

Poetry Series

# Chase Gagnon

## - poems -

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## Chase Gagnon(February 17th,1995)

Chase Gagnon is a poet born in Detroit, Michigan in February of 1995. He was raised within the city and many of its suburbs, spending his childhood moving from "broken home to broken home". His childhood was unstable and often violent,11 of a mentally and physically abusive father. This resulted in a severe depression, which resulted him to being hospitalized after attempting suicide. While admitted in Havenwyck Hospital he discovered his passion for writing, and used it as a creative outlet. He has stated many time that "writing is what saved my life"

In the rather short amount of time since then, he has gained worldwide recognition and praise for his work, receiving multipul honors such as having his poetry reprinted in twice in the annual Red Moon Anthology edited by renowned haiku poet Jim Kacian.

# A Girl Named Angel

In a makeshift boat  
I paddle through her enchanting iris  
trying to reach the black island  
of her soul,  
but the sirens that sing  
of her fear of love  
pull me to the depths  
of crystal green lust.

Chase Gagnon

# A Rhyme For Detroit

I took a walk today  
and listened to the birds  
choking on the smog,  
broke my mother's back  
with every step  
and outran a stray dog.  
I picked you a bouquet  
of dandelions from the field  
because flowers can't grow  
when the sun's always concealed.  
I put them in a vase  
and filled it with water from the tap  
they died within an hour,  
now I know for sure you won't come back.  
I always swore  
I'd never own a broken home  
but it's hard not to when the only one's who stay  
are the garden gnomes —  
but someone's been smashing them  
in the middle of the night,  
or maybe they're blowing out their brains  
to escape my company  
and the blight.  
There's no magic left  
in this city, so chronically gray  
storms are always passing though  
and the rainbows are too scared to stay...  
I wanted to run away with you  
from the hood and past the burbs  
to somewhere where the air is clean  
and filled with singing birds.  
But instead I'm stuck here on this couch,  
microwaving Ramen  
while I search for words.

Chase Gagnon

# A Text I Sent To Another Young Poet

You know, this pain you feel is a blessing because with that pain you create beautiful art... We're cursed for a reason, and that reason is to create beauty. Without pain there would be no art, and the world would be dull and colorless... so in a certain light, the blood that drips from our wrists is the paint that brightens the bleak walls of this world. It's such a special gift to hurt like we do.

Chase Gagnon

# Broken

When I was eight or nine  
I started drinking  
and smacking my pretend wife  
when she came over to play,  
me and my friends in the hood  
would play cops and  
serial killers  
on the dark side streets  
just north of Eight Mile  
where the streetlights never came on  
at night  
where we never went back inside  
to our parents, guardians,  
or single mothers  
who were strung out on meth  
or puking up whiskey  
after another man left.

My dad was always there for me though  
he taught me how to love a woman  
with my fist  
and how to clean up her blood  
after you busted her lip.  
How to throw a bottle  
through the window  
then board it up  
before the landlord started bitching.

But I don't know how to shave  
change a tire  
or what the difference is between a flathead  
and a phillips  
or even how to use a damn screwdriver  
or wrench...  
so tell me,  
how am I supposed to fix myself  
when I cant fix anything else?



# Cursed With Wonder

Last night while crossing a field  
I parted the silk canopy of moonlight  
and stepped into a bed of wild flowers.  
They sang me lullabies in the cool Language of darkness;  
the wind was their voice.  
I laid my head near their whispers  
and their shadows engraved my body  
with hieroglyphic patterns.  
This field was their ancient kingdom  
and I was a trespasser  
forever cursed with wonder  
by lilies that closed  
when I awoke,  
trapping me inside their spell.

Chase Gagnon



# Devil's Night

I warm my hands with a lighter in the chill of late October, after burning fallen leaves and scattering their ashes onto a sea of broken asphalt. I have nowhere to go, and I almost hope they find me out here after the curfew and take me away to somewhere warm. It's unseasonably cold, and snowflakes dot my black hoodie giving it the appearance of a universe of stars building on my hunched body. The glow of this burning city drowns out the real stars, and I don't know if I believe in them anymore. What proof do I have?

