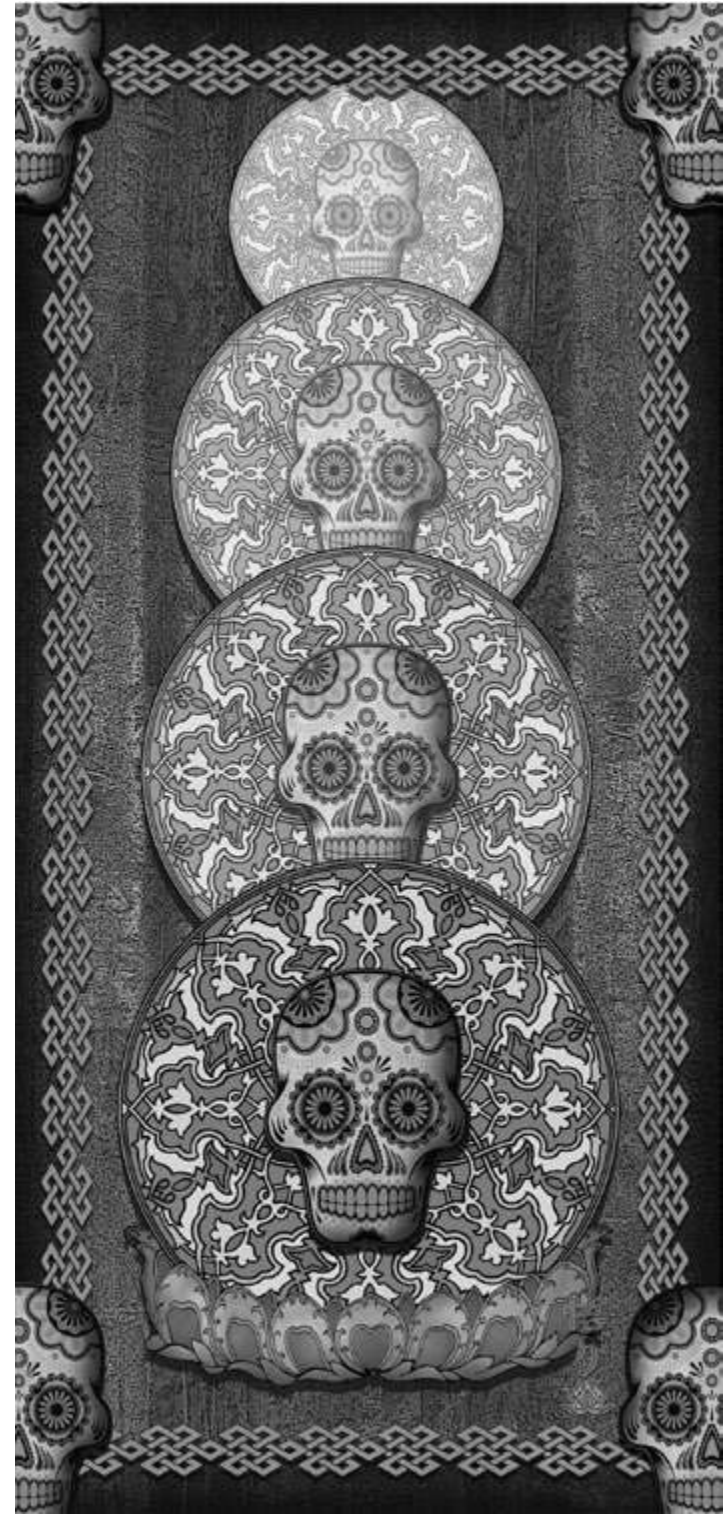


4TH FLOOR



PARANOIA, DEPRESSION,
AND OTHER STATES OF MIND

dave boles



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Author's photo by Mrs. America

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Illustration on page 107, *Gift Of The Nagual*, by Bodhi

ISBN: 979-8-9988517-2-8

Library Of Congress Control Number: 2025945509

A Lake House Publication

Cold River Press
15098 Lime Kiln Road
Grass Valley, CA 95949
www.coldriverpress.com

DEDICATION

*This book is dedicated to those
varied souls i shared countless moments with
as we traveled together dodging demons,
praising the rise of the sun,
living just this side of the edge
and, sometimes, traveling further
than we should have traveled.*

This is a mournful discovery:

*Those who agree with you
are insane*

*Those who do not agree with you
are in power.*

~ Philip K. Dick

PREFACE

Perhaps it was because of the intense fevers I had when I was a child. Perhaps it was because of leaving the safety of my home far too early and discovering the insanity of the world without guidance. Or, perhaps, I was simply crazy and just needed to be around like minded souls.

Whatever the reason, soon after finishing my time in the U.S. Navy I found myself working in Mental Institutions. Back when we still called them Institutions. I was an orderly at first, then a technician, then, after a few years of college, a psychiatric nurse. While my plans included eventually getting a doctorate in psychology, the universe had other interests for me to develop; specifically writing, publishing, and design.

As zeitgeist dictated and directed, soon enough my career in the field of Mental Health came to an end. Governmental intervention became the theme of the day and hospitals, institutions, care-homes, call them what you will, gradually became a thing of the past. No longer was treatment offered to those in need. If they were fortunate a passionate doctor would prescribe them anti-psychotics until, of course, the prescription ran out.

Then came the whole health insurance scam which continues to play out today. No longer are the mentally, and emotionally challenged, for whatever reason, given anything remotely related to treatment. Robotic humans in cubicles decide, without ever seeing a patient, what is needed to “cure” them.

Imagine a nation’s surprise when they realized, after implementing this new system, for many people, there was no cure. Theirs was to be a lifetime lived with coping as best they could, for as long as they could, hanging on to that shred of a moment we like to call “stability”.

I certainly was not one to help my cause. I despised conventional medications created to make people “normal” (tell me, what, exactly, is “normal”?). So it was jointly decided between myself and the medical field to discover other methods of helping those in need.

A handful of Shamans had introduced me to cultural norms and mores that have existed for millennia, using natural plants and minerals to help medicate those in society who need help from time to time. I am most grateful to these teachers and continue writing

about, and practicing, their methods to this day. I am forever grateful for the knowledge they imparted to me.

While I had stopped working in the field of Mental Health, the years I did spend working within it gave me profound insight into humanity, or lack thereof. I incorporated these insights into teaching people to use natural substances and methods in order to contain the demons that lived within them.

Working with those whose path exists outside of our societies norms, I found I could easily have a conversation on advanced theories of evolution with a schizophrenic, as I could playing an intense game of three dimensional chess with a manic depressive. The strange thing was, for the most part, they all, everyone single one of them, actually made sense. I took notes. Lots, and lots of notes. In time these notes turned into poems, and then into what I have come to call, *Stories Of The Mind*.

The poetry in this book dates to between 1981-1990, and were compiled from the aforementioned notes. The title of the book came from my time working at Napa State Hospital. Not certain why, because there was only one floor, but the title stuck with me, and I carried it on.

In 1992, I had the extreme misfortune to accompany my soon to be ex-wife to custody hearings involving her son from a previous marriage and her ex-husband. The courthouse for our County, at that time, was downtown in an older building badly in need of repair. The courthouse was crowded, it stunk, and, of all things, Family Court was on the....4th Floor.

Having a front row seat, week after week, month after month, as custody battles raged on, I was privy to all the fine humans who were there for the same reason, and their own personal battles. I eventually came to view divorce, and custody battles, as “The Great Unpleasantness,” and saw first hand how mental health played a large part in custody law, and in our society—Paranoia, Depression, And Other States of Mind, indeed.

Before I go further I will state here, for clarity, our County did eventually build a wonderful and new courthouse far from the degradations of downtown. But inside those sparkling new courtrooms

there was still plenty of “The Great Unpleasantness” to go around. It simply never ends.

In the ensuing years I wrote and published several books, created many magazines, and designed countless ads for publication. This book has sat patiently waiting, in a worn leather briefcase, then a binder, and then, finally, into a computer, where it remained for over three decades. Outside of fixing a few grammatical errors, the poems appear as they were first written. Some still in note form.

Putting this book together, re-living these poems and thoughts from ages ago, brought back memories as vivid as if they were written yesterday. The people that shared their lives with me; their fears, desires, and most of all, their dreams—took part in my own growth, both spiritually and mentally.

