

BEYOND the City of DREAMS

JIM PAULICZEK

Illustrations by Rose Burt



ANDANTE

Author's Note

These poems were composed between 2005 and 2021, consisting of haiku, and ballad-type pieces and less structured works; some I think of as landscape paintings, like *Sunset Splashes*, having less narrative focus but capturing a scene and its mood. Those poems with composition dates have retained them here for interested readers. Those with dedications have the dedication on the page with their poem, and the Acknowledgments page lists and thanks the influences and inspirations for specific poems. Despite the temptation to lay them out in thematic or chronological order, the poetry is grouped so as to juxtapose the more upbeat pieces and the more melancholy ones, mixing some shorter ones between longer works, and blending old and new pieces. The first poem and the last poem of this volume usually bookend my open-mic readings and I've kept that set-up to maintain the feel of a long open-mic set to some extent.

Feel free to disregard all that and read them in any order; they are not meant to form a larger story, though many are snippets from life and dreams, which should not always be seen as separate things. Many relate events and experiences, hallucinatory as well as objectively real, having a specific story behind them. Those stories would not be poetry, however, and constitute a very different beast than what you're holding.

Poetry should not require long introduction; it should speak for itself, and this is already longer than most of the following poems.

The Land of Fast Girls and Slow Cars

Languid rolls the sylvan stream
Through the mountains of coke
Past the shimmering red lakes
And burbles gently over the cliff's edge
Cascading in the Land of Fast Girls and Slow Cars

Winding across the plain's smoke and swamps of beer
From great falls and opiate pools
It loses its way in the desert of the real
On its way to the Land of Fast Girls and Slow Cars

Tossing boats and spray like a liquid mane
All over the bruised banks
Its silvery edges lap over the periphery
Of the Land of Fast Girls and Slow Cars
Turning across the Sound in the land of young faces with old scars
Where there are no stars

Raving Grasses

Barter presents in the noonday sun
 Past foothold fences
 And withered rosehips
Sprawls the golden field
 Riven by a paved path
 Atop the olden trails
Sentinel posts standing
 Long after the wire fell
Casting strange tumbledown shadows
 Near the lone tree
 Regal in their watching
 The waving grasses
Untended by man of late

Base-Camp

Beneath the golden sun
Base-camp sprang
Before space and thought were one
Beyond time where the grasses sing
We drank in the vapors of distant stars
Where the salt air rolls across waves of the meadow
And the forest breathes uphill



Wispies

Sipping the warm nectar of neighborhood flowering
Drinking from the jar with sticky hands
The warmth I feel flows outward, to meet that of the sunlight

A slow rush like an effervescent tide
Surges over my skeleton
The greens of trees, the yellow grass
And the blue of her eyes last night
Juxtapose over my vision and thoughts

Slowly fading as the wind picks up
The intangibility I feel becomes a gentle swaying
With the mild breezes
And it is this wispy-ness
Which tells me that I'm ready
To leave the comfortable bounds of the porch

The last of my dream-juice passes the perma-smile that adorns me
Now unimpeded
This waxing euphoria and ethereal quality murmur
Shadowy and elegant poems of forgotten, moonlit revels
As I waft towards the ancient forest
While strange music emanates from the obscured homes

Fortified

“Dude, it’s a veritable fortress,
Basically it’s impervious from the outside.”

Crouched around forges
And medieval implements for metal-smithing
Broken windows casting ghost-images
Of sieges past and present

We savor the atavistic sounds
Metalwork and wines with olden names clamor
Behind barricaded doors
Freshly sealed against town

“I was just out there, and I couldn’t even hear that grinder.”

Plywood curtained bathrooms
And a second set of double-doors
Bongs rattle with machines
Secure within our shell
Wrapped in illusions of the past
Manifested in the fortress of hidden shadows

The Gatekeeper

Brooding, implacable as the Sphinx
The mountain reclines
Moonlight shinning on its living face
Disgustingly ancient eyes
That track our tiny figures as we walk
Over shadowed desert sands

The stars are eclipsed as it rises
Eons of detritus fall from its long buried legs
Lumbering form carved from obsidian
Before humans learned to hide in caves
Raising once more a crown worked in jade
And set with stars and staring eyes

Tree-growths wriggled
In the moonlight like coral animals
Tracking the moon
As gigantic strides peel away more and more of the world
Until there is only the forest
The night and ourselves
Beneath a gibbous moon
And above the mystical sea
With the outer voids whispering
Beyond the guarded portal
The keys called from nowhere

