



The Red Cloud Collection
by
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Namaste my readers of art.

This is a book for all those who question their emotions and sometimes stay confused because of how they feel. I have written this book as a way to share my emotions and feelings towards life, hoping your feelings are mutual, and breathe some de-ja-vu into our sometimes empty lives.

I called this The Red Cloud Collections because of my affinity with red as well my emotion when seeing a red cloud. That emotion can vary depending on the day but when I see that cloud my mind slips away.

Thank you for this opportunity and I hope you feel inspired.

#1 – Feel The Colours, See The Notes

Today I found myself having a moment of ignorant bliss. What was my distraction? The simple sounds of drums. The inexplicable sound of a piano playing as a high pitched siren sung over the beat. It was almost as if I had just experienced what people have said is called ‘Colour Synthesia’. Basically, I could visually picture the colours of the various sounds I was hearing. Apparently Pharrell Williams has it.

The reason why this moment stood out so much was because of the sheer timing of the music. I had the morning thought provoking conversation with my dad. I had the usual bickering sessions with my mom and I listened to the same music I listened to. All the music I received from last week. It was in the late afternoon that I came to the conclusion: I was attempting to study for something I really had no interest in. As much as I loved the concept of teaching English to my elders, I came to terms with the fact that this vision was just not mine anymore. It marks almost a week since my return from a local clinic. I had entered before at 19 and learned more about my mental illnesses and indeed, the first time was more depressing than the last. This time around, I stayed for a shorter period of time and gathered more information about myself in that small space than in my entire period of the year. Not only was I more self-aware

of my habits and rituals but relationships with people had come to the hilt, some however I became closer with.

In this simple moment, I felt connected to the earth. I could hear red clouds in the distance talking about rain as if it were parcels to be delivered. I could hear the black mulberries gossip about how much more ripe they were than the red ones. In half of my afternoon dream I had my eyes closed, allowing me to really go all hippy and be one with nature.

I began to play the first song of this glorious album and for probably 5 seconds, I kept my eyes closed. Then, I opened them and saw the notes roll out and pass me like a steam train. I could never really explain this feeling because of how new it was, almost like having your first Mc'Flurry. The notes were clear and precise looking, not at all distracting but not alluring enough to keep all of my attention. I took a deep breath and as I exhaled I saw all the notes fade away like smoke, realistically looking like how the Cheshire Cat would fade out.

I had felt notes before; my first memory being of the first time I played a piano using both hands. Nothing, however, had felt like this. I was actually able to visually see notes as they played in the background.

Certainly, this is what a cotton-candy stomach feels like.

How do you feel right now?

I tried to make myself a soldier but I can't fight
I'm seeing shadows in the corner in daylight
I tried to put myself to sleep but I'm not right
And now I'm late and I have got 21 days to be confined

It ain't a choice for me, I didn't chose to be whack
If I could change it for myself, I'd change all of that
I got a huge roster of badly burned hearts
None that I broke, they all just fell apart

First Day Impressions

I'll be in this place for about 21 days
but I'm chilled
Yes I'm chilled
All these random people that I don't
know keep on asking how I feel,
Is this how I feel?
Wake up in the morning, not knowing
if this is really who I am.
Is this who I am?
All these other people say I'm crazy
but they just don't understand
They just don't understand

You've got your power, I've got mine
I've got time; I've got space between
my fingers for a cigarette
What you wanna bet, I'll be better with
no stress?

Slowly seeping through my veins,
chemicals inside my brain
I don't even feel the same as I did
before
They tell me that my mind is whack;
they tell me that I should fight back

I just don't have time for that; my
mood hits the floor

I've got the power; the will is in my
hands

But the pills are in my hand and my
brain don't understand why they're
talking

But I guess I gotta try 'cuz I cannot be
that guy who gets moody all the time

I am the one with the power

I've got my own tower, just need to go
up

I am the one to be free, you have
nothing on me

So I'll just keep being me and I'll just
keep being free

I am free.

October Sunrise

Sleeping beauty in my bed
I just love her in my bed
She just swags it out instead
Roll the dice and bank the head

Blue be on the wall like ocean,
Motherfucker
Always on the cherry sucker
Want it all like early supper

Colour in the pages
Count it all with yo' pepper clicker
Hold me by the side
Damn baby you pop the picture
Look up in the mirror
See me baby, see me baby, see me

Lampposts' by the side of your house
Hit me up when we chill by the south
Wipe the good shit off my whole mouth
Damn baby, damn baby, damn

Check the past up in your head
Roll out just like the commentator said
Used me in the dark, loved me in the light
Get the best reception

All the way when we try the fight

Hold up, I think I got myself a partner

Roll up, I think I got myself a charger

For life, you know this, yeah yeah, you know this

Plug you in, get me up

Monkey Man

Monkey Man no strings attached
With body yellow tint
The blunt rests deeply in his hand
The wink a casual hint
His voyage in the paper town of Jozi sees the sun
Monkey Man is joyous with no need to ever run

Monkey Man has talents in his paws that pave the gate
He has some yellow in his hair and cut it 48
Primal is his instinct when approached with female
power
Female monkey's jump around, get trapped up in his
tower

Monkey Man is zealous and his wrists have bands galore
His mind is always subtle but he hums it in a score
Monkey Man, you yellow beast, You caught me by the
floor
Monkey man once saved my life and never asked for
more

Have you seen The Monkey Man?
Swinging from his vine
His Nike shirt and clean cut shoes remind me of divine
Divinity and trinity, the monkey man explodes
His prowess keeps you guessing

Monkey Man with special nodes

#2 – Change

I suppose we all come to understand it eventually but uttering this word to some may cause some tension in the atmosphere. For many years I was not aware of change, or at least I chose to ignore it. A possible reason for this was because change came and went like clothing to me. I would wear it for a while, get comfortable and then suddenly they would be too big for me or I just didn't feel like wearing them anymore because I was so used to them already. Change would do the same and before realizing it, my life would be like two separate versions of the same movie. However, never once did I try and stop the reel from spinning.

I started noticing change in my life within the third and last quarters of the year. Autumn was my favourite season and by the time autumn came many changes were becoming more and more prominent. The first change I noticed was my look. Throughout the year I'd go through miscellaneous outfits and haircuts, going bolder as I began to reach the pinnacle of being a fully-flinched 18-year-old boy of great difference. I started losing weight and I guess people started noticing it, and then I noticed it. I tried my best to have a look exceptionally striking compared to any of the other boys my age. As I grew older, my taste in music changed as well. I was

attracted to music you'd never hear on the radio or expect people to know.

Along with new music came new friends. I met my best friend at 16 and it was like meeting my future best-man. He was funny and outgoing, everything I lacked he made up for and now as he reaches 20, we've realized how our habits have remained primitive, despite our ego's and persona's changing. He introduced to me to what I like to call now, my 'juiced gorilla's', the type of gents I see myself with in a Morgan Freeman-type of way. We speak a particular vernacular that ironically hasn't changed.

My family relationships changed as well, some in the best way possible and some for not. Becoming closer with members of your family is always self-rewarding. Change has helped me realize how much I treasure certain relationships with people. Like the seasons, things are constantly changing but we adapt to what we can't change or what we know is here to stay indefinitely.

At times I do find myself socially inept to change, stubborn in my ways and even too proud to admit that change makes me nervous. I have an anxiety disorder but nothing feels more unpredictable than the coming change. With change we have a new outlook on

something, without it everything would become mundane and boring. It is an incredibly difficult task to do, a very scary person to meet, but in the end, change can be a valuable thing.

Therefore, embrace the change. Not only as a person but in your entire way of life.

Yo' Boy Be On That Good Shit

Yo! be tripping on the wrong shit
Got my bong by my side, roll it long shit
Paper cutting, what you stunting on that 420?
I mix that kilo with a kilo of the proper Henney

Caught up in my green
Smoking like a damn machine
Hydroponic in the system
But I'm still keeping it clean
You have your goals
Homie I'm still dreaming
I'm on a level
Straight roll up, no scheming

Get baked, homie

Where did the Ghetto Girls Go?

One white kid in the Ghetto
I was backing up my steez
I said no to inclination
As I soaked up the Mayberry breeze

Back when the streets weren't so lonely
Back when the girls walked like Naomi
Now they get lost in the sand in Nairobi
One trick on this girl, one trick pony

Too little, too late

Your invitation, I do decline
I've got a boy and I think that he hella fine
You had your chance baby, I wasn't bae
You'd fuck with all them other girls and then you'd say
"They're just a hook up, they're just for fun"
But never once would you admit I was the one
Your love is tainted, just like your shoes
And when I play this game with you I always lose

Cigarette on cigarette and blunt on repeat
Stress by my feet
I can't compete with these hold ups and screw ups and
fuck ups
Your love had me weak, prefer we don't speak
I'm just with my boyfriend

I'm not a cracker, I'm not a hoe
I'm not in league with all the bitches that you know
You have excuses, they come in threes
And I would feel I'm only good when on my knees
I'm not a shy one, you know it's true
Ain't never had a boy come in the way you do
Was so unstable but still I tried
And yet I'm happy that we had it and died

Equality

+

I have my books alphabetized
I like male eyebrows and female thighs
I swing both ways and that's my choice
The lovely world can hear my voice

I wake up now with cheek bones red
I liked what my new partner said
Today, my babe, it's legal to wed
My future hubby comfortable in our bed

My kids can see the world has changed
The way you feel cannot be chained
We've risen up from our old ways
We welcome in the equal days

#3 – New Life

On my first day at the clinic I met an incredibly beautiful young woman. Although she looked around my age she was actually 24. Upon having a short conversation with her I learned about her husband and 6-month-old child. When she first showed me a photograph of her baby I thought, “Okay, it’s probably just another cute baby”. My view on having children remained the same; I made it adamant that I didn’t want to be a dad or rather think about being a father at my age.

Then, the little one came to visit. Just seeing that gorgeous smile light up, it was enough to bring joyful tears to my eyes. Usually from what I’ve seen, babies aren’t the best to respond to gestures or even talking. They usually just look at you dull-eyed and if you’re lucky, you might just get some cute baby loving. This child was like the happy sun on my South African kids show, ‘The Teletubbies’. The moment I looked at her she smiled, as if to say she had just made a new friend. She was happy and I mean genuinely happy. I thought maybe she was just doing it because I pulled a funny face, but no. Every person noticing those crystal blue eyes noticed how extraordinarily joyful this ball of sunshine was. The baby herself made me realize how beautiful the mother was, and how happy a young married couple could be despite trouble in paradise.

It also made me have a revelation: I want to be a dad. Before, I would have avoided the question with an almost instant reply. I always said it just wasn't my thing. Doesn't that sound like a dumb teenager? Well, my parents were around my age when they were raising children. They had all the responsibilities of adults but they were still kids. They never alluded to the fact that they were young parents but I never really understood what they meant by that. Now I'm a little older and wiser to what the world is really like. Now I look at my age and say, "Shit, my parents were raising toddlers at my age". I still struggle with comprehending this now known fact and it helped me make up my mind about fatherhood.

People have complimented me all the time about my bond with my dad and that's what makes it strong. We have a bond. We have a relationship we will never have with anyone else. Yes, all relationships can be like that but every person who has a good relationship with their father's knows what I'm talking about. I pray for those that don't have them and bless the ones that do.

When I see the colour orange I think of the names 'Austin' or 'Hudson'. I picture having a son. In all honesty, I don't see colour. I don't picture biological links or what type of hair my son will have. Fuck, even if

I have a girl I will be happy. Not because I have a son or daughter but because I have that bond.

Hopefully one day I can show this to my child and let him or her know about these feelings. They should know that Daddy loves them, even if they do not exist in this present moment. Excited for parenthood.

A Mother's Love

A mother's love isn't hard to find
But difficult when her son isn't kind
A mother's love shall know no bounds
But hard to listen amongst angry sounds

A mother's love is eternally deep
Even when her son refuses to speak
Although he may feel his mother is wrong
She still keeps things going and tells him to be strong

A mother's love nurtures her sun when he's down
She may become bossy, entitled to a crown
But when orders are made and things to plan
A mother and son will come to understand

Karlien's Poem

Little Miss Sunshine with eyes that melt your heart
I have loved you from the moment that your heart began
to start

Little Miss Lavender all dressed up in blue
How could I forget a baba like you?

Little Miss Gorgeous we can fight or you can dream
For you I will work and be a robot-man machine

Little Miss Daisy with hands small and neat
I'll be your strong daddy and make you feel complete
Little Miss Lovely with your hands all on my hair
Pull it so hard so you know that I'm there

Rubber-band Red Robin

Rubber-band red Robin
How I see you flutter your wings
You used to be an orchid
You'd worry 'bout the finer things

Your little tale got bigger now
I've seen you in the snow
You glisten from the heat while cold
Your wounds you never show

I've seen you lay about in the sun
Your eyes as glossy as mine
You fly about without a doubt
With whimsy of the time

Rubber-band red Robin
How I love to see you fly
I'll meet you when the grass is green
And fly with you in the sky

Wake Up with the Word

I wake up in the morning with my memo pad on lock
I wake up seeing lyrics, morning time, no writers block
I may forget my dreams but the words are clear as gold
I think about the paper, all the fonts and letters bold

Yes, I am a writer and my dream's to spread the word
Never goes unnoticed, even if it seems absurd
I pack up all my things but I always forget my pen
I'll write it all down later when I'm back inside my den

If you think I'm stupid
Just because I love a book
Go try doing a crossword puzzle
When complete, give me your hook

7 days of autumn

It started out as a cool breeze. Today is no different than it was on Monday. The smell of this park still smells the same; woody scents with a tinge of tobacco in the atmosphere. The grass has not turned green and the third swing is still broken. The potholes in the concrete seem to have grown though. As I sit on this unfinished jungle-gym, I cannot help but notice the particular fashion in which the slide has been placed. It's a rather large slide with colours of rusted yellow. Its whole beak is rusted but for some reason it still works. From a child's perspective I can see why it may be intimidating to get on.

I sit here holding the first cigarette I have ever bought. A 'loosy', as they call it. Cost me two rand and the Pakistani man didn't question my age. I walked into the shop with sweat on my hands, worrying if I were to be caught what would they would do to me. Instead it was a "Yessir", come again". I hold this cigarette or 'gwaai' as they also seem to call it, as a symbol of my youth. I'm at the age of in-between. In this one week of pure madness I had grown up. Maybe too fast for some but I felt it in my bones. The growth I've come to have. At seventeen I've come to understand a bit more about the world. I've

come to terms with the fact that next year I'm eighteen. For now, in this week of autumn, I want to feel like I'm seventeen.

I hope you take something from this as I navigate you through my week of fulfilment. My name is Keith Henley and I am seventeen.

PART 1 – The Orange Hues

It was a very windy Monday. I had decided to spend the week at my gran's house in Orange Reed Place, Alberton, South Africa. It was the second week of October and this place matched it season. The trees in ORP spread out wide from each other and looked almost dead, ironically many of the trees stayed the same colour. The grass was not really grass and had more veldts around it. The atmosphere always felt thick, possibly from all the veld fires. Despite myself going there several times while growing up, I never really took in anything besides the trees. The house I was staying in had stayed the same with my gran's paintings expanding wide into the hallways. There was just something so beautiful about this neighbourhood.

On this particular Monday something amazing was about to happen. I had made friends with a kid in my school. His name was Rocco. He was a black boy with rather chubby thighs. He looked a lot older but really he was younger than me. We are in the same grade and in the same CAT class. We became friends really easily; we bonded over a drink and then today, for no apparent reason, he invited me to his park. To my surprise I found he lived in the same neighbourhood as my gran. I immediately accepted. He was the first guy that I made

friends with that actually kind of saw me. I mean, really saw me. In two seconds of knowing me he already knew what I was like. Now it was my turn to get to know him.

I told him I'd call him when I've arrived in ORP but in reality I was just really nervous. It was the last word of our conversation that appeared as an enigma to me. He said 'we will see you there'. Who was 'we'? Who was I about to meet? Why would Rocco purposely hit me with a surprise? A lot of questions rushed to my head but I gulped it up and walked out the door. I called Rocco and heard monkey-like noises in the background as we spoke. I could hear two other voices laughing. One of them said "Is he cool"; another said "Don't freak me out". I felt like I had been ambushed except I knew why he did it. He never mentioned other friends but it was still like losing your toy after five seconds. I continued the walk, noticing the orange hues of the soil and trees. I really felt orange. I know you can't feel a colour but if I could it'd be orange. Orange, after all, is the colour no-one chases but never dislikes.

I followed the path my friend had told me about and took in the smell of old concrete. The wind was blowing hard and I was holding onto my beanie as I walked through it. You have to understand, for a white boy to walk around in the "ghetto" means to see a unicorn purchasing weed. It was all very new to me but I knew I had to get this

feeling over with. I came to the start of the dead park. I noticed immediately how dry and uneventful it looked. There were kids on a very tall swing and two cars playing loud music. That's when I saw them.

As I walked closer their voices became louder. They kept on speaking even though they could see me coming towards them. They were sitting on a half built jungle-gym that was oddly painted very well. They perched onto the wood like a bird would to an electric line. Then suddenly, as if I had dropped the N bomb, they stopped talking. There was probably about five seconds of silence. Then he spoke. My new friend Rocco. "Wuddup man?" Rocco looked at me with excitement. He approached me and greeted me like never before; he grabbed my arm and pulled it close. That was his way of showing me how to greet other gents. The others did the same. It was at this point that I made eye contact with what would now be my best friends.

Their names were Craig and Doug. They were brothers who were a year apart but put into the same grade. They shared very similar features but one was taller than the other. Their voices were in sync as were their laughs. They spoke with a much westernised South African accent. From the outside they seemed confident but silly, to say the least. They began to ask me questions but I was too shy to give them real answers. We sat and spoke

for hours and I learned how different all of us were from each other. Topics were flowing and everyone seemed to be satisfied with the conversations. I learned how each of us liked a certain type of music but we all liked the same cartoons.