I can feel myself shaking, and it gets worse the harder I try to stop it. I hear sirens over the charred rooftops that are the remnants of this twisted holiday. But I guess I'm an arsonist too, burning myself with cigarette butts just to feel something. I think this city feels nothing too, so maybe that's why they used to burn it on this night. F\*\*k the police, I'll burn my skin all I want until it peels, or until I'm picked up and locked away for the night. But once they see these fresh cigarette burns they'll probably take me back to the psyche ward instead. I'm totally aware that I'm not very sane, or does knowing that make me sane?

How long can I hold my hand over this flame? I can't last more than three seconds, so how am I supposed to satisfy this aroused urge to make myself hurt? Is this how I'll live the rest of my life, sitting on the curb and listening to sirens and pretending they're the cries of a banshee? Devil's Night is the best night to hear sirens... But Detroit isn't dying anymore. They just leveled Cass Corridor and are building upscale apartments and a stadium on that scarred ground near midtown. Eventually my house will be leveled too, probably after being burned. My ghost will be lost in a strange maze of luxury built on the ground where so many bled to death. What am I supposed to haunt when everything I know is gone? Maybe what they say is true, that sins are purified by the flame. Maybe I can heal too.

The metal on my lighter got hot while I was thinking. And when I tried to resurrect that little flame from its silver crypt, I burned my thumb and dropped it to the cold cement.

\*\*\*

NOTE: Devil's Night is a name associated with October 30, the night before Halloween. It is related to the 'Mischief night' practiced in other parts of the

United States and the world, but is chiefly associated with the serious vandalism and arson seen in Detroit, Michigan.

Note copied from Wikipedia.

Chase Gagnon

# Don'T You Dare

Don't you dare pull me  
from the wreckage of my life  
when I lose my high  
and fall from the sky.  
don't even put out the flames,  
I want people to see them  
from miles away.  
I want the explosion to shake  
a thousand cities  
and wake the children  
from their nightmares of monsters  
to a reality that drove millions  
to suicide.

I want want the debris of my thoughts to scatter  
and shatter windows nearby.  
And when it's all said and done  
I want the land to be scared forever  
and cursed with my madness.  
I want kids daring each other  
to walk up to the spot  
where I fell from sanity and tore up the field  
they now fear.

Don't mourn me  
for I will not be gone,  
I'll be hiding behind the flames laughing  
at all the different parts of me  
killed by the impact  
of whatever drug or drink  
has rotted out my mind  
to the point of brainless bliss.

So don't you dare pull me  
from the wreckage of my life  
when I lose my high  
and fall from the sky,  
because I want to enjoy being charred  
of every brain cell

and every agonizing thought,  
until I'm finally crushed  
by the settling debris.

Chase Gagnon

# Genius Heart

I cant thank you enough  
for bringing the color back into my life —  
you painted a beautiful picture  
on a canvas that's been empty for so long  
that was sitting in the back of an art store  
being passed over  
by artist after artist.  
But you picked me from the dark shelf  
and brushed stunning images  
onto the fabric of my soul  
just waiting to absorb your love.  
Your colors are so vivid  
and surreal  
your brush is soft  
and your strokes are light and wispy.  
I never want this painting to be finished  
I want you to keep me in your studio forever  
by the window full of stars  
that overlooks the city that craves  
your genius heart.

Chase Gagnon

# Hallucinating Hell

I miss the smell of the marijuana on your breath as we laughed at the world in the darkness of our filthy apartment. I used to hate the way it smelled, but I've been craving the contact high of your kiss. It's hard to believe that you're not breathing anymore, and your chest is motionless in the morgue. I refuse to believe that your lips are cold, and that you're lying naked without me there to touch you. Why would you leave me here alone? You were the only thing I had but I had everything in you. I found a strand of your hair on the pillow soaked in your nightmares, and then looked around our room hopelessly for your ghost. I don't know why I haven't cried... I guess there are just some things tears can never wash away, and I know you're one of 'em.

I see the bottle of pills sitting on the nightstand. You placed them back so neatly before you drifted off, leaving only two in the clear orange container that glows like a grinning jack-o-lantern under the lamplight in an otherwise dark room. Two isn't enough to kill me, but maybe I could get a decent buzz and visit you in a hallucination of hell, where you sit before the devil's throne sucking his red \*\*\*\*. I'll vanquish him with the light of our love and take his throne, then get a boner for your lips that are warm again. We'll reside here forever and never get another eviction notice until the end of days, when we'll spiral into a never-ending darkness with the demons who scream almost as loud as you when I caress your \*\*\*\* in a world where sinners are saints.