What began so long ago as a series of notes in order to help me better understand patients I wished to help, morphed into poems of existence from a section of society seldom understood and, rarely, ever visited. Whether I was tasked with monitoring a schizophrenic violently spinning out of control, or playing checkers with a mass murderer that had a penchant for using a machete (who could also speak eloquently about God’s plan for our salvation and the need to increase our collective spirituality), they all had a unique voice in our world. I believed then, as I still do today, we should listen to what they have to say.

I am not proposing they are right. Or they are wrong. But when pondering such questions I always remember something many patients told me, over and over again, “How can you appreciate the light if you’ve never seen darkness?”

Sanity? Insanity? I’ll let you decide.

Dave Boles,

Grass Valley, CA
Sept. 18th, 2025

4TH FLOOR



PARANOIA, DEPRESSION,
AND OTHER STATES OF MIND

dave boles

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FOREWORD

When the ancient ancestral voices rustle the pine needles at the edge of Lake House, one might find Dave Boles sitting in vibrational solitude with Coyote, listening intently, ready for wars to unwind outside as the subliminal monkeys begin to flutter into flight. There can be wavering sways of expanse in certain states of mind that are often known, yet ignored at the risk of taking flight. What are frequently mislabeled as “normal” behaviors, Dave takes to task in colorfully lyrical terms in his new book, *4th Floor: Paranoia, Depression and Other States of Mind*. Dave has literally been on the 4th floor, and all other floors above and below, for that matter. In his observations, he has held space and provided care for those in need of restorative mental care – those who are often trapped, not only within their bodies and minds, but within the dysfunctional system that is supposed to provide support and treatment for those suffering from behaviors affiliated with mental illness.

I first met Dave Boles at a poetry event he sponsored, hosted, and emceed in 2019 in Sacramento, California. As an occasional writer and a full time admirer of oratorical art, Dave impressed me with his ability to speak poignantly about the poets he introduced during the day’s event. He was kind. He was eloquent. He was honest. Afterward, I found him to be comically disarming in conversation about his days working for a Sacramento newspaper and enjoyed the exuberant passion he expressed about his publishing company, Cold River Press, which has published hundreds of writers and poets all over the world. He never mentioned anything about his experiences in service to those in the ward until recently. His pursuits are many and varied, yet each one he takes on rises in stature as he engages with it. The outcome of which is quality of the highest degree – this book included.

Dave unravels some complicated layers of the psyche in these poems, scraping the surface of humanity's capacities and its incapacities for its own mental wellbeing. Too often, our attachments to archaic beliefs and institutional systems tend to render our wellbeing, as a whole, incomplete, inadequate, and defective. Dave is a keen observer of our country's social disorders. He is in search of a finer solution that makes more sense than is currently being offered. His poems come to life and are named because of his observational skills and life experiences. Not only does he present each character in a manner that brings them to life, but he also reveals some of the impediments, characteristics, and social conditions that lead some to lose mental stability in the first place. These poems are worth an in-depth examination in the wake of a sleep-dependent and deprived society trending toward fear, recklessness, and abandonment in what is woke and what is broke, and what we won't admit is woke and broke, and how can we mend it instead of defending the way it has seemingly crumbled this far so fast.

Nothing about paranoia and depression is easy to discuss or listen to, but in the most wholesome sense of who we truly are beneath all these layers that we so easily hide within, we are the pure essence of love. We tend to forget it. We tend to distort it with our false perceptions and rigid realities, broken relationships, drugs, alcohol, church – you name it – we distort it until it's gone and forgotten. But it really isn't, is it? Then, here comes Dave, fresh out of his Coyote conversations, slipping each reader these palpably written reminders that we find so difficult to disentangle, either one thread at a time, or all at once. They are cues that flicker the light of hope in our humanity. They are dark, sad tales of those who rode out in their own way for reasons most of us would never comprehend. They are compassionate calls to come back to our own current individual and community stories. Through all the joyful accomplishments and heartbreaks in our lives that wind us up and take us away, we dwell in both worlds of serenity and insanity.

This brings me to that which is medicine. Good medicine. Medicine that heals without the poisonous residue we know to be true. Medicine that leans towards healing, getting well, being well. Medicine for the body, mind and soul. There are natural plants that mother earth gives us, and when ingested with healing intent – without doubt – provides healing to our busy bodies, ever-meandering minds, and sleepy souls. There are realms in spirituality entwined with liminality and rare characteristics of who we are where healing exists in each moment. Dave lets each poetic episode unfold as if to ask me personally to heal another part of my wounded self. A part that I once allowed to run amuck in disservice to those closest to me and from those I care for most. An insensitive part I realized had nearly run my ship aground and left me hopelessly set adrift.

There are a few things I take away from wading slowly through this poetry of the psyche that leave an indelible mark on me. First, the intensity with which Dave finds himself dealing with specific characters in this book and how he is able to deliver them in written form casting aside the ease of judgment for the encapsulation of compassion. He reveals freely that which can be considered malleable around his own psyche, making each character he presents more embraceable. Second, the slight nuances between realities and perceptions that still, if I am honest with myself, know there to be a fine line that is smeared with frequency between them both. And third, the *Brief History of Mental Illness Care and Treatment* section that Dave shares at the end of the book which leaves me with a waning hope that our society in America can provide appropriate care and treatment for those in need. However, I do have a waxing hope that it will change sometime soon for the sake of a nation struggling with the sanity of itself.

~ Ed Balldinger, author,

From Cavity's Kitchen to the Bone Comber's Home

‘

*i've been cruising through the galaxy
searching for some news
tryin' to find the lyrics
for them Anunnaki blues*

,

I AWOKE ONE MORNING ON
A LUXURIOUS BED OF GRASS

there was a hint of early dew that brought
the scent of water to me

the sun's rays warmed as i breathed in the moist air

you were there, floating above me
your body fluid as clouds in the wind

you held out your hand, touching mine
as we ascended to the heavens
the sun warming us as we flew upward
into the sky

i felt you smiling
i felt your grace

we traveled, until daybreak
when we descended from the sky
taking our place upon a field of grass
waiting for morning dew

to set us free
once more.

I WONDER IF THE SKY

will be as blue
on the day i die
as it is today

will the leaves
whistle
lightly as the wind
changes its pitch

will mountains be capped
white with late winter snow

will great white egrets dance
as they rebuild
last year's nest

there is a softness,
a stillness here

river creeks play on,
mandolins tuned
by the seasons

clouds form
far in the distance,
the scent of rain
touches me

i can feel the darkness
growing
i search the land
asking if the sky
will remain blue
when my heart stops
and i return
home again.

TRIMMING CANVAS

small pieces of art
neatly arranged
three to a row
two rows to a canvas
six individual items
of color
of art

a tedious process
trimming them down to size
painstaking meticulousness
is needed
at ten dollars
a pop
can't have too many
frayed corners
or damaged sides

this day
the foam board is unwieldy
despite the sharpest
blade
the canvas and board refuse
to go easily

after struggling with blade
board
canvas
i all but give up

the chimes on the door ring
her gentle form enters the studio

softly
earnestly
she crosses the room
giving me her look
she heads upstairs

i lock the door
placing my
“gone for lunch” sign
against the glass

upstairs
she is naked

shaved

immediately mounting me
she becomes lost
in her rhythm

our rhythm

explosive bursts
once, twice
three more

she leaves me with a soft kiss
our fragrance
scenting the room

* * * * *

upon her leaving
i remove the sign from the door
returning to the trimming
of canvas

a middle aged woman
and her son
enter the studio

she comments on how
sweet
the room smells
as her son purchases
a small canvas

i pocket the ten spot

my head filled
with visions
sublime.

BLUE PEONY IN MOONLIGHT

she had a thing
for flowers in moonlight
told me it made her feel
safe
secure
knowing that color
still existed
when all else
went dark

i painted her
a blue peony
so she could feel
its embrace

she felt the canvas
touching it lightly
then deeper
more aggressive
rubbing her fingers
then her body
across the canvas

sitting quietly
afterwards
she wept for the first time
since her blindness
took her sight
as she proceeded to describe me
every last detail
on the canvas.