When it reached sunset we decided to leave for the day. However, as we were about to part ways a local girl called on Rocco. We went to her house; I made sure to make myself like a shadow. She invited us to a “chillas” at her house the next day and we all gladly accepted her offer. Before departing Rocco left us with what is now our most used saying. He said. “Awe gents”.

To be continued...

#4 – Sleep Paralyzes

Sleep. A period of time in which one can exit their own reality and trade it in for momentary augmentation.

Doctors have said that dreaming is so remarkable that some people become so entranced in the beauty of the mind, they prefer it to reality. Many people have told me of how their dreams have always meant something and I have even experienced it myself. I have friends, twin brothers that dream of the darkest of things without any warning or complaint. They lavish in their dreams that some may deem ‘nightmares’. Despite my longing for it, I very seldom have the capacity to remember my dreams and nightmares. I look forward to those five seconds of waking up in which I can recall my dreams.

On a cold winter night, in the confined corners of my circular shack which I had turned into my bedroom, I experienced something I would never forget. I experienced a moment which seemed like a dream, or rather a nightmare but for the entire duration I was awake. I awoke to find that I couldn’t move my body. It was as if someone had glued the whole outline of my body with permanent glue. I could feel my eyes moving rapidly but I couldn’t say a word. I tried my best to scream for help and wiggle my way out of a ‘sticky’ situation. Nothing could be done and I eventually assumed it must be a dream and I’ll wake up soon.

Usually if I realize I'm in a dream I instantly wake up so this should be no different.

I saw the shadows move into a humanoid-like creature with no distinctive features besides the outline of a man. It was moving, not menacingly but rather fearfully, from one corner to the other. I sensed it staring at me but I was in total fear. For some reason though, I didn't see this thing as a threat. It was more like a night nurse doing her rounds in the hospital. It was in this brief moment that for once in my entire life, I genuinely believed something out of this world existed.

Being the person that I am, I google'd it. Turns out people have been having similar occurrences for decades. After sussing out the obviously dramatized instances I took note of all the ones that made sense, or at least were more relatable. All people described it as a moment of immobility in which shadows took forms of shapes or 'beings'. I took it a step further and posted my story on Facebook. The feedback was phenomenal. So many people had experienced the same things as me and I took closure from the fact that I wasn't alone.

I never experienced it again but many of my friends and family experienced it soon thereafter. I gathered from the internet that this phenomenon was known as "Sleep Paralysis".

If you ever experience it, or at least feel something close to it, remember you are not alone.

Dreams

What a small illusion one mind seems to create
It's the shutdown of your sanity but you keep open the
gate
In denial of your day to day, your subconscious loves to
play
Some fuckery you can't control, only memory allowed
to stay

Sometimes it's 5 minutes
Sometimes it feels like forever
They always put the questions up
But seem to hide the treasure
Sometimes it's so enjoyable
It provides a healthy pleasure
But if your mind is on 'always'
You'll end up wishing it was never

What a scary place it can be when it all goes wrong
Almost like karaoke with no lyrics to the song
A nightmare is the puppy suckling deep on Life's teat
Grabs you by the balls, wakes you up to admit defeat

Never underestimate
The power of your dreams
No it's not your destiny
But that may be how it seems

Sometimes they play dirty
Most of times they play it clean
If you understand your mind
You won't think like a machine

My Habitat

My habitat is passive
I wear sweatpants in the day
My habitat is hub shack
Have a blunt rolled up by 5
My habitat is tranquil
Comes with a dash of wine
My habitat has plants and trees
They just live, not try to survive

My habitat is honest
I always know what's happening
My habitat seeks no love lost
It calls for me at 10
My habitat has circle smoke
From weed or from tobacco
My habitat loves all of that
It sometimes calls me Ben

My habitat is bossy
Likes to keep things in one way
It doesn't like bad karma
Tries to force it to retreat
My habitat is lonely
Yes it moans for me to come
It meets me with a red gown
And slippers by my feet

Curry and Candour

The brandy man has gone to China town to find his wings

He smokes a Courtley daily and he likes the smaller things

He laughs when people fall and he likes How I Met Your Mother

He likes to dodge the rain but he never runs for cover

His dense sarcastic statements always keep the mood at bay

He's quite when the TV's on but he's got fuck loads to stay

Lately he's out of his habitat, he kinda escaped the dome
I wait for the Indian to come back to his fruitful
Randhart home

The Rain

Oh it's raining

Yes, it's pouring

How I love the gentle breeze

It may end up in hail with the remaining purple leaves

How I love the history of it

Where did the rain the start?

It works just like a mystery

It doesn't have a time slot

I walk among the raindrops

Stick streaming boats that rush

The rain comes on like kisses but it soaks away the blush

#5 - The World We Live In (Society)

As I have succumbed to change I have noticed the subtlety in which society has rapidly changed. I may only be 20 but I relish in the fact that I'm a '90s kid. I loved being part of a generation that grew up to innuendo-filled cartoons, nostalgic works of film and the simple deed of borrowing a book from the library. I miss the Sunday collection of comics that I received for R50/m. The toys we had come in three simple forms: The ones you bought from the shop, the ones you purchased from the flea-market and the ones you got from ordering from the kiddies menu.

As I grew into my late teens, I became part of the 'Blackberry' movement. It was the era in which communicating with people became easier. The more kids that grabbed onto the concept the more social kids became. Contacting someone took literally 5 minutes if they were online. Despite all this, I was part of the last dying breed of kids that walked to places. It started as house parties. Sure, we weren't doing things we were allowed to but at the same time we were just teens being 17. We were experiencing things like smoking weed for the first time, doing things that made us feel like adults. Our parents knew about it but never said anything. Our teachers never showed us those anti-drug videos and we were okay with it like that. It was in those days that we

were learning about people, how many different ones you meet every Friday and how, I emphasise this one, segregation and race didn't matter to us. Growing up in South Africa you find this can be a problem, but not for us Millennials.

The down side was watching the generation below me decay into socially-anxious, often lost and lonely, pre-teens and teens of tomorrow. Kids don't even know how to make friends without creating a profile. Have you been to your local park? Yeah you get the occasional smalls kids coming home from school but where are the children? When last did you see a teen go out and make a friend by having an actual oral conversation? Hard to find.

Still I digress. With the lack of social contact came the acceptance of people from different walks of life. A proud bisexual, at times I felt rejected or even scared to be who I am. Do I feel that is changing? You can bank on it. Kids are more open minded, room for LGBT members of the community is widening. Kids don't care what hole you may prefer, they just care if you care. Empathy. 50 years ago, a homosexual was considered 'mentally ill' and would sometimes be pushed into seeking 'treatment' for their ailment. Now, there are places where LGBT members can legally get married. Society is opening itself up to revolution and in doing so

we create a better, sharper minded branch of people. We are taking that step forward.

As I wait for the day I get married I find comfort in knowing that one day I can get married to whomever I choose, regardless of their gender.

'90s kid Cartoons

Y'all remember Courage?
All the '90s kids back me up
Dexter looked like Ethan
Grim Reaper gon' keep 'em
Not unless Mandy got his skull
Cartoons weren't so dull
Back when we had Fat Dog
When it was cool to be the slob

Y'all remember Ben 10?
Back when Benny only had one season
Back when Carne ran from the treason
Power puff was watched down on the low for a reason

Cramp twins in the morning time
Samurai Jack, man
'Member the cul-de-sac?
I had a crush on Nas

Codename Kids Next Door
Digimon stickers on my floor
Probono for Finn
Flapjack in my skin
Chowder all on repeat
Nostalgia water pour on old heat
I'm a '90s kid

The Era Of House Parties

It's 7 in the evening
The rain is now a drizzle
We pregame at the park
Vodka gets the veins to sizzle
There are always at least five of us
You never walk alone
Back when we had hookah pipe
And didn't know how to stone

The flocks of kids that came to party
Bumping in the night
Surprisingly the people see
In places with no light
The music's always deep house
Us kids, we loved to dance
After 10 o' Clock
All the kids are in a trance

We make new comrades on our path
Yes we share the vibe
I know we were only 17
But yeah, we did imbibe
We'd leave the party with our shoes
Covered in the liquor
Our memories stayed sealed with photos
Save them like a sticker

Lost in Technology

Damn these stupid kids
The info in their clutches
But they just let it loose
Disabled with no crutches
Yeah, you got connections
Have you actually been outside?
Your Insta page is growing
But at school you tend to hide

Why the sudden shock?
Are you surprised at what you hear?
You cannot even communicate
Your judgement is the fear
Go and get yourself a book
Learn a thing or two
How can you be popular when you know that this is not
you?

#6 – The Gift of Friendship

If you had asked me five years ago if I'd ever have “friends”, I would tell you no out straight. It wasn't that I had isolated myself or I wasn't liked by others. I found that I could never really form a real friendship with anyone. The friends I did have came and went within a year. Even the best friend that I had at the time was under construction. Now that friend, that one girl I spent almost every Friday with, has become one of my dearest friends. She was the first person I let myself be seen to and it took a while to get there.

I didn't have a lot of male friends. The ones I knew I wasn't close with. As mentioned before, at 16 I met my best friend and 5 years later we still chill. I have found a person I can do anything with, no judgments or scrutiny. It is all because he understands me, and isn't that the beauty of friendship? Finding comrades that actually listen and get you. I have a large circle of friends that now contains both genders. I have even made friends with a transgender woman and a few transsexual men. My mind has broadened so much that virtually anyone can be my friend. I have a certain friend for certain situations. A saint of a man; a genius outcast and even a promiscuous funny man. These men are part of my closest circle and without them I wouldn't be who I am

today. To me, they're all gifts that changed my life for the better.

The gift of a friend is smiling at your phone without knowing you're doing it. Watching a particular scene from a movie and reminiscing about the good times. Using words that only those people will understand. It is feeling excited in a moment of 'Hello' and satisfying disappointment of 'Goodbye'. If you're in crowded rooms of people and see that one familiar face, it's that wiping the sweat off your brow kind of relief.

One particular friend I have is a very special soul. There's a poem just for him that I have written. You see, this legendary individual is not my best friend. Nor is he my partner. This man is in fact my soul mate, my twin in another life. My love for this man is that of a brother, the closest one I'll ever have to it. It may sound weird but I can actually smell his odour before knowing if he's in the room. We finish each other's sentences and become one when we laugh. He and I have been through it all but we just can't lose each other even if we tried. If anyone on this planet can ever come close to me, it would be him. I thank him to this day because without him I would have never felt what love really feels like. To describe it would be impossible but in an attempt I will say, it is like winning your first prize or smelling your favourite food.

He is the Ying to my Yang.

Cherish the friends you have for the moments you have with them. Love them for who they are because who they are can make all of you.

All This Time

Let's go outside and smoke another double
Let's go look for fun like we're Shaggy and Scooby
Full moon tonight
I'm feeling alright, oh oh

We been chilling on this couch like Homer and His TV
Nothing on the mind, no-one else can see me
April moon coming up
Time to get in our zone

Interstellar options on the rocket of our minds
We be floating through the atmosphere
And we have all this time
We do, we do, we do

Let's go to the beach or let's take a drive
Let's go do the things that make us feel so alive
Let's go be the people hiding quiet in the back
Let's go have our luck fully stacked

Sunflower Girl

I'm sure she loves the meadows
The calmness in the breeze
She stands out like a flower
As she watches for the trees

She's an enthusiast of old tunes
She plays Aaliyah loud
She's beautiful in her blackness
She's independent and she's proud

She's so bright up in the darkness
She's got the power to compel
She's a ride or die until the end
Sunflower girl, The G4L

For My Brother

Walking down suburban streets with nothing but urban
feet

Uniform was then on fleek

We'd never speak but that was back when I was just 15

We were so young then, we were so young

First time that I saw your face, knew you were a special
case

Let myself trace back the space

There was a special place inside of you that said

You had the same dream

So now I'm reflecting, I'm going way back

So I say

Hakuna Matata my fella

Homies since we were just sixteen

Hakuna Matata my fella

Thankful that we both shared the pipe dream

Hakuna Matata my fella

I got your back and know you got mine

Hakuna Matata my fella

Chappy papers yellow and blue

Saved them just for you

Walking round the way we do

This shit is true

The ties couldn't tie us down
Sneaking our weed around the corner
And we'd smoke on the ground

I didn't care 'bout the others, I didn't care
No I didn't care about your colour
Cuz I know you said we'd always look out for each other
And like the Lion King, I will call you my brother

My brother, I have one thing to say
I'll be by your side, any night, any day
You gotta know if you ever feel down
I'm a call away even if you're not in town
I'll be there for you when you're so damn down
We'll never be found if you and I went away
And we'll never be late
We just have the open gate

Young Homie Sammy

I was just 17

We were just chilling out back in the dark

Getting lit before dark like a movie scene

Hold up the credits, won't ever forget it

My homies were out there all day

Vodka with Iron Brew, that's just the shit we do

Hangovers ain't there to stay, us homies we play

That's when I saw him, the young homie Sammy

The rep on this homie was that he was spammy

But young homie Sammy had all the good shit

Young homie Sammy knew how to get lit

Homies been telling me Sammy got green

Sammy got shit that you ain't ever seen

So I called up Sammy, a bro to a bro

At first, Sammy said no

But then,

Sammy had seen me and told me to breathe

Told me that after school I shouldn't leave

Sammy got presents tucked under his sleeve

Young homie Sammy has goals to achieve

I waited it out

Sammy brought over some shit from the South

Told me to roll it up, make it look stout

Told me to hold my when I am out

What I didn't know?
Sammy had given me 'Poppy Seed Dope'
Poppy seed kush with a Mexican flow
When I smoked that shit I hit start and go

My Soul Mate

My soul mate smells like coconut shampoo
He loves Kendrick Lamar, loves woman too
My soul mate isn't afraid to ask for your number
My soul mate rain down on these bitches
Like he some brown-skinned thunder

My soul mate's intelligent without opening a book
He makes sure when a hotty walks past
He gets a second look
My soul mate is confident and wears it like a crown
I suppose that's why the females always have their heads
bowed down

7 Days in autumn

PART 2 – I Do Believe I’m Drunk

When I had arrived home my food had been prepared and my gran had gone to sleep. She wasn’t as old as she looked but the cancer made her look older. She fought hard and now it was her resting time. Her second husband had died and her paintings grew more intense as the time passed. On this night she had enjoyed the hour of TV she likes where the soap operas have local cast. I love her so much that sometimes I feel she is the first person to have understood me.

I entered my room and listened to the empty house. The TV’s were off and my gran had the radio playing softly in the background of her room. I turned the light on and found the domestic hadn’t made my bed. This was typical though, as she was the only domestic I knew who disliked me. It wasn’t like I made her do my washing or clean my room. I probably sound very arrogant right now but I just see it as courtesy. I mean, my room is in between two rooms that she still cleaned. Nonetheless, I plugged my laptop in, settled in my bed and began to watch Big Bang Theory.

...

It was a Tuesday. I woke up for the first time with a smile on my face. The house was still quiet but my gran was playing her classical music in the lounge. My room, very small compared to my actual room in my house, had a small scent of mint and apple; I had smoked a hookah before I went to bed. My gran didn't mind as long as I didn't burn anything. I muzzled on up and got myself ready.

I had received a text from Rocco telling me to meet him at the park again. This time around I wasn't nervous. It was like those emotions you have when you reach the third term of the year. I had my hubbly packed up in my dirty red bag and I couldn't wait to show it to them.

They had never smoked it before but I made them keen on it by showing them a video of me blowing circles. Naturally they wanted to try it too.

I said goodbye to my gran who was in the process of making a gown for me. She was rather good at all these things and once made me an entire jersey, albeit it was a very uncomfortable jersey.

A new conversation had arisen before I departed this old home.

"Now my boy, what exactly are you doing today?" My gran tried her best not to sound condescending.

"Ah Gogo, I'm just gonna chill with my new friends. You're gonna meet them today."

“That’s all good and well but what are you *doing*?”
emphasis on ‘doing’.

“I’m gonna show them my hubbly.”

“What is a ‘hubbly’?” Her lack of knowledge was cute to say the least.

“It’s that vase like thing I was smoking yesterday, gran.”

“Oh I see. It smells quite nice.”

“That was the ‘green mix’ gran.” I reached into my bag and picked up a green box. “This is the mint one. I’m gonna mix them together.”

“Isn’t that bad for you?” Her facial gesture shifted from an interested face to one quite concerning.

“No Gran. I’ll be fine. You know I always am.”

“Okay, I understand. But remember Keith, you should always do what you think is right, even if the people around you are doing the wrong things. Okay?”

“I understand Gran. I’ll see you later.” I gave her a kiss on the cheek and proceeded to the door.

What my gran said had stuck to me like glue. I know I wasn’t with the wrong crowd but then again, I never really had a crowd to start with. I’d always be the kid that had one friend per year. The kid that liked to stay inside and read books. What I was about to do was very different from anything I had ever done before. I was about to meet up with “friends”.

ORP still remained orange as ever but it had a chilly breeze on this day. The sky was murky and there wasn’t

one sign of blue in it. As I walked towards the park I noticed all the houses in the neighbourhood. Each house was completely different from the other. Some houses looked brand new, renovated or plainly cleaned up. Those were usually the houses the kids that never go outside lived in. They were normally painted cream or white and usually had red or brown roofs. The other houses were painted with various colours, one in particular stuck out. Its walls were painted green and its roof light beige. The thing that stood out was the amount of white doves. Doug told me a story of how the lady in the house was a hermit. She was beautiful but extremely shy and it seemed the only friends she had were the doves sitting neatly on the various birdfeeders around her trees. They say if all five white doves are seen sitting in a row, you should make a wish. I made a wish on that walk.

As I walked to the park I decided to be naughty and walk in the middle of the road. There were no cars at this time of the day and kids were riding their bikes frivolously. I was playing Lana Del Rey and it made me feel quite nostalgic. I thought about how quickly Rocco and I had become friends. It was just 3 weeks ago that we had our first night together – I showed him how to smoke hubbly and he gave me some Drake. We were like best friends already. I pulled my one earphone out and heard my name being called from the back. I turned around and

saw two very hip-hop dressed black boys with smiles as wide as the sun. It was Doug and Craig.