There is of course, the possibility that none of that bull\*\*\*\* is real... and that you're nothing now, just a body that I should steal before it turns to bones. The smell of your rotting flesh would be a lovely perfume as you lay in bed with me, sleeping beautifully in a trance nothing can break. When my prescription is refilled I'll take the whole bottle too... I'll die cuddling your bones then rot away with the warmth of love in my arms on our semen-stained mattress. No one will find us once the sun sets, and the world joins us in our numb darkness that is a dreamless sleep in each other's arms.

Chase Gagnon

# Heirloom

After your death  
I'm rummaging through the drawers  
for your bottle of Vicodin  
hoping your ghost  
isn't watching.

Why can I never stay clean?  
Is it because I'm weak?  
I see myself like your husband  
in 20 years  
a tired young drunk  
sick of feeling old,  
who died before his grandchildren  
were even born.

I hear footsteps in the kitchen  
and wonder if it's you  
hiding them from me —  
but I hear lots of things  
when the floor beneath me  
crumbles  
and I'm left dangling  
from my barbed sanity  
with bloody hands.

I swore I'd keep it locked away,  
this heirloom of addiction,  
but right now I need to hold it  
and feel it  
because I miss you  
and I'm not strong enough to accept the fact  
that you're gone  
just yet.

So far this is the only moment  
I've told myself you're not here,  
when I find and swallow the last  
three pills  
that couldn't stop your pain,

then wash them down with gin  
that wasn't enough  
to stop mine.

Chase Gagnon



# I Saw Jesus

I saw Jesus  
on the corner of Lafayette and Chrysler  
begging for change,  
beard and all.  
He didn't judge me  
all those days I passed by  
without a penny to give,  
maybe because his eyes were fixed to the sky  
scrapers that reached toward the kingdom  
even he is beginning to doubt.

He used to hold cardboard signs  
that read THE END IS NEAR!  
like countless others on the corners,  
except he was different...  
he said that the end  
is in five billion years, which is soon  
to him and in the whole scheme of the universe.  
But everyone passes without even donating a glance  
on their way to work, the bus, or even church.

The Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church is  
just across the freeway,  
sitting there with such a specific name  
with such a specific group of people  
who might be right  
but probably aren't.  
I've never seen Jesus walk in there.  
'Matter of fact, I've only seen him walk once  
across a puddle  
that shone bright in the rainbow lights of Greektown  
and the moon.

I should probably clear something up  
I'm not talking about the son of God  
just a Hispanic man named Jesús (or, hey-zues)  
or at least that's what the tag on his dirty work shirt says.  
But I wouldn't doubt if he is divine  
not one bit.

He is a prophet  
of the god(s) no one will ever understand,  
who sleeps clenching cardboard scriptures  
backed by pure science  
which should coexist with our supernatural souls  
housed in meager flesh that's only purpose is to rot.

Or maybe that's just my interpretation of his signs.

Chase Gagnon

# I Will Be

In 200 years  
everyone alive today  
will be dead.  
The enemies who tore me down  
will be frail bones,  
the whores who left  
before I could wake up to love them  
will be unable to move...  
But I, I will be a ghost  
a vague memory  
a whiff of 11 perfume  
floating through the pages  
of forgotten books,  
the sound of a keyboard  
being struck in the night  
while a few citizens of that strange new world  
lie awake in fear  
of the poltergeistic rhythm  
that my words will refuse to stop playing  
on a stage before millions, or in an attic  
with no one.  
Tonight I'm typing  
a million miles per hour  
and this energy  
can never be destroyed  
despite whatever lies after the day that the lighting  
in my fingers finally burns up, and they are folded  
around a rosary  
in a casket  
before a funeral of grieving family and friends  
  
or a funeral of no one.

Chase Gagnon

# Immortal Wonder

When I was young  
I found the urn  
of a fairy in the woods—  
an empty beer bottle  
filled with flakes of dew  
and morning moonlight.  
I knelt  
and prayed for her  
to become a sylph  
then watched the sun  
ascend her sprinkled body  
into the sky.

Now years later  
the wind  
still slants this gentle rain  
towards my wrinkled face.

