truth. “IFEVERA” (pg. 95, *A-Train Blues*). I discovered this on September 1st 2006 when the Pope visited Veronica’s Veil. This was after I published *A-Train Blues* and sent it to 1,100 professors across the country.

I was sitting in my office with some down time on my hands when I read the story on the Internet about the Pope visiting Veronica's Veil. I read that the name "Veronica" is a combination of the Latin word Vera, meaning truth, and Greek Icon meaning "image." The Veil was a piece of cloth that some believe Jesus wiped his face on, on the way to crucifixion.

So three English words (If ever a), consisting of 7 letters (I,F,E,V,E,R,A) and two of those letters have documented symbolic meaning, have formed two words, in different languages, that both mean truth. You have to admit, it's statistically significant. And pretty far out.

...

My Delusion

Am I delusional? I have asked this question often. I asked my old therapist about this and he didn't call me delusional or say that I was completely sane either. He asked me if my beliefs had harmed anyone. I said no. He said there are people who commit murder because of a quarter moon. He said that men strap bombs on themselves, walk into crowded market places, and blow themselves up because they think it's God's will. And there are people who believe that violence will yield something other than heartache and a scarred soul. But I'm still not satisfied. So...

This is my delusion: I believe that God will redeem all humanity, will fill people's spirits with love and compassion so that we respond to each other in kind. I have formed a relationship with a God who will do this, by remembering that the "Conscience Alone" prophecy says "tears reflective in the eyes of all." This has been my meditation for ten years and I have been changed by it. I know that He loves all. *Deus est Caritas.*

Armageddon occurs within the human heart. The daily battle is how I treat my fellow man. There are people of course, who believe differently. They stand in the pulpit on Sunday and preach of Armageddon and of millions upon millions of people who will die in global nuclear holocaust. They do so arrogantly and they seem to gloat. They believe that God's beloved creations, humanity and earth, will be destroyed. They call this victory.

The idea of God not able to save everyone, not able to bring the world to a sunrise where people weep without sorrow, tears reflective in the eyes of all, is asking me to believe in a lesser god. A god that can't redeem all humanity is not omnipotent. A god who won't is a god of conditional love and finite grace, a love and grace that I have to labor for. This god is an idol, conceived by man, made in the image of man, who chooses vengeance over forgiveness. I can't downsize the God that I know. I can't place my faith in the violent and tragic outcome that is found in the Book of Revelation, where a god who can't save all humanity or a god who, even worse, won't save all humanity, lives.

We currently live in a violent world that is filled with greed and pride. But I believe that God's love for people is greater than our fear of people who are different from ourselves. I know that God's grace is kinder than our ideas of justice, which too often is called retribution. My delusion is that God's hopes and dreams for humanity will come to fruition in a world that has hopelessly accepted violence and vengeance as a solution for our nightmares; we will finally come home.

•••

God's Children

The publication of *A-Train Blues* was a complete failure. I mailed the book to around 100 different peace organizations that I got off the Internet, in addition to 1,100 professors. I received three responses. One organization emailed, thanking me for the book, telling me they would consider it. One professor responded, asking me why I was sending it to her. And the poet Nikki Giovanni sent me a card with a note of encouragement. I think most of the professors took *A-Train Blues* and threw it in the trash. It was pretty devastating.

Despite the rejection, which was immense, I believed that "Conscience Alone" contained the Word of God (Vrai), meaning that a dawn would rise absent from armed conflict. When I learned on September 1, 2006 that there was another Word of God (Vera), it only reinforced my belief.

I thought that *A-Train Blues* might one day yield a small amount of influence. I was then working for an advocacy agency concerning mental health issues and decided that I would turn that spotlight on the mentally ill, if I ever got the chance. I had a handful of poems and started writing what eventually became *God's Children*.