WEEKDAY

there is a moment
when you have been
up
drinking
for many days
perhaps
weeks
maybe more
you catch
sight
of a soul
reflected
in the mirror
behind a bar
in the window
outside a store
in the bright
eyes
of a child
where ever
the reflection
occurs
time suspends
you feel
the haggard
gaunt
life
of the street
taste

the death
that lies
in the back
of your throat
watch
as the concrete
gutter
rushes close
your blood
mixing
well
with the mud
of another day
realizing
there
in the
wet
muddy
street
how fortunate
you are....

this time
it was not
the bright eyes
of a child
that saw you
fall.

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

“you are here
to preserve freedom

act quickly
leave no evidence
no sound”

we were taught that
from the first day

throughout our training
and into the field
we had the message
seared into us:

“you are here
to preserve freedom

act quickly
leave no evidence
no sound”

before the start
of the war

when all there was
was us
hundreds of rounds
and a lot of training

it all seemed like
such a game

afterwards
after walking through
the valley of death
becoming shadows
of evil
things began
to change

missions were
more frequent

more bloody

risks were taken
much higher each time out

soon
one by one
we began to fall

each time
we were told
evidence
had been left
behind

after many years
my number came up

a routine call

nothing extraordinary
though my partner needed
to kill a girl
i had not noticed
hiding in the dark

it brought on
the inquest

they asked
the usual
questions

the need for secrecy
was their undoing

instead of securing
a facility
and themselves
they attempted
to extract
my information
locally
attempting to
hide

the embarrassment

the agent was pretty

long, blonde hair
equally long legs

she asked
the usual
preparatory
questions

when she reached
for her cigarette
i acted

a quick

thrust

with a pen

act quickly, no sound

there were two
rent-a-cops
working the door

equally as fast
they went down

no evidence

i had given thirty years
of dedicated
service

i was no longer a number

i was no longer a human

just a cog in their
machine

i caught the first boat out

finally
freedom

they never found me
though they searched
for days

now i leave this
for you

my message
in a bottle

i offer you
no gifts
only advice

take your freedom
the moment
it is presented

act quickly
leave no evidence
no sound

RUNNING IN THE RAN

i crossed the finish line

shedding my skin
leaving it folded

wrapped tightly
with memories of you

Many people i worked with who suffered psychotic breaks had difficulty expressing what that felt like. i developed the phrase "running in the ran" in an attempt at explaining their experiences. The "ran", being a moment of running that was complete, and "running", being in the moment of running itself; so as they were running in their minds they were simultaneously finished with the running as well, leading to a unique clarity of distorted time and space. The phrase soon caught on and patients began telling me they could feel a psychotic break coming on, stating they were soon to be "running in the ran".

SLAUGHTERING PIGS

tomatoes have been ripening
corn, lettuce and green beans too

pigs have been slopped
readying them for the butcher,
meat chickens run haphazardly
across the yard
leaving a few feathers on the ground
that will not be scalded off later

an old bull looks on
from the small hill he favors,
milk cows patiently expand
their udders and lazily
chew
throughout the day

national disharmony
continues the current
love affair
with our media lovelies

talking heads speak,
their mouths foaming
slightly
at the corners
of their lips

no one notices,
we all understand
the story will be
repeated

five times
in the next
three minutes

our nation remains
bankrupt,
devoid of morality

our sense of
shame
unemployed
in these current
times

tomato's ripening
in the nourishing
bright
sun

meat chickens still
running
haphazardly
about the yard

the pigs are ready
for slaughter

best get the knives
sharpened
quick.

POLITICAL RAIN

we all acknowledge
the seasons

even those among us
who are not
Pagan
refer to seasons by name -
autumn, winter, spring and summer

debates flourish
among the academics

will the fires
of summer lead way to
the rains of autumn
causing mud slides on hills now born
of ash and charred trees?

will the rains continue
through into winter
flooding rivers, lakes
broaching
levee and dam?

should we send gifts
to the gods
to stop the deluge, should one arise,
or do we send offerings to them
to increase
the amount of rain
making certain
our fields turn fertile
in spring?

in a land filled
with capricious nature
we snipe at each other
over the most
trivial
things
believing ourselves
in control
of nature
we further fan
the flames of discord...

even rain
has now
become
political.

THREE NIGHTS IN THE SNOW

the walrus appeared to me
presented by a thousand dragonflies
beating their wings as one

they lowered him gently
not wanting to disturb
his slumbering self

“have you any breakfast” he asked
as he woke from his slumber
a slight glimmer appearing in his eyes

“i do not” i replied
“but i know of a penguin
who makes an awfully good stew”

the walrus pondered this for a moment
dismissing the dragonflies
with a wave of his pipe

a fine wreath of smoke
circled lightly
about him

“and what would you need in return?”
his great girth leaning towards me
his words singing in the air between us

“all i ask for is a memory
of childhood
perhaps, maybe, two”

my response puzzled the walrus
his flippers stroking
his gleaming tusks as he thought it through

“you drive a hard bargain,” he bellowed
“but, as you know,
i am fond of a good stew”

he granted my wish
and the penguin served him
my childhood appearing before me

all manner of friends
returned from my memories
running, shouting, playing together again

the walrus smiled at me
a small piece of carrot
lodged in his whiskers

i offered a white napkin
but it blended into the snow
the walrus vanishing, with astonishing grace

the rescue team that found me
told my parents i survived
three days in the avalanche

remarkably fit
for having been frozen
mumbling about a walrus, penguins and stew.

THE SOUND OF KEYS HITTING RIBBON

hitting paper
the sound of a dog
drooling while dreaming
the captive slice of a sunbeam
held for a moment, within the room
the postman delivers
a hand written missive
a true friend always takes the time to write
without the sterility of a computer
i'm often asked why i do not read more
the dog understands
as does the old typewriter
my friend, he understands
sometimes, i believe, the postman, too
i write
others read
occasionally, i come up for air
to hear the blue jay's scream
inhaling large breaths of air
i return to the world
of computers whirring
phones ringing
i knuckle under and work
keeping an ear open
for the stray scream
of a lone blue jay.

MONKEY SPRING

it is about to be spring
and the monkey's friends are gathering
look into the sky
you can see their ship
floating, gliding
giving us hope
of warmer days
the time of winter is past
cheerful flowers are the saviors
today
pick one from the garden
wear it brightly on your ear
write the music
that feeds your soul
create the rhythm
that drives your life
understand the joy
your mind can bring
leave this place for a while
fly with angels
taste the life
a fine spring day
may bring.

THESE ARE THE DAYS WHEN

a river of fear and hate
courses through the soul of our land
the stain of political dissent,
a blight upon hapless citizens,
is the New Order
we have all feared its coming
prepared for it best we can
but the foul beast has run amok
and is taking no prisoners

political parties pick at each others'
candidates like so many headless chickens
running in the yard after slaughter,
their ideals increasingly devolving into
hate filled violence...

forget the rhetoric
let's get straight to burning cars
and looting

what passes as journalism floods our media
social networks are on fire with stories
filled with nothing but lies
though they all
have great, catchy headlines
and a sweet photograph
that is irrelevant to the story it illustrates

these are the days where honor is lost,
civility is but a forgotten dream
and political truism is that the moment
you become elected to office

you spend time and money
doing nothing but
keeping your office...

forget about serving constituents
just draw another map,
pass a law or two
and get fresh meat
for the next campaign

the river winds
its murky path
of fear and hate
touching all with its rancid
nature

nothing new here,
to be certain
it is as old as humanity itself

and like bygone eras
when the river ran so
dank with fear and hate
a great flood will arise
to wipe the land clean

the righteous wait
listening
for the flood waters to roar.