Chase Gagnon

# In Iowa

I have a garden  
with nothing but barbed wire  
and dandelions  
where ceramic gnomes  
lose their color  
in the heat of summer.

But come dusk  
the fireflies bring their pulse  
to the flat line  
of this farm town's horizon  
in thunder  
and those gnomes  
become lost in the darkness.

I like to tell myself  
they're out wandering the fields  
trapping fireflies in their tiny palms  
to crush them  
and rub the glow beneath their eyes  
like warpaint—  
screaming into the night  
behind the sound of the passing  
freight train,  
as they sacrifice their virgins  
to the rails.

Chase Gagnon

# I've Seen Death

I've seen Death — his shadow woke me  
as he walked through the alley by my house  
on his way to the gas station for a pack of smokes  
and my neighbor who was bleeding out  
beside the pump.

I watched him light up, and fill his black van  
with enough fuel to get Mark to wherever he was going.  
Death didn't hide his face from the cold  
he was pale with a shaved head and a black goatee  
and tattoos that climbed up his neck like ivy  
on the walls on an ancient castle.  
He never exhaled the smoke from the cigarette  
that warmed the frozen air  
as Mark's blood melted the snow, then froze to the cement  
when Death crushed the ember out in his stone-white palm.  
He asked him what just happened, as he helped his soul up  
from out his breathless body...  
I never heard his answer.

I was just a kid, and at first I thought that sound  
was firecrackers for new years....  
until I heard the sirens in the distance  
then watched his blood soak through the white sheet  
and rise to the starry surface of my young mind  
to attract sharks  
who were sleeping in the depths of my soul.

I watched them take his body away in an ambulance  
that pulled away without sirens  
dissolving into the snow while the world still dreamed  
visions of dancing sugar plums.

Chase Gagnon

# Listening For Nightmares

I wandered the streets with her  
at all hours, whispering dark philosophies  
while walking our black cat  
that would only purr  
in the darkness.  
Only the stars haunted  
that old town on the lake  
that slept as we roamed the unlit roads  
through the perfume mist of their dreams.  
The scent was so vulnerable  
like it was worn by young girls  
walking thoughtlessly  
through back alleys  
webbed in old shadows—  
we would hide in those shadows  
like spiders and wait  
for the dreamers to tangle with fear  
in their sheets.  
We fed on their screams  
still alive in the web  
then left their husks there  
for the sun to behead.

Chase Gagnon

# Love Trip

Inhaling your breath  
against my lips  
gets me high.  
Love this potent  
should be illegal,  
it feels so bad...  
like someone sold me your heart  
in a little plastic bag  
from the pocket of their hoodie  
in the cover of night.

I lit it on fire  
and breathed in  
every panted wisp  
of smoke  
pushed up from your burning core.  
I bet distant cities can see  
our flames on the horizon,  
and the citizens are rushing to church  
to kneel before God  
and pray to be spared  
from the glowing apocalypse  
crawling towards them  
on it's knees  
with dangling breasts.

What a beautiful way to die...  
but the world has already ended to me  
a thousand times  
because nothing matters  
in this moment but you.  
However, I think I can hear their screams  
beneath yours,  
as the climax of Armageddon firestorms  
falls from the angry heavens  
that generously matched our souls  
despite being so tainted  
with sin.





# More Than Just Words

-For Allen Ginsberg-

Sing me to sleep Allen  
with your father death blues.  
I've cradled myself in your voice  
which is a beautiful ghost  
haunting the darkest hallways of my mind.  
I think I'm bi for you,  
or maybe you're just my best friend tonight  
regardless, I love you.  
I want to fall asleep on top of your grave  
under the starless New Jersey sky  
with my head on the grass listening for a whisper  
from your gorgeous, empty skull.  
You are the codeine to my muse  
and the bearded saint in the stained glass cathedral  
of my holy mind...  
I'm an innocent alter boy there  
and I want you to be the priest.

Today was a terrible day  
so please lay with me while I read your book.  
I smell you in the pages  
and picture my head resting on your hairy chest.  
Your awakening poems are my bedtime story —  
I imagine you reading them to me, naked,  
and spooning my thigh as smoke curls from your mouth...  
I'm so shy.

I wonder if you can hear me when I talk to you  
I know I'm not just talking to the sky.  
Your lullaby of lucid literature is too surreal  
for this not to be real.  
I feel you burning inside me tonight...