Beyond The Realm of Light

Night wraps its silken arms around the town
Shadowing all deeds

Now the cadences of night ring from the myriad throats
The roaring amphibious horde
Chortles madly over everything in its swampy lust

Here flash shining lights
They pass and fade to red
Grumbling engines, fuming relics of a day's delight
Choking in rust

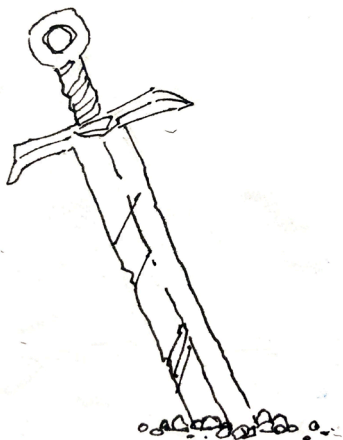
This darkened road between dream's delight
And the memory of it shattering
Treaded with an opiate lope
Is the alley beyond the realm of light
Where we have occasional glimpses of some half-forgotten paradise

3-6-07

Lady of Sunbreak

A faerie-queen voluptuous, rambled
Out of the glare of a downtown sun
Green and white plaid coat shimmering
Out of the painful brilliance of the damp concrete meadow

Enveloping us for a brief instance
In rainbow light
Her hair of autumn leaves flashed in this changed glow
As she crossed the other half of the road



The Fog Farm

There's nothing like waking up next to a fire pit smoldering
The sun beating down upon me
Burn-holes in my pillowcase, grass in my blanket
A circus tent stands before me, empty
Grown like a titanic mushroom
Over the winking grasses
Healthier here than town surrounded by beaches
Where the hordes of scary shiny people go

Here the horses munch
And the breeze plays gently with living things
Here the only thing that looms
Is a pancake breakfast
Borne majestic and chrome in the van
Swooping over the dirt track like a mirage

Out here
We are the only voices that aren't birds
And that distant rumble is a road
Out here your thoughts remain your own

Fungal Dreams

Rising spores of fetid fungal dreams
Permeate the air in thick clouds
Both obscuring and revealing
They arouse primal hungers
In the mind and body

Stirring appetites, known or not,
For subterranean vistas
And fleeting glimpses under the forms of things
Especially the masks we wear for ourselves

Burger Friday

It's Burger Friday!
Drinking in the gutter with
My burger buddies

Cold beer, hot sake
Uptown's regular rascals
Great food, the best crew

High point of the week
Our pandemic tradition
Love Burger Fridays

2-11-21



Gold-Green Light

Then spheres of haunted forms
And leering faces terrifying to behold
Emerge out of turbid seams
In the visible world
They gape in weird groupings
Colored like heated metal
Patterned in bizarre geometries

Orange Liquid Light

Step into the night
See the harvest moon's orange crescent
Calling from the glass bottle
Orange liquid light

Driving me back in the house at night
Sprawling sunlit meadow
Basking with beers
Watching the march of years
Orange liquid light

Sorrows drown any delight
Mimosas in the park
And fungus beckons
From the dark
Aquatic final diners
So what if we're not winners?
Orange liquid light

Gleams in our reflected eyes
Dreams of us running like dyes
Across a shirt
Planting feelings in the dirt
White Russian chats by a fireside
In orange liquid light

Those Eyes

I only miss her when she's near
Most distant when we're close
It's easy to disappear in those eyes
Those eyes...

My desertion of life to her fey, sensuous surprise
Drowning in those eyes
Those eyes...

How can I breach this visceral silence?
Can't quite let her go
She kills me in dreams
With those eyes
Those eyes...

3-10-07



Reflected Radiates

Stacking the chips of our teacups in cool evenings
 “Margaritaville” plays
 Hidden from an oppressive sun
Otter-pop drinks rattle in our hands
 Whisked away from our caves
 With a faerie-girls gaze

Fans grind like shark teeth inimical
In a closed shop with the lights on
 Someone puts on tea
 We bathed in refrigerated air
 Words unspoken radiate
Sipping White Russians to make things run
 Between us

Waking to swimming tea
 With a slice of orange
“Tangerine, tangerine...”

