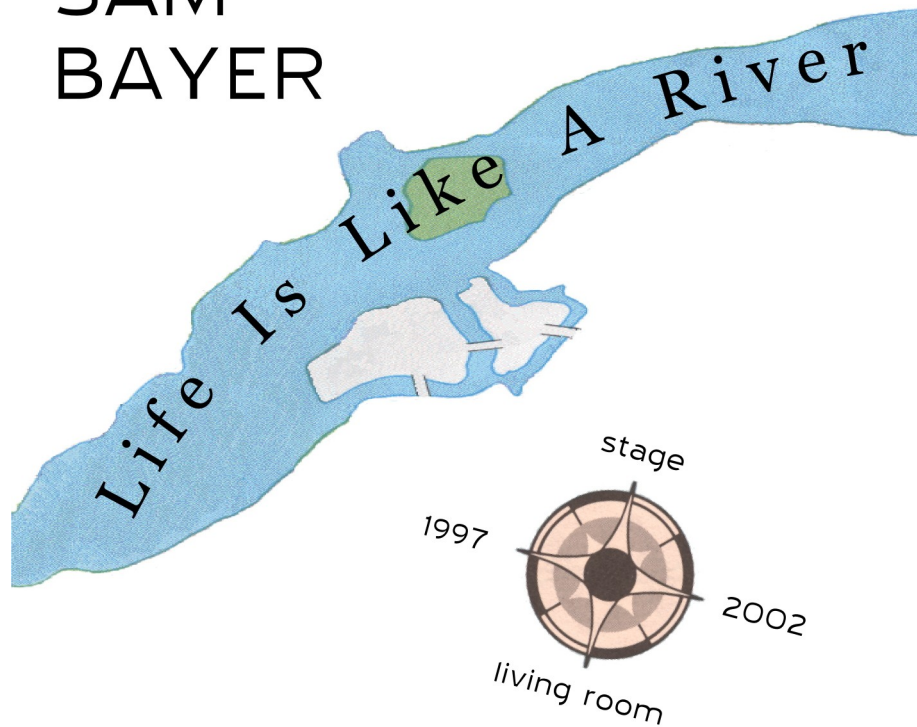


# SAM BAYER



## DISC 1

Love Letters  
A Couple of Photon Torpedoes  
Atlantis  
Algiers Cafe  
Amanda Means  
Different People  
American Elm  
Life is Like a River  
God Damn My Heart  
Doesn't Anybody Want a Piece of Me  
Bird on a Balcony  
To Your Health  
Edith and Elmer

## DISC 2

Just a Couple Steps Ahead of Me  
It Must Have Been That Botte of Wine  
Meeting Judi  
Vices  
Putting Sophy to Bed  
Playing with the Big Boys Now  
The Visiting Uncle  
The Vulture  
Chalkboard  
The Beatles Are Dying  
The Arrogance of Heartbreak  
Saving the Second-Hand Virtue  
What Kevin Remembers Next  
The Way She Looked Like You  
Oyster Girl

## DISC 3

The Mistakes You've Made  
The Longest Day of the Year  
I Can't Write Love Songs  
The Millennium Song  
Moving  
Me and Walter Mitty  
The Elephant in the Room

Hallucination  
I Can See Everything From Here  
Not Quite Spring  
A Man Like Me  
It Seemed like a Good Idea at the Time  
Cassandra  
The Election Song  
When the Empire Falls

# Love Letters

Copyright © 1988 Sam Bayer

Crayon sunsets and paper moons  
Paint Septembers and postmark Junes  
A pair of parted lovers with time to kill  
But such a precious target won't stand still  
It's the next best thing to the next best thing to being  
there

If you don't wear blinders the small reminders are  
everywhere

From the crackerjack rings and the paper chains  
The playground swings and the coffee stains  
The promises that hang heavy in the air

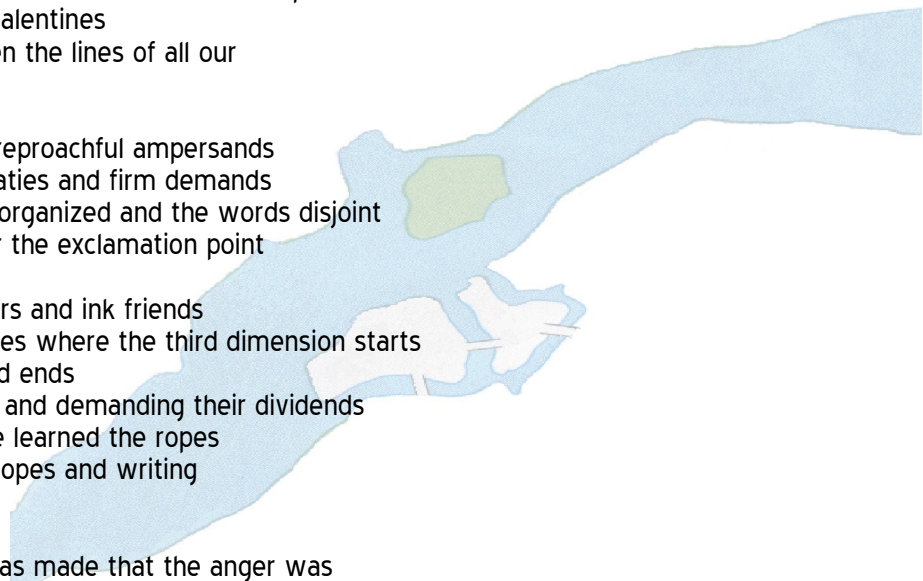
Made by ink women and ink men  
Each one a model paper citizen  
Each one the picture of restraint and discipline  
They dream of Valentines  
And hide between the lines of all our  
Love letters

Sullen commas, reproachful ampersands  
Distraught entreaties and firm demands  
The thoughts disorganized and the words disjoint  
But you can hear the exclamation point

Made by ink lovers and ink friends  
Storming the gates where the third dimension starts  
and the second ends  
Rattling the bars and demanding their dividends  
They feel they've learned the ropes  
Addressing envelopes and writing  
Love letters

The argument was made that the anger was  
secondary  
You and I were swayed but the two of them appeared  
so  
Stationery

And there's ink you and ink me  
Reflections in the mirror of reality  
Phantoms haunting photos in the gallery  
They roam the empty aisles  
Confronting distant smiles and reading  
Love letters



# A Couple of Photon Torpedoes

Copyright © 1997 Sam Bayer

In a cattle car at rush hour, we were standing nose to nose

I said, "Excuse me, neighbor, but you seem to be stepping on my toes"

He didn't say "I'm sorry", he didn't tip his hat  
He just turned to me and bared his teeth and growled,  
"You got a problem with that?"

I cringed inside and swallowed my pride and tried to limp away

I was running out of cheeks to turn and it bugged me the whole damn day

Well I know it isn't Christian, and I know it isn't kind  
But a couple of photon torpedoes would have probably changed his mind

Violence ain't no solution unless you're on the giving end

And how many pacifists feel the bully's boot as their dividend

I'm running out of forgiveness and grace  
Just gimme a couple of those photon torpedoes  
And I'll make the world a better place

They cut you off in traffic, and they cut ahead in line  
They park in front of hydrants and refuse to pay the fine

I'm picking up their litter, I'm sitting where they've spat  
And I'm getting my toes crushed on the subway and hearing,

"You got a problem with that?"

It's not like they murder or rape or pillage or steal or torture pets they find

They're just looking out for number one, but number two ain't far behind

So let 'em grin, let 'em gloat, let 'em celebrate, let 'em revel in our loss

Just gimme a couple of those photon torpedoes and then we'll see who's boss

Selfishness ain't no solution unless you're holding the stick at the long end

And how many altruists get the finger as their dividend  
Just one more slap in the face

And I swear I'm gonna take a couple of those photon torpedoes

And make the world a better place

Major Tom, Rocket Man, other people sing

They're all trying to get away from the same damn thing

Orbiting alone in the solitude of space

Free from all the ingrates in the human race

But there they are, parking geosynchronously next to you

Knocking on your porthole to borrow a spacesuit or two

Eating all your rations, breathing all your air

Leaving for higher orbit a couple minutes before the cops get there

Loyalty isn't an asset unless you're on the taking end  
And why should I shake your hand if you're as likely to

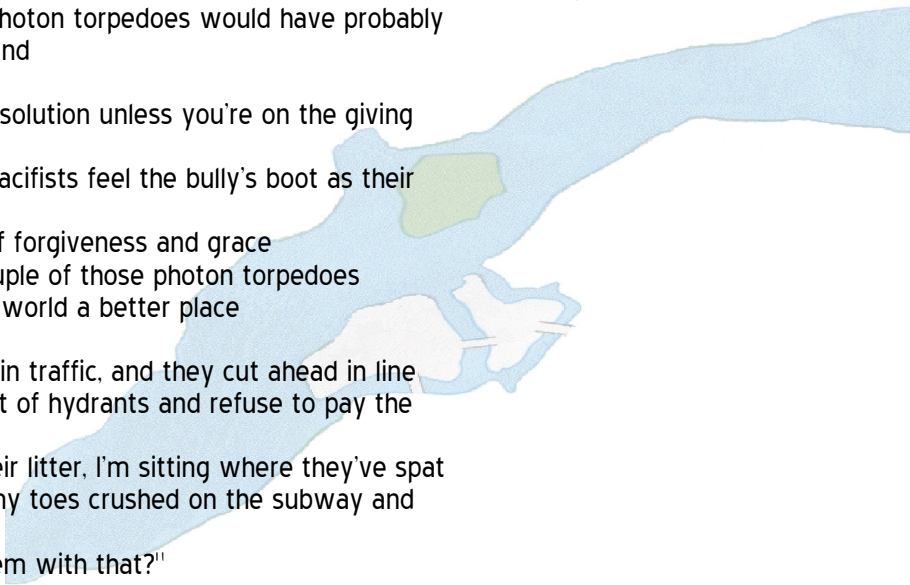
be a foe as a friend

The view is clearer from space

Just gimme a couple of those photon torpedoes

And I'll make the world

A better place



# Atlantis

Copyright © 1997 Sam Bayer

Try as I may I just can't seem to find a way for us to  
stay together  
Sometimes it seems that the land itself is conspiring  
against us  
Hills fall bare, and roses shrivel  
Heat and cold rage unchecked when we kiss  
Our love is struggling against a headstrong wind and  
I've had  
enough of this

But there's a land whose distance is measured in years  
instead of miles  
A city I've heard sank eons ago beneath the waves  
I can't say that I've ever been to Atlantis  
Or set out to find it under the sea  
But it couldn't be any more hostile to you and me

Can't breathe the water  
Can't drink the air  
Can't keep the life from oozing slowly out of this  
doomed affair  
Don't dare continue  
Can't bear to quit  
We can live in Atlantis  
I'm sure of it

There must be peace in that city, amid the seaworn  
stones  
and the coral streets  
I can't believe they'd turn away such deserving  
refugees  
The army stands, staffed and ready  
To defend the city from the lands ashore  
No one could doubt their evil intentions anymore

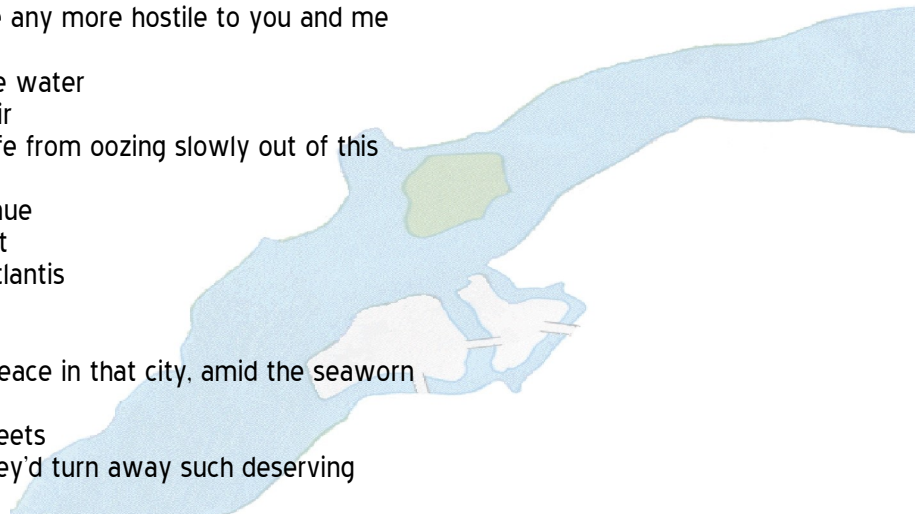
Can't breathe the water  
Can't drink the air  
Can't keep the life from oozing slowly out of this  
doomed affair  
Don't dare continue  
Can't bear to quit  
We can live in Atlantis  
I'm sure of it

There are seven seas, and not a hint to choose  
between them  
And the wind is a foolish and ignorant guide  
How will we know when we get there?  
Perhaps Poseidon will wave  
What if we wrinkle and shrivel like prunes  
What if the sea salt gouges our wounds  
What if the nymphs and the mermaids

Escort us to a watery grave

Will we emerge from the other end of this tunnel of  
love  
Are we wading into lakes too deep for hearts to  
survive  
Why do you ask me questions  
When you know I have only my faith to guide me  
How can you breathe this air when it won't let you  
stand beside me

Come on in, the water's fine, I say  
Let's take that dive, we're sinking anyway  
Got another gamble to take  
Got another wager to make  
Dammit, it's only a planet, it can't be that hard to  
outwit  
We can live in Atlantis (3x)  
I'm sure of it



# Algiers Cafe

Copyright © 1997 Sam Bayer

Mitch and I sit in the Algiers Cafe  
Wondering how life got so crazy  
He's expanding on a theory of exhaustion and entropy  
As I nurse my pot of Earl Grey  
Fretting the hours away

Mitch and I borrow a moment of time  
From the bank with the bitchy old teller  
She snipes and sneers from behind her safety glass  
And no matter how much time we spend today  
She's only an instant away

Sometimes I confuse yesterday with tomorrow  
Sometimes I miss the future and anticipate the past  
And when I turn myself around  
Who's to say I'm facing the right direction  
This time  
But it's the only time I have

Mitch and I nibble our carrot cakes  
As the evening grows long and the streetlamps bright  
We have our orders to trudge toward the next minor  
crisis  
And whether or not we obey  
It's only a moment away

Mitch and I seize on the Algiers Cafe  
As our likeliest line of defense  
We'll hide beneath the tables when the clock comes  
looking  
Informing the patrons they just can't stay  
It's only a moment away

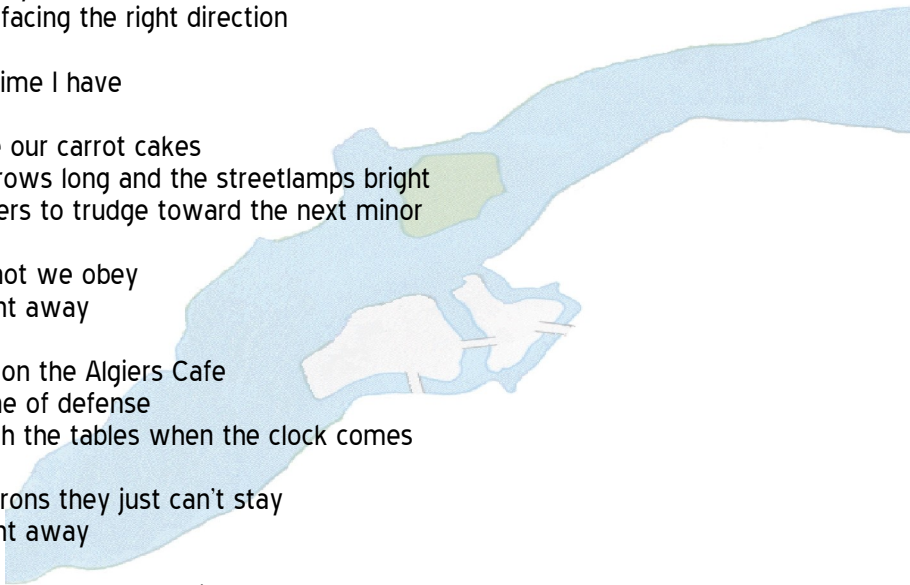
Sometimes I confuse yesterday with tomorrow  
Sometimes I miss the future and anticipate the past  
And when I turn myself around  
Who's to say I'm facing the right direction  
This time  
But it's the only time I have

