

found

&

lost

poems by
michael r guerin

Books by Michael R. Guerin

- ❖ Ghosts, Flames & Ashes
- ❖ world thru a window
- ❖ mind & machine
- ❖ between black & white
- ❖ still life
- ❖ Nature Speaks: A Lenormand Deck & Guidebook
- ❖ Vincent Speaks: A Healing Oracle Deck

© 2020 by Michael R. Guerin

ALL RIGHTS ARE RESERVED. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, mechanical or electronic, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the author.

ISBN: 979-8676925000

Six Cups Publishing, LLC. Newtown, CT
www.sixcupspublishing.com

Table of Contents

i. found

while i wait	9
in between (once again)	10
talking with rumi	12
woman at the well	14
in the mood	16
grounded	18
like confetti	19
into mud	20
walking with bukowski	22
laid bare	24
east coast road beach	26
vespers (ii)	28
holy of holies	29
waiting to exhale	30
found (and lost?)	32

ii. lost

kiss	37
disappearing	38
flower petals	40
the sweetest note	42
ink dark moon (a reprieve)	44
eclipsed	46
just like gatsby	48
4:27 am	50
haunt me	51
eighty feet per second	52
under the overpass	54
round and around	55
broken (i)	58
little river stillness	60
harvest moon	61
(the problem with) nostalgia	62
basic training	64
i remember (to remember)	66

“Don’t you want to find out if it is possible to live in this world richly, fully, happily, creatively, without the destructive drive of ambition and competition? Don’t you want to know how to live so that your life will not destroy another or cast a shadow across their path?”

– J Krishnamurti

i. found



while i wait

her barefoot steps
kick up dust
along the beachward path
and disappear from view

over windswept dunes
while i wait
on our painted back steps
chipped and faded

from years of use
and neglect
as the sun slowly sets
below the sea's jagged edge.

in between (once again)

on the ghost-white page
we connect in a space
far outside of time.
and through these scribbled lines
plucked from the margins
of my mind
i attempt to build a bridge
across the frozen wastelands
in between.

the full moon bares
her naked soul tonight
spilling out her pale light
across the hard-edged
corners of my room.
slowly words begin to flow
pouring from your heart
through mine
(once again) imploring

me to finally let go
of all the places
still stuck
in between.

talking with rumi

rumi might say that love
is just the other side
of a stone wall
your mind has built

where green fields stretch
out to horizon's edge
and golden flowers bloom
under a summer sun.

or that through the cracks
of a wounded heart
light from your beloved
abundantly burns

removing all shreds of doubt
and words no longer matter
as your world
becomes filled with truth.

or sitting across the room
he might smile
at so many questions
and begin to turn

because some facts unfold
feeling into deepest
feeling as a river flows
through your soul.

woman at the well

“your skin is my skin,” she said.
“your lips are my lips,
your heart, my heart.”
beyond parable and pleasure
those three simple lines
whispered into life
struck a note deep within
setting free
all of my
ancient fears.

a single tear
released from the prison
of her past
spilled down
her unblemished cheek.
unable to reach
her private pain i knelt
on hallowed ground

and prayed for dark clouds
to pass.

in the mood

in a distant city
far from the center of town
an empty coffee shop
opens its windows
to the street.

a string of sad sweet
notes from a lone violin
played full blast
floats atop a scented
spring breeze.

in the mood
for some reprieve
i enter the cozy space
barely big enough
for ten

and finding a back corner

order a cup
filled to the brim —
and taking a sip,
take it all in.

grounded

snow falls.

from flat on my back

specks of gray dance and swirl

in random circles

high overhead as cold earth

seeps into my bones.

each new flake which lands

burns my cheeks

but lost in thought

and stuck in the past

a sudden realization

that no moment

can last.

like confetti

twin maples
on my front lawn

flicker and flame
in morning sunlight.

one by one crimson
leaves shake

and fall from cold
october breezes

which scatter
their tender remains

like so much confetti
littering my lawn.

into mudⁱ

maybe infinity finds it impossible
to take root here
torn between shifting tides
and so much mud —
how every attempt
at a perfect circle falters
and bleeds off
the page
or runs one color
into next blurring their
collective edges.

bounded by that twisted loop
as we inherently
find ourselves to be all ideals
collapse into mud —
and staring over rusted waves
as a summer sun slowly
sets i'm reminded

that truth elusive as night
is impossible to hold
and bleeds off
every page
which vainly strives
to pin it in place.

walking with bukowski

should he and i have met
on some sun-drenched sidewalk
in the city of angels
it's easy to admit
that my younger self
would have better suited
his tastes with my former
predilection for bar stools and beer
and a favorite four letter word
often heard within earshot
of another pointless tirade.