“Ey dude, what’s happening” Doug greeted me with a sharp arm grab. He smelled like expensive perfume.

“You good man?” Craig’s arm grab was more forceful.

“All good guys. So we’re chilling by the park?” I was no longer nervous to talk to my friends.

We all nodded and made our way to the park. The normally abandoned looking park was filled with little kids on the swings, no loud cars this time. As we sat on the jungle-gym I noticed the many differences between Doug and Craig.

Doug was much taller than his brother and had a scar by his left eye. He told me it was from a time where he accidentally walked (and broke) through a mirror. Doug loved heavy metal and rock music, something very unusual for a black kid. He loved noodles and cheese curls. He was soft spoken and had a very simple laugh. Craig on the other hand was shorter than his brother and seemed to always wear a silver band to which no-one knew the meaning behind it. Doug was a hip-hop junkie but I noticed how flexible he was with music. He actually wanted to hear my type of music. Craig came off as quite aggressive but ignorant to that fact. He was much louder than his brother and more open with the topics we’d speak about

Despite their differences they had many things in common. They both spoke with the same lingo and both dressed the same. They both disliked adverts and couldn't stand the sound of people rudely coughing. They were brothers after all so of course they would sometimes be in sync, sometimes even finishing each other's sentences. We talked for what must have been an hour and then saw Rocco from the distance, walking like a tiger that just demolished its prey.

Rocco always seemed to bring this childlike whimsy out of all of us. I'm unclear if it is the way he carries out a conversation or if his personality alone is what brought us to life. Rocco was excited to introduce us to this girl who had invited us to her house. Her name was Vanessa and apparently I wasn't the only one who didn't know her. We were all intrigued at what it would be like to go to a 'chillas' and actually learn how to 'chill'. While waiting for this to come I decided to show the brothers what Hubby really was. Mine was a two-pipe with a red bowl and rubber pipes. I purposely went and got thicker pipes for thicker smoke.

"So basically, this thing is like a cigarette?" Doug was examining how I was making the head.

"No dude because the smoke is different." I began to put tinfoil on the head. None of us had ever smoked a ciggy so we honestly didn't know what that was like.

“Yeah man, it has a different taste too.” Rocco pulled out the water, something I had forgotten. There were no taps in our park.

“And then it heats up or something?” Craig was even more confused as I lit the coal and asked him to hold it.

“Basically, I guess. The heat from the coal works with the tinfoil to create smoke using the flavour.”

“Is that what that green stuff was?” Doug examined the box of flavour.

“Yep. Time to try it.” I gave one pipe to Rocco and I took the other one, using hand gestures to show them how it works.

We spent the remaining three hours talking about school and what we want to do with our lives. In these moments of chilling I found myself learning about my personality. I learned that I enjoyed laughing, especially at the things I used to quiet down about. I felt connected to these three boys because they made me feel secure in myself. I was still shy as hell but I was coming out of my shell. We moved about in the park, moving from the swings to the pavement and back to the jungle gym. The orange hues of this place were getting darker and the wind was growing stronger. The miscellaneous children coming in and out of the park had now departed on their vintage bicycles.

Without warning Rocco got the call. She sounded enthusiastic for us to come but in truth, all of us were

shitting bricks. I have had girl-friends for years but this was different. This was actually a boy-girl party. We packed everything up and made our way to her house, our vibes just buzzing and tongues twirling.

We arrived at the house with high expectations. We expected raging music and flocks of college-looking students to be rolling in and out of the house. We even expected a brief police arrival to check up on the party. It was nothing like what we had envisioned. The girl, Sarah, came out of the house alone wearing tight black leggings and her hair was hidden under a beanie.

“Wuddup guys, come through.” She had a gentle tone to her voice, almost like someone you’d hear on the radio.

We walked into the very simple house. The walls were painted grey and there were family photos everywhere.

There was a smell of curry being made in the kitchen.

We followed her as we heard music coming from her back garden. We could hear voices, female voices, as we continued to walk through her house. We passed the sophisticated kitchen and arrived at a small lapa area.

“These are my friends.” She sat down on a wooden stool and gestured for us to sit down. We were sitting around a glass table with curious bottles on the top. The other girls introduced themselves and at first we were all acting quite awkward. Only Rocco and Sarah were talking. The brothers began talking about obvious nonsense as the other girls sat on their phones. I could not handle the awkwardness any longer.

“So... what is this bottle?” I picked up the clear glass bottle that had “Smirnoff” plastered in red.

“This is Vodka. Have you never drunk before?” Sarah giggled as she took the bottle away from me.

“Not really. I’ve had a cider before.”

“Honey this isn’t a cider.” She let out a loud laugh.

Sarah disappeared for a little bit as the other girls began to talk. Their names were Samantha and Rita and they were best friends. The brothers seemed to enjoy their dumb comments on what they thought people were really like. Sarah came back with blue cups and a despicable smile on her face.

It was crazy. It was as if time itself was moving at speeds it had never tried before. I felt so confident. Brave enough to say anything. I noticed my balance was off and everyone was talking much louder than they usually do. I found myself giggling like I was seven again. It all happened so quickly. Rocco and Sarah had disappeared for a few hours and I was left with four people on the same level as I. When they came back it was time to leave. The four of us stumbled to the path where we parted and for a moment, we sat on the concrete in silence. We were drunk as fuck.

To Be Continued...

#7 – The Battle Of Mental Health

Have you ever seen what an audio clip looks like? The waves? Well, that's what it looks like for a bipolar person, only we replace sound with moods. Often people have various misconceptions as to what a mentally ill person are really like. Some people instantly think 'crazy' or 'psycho'. Some people think of a disease which could dramatically take your life away. To some extent, the latter half is true. If not treated the symptoms of these disorders can lead to self-harm and eventually kill you slowly. Entering a clinic, even as a visitor, will bring your senses to an immeasurable hilt. You'll end up like, WTF?

What many don't know is that it's not a choice. I don't decide this morning that today I will feel sad. I don't force myself to feel anything I really don't want to because I'll get that feeling anyway. People don't want themselves to be sick or rendered having a 'handicap'. Some of the greatest people, living or dead have had their fair share of experiences with mental health. Kids from the age of 10 are being diagnosed and blessed be those aiding in the recovery and treatment. There is disappointment on society's side, people are not informed enough about these conditions and some will even be told 'It's all in your head'.

Well buddy, of course it's in my head. That's why I can't see it. I don't know what I'm going to feel and it is at times overwhelming. The lack of empathy from people is devastating to say the least. Mental Health people don't want your sympathy, I repeat, don't feel sorry for us! We just want you to understand us. Understand where we're coming from and why we need treatment. Depressed people need coping mechanisms to deal with their sadness. Bipolar people need regular medication and skills to help them get their sense of control back.

I went from 18, experiencing a new emotion every period of school, to 20, feeling an emotion and dealing with it headstrong. I don't see my illness as a weakness but rather a challenge that only I can partake in. Finding people that are like me only makes me feel stronger. Hearing people empathize with you on a human level, and not as some broken toy, gives you all the more courage to become a better person irrespective of what your condition is.

My message is to be kind to those you don't understand. We're not crazy just badly misunderstood.

Solace

Sometimes I like to be alone
Sometimes I like think
Sometimes I coat it with a blunt
Have money? Get a drink
I'm not saying I push the pain away from what is real
But sometimes there are things only your mind can truly
heal

Sometimes when I am alone
I listen to Lana Del Rey
All the melancholy sticks on words she likes to say
Sometimes when I think too much
My brain vibrates like phones
Am I isolated? No, I like to be alone

Solace is my saviour that I like to keep afloat
Only when the world's too much do I then sink my boat
Yes, I am depressed but let me feel what's in my heart
This is not my ending, just my solitary start

Please don't fear my silence
Please don't think that I am sad
Just because I do not talk it doesn't mean I'm mad
Let me feel these feelings
Let me understand my pain
That way I reconcile and then I can reboot my brain

Violet Walking's

October in Mayberry
The lampposts on in spring
I walk home with a buzzing head
The walk a fuzzy thing

I love the tulip growing in the field of veldt and stones
I feel the atmosphere merging quick inside my bones
I just had a blunt with a homie, he lives one block away
Never thought I'd see the colour violet sing and prey

I notice all the buildings
They have a shadow to their spark
Is this the colour violet that you see dwell in the dark?
I love this place of purple
Especially when the lights are out
A walk home in the purple is what loving is about

Flaws and All

I am proud to be imperfect
I am loud about my flaws
I have doubt when I am successful
I have scars on my left paw
I am glad that I am angry
I am thankful for my tears
Without my inner-knowing
How would I conquer my fears?

I am special for my qualities
Only skin-deep or under surface
I know when I am a pessimist
Or when it's all just curses
I write happily when I'm depressed
I come up with sick verses
I look beyond my "measurement"
I look beyond the surface

I know I can't be perfect
It's not something I try to be
I know that there is potential
In the sometimes negative me
I love my size 6 righty
Very different from my left 10
I love all of my great flaws
Because they're not there to pretend

Board the 11 o' Clock Thought Train

11 o' clock

The evening is bare

The gent just got here

There's no-one to stare

Our judgment impaired

Our stamina spared

Our blood melts to green

The steam in the air

The lights look so fair

We've been here and there

I'm thinking of putting some blonde in my hair

#8 – Love

It's the smell of a new car. The lush colours of a poppy field. The messing up of words and not being ashamed of showing it. It's the giggles you get when you're not stoned but feel it in your stomach the next day. Love, in my mind, is almost impossible to describe accurately without pondering on various other things. When people say love they think red but I see an ocean blue. They think roses and chocolates but I think Chappy wrappers and white Tipex. Love is undeniably sweet.

The first time I thought I found love was with a boy I used to know. We met at a house party and it wasn't until later that I really noticed him. I didn't notice the way his eyebrow twitched when he gave me lunch money, or when he'd wink at me in assembly. Truth be told, I still don't think he noticed it but eventually I did. He started holding me in a certain way which at first I mistook as being friendly. Before I knew it, other people started noticing it and it hit me. At that time I was 17 and I hadn't explored my sexuality. It was like having a dirty secret that only one person knew, and that's exactly what it became. Alas, he never told me how he really felt and I still don't know the truth.

The second time was with a beautiful girl who always had the best hair. She always smelled like cocoa-butter

and strawberries. She had this glow about her that I couldn't resist, she was that beautiful. She knew it and not to say she lead me on but she once confessed that she was "accommodating my feelings". She was the first person I'd get nervous around and always had a boyfriend with her like her phone. I gave her my love but it was unrequited. We are friends but she taught me the difference between 'love' and 'infatuation'.

My first real love was with my soul mate. I only figured this out towards the end of my 19th year. We had become even closer over long phone calls that felt endless and had random visits within the year. I didn't tell him for a while over fear of losing him but eventually he drew the truth out of me. He was different from the rest though. He was kind and understanding. He knew our friendship would outweigh any obstacles in our paths. He made me realize the beauty of what it's like to be in love. The fact that even though he didn't love me like that, he understood my feelings and still insisted we stay best friends. Nothing has changed except he is now the brother I've always wanted.

Don't try find love, love will find you.

Young Temptation

I guess I got time, got time, got time for you
I'd trade in all my hours of smoking weed just for you
I wouldn't have to do that though
You'd smoke with me, just me
Smoke up on the mirror, your body's all I see

I like it when you play hookie
Show up late to work just for nookie
Don't grow old, we just get more sleep
Wash you down and dry you repeat

Lovelace, Lovelace, hit it on the spot
How I could I forget? You and I have got
Time and time and time and time to waste
Lovelace, Lovelace, get it while you can
Never doubt the power put up in his hands
We've got time and time and time and time to waste
Oh, I waste it on you
Oh, I'll waste it on you
Yes, I'll waste time on you
Oh, I waste time on you

Lonely Delight

Naturally, I like to ask questions
Naturally I'm not afraid to say what I feel
Your boy keeps it real
Naturally I am a youth of tomorrow
I don't show fear for my sins, my sorrow or pain
Don't have fear on the brain

But I get lonely too
Sometimes emotions can get lonely too
That's when we say there's me and there's you
It's just me and just you

Just love me baby
Wake up in my bedroom wearing my T-shirt
All pressed up and dressed up in white
My lonely delight
Just love me baby
Put away all of the pride that you kept deep inside
Inside of your soul
Baby let it go

Naturally, I am the one that is stronger
Holding it down, making time longer
Just when I thought that I'd still stay alone
Baby boy entered my zone

He messed up my head
Traded in money for roses instead
I kept it going, I wasn't prepared
Felt like I had been dared

He got me like, woah

I'm In Love

Basically, I'm basically in love with you
Fuck the people, fuck what they say
I'm in love with you
Every time I see your eyes, you see my smile
I see your shadow, and I wanna know

Can I smell your hair?
Can we take this party elsewhere?
You got a room with a nice view in it
I know how much you care
Let's figure it out together
I know you like sad weather
What can I say?
I'm in love

Basically, I'm basically hooked up on your stuff
We just watched some Anime and then we do it rough
You say baby, and I just smile
Nobody call me baby, not a long while

Can I read your comics?
Can we go out to the movies?
And you're being honest
I'm in love, I'm in love, I'm in love

What can I say? What can I do?

You're the one that got me feeling this, too true
Hoodie packing, sweatpants jacking
What do you say? Should we start snacking
I got your t-shirt on, the one on blue
I wear it just for you
Cause baby, I'm in love with you

How Dare You Give Me Love

Who do you think you are?
Spoiling me with your presence
Giving me the butterflies
How excited I am in your presence

Who do you think you are?
Teaching me just how to smile
How dare you come with all your love
And stay for all the while

How dare you give me chakra?
And good karma in this life
How dare you say you need me?
Like a husband needs his wife

Who do you think you are?
Dressing me up in blue
How dare you say you love me
when I know I love you too

Your Ambience

The sky's not quite blue, it's mixed with grey
And the different shades of the ambience
He said to come through to his house wearing my
confidence

The leaves on the tree have withered away
But you kept it going, baby, you came to stay
I love the love, I want the love, I need the love
I feel faded and famous
Rocking up at your doorstep doing it like it's shameless
Popping that blue champagne, the weezy calling out my
name

Let's turn the afternoon into a game
Baby boy just tell me what you want?

And your eyes have hazel in it
And you don't wanna fall back but you in it
We'll be fucking with the theme on purpose
Cut the drama out quick like a service
Wearing all black in the bright day
Call my telly up 3 times a day
Got a twitch in his eye, he don't know it
When he talking to me good, he will show it

This baby boy is down for me for life
Gave him wings and taught him how to fly
He's so small and he's so shy

Ready for the day he'll die, he says
He's not the usual guy I like to vibe with
Not the usual guy I see myself with
Truth be told yo' boy ain't never been whipped
Nothing neutral, nothing else like this
Cooking good karma, my medicine man
My lover who loves to understand

Take's his time; it's cool with me I'll wait
If he's nervous, I'll share in his pain
Deep breaths for my baby let me count those tears
I'll be there for him through lifetime and its fears

September Temple

Have you heard the news?
We can go and get married now
Legal in the home city
Not saying we should marry now
But you know I'm just saying
I love to talk and you love to listen
I'm playing baby, this ain't a love song

You got that Voodoo on yo' Buddha
Looks a little like Luther
Always carry the reefer
6 Swisher gon' have ya boy like
Woah, Uh, Whoo, Damn
Let me know when you toking
Love the fact that you love the fact that I'm just a little
broken

Hazel in your eyes
One freckle below your cheek
You always smell like the ocean
Sandcastle wave motion
And I love it when you get angry
Seeing you sweat just makes me wet
And you love it when I talk dirty
I love to talk dirty to ya

Luh da talk dirty to ya, ooh

My Guy

I guess I gotta try, have to try, I must try
For the first time in my life I've found a good guy
He's got his own cuts and he's got his own bruises
Never comes late, never has excuses

Met him in a clinic on a very hot Monday
We was watching Tokyo Ghoul until Sunday
We were only friends, never had any interest
Then I moved to my neighbourhood
Then I got this

I found myself sitting there thinking 'bout this guy
Thinkin' to myself, "I got a great guy"
He only calls me 'baby' when it's raining
Baby do you see how it's raining?
Thinkin' to myself, I got a great guy

He's never in a rush and he never says no
His body's always shaking and he always talks slow
He's always in sweatpants
'Nike' on his T-shirt
Fuck my boy, do we flirt?
Spongebob on his T-shirt

Baby, cotton-candy on you
His wall's painted blue

His eyes sparkle too
I don't say I love him but feelings are true
These feelings are true
I'm always gon' keep you by me

↓

#9 – Broken Heart Syndrome

I smell bath-salts and go numb in my right toe. It's like getting on a rollercoaster, seeing where you fall on the tracks and having those 2 seconds of 'Shit, am I gonna die?'" They always use the heart because that's where you actually feel it. Deep inside your chest where an x-ray just won't validate your misery.

Breaking your heart and feeling that emotion is really like losing a friend. You even mourn the loss of your partner by diving into ice-cream and cliché romantic films. Certain music, even if the lyrics aren't depressing, come across as more interesting because it's the emotion the artist is trying to convey that gets to you. You might drive yourself crazy by looking at old messages, hearing certain songs or even when that person is brought up in conversations. This is usually the early stages of your break-up, where you actually feel like you've been broken up into pieces.

Next comes the longing to be in each other's company once more. Missing someone and not being able to tell them will always prove to be heart breaking. When and if you see that person again can determine how much you love them, and or make you reunite. I believe that you have to realize how much you miss something by making it disappear for a while. If love can be found

again, pursue it with caution. If it cannot be fixed, letting go is necessary. Admitting you've lost, mourning your relationship and starting off fresh can really help with a break up.

Though I never broke up with any of my serious love interests I did get straddled with what I like to call, 'Broken Heart Syndrome'. This can occur simply by loving someone and they don't love you back, or being rejected. The first man I liked always dated girls but kept me a secret – Broken Heart Syndrome. The first girl I liked didn't return the feelings and I could never blame her for that – Broken Heart Syndrome. My first real love gave me the opportunity to continue my friendship and although I was disappointed, I found that closure sooner than expected.