We caress time, we praise time, we hoard time, we  
mourn time  
We count it like dimes under the sofa, we crush it like  
pennies  
on the track of an oncoming train  
We wrap times up like good clothes or fine china,  
bringing them out for special occasions, and packing  
them up again  
Time is the lint in our pockets, the slime in our fridge,  
the objects in drawers we can no longer name  
Time weighs more than our two thoughts together  
Time lasts longer than the oldest dream, the dustiest

planet,  
the darkest star  
Time is what we will be  
And have been  
And are

Mitch and I sit in the Algiers Cafe  
Wondering how life got so crazy  
He's expanding on a theory of exhaustion and entropy  
As I nurse my pot of Earl Grey  
Fretting the hours away

Time is the lint in our pockets



# Amanda Means

Copyright © 1997 Sam Bayer

Art is the language of life  
It was a button on her lapel  
Amanda Means was the name they were calling  
She silently waved, and I found myself falling  
Under her spell

The gallery gleamed in the sunset  
The patrons were packed like sardines  
The crowd was abuzz about what wasn't and was  
Her vision's so pure that not a soul can be sure of  
What Amanda means

The squares are the verbs, the circles are nouns  
Or so say the critics in the magazines  
I've stared at the reds and I've stared at the browns  
And I'm ashamed to confess I can barely guess at  
What Amanda means

Those paintings were Greek for more than a week  
So I returned to the classics I learned in my teens  
As I tried to stammer through my Latin grammar  
I was shocked to discover I was supposed to love her  
That's what "Amanda" means

So I opened my purse, sent her flowers and verse  
Serenaded and danced and cooked tempting cuisines  
We were the couple in fashion, the picture of passion  
But the captions were missing when I watched myself  
kissing  
Amanda Means

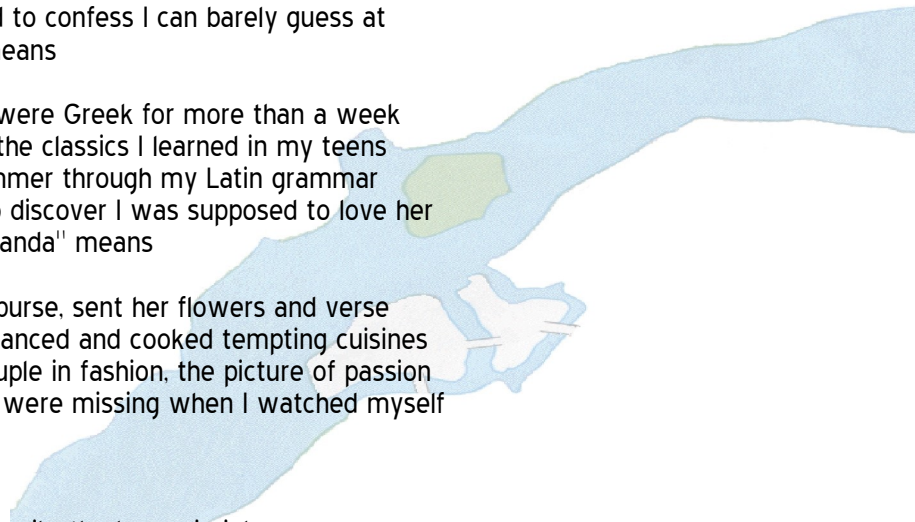
The friends are in oils, the lovers in inks  
The strangers in purples and aquamarines  
When I ask her to comment, she's as mum as the  
Sphinx  
Not even a lover can hope to discover  
What Amanda means

She'd draw a circle and I'd draw a line  
We had miscommunication in pantomime  
There were hours of tension about my comprehension  
When I asked to romance her she painted the answer

Was it green for no, or a square for yes  
I couldn't figure it out, I was afraid to guess  
So she threw up her hands and left a goodbye smudge  
She was living her art, maybe others would budge  
But not Amanda Means

Well, she embroidered my heart right here on my  
sleeve  
The craftsmanship is magnificent

I don't understand why she wanted to leave  
But I don't want to go where Amanda went  
And I don't really know  
No, I can't be sure  
What Amanda meant



# Different People

Copyright © 1997 Sam Bayer

I get a knot in my stomach when you enter the room  
Atop a mountain of expectations I can never climb  
It's such thin and bitter air  
How can you breathe up there  
You've got doubts neatly packaged and tightly bound  
They lurk like land mines under the most innocent of  
words  
Like "How are you feeling"  
And "How was your day"

We've been over it and over it and over it again  
We can't be lovers and we can't be friends  
I beg and I plead, and you bicker and barter  
But this is where it ends  
If we were different people

If only I smoked or ate crackers in bed  
Or picked my teeth with my silverware  
You could make me your dastardly villain  
And you could be the damsel in distress  
But you think life is short and I find it long  
And someone made you right and made me wrong  
But I don't see any justice here  
Just a woman with a noose in her hand

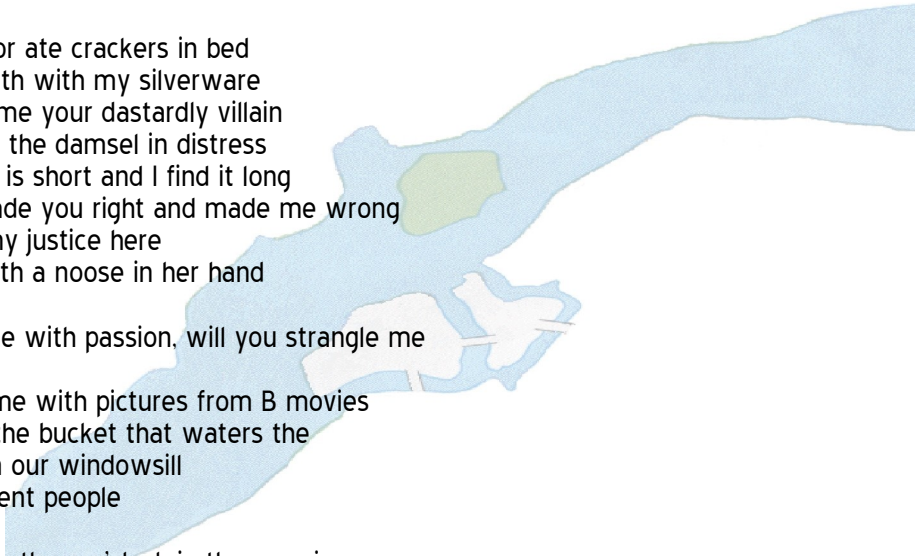
Will you choke me with passion, will you strangle me  
with love  
Will you silence me with pictures from B movies  
Or drown me in the bucket that waters the  
houseplants on our windowsill  
if we were different people

Do you remember three o'clock in the morning  
When you'd push me away and I'd surrender  
But victory wasn't enough for you  
You had to have me too  
Do you remember late in the evening  
When making love was the only way we could speak  
And you swore all you felt from me was fright  
It turns out that you were almost right

I've got pictures of you next to pictures of me  
And the smiles are a moment deep  
It's not a smile so much as a constant final wish  
I wish we were happy, I wish we were whole  
I wish you'd stop ignoring the magic in my soul  
I wish I could snatch back the time that you stole  
I wish we were over

Do you wish I was your puppet  
Do you wish I was your slave  
Will you spike your heel into my coattails

as I plot my getaway  
Pointing and prodding in your chosen direction  
In the hopes I'd find my way  
If only I had been born as an eagle  
If only you wanted sculpture and not clay  
If onnot clay  
If only we were different people



# American Elm

Copyright © 1997 Sam Bayer

It was an American elm  
Rare as the summer day is long  
Peter the forester traced the leaves in wonder  
An urban prize at our fingertips  
A wreck of a house sat behind it  
Abandoned since they carried the owner away  
A collision of dirty red and peeling brown  
But before they turned the house to rubble, the tree  
    came down

They choked the roots, and they cut the branches  
They felled the trunk and hauled it away  
They promise another will soon shade our back door  
But they don't make them anymore

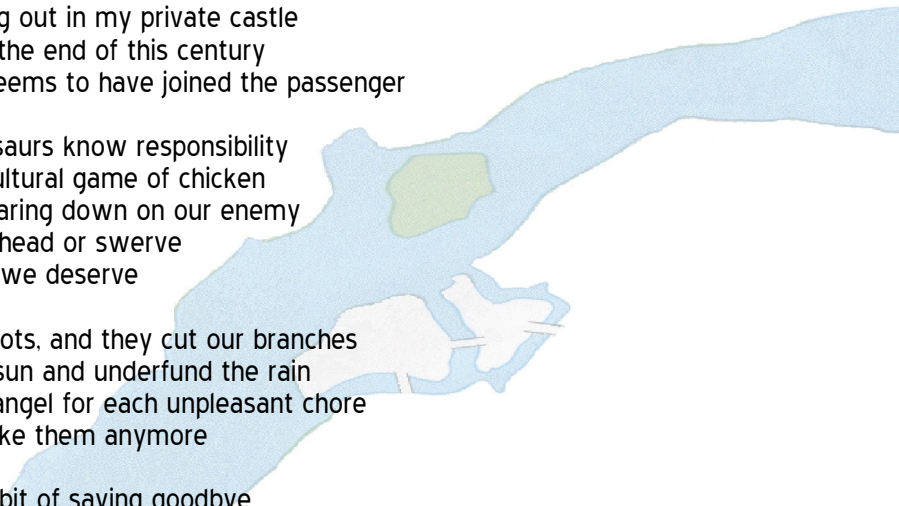
And now I'm hiding out in my private castle  
Amid the ruins of the end of this century  
Where patience seems to have joined the passenger  
    pigeon  
And only the dinosaurs know responsibility  
It's a breathless cultural game of chicken  
Each one of us bearing down on our enemy  
Where we plow ahead or swerve  
And we get what we deserve

They choke our roots, and they cut our branches  
They privatize the sun and underfund the rain  
They promise an angel for each unpleasant chore  
But they don't make them anymore

I won't make a habit of saying goodbye  
Hello makes the day so much brighter  
But the past weighs the most in its absence  
And the load never gets any lighter

You were my last chance, the final out of the inning  
The branch hanging over the lip of the waterfall  
I snagged myself on a corner of your heart  
And I stuck there  
But you said  
I can't be your dam against heartbreak  
I can't be the plug in your drain  
You tell me I'm the only tree in a world that's died  
But I'm parched from the salt in the tears you've cried

So you choked our roots, and you cut our branches  
You felled our trunk and hauled it away  
You tell me that someday I'll find what I'm looking for  
But they don't make it anymore





# Life is Like a River

Copyright © 1997 Sam Bayer

He picked up somebody else's guitar  
"Hey man, can I play a little?"  
And he wailed the blues like a man possessed  
with the bite of a thousand heartbreaks  
And he offered a song to the wedding boy  
A cryptic twelve-bar dream  
Life is like a river  
Life is like a river

We drank a toast, the ten of us,  
The seven of us, the six of us,  
We dwindled in number as the beers grew tall  
And swam around our heads like some vile primordial  
soup  
We cheered the guitar man playing  
I could swear I caught him saying  
Life is like a river  
Life is like a river

We're looking for wisdom and all we find is a riddle  
The current is trickier out here in the middle  
We paddle a lot, and move just a little  
Life is like a river  
Life is like a river

The assembled ladies wrote his fortune on the  
back of a cocktail napkin  
"When she asks how she looks, say 'lovely'"  
"Never kiss her without brushing your teeth"  
And in gold, the words "Whatever you say, dear"  
She'll laugh and he'll smile and say, "Hey dear,  
Life is like a river  
Life is like a river"

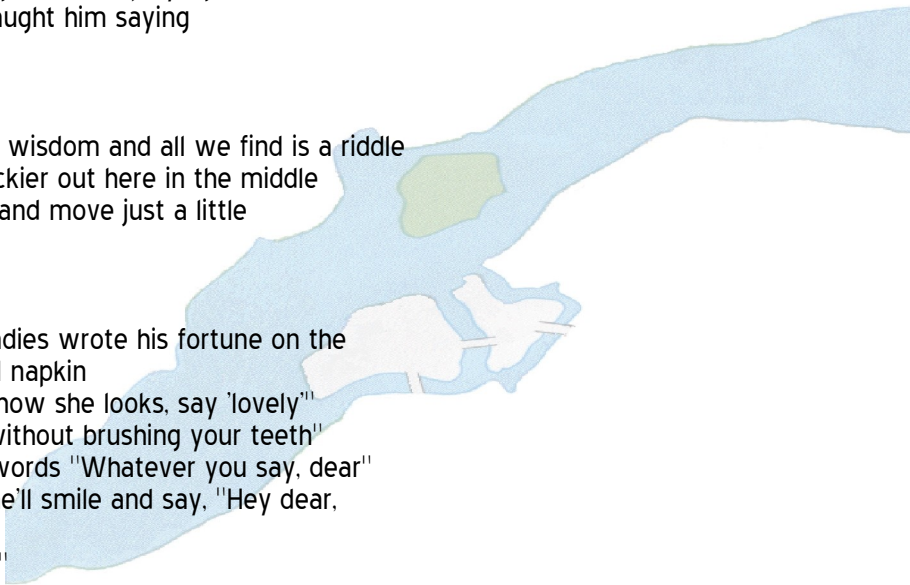
We're looking for answers and all we find is a riddle  
The current is trickier out here in the middle  
We study a lot, and learn just a little  
Life is like a river  
Life is like a river

And today, today is the equinox  
And we are halfway between faith and despair  
Halfway between truth and fiction  
Halfway between here (wherever that is) and there  
Will the world make more sense when two people in  
love are married  
Will the universe feel my lips when I kiss the bride  
Life is like a river  
Life is like a river

Each one of us has our mermaid  
Each one of us has sought her

Some of us are still fishing  
And some of us have caught her  
And some of us lose toes when we put them in the  
water  
Life is like a river  
Life is like a river

We're looking for wisdom and all we find is a riddle  
The current is trickier out here in the middle  
We paddle a lot, and move just a little  
Life is like a river  
Life is like a river (4x)



# God Damn My Heart

If I make the mistake of falling in love with you (3x)

Copyright © 1997 Sam Bayer

God damn my heart  
It's making a huge mistake  
Wish this was a nightmare  
But I'm pretty sure I'm still awake  
Caught between passion and discipline  
Can't hear the alarms when I'm in your arms  
Can almost forget the mess I'm in

They say you lose your heart once in life  
It better not be true  
I'd better be able to fall in love again  
If I make the mistake of falling in love with you

God damn this road  
I can't figure out where you went  
My auto swerves to follow your curves  
I cover my eyes an instant before the accident  
I clamber from the wreck  
Thumb my nose at the other lovers  
Slowing down to rubberneck

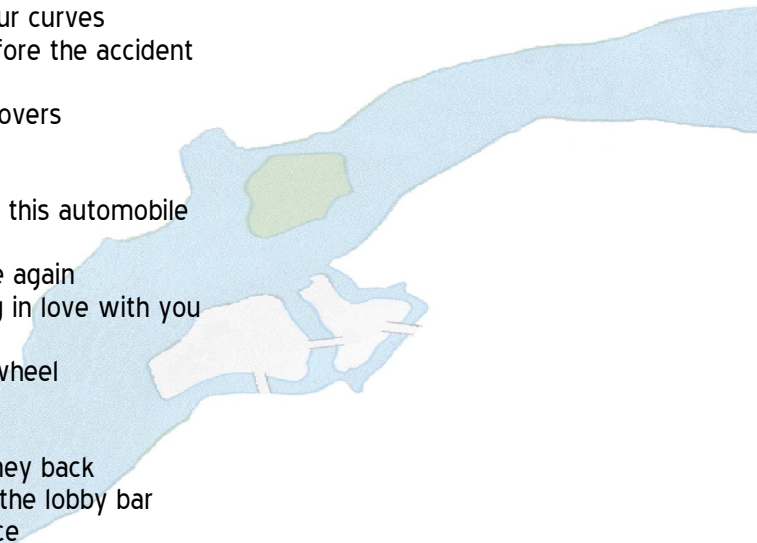
My heart has more dents than this automobile  
It's beating black and blue  
I'd better be able to fall in love again  
If I make the mistake of falling in love with you

I place my bet and I spin the wheel  
Riding red and hitting black  
Twenty-two on every deal  
I guess I ain't winning my money back  
You're the call girl lounging in the lobby bar  
With the triple-digit asking price  
The lady with the mink and the foreign car  
The dealer with the legs and the cleavage and those  
loaded dice

God damn these hands  
For touching this mystery  
Got women crying and characters dying  
And organ music moaning in some minor key  
A muffled scream, a hidden door  
Your eyes aflame in a portrait frame  
I could swear they weren't there before

You ask me where this tunnel leads  
I haven't got a clue  
I'd better be able to fall in love again  
If I make the mistake of falling in love

They say you lose your heart once in life  
It better not be true  
I'd better be able to fall in love again



