

MOMENT POEM

Not a moment goes by
Where I don't measure every potential outcome.
This existential maelstrom
hasn't finished rocking my boat
 Until I'm over the side.
These moments came and went but
every one was heaven sent.

A moment just for me.

Something to see and to witness.
The last kiss
 ecstasy; bliss.

Like feeling
 the fresh wind of a new day
On your face

Seeing a new place for the first time
Feeling fine where you are.
Seeing land through all of the haar
 And making landfall
somewhere you've never stepped foot on before.
Something more comes to light
And you fight to reach the shore.

A hundred men have braved the same path.
And stood aghast as they realise
They might not make it through to the new world.

But it always comes back to the same girl.

It always comes back to the same moment.

One I'm so familiar with.

I'll give you all the love I have left and let it glow forever
Until the world is bereft of light.

I've been sad and I've been forsaken
 I'm willing to be corrected if I'm mistaken
And I'm willing to fuck this up a million times
If it means I get this moment right
 just once.

GLASGOW

Glasgow is my city
A river runs through it.
I knew it was home
The first time I was left alone
In its grey expanses
And it's drunken advances
Turned into ritual dances
Taunting me into one of its
Many watering holes.
Full of equally lost and confused souls
All bemused by the news that
This particular dive bar
Was closing at midnight tonight.

It's 11.55 and so far, only two
Have left the bar
Every other soul is drinking up
But looking down thinking up
A way to disappear
And not be noticed by the bar staff.
I laugh wholeheartedly as a tipsy man boldly tries to down a stein as big as I am and fails.
Since when does beer come in steins in Scotland?
I guess when it's Thursday and you've couldn't tell it's a promo they do and this man isn't exactly
the clientele for Kokomo but
Credit where credits due.
He has seen off the last of that beer.

The night lingers in the bar for a split second
Before we're all beckoned outside by the lights of the now very cosmopolitan Sauchiehall Avenue.
What a view.
A gaggle of boys and girls, stumbling down the street
A tangle of tank tops, piri piri sauce and dirty bare feet.
I push through the crowd and lo and behold, there's the Lynx Africa.
Half a cup of rum still in my hand
Like the rocket man himself, I'm still standing.
Although I'm not sure where the law stands on drinking in the road.
Something about drinks being contained?
Clearly one of the many laws I haven't retained.

The blood of mere innocents paints the streets I cross with a red glow.
I see sense briefly and realise it's just pakora sauce.
Home sweet home.

I've always felt like two people in this place.
One who loves being in amongst it and one who just shows face.
Like this city, there's two sides to me
One side tries to be outgoing, fun, good banter
came here not knowing anyone but now
a Weegie through and through, I can gee it laldy with the best of them.
The rest of them don't see the other side.

The other side is quiet, calm but the complete opposite of carefree.
I want to be across the bridge and in the other side of town.
Over here, it's dull and grey.
Each day, I keep my head down.
This town doesn't have street names.
Just lanes of traffic, static
Beeping their horns

Keeping a constant noise
Ever present, never pleasant but still alive.
Still making sound.
It's easy to get lost in this part of town
But much harder to be found.

Over here you have to know what you're looking for.
Be able to describe it.
Corner the sun and bribe it into giving you a rest from the same, monotonous day.
A lot of us say "thank fuck it's Friday" like the weekend
Will be any different to the week.
A meek enthusiasm as you get in the car.
But you're going to have a ball.
Looking forward to the gaff
Only to get there
And realise it's a room of people who can't have a laugh.
And a cunt with a guitar playing wonder-wall.

Forget it all, keep walking the river.
Forgive her and forget that you ever met there.
She doesn't want the same things as you.
You knew all along that the swan song of your love
Would be a swan dive in a boxing glove
Punching the surface tension
You forget to mention that
Your heart doesn't beat in time with hers.
Sirs and madams, welcome to this other side show.
A festival of black lights and latex reflections.
On closer inspection you see it's just a mash of writhing people.
Keep well aware of your surroundings.
And document your findings in a journal
Which surely will show everyone
Just what it means to be alive on this side of the river.
This side is so peaceful but across the black water
You can hear the slaughter that's underway in amongst
The streets.
Numerous defeats later and you've sunk back in your chair.
Unaware that the other side of the water is calling you.
Always.
Black.
Consuming.
Always.