DACHAU

the old man
motionless on the bed
his emaciated frame
uncommonly small
when compared
with the sharpness
of his eyes
searching my face
he wets his lips
beckoning me closer
whispering

“four inches,
four inches”

the nurse admonishes him
to remain silent
tucking him tightly
into the sheets
nothing left
but bone and skin

his eyes burn into mine
so clear
so alive

“four inches,
four inches”

his murmurs become
a chant
others in the ward
become silent

all is still
the only sound
is his whispered chant

“four inches,
four inches”

that night
the old man passed
his eyes wide open
his face frozen
in fear

a slightly noticeable stain
running down his cheek
gave the tell tale sign
of tears
before death

his frail hands
clutched
a small and well worn
crucifix

the charge nurse noted
he was catholic
and directed me
to call a priest

last rites
dignity for the dead
the usual fare

the priest arrived
a relic
from a distant past
he walked with grace
with dignity
his was a presence
of the righteous
on Earth

“I am here
for the deceased,”
his powerful voice
boomed

i led him to the old man

the ward
again
eerily silent
not a sound
as the priest
prepared
to salvage
the old man’s
soul

i watched intently
having never before
seen the ceremony

when it was over
God’s grace given
the priest noticed
my purposeful stare

he turned to me then
speaking with a voice
so clear
so full of life

“his soul is now gone
nothing left for him
but an eternity in hell
for want of four inches”

the scene was surreal

a frail, old man
dead upon the bed

a wizened priest
his robes flowing
though no wind
present

the priest came closer
and whispered

“he was a guard
at Dachau
he murdered
hundreds,
thousands,
he would hang them
from a pole
leaving them just
four inches
from the ground

they would die that way
knowing life
was merely
inches away”

the priest gathered
his belongings
and left me

the ward began
to come alive
sounds of life
gaining form

i looked down
at the old man
eyes now closed
hands still clutching
his worn crucifix

it was then i noticed
the size of the crucifix

it was exactly

four inches

four inches.

ATONEMENT

when did we begin watering down
our artistic wine

choosing to view rainbows
through trademarked RayBans

walking the paths of Bodhisattvas
in nine hundred dollar collectible Nikes

a shoe stand lies
at the end of the trail

offer the peasant boy
a shiny Buffalo Nickel

your kind action
will not go unnoticed.

DARK WINGS

desiring to speak with angels
i searched the Voynich Manuscript
for clues

pages in the manuscript
turned as if propelled
by a greater power

the pages rested on an image
of dancing, naked women
calling to me

i revisited my birth
naked, alone
screaming to be heard

dark wings wrapped around me
comforting me
soothing my fears

it's been many ages
since those fears
abated

i have vague recollections
of a voice lilting
in divine grace

a voice fading
over time
until i no longer
heard it at all

as i near death
i long to hear
the sounds of angels
as i pass into the night

would dark wings find me again

or am i to die
alone.

GOD'S HIGHWAYMAN

the ice was thick on the road
the winds
wild

snow blew across the road
angels appearing in the mist
guiding us home

i had made this journey many times
knew when to turn
knew when to duck
i always advised my passengers
to take hold of the good book
perhaps find a passage
well worn
for travel

just in case i was asked
what my favorite passage was
“do no harm”
would be my reply

it was what got me the job

i've been at it for what seems
centuries
transporting souls that are lost

helping them find a way home

my own fate came at the hands of God
i was caught stealing in the name of the lord
taking the money

spending it on drink and women
it never occurred to me it was wrong

it was simply the way i was raised

some people are raised in a church
some in a brothel

some are cleaning women
some are politicians

in the end we all take the final journey

God saw fit to teach me to drive a carriage

gave me fine steeds
a pure black suit, too

told me my sins would be forgiven
but i had to guide lost souls home

help them into the light

i make my rounds at night
rain or snow
does not matter to me

i'm God's Highwayman
finding salvation after stealing
from the lord

how will you find yours?

FETTERED

the chains dug deep
into his flesh

his body
paralyzed

years of torture
in chambers
unknown
to the public
left him
wracked
with pain

on the day
of his death
he let out
his last

primal scream
from deep
within
his concrete
cave

outside
in the brilliance
of light
school children
skipped rope

citizens
went about
their day

never suspecting
a thing
was amiss

life went on
dutifully

we talked of who to vote for
in the continuing
round of lies

never aware
there were
prisoners of conscience
hidden
from us

they had been locked away
for their political beliefs

left to die
in concrete caves
of our making.

FLYING MONKEYS

and ruby slippers
got me a good witch
in crystal shoes
innocent girl
from the heartland
kills the bad witch
sing's them blues

tiny people
need a leader
corrupt system
no longer work
man in back room
pulling levers
smoke and mirrors
rule the day

aged story
never changing
tarnished hero
saves the day
until somebody
asks question
how much hero
wants in pay

no absolution
for the people
only taxes
they must pay
flying monkeys
cost you money
pull some levers
blow smoke their way

we all like stories
with happy endings
ruby slippers
heartland girls
tiny peoples
across our nation
telling stories
of better days.

“

insecurity
like an aging hooker
should know
when to retire

”

ON NIGHTS WHEN I WRITE

with skin for paper
blood for ink
and a skull for my pen

i believe i can taste
the smell of death
thick as bacon

frying nicely
on a cool
summer morning.

HE FELT THE DEPRESSION COMING

felt it mounting
till finally
he succumbed
to its demands
donning it
as a headsman dons
his black mask
separating him
from both world
and himself

he realized
what it meant
to be alone

now
he was aware of it

enveloping him
smothering him
crushing him
with its darkness

an open window
to jump
he watches people
below
struggling
with their own
darkness.

how many suspect?

how many eyes penetrate?

pointing
a crowd begins to form
urging him
cheering him
to jump

to leap
to his death.

smiling
he finds his strength
and pities them

they haven't the courage
to face their own
darkness

he does it for them.

THE DOOR'S BRILLIANCE
ON THE HORIZON

he had seen the door
many times

glimmering

sometimes
radiant
against the horizon

he heard the call of its brilliance

saw the light
merging
as it shut
tight
against the limits
of body

of mind

the door appears
when it appears

it is always closed
always brilliant

at times the brilliance
blinds
hurts the eyes

other times
elation, joy
overpowers and gives
comfort

he learned to not
approach the door
too quickly

and never
to reach out

over the years a peace
evolved

he knew the door would open
when it was time

a smile
serene
escapes, but for a moment

in that moment
the door relinquishes
its purpose

he viewed it
glimmering
on the horizon

he saw its
radiance
shine

anticipation

he knew the door
would open

a smile
serene
escapes his lips

it was time

for a moment
he becomes one
with joy

then lives
no more.

MOAB

light 'em up
take the fuckers down
make 'em burn
show the world
who is boss
why bother with
explanations
when none are
needed
they are inferior
we are superior
their mindless chants
of vengeance
drift off into the night
unheard
unlike the screams
of children
caught in the middle
of an ages long and
ancient
pissing contest
that
at its most
effective
level
does little more
than maintain
a surplus population
for the wretched souls
that believe themselves
rulers of the land.

BEAT HEART MADNESS

of children assassinated
in utero
blind
robbed of the pleasures
of mind and the body
damned to be sickness
life of deformity
innocent creature
the child in utero
condemned by the madness
of woman indulgence
they feel within
foul taste of the bottle

contemptible journey
this journey of sadness
which burns at the heart
and tears at the eyes
while some death is final
theirs is a torture
of life to be lived
where is the justice?

woman resentful
of bulge in her body
disrupted figure
no men will it bring.

a father type needed
to take care of woman
but what about baby
who the fuck cares?

now woman lie heavy
all bloated
distorted
pulls on her bottle
pretends it not there

maybe she give it
to fine upstart family

maybe she drop it
down trash chute
down stairs

politicians they tells us
this baby don't matter
this baby not born yet
why worry
don't care

all sadness madness
this child in utero
this child unwanted
alive in despair

outside in the distance
a dumpster lies waiting
these children
assassinated
in utero
blind.

CROWS

crows were dancing on lawns
making sounds
humans could not understand

men in their slippers
women in their housecoats
listened with irritation
to the early morning sounds

we have all known
many types of pain

some are fleeting
some remain with you

some can motivate
some can cripple

on the morning the crows
danced on our lawn
i had not known pain

your mother grabbed me by the arm
urgently stating
it was time

bags were packed
quickest route
plotted

we left the dancing crows
and headed out

at the hospital your mother
stumbled
falling gracelessly
to the still cool
pavement

orderlies ran to our car
a nurse appeared

blood had pooled
where your mother fell

as quickly as it began
it was over

the doctor could not
look me in the eye

he told me they could not
save your mother
they could not
save you

he reassured me
these things happen

gods will, and all that

a nurse was directed
to clean the room

glancing out the window
i watched crows
dancing
on the lawn

it's now been thirty years
since i truly
learned pain

i buried you
here
in this cemetery

your mother lies beside you

i come and visit
thinking of you
often

i keep an eye out
for dancing crows

though not once
have i seen them
dance on your graves.