# Doesn't Anybody Want a Piece of Me

Copyright © 1997 Sam Bayer

It's one o'clock in the morning, and the club is clearing out  
A traffic jam is forming at the door  
I've watched him far too often not to know what it's about  
He's signed a dozen autographs, and he'll sign a dozen more  
T-shirts on the counter, CDs on display  
If I'm not in the audience I'm probably in the way  
I may be just as handsome but my name don't have the same cachet

Doesn't anybody want a piece of me  
The undiscovered voice of my generation  
He'll cost you time and money, and I'm fast and cheap and free  
Doesn't anybody want a piece of me

I'll do it out of envy, I'll do it out of spite  
I'll gladly play each stinking college town  
I'll gladly play East Buttfuck on a rainy Tuesday night  
Opening for a juggler and a clown  
Ship me off to Paris, ship me off to Rome  
Ship me off to Pluto, well that's a bit too far from home  
I'll meet him in Altoona and I'll buy us both a beer  
And we'll take a sip and ask each other what we're doing here

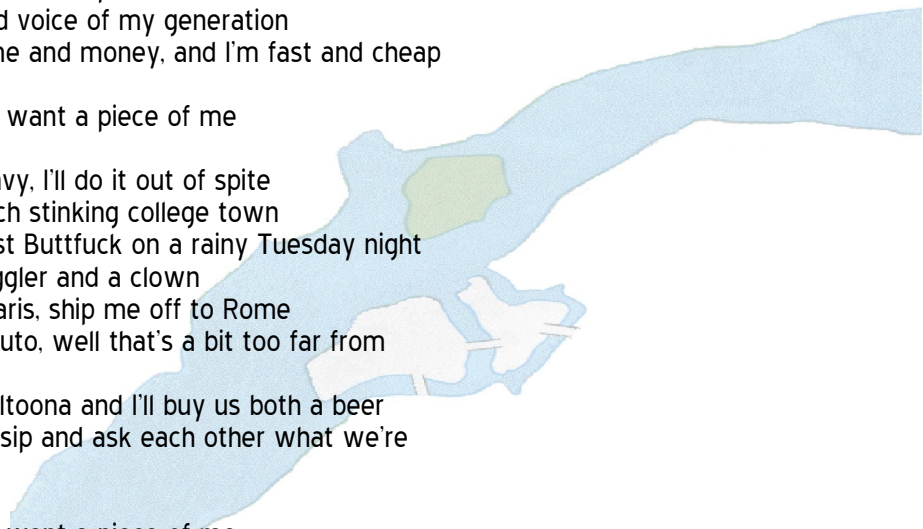
Doesn't anybody want a piece of me  
The undiscovered voice of my generation  
He'll cost you time and money, and I'm fast and cheap and free  
Doesn't anybody want a piece of me

He's always in the papers, it's a sordid tale they tell  
There's a dozen bastard children, and a couple wives as well  
He succumbs to strange afflictions, he's a slave to his addictions  
There's indictments and convictions, and he's going straight to hell  
He bites the heads off chickens, and smashes his guitars  
He's seen departing cheap hotels with wives of movie stars  
I'll never know if any of it happened that way  
But they say that's what they saw, and they say that's what they say

Hey you, come violate my privacy  
I'm eager for the chance to shock the nation  
They tell me that there's no such thing as bad publicity  
I'll take a headline over just another chunk of scenery

Doesn't anybody want a piece of me  
The undiscovered voice of my generation  
He'll cost you time and money, and I'm fast and cheap and free  
Doesn't anybody want a piece of me

I don't have all day  
What's taking you so long?



# Bird on a Balcony

Copyright © 1998 Sam Bayer

When first I saw you you were poised like a bird on  
the edge of a balcony  
Waiting for the wind to come by and fill your wings  
The squirrels rustled through the autumn leaves  
As you sighed and tucked your hands into your sleeves  
The sun reached down a beam and asked you to  
dance, and you said  
"Maybe later, I'd like to give this boy a chance"

I took your hand and you reeled yourself in like a dog  
leash  
or a tape measure, or the one that got away  
I lost my footing unaccustomed as I am to standing  
above the ground  
Heard thunder in the distance and the sun jumped  
back  
And those looming heavens opened up a crack  
You asked me to lead us to shelter but I guess I just  
lost track

The last part  
Won't fit  
I have to make my peace with it  
Round peg  
Square hole  
My heart  
Your soul

You landed on my shoulder and whispered in my ear  
It must have been language but it wasn't a language I  
could understand  
Didn't want to say yes when a no would suffice  
Didn't know what you'd told me once and what you'd  
told me twice  
Had no way of telling if I'd followed or ignored your  
advice

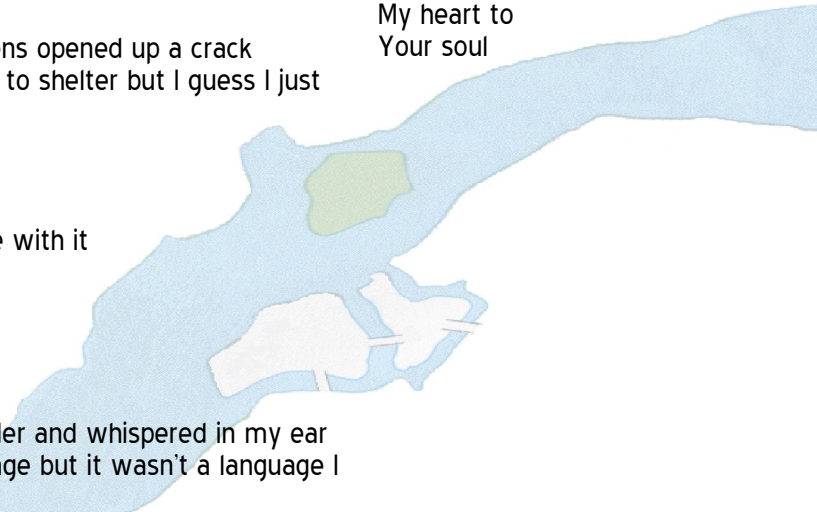
The last part  
Won't fit  
I have to make my peace with it  
Round peg  
Square hole  
My heart  
Your soul

The storm roared in from where the sun went to hide  
The leaves dimpled in the swollen rain  
And the trees bowed down as we waited inside  
Just a boy and his bird and breath on a windowpane  
We couldn't fly  
Just hovered in the vault of the hall  
It howled and it hailed, electricity failed

And the bird and her boy met the fury  
The fury of fall

When last I saw you you were looking kind of  
grounded  
I know I'll see you fly again just not today  
I didn't want to be the one to clip our wings but  
though  
Gravity's behind me I'm not light enough to slip away  
from other things

The last part  
Won't fit  
I have to make my peace with it  
Round peg  
In a square hole  
It was a good start  
But that last part  
Can't match  
My heart to  
Your soul



# To Your Health

Copyright © 1998 Sam Bayer

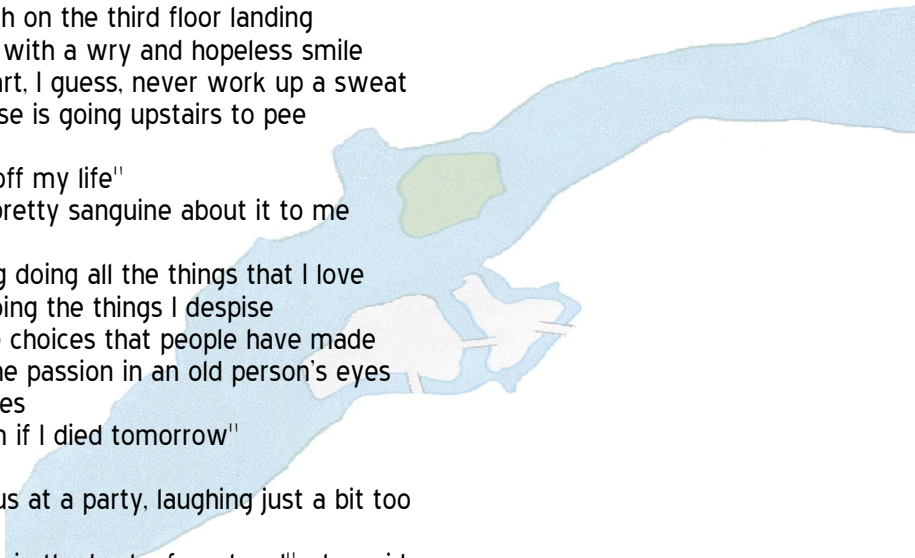
"Don't know from protein, never turn on my stove"  
He casually mentioned as he bagged my groceries  
"I'm living on pop tarts and breakfast cereal  
Jujubes and corn chips and Hi-C  
I'm killing myself  
I'm taking years off my life"  
And he seemed pretty sanguine about it to me

"You can die young doing all the things that you love  
Or live forever doing the things you despise  
And you can see the choices that people have made  
In the pain and the passion in an old person's eyes  
And I love my vices  
And I'd miss them if I died tomorrow"

Gasping for breath on the third floor landing  
He waved to me with a wry and hopeless smile  
"I'm just an old fart, I guess, never work up a sweat  
My idea of exercise is going upstairs to pee  
I'm killing myself  
I'm taking years off my life"  
And he seemed pretty sanguine about it to me

"I could die young doing all the things that I love  
Or live forever doing the things I despise  
And I can see the choices that people have made  
In the pain and the passion in an old person's eyes  
And I love my vices  
And I'd miss them if I died tomorrow"

She backed into us at a party, laughing just a bit too  
often  
"I wish I had eyes in the back of my head", she said  
"Especially when I've had a little vodka and rum  
And beer and tequila and whiskey  
I'm killing myself  
I'm taking years off my life  
Yes I'm killing myself  
I'm taking years off my life  
Yes I'm killing myself  
I'm taking years off my life"  
But she seemed pretty sanguine about it to me  
She seemed pretty sanguine about it to me  
She seemed pretty sanguine



# Edith and Elmer

Copyright © 1998 Sam Bayer

I was watching a commercial for Boost or Ensure or  
one of those  
products that keeps old people from wetting their  
pants or dying of  
exhaustion  
And there were all these folks thirty, forty years older  
than me  
running round like they owned the place  
And I looked at Edith in her sweatpants and curlers  
And me in my T-shirt and ratty old robe  
And all the time the clock on the wall was ticking,  
ticking, ticking

And I said,  
"Edith, get your coat  
Put on your hat  
Forget the chicken in the oven, there's no time for that  
Death is at the door, he got my name somehow  
I think we can outrun him if we leave right now  
I'll step on the gas and you can steer  
Edith, grab your coat and let's get out of here"

And she said,  
"Elmer, have you lost your mind?  
You never voluntarily leave the house  
And I am honor-bound to remind you that your idea of  
the great  
outdoors is being more than fifteen feet from an  
electrical outlet"  
But I said, "Hallelujah, woman, I have seen the light  
I have been humiliated by old people on television  
And this decade and a half we have been vegetating  
together is but a  
prelude to a dynamic and invigorating life"

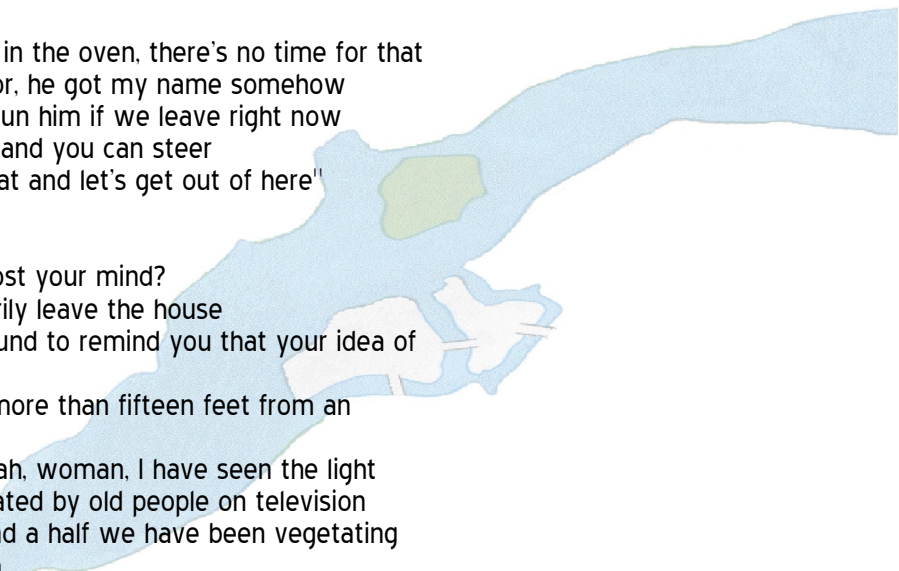
And I said,  
"Edith, get your coat  
Put on your hat  
Forget the chicken in the oven, there's no time for that  
Death is at the door, he got my name somehow  
I think we can outrun him if we leave right now  
I'll step on the gas and you can steer  
Edith, grab your coat and let's get out of here"

And she said,  
"What do you think I've been doing these last fifteen  
years, sitting  
around listening to you fart and watching you scratch  
your belly?  
Instead of sitting in the kitchen reading beauty  
magazines I'll have  
you know I went out and won myself the Nobel Prize

in Physics  
And in 1987  
I invited you to the awards banquet in Stockholm  
And you said, 'Woman, you know I hate wearing a  
tuxedo'

"And I said,  
'Elmer, get your coat  
Put on your hat  
Forget the burgers on the grill, we've got no time for  
that  
Gotta get up on that plane and fly across the sea  
Gotta do my little two-step with history  
So put aside those Cheetos and flush your beer  
Elmer, grab your coat and let's get out of here'

"And you said, 'Nothing doing, woman'  
And went back to watching that goddamn TV"



# Just a Couple Steps Ahead of Me

Copyright © 1998 Sam Bayer

A break in the trees  
Seems to lead off to nowhere  
It's a path I never would have followed  
Without you leading the way  
The dappled shadows pose a dozen questions  
But you prefer to watch the light between  
I try to believe in what you see  
Just a couple of steps ahead of me

There's a sandy gold in the winter brush  
That matches your hair and skin  
I can't really tell where the forest ends  
And you begin  
I've got my compass, my rations, my first aid kit  
My flares to signal an SOS  
I see nothing but frozen misery  
Just a couple of steps ahead of me

The woodland creatures would be mystified  
By this boy who was stymied by a walk through the  
trees  
If you stick to the path you're bound to meet  
The robins on Laurel Lane  
And the squirrels on Acorn Street

Logs in the mud  
Steppingstones across streams  
A break in a flagstone wall  
Steps up the face of a ravine  
The obstacles fall like the autumn leaves  
On this path I was afraid to follow  
I try to believe in what you see  
Just a couple of steps ahead of me

Da da da da  
The robins on Laurel Lane  
And the squirrels on Acorn Street

And I remember the path back to the parking lot  
I remember my car  
I remember betting you an ice cream code  
We'd never get this far  
The sun waved goodbye to our safari day  
The forest bled steel and slate and grey  
I waved my goodbyes and I turned to flee  
But here in the dark  
I can't even see  
A couple of steps ahead  
Of me



# It Must Have Been That Bottle of Wine

Copyright © 1998 Sam Bayer

Gather round, and I'll tell you a tale  
Of the sorry state of male and female  
We've got questions to ponder, blame to assign  
Thanks to a bottle of wine

She was a lovely lady, charming and tall  
She could throw back her head and laugh at it all  
It's a sound that scampers up and down my spine  
And begs for a bottle of wine

And it introduces speculation  
About the source of my intoxication  
So let me haul down the facts from the shelf  
And let you figure it out for yourself

Well, she mounted my stairs, and rang my bell  
She was smiling wide and looking swell  
We strutted out on the town on our way to dine  
And we ordered a bottle of wine

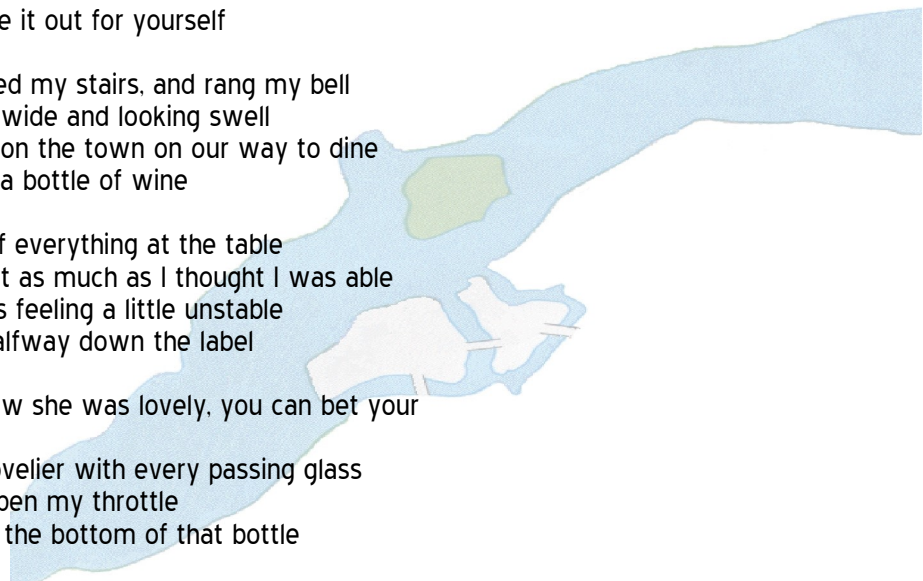
I ate a little bit of everything at the table  
And I drank about as much as I thought I was able  
And though I was feeling a little unstable  
We were only halfway down the label

And though I know she was lovely, you can bet your  
ass  
That she grew lovelier with every passing glass  
I was ready to open my throttle  
When we got to the bottom of that bottle

Well, I held her hand and kissed her goodnight  
And the feeling hit me like a meteorite  
Was she on her way to being my valentine  
Or should I blame that bottle of wine?