Chase Gagnon

# My Field Of Wildflowers

You're my stillborn butterfly  
afraid of your beauty  
with limp wings —  
pried from the safety of your cocoon  
by my old hands  
in a forest where everything  
is charred.

Only the skeletons of trees  
once lush with life and birdsongs  
can admire your strange elegance  
as you lay listless on their roots  
that thirst for a storm of passing love  
and thunder.

I want to carry you away  
to my field of wildflowers  
and resurrect you with the unfiltered glow  
of the shy moon, who only shows its face  
in this meadow of lies.

I'll watch the breeze wake you on my fingertips  
then let you fly away, carelessly  
into a world of color  
I'll never compare to.

Chase Gagnon

# My First Pet

I watched his gold scales shimmer  
in the faint glow of my nightlight...  
I was so scared of the dark  
so I pulled him gently from the water  
and watched him dance in my hands.

He looked so happy,  
and I knew he'd keep me safe  
from all the ghosts who were peeking in from the hallway.  
I laid him on my pillow, right next to me,  
and watched him breathe slowly.

Now his eyes were glowing  
under the milky way of plastic stars  
that shone down from the plaster heavens  
of my ceiling.  
He started breathing real heavy,  
I knew he 'musta been scared of the dark too  
so I read him a bedtime story  
and petted him through every word.

It took him a while to fall asleep  
but once he did I gave him a goodnight kiss  
and pulled the blanket over my head.

No ghosts or icky dead things will get us now Swimmy...

Chase Gagnon

# Nineteen And Lost

It's morning and still dark  
the world is a world away, dreaming  
and the smell of last night's rain lingers  
like a ghost, trying to tell me something  
but I'm not a believer.  
I haven't dreamed in years  
and I think I might be hungover.  
This is too real,  
I woke up on the floor  
and stared into the darkness under my bed  
where the monsters once lurked,  
they were slayed by the sword of depression  
some time ago,  
when I stopped caring if they would get me.  
Now the only thing under this bed  
are my demons  
empty liquor bottles, cigarette butts,  
and used condoms —  
and they don't even scare me anymore.

Chase Gagnon

# Our Kingdom Inside A Casket

Where have you gone my love, and why are you breathing? You said you felt dead in my arms but I know you've been reincarnated in his. I want you to be under the ground with me, cuddling in a lightless box wondering how the world outside is changing. I wanted to spiral into an unsavable depression with you. I wanted to build our own world, our own little afterlife six feet under the dirt of that depression... It wouldn't have been much, but it would've been our kingdom inside a casket where we would lay cuddling in tears, picking which worms to let inside our bodies and which ones to condemn. We would've been gods, sitting together on a throne no one else could see.

I wanted to be reclusive with you, never surfacing as our skin peels away with holes from dirty needles. We would've been skeletons living off the invisible government, the new American dream! Was my apartment not a cozy enough coffin for you to spend eternity? Or was it the smell of those rotting cats in the garbage bag I kept in the closet to accompany us into the next life? I promise you, if you step one foot on my grave I'll reach up from the dirt and drag you down with me, into a plot so deep that no medication could ever pull you back towards the sun. I wanted you to be my crying queen, I wanted you to grow pale as me in my lightless world hazed by sage and cannabis incense. You would've been everything to me, not because I loved you but because depression is no fun when you're in it alone — and you're the only one I thought I could drag with me. I'm rotting away, and soon gravediggers will find me in this stuffy apartment, lifeless with the needle still in my arm as you walk down the aisle to wedding bells under a setting sun.

Chase Gagnon

# Periwinkle

If suffering  
had a color...  
it would be periwinkle,  
because purple sounds  
far too real.

Chase Gagnon

# Residual Love

I can't write about you. I'm not sure why. Maybe it's because you're more than a memory to me, and I can still hear the ghost of your love moaning in this little corner of my mind. It excites me, and scares me at the same time because I know it's a residual haunting, and your actual love has flown away to the great beyond into someone else's arms. But what you did while you were here marked the land of my soul forever, and that part of you will never leave. My emotions and hopes flood to this spot of my heart like tourists, hoping to catch a glimpse or a kiss from your beautiful apparition.

