

Poetry Series

Jeffrey SpahrSummers
- poems -

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Jeffrey SpahrSummers(01/26/60)

Jeff publishes his poetry and photographs on a regular basis.

Please go to these sites for more information...

After The Rain

We sit alone across the table
Unable to account for the storm
Driving through our lives like tourists
Slowing to point at the sight of us

Jeffrey SpahrSummers

All Things

That we are given
Are not ours to keep
All we get is the moment
A minnow of time to borrow
And soak up sunshine days
Birdsong gifts of stormy winds
And the thunder in our hearts

Having felt the wonder of irony
And reflected hard on my life
I say let the tears fall like raindrops
Drenching the soul cleansing
That awful sad gasp of growth
And pain each and every day

Jeffrey SpahrSummers

Cigarette Break

I stand outside with two tourists
They are watching me smoke
As I inhale and hold the smoke
Deep in my lungs with purpose
One talks about Amish carriages
Back home in Pennsylvania he
Asks have you ever seen them?
Damn things get nailed by cars
Every now and then he drawls
Yep all black... nothing but black
And his brother nods in agreement
Sometimes they get drunk and pass
Out and the horses know the way
Home but they don't know to stop
For traffic lights and WHAM the
Brother smacks his fist in his hand
I can tell they are brothers they
Have the same peppered beards
The same blue eyes of conviction
The same ironic believing smiles

Jeffrey SpahrSummers

Courage

It takes courage to admit defeat
to lay the weapons down
to declare oneself unarmed
before anyone else gets hurt
it takes courage to succumb
to ones fear to overcome it
to surrender to the frankness
of the unknown you know don't
want to be held prisoner exactly
perhaps someone will just kill me
then it won't really matter anymore

2005

Jeffrey SpahrSummers

Designated Driver

i am tempted to say
oh hesitant waitress
yes they are sisters
take their orders and
humor these women
who cackle and cuss
clinking their glasses
while we wait for juicy
filets potatoes salads
and bread and butter

Jeffrey SpahrSummers

Do Not Disturb

The discretionary sign
hung from the doorknob
of the door to the room
in dallas in a holiday inn
untouched by your hand
for three long dog days
it waved to the house-
keepers like a wind sock
come clean another day
buy me time to neatly lay
plastic in the bathroom
compose a goodbye note
load the pistol with only
one bullet or reconsider

2004

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Father And Son

And so I carry you this last time
To your exhausted bed of death
Where words of hope faith fear
Lock our eyes in a final salute
Silent thoughts and old wishes
Driving us to a familiar silence
No need to speak these words
The private ones never once
Uttered in our lifetime together

Jeffrey SpahrSummers

Forgiveness

(for traci)

is a gift we can only
give to ourselves
it cannot be coaxed
or demanded
or expected
never borrowed
it knows no guilt
it knows all things

2005

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Four Fifteen A.M.

I am preparing chicken salad
and while the meat cools
in the colander
in the pocket of the sink
I am cutting grapes
in half
another act of love
in the den
just off the kitchen
I sit with an orange bowl
in my lap a bowl
of screaming half grapes
such panic
I have never seen
I have never
witnessed this before so
I coo to them
my little green sacrifices
my offerings
I coo to them like
I do to babies
and I think about
the women in my life

2005

Jeffrey SpahrSummers

I Have Nothing To Offer But

me
love
faith
heart
humor
honesty
empathy
patience
compassion
lots of poetry
and baggage too

Jeffrey SpahrSummers

Ignoring History

We choose to do this
as a society
as a race
we clamber for bread
and circuses like Romans
already corrupted
lounging in our spas
barking orders
throwing undesirables
to the lions because
we don't really know why
but we do it anyway
we live for it somehow
it comforts us
to wield this power
like crafty would be gods
creating chance
and circumstances
handing out candy
lording over life and death

Jeffrey SpahrSummers

Im About To Open This Bag

stand back this is a heavy one
sealed tight long long ago
crammed into my closet
crammed into my
psyche my
long lost lover my
long lost daughter my
long time coming my
reckoning

2006

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Mary Jane Doesn'T Live Here Anymore

But her sweet guttural scent
Permeates through the house still
Like dull shafts of sunlight
Hung dusty in the windows.