Cuz the next time I saw her, the fire had died  
Like a birthday present with nothing inside  
I should have known better than to use as a model  
A night I watched through the bottom of a bottle

Well, that's the end of my tale, the end of my song  
But if you think it's the end of me and her, well, you'd  
be wrong  
Her laugh is still lovely, her smile's still divine  
And if I had a moment of doubt, well, it must have  
been that  
bottle of wine





# Meeting Judi

Copyright © 1998 Sam Bayer

The bear emerges in the middle of the night  
Snorting and stamping his feet  
In pajamas that were never meant for human  
observation  
He's been flushed from his lair  
Roused from a sound night's sleep  
Stirred from a quiet winter's hibernation  
He bares his teeth  
Glares through his horn-rimmed glasses  
Growls with disdain at the chaos that passes  
For meeting Judi

The coyote spots his victim a living room away  
Now he's polishing the buttons on his captain's coat  
Now he's dressing up in feathers of bronze and indigo  
Now he's hurtling down the hillside on his rocket sled  
Now he's hovering for a moment in the air beyond the  
cliff  
Now he's a puff of smoke in the valley miles below  
And his body aches  
As he listens to her laughter  
That sudden collision  
Is all too common after  
Meeting Judi

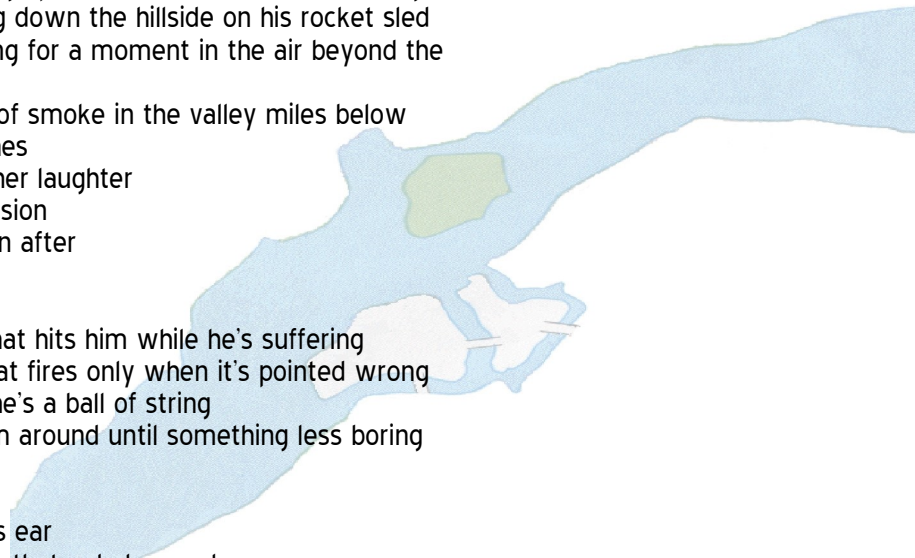
She's the anvil that hits him while he's suffering  
She's the gun that fires only when it's pointed wrong  
She's a cat and he's a ball of string  
And she'll bat him around until something less boring  
comes along

She purrs into his ear  
Whispers secrets that only he can hear  
Turns down the light to aid the atmosphere  
And mask his larger flaws  
She flicks her whiskers in his eye  
Rubs her fur against the inside of his thigh  
But it's not the armth of her breath that he'll  
remember her by  
But the length of her claws

She's a cat that jazz forgot about  
He's a coyote without portfolio  
The bear shuts his eyes, but no matter how he tries  
The sight of them entwined is going to set his therapy  
years behind  
He just doesn't want to know

The bear growls a final time and lumbers away  
The coyote plots for tomorrow the same plots as  
yesterday  
And the cat strokes her tail and turns back on the light

The bear lies down and his eyes drift shut  
And the cat and the coyote go off to do God knows  
what  
And the menagerie shuts down for another night  
The price of your admission  
Is the least of your expenses  
If you want to play  
You'll have to pay the consequences  
Of meeting Judi



# Vices

Copyright © 1998 Sam Bayer

You could eat off my morals  
I was as pure as the driven snow  
You could steer by my ethics  
You could read at night by my halo  
But that was before I met you  
Before I begged you to lead me astray  
I didn't know how to get you  
But righteousness wasn't the way

I was wandering around where I shouldn't  
In a neighborhood I didn't know  
I stopped you and asked for directions  
And you told me where to go  
You were a menace to my salvation  
There was decadence in your eye  
My knees took a moment's vacation  
And I didn't even fight it, I didn't even try

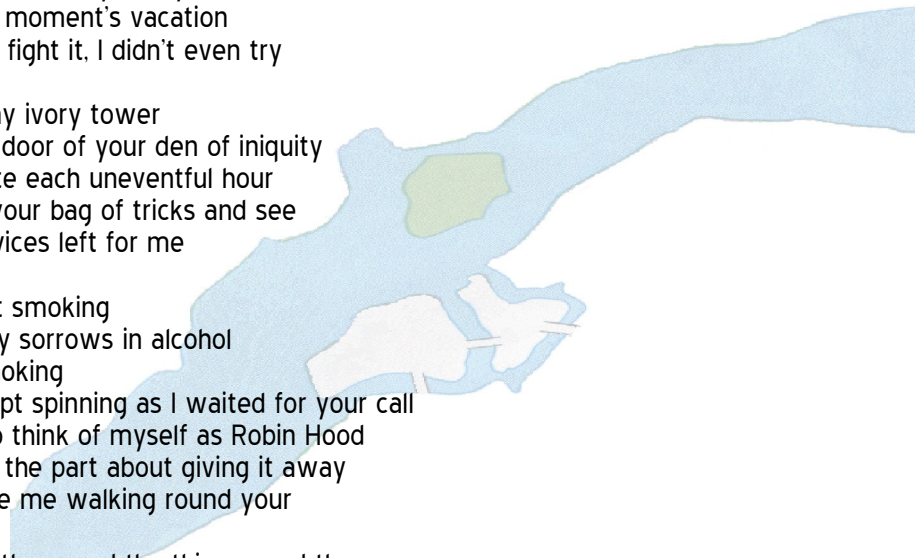
I'm all alone in my ivory tower  
Pounding on the door of your den of iniquity  
I've grown to hate each uneventful hour  
So rummage in your bag of tricks and see  
If you have any vices left for me

So I tried to start smoking  
And drowning my sorrows in alcohol  
I couldn't stop choking  
And the room kept spinning as I waited for your call  
You asked me to think of myself as Robin Hood  
But forget about the part about giving it away  
You couldn't have me walking round your  
neighborhood  
What would the thugs and the thieves and the  
delinquents say?

I tried to be bad the way you wanted me to be  
I tried to ooze venom and larceny  
But I ain't going to hell unless you give me the key  
And I'll never get to heaven  
No, I'll never get to heaven  
No, I'll never get to heaven  
The way you got to me

So you sip your bourbon  
And I slug my tea  
You bite the end off a Cuban cigar  
And I mask the stench with potpourri  
We can't ask our parents to dinner  
My folks would faint, your folks would faint  
You can't pass me off as a sinner  
And you'll never pass as a saint, never pass as a saint

I'm all alone in my ivory tower  
Pounding on the door of your den of iniquity  
I've grown to hate each uneventful hour  
So rummage in your bag of tricks and see  
If you have any vices left for me  
Got to get me some (3x)



# Putting Sophy to Bed

Copyright © 1998 Sam Bayer

I will trade one sweet for another hour of daylight

Sophy throws her licorice stick into the pot  
And peers at her parents, jacks and queens in her  
camp

The stakes are getting kind of high for a friendly game  
of cards

And Sophy's starting to wilt under the low-hanging  
lamp

It's the time of the evening for high-wire negotiations  
For wheeling and dealing in talcum-powder-filled rooms  
Poker faces melt into desperate solicitations  
And the darkened spectre of the mattress looms

Sophy's going to be an international gambler  
Sophy's going to be a diplomatic attache  
She'll win with a bluff and a promise  
Or perhaps with a tantrum instead  
But Sophy ain't going to waver  
And Sophy ain't going to bed

I wanna eat my milk and cookies in the evening breeze  
I wanna run, I wanna jump, I wanna dance, I wanna  
sing  
I wanna laugh, I wanna play, I wanna stay up  
Pleeeeeeeaaase

Sophy's in her kitchen stirring up a hypnotic brew  
To mesmerize and paralyze her parents  
She needs to stay up past her bedtime to achieve  
worldwide domination  
And she's grown tired of their constant interference  
She's a four year old Lex Luthor, with her sinister plans  
And designs on the household water supply  
The cartoon bubbles above her head will tell you what  
she's thinking,  
and they say  
"Superman doesn't have to go to bed, so why do I?"

Sophy's going to be an evil genius  
Sophy's going to be a devilish mastermind  
She'll win with the power of logic  
Or perhaps with a tantrum instead  
But Sophy ain't going to waver  
And Sophy ain't going to bed

I wanna eat my milk and cookies in the evening breeze  
I wanna run, I wanna jump, I wanna dance, I wanna  
sing  
I wanna laugh, I wanna play, I wanna stay up  
Pleeeeeeeaaase

Sophy paces in her tent, miles from the front  
The scouts are reporting in and the news isn't good  
Mom and Dad have cut off access to the stairs in the  
kitchen

And they're waiting in the hall, just like they said they  
would

It's a desperate plan, she's a miniature Mata Hari  
Sneaking across the border in her wide-brimmed hat  
She asks the help of a friendly native in her very best  
Spanish

And Mom scoops her up and scolds her and it isn't  
supposed to end like that

Sophy's going to be a military commander  
Sophy's going to be an undercover spy  
She'll win with force and deception  
Or perhaps with a tantrum instead  
But Sophy ain't going to waver  
And Sophy ain't going to bed

Sophy's going to be an evil genius  
Sophy's going to be a devilish mastermind  
Sophy's going to be a diplomatic attache  
And Sophy's going to be a big girl who gets to stay up  
late someday

An international gambler  
A diplomatic attache  
And Sophy ain't going to bed

# Playing with the Big Boys Now

But we'll shake their hands and smile anyhow  
Cuz we're playing with the big boys  
Yes we're playing with the big boys  
We're playing with the big boys now

Copyright © 1998 Sam Bayer

Got us a football team  
A source of civic pride  
I can hear the cheers echo off the walls  
Got us the biggest signs that the laws allow  
We're playing with the big boys now

Our city maps  
Are obsolete  
Every week we pave another highway  
Our visitors still find us, but we're not sure how  
We're playing with the big boys now

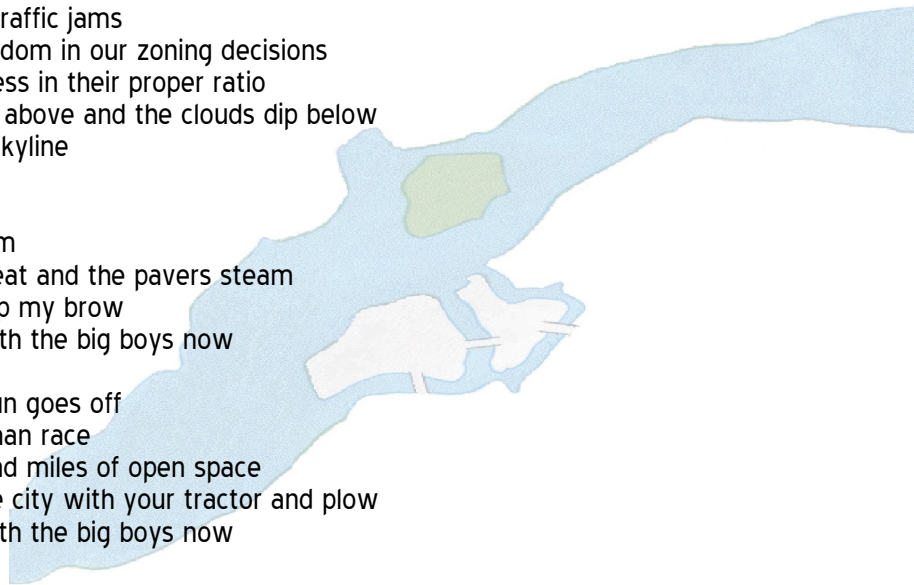
Lord  
Deliver us from traffic jams  
And grant us wisdom in our zoning decisions  
Home and business in their proper ratio  
As the sun soars above and the clouds dip below  
The downtown skyline

The traffic roars  
The towers gleam  
The welders sweat and the pavers steam  
In solidarity I mop my brow  
We're playing with the big boys now

And when the gun goes off  
We run that human race  
Through miles and miles of open space  
Don't drive in the city with your tractor and plow  
We're playing with the big boys now

Lord  
Deliver us from traffic jams  
And grant us wisdom in our zoning decisions  
Home and business in its proper ratio  
As the jets soar above and the cars rush below  
The downtown skyline

We say please and thank you and pardon me and how  
do you do  
We shake your hands and tip our hats and never  
swear and never boast  
You're welcome if you're staying or just passing  
through  
We're even civil to the assholes who fly in from the  
coast  
The talk too fast and deal too slick and half of what  
they say is true  
But it's the simple lack of manners that bothers us the  
most



# The Visiting Uncle

Copyright © 1998 Sam Bayer

I open the door for Elijah  
He's only eight months old  
He lumbers toward me like a beach ball  
Rolling down a grassy  
Hill  
Somehow he's still standing  
Where lesser infants have failed  
All baby fat and half-formed consonants and grinning  
Drool

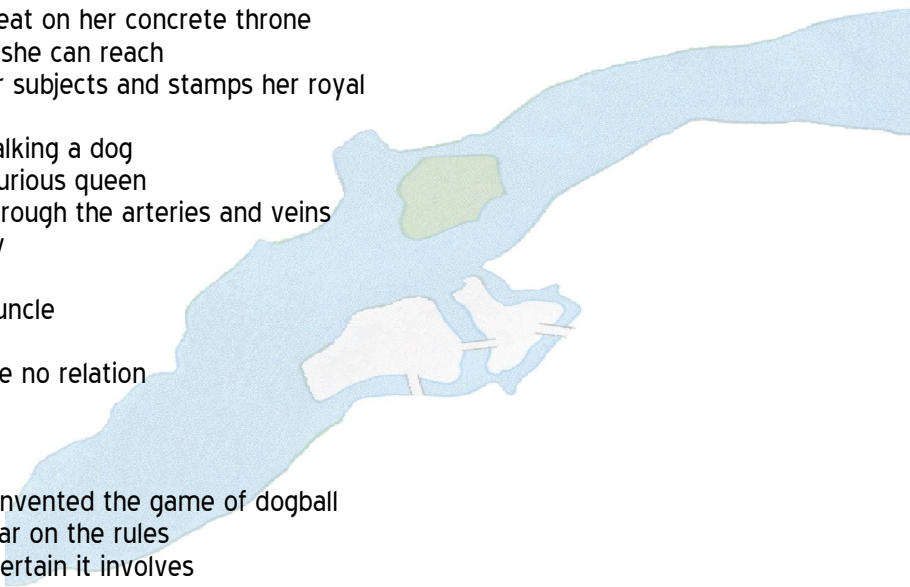
I am the visiting uncle  
The family friend  
These children are no relation  
Just a partial preoccupation

Anne takes her seat on her concrete throne  
It's the only stair she can reach  
She beams at her subjects and stamps her royal  
Tennis shoes  
It's a little like walking a dog  
Waiting for the curious queen  
As she stomps through the arteries and veins  
Of New York City