I met with a minister in December 2008 who knew the outrageously generous grace of God, much better than I did. We went out to eat after a service

and I told him that I basically thought the Book of Revelation was in error, that I didn't believe that humanity was going to be destroyed or the earth consumed in hellfire. I told him I thought that God, out of love, is going to remove spiritual deficiencies within us, which block us off from Him, and in knowing Him, we would know peace, joy and one another.

I also told him that I have a mental illness. I wonder how much difference this makes concerning *A-Train Blues* and "Conscience Alone." If someone without a mental illness had the same message, carried the same writings, would he or she be believed? I'm sure that I lose a certain amount of credibility by identifying myself as someone with a mental illness. This was the other reason that I wrote *God's Children*, because I wanted a chance to tell my story, my struggles and ultimately my recovery.

•••

The End

I continue to wait...

making personal progress, heading into the Kingdom of God.

I wonder what the hold up is, wonder if it's me, or circumstances.

I just know this: the spirit of Love
will enter the most hardened hearts
and there will be peace.

There will be no more greed, but charity.

No more hunger, but filled appetites.

No more jealousy, but gratitude.

No more lust, but love.

No more anger, but patience.

No more fear, but faith.

No more poverty
of the spirit.

No one will be lost again, but guided by the light of God,
motivated by the principles of brotherhood, living by the desire to
give of ourselves.

I hope for this emerging world, for a window of
Grace, by praying for people that I've harmed, who
harmed me.

I sit on my couch with a rosary; feel the beads saying,
I pray for... They're the people who I'm intolerant of.
I offer their names, closing the distance between God
by the love I have for them.

•••

Epilogue

I.

I rebel I say, speaking into an empty room filled with Sunflowers that slowly stir. They give off a haze of resurrected dreams-- with the chains falling from my wrists and the shackles from my ankles and freedom moves into my soul, from the crown of my head, to my feet, out from my toes. Considering your disbelief, I laugh--it won't silence me; it will not bother me...so I say. And your concerns, they won't deter me. My course has been set, and with my faith as my compass, can I go astray?

II.

I won't be silenced by my own hesitant, fearful tongue and I can't be deterred by your well meant concerns. You offer me the shackles that I've been freed from and you offer me a blindfold for my sight, you point to a Bible with an ending that I won't conform to. And I tell you, that when you asked me not to pursue this line of thought, my God said to believe, be not afraid and He told me that I would have to tell people what I had seen and heard.

III.

Please understand that I am trying to be a man and not a child. I try not to concern myself with what your perception of me is, or what I am supposed to be, what society deems me to be, with a predetermined role regulated to a mentally ill man, who is not really a man with thoughts or beliefs that are valued, but is looked at as

just mentally ill. I am tainted. But I tell you that I am a man and have a right to believe what I want to believe. I have a right to act as I deem fit and to pursue my own dreams. But...

IV.

I, of course, don't see myself as a man, because I have taken on those roles and perceptions of a mentally ill man and they have saturated me. I identify myself as mentally ill, which has a broad assortment of negative connotations, namely that there is something wrong with me and something unacceptable about me. I am defined by my limitations and some are legitimate limitations, but they have poured into other aspects of life and have polluted my perception of self so that now I think in terms of what I can't do, instead of what I can do.

V.

I shouldn't have been so harsh on you earlier. I mean let's face it, the main problem with this path of realization that I am on, is that I don't believe what the universe has been telling me for ten years. And its been whispering that I can and that I am. Its been powerful spiritual experiences that have been occurring over the years, as if the Spirit of God is whispering in my ear, saying, "I'm with you Eric, here I am. I'm with you. And you can and you are." I have these experiences and question instead of accept. I reject instead of embrace. I doubt instead of believe. So I shouldn't be so hard on you for not believing me, when in certain respects I don't believe either, despite vast spiritual experiences that has occurred in my life. I will try to show you the same grace and patience that my God has shown me, though I am certain to come up short, because I can't match His goodness.

VI.