I wish I could write you a sonnet, with all the frills and delicate rhymes so I could fold it up and place it on the grave I thought I had buried you in, and put an end to this haunting. But I can't. I've become too hard and I can't put a leash on my emotions. Nothing I ever write will be good enough to get rid of you. I could scorch the land of my mind with gallons of absinthe and light it all on fire with a thousand burning blunts flicked from my fingers, then lay down to shield myself from this mental explosion... only to look up, minutes after the blow and see you wandering between the flames, pushing them aside gently like silk curtains warm with the sun.

I'll probably ask myself "where am I? " and "who is that beautiful woman? ". I'd have no knowledge left of fire, and as I'd go to wrap my arms around your soulless impression from behind... I'd hug nothing but the flames and the smoke exuding from my mind, then fall to the ground and suffocate under the ash that once made up everything I am — my soul and heart and mind that will collapse under the weightless footsteps of a beautiful memory.

But unlike you I'd actually be a ghost, Not a metaphor for one, as you're off in the real world loving and breathing. The world that I haven't set foot in since you left. I can't step back out there, I'm not sure why.

Chase Gagnon



# Self Medicated

I swallow the anti depressant  
with a big swig of wine,  
the one that's bottle warns  
"do not drink alcoholic beverages  
while taking this medication"  
But after a few glasses  
the wine bottle begins to say  
"do not swallow anti depressants  
while drinking this medication"  
I start laugh, hysterically at my own humor  
then shove my fingers down my throat  
and puke up  
what I hope is the pill,  
and continue laughing  
not because I remember the joke  
but because my puke is shaped like Texas.  
Then I remember a girl I dated  
who lived in Texas  
the one who got away,  
so I drink a few more glasses  
until I throw up some more  
and the Texas looks like Alaska  
or the pacific ocean

Chase Gagnon

# So Bad

How did I get so cold?  
I'm not even old but I might as well be,  
I'm on more pills than my grandma  
just so I can fall asleep  
then wake up dreamless from an afterlife  
of darkness, in gray dawn rain.

I've lost my g\*ddamn mind  
somewhere in my messy skull  
furnished with only a bed and a desk  
where I sit naked digging through piles of clothes  
looking for unwritten poems.

life's a b\*tch... my bit\*h  
I tongued her inverted nipple then chewed on it when it showed  
as she moaned with pain —  
or maybe it was a secret pleasure  
so secret that life herself wouldn't even tell me  
but begged for it  
because she's been so bad...  
so bad  
that my wrists are still bleeding  
with what she calls love.

Chase Gagnon

# Solitary Confinement

I stare off the overpass  
through the fence  
into the empty freeway;  
the dark cement  
that's lava if I jump.  
I'm still a teen  
and they say this is normal  
but I remember walking over this freeway with my mom  
when I was nine  
before I even knew what suicide was  
and thinking the same thing.  
I barely understood death  
but the idea of escaping  
sounded nice.  
I schemed to break out of this world  
that doesn't even care if I leave  
by climbing a fence  
beneath the blind searchlight  
of the moon.

But I wouldn't survive out there  
in heaven, limbo, or even  
nothing...  
I have no friends waiting for me outside  
they're all in Hell  
and they wouldn't let me stay with them anyways.  
I'd starve out there,  
at least they feed me shit here.  
I'll just do my time  
and repent for what I must've done  
in some other life.

I just skim my hand across the fence  
and listen to it rattle  
while I walk home to lock myself away  
in my filthy room.

Chase Gagnon

# Speech Of The Underworld Laureate

I want to be nothing but bones, a skeleton with a wardrobe of tattered and tattooed skin, picked out from the morgue in the night like a resale shop for life. I want to walk the streets dragging a dead dog on a metal leash while I bark my favorite obscenities to the moon.

I want to be one of them, a creature only visible in the night or in nightmares. A person who a little girl would see from the backseat window with dreary eyes on her way home from Disney World, while awoken by the dull glow of a strange city – someone who'd haunt the hallways of the magic kingdom in her dreams and dangle her innocence over the balcony where her Prince Charming jumped to his death after being raped by Jeffrey Dahmer in a mouse costume.

I want to die in an alley with a needle in my vein and a hooker's face in my crotch, after ejaculating my brilliant ghost all the way up to its throne of rooftops that crown the abandoned highrises that ooze darkness from their windows. I want to find Shakespeare's spirit in the afterlife and call him a pussy. I want people to read my poetry and vomit, and teachers to hide my books from their students. I want to bitch slap Billy Collins with the hand of the underworld laureate, then sip absinthe mixed with lighter fluid from a teacup and ask him what he thinks this poem means.

