



**ENGLISH
POEMS
AND
WRITINGS**

PAUL TAGNEY

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By Paul Tagney



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Author's Preface

“As a follow-up to my initial published novel, “Family and Love“, this book contains a collection of early and later poems, three articles I wrote for a college newspaper in 1967, a short story written more recently, a descriptive journal of time spent on Vancouver Island in 1971, and an interesting collection of thoughts that have come to mind over recent years.”

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Part One: Poems

The first group of these poems was written between 1964 and 68, and reflects at least partly, the 'hippie' era which we were living in during those years. The poems all focus on thoughts, emotions and experiences I experienced back then. Many of the poems have few or no capital letters in them, which was an influence I got from e.e. cummings, one of many poets whose works I explored back then.

.....

---the bowery 3:a.m.---

old man, you look
so fetal, unprotected,
lying there
in that doorway
upon your regal
cardboard bed.
what mother ever
held you close
and let your
twitching, grasping hand
curl around
her loving fingers?
could she see you
these years later
clothing torn,
breathing heavy,
reeking strongly?
now your gnarled hands
clasp your shoulders
unconsciously,
instinctively,
keeping the cold
from your aging bones.
would she have wept
if she could see you
so unwanted,
curled up in
the unprotective
five-sided doorway,
crate of your destiny,
in which only your thoughts,
in what's left of your mind,
are private?
or did she leave you
some hours old
in some other packing crate
upon some other
nowhere doorstep?

(greenwich village, new york city, november 1964)

.....

solitude

it can be
very relaxing
at times
to just lie
quiet and still,
listening to the telephone
ringing,
ringing,
ringing,
telling the world
that i'm not here...

.....

facing reality

this is not a poem.
it's a fact.
some women
are too beautiful
to ever be conquered.
they just move thru life
like invincible cities,
as I stand
helplessly
outside their bodies
like a Trojan horse
with a glass side.

.....

habit

like cocaine
your body
is a drug
i have become
addicted to.

.....

sentries

do not be afraid
for your clothes
that lie scattered
by the bed
as I make love to you.
my boots
are watching
over them.

.....

alone

isn't anyone else

lonely out there,
lonely for a hand
to be placed
on the back of your neck
and left there,
lonely for five fingers
to mess up your hair
with love,
lonely for someone
to get smashed with
and belong to, lonely for someone
to walk hand-in-hand with
along st. catherine street
on a Friday night?

.....

“song for an old lover”

sometimes now
i see you from afar,
across a street,
a world,
a second,
your face a vacuum,
an arid place
where love has wasted away.
and I can sense your soul,
cold and desolate,
like a deserted shopping center
on a late fall
sunday afternoon.

.....

fertility and rebirth

pretend you are a tree.
your clothes are leaves.
you are in the autumn
of your life.
you let your clothes
fall about you.
the wind takes them away.
you are naked, but not dead.
now begins the most physical,
the most beautiful,
the most intense
period of your life.
it is your time
to cheat death.

.....

“the only rule”

love is a game

that only two can play.
the first one
who says
“i love you”
loses.

.....

“poem”

where do I start?
how can I ever put it all down,
put it all into a poem,
or a novel,
or a word?
all the things that will count forever,
st. catherine street on a sunday afternoon
your hand on my arm
your head on my shoulder
the store windows singing out
as our reflection embraced them.....
our bench in dominion square
where we spent so many
warm summer evenings,
you
and i
and the city.....
your studio flat in old montreal
where we'd stay up all night
painting
or reading poetry
or making love.....
and the cold, cold orange juice
you always brought out in the morning
just after we'd watched the sunrise
just before we went to sleep.....
i guess you can't ever
really put it all down on paper.
even if you wrote forever
there'd always be
something else to say
something more to add.
so I suppose the only
real purpose in writing poetry
is that it enables us
to leave behind a few signposts,
a few token acknowledgements
of what life has meant,
how it has touched us,
how it has made us want
so much to explain,
how it finally makes us realize

that we can never describe it all,
but we'll always go on trying anyway,
trying,
trying,
trying
to say it
like it really was.

.....

“the truth of the matter”

this is for you, darling
because now I know
we never have to happen.
i write this because
it is the closest
i ever want
to come to you.
i will love you purely
while you never escape
from the poems
i write you into.

if you brought me your body
i would say, “I have already seen you
naked in my poems,
and I have loved you before
in the hidden parts of my mind
where desire does not go unfulfilled.”

then you would dress quickly
and go back on the street,
leaving me alone to suffer
yet another penance
of incomplete preliminaries.....

this is the EXCUSE
i always FALL BACK on
whenever I THINK
i have SEEN you.

if YOU READ this BEFORE
the NEXT TIME WE HAPPEN
and you SORT OF UNDERSTAND
what it is ALL ABOUT,
i would ASK YOU TO DEMAND
MY UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER
for i am getting RATHER
BATTLE-SCARRED and WEARY,
AND QUITE, QUITE READY FOR bed.

.....