Closure is only achieved when one really comes to terms with their loss.

To cure Broken Heart Syndrome, find closure.

Miscommunications

I look up in the sky and then I smile away
Cuz there's a shining and it always seems to stay
Whenever I feel lonely, I feel the sky turn blue
Shooting stars pass and it reminds me of you

It really isn't easy though
Sometimes you're just not kind
You say things so damn rapidly
It's hard to try define
I know that I can't help myself
I wanna take care of you
So tell me, lost lover
Why do you do the things you do?

Unrequited

Why'd you have to have
A face close to heaven
A smile that tokes on your tongue
Every time I hear your name
I get that cold feeling
Like we're in love just 'cuz we're
young

I know it's wrong
Oh, how foolish am I
To think there'll be come a day
You'll be my side
Be down for this ride
I hope one day you'll love me the same
way

Fictional Love

Our love was a work of fiction
3 hits in, full of contradiction
No lies though you gave it to me right
Don't fight that homie, don't fight

I watched you go insane, I watched you blow your brain
I watched you drink your pain, I watched again and
again

Tuesday's
Ricky's bar
Homie wouldn't set up
Light a jay for me
Won't ever have it let up
You took me to the bestest
My was smile was pretty before those texts

I would be a liar if I said I don't imbibe
Drink up in my cup, had your feelings there to hide
Linked it, almost fucked and then we went one night and
chilled
Bourbon in your cup, roll you up one just to grill

You only call me when you're lonely
You're always passed out by the bar
You phone me while you're in the bathroom

And your drink is never far

Your friends left you outside the club

Your girlfriend doesn't want to talk

Maybe if you were sober

You'll remember how to walk

Rushed It

When tomorrow comes, I'll be on my own
No-one there to fill my throne
Gotta do this by myself, this by myself
Maybe I was a little quick
Maybe I just rushed it
But I had feelings I ain't never had before
But I rushed it
Rushed in to my room with your talk
And I rushed it
Rushed into your room and said let's talk

Vixen

She know we did it, she know it
Low life, too cool to play
She's got extensions, don't grow it
November time it's all in braids

She's white though, she don't mean it
Pipe dream too real for the hoe
That pipe now, she don't clean it
It's constipated like an ego

Man I love all women
This one got an acting spree
But damn, I love this woman
A damaged good made just for me

Bad Habit Boy

Palm trees, I wear the sweater
You want this and I want better
You want calls done late at night
You love her but want me, right?

I like your eyes, your brown is blue
Only I see it in you
Come through and park your car
Bring the wine in a jam jar

Fan on as we hit the blunt
You slip off and I just stunt
You're low-key too high for rain
Our bodies change but you stay the same

Uncertain of Love

Who am I? Who are you?
What are we? What am I to you?
Am I just a lay back kind of homie?
Am I only there when you feel horny?

What is this place? What is this taste?
Peppermint zest in your toothpaste
You always seem to taste the same when I kiss you
Cigarettes and peppermint make me miss you

I just wanna ride the wave
Get these feelings out of the way
Smoke about kilo in day
Please don't interrupt my grinding
I don't want a declaration but I think I need it
I don't want the power you put in my plant
It's already seeded

What do I chose?
What do I lose if I choose to love the one that I'm
boning
Giving up my freedom?
Just you say it's me that you'll own
What do I choose?

7 Days in autumn

Part 3 – The Tingles

That day we met the concrete at exactly 5 in the evening. We were all buzzing and we had all encountered our first time being drunk. It was sensational. As we sat on that concrete we realized how much energy we had used. We were exhausted and as a result we felt drunker. We finished our conversation by staring at the orange sun ahead of us. The orange had spread throughout the sky and there were baby clouds taking naps without crying. It was all very surreal, the very essence that was being naïve and seventeen. It felt like we came from a different planet or the '90s kids were just a different species of homo erectus. Although it felt like five minutes, we had actually been sitting there for almost an hour. Realizing the time, we all went our separate ways and parted the night off with 'Awe'.

The walk home was short but the experience extended way past ten minutes. I could actually feel gravity and I couldn't even try to feel sad. It was such a weird feeling and I especially felt it in my stomach. My body had become one with gravity and the joints of my bones were tingling. It was, to say the least, sensational. I arrived home to find a quiet house yet again. My gran had left the gate open so obviously she must have been chilling

outside. My gran was a lover of nature and I think if she was able to obtain one superpower, it would be to converse with animals. My gran was the type of woman to get into a car accident because she stopped for a dog to walk to the safe side of the road. She was lovely and kind.

I attempted, in my drunken stupor, to lock the house up without making it obvious that I had just drank the devil's poison. I observed the walls of the houses and checked twice for people in the windows. It all seemed very bad but in reality it was so, so good. My bed welcomed me like a mother welcomes their child home from school. Ah, the joys of being drunk and seventeen.

...

It was Wednesday. Wednesday was usually the day that everyone felt most comfortable during the week. During the holiday, this day felt like an ordinary day with no time frame set in stone. We as gents were going to assume that today would play out as yesterday did, with the exception that there would be no female presence in the atmosphere. I initially had a severe headache when I woke up. Believe it or not I had never actually woken up with a headache. It felt like someone had put pins in my brain and that morning was the day after surgery. My body felt weak and it still had that dizzy effect to it. It was almost as if my body was punishing me for all the

sins I had committed on Tuesday. Luckily it faded quite quickly and before I knew it my body was back on my side. My gran didn't notice and I felt I had gotten away with murder. My pins had turned into a tick in the noggin.

As I felt no changes to the scenery of my grans house, I started listening to the music the brothers and Rocco had introduced me to. It was all brand new; the music and my emotions towards it. I was listening to Odd future and my own discovery, Little Dragon.

I discovered that musically the brothers had polar opposite tastes in music. Even though they shared various similar physical traits their passion for their music was very different. Doug was very calm and poised but he listened to heavy metal. Personally I cannot stand that genre but I understood his need to listen to disfigured vocals and ripped guitars. Perhaps he listened to it because in that moment he felt he could let his anger out. It made sense that heavy metal could be an outlet for his anger. Doug also listened to very electronic music. It was part of new term of electronic called 'Dubstep'. Rocco suggested it sounded like music aliens would listen to in their flying saucers. Nonetheless, it was the genre that I took from Doug and I was more than happy to Google it. I find myself listening to a slowed

down version of the genre with added vocals as a twist. Orbiting my brain was the echo of these beats. Craig on the other hand was a heavy hip-hop fan. Honestly I had never heard rap music other than what was on MTV. My taste was not vast but I had a comprehensible knowledge of rap. At least that was what I thought until Craig introduced me to a bunch of people I didn't know existed. They were all rappers but they didn't sound the same. Each one had a different approach to how they would make songs.

I listened to music as I waited for Rocco to call me. He said that he wanted to meet up with me before we went to the brothers. My gran was walking around the house, taking in all the flowers that were placed messily in glass transparent vases. She had a habit of talking to her plants. At first I thought it was odd but the more I got to know her, the more I realized how in tune she was with nature. She caressed the petals of all the plants and sang to the ones that were dying. It was a very morbid situation if you thought about it but her opera-like voice did seem to actually bring life back to her dying tulips.

My gran made her way to me, almost like a slug, and sat down with me at the old wooden table she kept in her living room. She looked curious and a curious granny means lots of questions.

“So Keith, are you enjoying your new friends?” She had brought a silver tray with her ‘special tea’ on it.

“Yes Gogo, it’s very different though.” I watched my gran make her tea slowly.

“I understand. I know you had trouble making friends in primary school.”

“I think because no-one was trying to understand me.” I actually was a little offended at what she said. She wasn’t lying. I did struggle to keep friends in school.

“People are always going to misunderstand you. Hell, if people don’t try to understand others they’ll end up being ignorant to what people are really like.” As she spoke, my gran’s dog hurried to her and signalled for her to be picked up.

“I guess you’re right.” I did my best to try act like what she said didn’t just hit my heart tenfold.

“But you know Keith...” My gran’s eyes became low.

“Sometimes we are put into situations where we try to fit in instead of loving the fact that we stand out”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, you have to be happy with who you are so that who you are can really shine for others to see.”

My gran ended the conversation by finishing her tea and wheeling herself away.

I got the call-me from Rocco. A jolt of excitement rushed through my body. I was ready for the new day. I kissed my gran goodbye, put my snapback on and made my way out of the very old ORP house. As I stepped outside, I noticed the temperature. It was in-between weather. It wasn’t hot enough to start sweating but it

wasn't cold enough to wear a jacket. Nonetheless I had my hoodie on and continued my walk.

The walk to the park was fast. There were no kids in sight and the only sign of life were the dogs barking at me as I passed their houses. At one o'clock in ORP, kids are usually at friends' houses or arriving home from school. This was however the holidays so it seemed unusual that there weren't any kids playing around the streets. Indeed, today felt very different. I could feel some sort of energy that wasn't there the day before. I disregarded this feeling and made my way to the park. That's when the exception of silence came to play. On the jungle gym, in the same spot where the gents would meet up, there were two young men 'blomming' by our spot. It made me incredibly nervous to see older kids chilling where we normally do. My hands began to shake and I had that feeling of when you're about to mess up a conversation. I decided to sit on the swings and wait for Rocco. A perfectly viable plan, right? Avoid all contact with the newer community of ORP. I thought wrong.

"Aye man, you Keith?" One of the boys yelled for me from the distance. I was shocked. How did he know who I was?

"Yeah I am." I tried my best to sound normal even though I was shouting.

“Come over here man.” The other boy gestured for me to come closer. I looked down the entire time walking over there. I was so scared they were going to do the worst. Not to sound pessimistic but when you’re in the “ghetto” by yourself, you come to understand the seriousness that is safety.

The boys looked at least 5 years older than me. They were both wearing red all stars and their hair was very long and messy. The one boy was a little lighter than the other but they both looked around the same height. They were wearing snapbacks and white t-shirts. At first I thought they were thugs but on further inspection I found that they were too well dressed to be of that nature. As my eyes met their faces I tried my best to show that I really wasn’t freaking out, although no guarantees on how they really felt in that moment.

“Wussup man?” The boy greeted me like all gents would. “I’m Jedda. This is Ricks”, The other boy then greeted me.

“You’re the white kid Rocco was telling us about, right?” Rick’s low voice was very intimidating and it honestly felt threatening.

“Yeah I am, I guess.” As I nodded, the boys broke into a loud chuckle. Jedda’s cackle sounded very mischievous. “Well homie, we got a present for you guys.” Jedda pulled out a box of cigarettes from his pocket. Although my mom is a smoker, I never really paid attention to the whole cigarette thing. The box Jedda had was silver,

with only four smokes inside. Out of no-where, he pulled out what looked like an all-white cigarette.

“This is where the magic happens, bro.” Jedda’s grin was enticing.

Then, almost if it were magic, Rocco appeared from the corner of the park looking eager as ever. It then dawned on me that Rocco had yet another ambush on the way.

“Ayo guys. I see you’ve met Keith.” Rocco greeted the giggling boys. “Have you explained today to him?”

“Today? What’s happening today?” I was trying my best to keep composure.

“You ever ride the green meanie?” Jedda began to play with the white cigarette.

“Nah, I don’t know what that is.” I must have seemed so dumb.

“You’re gonna learn today, son.” Jedda began laughing to himself.

He lit the cigarette and then I realized that it was actually a joint. It all began to make sense now. I was about to smoke weed. The four of us went quiet as the blunt was passed around. Jedda said we were going to do a ‘two pull pass’ which is essentially when you take two drags of the blunt and pass it around until it was finished. The blunt burn the back of my throat and I couldn’t help but cough and sound like a dog when it sneezes. That was the first pass. By the third pass the blunt had become a stump. The silence was still there until Jedda intervened. “Keith.” Jedda nudged me.

“Yeah?” I moved my head slowly and yes, it did feel like my head was working in slow motion.

“Do you feel the butterflies?” He was holding in a giggle. The other boys were now staring at me.

“They feel more like moths.” Without warning, we all let out a howl of laughter.

“We’re high homies.” Jemma fist bumped all of us and for three seconds we were silent. Then I felt it.

It was the most unusual experience I had ever felt in my life. It didn’t knock me at first but after what must have been 5 minutes I felt a tingly sensation rush through my entire body. It seemed that the whole world had slowed down.

“Keith. I rate since this is your first time, you should listen to music.” Ricks, with his eyes now a glossy red and brown, shuffled through his jacket and gave me an iPod. He pointed to a specific album and told me to lie down and close my eyes. I did as he said and let the whole ambience of the situation flutter in the core of my stomach. It felt like time was endless. I didn’t keep conversation with the others because I was so focused on this feeling. I was touching my arms and could kind of feel the static from my fingers to the hair on my arms. The songs I was listening to were synching deep into my mind. This ‘high’ made me take careful note of all the vocals layered on these tracks.

Before we knew it, it was four in the evening. Kids were coming back from friends and parents were on their way home. Jedda suggested we move out because we all still look high. With a simple ‘awe’ we all parted ways.

Before leaving, Jedda gave me a cigarette on the low and told me to use it when the time is right. Rocco decided to walk me home because he actually thought I met get lost. We walked to my house, our bodies still feeling the sensations of 2 hours ago. Then, in a very calm manner, Rocco began to speak.

“Keith... I gotta tell you something.”

To be continued...

#10 – Beautiful Creatures

It is common for the public to view beautiful people in a more sensitive light. We tend to have a background and personality analysis when looking at a celebrity. As we notice all the perfections of others we begin to question our flaws. Although I do believe we are all beautiful, I think that those with outer beauty will always lack that syrupy sweet something that makes them an individual. I am not looking at those with perfect skin, synthetic dye jobs or straight teeth. No, I'm gonna look at those blessed with inner beauty, better people who've become complacent with themselves despite the obvious surface flaws.

I once met a man with a crooked nose and missing limbs. On the outside he looked like a broken action figure, damaged goods that someone had just tossed away. That's what appeared on the surface of an ignorant person. But he wasn't ignorant, no, he was comfortable. His arms had been accidentally blown up and it left him with scars he could never hide. I'd think that a person with this disability would have the most pessimistic outlook on life. Instead the man chose to paint, with his feet no less. I watched him paint a picture for me using only his toes and foot. He held the paintbrush between his toes like my gran would do with her mouth, clinging to the pen as if it were a crime to fall out. The man I saw

was an optimist who took joy in the fact that his paintings were beautiful *because* of how they were made. This man has inspired me to be grateful for what I have today.

I met an oddly shaped girl, round from the waist down, with a severe case of anxiety. Her large body always shook and she had a bad stutter. On the outside she seemed broken and a vessel of no hope. Instead, she was bubbly and never had any difficulty in making someone laugh. She wasn't ashamed that she couldn't close her front door gate by herself. She poked fun at that. She was able to laugh at her circumstances without avoiding how serious her situation was. She taught me to laugh at the little things in life, even if that is you.

I have encountered many beautiful creatures but I have noticed one thing – they are shameless. They do not fear the judgments that would pass upon first glancing on them. They all have courage and self-confidence that many beautiful aspire to have. They embrace the fact that they are weird and find the word 'peculiar' to be like a comforting heated blanket. They do not aspire to be the porcelain images they see on TV. They aspire to inspire those that are more fortunate than others, without any need for gratification or validation that they are just like us.

It is the ‘freaks’ and ‘misfits’ of the world that push the boundaries of society. People in the LGBT community are bringing awareness to the unusual and that is great. These introductions of the unusual open up the minds of the uninformed.

Love for all the weirdoes.

No Skin Shades To My Eyes

It hits me like a tsunami
All these people just see colour
I don't see the skin type
I just see my earthly brother

It's not about whose side you're on
For me, it's how you care
It's separating your segregation
With love that's out to share

Yes I love the Indian man
He sells me all my shit
Persistence for successfulness
Makes sure he never quits

Yes I love the coloured lady
Her stories keep me young
She shares them with the family
And thanks her god for the sun

Yes I love the black man
How I love textures in his hair
Embrace the noise around him
Makes you know we all are there

I love all the people

It doesn't matter what colour's your skin
Love is all that matters
Before the end, we must begin
Begin to have more U-N-I-T-Y
Let's all put down the guns
We all look at the moon the same
All of us share the sun

The Man In Drag

I entered a club with green walls on fire
The jump was so high but the people made it higher
The floor was so covered with smoke and with dust
The people around me were so after lust

That's when he must have seen me
The man wearing red
His lipstick was so splattered
But he wore pride instead
He was tall, black and smooth
His eyes were a darker brown
He asked where I was from,
'said he comes from this town

The man wearing make-up kindly sought after a dance
He didn't grab my thighs and he boldly took his chance
At first I was so timid by the man that wore red heels
He'd never be my type but there was something 'bout his
appeal

He smelled like lavender perfume
His hands were bigger than mine
I said I'd never been here before
'said he comes here all the time

Once the dance was over he insisted for a drink

He bought me a Strawberry Daiquiri
The “drink that makes you think”
His dimples were so heavy but I never had a touch
I only kept his number but to me that was enough

He showed me we are all beautiful
In dryness or in drag
He lived a normal life thereafter
I’m sure he kept that bag
That man was so damn comfortable; I knew he told his
wife
It was the man in drag that seemed to live a lovely life

R.I.P Rocky

My first little puppy that I could call my own
Your blonde coat so shiny, your yawn like a moan
A Labrador so silly but you always made me cry
Whenever I would leave for school, it's the gate you
would wait by

Too young were you to have it
At 6, you were fully blind
No matter if you bumped into walls
You still remained so kind

I miss you oh so deeply
How I wish I had you back
Your body was so huge
But you never did attack
My friends would always pet you
They loved to see you shine
Rocky up in heaven
You are utterly and always mine

Animals

We are the animals

The ones they can't tame

Wearing our blisters and scars with no shame

We all fly together yet we're stronger with our pain

We may all fly differently but we all fly in one way

#11 – What is Out There?