POETRY BY SID URIN

buses are rolling
along the highway
in the back of my mind

i envision a dog
with my girlfriend
and become
extremely
agitated
puking all over
the lady sitting
next to me

i smile at her
knowing
i've wet my pants.

NEUROMANTIC

waking up
morning sunshine
birds singing
flowers blooming
becoming all that
shit
in poem's we've read

fuck it
no be true
false god
nature as idol
be made worship
her

mother nature
aged whore
reeks of beauty
bullshit poetry
written for her
in her name

no be true
no be true

beauty be beast
destroying angel
killing thousands
at her whim

say what
you want

a flood
perhaps volcano
blowing brilliance
fiery breath
lighting night on fire
like sun exploding

or quake
moving earth
tossing homes
like so much nothingness

she levels culture
in one fell swoop

mother nature
destroying angel
killing hundreds
thousands, millions

what say you?

THERAPY

i'm feeling kind of sketchy lately
out of sorts
not myself
can't seem to shake this feeling
of apprehension

stopped listening to talk radio
stopped listening to NPR
don't watch the news
unless it's about a fire
or a flood

quit listening to conversations
in grocery lines
or while purchasing gas
i've even stopped talking
to the donut lady

no longer hang out
at the strip club
or the church
though once in a while
i still visit the VFW

there is a murkiness there
that cannot be replaced
by coffee, or cocaine
or even Sharkleberry Fin
and gin

i used to drink with my dog
every night
people said it was
creepy i drank alone
so i poured him a shot, too

one night i got arrested
pulled over because the dog
was on my roof rack
barking and jumping
and slobbering as we drove

the judge wanted to know why
my dog was on the roof
of the car
as i drove down
the freeway

i told him i had run out
of Sharkleberry Fin and gin
and offered myself a shot
of tequila instead,
or maybe twelve

the judge sentenced me
to thirty days
and they put the dog
up for adoption
at a dog halfway house

i got released and
started feeling kind of sketchy
out of sorts
not myself
couldn't shake the feeling
of apprehension

my court ordered therapist
gives me exercises to complete
so far, to date
i have come to understand
to not give the dog
Sharkleberry Fin and gin
and...tequila

though i am quick to point out
to the therapist, to the judge
to all i encounter
i did have the dog on a chain
when he was on the roof

how stupid would that be
to drive down the freeway
with your dog on your roof-rack
without any
kind of restraint?

IN OUR TIME

paranoid thoughts
creeping deep
inside
our minds
shooting each others
brothers
with hardened bullets
of fear

living in the schizophrenic world
timelessly takes
its toll

poor men seeking
searching
don't hesitate
don't fall

don't lose your soul

for when the mad hatter topples
and Alice returns to home
it is then we'll rise in splendor

our turn
to run the show.

A NIGHT ON THE AUDIT

the girl with the hungry
eyes
brought terror into his life

she showed him crystal
visions
scoring his eyes
leading him down
pathways
with every exit an entrance
into yet another
sordid dream

she talked freely of love
power
the feeling she got
from watching him
writhe
on a bare
wooden floor

the sound of a knife
slicing quick
through the dead
of the night
loosing demons
which feasted upon
his soul

she laughed
applauding the moment
with twilight
sparkling
from her red
bloody lips

while he lay helpless
victim
to her madness

a gag in his mouth
no sounds
could he scream

in silence
she sheathed the knife

the demons
had been freed

time to move on

to find another
to show
her crystal visions.

DRAGONS DANCED

long into the night
bathing
in the morning
washing away
their sins

read the words
that are emblazoned
upon your heart

share the lyrics
that stir
within your soul

view the world
as a playful child
so you may forever
remain free.

NARCISSISM

i need to register
as an independent

no party affiliation

that way
when the swine are
re-elected
and carpet bomb
strange sounding
countries

killing innocent
civilians and children
along the way

i can rest easy
knowing it was
the other voters who
elected such a
low-brow candidate

my candidate only
carpet bombed
daisies.

OPULENT WHOREMONGERS

insist on helping me
passing laws of inequality
under the guise
of furthering society
proclaiming reforms
from their specious perches
in the Ivory Towers
my money supports

i only needed help
once in my life
when my Radio Flyer wagon
broke
decades ago

it remains broken

i send messages
to the whoremongers
in the Ivory Towers
to fix my wagon

they do not reply

i will wait

patiently

ignoring the decay
their opulence brings.

PASSIONS OF ISRAEL

all around us rained death
as we looked towards
another sunrise
unwilling to see
the blood before us

our masters exact
a heavy toll
upon which to travel

their roads are paved
with the blood
of the innocent

their tolls are paid
with money made
from the flesh
of the damned

choosing to ignore
the death around them
searching for the sunrise
in a blood red sky.

HALDOL

 speak to me
 empty your mind

 there are only friends here
for Ba'al has blinded his enemies

 they come for him
 through your dreams
 leveling forests
 vacating seas

you were right to seek my counsel

 these are ancient ways

 practicing this magic
 is ancient as sand

 there is much to discover

 truth, is a fleeting moment
 all father, El, guides your dreams
all mother, Asherha, guides your soul

 you wear the mark of Yahweh
 believing it protects you
 i will tell you, it will not

 El saw the birth of your God
 Asherha, bringer of life
 was the midwife

 Ba'al was trusted
to guard Gods soul

many people claim the status
 of a one, true God

 this should come
 as no surprise to you
 the wasteland is filled
with the bones of religion

 i tell you this in earnest;
there is not a need for doctors

 your mind is cluttered
your thoughts in disarray

empty your mind and speak
 with the clarity of ages

 Ba'al is there for you

 accept these things

 the demons are false Gods
come, let us slay them together.

ON THE END OF CIVILIZATION

in a windowless room
in a tiny cubicle
amidst reams of paper
and antiquated machines
a lone bureaucrat
hungry for advancement
develops a form
for the continuation
of civilization

no longer a need
for political splendor
or rancor
society will be able
to fully function
through the use
of his form

a number 2 pencil
is all that will be required

tabulation of the forms
will be done quickly
thereby saving civilization
from itself

* * * * *

in a windowless building
in a tiny cubicle
amidst reams of paper
and antiquated machines
a lone bureaucrat

dissatisfied with his life
ignores the forms
filled out
by the masses

he has no need
for his these forms

too much work
not enough retirement
he goes back to his nap
with dreams of exotic
tropical girls

this is not
a time for work
this is a time
for a nap

awakening to the pile
of forms on his desk
he removes them swiftly
to the waiting trash bin

thereby ending
all of civilization.

THE HUCKSTERS HAVE MOVED IN

no longer can poetry be
read
for the sake of
hearing
words

the crowd must be
entertained
they must be
given their
money's worth

no matter
they paid not a cent
at the door

poems of substance
will not be tolerated

political positions
are right out the door

rules of
the new order
include punch lines
fun times
give the masses
what they want
keep them
entertained

bring in the crowds
make them feel
cozy

make certain you have
a catchy name
and for God's sake
don't forget the punch line!

the hucksters have moved in

no longer can poetry be read
for the sake
of hearing
words.

WE PLAYED AT
OUR RELATIONSHIP

approaching it
as high wire acrobats
in training

working with a net
all things are possible
until the net is removed

the crowd is in place
the tickets sold
the ring master commands

all to watch

high above
a lone acrobat
flying without fear

his partner
applauding
enthusiastically
from the ground.

POP-TARTS & REAGAN

i dropped the pop-tart
right on top of the cat

dog didn't seem to mind
grabbed a corner and fled

cat chased after him
wanting the whole pop-tart

the whole enchilada
so to speak

Reagan speaks to me from the grave
reminds me there are 8
pop-tarts to a box

enough for the dog
the cat
and Ronnie, too

i pour myself another cup of coffee
it's going to be a long day.