I am the visiting uncle  
The family friend  
These children are no relation  
Just a partial  
Preoccupation

And Jonah's just invented the game of dogball  
He's a little unclear on the rules  
But he's almost certain it involves  
A dog  
And a ball  
And hurtling through the air like an artillery shell  
But he lands without exploding  
On padded sofas or carpeted floors  
Or a mother's bruised but willing breast

And Anne demands my Chinese noodle worms  
And Elijah looks puzzled as I kiss him goodnight  
And Jonah gives me a cold  
To remember him  
By



# The Vulture

Copyright © 1998 Sam Bayer

We creep through the streets of the city  
We meet in twos and threes  
Almost everything we say and do the vulture sees  
He presses pen to paper, he touches pick to strings  
He waits among the shadows to collect the words he  
sings

He's looking for timeless wisdom  
He's looking for the universal truth  
He feeds on the genius of the elders  
He feeds on the folly of youth  
He thrives on salacious rumor  
Appropriates a dash of humor  
You better watch what you do, watch what you say  
You might end up in a song someday

He's the waiter at your table  
The clerk in every store  
The sullen secretary just beyond your office door  
We hone our blank expressions  
And circumscribe our prose  
But everything we think and feel the vulture knows

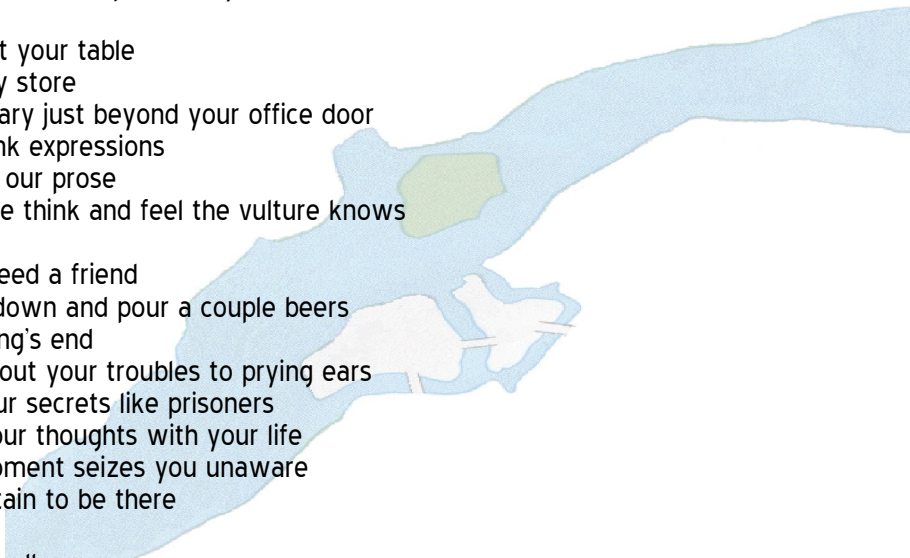
Someday you'll need a friend  
And he'll sit you down and pour a couple beers  
And by the evening's end  
He'll be crooning out your troubles to prying ears  
You can keep your secrets like prisoners  
You can guard your thoughts with your life  
But when the moment seizes you unaware  
The vulture's certain to be there

Someday you'll finally snap  
And you beg the listening skies for privacy  
But here inside his trap  
He'll hear your prayers in major ninths and poetry  
You can keep your secrets like prisoners  
You can guard your thoughts with your life  
But when the moment seizes you unaware  
The vulture's certain to be there

You can speak a private language  
A secret set of signs  
You can bury all your meaning in a nest of nonsense  
lines  
But the vulture will untangle  
The vulture will unfold  
The vulture will ensure that no one's tale remains  
untold

He's looking for timeless wisdom  
He's looking for the universal truth

He feeds on the genius of the elders  
He feeds on the folly of youth  
He thrives on salacious rumor  
Appropriates a dash of humor  
You better watch what you do, watch what you say  
You might end up in a song someday



# Chalkboard

Copyright © 1999 Sam Bayer

I can't remember how it started  
The silences seemed a little less than kind  
Cooler and longer than the day before  
It crept in like frost beneath the shingles  
We didn't see the damage, I didn't take the time  
And every day the temperature dropped a little more

And I'm waiting for a reaction  
In the sidewalk slate of your face  
Where every broken moment bears its weathered  
stain  
And the chalk pastels of a happier time  
Rendered by an unknown artist  
Blur to dust in the traffic  
And wash away in the rain

And though time is the best prescription  
It's a luxury we can't afford  
We're fingernails on each other's chalkboard

I've taken cover behind the sofa in the living room  
I can serpentine to the armchair in the den  
The shelling stops at dinnertime, to give the troops a  
bite to eat  
I've got reinforcements coming, but I don't know what  
I'll do then

And though I've tried to base our truces  
On the roll of the dice or the flip of a coin  
There's only one set of rules upon which we both  
agree  
Choose your weapons, take your places  
Draw your pistols, count your paces  
Turn to fire, glimpse the faces  
Wait and see

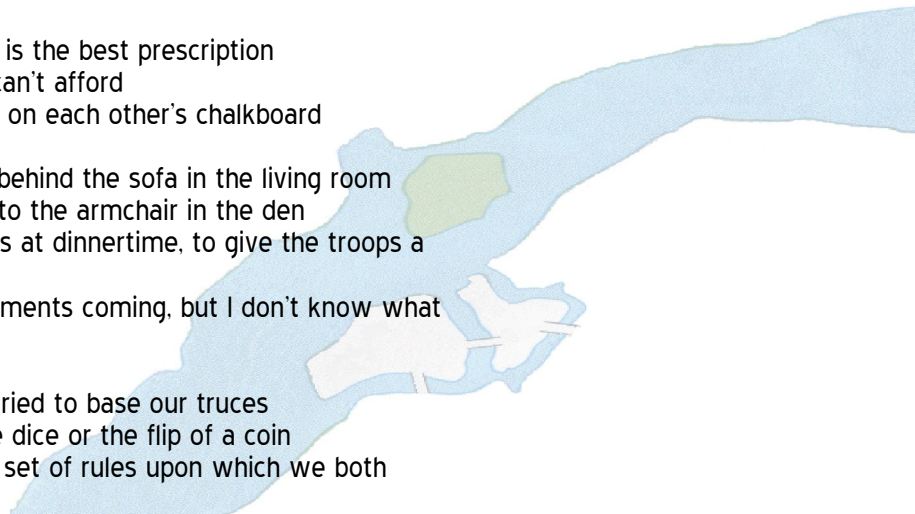
And though valor calls for discretion  
It's a path too often unexplored  
We're fingernails on each other's chalkboard

It's a quietly dying neighborhood  
With soap for storefronts and weeds for yards  
And traffic signals winking at the vacant streets  
Apathy killed this struggling town  
As certain as if it was dynamite  
Will the last person out of our heart please turn off the  
light

So I rub you with sandpaper  
And we prick each other with needles  
And you hunt me down in the basement next to the  
laundry

I'll try to keep the bleeding low  
But it's a trap they outlawed years ago  
I might have to chew my leg off, but I'll get free

You might say the process is draining  
But there's no more blood to be drawn  
It's not that my patience is waning  
It's that it's gone, gone, gone  
We might locate the love that's remaining  
If only someone would offer a reward  
We're fingernails on each other's chalkboard



# The Beatles Are Dying

Copyright © 1999 Sam Bayer

"Let me hear Penny Lane once more"  
Sir Paul whispered on his deathbed  
"I still remember the moment the amplifiers switched  
on  
and the tubes all glowed"  
His nursemaid nodded silently and repositioned the  
stylus  
And the room sang that trumpet's ancient song  
He closed his eyes and began to dream  
About that barefoot walk across Abbey Road

Oh, the Beatles are dying (2x)

Ringo retired from his little red caboose  
To bounce his grandchildren on his knee  
Making up new and outlandish verses to "Yellow  
Submarine"  
And as the years passed he'd forget his own name  
Or the faces of his children or where he lived  
But he still snapped to attention when a cymbal  
crashed  
Or a snare serrated across the village green

Oh, the Beatles are dying (2x)

And John's assassin played Father Time  
And Linda Eastman earned her angel's wings  
You can try to seek refuge in rhythm and rhyme  
But we all know what tomorrow brings  
And George's sweet Lord will be there to greet them  
And pretty soon all I'll have is this photograph  
To remember them by  
Seems like yesterday there was a buzz in a basement  
in Hamburg  
And today I hear "Yesterday" in an ad for an auto parts  
store  
We always said we wanted a revolution  
But this ain't the revolution I was hoping  
For

The Beatles are dying  
Oh, the Beatles are dying

"Let me hear Penny Lane once more"





# The Arrogance of Heartbreak

Copyright © 1999 Sam Bayer

Look at me. I'm an apple core on the trash heap of  
romance

Look at me. I'm a carcass on the highway of love  
Where's my consolation prizes  
Where's my army of outraged friends  
Where's my raft of sympathy  
Everybody  
Look at me

Do my laundry, pay my rent  
Keep my pets from starving  
Weep with me for her lost embrace  
Wring your hands as I stare off sadly  
Into space

I know you want to help me  
But it's a huge mistake  
I just can't seem to shake  
The arrogance of heartbreak

Help me deface her photographs  
And shred her correspondence  
Curse the strangers who won't pass blame  
And punish your friends who share her name

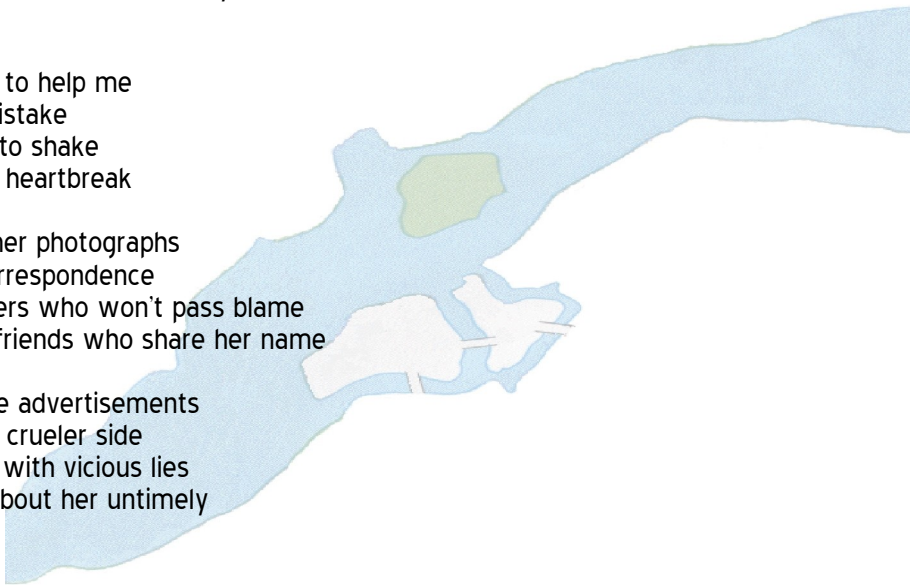
Take out full-page advertisements  
Documenting her crueller side  
Smear her virtue with vicious lies  
And file reports about her untimely  
Demise

I know you want to help me  
But it's a huge mistake  
I just can't seem to shake  
The arrogance of heartbreak

Ply me with Kleenex and alcohol  
Strippers and Penthouse magazines  
Tell me that dreaming of retribution  
Ain't no crime  
Tell me stories where she gets burned  
Tell me lies about the lessons I've learned  
And make all those soothing condemning sounds  
For the nineteenth time

Meet my eyes from across the room  
Lend an ear for sympathy  
Hold my hand over brewhouse foam  
Stroke my temples  
Take me home

I know you want to help me  
But it's a huge mistake  
I just can't seem to shake  
The arrogance of heartbreak (3x)  
The nerve



# Saving the Second-Hand Virtue

Copyright © 1999 Sam Bayer

You'll never guess what I found in the dustbin  
A little courage the someone had lost faith in  
Notes in the margins, page corners folded down  
A few faded traces of a highlight pen  
And there's a prayer inside the cover  
It's a little hard to see  
That says, "I just need someone to love me"

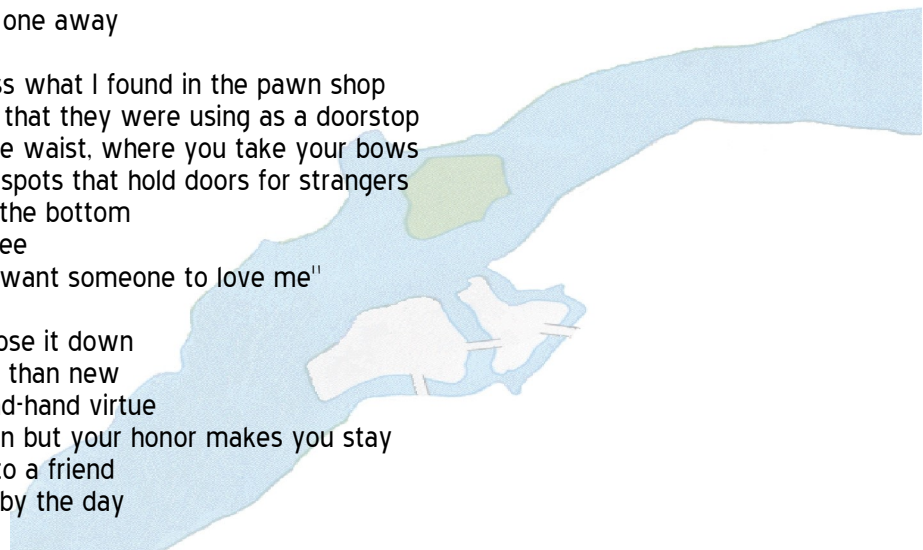
So dust it off, clean it up  
Bet it'll be better than new  
Saving the second-hand virtue  
Don't like the price that your courage makes you pay?  
Buy a cheap one on the Web  
Throw the other one away

You'll never guess what I found in the pawn shop  
A touch of grace that they were using as a doorstep  
A little dent in the waist, where you take your bows  
Mold around the spots that hold doors for strangers  
It had a label on the bottom  
Kind of hard to see  
That said, "I just want someone to love me"

So wash it off, hose it down  
Bet it'll be better than new  
Saving the second-hand virtue  
If you'd like to run but your honor makes you stay  
Sell the old one to a friend  
Rent a new one by the day

You'll never guess what I found in the thrift store  
A little common sense that someone had no use for  
Scratches on the casing from a rollerblade fall  
A little rust around the parts that know when to cross  
the street  
And a message scribbled underneath  
The voided warranty  
That said, "I just need someone to love me"

So shine it up, turn it on  
Bet it'll be better than new  
Saving the second-hand virtue  
If the things you think are far too dumb to say  
Give your caution to the poor  
And do it anyway  
Sell the old one to a friend  
Rent a new one by the day  
Buy a cheap one on the Web  
Throw the other one away



# What Kevin Remembers Next

Copyright © 2000 Sam Bayer

It's a grim day dawning in the 'hood for Whitey'thieves  
Young toughs on the corner, cigarette packs in their  
shirtsleeves  
Grizzled lieutenants spitting tobacco in the shade  
And muttering about the mess these careless  
youngsters made

Hooker by night, waitress by day  
Serves a coffee to a wise guy who plugged a bookie to  
pad his resume  
They've all read the papers, and they're scared and  
perplexed  
About what Kevin will remember next

Nerves fray in the kitchen, tempers flare in the yard  
Fingers drum on bakery counters, shoulders hunch on  
the boulevard  
Lips are sealed and fingers are crossed in the context  
Of what Kevin will remember next

Kevin's associates are kind of upset  
About those people and places he was supposed to  
forget  
There's frustration, and rage, and occasional regret  
And no one thinks he's finished yet

Eight by ten cell, a little sunshine at three  
Wonder Bread for breakfast, General Hospital for  
company  
The thought of Whitey in a fake mustache  
Swimming in women and liquor and cash  
Jogs his memory