but walking in footsteps
long vanished from unfamiliar streets
bleached beneath cloudless skies
and oppressive heat
it was easy to feel his presence
in the face of the homeless man
one block from highland ave

or the hustlers hawking
tours and souvenirs
to bright-eyed tourists
somehow missing what's real
beating just beneath the tinsel
and paper-thin veneer
holding it all together.

laid bare

you could strip me down

layer by layer

until nothing was left

to hide behind.

but what would be left

to find?

it's not as if my words

never mattered

or anything remained

unsaid. it's not as if i never

laid my cards (whatever

they happened to be)

one by one on a table

of your choosing.

this isn't about "winning"

or "losing."

and what was played

was never just a game

(no matter how it may

have appeared).
so where do we go
from here
once all of our diversions
are finally laid bare?

east coast road beach

behind the bungalow
a path cuts through green
waist-high grass
as rough as a cat's tongue
on bare thighs.

beyond the path
a beach of pure white sand
awaits her footsteps
in the crisp morning air.

a slowly rising tide
breaks and foams beach-
ward flamed by
an orange disc of sun
hung on horizon's edge,

and sitting cross-legged
on cool, wet sand

i shade my eyes —
waiting patiently
for a sign.

vespers (ii)

the sun dips below the faraway hills
while scattered clouds flame into lavenders,
pinks and grays. a flight of swallows overhead
invites me to look heavenward, but lost for
words

i have nothing to offer save the beating of this
heart.

and here beneath these vaulted cathedral
skies

as evening bleeds into day i wish there was
more to say

than a handful of platitudes worn too smooth
from use.

love, but a whispered breath surrendered into
night.

holy of holies

a thousand eyes for you
on any given evening

waiting in the wings
to undress every moment

and desperate for a spark
to illuminate their darkness

or searching for a sign
which hints at something deeper

or craving some connection
just beneath the surface

given in the silence
while naked and afraid.

waiting to exhale

between one heartbeat
and the next
so much which hangs together
by the fragilest of threads
can reach its sudden end —
a late afternoon thunderstorm
chasing sunbathers from the beach
or a daisy's final petal
falling into grass.

heading east to the coast
with all four windows rolled down
the deafening rush
of warm summer air heavy
with the scent of wildflowers
blows through my hair
as a favorite song
plays out
on the radio.

and as mile markers blur past
counting down the clicks
until i finally
reach the rocky shore
there are no other paths
left to follow
as shadows grow long
across the winding
road up ahead.

found (and lost?)

it's bittersweet to survey
the field of one's becoming
with an eye
to what's real and (what could never be?)
reminisce about the past holding
(close) those moments
which slipped from our hands
forever lost into dust and decay —
opportunities missed
or relationships broken
and an ever fractured ego
faced with its own faded reflection.

i'd turn back the hands of time
if given half the chance
but what would emerge from nothingness
when shadows brought to light
finally cross our path?
perhaps goodbye

was always the better option
and (maybe held fast
in that disguise)
the chance for some redemption.

ii. lost



a kiss

all i see is this...

your tears no longer fall —
the sun begins to set —
summer rains have come and gone —
ashes are scattered here.

all i know is this...

a heart beats in my chest —
the sun will kiss your lips —
autumn leaves dance and fall —
the earth receives my steps.

all i want is this...

a fire consumes my soul —
your passion flames my lips —
the seasons come and go —
my heart becomes your home.

disappearing

morning fog
hangs thickly over the road,
its twin yellow lines
faintly painted on pavement
draw me deeper
into mystery.

on either side
shrouded remains of trees
now stripped of leaves

watch silently
as i pass
paying homage to the ghosts
of our collective
past.

each step pulls
me further

from what i've known

and afraid to let go
of hand-me-down notions
i wonder
if a home whimsical
and marvelous
lies somewhere up ahead.

flower petals

beneath starry skies
i wait for you.
it's late and long
past counting

these idle hours
until your presence
might grace
my empty-headed
dreams once again.

for nights beyond
counting i've lain
awake

tossed between
remembered scenes
of a love
too fierce to flame

lost here among
the ruins

like so many fallen
flower petals.

the sweetest note

“do you love me?”

a breath heavy with sleep
whispered into night.
i rolled on my side
and fought back the tangled
webs of dreams
better left unseen.

“can you feel me?”

some nights pass easy
while others seem to harbor
all of our darkest
fears. deep into the witching
hour i pulled the covers
under my chin.