Glasgow is my city.
A river runs through it.

TREES

The year looms like a blisteringly cold winter,
And I'm staring at the ground,
Trying to find a new leaf to turn over.

 The withered trees,
 Their arms a tangled mess,
Their hands in the air as if to say,
 “What now?”.

That gnawing wind ruffles through my feathers.
Through this deep, dull winter
 And has decided to stay.

A crow, stripping every last bone clean.
 Miserable gluttony.

I bloated and the weight kept me grounded.
I want to look up and see the trees
 cheering me on.

 Instead, I keep my head,
Looking down at the ground,
 At all the leaves that didn't make it.

Some days the sun pokes her face through all the blackness,
Like a balaclava-clad thief here to steal
 This sadness away.

 I catch a breath and look up
 And I see the trees.

Naked, bare; stripped clean of those leaves that weighed them down.
 Those mangled arms awaiting new life

 With their skeletal hands,
 Taunting the seasons as if to say,
“What's next?”.

LUST

A shallow whimper followed by a deathgrip.
I want to fuck everyone that has a pulse.
In amongst the maelstrom I sense a potential ripple in my chest.
Primal lust thrusts
at my heart but misses
And something else guards me as she kisses
My cheek so tenderly.
Sparks send me reeling, unfamiliar feeling yet familiar at the same time.

Like a grapevine I didn't hear anything through
She clings and wraps her arms around me.

I see something in her eye
my hand brushes her knee
and hopes it will be what I thought it was.

I can't sense if the suspense is killing me or if it depends on how she's feeling.

Lonely as I am
jacked up on citalopram
I feel feelings for the first time.

Like opening the blinds and letting the light in.

I fight with the sun as it's too bright and then my heart takes over.
It devours all sense of doubt as I figure out that this girl might be the one to heal
my broken bones.

And all those past mistakes, promises that were destined to break, and
thorns that stick in my mind,

Melt away like frost on the window

On a sunny day.

CORNER

Waiting on the corner for drugs
Like a slug sliding down the wall,
Let it all fall down and pick it up
Let rip on the lip of something else,
Find yourself easy to go
And write a poem, easy as
Less pizzazz and more show.
James is his name
And gear is his game
He does it well
The spell doesn't wear off
Leviosa, not leviosar.
So far nothing but fuzzy teeth
A heath, hot with a fire
That's not what you want.
It flicks and it flames but never the same as when
She meant everything to you.
To do it all over would be a sin.
So I settle in and await the barrage of life
On the edge of a knife so thin
My skin just waits for anything
To cut through the din
And show something else beneath
Bequeath all that I am to this person
It worsens over time and I think I'm fine
But James disagrees.
He falls to his knees and arms outstretched to the sky
He wonders why everything comes to a standstill.
I will always feel what you were in my heart
And sit your photo on the window sill
Always looking.
Always asking.
Always will.

CHRISTMAS

It's Christmas time
There's no need to be afraid
Just rip it off like a Band-Aid
20/20 vision now and I can see
Through this fog.
We didn't get snow here this year
And I fear we may not
Instead we just get watch the flowers rot.

Leaving fresh footprints
As I walk up to the house
Would be nice.
Just feeling like I'm somewhere
I haven't been before.
But I've been here
And I know why I fear
Coming home.

The best gift I got this Christmas
Was a thicker skin.
Five minutes in
Through the door
And I can't take much more.
"I think you're an alcoholic", says mum straight away.
Would rather be than have these issues, that by the way,
Are chronic.
"You're looking fat", says my Gran,
As she's sat there, almost buckling a seat.
I feel the heat of the oven, cooking the dinner.
We're onto a winner here, she must think.

My heart sinks.
My gifts include toiletries,
An Amazon Alexa,
And an address book.
Look, I'm all for pleasantries
But an address book?
What was the amount for secret Santa again?
£50?
Sounds to me like there aren't many thoughts to count here.