I believe everyone likes a bit of mystery in life. Some people find amusement over the chocolate they leave on your hotel pillow; the question is who brings it? Some people arrive at their gate to see the morning paper placed untidily far away from the actual mailbox. I am one of those people. However, I was never one of those people that believed in the supernatural or thought of a higher power. It was never one of my interests and it wasn't that I chose disinterest but rather chose to not think about it. However, as I get older and dived into the endless information the internet has on strange things, I found myself curious as to what is really out there.

My first thought: Aliens. Why have people for so many years questioned the existence of these intergalactic organisms? Yes, there have been “photographic evidence” that leads to these theories (the crop circle thing), but I am a man that believes in what I see. However, if there could be life existing on this planet, who's to say there isn't existence of life on the other planets? Who's to say that we're not the inferior species and there is a more advanced civilization out there? How do we know that they aren't examining us out there? We as humans were designed in a certain way and evolved into what we are now. Perhaps that is the case with these foreigners. I don't believe aliens are green with bulging

heads, in fact I think they might be more civilized than we are. The mysteries of space will span longer than our time.

Another thought: The Paranormal. I don't believe in ghosts, spirits or demons and angels. I am not a spiritual person but I don't condone those that are. When I see it for myself I will believe. That isn't to say they don't exist. Centuries have shown how people have encountered transparent spirits and told their stories of how afraid they were. My dad told me that when he was 17, he had a ghost grab his throat before evaporating out of his room. A chilly story but I still remained unchanged. I've heard countless more but it just doesn't push me to take that extra leap of faith into figuring out what lies beyond "the earthly realm".

I take a big interest in the occult and paranormal because it fascinates me. I've google'd all the research on the paranormal, seen the pictorial 'evidence' of humanoid-hybrid like creatures and read the stories of their paranormal encounters. But still, it does not scare so much as it fascinates me.

As for a higher power, I'm keeping my options open. I now find that I do believe there is something out there watching over me, I just don't want to label it because I'm not entirely sure what exactly it is.

Nonetheless, I remain open minded to the unknown.

Glass Mirror Boys

You're going through motions
Don't know what to say
Keep it smooth like lotion
Keep it perfect every day
Brighten up your future, shine your shit away
Smoke another cool one, breathe in a brighter day

Don't know how many times I'll be working and rocking
I still have my All Stars while the others Reebokin'
I notice how many girls you're preoccupied with lip
locking
They be hanging up their future like they're hanging
their stockings

What's a number today?
What's a digit to you?
Your instagram's your whole life
But it still isn't true

Mamma Don't Always Know Best

Why you always acting mad?
Acting like the world is on your shoulders
Yo' Mamma told ya
Why you always seem so sad?
Looking like you're headed for a boulder
Yo' Mamma told ya

Mamma doesn't know my brain
Even if we think the same
Mamma doesn't know what's best
She once had sent me for a test
Questioned if it's a phase
Liking boys that weren't my age

Now my Mamma knows the drill
Leave me be to take my pill

The Shape Shifter

It was glowing
It was showing it's interested
It had colours that shifted
It had messages lifted
by the vase full of flowers

Its handle was guided by the dim flashing lights
Still it looks cool if rendered with no sight
I managed to pick it up
Glowed in my hands
Not like a lava lamp
You don't understand

Watching it shape shift
I just baked at 10
I'm writing this poem without using a pen
Now I retreat to my warm little den
Nothing considered
Nothing to commend
Back to the drawing board without a pen

Orange

Let's talk about the colour in which not one word can
rhyme

I see it in my neighbourhood, at night or in daytime
I feel it when I wear it and I wear it like a crown
Everyone knows Orange but no-one wears it in my town

I love it on thick women
On their thighs or on their skirts
The curves just match the architecture
Like patterns in the dirt
It hits me like a one-liner
So hard it sometimes hurts
I love the colour Orange but don't have it as a shirt

Have you seen the colour Orange work a patch of
crimson yellow?
The bubbiness of Orange always seems to make me
mellow
It might not rhyme with anything but damn I love its
shade
Orange is my new fave colour, my favourite way to fade

#12 – Sexuality

Imagine your favourite colour was blue but you weren't allowed to tell people. Imagine not being able to wear that colour or even think about it because people would think differently of you. Well, that's basically what sexuality can feel like if someone tries to suppress it. I am a proud bisexual man and I have been with both sexes. I have enjoyed the company of a beautiful woman and can say the same about a man. It wasn't as simple as you'd think.

Most of my childhood and early teens were years of suppressed sexuality and conflicted identity problems. Due to how I saw people think about a gay man, I often neglected to ask myself what I thought about them. There was this particular stereotype that seemed to stick with people in my school. Because of all of this, I pushed any homosexual feelings away. I couldn't like that because everyone else thought it was weird. I kept quiet about it for years but as I navigated my teen years, I began to realize my feelings for the same sex. My friends, at the time, were quite homophobic and the comments they used to make secretly cut me inside. I couldn't tell them the truth, not because of what they'd say, but simply because I was unsure of how I felt. I was in love with two people, one a boy and one a girl.

Juggling these feelings became complicated and I had to watch who was watching me.

There was a moment in my life where I actually had a secret relationship. I had met an older boy who seemed to be the life of the party. The exception – nobody knew about the parties. My friends were unaware that I was spending my weeknights with a bunch of LGBT members and at 18, you have to understand, you are at the threshold of being “a young adult”. It made it to the point where I was using a fake female persona as an excuse for why I was missing so many social gatherings. In all honesty, I was too afraid of what my straight friends would think and that made me live a short lie. Eventually though, my best friend got word and confronted me. Within one weekend I had gone from me, the straight women-loving boy, to a young man whose sexuality was thought-provoking. It was very difficult in the beginning but I found that all my friends were willing to accept me *because* they loved me.

To all those who struggle to identify their sexuality or find it difficult to feel acceptance, know that you are not alone. You may just find that there are millions of people who empathize with you because they’ve experienced it too. You may find yourself questioning existence because the inside of you doesn’t feel right. Obviously you can’t just figure it all out in a day but understand

that what you feel is normal. Denying yourself the truth of who you are can be soul destroying but once you find yourself, that is to say the real you, you will learn to love yourself and embrace your feelings. Gay, straight, bisexual, transgender or pansexual – However you feel is okay.

I encourage all who read this to really think about their sexuality. If you don't identify to anything, it's okay. The world will love you for who you are.

Cockiness

I got a popsicle in my pocket
Nobody can stop it
The one in the middle, man
That's my rocket
I have loose ends where the plugs meet the sockets
I have pills for everything so I box it
I've got plenty of lines and plenty time
I converse with my red wine
Don't be asking me if he's mine
Ain't nobody mine
I ain't got the time
Hit me up on the daily when you down for the dm's
Wanna smoke trees?
Bring your friends
I got some cockiness up in my shoes and woes
No arrogance here, just a good ego

Cravings

You're fucking up my appetite
Didn't want people to know I'm craving cherry on the
low
And the girl I know just keep it tight
After hours we hit go, she said I gave her a new glow
Feel the salty on my lips
Grab some chips and add the dips
I'm craving for the taste of blueberries
I need me some of that blue cherry

Foreplay

Naked in your living room
The smell of candles burning to the tune
Got Marvin playing in the back
About to set off to your tomb

You calling me white shok-o-lahd
Your mouth is tasting hella bittersweet
I'm calling out your wild card
Your hand is banging to the bongo beat

We sink into bed peace
I'll give you a head peace
Carve your name up on my silver stone
Do things to you 'cus we're alone

It's just been a touch
But this foreplays enough
Some poison ivy on my dirty hands
So let's see who's the bigger man

He Makes Me Feel Like...

I'm a poster child for unethical practice of a very bad
mind

I skip the shots, always wear socks and I forget to tell the
time

I'm in love with a very shy boy who never speaks his
mind

When he has something to say, I tend to fall behind

I'm a hipster kid with scarf all season

Winter wear all day

I've got 5 tattoos and dirty shoes

and don't go outside to play

He's got cigarette's waiting for me

Menthol for himself

If I had to die today

I wouldn't spend it with nobody else

But You

7 days of autumn

Part 4 – Is This Intimacy?

“Keith... That was actually my first time smoking weed.” Rocco looked embarrassed.

“Wait, I thought you said you smoked before?” I was confused. Rocco told Jedda, Ricks and I that that was his second time.

“I know man, I lied. I just didn’t want to look weird in front of those gents.” Rocco started giggling. We were both still high so everything seemed funny.

“Well it’s definitely something we have to do again.”

“We can do it tomorrow.” Rocco slyly pulled out another blunt. “This time we do it with the brothers.” Rocco had a menacing grin on his face. I started to laugh.

“Do you think they’d be up for it?” Rocco gave me the blunt to hold. I felt like there was so much power in this little white stick.

“They’re gonna have to be. If not, we’ll just smoke it together.” Rocco took back the blunt and stopped in the middle of the road. “I’ll check you tomorrow”.

With goodbyes said, we parted ways and I walked home with red eyes and a wondering mind. Remember how I spoke about the orange in the neighbourhood? Well, those colours had become so vivid. My body seemed to become one with the wind and I was shaking, not from being scared but actually being excited about this

feeling. When I arrived home, the paranoia began. I felt that if I got caught it would be even worse than when I was drunk. I was alone now so I didn't have any back up if someone came to confront me. Lucky me, I arrived to my grandmother fast asleep on the couch. I went straight to my room and closed the curtains. I made my bed so I could be lazy on it. I put my earphones on and let the day end. So this is what it feels like to be grilled.

...

It was Thursday now. Hump-day to those familiar with the term. It's the middle of the week and for some it is the longest day of week. At school, the periods are longer on a Thursday and teachers tend to be lazy. For me, Thursday was a lucky day. For some reason good things always happen on this day. I woke up feeling refreshed. That blunt gave me the best sleep of my life. I walked around the house looking for my gran. She must have gone out. I remembered the cigarette Jemma gave me and pulled it out of my drawer. At first I thought of smoking it but Jemma said I should smoke it "at the right moment". I put it away and took a step outside of my house.

It was raining but not in the usual way the rain normally comes down. Some droplets felt more like hail on the skin. They were thick and would clearly leave a mark on

your shirt. Other droplets felt more like a drizzle, almost as if the sky itself was crying. It was weird, to say the least but it felt really good. My gran always loved the rain and actually told me that people who love rain are called ‘Pluviophyles’. She said that people like that tend to become more tranquil at the touch of a fresh raindrop. People like that tend to have a ‘connection’ to the water and by having that connection they become one with the universe. Of course this is my gran we’re speaking of. The woman that would rather put herself in danger than have her pets succumb to pain. I love my gran but sometimes she’s just fucking weird. Nonetheless, I took the advice of an almost-Pagan like woman and let myself go to the slippery tears that fell from the sky. It kind of felt good to just stand there in the rain. It felt like multiple balls of energy were attempting to take a swing at my chakra. What could possibly ruin genuine euphoria? Perhaps a woman?

As I stood in the rain I couldn’t help but sense that there was someone else out there, watching me as I reservedly reminisced in the teardrops. It was that type of sensation you feel on the back of your neck as if someone just blew wind on it. I slowly dropped my head and saw a human being standing outside my gate, except this human being seemed to be imitating my actions. I couldn’t see what gender the person was because they had a very large hoodie covering most of it’s body. The

person had torn jeans on and in this day-and-age ripped jeans were a fashion statement that anyone could rock. At first I thought of walking away but then I came to my senses and realized that I am, after all, extremely and utterly inquisitive.

I decided to go closer and tried my best not to look like a lion stalking its prey. It dawned on me that this person couldn't have just stopped in the middle of my road just to feel the rain. Sure, I may have done it too but I did it in my driveway. I did it in a place I knew wasn't just some random location in which people actually stop and smell the rain. Then again, maybe this person was just plain random. I took four more steps before being noticed. A chill went down my spine and believe it or not I felt it in my toes. That one moment of eye contact was all I needed to set my brain's biological curiosity. The person turned out to be a girl. A girl that I claimed I had never seen before but for some reason recognised her face. I read in an article once that when random people you don't know appear in your dreams, they're usually the extras in a film or actors that you've never taken note of. Her face was so familiar but I just couldn't figure out where I had seen it before. She looked at me in the friendliest way an unknown person could look at you. It was scary and exciting at the same time, almost like a rollercoaster.

“So are you going to stare at me all creepy-like or are you going to invite me in?” She was giggling as she spoke.

I stared at her for about five seconds and immediately opened the gate afterwards. She walked in like a tigress, confident despite the coverage her hoodie was giving her. Upon further inspection I realized that she had bleach blonde hair, crystal green eyes and I received all this information from a simple hug. Now, you gotta understand. I am only seventeen. I have never had a girlfriend before or even thought about girls in that way. I always viewed women as beautiful creatures and not subjects to my desire. This girl, however, was completely different and honestly way too out of my league. I didn't say a word. I just took it all in.

“My name is Sam. You must be Keith, right?” She kept smiling that tongue-twirling grin at me. No lies, she gave me the ‘come hither’ look. Honestly, I felt special.

“I don't know if I should be?” I sounded equally as nervous as I acted.

“Well if you're not Keith then I'm basically just walking into a stranger's house.” She had a giggle that if transformed into food, she would be a banana dipped in strawberry yogurt.

“And if I am?” Strangely enough I wasn't nervous the second time speaking. I knew she was a stranger to me but if she knew who I was, surely she would have a reason for being there.

“Well then I’m in the right place.” She winked at me and my eye twitched. We were now standing by my front door, face to face, with nothing but the rain as background music. I know it sounds so cliché but this was my reality. A beautiful girl literally rocked up at my doorstep and yes, I had no idea what I was doing. She walked into my temporary home as if she were about to stay for a really long time. She smelled like pine cones. You’d think girls would go for that flowery fragrance or at least let themselves smell like candy but no, she smelled just like the pine cones that fell from the tree by my actual house. The musk rubbed on my sleeves when she hugged me so I could smell her point-blank. She made her way to the lounge and sat on my grans vintage couch. She stretched her legs like a cat would in the morning. Despite all the movement she never once lost eye-contact. As I sat down she started talking or rather, she started to engage in what would probably be one of my most ‘intimate’ moments of all time. “So... you’re probably wondering who Sam is?” Her head looked around my place. “I’d be lying if I said I didn’t think about that.” “Understandable.” She nodded her head and drew her eyes back to me. “Well, I’m a friend of Jedda. I was chilling with him yesterday and he told me about you.” The first thing that came to mind was ‘How does Jedda know where I live?’. I mean yeah we did chill but as far as I knew he didn’t know where I stayed. Obviously

someone has loose lips. Not to say that Jedda is dodgy but it's just information you wouldn't expect someone random to know. Nonetheless, her beauty was so distracting.

"Okay. Well, what did he say?" I was curious after all. "That was a conversation commenced only between Jedda and I." Sam let out an extensively loud cackle. It was contagious. "But what I will say is that from what he told me, you just seemed so interesting."

"You think I'm interesting?" I was self-conscious to the point that a compliment seemed like an insult. Even though she sounded all syrupy-sweet her words came off like daggers to the throat.

"Well I don't know you yet. How about we find out?" That grin of hers was so seductive.

"Uhm...okay?" My heart began to pound. I felt the redness dwell in my cheek for this very moment. I was undeniably blushing like a little kid.

That's when it happened. Something I had never experienced before. I had my first proper kiss. We all have those 'peck' moments as kids and early teens but this was a legit make-out session. Sam came slowly towards me and first touched my knees. I felt a tingly sensation rush up my spine. She was actually touching me. She moved on with a peck on the cheek, and then the other one and then she made her way to my lips. I tried to talk to her but she just shushed me by putting her

finger to my lips. She whispered: “Just trust me”. Was it wrong that I really did? There was stranger in my house trying to cop a field – with me no less. It seemed unimaginable at the time but damn was it real. She began to kiss my neck and held my hand through the whole process. She moved her body on top of mine and sweat never felt so good before. She started to unbutton my raggedy shirt. She slipped her hand underneath my green shorts. That single touch brought a moan out of me. I can’t explain it all because so much was going on. There was so much magic happening. I examined her body with my hands because she let me. This female presence was different. It wasn’t friendly but instead was forceful. Her touch was enough to make my eyes pop out and yet I tried my best to remain calm. Ask yourself this question though.

‘What were you like the first time you had sex?’

For me, it was nervousness extreme. It was like someone had thrown a French book at me and told me to learn all of it in a day. I had no idea what was going on but my instinct never lied I let my body do all the talking as I laid there, on my grans spot on the couch and engaged in my first ever sexual experience.

An hour later the oxygen in my lungs went on standby. My breathing was so weary that I couldn’t figure out a pattern in which to breathe. It was a different type of exhaustion. I cannot say it was beautiful because it was

my first time. To top it all off I knew nothing about this girl but that didn't matter because your boy just lost his virginity. Sex was not something us gents spoke about in length. None of us had ever been with a girl like this and I was the most unlikely one to get laid first. I didn't have that urge to tell my friends though; I preferred not to have pride in this situation. I never even thought of sex like that. Sure we all watch those videos but that doesn't make it real for you. This was real and to me – probably not to her- but to me it was special. We lay on the couch like animals, perspiring in the sun. She was calm as fuck but in my mind I was losing my shit. I couldn't fathom the fact that I had just lost the infamous V-card. Then, in a very low turn, the vixen began to speak.

“So you say you're curious?”

“More like inquisitive”. My confidence hit a boost in the span of that hour. I believe once you see someone naked you've seen their vulnerability. You kind of have to be comfortable, I guess?

“Well I think you deserve the truth.” She began to put on her clothes and multi-tasked the conversation. “Jedda told me that you were a nice guy.”

I wasn't sure how to take this. I am a nice person but to sleep with someone solely based on this fact is rather strange.

“So what does that mean?” It wasn't like I was expecting her to be my girlfriend but she was talking like this was literally just an hour to kill.

“Well, I just took a chance on you. I’m a free spirit and also, I’m much older than you.” She had put on most of her clothes and was now fixing her hair.

“How much?” My eyebrow rose. I had to giggle at this situation.

“You can count it on one hand.” She smiled and touched my cheek with her soft hands.