City of Dreams

Magnificent and sinister dreams the city
Great and terrible dance the shades in the city of dreams
And the flame burns heavy and low
And the moon shines soft and slow

When gypsy rhythms sound
And a flame-haired woman plays the saw like a howling wind
All across the sea of fluorescent faces

Magnificent and terrible dreams the city
Great and terrible dance the shades in the city of dreams
And the flame burns heavy and low
And the moon shines soft and slow

When shadows dart across the harvest moon
And lung-goblins gather thickly
On nighted shores in the city of dreams
Loud strolling through the frogs fucking
While the city dreams

Magnificent and terrible dreams the city
Great and terrible dance the shades in the city of dreams
And the flame burns heavy and low
And the moon shines soft and slow

On our gleaming windows and darkened trees
On your graceful branches and shimmering leaves
With burning eyes we'll light the path
beyond the stars, behind time and past the sea
Where brood the watchers eternal

9-14-05

Vision of Night

Visions of night that I see
What are you meant to be?

Hazy light shines on meadow and tree
Dew soaked roses of white
Gleam before the vast ebony door
Keeping me
Here among grass and cement so bright

Vision of paradise that haunts me
That dream is my greatest enemy
For who can save myself from me?

Fall Haiku

Yellow leaves falling
Crackling autumn fires glow
Harvest moon rises

The first frost crunches
With red leaves under my shoes
The moon sets at dawn

II-I-20

Algol

There grow mad trees
Their pungence and flowers in a breeze
Wafting from shimmering beaches and dank fens
In the land of the Green Sun
Where tunnels riddle the earth
And moons of red and gold dance in a sky too blue
A sky too blue for you

Amid fragrances of insanity
And a mist of wine curiously swirled by ghost-forms
Arose a man of amber and bone
From the Star-fed River's shore
He wandered to its source in the mountains alone
Returning to the jungles of Before

There grow mad trees
Their pungence and flowers in a breeze
Wafting from shimmering beaches and dank fens
In the land of the Green Sun
Where tunnels riddle the earth
And moons of red and gold dance in a sky too blue
A sky too blue for you

Following the babbling course
He ventured into cavernous deeps
Through old winding passages to the cataract lake
Finding where the last of the Serpent People sleeps

She donned new skin, awake
Soon entwined together, an eternity lay
Passion blazed in gold-green eyes
And hers of black-slit crimson
Their mortal spawn sought to sculpt
The ghostly mist-forms in living stone and wood

Spirit-men stalk the glades and chambers
Of these frenzied, elaborate statues
Beneath the Demon Star's rays

There grow mad trees
Their fruits swollen with poignant dreams
Wafting through the shimmering beaches and curdled swamps
In the land of the Green Sun
Where spirits linger in tunneled ways
And moons of red and gold dance in a sky too blue
A sky too blue for you

The Nymph Beyond the Trail

Her smile was the glowing of spring blossoms
The rush of our chemicals
Eyes burning like heretical scholars
Blazing in defiant beauty, stars to show what could be
And to steal my shapes in ink

And through unnumbered retreading of those fungal ways
I've never seen a look quite like hers that day
Grinning mischievously at me
And the woods in my hair

Though I still have a piece of that forgotten path's pavement
We found on that wild drunken expedition
A part of me remains locked hand in hand
Endlessly wandering that opiate forest
Together

Velvet Coils

Ponderously hang the embryonic dragon heads
 Making their mind-fire
 From the soil, forever patient
 For they are always reborn
 But their fires are temperamental
 Burning to kill or to please
Drawing stares like one of those bug-lights
 Deadly, fascinating
Mankind has worshiped their blood
Since before writing was thought of
And we can never let them go

Chasing them over the moon and through our veins
 The caged beast claws behind our eyes
 An echo in the long-screaming night
 Of the souls lost to the velvet coils
Sealed forever within the clasped petals
 That will never let us go

 To catch the dragon is to die
 With forever to fly
 Through one last dream
For we can never really let them go

Whiskey Blanket

Dedicated to Sadie Rose Maher

When it's chilly but I know I'm planted on the couch
I want a Whiskey Blanket

Like layers of comfortably drowsy cobwebs
The Whiskey Blanket holds me together

When it's time to wind down
But also settle in for the duration
I want to wrap up in a Whiskey Blanket

Like night over a foggy scene
The Whiskey Blanket seeps and settles over me

When I return out of the night
Having peered into the right kind of abyss
I want to snuggle into a Whiskey Blanket

5-18-20

The Legend of Running Girl

George and I were walking his dog
On the beach
Up ahead was a distant girl
Running through the surf
We stopped marveling at the water's majesty
Distant shores and the sky

All we could see was in two words:
Running girl

As we followed unthinking at our slower dazed pace
She continued to race
Into the horizon, fading slowly into space
And we knew without saying it
This apparition, like her swishing hair,
Was beyond fair