Chase Gagnon

# Still Unanswered

As dawn climbs  
up the flat horizon of  
a sunflower  
my dreams fan their petals  
and I pluck them in the wind,  
asking if  
I love myself.

Chase Gagnon

# Summer Love

I love when you touch me under the moon, tracing the acne scars on my face and telling me they're beautiful. They're the only thing I have left from my childhood, and they're fading. You point out the first firefly, orbiting the warm world of our sleeping bag like a tiny moon, waning and waxing every few seconds. Time goes by so fast with you. The tides of your eyes are pulled away from me by the wonder of the pulsing satellite that is for some reason drawn to us. In our world within a world, I like to think we're ancient nomads just opening our eyes to an existence we know nothing of. We're speaking elegantly in a primitive language, the caresses of our entwined bodies that we have yet to discover — but we have all summer.

a shooting star  
disappears behind  
the dark horizon...  
I'm no longer afraid  
to fall

Chase Gagnon

# Tattoos And Barbed Wire

When I showed you my body  
I put down my hair for you  
removed the piercings  
and let the studded bracelets drop  
to the floor...  
You, the only one to ever see me naked  
of both my clothing and my walls  
saw Stephen  
and realized that Chase wasn't nearly as strong  
as he looked.  
You saw the slashing patterns in the scars  
that I told you were from fights,  
and you realized they were only from fights  
with tired old demons...  
you saw how my pale skin looks strange  
and unnatural without the counterweight of darkness  
achieved so easily with black shirts and bandannas.  
I was your other half  
your yin yang symbol  
that disappeared  
behind the white backdrop of the world  
when the dark parts of me left –  
I don't exist to you anymore,  
and I don't think I care.

I have trouble sleeping now  
not because I miss you  
but because I don't wash my mohawk out anymore,  
and it's hard to lay comfortably  
with that row of hard black spikes  
glued up six inches  
from my pale scalp  
like barbed wire around my prettiest dreams and thoughts  
preventing them from ever escaping  
again.

Chase Gagnon

# Terrible Tenants

My demons have been living in my mind  
rent free, for years now...  
I'm too scared to evict them  
so I just pretend like they're not there.  
Even when they're stomping the floor  
to heavy metal music  
having orgies with angels  
who suffer burns from their flames,  
through all of it I just sit here  
with a cup of coffee and a book  
while they shake the plaster ceiling  
of my sanity.  
I haven't slept in days  
I'm angry, guilty, drunk, and tired  
and they're up laughing about  
all the things they're getting away with.

Chase Gagnon



# The Drug In Me

In the piss test  
they found traces of  
you -  
the substance that got me put away  
in this florescent hell.  
I thought you were out of my system  
but I guess not  
maybe that's why they think I'm  
crazy  
when actually you're the one who's  
insane, with euphoric qualities  
that were killing me.  
Your eyes shined like crystal sheets  
under the ghetto moon  
and tempted me to inhale the madness  
exuding from your gaze  
that lulled me into bed...  
but I burned the mattress in an alley  
still high from your empty love  
while screaming to the stars that were hidden  
in smog.  
I fell to my knees  
ready to send the universe  
a resignation prayer...  
but woke up here  
probably miles and miles  
away from you.  
I know this because the sky outside my window  
is full of stars  
and I don't feel like killing myself.

Chase Gagnon

# The First Time I Saw You In A Dress

I touch your face in the casket  
and feel the bone just below.  
Soon you'll be a skeleton in a blue dress  
and the smile I loved since birth  
will peek at me between the aisles  
of Wal-Mart around Halloween.

It will be your new face, come October  
I'm not sure how long it takes  
but once I close the lid  
you'll never be the same.

I shouldn't have come  
because this is how I'll picture you now  
and it doesn't even look like you.  
I'm asking you to haunt me, like you promised.  
You said when you die I'll feel you in the breeze  
but it's March  
and the wind is cold.