And I remember her in that chair
Staring at the books for hours,
Electric moments under headphones
Giddy from the white album.

And she was a lover to be sure,
Quick to excite and comfort,
Quick to entice a lonely man
With a smile and soft afternoons.

And I imagine her in some night
Blowing in on the arm of a friend,
Blending into the party easy,
Teasing me with the love we once had.

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Munchkin

Suddenly she appears out of nowhere
Her miniature fingers grip the counter
Her big Bambi eyes peer over the desk
Her head an umbrella of sky blue cap
She says I am looking for Mr. Strong
My uncle please has he checked in yet?
She cocks her head like a dachshund
But the little child's uncle is not here I
Am afraid not so sorry and I tell her so
Perhaps he is at a different chain then
She smiles twirls marches out the door
flip flop flip flop in shoes as big as God

Jeffrey SpahrSummers

My Compass

lies broken on the floor like a wine glass shattered tossed
into the fireplace as if in celebration of something I cannot
comprehend the cold needle is stuck due west north west
not magnetic north where I want to explore the wilderness

2004

Jeffrey SpahrSummers

Of Poems And People

Never satisfied
The whiners
Always primping
Looking in mirrors
Screaming for attention
Always wanting
To re-invent themselves
Rise out of the ashes
Presto
You know
Go Phoenix

Jeffrey SpahrSummers

Outside The Emergency Room

At least the sun is forgiving today
The warmth makes me think of you
And there are birds chattering but
I worry about you and your mother
And grandma is fine considering 90
Pneumonia and a bladder infection
She tells me I should be a doctor
And asks what they say in her office
I think she means the nursing home
I tease her to make her smile and
Then she is lost and then I am lost
All these lost people here together
It occurs to me I am watching a girl
Who cannot stop crying her eyes so
Red and swollen something very bad
Has happened to someone she loves
A weary woman pleads on her phone
This is the worst time to leave me...
And a cute little boy climbs the back
Of my chair only smiling when I look
Into his eyes we are all lost together
And I hear a little girl talking about
Puking in a car that's why she's here
I hear a baby boy crying behind me
There is no happiness in this room
Not in the woman in the wheelchair
Broken because she's out of Zoloft
Not in the couple patting each other
Not in the old woman who just stares
Not in my mother who waits with me
At least I have a sliver of you inside

2005

Jeffrey SpahrSummers

Poems

every poem is an experiment for me
every poem an experience i read

every poem that i can
every poem i am

Jeffrey SpahrSummers

Rene

like stars in the sky i know you are lovely my
hearts desire but a storm rages overhead so
distracting these clouds and raindrops falling
the lightning blinding my eyes then darkness

Jeffrey SpahrSummers

Ser-En-Dip-I-Ty

he

begets poetry

begets interest

begets poets

begets poetry

begets respect

begets inspiration

begets poetry

begets hope

begets them/they/she

begets poetry

begets love

begets this

2005

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Sheba

She came
across the desert
my tempest
for three years
she traveled across the earth
on camel back
on foot
shifting sand and
shadows
her face veiled
her want of wisdom
her love
of what puzzles
and i am riddled still but how
could we deny temptation
or passion
what would become
of her kingdom
or mine?

2005

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Snakes Never Stray Far From Their Mates

(for Daddy George)

A fact of nature, you said
Poised and ready to strike again
As we watched the Night Adder die,
Writhing its blood back and forth
Across the floor in front of my dresser.
There's always a mate nearby, you said
And I hated you
For making me clean my room anyway.

Then came the psychotic game I played.
Where would the next be found?
At my feet?
Wrapped around the toilet seat?
Or maybe
Lured to my bed by body heat
Like the stories I'd heard.

I should have known,
Two weeks to the day
On the very same spot,
Once again
A taste of blood
Pasted hot on the floor.
I waited by the door
Until I knew by your breathing
Another was dead,
Relieved there were no more.

Unless there are eggs, you said.

1990

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Stiletto

I love to swim
with blossoms in the stream
air alive with sunlight
and drink the tale of years.
I would tell you, dear beloved...
I grew, before time was worth mine,
 alone
with the sun to soothe my feet.