“remember me.”

an unstruck bell always tolls
the sweetest note, hung
on pure possibility.
and as melancholy came
to claim me, a single tear
down my cheek.

ink dark moon (a reprieve)

beneath an ink dark moon
she waited for me
but i was lost
in the depths of sleep

dreaming of a beach
pristine and abandoned
where foaming waves crashed
on the distant shores
of a home only
imagined.

beneath the ink dark moon
i searched for her
but she was lost
to the pages of history

her ashes left scattered
and far out to sea

where foaming waves blur
all the sharp edges
from a life only
imagined.

eclipsed

the light of your moon
has eclipsed my sun
casting all of my thoughts
into doubt.

unable to sleep i prowl
dusty halls hung
with memories and fears
tumbled down

which roll season
into season without count
to where i stand now,
desperate to recall

the light which once
shone so clear
and so true
through you. what's done

is forever undone
dragged along the slow
run of years
without end but unable

to contain these feelings
i take one last
loving look behind,
hoping for a reason.

just like gatsby

sometimes i can still imagine him
standing at the edge
of a west egg dock
peering through the night
and constant fog towards
a distant shore
just across the bay
and the green light
which called his name
yet stood for so much more
pulsing like the beat
of a faithful lover's heart.

transfixed by the spell
of his best laid plans
somehow going to waste,
yet still he strove to capture
what could never be
continuing to believe

that our collective past
can always be erased
right up until the sudden
end awaiting us all
with her name
reduced to a whisper
and hung like a daisy
forever on his lips.

4:27 am

your perfume lingers here
like morning dew
which clings to each blade
of uncut grass
before being burned away
on a summer's day.

from room to room i wander
aimless and lost
as your sweet scent haunts
my every breath.

in the window's glass
my pale reflection stares
blankly past a barren landscape
once filled with grace
which still aches
for your bare footsteps.

haunt me

trees skeletal and severe
in the moonlight
stretch their bony fingers skyward
as if pleading for warmth
or a return of leaves.

their silver bark mirrors
a thousand fleeting
thoughts and dreams of you lying
asleep as your raven hair
cascades around me.

and your breath heavy
with the night
no longer tickles my neck.

but your lingering shadow
haunts my every step.

eighty feet per secondⁱⁱ

maybe von helmholtz got
it wrong when he measured the speed
of nerve conductivity
as eighty feet per second,
at once diminishing that flash
of inspiration or sudden
flush of cheeks
to little more than data points
to be collected, collated
and eventually reduced
to math.

i can't be sure if emily
counted out each footstep
from her front porch
to the home next door
intent on leaving one more note
about an evergreen love
never able to fully bloom

given her singular time and space,
but i'd like to think that eighty
steps was all it took
to close that gap
(however fleetingly) between
another heart and hers
so painfully near
and just down
the garden path.

under the overpass

it's easy to look past them
with feigned oblivion
as they huddle
in the shade
under the scant protection
of tarps and plastic bags
covering over what's left
of their possessions.

it's easy to ignore
the woman washing her hair
beside the drainage ditch
collecting up the remains
of a midnight rain
and still doing her best
to look presentable
as we drive by on our way

for tacos or meetings

or to shoot the breeze
in a roadside cafe
soaking up the latest gossip
and chewing over grand plans
of our own design
while celebrating the magnanimity
of our naked humanity.

we talk of ascension
as if nirvana is self-assured
and our de facto reward
but what will really become
of those huddled masses
who never seemed able to catch
a break — and for us
who looked idly on?

round and aroundⁱⁱⁱ

i followed you from afar
for so long it's hard to fathom
the time anymore. i traced the arc
of your career and marveled
at how well your sweet innocence
remained untouched, unbroken
and perfectly reflected
in the sparkle of eyes
so pure and so deep
that they captured me whole
and wouldn't let go.

you came and you left
with barely a word spoken
and before anyone
could offer their fond farewell
you were off the stage
once again
while round and around

this merry-go-round
we continue to roll
as the notes
of your songs still linger.
and now i'm left behind
to pray and to hope
that your next role
brings more joy than pain
with a profound wish
that our paths
might cross
again one day
in a future
less lost
than found.

broken (i)

some things crack —
glass. a walnut.
your voice.

other “things” get broken —
a heart. the will.
one’s spirit.

just the other side
of this thin hotel wall
a child wails
for his mother to stop
shouting (or start
loving him).

doors slam shut,
rattling my room.
cloaked in darkness
(with nowhere

to go) i feel
lost
through another
broken night.

little river stillness

the soft splash of oars
beating black water
which mirrors blue sky.

dry grasses bend
reverentially in a cool
autumn breeze.

beneath tangled limbs
of towering maple and oak
a few yellowed leaves

cling tenaciously
to a past daily fading

as the banks of little river
receive my silent goodbye.

harvest moon

hot summer afternoons
have long transformed all buds
into bloom.

from my shuttered room
i peek out on a world
of too many voices
and wonder
how it's possible to fit
in and out
all at the same time.

i long for cool autumnal nights
suffused with shadows
and light
where multi-colored trees
reach for the sky
beneath an amber
harvest moon.