THE BLADE

you chose to die
before Christmas

thought it would make it
more palpable

more believable

the death you carried
would not go quietly

many lifetimes later
it reared a crescent head

the cancer was deemed
a service related incident

your life insurance policy
would not pay

a wife, three children
were to be left penniless

your insurance company
would escape the payout

the night was bitter cold
when last we met

you handed me your wallet, your watch
called me brother

i stuck you quickly
before we could think

you lay bleeding out
my blade deep into your spleen

* * *

on these nights
before Christmas

when it is bitter cold
i remember

the policy you had paid into
all those many years

the policy that would not pay
for your service related cancer

was forced to pay in full
for the robbery

for your murder

on that dark, bitter,
cold night

that night, that winter

you provided
for your family

and upheld your honor
i've never forgotten you,
 my brother

your family lived

your dream survived

i look in on them
from time to time

as requested

though i remain
 as agreed

a stranger

rest well, my brother

i will see you
on the other side.

HE DYED HIS HAIR AND SNIFFED COCAINE

wore a yellow ribbon
 loosely
 about his neck
wore too tight pants
 pointed shoes
 wingtips
 on occasion
and that yellow
 ribbon
 loosely
 about his neck
had a way with laughter

he dyed his hair, you know,
and sniffed cocaine
 on occasion
he'd run the streets
 naked
 screaming
thoughts of solitude
turning his yellow ribbon
 the color of ash
 grey
 naked
 lifeless

along the street
we'd find him
 trembling
and would take him
 home
 to bed
and steal his cocaine.

in confessional
solitude
he would carefully
pluck
his eyebrows
pruning
that ungodly bush
to a small
thin
line
could take hours
but he had
the time

drying
above the radiator
the yellow ribbon hung
limp
waiting
anxiously
to be tied about his neck.

we found him
early morning
hanging
there
above the radiator
the yellow ribbon
tightly
about his neck

his face
neatly
arranged

his hair
perfect
dyed yellow
looked lovely
as ever

we left
before we disturbed him

left him
alone
with his passions

though we did manage to remove
that ever present
vial of cocaine.

he wore a yellow ribbon
loosely
about his neck
till one day
it tightened

i believe he alone
understood the laughter

he alone
understood it's tide.

HERE

in the room where
all is quiet
serene
gilded light illuminates
bringing
warmth
on a frosty day

there
on the streets
where all is chaos
whores
tramps
addicts
pushers of all kinds
trample the earth
dead
with their decay

in an instance
the two
merge
a unified spirit
defined

this, i cry out
is life.

CAN YOU HEAR ME...

i am the voice of a child
beaten and raped
living in a shelter
no family
nor friends
my attacker
roams free
on bail
his local church
rallying
behind him
supporting him
with platitudes
of every kind
even the local paper
fails to use
the word
victim
when they speak
of me

...i am
no more.

FEVER

when the fever comes
i lay by the window
watching paintings drift
between trees

though skies are dark
the light dim
colors of the paintings race vibrant
through my mind

the large oaks produce exquisite works
purity of thought melding with the
movement of the trees as they dance
in the wind

the pines and cypress lend
a more impressionistic style
while the palms produce
dada at its finest

paintings drift gracefully
between trees
as i lay in my bed
in total rapture

* * * * *

i have always run
high with fever
as a child i would hide our thermometer
so my mother would not know

playing this hide and seek
could last days
until my pale body
would finally collapse

doctors chastised me
telling me i needed to understand
the damage fever
could bring to a child

i ignored them then
as i do now, preferring to watch
paintings dance
between trees.

UPON RIDING MESCALITO'S HORSE

Mescalito's horse delivered me
to the bottom of a turquoise mountain
on the far side of a meadow
under a pale, green sky
where the Nagual spoke
delivering Zen koans
that floated
lazily
fading
as they moved
to the horizon

i managed
to hear
the Nagual's lyrical voice
chanting
rhythmically

"one plus one
does not
equal
two,
it equals
one"

i challenged the Nagual
speaking clearly
directly
pointedly asking

"how can this be?"



the horse's spots
shone brightly
his mane glowing
a magnificent magenta
turning orange
then persimmon
as the Naugual
spoke

"one plus one
equals
one

it is one love
one heart
that you seek"

with a wave of my hand
they both disappeared
like smoke
on a calm summer day
drifting effortlessly
timelessly
until they were
no more

Mescalito's horse
returned to the meadow

the Naugual flew
to another's
need

i was left
sitting
floating

for a brief moment
i had glimpsed the truth
of understanding everything

while still knowing nothing
nothing at all.

NIBIRU AWAITS

the last ship departed
minutes before the apocalypse
pounding its way through the atmosphere
it reached its goal of space
gliding silently
effortlessly

our vessel's course set
decades before it launched
hundreds of our ships sailing
past the moon
past Mars' red fields
past the rings of Saturn

a world in exile
from its own planet

its destruction foretold
by ancient Anunnaki
in stories Sumerians
painstakingly recorded

their message ignored
by ignorant people
arrogance driving
their greed ambitions

flaunting truths
the genocide began

removing food
from whole Earth Mother
replacing it with
chemical death

fabricated food
by fabricated people

sustaining life water
carrying disease
from shore to shore
no longer sustaining life
now a mixture
of glowing
toxic sludge

those that were fortunate
found refuge
traveling to a distant planet
only spoken of
through ancient poems

history
denied
they look to their children
whose eyes stare back
vacant

they will spawn a new world
one in which all
shall forever remain free

until their children's children's children
begin losing their history
and many eons later
the cycle will begin
again.

JAZZ FROM A FRENCH STATION

turkish coffee to wire me
eyes bleary from writing and designing
three days straight
perhaps it has been five

there is a well known noise
that hums from the inside
of my head
to the outskirts
of some
other
life

it is magic hour
in this land

i am home at last.

A GLIMMER OF MADNESS

the silence of our children
is proof of our decay

we shed our responsibilities
acknowledging
the charismatic among us
know the way

they possess the knowledge
all knowing
all seeing

looking deep into our souls
they see the fire
burning
within

they guide us
shelter us
from ourselves
and our sins

they give us rules
to live by

stories to fuel
our beliefs

there is no need
for individual
responsibility

an entire planet
could be at peace
if only the charismatic
were obeyed

no questioning
their purity

despite the occasional
fall from grace
they are the chosen

the ones who are pure
decide
they speak for all

we handed over our progress
to them

gave up all rights
to them

their disease quickly swept
beyond trite
religion

spilling over to politics
leadership at every level
was handed over
to them

the faithful flocked
to the cause
of righteousness

the charismatic
demons
allowed an out
for our responsibility

while some might argue
that was really
not the case

it was all only a glimmering
of the madness
behind a mad man's eyes

though that
as well
is still not true

for the proof
is easy enough
to see

the silence
of our children

is proof of our decay.

MEMORIES OF A CITY

the podium is empty
at the Buffalo Club

late nights spewing words
until we were kicked out

are no more

i recall the twang of guitars,
the nasal recitation of poetry
limply passing as blues

an errant set of panties
are thrown upon
the buffalo's massive head

outside, a city is consumed
with besting its rival
Baghdad by The Bay

a chapbook is sold,
the bartender pocketing the money
to offset my tab

there are rumors
these days never appeared
at all

history is written
by those that
were never there

memories float by...
clouds on a cloudless day

my turn at the podium
is coming up

i must not be late.

WHEN YOU REALIZE
THE HEAT AROUND YOU

is the fire burning
from within

when the clarity
that comes
from a magnificent fog
enveloping your mind
your body
your spirit
your soul
showing the path

hidden...

it is these times
these exact
moments
that truth
for the briefest
of instances
shows itself

it is these times
these exact
moments
that truth
for the briefest
of instances
shows itself

and life, gracefully
becomes bearable, again

there is no sin
no memory
no pain

there is only
the path
leading you
to the next
fire
burning
from within

the next fog
enveloping.