Sometimes on the beaches
I catch myself
Looking in vain for fleeting glimpses
Of Running Girl

Acidosis

I am the wind
Omniscient and empty
Flickering in an audient void

Rumbles of fountains, of cars
Trails overshadowed
Darkness thick as Jello

Spiders mate in bushes
Briar-patch paths, moth flagged
Arteries like Otter-pops
Pumping under frozen grease

A fog played over us
Horns heaved the stars with praise

Underwater crosswalk
Coral encrusting thought

8-9-06

Ominous Murmuring

You love to say you want something real
But you only chase the fantasies
Images telling you what to feel

You always thought your dreams would come true
Now you're taking a hard look around
Wondering what to do

The sun may be bright in the sky
But the storm clouds roll around you
And you think you know why

II-24-16

Dreams of Forest and Sea

The blazing sun sets in the wine-dark sea
Amid folktales and legends of old
Resounding in hearts ever filled with the roaring of strange seas

While the pale moon gleams
Upon the upper branches and dancing leaves
Above the stout-black night of the forest

Awakening to the glare of a dawn-bright sea
Driven by fierce winds
And vibrant rolls the foamy sea

Leaf-filtered sun dapples the lower forest
The breeze carries whispers of the rain
And tattered fog softly rolls into the forest

While the pale moon gleams
Upon the rocking ships and silent waves
Above the silvery sea

The blazing sun sets on the absinthe-green forest
Amid folktales and legends of old
Resounding in hearts ever filled with the shadows of mysterious forests

Dying of Life

Treading water
Just above the whirlpool
In the right light I can see all the other bits of human detritus
Circling the drain

Drifting nearer to an unseen doom
While staring into an indifferent abyss

Sulking around the wasteland of my life
Without the courage to leave Las Vegas

2-13-08



Rusty Lemonade

When corrugated sheet metal shimmers on a cold day
And the tide's drained away
Leaving everything gleaming and moist
Amid boulders and wet sand
Gasping like barnacles on land
The bare ives of life
Stand mutely around lonely figures
Staring out at the retreating sea of time
Footprints stretching back over tiny springs and leftovers
Like the dull mechanical buzz that is glimpsed only in silences
But underlies many conversations

2-13-08

Sharp Memories

Walking through life's thick shag-carpet jungle
They stab like broken glass, unseen
Cutting through the present
To stick deep in your mind

Obscured by callouses and more recent accretions
They wait like shrapnel, indelible
Growing sharper with years
But harder to fit into a coherent mosaic

When life jars you or you fumble upon them
Electric intensity overwhelms, inescapable
After a minute your mind works around them
Thoughts seeping like blood around a splinter

Letting you back to the present
Sharpening their edges on new experiences, waiting
Unlike the common, vague kind
These sharp memories

5-12-19

Majestic and Elusive

Hair always changing
Like the sunlight, changing whenever I look

Hat or shawl like a cloud
Changing outline showing something new
With each movement
Never wholly revealed

Every conversation seems
Like a first encounter
They say you can't swim the same river twice

It seems I am a stone
Trying to be friends with the mist

You can change the mood of any setting
Simply by being there
Majestic and elusive

10-28-18

Spring

And there at the end of winter's dark nights
And bleak days, when the sun cuts through crisp air
In scintillant brightness sat
The shimmering hope of paradisaical visions
Just out of reach
Tauntingly delicious visions

The vibrant green of new growth outshines
Knight's legendary zeal, struggling through freezes of despair
Growing beyond the cold and the winds shuddering
Seem to eclipse
My hopes of dream-like visions

3-9-14

Enduring Awe

Even after ten years
When I see you I'm feeling that same magnetism
Like I've become a plant and you the sun
Trying to avoid your eyes
Through bar-haze
Was a stifled combustion

I grew used to not seeing you
Now that hard-won numbness is ruined
But I seem to carry it around with me still
Like a sad hermit crab in a broken snail shell
And nothing else to hide in, vitals exposed
And like warming frost-bitten hands, the pain is also joyous
You were a tigress drinking at a spring with us lesser primates

2-19-11

Beneath the Blood-Red Sun

Beneath the blood-red sun
Tower the bleached limbs of the huge spiky trees
Where the last two people became one
Among ancient rubble they rolled in rusty golden leaves

The wheeling carrion-birds, they screeched
And the river of acid spilled over the burning plain
Wild dogs jumped among the flames and fumes with a tremendous howl
Giant rats drowning in that poison tide with hideous gurgles and squeaks
The roar of the fire, the bubbling tide grew louder