This was the last thing she would say to me before asking me to let her out. I walked her to the gate and she gave me a very friendly hug. Although the situation was calm her eyes told me a different story. They indicated that this would be the last time I saw her. I walked back inside and had the smile of joker plastered wide across my face. I chilled on the couch for a while thinking over and over about what just happened. Without warning my gran decided to arrive at home.

To be continued...

#13 – Horror Movies

I know it may sound morbid but I have a fascination with the destruction of the human mind. To see the artificial reactions of people gives me a sense of confidence in the world I live in today. I do not feel joy in seeing death or feel comfort in the fear of others; it is merely curiosity as to how a human being behave when facing paranormal instances. Let me explain.

The entire architecture of a horror is built on the fear of people. For those who may believe in the supernatural the fear is simply thinking what you see is possible. Running with a story sparks interest, especially those that involve ‘true events’. Of course everyone is different. For some people, the concept that there are spirits who dwell inside of quiet places may ignite a primal fear to check their own. Instances of demonic entities give an illusion that we are not alone on this planet and that there is a ‘third world’ existing in a space we can’t see. The very thought that the dead can come back, not quite alive but not quite dead, fuels many thoughts of what the afterlife is like or rather what it could be like. It is the sheer curiosity of people that makes horror movies so successful.

In my opinion, a great horror film is one with a detailed story. A horror movie that doesn’t rely on scare-tactics

or major special effects can make up for that with the use of a thrilling storyline. I need some substance in order to truly feel that what I have seen could possibly be real. I find that the directors of horror movie classics have filmed their movies without thinking that it's classified to one genre. I also realized that it actually takes a lot of effort to act scared. Props to all those people who had to do twenty takes of screaming.

Horror movies have become so wide that there are now different types of horror.

We have the classic 'slasher' films which depict a murderer or presence that kills off their victims one by one. A sad but true stereotype is the use of sex and nudity in order to boost the appeal of the film. To some extent I agree with this, male or female victim, because I believe a human is most vulnerable when naked.

Next we have the classic 'monster mash' movies. These are films that depict large or menacing creatures terrorizing unsuspecting people, usually tourists or couples. These 'monsters' can range from vampires and werewolves to made up monsters that are 100% original. This unfortunately is genre that relies on graphics. No-one's gonna believe in a monster who's irises look like contact lenses.

The last, but still expanding genre of horror is that of psychological terror. This is my favourite because it shows exactly how far the human race will go to survive.

Torturing the body is one thing but confusing the mind is another. I cannot mention how many horrors have shown how desperate people become when their lives are endangered. It's also a good way to show how people think, especially when they're not quite certain what the next move will be.

Films like this usually involve people killing people in an almost artistic fashion.

My thoughts? Grab your partner and get ready to cuddle

Stranded

I pick up the movements
The sound of today
Wasn't looking for no-one but you came here to play
Didn't think that such emotions could take form and stay
I lost myself inside your eyes and tried to fly away

In the back of my mind I am still trying to find
A place I can call my own in this world
Get locked up for days and try to figure out ways
How to make you mine you beautiful girl

You make me feel so stranded
Looking for reasons, should've planned it
I'm still picking up the pieces from the first time I
landed
Landed in a place that you got just for me
Stranded is the word I feel to be

I run through the missions
The ones where we're walking
The city and moonlight gets us people talking
We're chasing the moon like we're down for the stalking
Unaware of the people mumbling and gawking

A Dream of the Once Loved

I saw you in my dreams last night
I pictured your face as we broke out into a fight
I tried my best to keep my distance
Put up every form of resistance
But I kept saying “You keeping me away
only makes me want to stay”

Every little flaw that I saw
It only made me want you more
Nothing in life is free
But you never offered it to me

I miss those big brown eyes
In this dream, at least we tried
I knew you’d be alright
But I couldn’t make it through this night

Insecurities?
They aren’t for you
But you need someone to adore you

Got fucked up on a Tuesday
I couldn’t mouth the way I feel
I don’t cry over anyone
The emptiness was real
Never wanted you to feel worthless

You should be a fucking king
Please believe me when I say that what I say is what I
mean

You never gave me a chance to explain
In the dream they were answered questions
I never thought that you and I
Would ever leave with so much tension

#14 – Bullying and Self-Esteem

We as human beings are entitled to our feelings. We are allowed to feel how I feel but we must also be the change we wanna see. It can be very difficult to express these feelings when negativity seems to knock on your door constantly. I have learned that in this world people will try and bring you down no matter how hard you try to stand. The insecurity of others leads to the victimisation of our egos. We need to assure ourselves we are anything but fuck ups because in reality, not everyone thinks the same.

I was bullied from grade 1 up until I was in grade 9. I'd have fear of going to school while putting on my blue uniform. I would literally sweat when I saw those nasty faces. There was a stage in my early high school years where I was tormented every day. I was criticized because of the tone of my voice, the movements of my hands and the way that I would walk. At first it never got to me but when it became persistent I believed every word those bully's would say. I shut myself from the world because I thought I was not worthy of its presence. The names they called me began to sink into my brain. I became so used to being pushed around that I didn't even flinch when someone violated my space. And then, I had enough. This one guy pushed my limits and I turned and confronted him. Instead of acting angrily I

decided to give him a taste of his own medicine. I dummed him down and criticized him to the point where he had no words left to say. I assured him that no-matter what he said, I would always be a better person than him. Believe it or not, years later I became friends with my bully.

Bullying is not just about others criticizing you. You can be your own bully. If you constantly tell yourself you're not beautiful you're gonna think you're fucking ugly. If you give yourself too many limits you will just be holding yourself back. You need to be in a space where you feel good about yourself. A space where looking in the mirror is like seeing the ice-cream man. We all have things about ourselves we really don't like but embracing your flaws will only make you more beautiful. So what if someone is better looking than you? You may be funnier or more charming than they are. Never compare yourself to someone else because it's an unjust comparison.

At the end of the day, it's all about your self-esteem. Feeling good about you starts with loving yourself. As the years go on, you will grow up and see that everyone changes. In school you may feel like an outsider but it doesn't feel like that forever. You'll find that when you graduate you'll be on the same level as people who don't think about appearance.

Personal growth starts with learning about yourself, all of you, and embracing who you are regardless of what others might perceive.

We Lost It

How did we lose it?
You used to be an icon
We'd tan in the sun
Never keep the lights on

How can you distance yourself from this mess?
Why you are more worried about your dress?

How come it's never you making the call?
Why'd you let me stumble, no catch when I fall
We were once like a fortress protecting our views
Now you seem lost, muddled somewhere in the hues

Don't for a second think I won't be there
I'm still gonna be there just to hold your hair

JuneBug

How long does the humming bird sing her sad song?
Has Lana Del Rey and tight red panties on
Promiscuous as ever, indulge in the flesh
Craving for brandy made fresh

I see her sipping on coffee
Some vodka in the mix
Red lipstick on her chapel
Wears it like a crucifix
Popping tiny blue amnesia's
Try forget where is the road
Allows them in her temple
But never in her home

All she wants is a boyfriend with endless devices
She don't wanna talk about it
She just wanna try it
But with somebody that'll read the signs
And not someone to fall between her lines

Looks for the retro
Ends up with the Ghetto
Black like the night time
Sings in Falsetto
Wants all the control
But she's no Gepetto

She lives with her “man”
In the South Side of the Ghetto

Critical Minds

Life Green Machine
You know what I mean?
Cloudered it out like a hexagon beam
Underneath the narrow post
Reclusive by the note
Based on what they feel
I guess I'm alright?
Take the criticism on board
Keep it stored
And take flight

An Angry Woman

You always consume, and then you just assume
You call me fucked Keegan, you say without a reason
But yeah, I know you mean it
You kill it then you clean it
You wash away the things you say
Burn, dry it or steam it

I know I'm not ready for this fight
You cut my wings before the actual flight
The walls you built are higher than your ego
But it's all on me, though?
That's what you say

Closing on the basics
What you wanna say?
You think that you know me
So think another way

Hypocritical on the regular
Got me by the jugular
Make me wanna scream all my woes
Judgemental power to this female that I know
'Cuz this female that I know has an ego that will grow,
Like a bastard

She thinks because she wears green all day

A loyal one is not her truth today
I'm tired of you pushing me as if I cannot stay
Go home, claiming-Catholic girl and pray

Hold up
It's abuse, I'm about to hit the deuce
I am not riding, I am not rolling
Hold up,
Can't take it back, you've just hit a full blown stack
I am not staying, I am not playing
Not anymore

#15 – Appreciate Where You Are

As I write this passage of thought I recall the beauty that is my neighbourhood. I love the trees and flowers of my area, the constant sound of wind in the air. I like to walk the streets at night because the lampposts make the leaves on the tree look much glossier. The atmosphere of this entire place brings sweet serenity to my often hectic life. It was in this moment that I realized what it really means to appreciate where you are.

Literally speaking I say take a look at where you are. The world has infinite treasures we can find by opening our eyes. If you're in a park take note of the trees. Make sure you look at how the flowers touch the soil with ease. Notice the buildings when you walk home. Notice how different they all look as you pass them by. As a kid from the suburbs I can honestly say that now I notice how old certain buildings look. I notice how abstract the roads can look when the seasons change. I notice how the veld only has green grass growing in a particular space. I notice and enjoy the small beams of light that reflect on the walls when the sun is going down. Take note of what your surroundings are like so you can appreciate your habitat.

Figuratively speaking I say notice how far you've come. Take a step back and think about what your life was like

5 years ago. Progress is only progress when you make a major change. Changing your lifestyle affects your life in general. As people we grow and we learn more about ourselves. We allow the improvement of our lives so that it seems a bit easier when tasked with something difficult. We make sure that when we encounter a certain situation we can handle it in a different way than before. As a person, look at how your relationships with people have changed. You once may have been bitter but now you're syrupy sweet. It may be the small things but it still makes you think about how far you've come and how much improvement you've made.

We tend to be ungrateful or unaware of what we have. We forget that we have things, relationships or characteristics that other people just don't have. Be grateful that you're still breathing and you have the ability to see this page. Understand and appreciate where you are. Understand that you are an organism amongst many other organisms but you as a person have evolved. Love the fact that you have what you have without acting like it's small. Help others appreciate what they have by showing them how far they've come.

Appreciate all the beauty that you see before your eyes.

Ain't For You

Purple beads all on your wrist
You sip on beer and reminisce
Bout the days we used to have
Damn it shined
I read the notes and took the time
Got the Marvin Gaye on
Yeah, I just set the mood
Got the scenery just not for you
Every time your world goes down
You think I'm the one with the crown

The one says you're 'The Man'
The other one says you're mad
The other one just doesn't speak
Man, aren't you so glad?
You come with a side of pepper
Some saltiness to you
So when you call me up again
You know just what I'll do

Postman Brought Me Bad News

There was a gentleman at my front door
He had himself a package
Had my address on it
All the details signed in red
He told me to be calm
It was not a good letter
The fear behind my mask
I wore bravery instead
The postman stayed right by me
I opened up the letter
I knew just what was in it
But I opened it instead
He left me with an option
I knew existed now
“I think you should just drop out, son”
I smiled and bowed my head

Smoke It

Blue in the sky
No cloud today
Its all okay

I climbed on top of my roof
Defy the laws of gravity, get baked by the sky
Ain't no-one coming up soon
No problems to my questions, no veins running up dry

And I got a blunt by my lip
Hope a homie don't trip
Hope a homie don't sleep off of this roof
Dogs barking like woof
Now the blunt like puff
Where'd it go, Where'd it go?
I just smoked it

And I haven't had a decent conversation
The world so open with me, no frustration
And they tried to confiscate, the food up on my plate
These small dragons are too late
I'm a monster, yup yup

I called all of my friends
We hustled up the dealer, got ourselves a bag
Chilled with all of my friends

We jumped on all of them blunts, had a homie go mad

And we had the bong set up right

Smoked up in the daylight

Homies catching up flights on this airplane

Wish a homie could feel the same

Wish the bitches didn't know my name

Where'd it go, where'd it go

I just smoked it

Homie just called me up, said we gon' smoke it

We gon' smoke it

No Noise Pollution

Imagine in the morning
You see but cannot hear
The visuals multiply with thought
But your eyes just shed a tear
The grass may look quite green
But you couldn't hear it grow
You cannot hear the wind whistle
But you'll always feel the blow

Imagine if your hearing had some sabotage in depth
You understand the logic but your ears just seem inept
You look up at the TV but to you it's just a screen
You see the actors use their mouths, can't hear what you
have seen

The lullaby you once heard
The song you used to like
Now you use your memory
As your hearing rests on a spike
You clutter up your visuals
Make sure to see it all
Cause once your hearing goes away
It's nothing but a wall

7 days of autumn

Chapter 5 – The Pacts We Make

Having sex for the first time is one thing but having to hide it is another. Lucky for me my gran is super slow and she gave me enough time to clean up everything before she walked in the house. I always heard that sex has its own aroma but I think that only applies to those that walk in on it. I wouldn't handle it well if my gran found out, let alone the fact that I just fucked on her sofa. I ran around the house in a frenzy trying to make sure there was no evidence of fornication. I switched the blankets on the couch and locked myself inside the bathroom. It was a guilty pleasure for sure but at the same time it didn't feel wrong. I felt that it was gonna happen sooner or later so why not when I'm seventeen? Hours passed and I had taken a bath. To be honest it felt really good to be clean. Sweat is not a lovely fragrance but instead a heavy reminder that your body put in work. After my bath I casually sat down with my gran as she watched her local soap-operas. She obviously didn't know the truth and I preferred to keep it that way. At ten o' clock Rocco messaged me and told me that we were gonna have a "chillas" at his house tomorrow. He also made it clear that I must be ready to meet new friends. Technically speaking I knew the gents he was inviting but really I never had proper conversations with them. I

don't think they even knew my name and to be honest I didn't know theirs. Either way I knew I was about to meet some new comrades. I fell asleep to Lana Del Rey and dreamed of the bleach blonde girl.

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Friday. The start of the weekend. Normally it just feels like that because that's the truth but this was seven days in autumn, where every day felt like a Friday. To my surprise I woke up with a rather sore back. The muscles in my legs were vibrating as I got up to pee. I felt this sense of accomplishment, like I had just crossed the threshold of manhood. Sex to me was my initiation into becoming a 'young adult'. It wasn't pride or arrogance but rather a mental session of bragging to myself. Never would I have thought that something like that would happen to someone like me – a semi-chubby, shy and restrained teenager. Yet it did happen and it felt amazing. I stored the info from yesterday into my mental vault and carried on with my Friday. I got dressed, had a conversation with my gran and decided to have a hub in the backyard as I waited for Rocco to arrive at my house. Rocco insisted on fetching me so that all of us gents can meet up together. The weather was chilly and the ORP breeze was back. It interfered with my smoke circles but I settled for the calmness that hub brings to you.

After an hour I heard an unexpected ‘Keith!’ coming from the front yard. I recognised the voice and instantly knew it was Rocco. His voice was normally light and calm but whenever he yelled his vocals would hit a very low bass. Rocco was a lover of women, having multiple ‘side girls’ but no ‘real girls’ to claim. He wasn’t shy about his love for woman and could be quite vocal about his ‘needs’. End of the day, Rocco is a male and after yesterday I realized that it’s not only men that can pull the whole ‘fuck-and-leave’ concept. A part of me felt used but another part felt fulfilled. Definitely a mixed bag over here.

I said goodbye to my gran and made my way to the front gate. Rocco was dressed in all denim and cut his hair super short (he used to have really thick hair). We greeted like we usually do and made our way to his house. Somehow from someone, possibly even myself, Rocco new something was up. Perhaps I gave it away by being too reclusive about the subject. Rocco wasn’t book smart but he made up for it with his ability to read people.

“So dude, where were you yesterday?” Rocco sounded very eager when he asked.

“Ah... something came up dude, sorry.” I looked down, avoiding eye contact.

“Neh... Keith. What did you do yesterday? Did you smoke weed without me?” Rocco began to giggle.

“No man. I just met up with someone.” This was clearly my hint I didn’t even realize I had just given away.

“Or, did someone meet you?” Rocco let out his usually high-pitched laugh. He knew. The man knew.

“I guess you could say that...” I could feel the sweat running down my forehead. I hate confrontation.

“Keith bro, you can tell me dude. Did you fuck yesterday?” This time Rocco became quite serious although I didn’t know if he wasn’t trying to be. I kept quiet after this question. It didn’t occur to me that I was practically giving myself away.

“Wait what!? You had sex yesterday?” Rocco’s voice became high-pitched again.

“I guess... kind of?” My flush cheek bones must have looked sickeningly pink.

“I can’t believe you had sex before I did!” Rocco mixed frustration with laughter.

“I thought you already did it dude!?” I was incredibly confused.

“Nah man, I haven’t gone that far. Well up dude!” Rocco was genuine about this but I was too embarrassed to talk about it at that moment.

“Can we not talk about this dude, please?” I wasn’t trying to be rude but the conversation was just making my body feel hot and bothered.

“Fine. But we are gonna talk about it later. Ayt?” Rocco grabbed my shoulder and indicated with his right eye wink that it was okay to feel how I felt.

We changed the subject to music and instantly I felt more comfortable. We were on our way to the brothers' house. I didn't know it at the time but they actually lived two streets away from my gran. I never saw them past the point of the road they usually took to go home. It was also kind of the first time I had been to someone's house. I didn't really have friends growing up so again, this was all new for me. It must have taken us five minutes to get there because we arrived before Rocco and I could finish our conversation. It ended as quickly as it started. Like most of ORP the houses were all different from each other. The trees were all different too, with random purple trees popping up by the pavement. When we arrived at the front gate of the brothers' house, I was so shocked at what I saw. With personalities like theirs you'd think they'd live in an extravagant house but no, their house, although different from the others, still looked like an ordinary ORP house. Before I could take it all in, Doug appeared from the corner of the gate with a wicked smile on his face.