I'm not bitter and honestly,
I don't really care about the gifts.
They're the worst bit about the festive period.
But she can't be serious when she says
"Who you going to write in there first?".
With the worst impression of sincerity I can muster
I say, "obviously you, Gran".
Trust her not to understand
That a phone does this all
From the palm of your hand.

We sit down to the meal
And I feel relieved
That this perceived discomfort can subside for a while.

I smile as my plate is planted down
Then frown, when I realise my plate is loaded up way higher than everyone else's.
Way to look after your fat son's self esteem.
I get handed leftovers I didn't ask for
Get made to answer questions I abhor.
What for?
So the family can think they're taking care of me.
But they never ask how I'm doing.
They just ask me why I'm not doing x y and z.
It doesn't matter what I've said; I'm never doing enough.

I don't touch a drop of alcohol
All day
Mum looks at me that way that says
"You ok?".
Aye grand mum.
Just trying not to drink my weight in coke and rum,
Be a fitter and less fat fuck grandson,
And for once do something right.

A merry fuck you to all
Now I shall fuck off.
Goodnight.

SEPTEMBER SEVENTH

Trying to explain depression
To someone who has never had it
Is like trying to light fire
In a water soaked hole.
You hunt for an expression
An analogy to describe it
Only to confide in them,
Bare your soul
And be too literal.
A guttural yawp.
A vomit of words you can't stop.
And before you know it
Everyone has seen your skeleton.
Your heart locked in a cage,
Barely beating.
Like a flower waiting to bloom,
Your heart sits in wait,
Blood waiting to boom
Around your body
To your brain.
Not enough oxygen
And again, you sit wondering
If you've just made everyone's hearts start floundering
And worrying.
Scurrying to fill the silence
It's been a while since you
Felt this cast out to sea.
You were just trying to tell them about anxiety.
About you, your thoughts and where your mind goes
But no one knows how to respond.
They grasp on to the speech
But listen from the beach
Where the tide can wash all those negative thoughts away.
They want to hear and listen to what you say
But it makes them too sad.
Don't worry, there's hope in this yet.
You were set on complete isolation.
The destination changed overnight
But you never corrected course
No remorse should be had for speaking the truth.
Aloof you might be but you've bared your soul
And were on a roll.
In a single instant
You connected with all
Those who felt so distant.

They may not understand completely.
They might make comments that seem trivial
But they'd rather you talked openly
Than see you at your burial.
Life is for communication
And no amount of procrastination
Can put off the relief
That comes with the belief
That you've been listened to.
Your family love you,
Your friends are there always.
It doesn't matter how sad you are or how distant you feel.

The reality is that all days feel like this.
It just takes someone to hear you,
For the executioner to miss
And you have one more day at your disposal.

FACIAL RECOGNITION

I was on Facebook the other night
Browsing at home, alone.
Illuminated by my phone like
I was telling a ghost story.
Before we move on, I should explain
That I, with not an ounce of shame,
Was stalking an ex-girlfriend.
I'm on the mend but I heard
She was seeing some guy now
And I, being alone and with easy access to a mobile phone,
Had to know how, no, why she's moved on so soon?
Her relationship status has changed.
There it is.
The stories weren't fabricated.
Clear as day.
"It's complicated".

I'm face to face with her Facebook.
I look her Facebook in it's little digital facial features
And immediately hate her.
I wish this new complicated boy
Would break her heart and teach her a lesson.
She shouldn't have decided to part with me.
I'm complicated. I can be complicated.
I can update my status too.

My eye is drawn to her timeline.
She likes the Cure now?
Well, that's pure gold.
How many times did I tell her about that band?
And how many times did I have to converse with her hand?
Boys don't cry for the fifth time that day.
Well fuck you, Robert Smith.
I'll cry with or without your blessing.
Of all the things messing me up
This one feels tied to the root cause
And is definitely not the cure.

I look at photos of us.
Me and her.
Each one a drunken blur,
A thick haze of smoke, sloppy kisses and us together.
I'm tagged in everyone of them.
Tagged with her
In that moment.

There's a like button, a love button, a little crying emoji
But can someone please
Show me the button
I can click that says "that was the happiest I've ever been".
The little smiley emoji hasn't seen the kind of happiness I've seen.

Not the kind I saw with her.