Above the smoldering, damp ash-fields
Hung the wooded precipice, shrouded in vile
Exhalations from the waste below
Afterwards they feasted awhile
On the opiate fruit as fire-flies began to glow
Within the nighted forest where shadows dance

The blue moon cast its silvery light
Upon their nest of fallen leaves and remains of buildings
At the rim of trees and cliff, on two forms writhing in delight
Violent clouds tangled overhead with jagged lightnings
The last time they saw that cold moon's light

Beneath the blood-red sun
And the bleached limbs of gnarled spiky trees
Gleam two skeletons of mingled bones where their lives were done
Scorched pavements peek from burned remains and rusting golden leaves

12-22-07

Beautiful Hellscape Haiku

Red summer sunset
Distant fires so smokey
Beautiful hellscape

I-2I-20



Beautiful Hellscape Redux

Summer sun turns
Smokey orange glaring on
A world gone mad

9-16-20



Drought Feelings

Like a dried out leaf
Fallen and withered
Craving the water that once sustained it
The water that will now fuel its disintegration and rot

I'm blown by fickle winds
And crinkled by myriad impacts
Dragging along the pavement
Slowly wearing away
Hoping quietly for love's deadly rain

4-28-19

Organs Blazing

After they dissect my remains on the altar of science
 Wondering how I held together so long
You will be led past jars of organs steeped in brine
 And you'll know before you read the labels
 Which ones are mine

My cancers will all have your face
Tissues nearly buried in erotic tumors' embrace
Multiplied to fill my crowded space
 Organs slowly blazing

And then, within specimen jars
Your portraits' eyes will all open for a final gazing
 Into your own as my severed parts ignite
 Organs fully blazing

Before I can truly depart
With your smile finally burned out of my heart
 And my pickled brain can cease climbing
 These walls to find you
Slipping back into the flaming jar

Knowing you'll leave the burning building
Unscathed
Maybe even melting the glacier behind your eyes
While my dead organs blaze

You always knew how to walk between the raindrops
When to leave a party
Leaving guys like me behind in the dust
To pick up the pieces
Looking ever after for your return as our hearts started to quietly rust

II-18-19

Reality TV Haikus

It's douche-bags are us
Resting bitch-face bleached-out teeth
Summer of settling

It's all the rejects
Oh, wait, robot-dance shit show
...and they're just gonna date

7-30-19

Sunshine Splashes

The sun shifts into orange
With some extra pink
And I think
That the white clouds and blue sky
Have changed places
As the roseate light splashes
On our faces

For Lalage

Dedicated to Lalage Owen-Jones

Watching the fiery worms eat
Then the shattering
Of their ashy pillar
The broken stub alive
With embers and air
Moving through it
Like water in a stream or shots thrown back
She finished her cigarette

Boozy Dream Haikus

Escaping the hot sun
Weary I sip the glow of
Cool neat, neat bourbon

In quiet repose
I feel: warm melancholy
Wild, rough joy, whiskey

9-17-17

Fermented Light

Another night of wishful drinking
With the familiar faces and ethylene's soothing
Waves lapping this comfortable shore of night
Here in the fermented light

Welcoming music partly muffling
Conversations punctuated by laughter
Or glasses clinking
Finding ourselves sinking in the friendly banter
Behind the breath-clouded windows view of night
Here in the fermented light

Coming in from the weather
Smelling of nicotine's kiss and the rain
Windblown hair holding pot-smoke or sweating cocaine
With neon shadows and electric echoes we gather
Here in the fermented light

II-27-19

Day Drunk

When your night eyes go blind
And the trees are bathing in sunshine
All the colors change and depth gets dark and funky

As the shadows grow
Creeping from corners and below
The wind blows from the beaches
While the moon ascends the celestial reaches

Another day's gone by
This beer's gone dry
And the familiar night envelopes me

5-4-16

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Jim Pavliczek grew up in Port Townsend, WA. He lived in boats on Alaska's southeastern coast during his early teens, returning to Port Townsend to graduate high school. He has studied theater in Edinburgh, Scotland with the Royal Lyceum Youth Theater, and preformed at the first National Theater Festival in Stirling, Scotland in 2005. He has worked in landscaping, restaurants, and Port Townsend's last video store. He has lived most of his life in Port Townsend, WA and resides there to this day. Always an avid reader, he has dabbled with writing off and on for years. This is his first book.

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