WANDA

night time was the worst
it was when the screams began
and the nightmares
became real

screaming through the night
strapped to her bed
skeletal frame
hair torn out in clumps
fingernails like talons
would rip your flesh
if you came too close

orderlies had to don
special equipment
just to trim her nails
wash her hair
un-strap and then strap again
was the procedure each time
she would begin screaming

her appearance was severely
emaciated and was
from all appearances
a demon from hell

she was selective of staff
letting only her chosen few
attend to her

i was a fortunate soul she let in
if only for brief moments

there was something about my beard
and long hair
that captivated her
calmed her
allowing me to tend to her
to make her as comfortable
as i could

she had been institutionalized
for close to three decades

the medications had rotted her teeth
left her scalp bald
here and there

i would offer her sweet fruit
so she might eat

over ripened peaches
pears
plums
nectarines

at times, it was the only
nourishment
she would have
for weeks on end

on the days she was peaceful
she would tell me of the train
that took her family

the family wagon had stalled
on the tracks

her husband, apparently,
had a heart attack and left them
her and the children,
three of them
stranded as the train roared
closer

she could not revive her husband
and her children, frozen with fear
would not leave the car

she barely escaped
before massive steel
ended her family

this was a story
she would tell
to anyone who would listen

while nights were spent screaming
daytime was spent rapturously describing
her perfect family
that never visited

“where are the children?” she asked

in truth, there was never
a family wagon
that stalled on the tracks

her husband did not have
a heart attack

her children
were never in the car

it was all a delusion
created to salvage
what little she could

she had brutally murdered
her entire family

killed them all

her parents
his parents
the children
the family dog

she had even drowned the cat
and left pet goldfish
lying dead on the floor

the courts found her insane

with no hope for a cure
she was remanded to institutions
which was where i met her

screaming through the night
strapped to her bed
calling out to children
as if they were there.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MENTAL ILLNESS CARE AND TREATMENT IN AMERICA

Remember this statement: the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

In a bid to de-institutionalize our mentally ill in hopes of “helping” them, we sacrificed quite a bit of our own public safety in doing so. In 1833, Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts opens as the first mental hospital fully supported by state funds. It was a historic moment; for the first time in America’s history the mentally ill were able to receive medical care that was fully paid for by the state. By 1860 twenty-eight of the thirty-three existing U.S. states had state psychiatric hospitals for their mentally ill citizens.

In a little talked about piece of American history, from 1939-1945, during World War II, conscientious objectors to the war entered state psychiatric hospitals to replace doctors who were sent away for the war effort. These “doctors”, some of whom had medical training (most did not) did little more than to keep their patients sedated and out of the public eye. All while “serving” their country as conscientious objectors nie doctors.

On May 6, 1946, Life magazine published “Bedlam 1946,” an exposé of two state hospitals: Pennsylvania’s Byberry, and Ohio’s Cleveland State. To a country shaken by the recent revelations of Nazi atrocities, the pictures were deeply affecting. The crisis in state mental hospitals motivated a Dr. Walter Freeman, to devise a simple version of the lobotomy procedure, one that could be used on a mass scale, in order to appease the increasing panic of “Mental Illness”.

His article was followed by court and grand-jury records that documented scores of deaths of patients following beatings by attendants in attempts at controlling patients. Hundreds of instances of abuse, falling just short of manslaughter, were similarly documented. Reliable evidence from hospital after hospital

indicated that these were but a tiny fraction of the beatings that occurred, day after day, only to be covered up by the tacit conspiracy of mutually protective silence and a code that ostracized employees who dared to break this code.

Yet beatings and murders are hardly the most significant of the indignities that were heaped upon the 400,000 guiltless patient-prisoners of over 180 state mental institutions at the time. Thousands spent their days -- often for weeks at a stretch -- locked in devices euphemistically called "restraints": thick leather handcuffs, great canvas camisoles, "muffs," "mitts," wristlets, locks and straps and restraining sheets. Hundreds were confined to "lodges" -- bare, bed less, rooms reeking with filth and feces -- by day lit only through half-inch holes in steel-plated windows, by night becoming black tombs in which the cries of the insane echo from the peeling plaster of the walls.

Such were conditions of our mental institutions and their patients.

In 1954 Chlorpromazine, marketed as Thorazine, was approved by the Food and Drug Administration. It was the first anti-psychotic drug widely used to treat the symptoms of mental illness. For many, it brought hope that some patients could live among the community and for a brief moment, there was a breath of hope.

Nationally, in 1955 the number of patients inside public mental hospitals nationwide swelled, peaking at 560,000. By 1959 the number of patients in California's state mental hospitals peaked at 37,000, alone.

With state resources struggling to maintain individual state hospitals and programs, in 1963 President John F. Kennedy signed the Community Mental Health Act (CMHA). This Act pushed the responsibility of mentally ill patients from the state to the federal government. JFK wanted to create a network of community mental health centers where mentally ill people could live in the community while receiving care that was standardized throughout the country. Many believed he might have been inspired to act because his younger sister, Rosemary, who

was mentally disabled, had received a lobotomy and spent her life hidden away. Whatever his reasons, the CMHA was a revolutionary piece of legislation that gave help to those in our society who were desperate for help but unable to advocate for it on their own.

Less than a month after signing the new legislation, JFK was assassinated. He never got to see his plan develop. The community mental health centers never received stable funding. Fifteen years later less than half of the promised centers were built, and the bulk of the program had fallen into disarray.

When the U.S. Congress established Medicaid and Medicare in 1965, there was again renewed hope for the mentally ill. Though soon after the act was signed into law it is discovered that mentally disabled people living in the community at large were eligible for benefits, but those in psychiatric hospitals were excluded. State legislators began encouraging patients to be discharged in large numbers in order to shift the cost of care for mentally ill patients to the federal government.

Two years later, in 1967, Ronald Reagan is elected governor of California. By the time of his election, the number of patients in California state mental hospitals had fallen to 22,000, and the Reagan administration used the decline as a reason to make cuts to what was then named the Department of Mental Hygiene. They cut 2,600 jobs, along with ten percent of the budget, despite reports showing that hospitals were already below recommended staffing levels.

1967 also was the year that Reagan signed the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act which ended the practice of institutionalizing patients against their will for indefinite periods of time. The law was regarded by many as a "patients bill of rights". While this was in a somewhat positive direction, sadly, the care outside of state mental hospitals was inadequate to maintain proper care. The year after the law went into effect, studies show the number of mentally ill people entering California's criminal justice system doubling.

Another two years go by and in 1969, Reagan reverses his

earlier budget cuts and increases spending on the Department of Mental Hygiene by a record \$28 million, the most California had ever spent on Mental Health. But despite the added budget increase, the number of patients in California's Mental hospitals fell to 7,000 by 1973.

President Jimmy Carter, in 1980, signs the Mental Health Systems Act, to improve on Kennedy's dream. But a year later, in 1981, with Reagan no longer Governor and now our President, he repeals Carter's legislation with his Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act. This act pushed the responsibility of mentally ill patients back to the states. The legislation created block grants for the states, but federal spending on mental illness declined. States used the money for anything and everything, but future audits uncovered that little money actually went towards mental health as the money was termed "discretionary".

The downward trend of help for the mentally ill continued to spiral towards a deep and dark chasm where little help became available for the mentally ill. If any at all.

In 2004, a U.S. Department of Justice report acknowledged estimates that ten percent of state prisoners had symptoms that met criteria for a psychotic disorder who were offered little to no help. With no facilities available to handle these disorders prisoners continued their downward spiral.

According to a 2015 assessment by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 564,708 people were homeless on a given night in the United States. At a minimum, they found that 140,000 people, or twenty five percent, were seriously mentally ill. 250,000, or forty five percent, had some form of mental illness. These were our fellow citizens who were, yet again, offered little to any help.

As of 2018, there were 11,682 registered mental health treatment facilities in the U.S. Within those, 8,956 were less than 24-hour outpatient facilities while 1,920 facilities were 24-hour inpatient facilities; leaving just 806 facilities for long term care. Eight hundred and six, for the entire nation.

Compare that number to 1,833 state prisons, 110 federal

prisons, 1,772 juvenile correctional facilities, 3,134 local jails, and 218 immigration detention facilities, where a collected 2.3 million people are held at any given time.

In the United States, it is widely recognized that almost half of adults (46.4 percent) will experience a mental illness during their lifetime. Five percent of adults (18 or older) experience a mental illness in any one year, which is equivalent to 43.8 million people.