(the problem with) nostalgia

i don't really know the blood
that flows in his veins
(though we happen to share
the same last name).
and i can't imagine
his life was ever simple
(despite his constant
claims) as one by one
those who were closest
took their leave
(without fail)
from his home.

some selves don't have it easy
while others seem to make
a mess of it all, yet
remembering back across those years
(like thumbing through stacks
of slightly out-of-focus polaroids

recovered from a shoe-box
forgotten on the hall closet's
upper shelf and confronted
with dusty, frozen smiles
divorced from any useful
context) i can't help
wondering what's next
for him with a memory
long since faded
and pretending it's alright
as his world daily shrinks
to someone else's problem
when there's nothing
left to fix.

basic training

imagine a thin red line
running from eye
through gun-sight
and down the barrel's length
which lands squarely
on an unsuspecting target.

you're told to keep breathing
in slow, long, even
breaths (to prevent
tiny tremors
from altering
your shot).

the trigger squeeze is key
(though "squeeze"
seems a strange word
to use for the act
of discharging

a weapon.

i'd much rather pull my girl
in close by her waist
than grip molded plastic
and death-cold steel)
in one steady motion
so as not to throw off
your aim.

i remember (to remember)

i remember what he said
(not so long ago) that day
when i asked what he felt
as he hung on display for all
to see with so many waiting
for a sign or some proof
of his divinity (or maybe
just filled with naked
curiosity?) — in one swift
motion he took me up
to a towering precipice
and held my bony shoulders
and had me lean over and gaze
down into an endless abyss
which yawned deeper and darker
than any my mind could possibly
glimpse. “this,” he whispered
in my ear. and drunk
from that dizzying height

i nearly fell forward
but his strong hands held
me fast and reassured me
that all would be fine
one day, that all could
be won and lost
and ultimately
forgiven.

i remember the pale blue
clearness of her eyes
(so long ago) as they pierced
right through to the very
heart of me, reading my
soul in ways no one else
ever could. without a word
between us i knew exactly
what she wanted from me,
or needed (if such a word
could ever really apply
to one such as she). and held
by her pleading and penetrating

gaze i steadied my nerves,
readied my pilum and in one
swift motion of will and iron
pierced his side to end
their private pain
while the world
looked on as
he died.

and now i'm left behind —
remembering (to remember).

Acknowledgments

Perhaps it's true that every writer writes for himself or herself first and only secondarily for an audience. That's certainly true with respect to the poems I continue to write down (and share), emerging from someplace deep and dark within me (well, the best ones anyway). Regardless, I've been blessed with a handful of kind and considerate souls who look forward to these poems and are willing to share their feelings and feedback as well. To all of you, here is my heartfelt thank you: Brandon, Julie, Kim, Ken, Sheila, Mark, Kat and Cindy. Your kindness continues to inspire me onward with respect to this "fool's errand."

Credits:

Cover photo by Bess Hamiti from Pexels

Photo on p8 by Tomas Anunziata from Pexels

Photo on p36 by Engin Akyurt from Pexels

Cover design by Angie (pro_ebookcovers) from fiverr.com

About Michael R Guerin

This is (always) the least interesting page for me to write. What words can I offer which might add to what has been shared in these poems?

The simple fact of the matter is that I continue to put thoughts down on paper and share them because I feel compelled to do so. All I can truly say is this... hopefully one or two (or more?) poems moved you, touched you, or caused you to take a closer look at the “world” around you. If that’s the case, then I guess I’ve done my job. But if that isn’t true for you, please accept my humble apology. Chances are the well hasn’t run dry yet and more poems are waiting to emerge from the deep to be shared in the future.

In any event, thank you for taking the time to read through this book. I wish you well.

“To inquire into the art of living there must be a fundamental, unshakeable, immutable honesty, an honesty that is not corruptible, which doesn’t adjust itself to environment, demands or various forms of challenges. It requires great integrity to find out because we are dealing with a very complex problem. It is not easy to live a perfectly orderly life that does not dissipate energy, a life without illusion or tradition.”

— J. Krishnamurti

- i Poem inspired by Aurore Uwase Munyabera's work of art titled "Conflict Resolution."
- ii For Emily Dickinson
- iii For Sridevi