I click on our little friendship button and it shows our timeline.
Our course through this little history.
I scroll down like I'm flipping back the pages of a calendar

And every date is marked with some memory
Where I fell deeper under her spell.

Facebook has this new thing where it automatically recognises you.
Some sort of slightly creepy, behind the scenes code,
Analyses you
And finds you in places you didn't want to be found.
At some event with a stain on your shirt.
You jumping into a mosh pit and getting really hurt.
Or you in a club, holding two blue WKDs and dancing like a twat in the background.

I found a bunch of photos on my phone.
Of us, that time we decided we weren't going home
And we'd scream into the night until
The sun came and left us alone in a new light.
I upload them, study them, try
To decode them and figure out this riddle.
This middle ground where I stand where I can't feel you.
Nor hold your hand.
And for once, it sinks in.
My brain thinks in melodramatic verse
Nothing can ever surely be worse
Than right now.
I don't want to be free
And I don't want to admit that, without you, I'm still me.
The photos upload and the secret Facebook code that knows who's face is whose
Works it's magic and tags you
In every single photo.

It comes over me, slow, at first
Then like a wave of cold air; an icy burst.
A realisation
That these photos don't bring me distress
But they show progress.
That I've moved on.
That I'm free.

Facebook works it's wonders and recognises your face every time.
But it doesn't recognise me.

COLD

Time doesn't heal wounds
 It plasters over mistakes
 Doomed to repeat the same
lame excuses over and over again.

Refuses to let bygones be bygones
 Sat in long johns
 claiming the cold isn't
 inside your bones.

It begs the question does time ever wait for anyone?

Watch the same sun
 Dip and dive
 Make you feel alive

Bask in the radiance
 This life is gradients

Of happy to sad back to happy and everything between
We've seen time take everything
Take a swing
 don't worry if you're out bowled.

Our time is contained in our soul
Live forever.
 Get through whatever weather

But the end result may still be no.

Where did the last 25 years go?

MONOPOLY

You think you're a loser
So you refuse to play the game
You sit out, ignore the rules
But get played just the same
Every day is a dice roll
But you never pass go
And this banker, who deals in regrets and wishful thinking
Takes everything you own.

OXYGEN

My friends are living memories of how I used to be.
Those carefree days passed by so easily.
Time was just a stranger back then.
To grow up and lose a friend so soon, a piece of me went with him.

A serene scene of muted blues and muddy green
Ripped apart by the wounded red
When you called me from that hospital bed
To tell me how early the Reaper was
You thought he had come for the old woman opposite you
But he was here for you instead.

In the end I know we will see each other again
When every atom has turned to dust
Every mistake we ever made is inconsequential
With no more blame or wasted potential
These torrential tears I cried for you will turn to glass and crash to the floor
And we can start where we left off
I know we will see each other again, in the end.

As this race against time came to a decisive finish
Your will to keep running never did diminish
To marry her, you said when asked to make a wish.
I can still see your hand, that oversized wedding band
And your finger, gripping it so tightly
Making a last stand.

And as your bride's dad gave thanks
They changed your oxygen tanks
Filled our glasses with lemonade and we raised a toast.
The thing eating you wasn't the same thing eating me.
To me it felt like the reaper organised your roast.

JAM

My mum used to crush my painkillers into jam
I didn't like the taste and
Couldn't put on a brave face
So she masked it with something sweet
Not admitting defeat, she'd always find a way
To help me swallow those bitter pills.

My dad had some clippers in the bathroom
I shaved a chunk out of my hair
Couldn't really tell you why
So he cut it all off; a little, pale, white skinhead
He didn't shout at me, instead I learned
That it's ok to need some help sometimes.

The longest hour is only sixty minutes
The darkest day still has some light in it
The blackest night always brings about
A brighter dawn.

So long to the old and tired you
Go home, come back with a clearer point of view
You can't live vicariously through your memory
If you've got one foot in the past
And one foot in the future
You'll just be pissing all over your day
This time I think the sun might stay.

I've been told that I'm now a grown man
I don't take my medication with jam
30 milligram of Citalopram
Wham bam, thank you mam
One night I plan to stand and thank you
For helping me back on to my feet.