The house itself was a cream colour; the roof was filled with red tiles. In the front there were no trees or signs of shrubbery. The grass was still green like everyone else's but there were spots of dead patches where the sun didn't meet the grass. Craig was inside the house but Doug lead us to the back yard. They had a small brick patio with a plastic canopy connecting to the roof. This part of the

yard was full of trees and bushes. One particular bush stood out. It had dark green leaves with light green flowers that you would only see if you went up close, which I did. The sound of electronics and video games echoed in the house, deflecting to the outside. Soft music could also be heard in the background but you had to actually listen to it carefully in order to hear it. It was classical music but with a tinge of electric guitars. The house had a sliding door that takes you to the lounge. The door had evidence of stickers that had been scratched off yet the paper part remained stuck. It was a fascinating house.

Like a mosquito coming from nowhere, Craig appeared from the sliding door and ran towards me. He tackled me down in a brotherly fashion and told me that there is someone I should meet. The minute he said this I saw all the gents faces light up. Craig pointed to the lounge and gestured for me to go first. As I entered the house I noticed how normal the house looked. The walls were all a lighter cream than the outside and there were no paintings up for display. Instead, the lounge was filled with smooth leather couches and versatile sculptures placed in the corner spots of the room. I know that they obviously didn't live in some flamboyant apartment but my mind had other ideas of what the house looked like. Everything I saw in that house was not expected, including the Indian kid sitting sluggishly on the

brothers' sofa. He looked really focused on the screen; the brothers' were playing some soccer videogame. I had seen his face so many times, including in my biology class. I knew his name was Keshlin because his name was after mine on the register. We knew each other but didn't actually *know* each other and yet for some reason, we acted like we knew each other.

“Aye! Keith my man, how are you?” Keshlin looked excited. I could tell by how his eyebrows rose an inch than the normal.

“Ey I'm good dude. How are you?” I was in a mix of shock and awe.

“I'm good my man. I was looking forward to seeing you bra.” He sounded sincere and it caught me off guard.

“Seeing me?” I couldn't hide my confusion.

“Yes bra! I wanted to chill nxa with my homie.” Again, his sincerity was real and I realized that maybe I was the one who was ignorant, even rude, because I didn't get to know this kid the way he's tried to know me.

The rest of the day went swimmingly. Like the whole of this week, the friends that I was making were becoming more like my brothers. I started to learn more about each gent as an individual. I learned that Keshlin has a twin sister in another school. That Craig hates mushrooms except if it has cheese in it and Doug eats anything except for lettuce. I learned that Rocco's dad had passed away when he was young and his mother now had a new

man he would only tolerate, not like. More than anything though, I learned that as strong as all of these gents were they all had hidden insecurities. I learned that Doug is scared of failure and Craig hates change. I learned that Rocco wants a relationship and Keshlin thinks too much about his school. In three hours I learned more about them than any friend I have made in the past 17 years. It was refreshing to actually understand people and not just judge them for what they're like on the outside. I also learned one very important thing, something I have questioned for years about the males of our world – men have feelings too, they just don't show them the way girls do. Learning about people was interesting but learning about insecurities was consoling. I was not alone on the quest to understand my emotions.

The last and most interesting fact I learned about Keshlin was that he lived in the same neighbourhood that I did. He was located literally one street away from my house. The information was brought to light when Rocco mentioned that we should actually know each other. Unfortunately, shit happens. Rocco got a call from his mom asking him and the brothers to help move stuff. Yet, like every moment of this week, expect the unexpected from people. Conversations can lead to great moments. Keshlin pulled me towards him and we were at eye length.

“Brazzo. What you say we kick to your grans while they go sort their shit out?” Keshlin almost always had a mischievous look on his face but this was different. This was plotting some good ass trouble.

“Sure dude. Let’s hit that walk now then.” I noticed the time. We normally only chilled until five in the evening and it was three in the afternoon.

We all got ready very quickly and sped out the front gate with our feet. The brothers had this habit of rushing to places, not out of fear of being late but instead wanting to get there early in order to “make the day longer”. I’m a little chubby, so you have to understand that fast walking is not my thing. Fortunately we got to my house in like two minutes. Keshlin and I waved goodbye to the gents and we set inside my temporary home. I knew gran wouldn’t be home as she had an art class she always goes to on a Friday.

Keshlin and I sat outside on the broken white wooden bench my gran had kept for over twenty years. The view we had overlooked the neighbours flower garden and the wind was blowing gently against the leaves and all the petals. The view inspired Keshlin to have an interesting conversation.

“Do you dream dude?” It was the first time I heard Keshlin sound so serious.

“I do,” Initially I didn’t understand the question. “But I can never remember my dreams.”

“Nxa. Same. But I remember all the twisted ones.”

“Twisted ones?” I wasn’t confused but actually intrigued at this thought.

“Yeah. Sometimes I’ll dream I’m on a boat but I don’t know where I’m going.” His voice became low and raspy.

“Do you think it means something?” I looked over to Keshlin.

“I think it means I’m lost.” Keshlin bowed his head

To be continued...

#16 - Art in All its Forms

What is art?

It is a medium in which people of every creed can express themselves utilizing visual or audial methods. If not using these methods, people can express themselves using basically anything. I believe that everyone can create art, in some form or other. For people who are gifted with picture talents, art is the simple picking up of a pen and drawing whatever comes to mind. For those with audial talents art can be the writing of the song. Some people even express their emotions through dance. Isn't that the beauty of it? The ability to display your emotions without looking or sounding too vulnerable. At least that's what the outsider may see.

Art is subject to interpretation. We may look at the same image but we each think a different thing. The mind may be similar to another's but it definitely isn't the same. As people we tend to look at things without actually seeing a hidden meaning. Art is the messenger to all those seeking some closure in one form or another. The music you listen to is art. The artist you listen to obviously likes discussing subjects through their music. Have you ever listened to a song and thought, 'this was made for me'? Well that's basically how it works. That artist created that song for listeners who are in that mood. It's the same as when we read books. Many stories bring us a

sense of relativity because in that moment, what the writer has written down is more relatable to you than any advice one might receive from any shrink.

Art is not just something someone created. If you look at the trees or even a single flower in a small park, you may just find yourself being inspired. We may not look at it like that because we see it every day but actually noticing it's there will make you take in all that you see. Art can be found anywhere by simply looking around you. A broken tree may offer an image of heart-break better than hearing it sung by someone with a powerful voice.

My granny always used to tell me that art is like a tickle to the stomach. Exactly what is it that makes your stomach tickle?

Mind Lover

Drops of paint upon your shoes
Dust from books you always read
Your mind is but a library
On yours, I like to rest my head

I don't think I'm a sapiosexual
Your mind is just my muse
I find that when I think too much
Your thoughts stay behind like a bruise

Keep thinking like a scientist
Keep living like a king
Make my mind so thin and strong
And sew me in just like a string

420 Life

I have a blunt in the morning
A wake and bake by 10
My homies call me Keez
But I feel more like a Ken

I have a blunt in winter
Love the cold that has no snow
I wrestle for some rizzler
Need to save the blunt to go

I lick stick up the paper
When I have my little funnel
I light it up to 2 Pac
Then the XX brings the tunnel

I feel my mind is dancing
Man I love to be so baked
I love the clarity in my mind
The thoughts that I create

Purple Prince

The tree that stands alone
No friends are by his side
His purple leaves flamboyant
His hands rest high in the sky

In neighbourhood like Mayberry Park
There are only 3 that exist
They're scattered round the blocks of complacency
But still the leaves persist

I like the colour purple and I love to see it shine
The sun reflects against the grey hue of the single vine
It grows next to the purple tree, only seen with a glimpse
In the Kingdom of trees in Mayberry Park, this remains
the prince

#17 – We Cannot Be The Same

Would you still enjoy your life if all the fun was taken out of it? Would you find the world interesting if flaws were subtracted? Have you ever thought of what society would be like if it didn't have its mistakes?

The first phase we see is the people themselves. Sometimes we think that because other people are better looking or more talented, we are just useless and not interesting at all. We let our flaws become our identities. We become so insecure that we forget about all of our best qualities. We even go so far as to compare ourselves to other people. “Oh he has bigger muscles than me...” or “Oh she’s got curves that I don’t”. We pit ourselves against each other because we want to look or act just like people we deem to be ‘perfect’. Sometimes we even do it without realizing it. However, without these differences what would our planet look like?

Your image is unique. There is not one single person on this planet that looks exactly like you. There is no other person with your exact personality. Sure you get people that act a little like you but that doesn't mean they *are* you. You may not be in the same calibre as someone in terms of looks but you can make up for that by having a beautiful personality. If you become one with yourself and make your entire presence seem exclusive, other

people will notice you not for the exterior but for the person on the inside. We can all share dreams and ambitions but no-one can share your being.

If the world was full of people that act the same and look the same, don't you think we would exist on a very dull planet? Our features are what set us apart from other people. Our flaws are what make us stronger because we know they exist. We can acknowledge and choose to embrace them. We all have things we'd want to change about ourselves but our physical flaws can give us character.

If you're weird or a bit odd, it's super cool man. Just be cool about it.

My Country and my Pride

My country isn't perfect
It has so many flaws
The racism is real but there's no guns taken from the
drawer
The people are diverse
We have colours that reverse
She hid her marijuana in her purse
The policemen try do their jobs
The atmosphere feels so ethnic
We are all different colours but we don't remain sceptics

When given the huge tasks
Our people stand united
A rugby match at seven
All the people are invited
When people feel confused our coloured flag leads love
ignited
The youth are more connected
Break the stereotype, feel respected

My country has its poverty
The money doesn't flow
But still we stand inspired
On the grind and party down low
I love my country of difference
I love the green, red, blue and yellow

Including black and white as well
How the people make us mellow

Nicotine Dream

I am a frequent smoker
I smoke many things in June
I like to have a blunt when I am staring at the moon
And yes I love my marijuana
Nothing can compare
But having that morning cigarette is more thrilling than a
dare

If stressed out I have B&H
The red one 'cuz it's strong
It leaves a stronger scent than my black cobra-shaped
bong
At the moment I'm so poor
The Paki's rolled up my new gwaais
Sahawi is the brand that the people just can't seem to
find

I'm not promoting tobacco
I'm not telling your kids to toké
I'm describing how I feel when I have that morning
smoke
A cigarette after sex
One I have with my morning tea
Now I can relax 'cuz my balance is back for me

To Be an Indie Kid

An Indian boy looked at my wrist
Asked me what it means
The Indie flag tatted on my bone
The movement that we sail
It's a symbol of devotion
For the alternative I love
To be different is to be embraced
My win without a fail
This poem that I write for you
I'm about to have it explained
I'll get locked up for the art
Don't you think of posting bail
My Daddy, when I got it done
He told me something ironic
He said I was an 'Indigo Child'
I thought I had a tail
I wear this flag like country pride
If they ask, yes I'll say
I'm proud to be an Indie kid
An illusion with no veil

My Weed and My Women.

I love to have a blunt
In the clear or in the rain
as long as there is cover
for might-as-well-swell brain

I rolled it up with vengeance
for the blunts I could not roll
I learned a new method
Gives me balance and control

The girl has been calling and banging my phone
I think she thinks murder is being alone
She's not that entitled, no game to her throne
Maybe I shouldn't have let myself bone

Now just like the blunt, I let off release
I need to have patience to conquer this beast
Rolled up a nxa one with balance for me
Take off your chain and just set me free

#18 – Optimism amongst the Pessimists

A vital part of life, I believe, is optimism amongst the pessimists. As a person that suffers from clinic depression I can completely empathize with those that feel down. I understand what it feels like to wake up and not feel good about where you are in that current moment. It is fine to be sad. The problem lies with those that choose not to believe that things get better. We all have our momentary phases where things just seem to get worse but that is no excuse for you to stay angry. Although we do need to feel our emotions we cannot let them control our lives.

In times of great distress we tend notice all the negativity around us and like to blend in with that current. We don't like to act how we don't feel and that makes us real. It is in this space that we need to decide how long we're going to feel these emotions. Our emotions can affect others and constant negativity pushes people away from what is really going on. Our painful cries for help cannot be heard because other people just think you're moody. We forget that people don't instantly understand a situation. We need to inform people of how feel, explain our frustrations and then honestly listen to an outsiders opinion on the subject.

Placing yourself in a negative space will only bring you down more. By choosing to surround yourself with negativity, you're choosing to accept defeat and just let life shit all over your breakfast. No, that is not you. That angry pessimistic version is not you but just a side of you that will only come out when irritated. Don't think for a second that the negative version of you is permanent. It is incredibly difficult to be told that you are negative and then deal with it, but if you choose to accept that you are angry you will stay bitter throughout your journey.

My truth, speaking as a person who does get angry, is that we don't have to be that way. It's not a switch you can just turn off but rather a dimmer to your often confused bulb of life. You need to go through the angry phase to get past it and by doing so you will open yourself into a sense of calm.

Be happy, everybody.

I Forgive You

Fucked me over in a past life
Now you did, only on the East side
Why you hiding in the corner like a shadow?
Why get on if you know you can't ride?

Now you know I'm not the type to get mad
That's a lie, you know I really feel it bad
But you apologized like you were pathetic
And I guess I can't let you be sad

Granny told me I should learn to let live
And to do that I should learn to forgive
Man I fucked up sometimes, I know it
I'll be sympathetic but I won't show it

Read the sign
I forgave your lines
Now to move on with a different rhyme

Give up Greenie

I just got told I have 30 years to live
That life is a bitch and she just doesn't give
I have to change my habits in order to succeed
How can I give up my blue dream?
My end-of-the-day deed

I used to think dreaming was only for fun
It was time that I used instead of watching the sun
Now I want more of them all in my bag
Less to weigh on me but more I can grab

Now I have to give up that oh-so bitter taste
I think of all the time that I had there to waste
I wanted to leave this oh-so cruel place
But how do I leave without leaving a trace?

My scent is all over, they know me by name
They know that I smoke 'cus they do just the same
But now I've got shrinkage in the middle of my brain
How do I sit here? Make sure I maintain?
Maintenance of the mind, no body this time
I'll live with this pain but I'll show true disdain
I will never give up Greeny, my oh-so loyal friend
I will make sure that my blue dream knows no end

Cover up the tracks that I left in the snow

Pick up the cigarette I lit long ago
Walk away now, with gwaai in my hand
Why do these things happen to only this man?

Dope Fiend Feels Me

I know you got the VCR
On your black decoder
You've been recording the people who keep speaking for
ya
I know you like me though
You keep calling me to buy your dope

When I get into your car
And I close the yellow door
I'm not sure of what reason you're particularly smiling
for

I'm not a motherfucker
I do think you're cool
But I'm not a motherfucker
Some stupid young fool

Almost is never enough
I know when you're faking
I call your bluff
Respect the space between
Myself being just a client, not a member of your team
No lies though, your weed's a great machine

Voice Control

It comes like a wind
It spins and spirals to my cerebral
Your voice is so surreal
Like a Final Fantasy play outs
The layout you use sprouts blossoms
You went to the bottom
But your sound topples my energy
It traps and captivates my subconscious
You're just an Angel in disguise

7 days of autumn

Part 6 – The Era is Upon Us

Silence seems to be the best noise when it comes to understanding something. I think we often find ourselves at a loss for words because we come up with so many concepts, we actually don't know what to do with them. Keshlin and I chilled on that bench for what seemed like hours just talking about our thoughts. Keshlin spoke to me about how he sometimes zones out when all the important things are going on. He discussed how he hasn't found his way in the world and how he's not entirely sure who he is yet. The best part of these conversations were not that fact that he opened up to me – trust me, that is a big deal – but it was more rewarding to connect with someone who really understood my emotions, simply because they feel them too. There were so many things about Keshlin that I saw myself in. His insecurities and fears were so similar to mine that I began questioning why I haven't been close with him. He really was a blessing in disguise. He came at the right time in my life where I didn't want sympathy, I wanted empathy.

Keshlin ended the night off by driving us to McDonalds. Although he didn't have a licence his sister had one. Keshlin and his sister were born ten minutes apart but separated by date. She was born at the end of December

and he was born on the first of January the next year. Keshlin would occasionally use her car and I was overjoyed that he used that night. He dropped me off and I sunk myself into my room. The walls were all black but my shiny purple carpet reflected on the walls surface. It was very nostalgic but it also made me think about all the things we discussed that day. I sat in my bed, upright and thought of all my own insecurities and fears. How funny it is to have someone that shares those woes.

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A Saturday is an ‘everybody’ day. When you’re in high school everyone is equal and that means that you know everyone is off. It is the period of the week where everyone goes crazy but on this particular Saturday we had nothing to do. The parents are usually home so the parties are limited. Something, however, was changing drastically. Over the course of the week we discussed this new phase of youth they call the ‘Era of House Parties’. It was first brought up by Jedda when he mentioned that on Saturday there would be a house party. At first we didn’t know what it means or what they even were. When Jedda described it, it sounded like an orgy of the mind, a wicked spree of under-age drinking and senseless dancing with strange people. It sounded very exotic and too mature for us. None of us had ever been to a proper party, let alone a ‘house’ party.

Descriptions aside, our initial plans were to just meet up at the park and chill. We had decided to skip the party and just have a chill. In truth, we were all too scared to admit that this type of vibe was just too daunting for us to take on. We had heard that kids were doing it on a regular basis. For those of us that had BlackBerries at the time, we received the broadcast messages with the ‘B.O.B’ and ‘B.O.H’. Again our ignorance got the best of us and we felt too threatened to even attempt it all.

The day began as all the other days did. I woke up nostalgic in my room. I took my morning walk around the garden at my grans house and had little conversations with her about life and how it changes. Plans were already made so I had plenty of time to kill. We all agreed to meet up around two in the afternoon. I had bought new flavour and coal for the hub. The other gents seemed to be just as fascinated at hub as I was. Craig was an instant lover of it while Rocco was able to make circles on his first try. By Saturday I had a whole variety of new music. I went from being a kid that listened mostly to the radio to now being a kid that yearned for underground music. It wasn’t just hip-hop. Due to all of us having different tastes in music, we began to share music between one another. Rocco was the House man and always had local music. Craig was still into hip-hop but was leaning towards the more alternative branches of the genre, like Gambino or Cudi. Doug’s taste for rock

music seemed to be overwhelmed by his love for electronic music. I was left searching the dark corners of the internet for various types of ‘indie’ music – indie music being anything alternative or different. Our music made us feel like we were part of a movement, a trend only our generation could keep up with. We felt unique in the fact that random kids our age were discovering new music the way we did. Five days had passed and on Saturday, I felt like a music guru.