Chase Gagnon

# Untitled Senryu

safe in a box  
the christmas bulbs  
from our shattered family

Chase Gagnon

# We'Re All Equal

We're all equal in the eyes of the reaper  
from the wild dreamers to the never-sleepers  
once we're pulled up on his hook, we're all keepers.  
He'll mount our souls in his rustic cabin  
that sits beside the lake of fire  
then dangle a line over our watery world  
baited with light on a scythe of desire.  
I only love darkness, so I'll live forever  
I'm not game for his tackle... I'm sunken treasure  
dropped from the deck of sanity  
when the captain's head was severed.

I'll never be found, at these depths of despair  
I'll remain a legend he can only dream of catching  
as he stares out over earth with celestial winds in his hair.

Chase Gagnon

# What I Want To Be When I Grow Up

I wanna be a poet when I grow up, Mrs. Evans  
I want my past to terrorize me in my sleep  
and die wif a needle in my vein.  
I want ta be poor and impoverished  
like third world childrens  
and fall asleep ta the sound of bombs  
in my tin hut castle.  
I want whiskey tooo rot my mind away  
but lift me to brilliance first.  
I want one night stands full of screams  
and warts that only hurt  
in the handsome doctor's latex grip.

I want ta grow a beard like daddy had  
before he hung himself in the garage  
and sit on corners begging  
for peoples tooo read my book.  
I wanna feel the shadow of death  
and write about how he terrifies me  
becauss mommy will be dead,  
and unable scare him away.

I want to be a poet becuz  
gram-grams read me Ginsberg before bed  
and called me her little beatnik,  
I cant wait too be a poet  
and get famouser when I'm dead!

Chase Gagnon

# What's Mine Is Yours

The moon is following me wherever I go, hunting me down like a jealous lover bent on revenge. Her porcelain eye has completely opened to my lies, and the lids brushed with a sexy perpetual darkness have rolled back into her skull. I run through the woods, hiding behind ancient trees to breathe in the cool darkness who keeps me safe; I just pray she, this darkness, doesn't find out about my affair with the moon. It was a moment of weakness and curiosity; I've known nothing but darkness for all of my existence and now I am certain I want to make her my queen.

I dig a shallow grave and lay in it, to hide from this terrible light and be alone with my one true love. I pull in dirt over us like a blanket, leaving claw marks on the sun-bleached earth above us 'we're all alone now baby, and you'll never leave me... not even when the sun returns'. This is our kingdom now, where my pale flesh will rot away, and she'll fill every socket of my skeleton with her sweet essence. We'll truly become one.

'what's mine is yours, my love...'

Chase Gagnon

# When I Return To The Earth

When I return to the earth  
I'll let the fairies play hide and seek  
with my bones  
in hopes that they'll hollow  
my phalanges into little flutes,  
so music can flow  
from the tips of my fingers  
that crafted countless poems.

Chase Gagnon

# Why Did The Chicken Cross The Road?

Because the chicken was walking home from work, dreading the fact that he would have to tell his wife and baby chicks that he had just lost his job, and the traffic zooming by looked like the best escape there was. So, he boldly set one little chicken foot on the hot black asphalt, closed his eyes and raised his beak, and trotted on out, preparing for death. But to his surprise, he made it the whole way across the interstate without getting hit. So in amazement, he fluffed his feathers and looked up to the clouds, with a tear in his little eye and said 'God, you must want me here for a –' but before he could finish his sentence, a homeless man grabbed him by his neck, and choked him until the last bit of life escaped his eyes, and took him back home to his box in the alley and fed his children who haven't eaten in days.

Chase Gagnon



# Winter Burial

While running my hand  
across your casket,  
I leave fingerprints  
on the polished wood  
that will be lowered with you  
into six feet of obscurity,  
telling no one, only the darkness,  
that I cared enough for you  
to watch your unbearable descent  
in to peace  
while the January wind  
further numbed my core.

I have nothing  
so these are the only things  
I was able to leave you with,  
but at least I know  
no one will ever wipe them  
from the cherry oak surface  
that even my tears slid from  
so easily when I cried...  
But my hand  
the hand that felt the last twitches of life  
in your fingers  
and squeezed them until the warmth escaped  
has left such delicate mementos  
that will never wither  
with the expensive bouquets  
and flowery wreaths.

Chase Gagnon

# Writer's Block

Tonight  
my muse's fetus  
has died in the womb of my mind  
so I push its unformed body  
from the glistening tip  
of my favorite pen  
and cradle its corpse of meaningless  
stanzas, until I cry.

Chase Gagnon