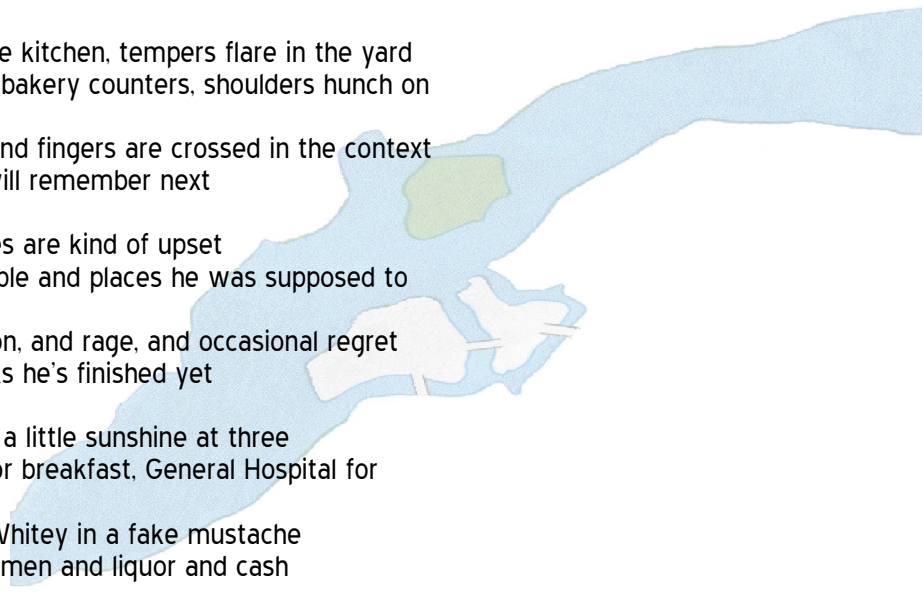
There was this bimbo down on Broadway who wanted  
a piece of the action  
She dropped too many names for Whitey's satisfaction  
When a woman like that makes such a rash demand  
You've got to kill her or deal her a hand

They seem to love their mamas, they can't be such  
bad chaps  
Just another day at the office, running numbers and  
busting kneecaps  
It's a dirty job, and just a privileged few can do it  
It sure beats Burger King, it's a shame that Kevin blew  
it

The iron fist turns rusty, the secrets wilt in the light of  
day  
Counterfeit twenties in the till, shallow graves beside

the highway  
From the crustiest veteran to the youngest turk  
They're all looking for a new line of work

And Kevin pumps the freeweights in the federal pen  
He's serving two to five instead of eight to ten  
It ain't good behavior's gonna save his skin  
It's that Whitey can't get in



# The Way She Looked Like You

Copyright © 2000 Sam Bayer

I put my parcels on the counter  
Got a wedding on my mind  
There's a clerk behind the clutter, and she gives me a  
    wave  
But it's a hand reaching out of a grave  
It's eerie but it's true  
How much she looks like you

A sudden crash of ocean  
Washes back the time  
I'm drowning as the dream descends  
I race back to the surface and I get the bends  
It's eerie but it's true  
How much she looks like you

I remember your face as you told your tales  
Your lips would linger on a turn of a phrase  
But whenever I dwell upon these sweet details  
I feel a tap on the shoulder of happier days

I was foolish and lonely  
And you were bitter and lonely  
And we stood next to each other for a while  
and our friends made a fuss  
There was just enough love to be dangerous  
As we tried to make do  
With how you looked to me, and I looked to you

I could try to forget about the ways it grew clearer  
That I couldn't be the person you begged me to be  
Or I could admire my scars in the mirror  
Cuz pain has this funny integrity

The transaction's almost over  
She's got her hand out for the bill  
And I can't help but find it strange  
How I'm already so different and here she is  
expecting change  
It was a shot out of the blue  
The way she looked like you



# Oyster Girl

Copyright © 2000 Sam Bayer

You look up and smile  
And I ask myself what the hell is wrong with me  
You take my hand for your anchor  
When all I want to do is break free  
But I don't have the courage to tell you  
So I'm hoping you'll figure it out eventually  
I'm counting on the rust of cowardice  
Instead of the knife of bravery

You are my oyster girl  
I am your blinded and stranded pearl  
You'd sell your shell to keep me, this I know  
But if I'm enough of an irritation  
Maybe you'll let me go  
Maybe you'll let me go

So I smile a little more weakly  
And I consent with a little less spark  
I turn away a little more quickly  
At night in the dark  
I protest a little more firmly  
I frown and I whine and I worry out loud  
It's the cheapest of tricks  
But I'm not proud, I'm not proud, I'm not proud

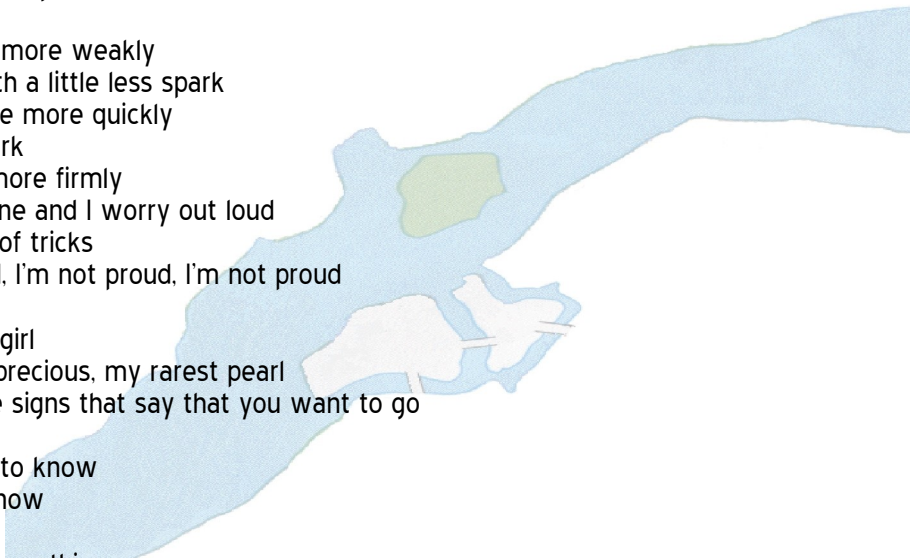
I am your oyster girl  
And you are my precious, my rarest pearl  
When I see these signs that say that you want to go  
I wish I was blind  
Cuz I don't want to know  
I don't want to know

Your patience wears thin  
With my stance of neglect  
I wish I could tell you that it's weakness  
And not disrespect  
And all the joys that we shared  
I don't want to discuss  
The taste of our laughter will turn bitter after  
The wreckage I've planned for us

If I laugh by mistake  
If I warm to your touch  
If I have to remind myself I can't afford to care  
very much  
Don't take it as an invitation  
It's not a promise to stay  
Cowards sometimes do things wrong  
That way

You are my oyster girl  
I am your shameful, your blameful pearl

You'd sell your shell to keep me, this I know  
But if I cut you down  
If I make you pick the crumbs off the floor  
When your well of goodwill is empty  
When you decide not to take anymore  
Maybe you'll let me go (4x)



# The Mistakes You've Made

Copyright © 2000 Sam Bayer

We were the match from hell, of that you can be sure  
Romantic indigestion, mal d'amour  
Compounding the damage with each moment we  
    stayed  
It was one of the mistakes we made

But now you're pointing fingers; man, that's rude  
I won't be held responsible for the things you've  
    screwed  
Up  
You want me for your scapegoat, but I'm afraid  
I'm just one of the mistakes you've made

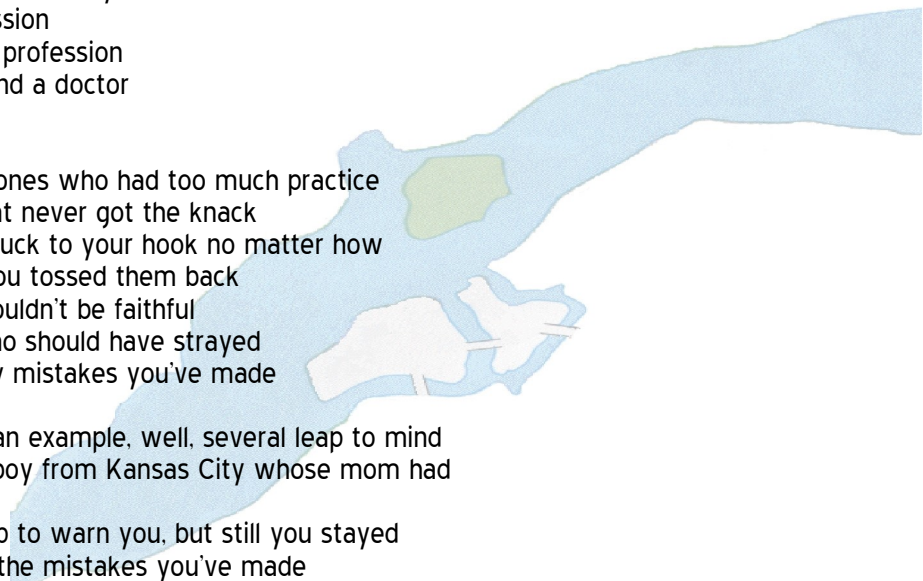
You could fill your pen with professional men  
Or members of the faculty  
But auto repossession  
Don't count as a profession  
And when you find a doctor  
It's Mengele

There were the ones who had too much practice  
And the ones that never got the knack  
The ones who stuck to your hook no matter how  
    many times you tossed them back  
The ones who couldn't be faithful  
And the ones who should have strayed  
Among the many mistakes you've made

You ask me for an example, well, several leap to mind  
There was that boy from Kansas City whose mom had  
    just resigned  
She called you up to warn you, but still you stayed  
With another of the mistakes you've made

You swear that you're maturing  
In the men you find alluring  
But no one thinks it's going to last  
Your friends have reached consensus  
That your only safe defenses  
Are a blindfold, and handcuffs, and a body cast

So when the sun is high, and love is in the breeze  
And you inhale romance like smog or allergies  
I may be no physician, but I can pinpoint your condition  
Whenever you begin to sneeze  
You're dogged by bad decisions  
But dogs can be spayed  
So they won't make the mistakes  
No, they won't have what it takes  
To make all the mistakes you've made



# The Longest Day of the Year

Copyright © 2000 Sam Bayer

On the longest day of the year  
On the porch behind your apartment  
We made faces into your camera  
In front of a platinum sky  
On the longest day of the year  
We pricked our pinkies and touched the tips  
We drew two stick figures on the sidewalk and  
guarded them from passersby  
And the sun don't move, the clocks don't chime  
Seems like we've got nothing but time

So stand clear  
And let the sundial shadows pass  
Free the sand from your hourglass  
It can't make any difference here  
On the longest day of the year

On the longest day of the year  
We dipped our toes in the water  
We ate clams from a paper bucket  
We drew hearts in the sand  
On the longest day of the year  
I picked up a snail from the sidewalk  
And I knelt and placed in on the third  
finger of your left hand  
And the sun don't move, the clocks don't chime  
Seems like we've got nothing but time

So stand clear  
And let the sundial shadows pass  
Free the sand from your hourglass  
It can't make any difference here  
On the longest day of the year

Some day  
When the future ain't so far away  
And the past is just a masterpiece  
Hanging on our wall  
Then we  
Will snare this firefly memory  
It's just one of many moments  
I'm gonna try to catch them all

On the longest day of the year  
I put my gun down  
I put my sword down  
I stood there weaponless  
On the longest day of the year  
You whispered your answer to your finger snail  
And you looked at me kind of slyly

And told me to guess

And the sun don't move, the clocks don't chime  
Seems like we've got nothing but time

So stand clear  
And let the sundial shadows pass  
Free the sand from your hourglass  
It can't make any difference here  
So let go  
And share the secret the vacationing roosters know  
That time stopped passing a long long time ago  
And who are we to interfere  
On the longest day of the year (2x)



# I Can't Write Love Songs

Copyright © 2000 Sam Bayer

Sunday morning  
We wake up with the heat  
We buckle up our bathrobes and shiver through the  
paper  
And I pick up my guitar  
And shake it to find out what's inside  
It's a spider's strand of inspiration  
I make aimless tuneless noises  
And I search for a melody  
Your bare feet glow in the sunlight  
And you ask "Are you thinking of me"

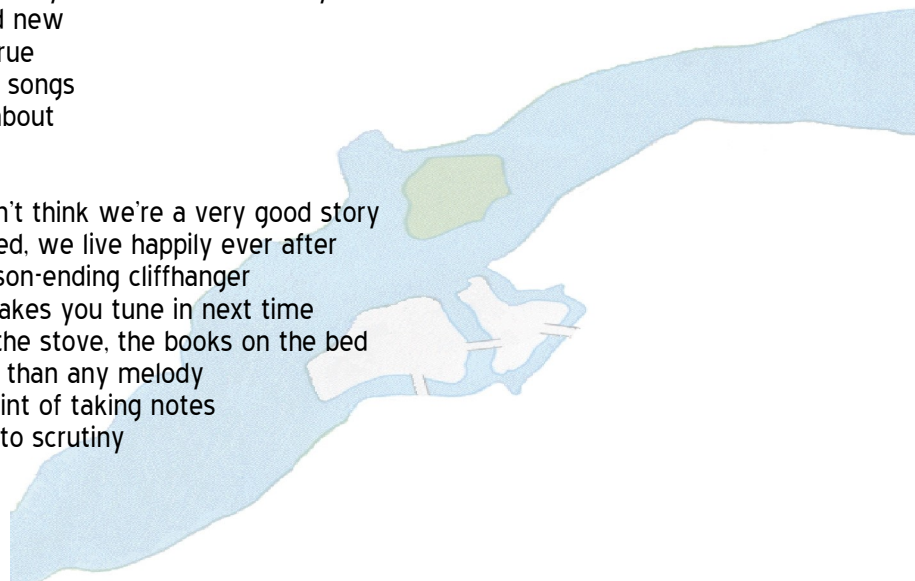
I can't write love songs  
I don't know how it's done  
Can't bear to bare my heart in front of everyone  
They don't sound new  
They don't ring true  
I can't write love songs  
So I can't write about  
You

The truth is, I don't think we're a very good story  
We meet, we wed, we live happily ever after  
Where's the season-ending cliffhanger  
The hook that makes you tune in next time  
But the pots on the stove, the books on the bed  
Tell a better tale than any melody  
So what's the point of taking notes  
Or subjecting us to scrutiny

(chorus)

And last night  
I held you as you fell asleep  
And I thought of words to sing  
But they didn't tell a story  
And they didn't form a rhyme  
No, not this time

(chorus)





# The Millennium Song

Copyright © 2000 Sam Bayer

Chicken in the oven, cider on the stove  
Champagne on the back porch cooling  
The kitchen stinks of lemon, cinnamon, clove  
Dog lies near the trash can drooling

Cold breath on the window as the doorbell rings  
And cake and wine and cheese and bread and hearts  
stand in the doorway  
We've made the march of time, but no one promised  
    life was fair  
I've seen my whiskers peeking gray  
But Dick Clark's looking younger every day

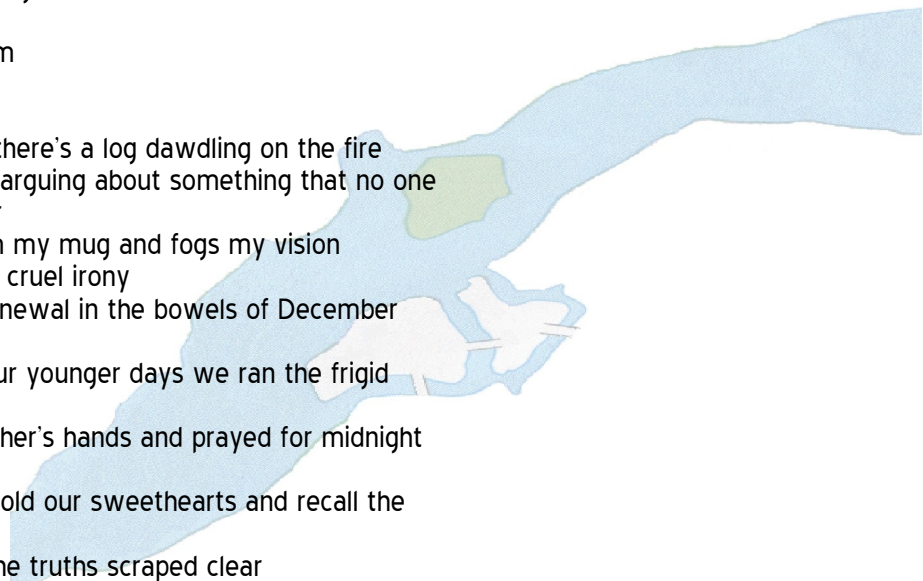
So hurry up  
We don't have long  
Learn the words  
To our millennium  
Song

Ten o'clock and there's a log dawdling on the fire  
And we've been arguing about something that no one  
    can remember  
Steam rises from my mug and fogs my vision  
but I still see the cruel irony  
Of celebrating renewal in the bowels of December

'Cause back in our younger days we ran the frigid  
    streets  
And held each other's hands and prayed for midnight  
    kisses  
But tonight we hold our sweethearts and recall the  
    frantic revelry  
And chuckle at the truths scraped clear  
And besides  
It's warmer in here

So raise your glass  
And sing along  
Learn the words  
To our millennium  
Song