He has never stopped giving me love, grace and patience; He has more than he can give away, no matter how hard and long He tries. He works day and night, but He still can't give the world all that He has, no matter how hard He tries. He works at His farm, wearing His straw hat, bib overalls and work gloves. He can't give it all away, because the more grace and love He gives, the more He creates and the more He creates, the harder He works to give it away, because of the generosity of His Spirit. And as I've received, it is my job to pick up the tools that He hands me; to work with Him, to be a humble example of His Grace.

Book III

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...

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Untitled (The Lifting of the Veil, Part II)

I.

Here She comes, our beautiful one, hair shining like the sun, eyes that of an ocean, skin that of the earth, breath that of a cool spring day.

This poem is standing in the halls of History, pondering previous theological thought.

This poem is a book on its own, without end.

This poem is my mother, and Aunt Michael and their mother. This poem is my sister and my father's sisters and their mother, because this poem is strong, and confident.

And this poem has been through what women go through, that which I cannot image.

This poem brings life to the world.

II.

When I went back to school following my first hospitalization some of my high school classes changed, including French, which I dropped. What is significant is that if I had continued to take that high school French class, I would not have had to take French in college. That dropped class would have fulfilled my foreign language requirement for my college degree. But I dropped that class and as a result had to take 4 semesters of French in college.

III.

This poem is for women, sitting in shelters, having been beaten by their partner, thinking about a way out, putting together a plan to leave. This poem is by your side. So call on it. Ask for strength.

This poem is for women, trying to pick up the pieces of a life shattered by addiction, and her children have been taken and she is sitting alone on Christmas without her kids.

And this poem is for single mothers, coming home from work, exhausted, cooking dinner for the kids and it's the end of the month, bills have to be paid and she wonders how.

This poem is for women, facing any kind of oppression. And it says that when you oppress women in any way, you are defiling the face of God.

IV.

So I went to college and my grades in French became progressively worse. I earned a B, C, D, and a D. As the classes became harder my grades went down the tubes. I went to my professor during my last semester of French. She knew that I was struggling and suggested I get a tutor, which was not the answer I was looking for. I really wanted her to say, "It's ok Eric. I know that you're struggling and that you are really trying. I think I'll just pass you." But she didn't say that. And I didn't get a tutor, but somehow passed.

V.

This poem is shaking foundations. This poem is changing the consciousness of humanity. And it's doing it with substance and grace.

VI.

Something fell into my lap the other day and I realized the French language, as do other languages, has a masculine and a feminine spelling for words. I don't know why they do that, but they do.

And those special 7 letters are I,F,E,V,E,R,A.

VII.

The feminine word for Truth in French is VRAIE, which is the Third and final Word of God.

VIII.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice! The veil has lifted! A dawn shall rise into a new horizon, under which men and women weep without sorrow, tears reflective in the eyes of all, the sunlight will be provided by the realization of Love.

IX.

And so when God moves across the land, and into the hearts of humanity, when the seas swell and rise and mist, when people can finally breathe and are no longer referred to as enemies, when angels rejoice and when we all have a chance to reflect for moment, let us praise and give glory to Him, but let us also remember, and give thanks and honor to Her.

Appendix

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IFEVERA...

I was discharged from Caritas Peace this time last year where I was told I had to change and could no longer drink alcohol or smoke marijuana. I was told I needed to stay balanced, and this year I have. Before I went into the hospital I was far from it. My typical day was to work at the golf course, come home, take a shower and write. I was writing six hours a day every day and when I went to bed I would play with words in my head. I slept little if at all.

I was also under a tremendous amount of pressure. My ego thought I could somehow stop the war against Iraq, which at the time was just entering the public debate. I was aware of the likelihood of war by mid-August. I ate, slept and breathed war and anti-war.

I was lost and exhausted by mid-October, 2002. Before I wrote "Conscience Alone" I thought, "Now is the time to say what you've really got to say." I had been holding back until then. I thought it was so powerful. I cried when I listed spirits of God, and my knowledge of the prophets. I opened the Book of Revelation after I wrote it and went out and bought sealing wax and X, L, C stamps and envelopes. I marked the sixth letter, the right head of the "R" with a decimal point. I then opened the first envelope in front of my mother. On my first attempt I was only able to break the first and the seventh sealed letters.