I travelled country through country
sea upon sea.
In a land where daylight
 is shadowed with dragons and kings,
 blood and bone,
I built a fortress
 stone upon stone,
and built myself in.

Jeffrey SpahrSummers

Take A Separate Train

(for Anna)

(Johannesburg to Cape Town)

The best of both worlds, they say
And it's true
The Blue Train is special,
Like a first kiss.

Picture a windowed mansion
Whisked brashly down the line
Tailing a quick ocean scent,
Sailing through the vineyards
Intent on a smooth ride.

But they'll hide you
(we both know they will)
On another train
As if to blame black pride
For your ties to this ripe country.
So your time must be spent
Sitting up a straight 24 hour ride
Unable to lay down for sleep,
Frustrated and hungry,
Keeping track of the reasons
Why you cannot ride with us.

Jeffrey SpahrSummers

Thin Line

i dont understand this business
of anger i just
dont get it
i dont understand
the heat of this language
hateful words bang
bang gotta blame
somebody
anybody
anyone
anyone but
ourselves anyone but
us us
mean mister misters
gone and
done it again
i dont understand
the purpose of
this
this is my dilemma
and i find no comfort here

2006

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Top This Television Moment

you shouldve been there
everybody else was
at least it seemed
in july
in nineteen
and sixty-nine a d
i sat at my desk in school
like all the others
gorging on the greatness of it all
on this spectacle of vertical
liftoff from the earth
this reaching beyond ourselves
this voyage of all mankind
happening before my very eyes
we were mesmerized
by the seduction of the beast
the saturn five series rocket
the behemoth we
held our breath we
held on to each other we
were speechless in
fact in awe of it
of everything
every one of us
everyone wanting
to cheer out loud oh
cmon lets light this candle
lets do this and
lets do the other thing
lets soar to the stars
and beyond
lets seize the glory
we fucking rock
watch us walk
on the moon

2005

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Tramp Of The Galaxy

Done with the day's challenge
I reflect slow down
Watch the screen savers
Flying through space and
Having fought the good fight
My three storied craft cruising
I check the star flooded portals
Secure the doors mop floors
Greet the passengers
And attend to the roar of
The engines behind me

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Watching Clouds In Oklahoma

there is a blazing white dragon
floating over there in the sunlight
it expands like a balloon filling up
slowly as i watch and there is a
herd of black horses thundering
rumbling directly overhead as if
this sky is just an endless prairie
to be trampled by hooves in a fit
of skittish frenzy i see the glory
of wet orange sunset splashing
through a hole in the sky tonight
trees thrash around like lightning
electric brew in an iron cauldron
these clouds don't know where
they're going trapped indecisively
headed north south east west a
double exposure across the sky
i wait for the sizzle of rain to fall
it is tornado season in oklahoma

Jeffrey SpahrSummers

Watching Daddy Die

Something weighs heavy on the man
Lulled to sleep deep in the recliner.
Something has cut his taut line
And slashes age across his face
Faster than I've a mind to see.
And something makes me wonder
Why death deals a winning hand
Then shouts foul play across the table.
I could say I've seen for years
His lively eyes grow slowly dim,
His love of hunting birds at dawn
Turn to birdseed across the yard,
Or simple tasks become frustrating
Like hands shaking through a shave.
But I have to question who this is,
And wonder where daddy has gone.
To be sure, I know it's my father
Who's grateful that I'm mustached
And not to be mistaken for a woman,
Who says 'hurry home for Christmas
I want to meet my grandson, '
Who calls to tell me once again
My son is the prettiest baby he's seen
And he's proud of the father I am.
But who is the old man silent behind me
So nearly a shadow in the back of my mind,
So resigned to the speed of his flight?
Who is sitting weary on the carpet
Staring absently over my shoulder,
Curious to see how I tend a fire
Like my father taught me years ago?
And here it is that mother reminds me
Of the many years I've spent away,
And asks me to move my family home.
We don't know how long he has,
Her eyes appeal to the son in me.
But they are Tulsa, and I am Chicago,
And it's far from boredom to adventure.
But it's not just that exactly,

My life has seen enough of both.
It's more that...
I don't have the heart to tell her
I'm afraid to watch mama cry,
I'm not strong enough to watch daddy die.

Jeffrey SpahrSummers