Eleven forty five and three of us are almost dozing  
But the year is hanging by a thread  
And another one is straight ahead  
So forget about the lost election, point your corks in a  
    safe direction  
Tense your toes at the starter's gun  
Ten nine eight seven six five four three two  
Thousand one



# Moving

Copyright © 2001 Sam Bayer

Pack up the books, sort them by size  
Pick out the stinkers and give them away  
Roll up the rugs, tie them with rope  
Shake out the dust and vacuum them later

Gather the change from inside the couch  
It'll pay for the tolls on the interstate  
Shut the windows and lock the door  
Don't know whether to mourn or celebrate

Cancel the paper, forward the mail  
Wave to your neighbors one last time  
Ready or not, now we are free  
Kym and Taylor and me

Clean out the closets and throw out the crap  
Empty that ominous kitchen drawer  
There's gizmos and gadgets and doohickey thingies  
How can you need them if you don't know what  
they're  
For

Donate, downsize, simplify  
Is it wisdom or betrayal  
You don't want to wake up tomorrow  
Without the props to tell your tale

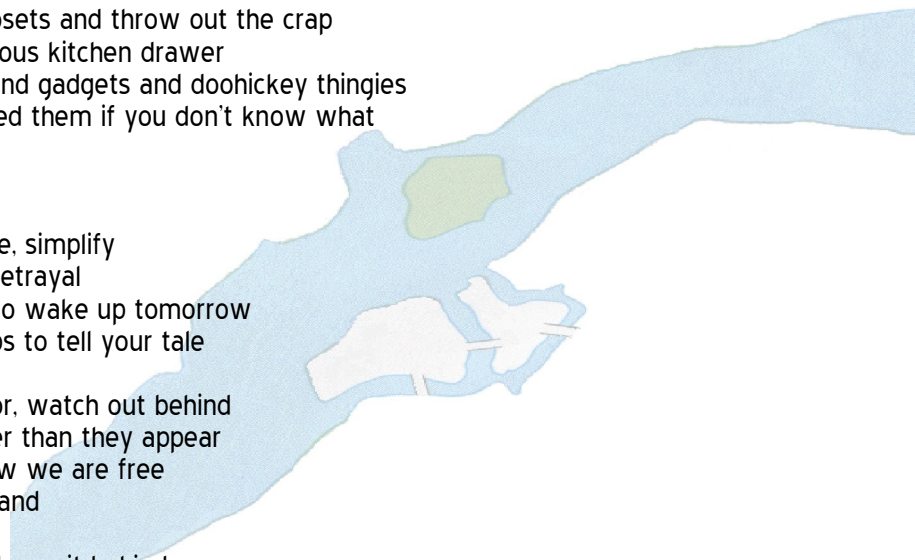
Look in the mirror, watch out behind  
Objects are closer than they appear  
Like it or not, now we are free  
Kym and Taylor and

Keep it, trash it, leave it behind  
Everything goes into one of the piles  
The more we pack the more we find  
We're traveling lifetimes more than miles

The lonely snap of bubblewrap  
A partially empty bottle of beer  
A key on the floor of an empty room  
This is the evidence we were here

Open the throttle, step on the gas  
Kick up the sand in your hourglass  
Ready or not, now we are free  
Kym and Taylor and me

Ready or not



# Me and Walter Mitty

Copyright © 2001 Sam Bayer

Me and Walter Mitty  
Traded notes on the veranda  
From the jungles of Uganda  
To the alleyways of Rome  
And we reached a quick agreement  
That in spite of trouble brewing  
Though good deeds still needed doing  
It felt good to be back home

The world weighed on our shoulders  
As we sipped our tea and honey  
Not adventure, fame or money  
Could distract us from our goal  
While others spin their story  
Of revenge and gain and glory  
We will dream the dreams of courage  
That can make this poor world whole

Chase the pirates on the ocean  
As the hurricane roars past  
Give the password to your contact  
Taste your blood and breathe your last  
Free the patriotic prisoners  
From the despot's catacomb  
Lead the refugees to safety  
Save the world and hurry home

Me and Walter Mitty  
Watched the sun set on the river  
Heard the chirping crickets shiver  
And the rattling of roulette  
But we couldn't help reflecting  
On the world and all its dangers  
And the untold desperate strangers  
That we hadn't rescued yet

Me and Walter Mitty  
Tucked our pistols in our pockets  
Rode the Orient Express  
And snatched the maidens from the tracks  
But it's a million miles to Moscow  
As the last cabana closes  
And we stroll back, sniffing roses  
And trying to relax

(chorus)

Me and Walter Mitty  
Downed our final dry martinis  
Raced our custom Lamborghinis  
To our leader's hidden lair  
We were briefed and dressed for duty

In our comfy plaid pajamas  
We curled up with dime-store dramas  
In our favorite easy chair

Me and Walter Mitty  
Read our secret coded orders  
We'll be off to war-torn borders  
And adventures yet unknown  
We'll be dreaming dreams of justice  
Slaying dragons, saving planets  
In this world with too few heroes  
You just have to be your own



# The Elephant in the Room

Copyright © 2001 Sam Bayer

He kind of blocks the door, when I get up to let you in  
He says he's merely clumsy, but I'm suspecting  
discipline  
He grazes in my parlor, beneath a wrinkled cloud of  
doom  
He's the sturdiest of baggage, he's the elephant in the  
room

I offer you a beverage, and you gratefully make your  
choice  
But above his heavy breathing I can barely hear your  
voice  
We talk about the weather loud and firm  
But he cannot take a hint, my patient packyderm

He doesn't seem to mind that he doesn't have a name  
I can't bear to meet his eyes, but he stays here all the  
same  
We hunt for other topics as he lumbers in the gloom  
I won't say anything if you won't about the elephant in  
the room

He says he'd work for peanuts, but that's more than I  
would pay  
But I'd buy him all of Africa if he'd only go away  
He's a constant through each psychosocial fad  
He's the parrot on my shoulder, the dog I never had

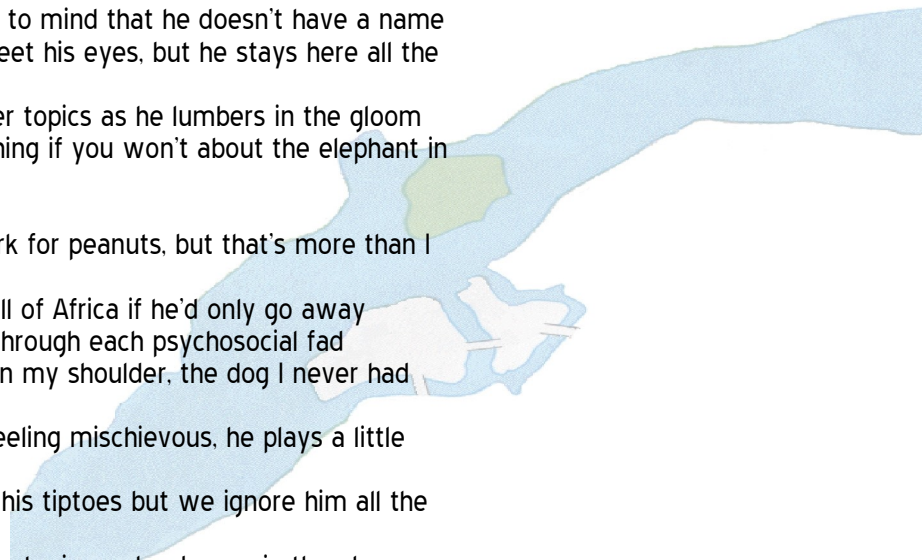
And when he's feeling mischievous, he plays a little  
game  
He stands up on his tiptoes but we ignore him all the  
same  
We hunt for other topics as he dances in the gloom  
I won't say anything if you won't about the elephant in  
the room

He's been stared at and avoided  
He's been whispered at and shunned  
But it's never changed his sunny disposition  
He's endured the coldest shoulder  
As he's watched us growing older  
But he only seems more focused on his mission

And then one fateful day you brought an uninvited  
guest  
She was large and grey and wrinkled and she had  
something on her chest  
She was looking for another ear to bend  
And there amid the shadows, she made a brand new  
friend

They bellow and they chortle as they egg each other

on  
They're so vaguely badly mannered and so vaguely put  
upon  
We could endure those painful quarrels about who's  
ignoring whom  
Or we could scoff at all this fussing  
Why, it's barely worth discussion  
Ve know absolutely nussing  
About the elephants in the room



# Hallucination

Copyright © 2001 Sam Bayer

Ah, last week, I remember it well  
We found a stray cat beneath your neighbor's porch  
And as it looked up at me with those big green saucers

You promised that we could keep it  
Now it's five AM and you're awake again  
and the cat is treading on brand new bedding  
And you're telling me it's all my fault  
as you lasso the cat with your sheet  
And I hope it's the exhaustion talkin'  
When you call me names I can't repeat

I ain't lyin', I'm just remembering differently  
It's subject to interpretation  
It may be plain reality  
Or a convenient hallucination

Ah, last year, I remember it well  
You wore that red, red dress on the day we met  
And as the sun beat down on those empty stands  
We toasted our team to victory  
Now it's five AM and you're awake again  
and you swear it was hazy and the crowds were crazy  
And you stained your favorite T-shirt  
as we traded a couple belts  
And the Sox were losing another one  
And I've got you confused with someone else

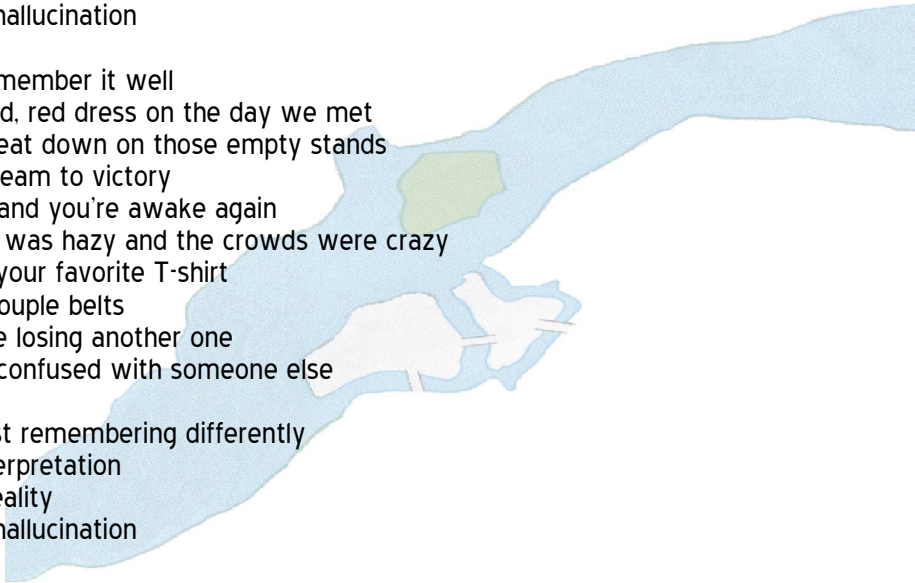
I ain't lyin', I'm just remembering differently  
It's subject to interpretation  
It may be plain reality  
Or a convenient hallucination

No permanent record, no tape recorder  
No memo filed in triplicate  
No judge, no jury, no court reporter  
No journalist live at the scene  
No wise and relevant Asian proverb  
No Solomonic wisdom, no superhero lurking  
I'd like to go back for another look  
But there ain't no instant replay,  
and the time machine ain't working

And last time, I remember it well  
The streets were warm and the subway sang  
And you held up a match in your fingertips  
And asked me if I'd like to light it  
Now it's five AM and we're awake again  
and we're finished sweating and I've started fretting  
That we'll never, never match  
and this is all a big mistake  
And you're reminding me of promises

I swore I'd never make

I ain't lyin', I'm just remembering differently  
It's subject to interpretation  
It may be plain reality  
Or a convenient hallucination



# I Can See Everything From Here

Copyright © 2001 Sam Bayer

I've been climbing up this mountain  
Climbing day and night  
Got chasms on my left and I got glaciers on my right  
I creep up through those crevices on hand and knee  
And I stop to catch my breath, and this is what I see

I see the twisted path you followed  
To slip into my heart  
The tricks you played to stay there  
From the very, very start  
The frozen words you whispered to keep me near  
Oh darling, I can see everything from here

The way you plot my future  
And the way you sculpt my past  
The way you forge these chains that  
bind my heart so tight and fast  
The way you make your promises and disappear  
Oh darling, I can see everything from here

You're the shadow in the corridor to trip me as I pass  
I fall flat on my face, and I fall flat on my ass  
And you reach down to help me with that goddamn  
upper hand  
From high atop this mountain  
I finally understand

The way you plot my future  
And the way you sculpt my past  
The way you forge these chains that  
bind my heart so tight and fast  
But the secrets that you kept from me, well,  
Now they're crystal clear  
Oh darling, I can see everything from here

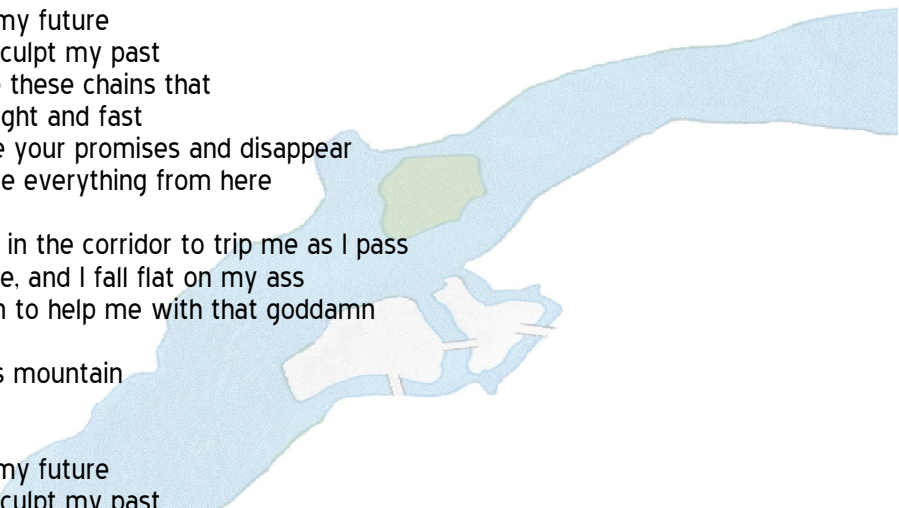
But is that us in our dotage  
Locked in our embrace  
The familiar look of panic etched across my wrinkled  
face  
No mutiny concerns you, no scraps of pride remain  
I lean on you as firmly as I lean upon my cane

And what fool would stay in prison  
With a copy of the key  
And why can't I do to you what you're gonna do to me  
If I'm the marionette and you're the puppeteer  
What the hell's the point of seeing everything from  
here

It's a muddy, muddy march

Through the foggy mists of time  
And I just can't bear the thought that I'll learn  
nothing from this climb  
But there you are in front, with me bringing up the rear  
Ankle deep in shit  
So mad I could spit  
Nothing's changed a bit

I can see everything  
From here



# Not Quite Spring

Copyright © 2002 Sam Bayer

I stumbled over the leaves we'd forgotten  
The soggy mess of an unkempt fall  
I tossed them skyward, waiting for a warmer breeze  
to take them  
But it couldn't take them all  
Damp with ice and slush they fell  
Spattered the mailbox and the telephone pole  
It's a doubtful balm to soothe the sting  
Of this not quite winter, not quite spring

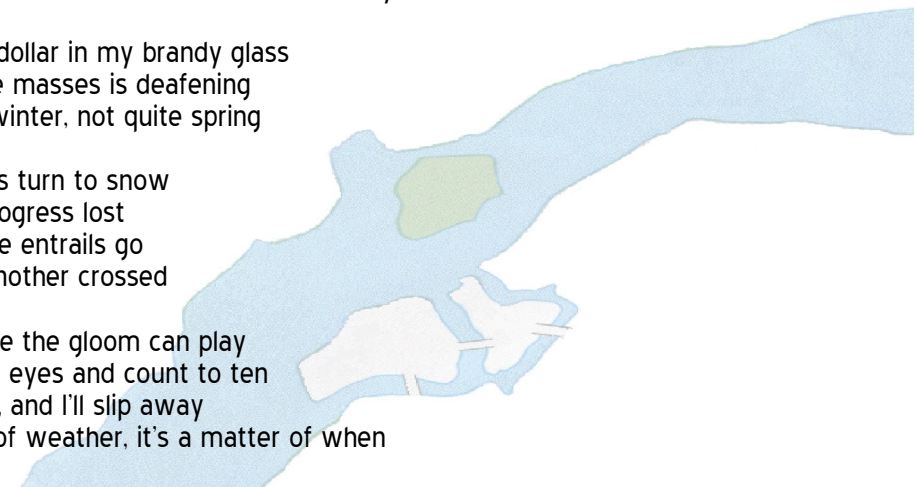
At dusk I asked the sun to reconsider  
At dawn I asked the moon to yield some ground  
I pried the day apart with the force of my persuasion  
And it seemed to make a difference  
But no one stopped to thank me, no one shook my  
hand  
No one tucked a dollar in my brandy glass  
The silence of the masses is deafening  
In this not quite winter, not quite spring