I then took my infamous car ride through the night on October 22, 2002. I served a total of seven days of a ten-day jail sentence in August 2003. I got out early because I worked from four-thirty in the morning to six at night in the jail kitchen. When I did open the sixth seal on December 12, 2002, Satan was revealed. I watched him cower, shouting in shock and surprise "Oh no, oh no!" to a woman wearing a crucifix. I won't write who he is, because his name has no place in my book. His games are almost finished.

I have resealed those seven letters; they will be broken again during the week of Sunday, December 7th through Saturday the 13th, 2003. I hope and pray the Kingdom of God will soon follow. I believe it will.

I know I have made mistakes. I am not perfect nor would I ever wish to be so. I am adequately capable of being wrong. I've done things that are completely immoral and go against everything that I now believe. I pray and hope to remain teachable.

Its been a very good year for me spiritually. A friend, a teacher, told me he had never seen such growth and change in such a short time.

This year I now pray in the morning, the evening, and at night with a candle lit. It's a big difference in my life. I pray to God. The changes my friend remarked upon have come only through my faith in Him, which at times has faltered. Today my faith is my only asset. Faith is not an intellectual endeavor, which is why I had problems with it before. I'm learning to unlearn and to believe in what I cannot explain. I strive to be spiritual.

In closing, it's important to share some thoughts about religion, which has been polluted to the point where it is simply neutral. Religion today may be best described as a belief of arguments and a set of divisions. Religion is not meant to be comparable but compatible, held together by tolerant men and understanding women striving to find a greater love, a higher ground of tolerance and acceptance. Yet we live in an age of tremendous conflict so it's not surprising that we again draw religion into war and down to neutrality.

I don't understand why some men think their words are more powerful and their means are more constructive by teaching hate instead of giving love since the eventual end of hate is internal weakness and self-destruction. I don't understand how some men can take so much pleasure in taking instead of giving. It takes thought and effort to take and the rewards from giving are much greater and longer lasting. I don't see how some men can use religion and God as a scapegoat to meet unholy ends and then wish to think of themselves and their cause as holy.

I've prepared myself for what's to come in the last two weeks. I've started walking, running and lifting weights. I quit smoking. I've started to pay more attention to what people say and how they say it. My perception is getting clearer. I'm beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. I've been fighting for so long that I have a hard time believing the faith that's come over me. I believe we will meet one day in a world of peace.

I've realized over this last week in my prayers and meditations that despite the molestation and those years filled with rage, my hospitalization, the death of my sister; despite the sheer madness and brutality of fraternity hazing, dropping out of college, another hospitalization and the dark days of my alcoholism; despite resuming and again dropping out of college and yet another hospitalization; despite the war on terrorism and its moments of overwhelming despair and extreme loneliness; despite waiting to go to jail, and jail itself, and having bi-polar disorder with its crippling mood swings; despite all the people who have painfully come and gone through my life — that I have been blessed, by God, my family and the teachers who have surrounded me in this last year.

There's much I've left out, much I haven't written, I apologize. I wish you peace and love. Through Grace, we will meet as friends in the Kingdom of God.

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Conscience Alone

Conscience challenges. Conscience begs forgiveness and Love answers before Conscience asks. Conscience blindfolds skin color and gender. Conscience wears neither patriotism nor shouts nationalism. Conscience stands behind justice, writing laws governing all. Conscience fails to differentiate between ethnicities and competing religious ideologies. Conscience drives reunion down the road of Love and righteousness toward wrong.

My conscience is the basis for my objections concerning the war on terrorism because my conscience tells me that violence, “V,” causes a problem:

$$V + V = 2V = 2V(t),$$

“t” = time. The solution for that problem is XLC... “X” representing the constant unknown, “L” representing Love, a constant, “C” representing Conscience, a variable. Currently, internationally, the problem looks like this:

$$V(T) + V(US) = 2V(T)(US) = 2V(T)(US)(t).$$

“T” represents Terrorism; “US” represents the United States.