Is it any wonder then why our policing solution is inadequate? While we currently house 2.3 million people a year in our prisons and jails, there remains an estimated 43.8 million people a year who will experience a mental illness of some form. With only a handful of facilities to handle these mental illnesses, authorities are left to do their best, though that is not much.

Perhaps we, as a nation, should begin shouting, and loudly at that, to return to a plan such as what JFK initiated with the Community Mental Health Act. It certainly might be worth a try as whatever it is we have been struggling with for the past few decades is certainly not working. Homelessness, addiction and mental illness continue to soar while fewer and fewer services are offered as assistance. Where there is money earmarked to help this issue, politicians devour the money as it is frequently granted as "discretionary," seldom making it to those who truly need it most.

Remember the statement at the start of this article; The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results? It leads one to wonder just who, exactly, is mentally ill?

Other works by dave boles:

Do Aluminum Chickens Eat Metal Feed?

Media Dissertation Of A Balding Man

A Small Answer To A Large Question

*ALIVE IN AMERICA: Politics,
Psychedelics & An Illuminated Monkey*

CABO DAYS

Confessions Of A Black Ink Junkie

*15 Days To Slow The Curve -
One Mans Journey Into The
Heartland Of Absurdity*

Paths Of Emptiness

About The Wedding

Coyote Magic

Coyote Vision

OFFERINGS

Homage To A Word

Excursions Along The Way

WAR



dave boles, founder of the alternative literary and visual magazine, Primal Urge, developed Cold River Press in 1990 to promote regional writers and artists. His press and focus eventually grew to international levels of publishing with the anthologies VOICES and QUIET ROOMS. He has published, designed, edited and written numerous books, magazines, articles, ads and periodicals. His publications, graphic design and artwork have won him acclaim in an over forty year career.

A lifelong student of Magic and Spiritualism, he holds degrees in Psychology, and a Doctorate of Divinity in Theosophical Studies. His church, *The Church Of The Illuminated Monkey*, has supported alternative methods of treatment for alcoholism and depression since its inception in the late 1990s, using micro-dosing of psilocybin and other holistic substances from the earth.

Living in Northern California at his beloved Lake House with his wife, Mrs. America, and numerous animals, he chronicles his devotion to the ancestors, writing of ancient mysticism through his *Coyote Series*, a series of epic poems that detail the spiritual and mystical wisdom of the ages.

A devoted collector of tattoo, *The Golden Pakara*, is tattooed on his back guarding against the ultimate knowledge man continually seeks to attain.



THE GOLDEN PAKARA

The Golden Pakara deity is found in the Buddha Scroll. It originally appeared in the Pictorial Of Buddhist Icons by the artist Zhang Shengwen of Da Li, a kingdom in China, in the year 1180. It was reproduced again by the famous Qianlong Emperor, Gaozong, of the Qing Dynasty who ruled from 1735–1795. He commissioned artist Ding Guanpeng to recreate the scroll from the original, water damaged and heavily aged scroll. Ding Guanpeng was a master artist who was schooled in Taoist, Buddhist and European art, being trained in European art by the Italian painter Giuseppe Castiglione, who spent a great deal of time in China in the mid-1700s. The final scroll was organized by the Zhongjia Khutughto, or Living Buddha. It was one of four major prelates of the Gelugpa or Yellow sect of Lamaism, which was recognized by the Manchu government of the Qing Dynasty as spiritual leaders of Tibet and Mongolia. Hence, it is alternatively called both the Buddha Scroll, and the Tibetan Buddha scroll.

Pakara means the letter Pa, which stands for the principle that the ultimate reality of all things cannot be grasped. He is a fierce Dharma-protecting Tantric deity, or celestial spirit, that is associated with the Naga, or Dragon Kings. He protects man from reaching, or understanding, the Ultimate Reality Of All Things, which man cannot handle, nor wield its incredible knowledge. He is an ancient deity dating back to early Hinduism, Jainism, and beyond, with appearances as early as the Sumerian era. The Sumerian deities became known as Naga kings, or dragon/serpent gods, as their appearances took form as such.

There is a small portal to his left, under his lowermost left arm. It is a “grey” area with a bit of rope dangling in it. It is through this portal that those who study and prepare themselves worthy to him might gain a glimpse of the Ultimate Reality he protects.

4th FLOOR: Paranoia, Depression, and Other States of Mind (first printing), is published in an edition of 200 copies.

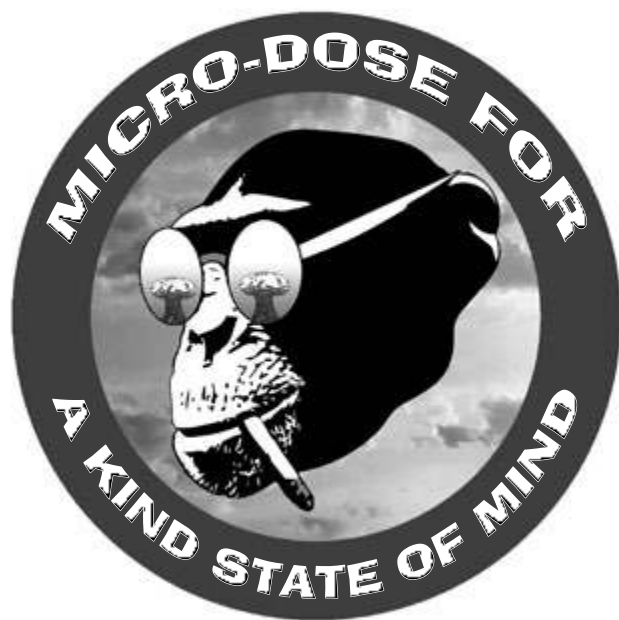
Text: Body is Adobe Caslon Pro, 12pt leading 14pt. Poem headings are in Baskerville Old Face Caps, 17pt leading 18pt. Page numbers are 10pt Adobe Caslon Pro, with a 65% tint. Page headers are Annual Extended 9.5pt, with a 65% tint.

Paper: Interior pages are printed on 60# off-white 3.7 Caliper, 541 PPI. Soft Cover is printed on 12pt Cover stock 541 PPI and gloss laminated before binding.

Printing: Text was printed on an Océ 6250 digital printer. Cover was printed using a Xerox Versant 3100.

Binding: Book is soft cover perfect bound.





In *4th Floor: Paranoia, Depression, and Other States of Mind*, Dave Boles takes the reader on a mythopoeic adventure that weaves between tales of those abandoned on the upper floor of a mental institution and an everyman narrating the perplexing throes of his life, a pagan awaiting the moral judgment of the gods, summoning a spirit older than a Judeo-Christian god. He suggests there is very little clearance between the madman and the everyman. Chronicling the insanity of our age and its “political rain”; its many-splendored absurdities and its hypocrisy, while he beckons the moral clarity of a bygone age. Along the way the reader visits Dachau, the Voynich Manuscript, the Nibiru cataclysm and many creatures plucked from a fabled space who remind humans of a confounding nature reluctant to give up its wisdom easily. These fabulist creatures signal the supremacy of nature over culture, and in doing so they signal there are no madmen in the wild, only ones that sound off in the inhabited spaces . . . and if you listen very closely, you can hear the Haldol speaking in all of us.

~ Tim Kahl, author of *Drips, Spills, Bursts, Tangles & Washes*

As I read the book cover to cover, I wanted to write down key elements: wisdom, deep thoughts, insights, and creative anchors for my benefit. I found myself writing almost the entire book over again. Dave Boles’ *4th Floor* appears and vanishes from sight as we will it to. We are the drivers of our reality, unless ...

~ Paul Aponte, author of *Del Cactus*

Dave Boles dedicates his poetry collection, *4th Floor, Paranoia, Depression, And Other States of Mind*, “to those varied souls I shared countless moments with as we traveled together, dodging demons.” Boles probes society’s truth of the human experience, “tell me, what, exactly is normal.” In the poem, “Political Rain,” even the weather results in academic debates and a solipsistic view of natural phenomena. From the private to the public with special consideration to the unknown, these poems just don’t happen but move and grow through the noise of the *world*. These poems engage our awareness to “lift us into “Other States Of Mind,” and draw our attention to matters that should concern all of us.

~ Lara Gularte, Poet Laureate Emerita El Dorado County, CA
author of *Fourth World Woman*

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\$15.95 US