Freezing raindrops turn to snow  
A bitter tale of progress lost  
Back and forth the entrails go  
One god sated, another crossed

I've a simple game the gloom can play  
Where I close my eyes and count to ten  
He'll run and hide, and I'll slip away  
It's not a matter of weather, it's a matter of when

This battle of wills will only lead to trouble  
Mother Nature whispered as the drizzle swirled  
Your victories today are just losses saved for later  
I've got all the time in the world  
But still I curse the darkness, still I raise my sword  
Still I light my fires to melt the snow  
You've got to stand for something  
In this not quite winter, not quite spring

It's not a matter of weather  
It's a matter of when



# A Man Like Me

Copyright © 2002 Sam Bayer

If there were colors more primary than primary colors  
Those would be the colors he'd be  
Brighter than the stars, wiser than Socrates  
Heavier than gravity  
More honest than truth  
He's the original the original's a copy of  
He's the next plunge in the swimming hole, the next  
kiss in the rain  
Frozen anticipation  
The picture of perfect love

I fell into your looking glass  
When I reached out to take your hand  
I tried to speak with my voice, my thoughts, my  
desires  
But all in a language you didn't seem to understand  
You're tuned in to some distant station  
He's holding flowers on your doorstep on channel  
number three  
It's a barrage of better moments, the punchline to all  
the jokes  
The trailer for a movie you never got to see

You say you find your prospects grim  
You say you view the field so skeptically  
There's never been a man like him  
But there's never been a man like me

Now we're sitting in your living room, your tomb to  
your lost lover  
Here's the masking tape he left here you just can't  
bear to use  
Here's a lock of his hair, the sweater you refuse to  
wash  
The note he left one morning when he went out to  
find the news

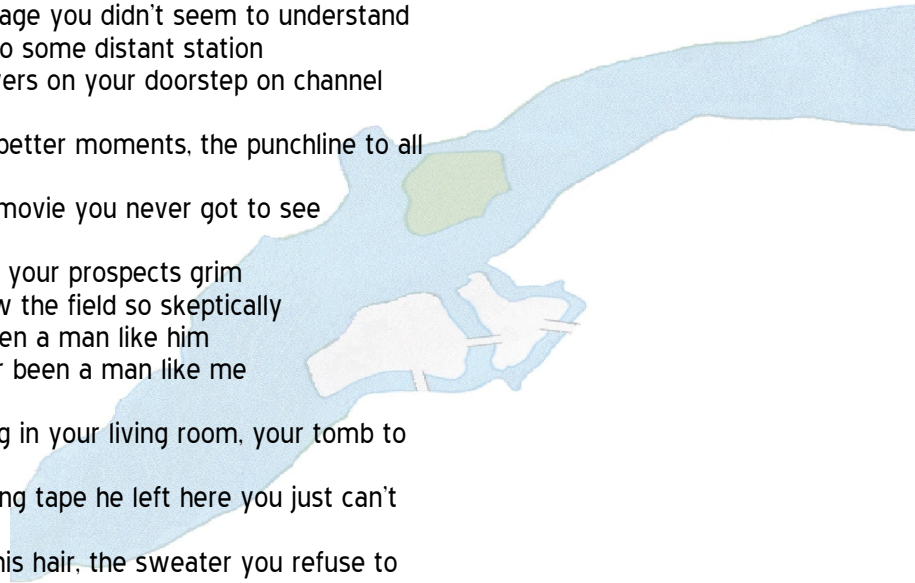
It's a motley collection on which to found a new  
religion  
A single blind disciple is all it can hope to gain  
It brooks no caution, makes no promises  
And it calls salvation what I call pain

Did he beg for your forgiveness on the day he broke  
your heart  
Was he suffused with sad nobility on the day he said  
goodbye  
It's an all too common tale, and he's got company on  
the scale  
Somewhere between a deity and just another guy

This man you've hung your heart on, I know that you

still see him  
Posed in the middle distance with his chin against the  
sun  
It's been a lovely visit but I've grown tired of this  
museum  
Why don't you try to count to two before you decide  
that he's the one

You say you find your prospects grim  
You say you view the field so skeptically  
There's never been a man like him  
But there's never been a man like me





# It Seemed like a Good Idea at the Time

Copyright © 2002 Sam Bayer

He invited me onto his yacht  
And offered me champagne and truffles from a  
platinum bowl  
"Would you believe I started with nothing but the  
clothes on my back  
And a no-interest loan from the governor's son?  
Y'see, there's this little company down in Texas  
And I'm not sure what they do but they seem to do it  
very well  
I made my investment and watched it accrue  
I tripled my money, and you can too"

You take three parts hubris and no parts shame  
Mix a gallon of repellent and you'll get bitten all the  
same  
You've been oh so entertaining and I haven't spent a  
dime  
Yeah it was dumb  
But it seemed like a good idea at the time

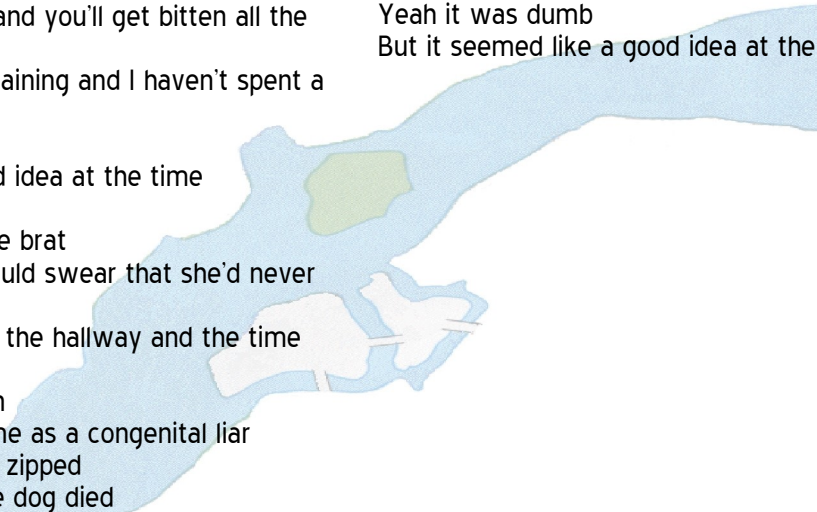
She was a persistent little brat  
And there were days I could swear that she'd never  
take no for an answer  
So there was the time in the hallway and the time  
under my desk  
And the time I left a stain  
Now the world regards me as a congenital liar  
who can't keep his pants zipped  
And I lost my job, and the dog died  
And I'm staring at the tatters of my legacy  
And my wife has made her choice between Strom  
Thurmond and me

I took three parts hubris and no parts shame  
Mixed a gallon of repellent and got bitten all the same  
I've been oh so entertaining and you haven't spent a  
dime  
Yeah it was dumb  
But it seemed like a good idea at the time

And those pesky small corrections  
That leap in from strange directions  
They're just pebbles in the path  
They'll never crease your placid brow  
But from the poles to the equator  
You're gonna look real stupid later  
And if you want my frank opinion  
You don't look too clever now

So if you've ever left a courthouse with a bag over

your head  
Or referred all reporters to your attorney  
If you've ever stopped reading the paper because  
every time  
you read the paper thinking things couldn't get any  
worse  
They get worse  
And if your ears are ringing with the sound of mocking  
laughter  
And your face is flushed, and your nerves are shot  
You might pray for something curable, like the plague  
or halitosis  
But that ain't gonna be your doctor's diagnosis  
  
You went heavy on the hubris and skimmed on the  
shame  
Mixed a gallon of repellent and got bitten all the same  
You've been oh so entertaining and I haven't spent a  
dime  
Yeah it was dumb  
But it seemed like a good idea at the time



# Cassandra

Copyright © 2002 Sam Bayer

Cassandra makes a face and births a new prediction  
Her breath grows heavy, and her knees go weak, and  
her eyes descend  
It's not about politics, and it's not about religion  
and it's not about a neighbor, and it's not about a  
friend  
The one thing that concerns her is the way we end

And she rations her prophecy  
Don't wanna take a stab at the lottery  
Don't wanna write tomorrow's headlines  
Don't wanna guess what's in my hand

Cassandra  
What makes you see the things you saw  
In the middle of the night, after all my second guessing  
Over each real and imagined flaw  
Oh Cassandra  
You say you suspected all along  
That doubt this deep trumps love this strong  
But what makes you think there's anything wrong  
With us

I've seen Cassandra pacing when she thinks that I'm  
asleep  
I've seen her lose her place, in a public space  
when the demons creep  
They tap her on the shoulder, and they poke her in the  
ribs  
and they tread upon her toes, and they kick her in the  
shins  
And her breath grows heavy, and her knees go weak,  
and the trance begins

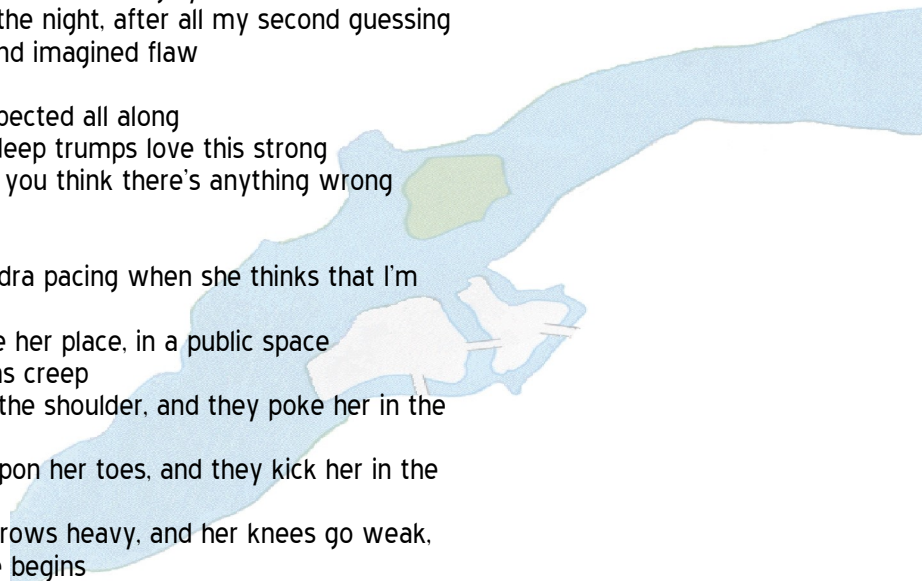
And Cassandra draws a crowd  
She's got her acolytes of doom  
They form the static in our kitchen  
And pierce the silence of our room

Cassandra  
What makes you see the things you saw  
In the middle of the night, after all my second guessing  
Over each real and imagined flaw  
Oh Cassandra  
You say you suspected all along  
That doubt this deep trumps love this strong  
But what makes you think there's anything wrong  
With us

Your friends are at a loss  
They say, look at the damage that you do  
And you say, I know you think we're perfect, and I

know you think I'm crazy  
But the future's true, it's true, it's true

Cassandra  
What makes you see the things you saw  
In the middle of the night, after all my second guessing  
Over each real and imagined flaw  
Oh Cassandra  
You say you suspected all along  
That doubt this deep trumps love this strong  
But what makes you think there's anything wrong  
But what makes you think there's anything wrong  
But what makes you think there's anything wrong  
With us



# The Election Song

Copyright © 2002 Sam Bayer

Tweedledum and Tweedledee  
Competing to serve you publicly  
One's enough to make you curse  
And the other one is worse

Tweedledum and Tweedledee  
Run campaign ads on your TV  
I want your vote, I'll tell you why  
I'm not the other guy

They don't much care if the question's hard  
They answer them all with the same regard  
"Lock 'em up, blow 'em away,  
Not in my backyard"  
Tweedledum and Tweedledee  
The booby prize of democracy  
When they zig and zag and haw and hem  
There ain't much difference between them

Tweedledum and Tweedledee  
Differ in their philosophy  
One hates the poor, and one hates the rich  
But I can't remember which

Tweedledum and Tweedledee  
Squabble about the economy  
They each have a plan to save your ass  
As long as it's middle class

They're fond of business and tough on crime  
They're giddy watching the Dow climb  
They'll slap the wrists of nepotists  
Some of the time  
Tweedledum and Tweedledee  
The booby prize of democracy  
There's an instinct lodged in my brain stem  
That there ain't much difference between them

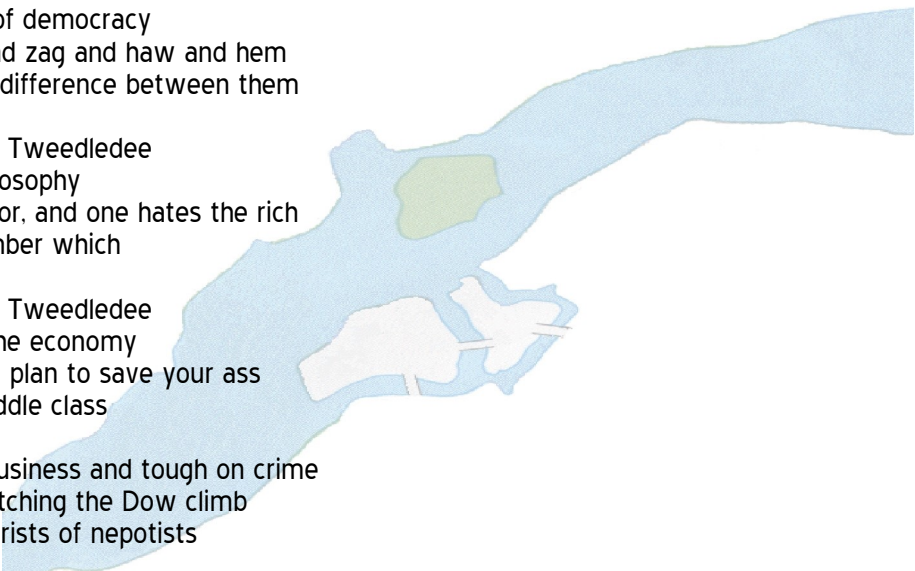
Tweedledum and Tweedledee  
A model of opportunity  
Man or woman, white or black  
You can be a party hack

Tweedledum and Tweedledee  
Believe in the rule of majority  
Like back when Bush defeated Gore  
By a vote of five to four

Their skulls are thick and their nerves are thin  
Their principles made of gelatin  
It must be a flaw in election law  
That one of them has to win

Tweedledum and Tweedledee  
The booby prize of democracy  
There's an instinct lodged in my brain stem  
That there ain't much difference between them

Tweedledum and Tweedledee  
This time it's O'Brien and Romney



# When the Empire Falls

Copyright © 2002 Sam Bayer

They say a lobster boiled slowly  
Never knows he's dying  
It lacks that certain sense of urgency  
Living the high life  
Strutting safe inside its shell  
King of the shallows  
Taking whatever the sea has to give  
Just a bit too stupid to live

When the empire falls it will be whittled by degrees  
Pecked by sparrows and stung by bees  
Most of us lounging behind these walls  
Will go right on sleeping when the empire falls

It was a lovely suit of armor  
With heralds at the breastplate  
And a scabbard at its side  
But then you wore it to too many parties  
And you left it in the rain  
Forgot what it was made for  
Taking whatever the steel had to give  
Just a bit too stupid to live

When the empire falls it will be cut off at the knees  
Softened by the sun and scattered on the breeze  
When that knock on the door comes and destiny calls  
We'll be honor-bound to answer when the empire falls

Nero fiddled while Rome was aflame  
And now even the Visigoths have their own video  
game  
Glued to our sofas like a planet to a sun  
We've got five hundred channels  
And the revolution's on every goddamned one

Well, this boxer's lost a step or two  
But he still packs a hefty uppercut  
And he'll hit you and hurt you where it counts  
And he's got a nasty temper  
But his memory is shot  
And his attention is starting to wander  
Taking whatever the ring had to give  
Just a bit too stupid to live

When the empire falls it will be whittled by degrees  
Pecked by sparrows and stung by bees  
Most of us lounging behind these walls  
Will go right on sleeping

When the empire falls it will be cut off at the knees  
Softened by the sun and scattered on the breeze  
When that knock on the door comes and destiny calls

We'll go right on sleeping when the empire  
Falls

They say a lobster boiled slowly  
Never knows he's dying