Right now there’s strong talk to adding another “V” to a problem mathematicians already can’t solve, erasing conscience alone into this:

$$V(T) + V(US) + V(I) = 3V(T)(US)(I)prco = 3V(T)(US)(I)prco(t)...$$

“I” represents Iraq; “prco” variables represent politics, regime change, and oil. That’s rocket science even Albert Einstein wouldn’t touch, so right now my conscience has to talk...

“p” changes into an unknown = International foreign policy laws

Politics clouds the original wrong. History is viewed at least fifty to one hundred years back and historical visions are viewed fifty to one hundred years forward; dates aren’t important. Lesson on anti-American hate. First regime change in Iran. The Shah comes to power... extremely abusive. Pro-Western pro-oil pipelines sprout, but revolution... the Ayatollah Khomeini comes to power riding pro-Western pro-oil hatred. War breaks out between Iran and Iraq and those

weapons of mass destruction originally came from politics. Politics speaks to the majority... politics are corruptible. Is this what we're fighting for?

Remember our Prophets. Remember Abraham... Remember David... Remember Jesus... Remember Muhammad... Remember Arjuna... Remember Siddhartha Gautama... Remember Confucius... Remember Slavery... Remember Egypt... Remember Moses...the Promised Land. Remember South America... Remember Africa... Remember America... Remember Slavery... Remember Douglass... Remember Lincoln... Remember Colonialism... Remember India... Remember Gandhi... Remember Segregation... Remember South Africa... Remember Mandela... Remember Tutu... Remember King: "It is no longer a choice between violence and nonviolence in this world. It's nonviolence or nonexistence; that is where we are today." America... the post-World War II generation objected to Vietnam based on political beliefs, politics change. The politics of that generation accomplished nothing concerning legally injecting conscience into governing foreign policy which cares about, among other things, international profits. Remember the Civil Rights Act...

I inquire about writing a formal amendment to the Charter of the United Nations consisting of business law, international law, constitutional and domestic law governing and allotting a percentage of international oil profits to the environment...to shelter...to food relief... to the education of citizens around the world. Between .9 tenths of a penny or 1.9 tenths of a penny or three cents a gallon. Between .9 tenths of a penny or 9.9 tenths of penny or a dime per barrel. Is this what we're fighting for, less than pocket change? What have we forgotten that the collective Conscience of Humanity cannot remember...

o = H = H₂O

Oil is a fossil fuel... oil is money and power... oil is not money... oil is not power... oil is money and power... The byproducts of hydrogen engines is water... variable "o" has a lease on politics governing foreign policy.

rc = reason

Regime change would entail U.S. responsibility to establish a democracy in a region where a large minority (or slight majority) of the population is unable to read and would be unable to understand its rights. If Rousseau believed the first inequality of man arose from the rate men evolved muscle and instinct to intellect and reason, then the first inequality for modern woman is the denial to the ability

to read, and if you can't read, you're a slave to another mind. You can be told anything. If you can't read, a sentence looks like this:

EFEVRAI...nwdahsallisreinotawneronizohrednuhchiwenmndawne
mowepthiwtourrowsoraestfleecityreinhteesyfollatehnusthiglillw
eboiprvveddybhteraizlatnoifoLOVE.

If you can't read, you would never know that sentence means this:

If ever a dawn shall rise into a new horizon under which men and
women weep without sorrow, tears reflective in the eyes of all, the
sunlight will be provided by the realization of LOVE.

...

The Word of God

Tu parle francais?

Non? Oui?

Pour "Conscience Alone"

le mot est VRAI, et il moyens

en anglais : true real genuine right proper
fit downright truly really in truth; truth

In the Beginning,
there was truth and
those four semesters
and two dropped French
classes really did pay off
and I think that's absolutely hilarious,

I really do.

In the End,

Love is Amour

and I think that's beautiful.