After hours of listening to various artists, two o’ clock came like warm soup in winter. It was comforting to know that I actually made plans with people. I had actually made genuine friends and it motivated me to open up more. I took a slow walk down the road to the park. I noticed a big difference in the trees. Most of the leaves had fallen off and I felt like I missed the whole process of trees aging. The trees weren’t morbid looking, they just looked extremely tired. The streets were covered in dead leaves and only the winter flowers remained standing from the change. The house with five doves now really looked haunting with no sign of animal activity. It was a weird space because things were changing so fast. I tried not to get too deep into the whole emotional part of the trees but in truth, I felt connected to them. I walked to the park and was surprised to see all the gents chilling on the large swings that greet you as you came into the park. Doug was

playing very mild Dubstep and Rocco and Craig seemed to be having a deep conversation. As I arrived, just like I met them for the first time, they all went silent. I walked in slow motion just to check if it was me. With a flash I saw three white teeth teens looking at me. Rocco got up from the swing.

“So Keith... we’re going to this party.” Rocco was determined to convince me of this truth in the most humble of ways. “Let’s end these holidays with a bang!” “But I thought we weren’t gonna go?” I shook my head a couple times.

“Nah dude, we were just scared.” Craig said quite aggressively.

“C’mon Keith. Rocco even knows how to get there. We’re just gonna walk there.” Doug still sounded like a saint, even when he thought something was a bad idea.

“Okay... so what do we need?” I perched myself on a dead stump that apparently existed in the park for years.

“Simple. We need to buy dop.” That wicked grin of Rocco’s came back again. Immediately I felt that nervous feeling again. This time I actually felt sick to the stomach. It felt more like flies were in my stomach than butterflies.

“But how are we going to buy it?” I really was trying to lean them into backing down and leaving this obviously illegal activity.

“Ah don’t stress. I look older so I’ll get it. You just get the hub together.” Rocco was cocky. He was always like

this but when he wanted to be a rebel it came off as a little bit arrogant.

“Okay gents so we all meet up at 6?” Doug was already setting his clock.

“Where do we meet?” I was a little more keen to the idea now that I knew I wasn’t going to carry any of the shit.

“Right here, homie.” Craig gave me a sharp punch to the shoulder, oblivious to how hard his punches were.

The plan was set. The time was set. Everything was set except for what would happen when we got to this party. None of us had any experience in parties, let alone a party that was being broadcasted around the whole of the Alberton area. On BBM the statuses were flying. It seemed that everyone was going. We weren’t even certain of where there party was. We just knew to follow Rocco who honestly was just winging the whole navigation process.

I killed time by watching Big Bang Theory and making food for my gran. A million thoughts were racing through my head. I’m already socially anxious and now I have to go to a party full of strangers? It wasn’t dwelling well with my mind and overthinking started blocking how I really felt about it. As much as I was scared, I realized I couldn’t just be a wallflower and blend in for the rest of my life. This whole week I had taken the challenges of meeting new people, opening up and trying to figure out who I was as a person. This party would be

the ultimate test of patience to see how long I could make it without freaking out. I enjoyed the challenge. Now as the time was coming closer I began to get ready. I put on my best cologne and wore my best shoes. I didn't cover myself in a baggy hoodie; instead I wore a fitting jacket like pride. The cap I wore made me look five times younger but I didn't think about that at the time. All I could think about was how is all of this would play out?

When the time came to walk, I did as I was told and went straight to the park. I was in such a state of mixed emotions that I even forgot to tell my gran. Luckily she had already fallen asleep and I knew that I had locked the house up before I left. My brand new-looking shoes clashed with the slightly wet concrete. My lips were dry and my palms were pouring sweat like a fountain. I reached the park and according to plan all the gents pulled through. Everyone was dressed in their best and acting louder than usual. Instead of silence I was met with praise because of how different I looked. Rocco pulled out a bag full of vodka and started us off in the best way possible

“Gents, are you ready for this shit?!” Rocco made shifted eye contact between all of us. Everyone nodded except for me. I was still uncertain of how I felt but it was too late to back down now.

“No matter what guys, we stick together. We have fun but we stick together, ayt?” Rocco sounded like a true ring leader.

“And no-one drinks our alcohol!” Craig made that clear. It was something we all agreed on as we all put money into it.

With that being said, we set off on our journey to the mysterious land of Brook Field.

The walk felt like the longest journey I had taken in my life. Driving down to East London was nothing like walking 10km with uncomfortable but beautifully made shoes. The conversations lessened as we began to lose breath. We were all carrying bags with something in them so we all had a weight to carry. I realized that when the four of us walked distances we traded places with one another. We walked two by two and kept the topics flowing. We were all basically talking about this journey. We were also discussing what it would be like if we got stopped. Police were quite avid in Brook Field, a neighbourhood for the upper class that was a bridge away from ORP.

Half an hour into our walk and the truth hit us hard with the example being a small police car, trolling around the streets. The car stopped beside us and a female officer got out the car. She was very butch and the uniform she wore was completely unflattering to anyone’s eyes. She knew what we were doing but we really didn’t grasp the fact that we were under age and about to go to a free

party. She questioned us about what was in the bags as her partner sat bored-looking in the car. Eventually, after all of us released a combined 10 litres worth of sweat, her butch personality turned into one of a concerned mother.

“Please just be safe guys. I don’t wanna see you at night on these streets again.” With that being said, she got into the car and drove away from what was one of my most mortifying moments we had all experienced. The ironic part was that we could see the house in the corner of eyes. We could hear the music and we knew we were so close. Murphy’s Law always sneaks up on you when you’re not paying attention. We left the shock of the police lady and proceeded to the party.

I am about to describe exactly how this night played out.

When we arrived at the house there was no host to greet us. Kids of all creed and colour were walking around with plastic cups. The music was deep house and by the looks of it this party started early. We weren’t allowed into the house; instead we were given a massive back yard with a large space to set our spot up. As I walked past all the kids I didn’t know I noticed that there were no parents around. These kids literally only knew each other if they went to the same school. We recognised some faces but in honesty we knew no-one. It was sparking up some anxiety in myself so I set up a hub. That’s when it started.

We didn't realize that hub brings people together. I smelled no weed but a lot of different fragrances, all from the hub flavours being smoked through a hookah. People just walked up to us and sparked up conversations. It didn't matter what colour or gender you were because the hub was keeping us together. Two pretty black girls walked up to us, no words, and just placed four plastic shot glasses at our table. They giggled and walked away. We decided to take shots of vodka until it was a quarter way finished. After the first one we were all buzzing. After the third one we were basically doing what everyone else was doing: mingling and socializing. As the night progressed, we just became more hyper and entertained by our own candour. We all split up for a brief duration of the party, stumbling onto one another as we explored the back yard of this person in our school who we didn't even know. Then out of the blue, with blue lights flickering from what looked like the front of the house, we heard a loud voice on a microphone.

“Okay kids. The party is being shut down!”

To be continued...

#19 – E.T come to Earth

I have never believed in the abnormal or unexplained. If I could not see something or really get the facts, I would debunk the theories and move on with my life. However, as an over-thinker does, I started thinking about the possibility that ‘we are not alone’.

My first thought was this.

If we are on a planet that supports life, who’s to say life cannot exist on another planet? Think about it. Our planet supports the system of oxygen, humans have been evolving in order to survive the harsh reality of life and to top it off, living organisms are able to exist on this planet for centuries. These facts can justify that living organisms could possibly be living on another planet.

My second question was as follows.

If another organism is able to locate and arrive on our planet from another, surely they have to be more intelligent than we are? I mean humans are only now thinking of means to get on another planet. We only know about the other planets from what we’ve seen through lenses. We haven’t found proven ways to get to other planets yet and until then we will be shrouded in the mysteries of the cosmos. My point is that these aliens must be more intelligent if they have found a way to

come to our planet. Their technology has to be much more advanced than ours.

My third question.

What would they look like? I believe that humans are actually more evolved animals. The science shows that our intelligence separates us from animals. If these aliens are really more advanced than us, surely their body structure would be more evolved too. I think that if they did have large heads it would be because their brains are much bigger than ours. If they were green or scaly it would probably be because of the atmosphere on their home planet. Many might find them freaky but I find the concept of green people to be rather curious.

Now, if a peaceful alien had to rock up in my back yard I honestly don't think I'd freak out. I'd actually be so inquisitive of the nature surrounding this otherworldly being. I'd ask it how long has its race has existed for. I'd ask it how their biology works because I'm certain they would look nothing like us. I would ask to examine their bodies.

Personally, I think aliens will probably not have bulging eyes or tentacles. I don't think they fly in ships but rather specially designed aircraft. I think they would be highly intelligent and able to speak our languages. If anything,

an alien would only come to our planet to examine us,
just like we would do to them.

To any potential aliens, live long and prosper.

The Caterpillar Will Tell You

Smell the fragrance in your palm
Rip the plastic sleeve
Absalom has told me that my mind will now perceive
Perceive a world of colour
One with magic mixed with smoke
Learn to keep it in
Learn to blow and never choke

Absalom has told me I should pick up a new pipe
I just bought a cigarette but long for the smoke that's
ripe
It fascinates me just to make some circles in the sky
I nxa to be a smoker, yeah, I nxa to be that guy

My favourite must be mint
Don't give me no Blue Mix
If you give me a fruit flavour you know I'll end up sick
Absalom advised me of the ways the hookah chills
How about we light a coal
Put some music homie, chill

Oldies

Not the smell of leather, not the texture of the snow
I have a little crush on Ms Marilyn Monroe
Her lipstick always red, her voice sounds candy coated
I would be Mr President, her presence always noted

Not the Njala leaf, just something 'bout the scene
I have a little crush on lovely Mr Dean
James just looks so passive, I'm sure that he had a lover
But I would fall right to my feet if he called me his
brother

Oldies are the bestest, Guyee taught me to be wise
She showed me all the pictures and then calmly, she
advised
Find yourself a Judy but don't act like Mr Wayne
Now I look for James, oh I hope he stayed the same

#20 – Self-Acceptance and Inner Happiness

On the first day coming home from an absence of 10 days, my father asked me how I feel.

The first word that came to mind was ‘free’. Free to be who I really am. Free to do the things I’m passionate about. Free of all chains, both mental and physical, that held me back for my 20 years of existence. It’s like learning how to ride a bike for the first time or receiving that matric certificate. It’s dancing in your room alone even though the whole family is at the house. It is singing your favourite song and not caring if you miss a lyric or two. It is indeed, freedom.

I feel free to be me. To be the quirky kid everyone knows me to be. The freedom of wearing my raggedy gown even when I have visitors. I feel free in my sexuality with my options wide open. I feel blessed for who I am and actually proud of what I see. I have no bars holding me inside a chamber of self-doubt. I am a bird released from captivity that finds a new nest. I feel free to say the strange things I think of and ignore what judgemental listeners have to say. I feel free to walk in the streets and sing to the top of my lungs despite the old lady outside knitting. I feel free.

I look at myself in the mirror and actually love what I see. I love all my flaws and accept them with open arms.

I can forgive myself now and move on with life as I see fit. I can look at my smile and say “It’s not that big”. I can stumble down a staircase and laugh at myself when I fall on my ass. I can be grateful that I’m still breathing, that both my eyes still work and my heart beats normally. I can be grateful for the scars I put on my own arms and not be ashamed that it happened. I am proud of the voice I tried to conceal for so many years. I feel free.

I am content with the way things are. Time is not my friend and he doesn’t give chances to anyone and because of this, I treasure every moment that makes me feel happy. I let myself be happy because I feel I deserve this. I say it aloud, “I deserve to be happy”. I enjoy the company of my friends and the Sunday’s of my family. I am excited for the future and empathetic towards my past. I am a new me, and I will continue to change and increase my “happy vibes” so that my life can do the same. I fear not what is to come but anticipate what fortunes are to be. My love for myself, my inner happiness, is all I need to keep me going through what appears to be a moody, self-righteous existence. It will not become the latter but that’s what life is really like now.

Choose to be happy. Choose to smile when they say you should be melancholy. Choose to laugh at the lighter things and take note of the darker things. Find yourself,

in one way or another, and I truly believe you will find happiness.

Peace and Love, eternally.

Displacement

Pebbles that call up some sweet symmetry
I'm way too young to feel my destiny
Sunburn is crawling right onto my back
This truth at 20 is all that we have
Had I seen the sun
Had I seen the uncrushed kush
I gave a glimpse of the circus
They gave me a push
They settled to fight for my future
They let colours lead my room

I am Free

I wanna wear my moustache and my beard
See green lines as my stash disappears
Have pretty thoughts and a daydream at night
I wanna know the calming afterglow

Singing the same old songs like, “La la la”

Air supply of greater note
Rock the wind and swing the boat
Satisfy this lonely hope
Move forward on a lonely road

I am free
Free, to me.

Anthem for the Reformed

What is this feeling I feel in my heart?
My friends say “good karma” but I
can’t tell them apart
I feel scales on the surface but the
inside is fur
I hear all the pussy cats’ purr.

The dopest fiends have said many
changes are to come
I feel all the power vessel deep within
my thumb
I feel good emotions all the time, it’s
hard to sleep
But never once will I sink myself too
deep

I call myself a warrior without acting
like I’m brave
I let myself save, behave and I pray
I actually get down on my knees and
thank the world for this day
I’m grateful that I stayed and now I’m
thankful that I prayed

Eternal mixed emotions never come
down like a cloud

Instead I see the red and I'm glad that
the cars are loud
I finally feel the victory to look at me
and then am proud
My voice may be raspy but oh shit, am
I loud?

I end this little silhouette with tokens
of my trip
I've joined my mind with soul and
grabbed the cup of life and sipped
Be who you are, so who you are, can
be grateful for your smile
Laugh a little longer; love for the 'while

7 days of autumn

Part 7 – Reflection

What seemed like a perfect night turned into a fiasco of hilarity. The reality was that this house was harbouring fifty plus underage drunk teenagers. We were all wobbling around in the yard of a man who to us did not have a name. When the police arrived everyone was scattered around. Kids were organizing transport. Some very intimidated kids were even calling their parents to avoid being arrested. We were all avoiding the cops but the truth is they were just tryna get us to leave. They didn't care if you were drunk. There weren't any officers escorting kids home. A lot of the kids lived around Brook Field and many had come with a driver or someone older. We were the only kids, from what we assumed, that walked to the party from a far distance. We were too drunk to notice at the time. In that state of mind time slips away from you. Four hours felt like one action packed hour. The police had made everyone leave the house and kids were now scattered in the streets. I was alone and had to find my friends in the very dim lit street of which we didn't know the name. I paced myself and eventually found each gent one by one. Doug had made friends with a Brook Field group of boys. Craig had blended in with all the coloured people and Rocco had sunk himself into a pit of ratchet young females.

Eventually when we did get together we hit that long walk back home. It didn't feel like it though. Time was altered by our drunken minds. We were still buzzing off all the people. We laughed as we tripped and fell in the road. There were no cars and many of the streetlights in ORP didn't work. It was us bright people lighting our own path to home. When we reached our point of separation we had a moment of silence. Rocco suggested that we take in what happened and never have I ever embraced silence. This wasn't silence though; this was tranquillity. I wobbled back home and tried my best to sound quiet but I don't think that was possible. When I walked into my gran's house everything was the same. The same light was kept on and the smell of cooking still clogged up the normally clear atmosphere. My gran had still made food for me. I don't think she knew where I was. For a minute even I didn't know where I was. This was not the reality I knew. This was the alternate reality that I was now living. I went into sloth mode prepared for the hangover. It was all fucking worth it.

...

It started out as a cool breeze. Today is no different than it was on Monday. Indeed, today is Sunday. The smell of this park still smells the same; woody scents with a tinge of tobacco in the atmosphere. The grass has not turned green and the third swing is still broken. The potholes in

the concrete seem to have grown though. As I sit on this unfinished jungle-gym, I cannot help but notice the particular fashion in which the slide has been placed. It's a rather large slide with colours of rusted yellow. Its whole beak is rusted but for some reason it still works. From a child's perspective I can see why it may be intimidating to get on.

I sit here holding the first cigarette I have ever bought. A 'loosy', as they call it. Cost me two rand and the Pakistani man didn't question my age. I walked into the shop with sweat on my hands, worrying if I were to be caught what they would do to me. Instead it was a "Yessir, come again". I hold this cigarette or 'gwaai' as they also seem to call it, as a symbol of my youth. I'm at the age of in-between. In this one week of pure madness I had grown up. Maybe too fast for some but I feel it in my bones. The growth I've come to have. At seventeen I've come to understand a bit more about the world. I've come to terms with the fact that next year I'm eighteen. For now, on this last day of autumn, I really felt what it meant like to be seventeen.

The cigarette that Jemma gave me was used the night before. I shared it with a beautiful Indian girl who never smoked before. I couldn't remember much besides lighting it and coughing. I knew I shouldn't do this but what more could I do that I haven't already done this year. I've gotten drunk twice, smoked weed for first time

and lost my virginity. I feel the essence of adulthood seeping through my veins, feeling like warm cough syrup. Nothing could ever replace this feeling of ‘seventeen’. It’s not a feeling but it comes off like one.

I needed to do some reflection. I decided to light the cig up. I told myself I would not cough and forced myself not too. I did it with ease because I’ve done before. I savoured this moment because I honestly don’t think I will ever experience this again. Once you’ve done something and it’s no longer new, the fulfilment of the task does not entice you as it should. I’ve discovered that I like to be social. I discovered what it feels like to be touched and enjoy it. I understood now that you only live once. I know now that nothing is what it seems, no-one can be categorized and that there are people out there who can empathize with you. I validate all the ‘bad decisions’ with a simple response: I am young.

Uncertain of if he remembers, Rocco had given me the blunt Jemma gave him. Rocco said he didn’t have a use for it but then again he was going squint as he spoke. I made the decision to smoke this by myself, at the park of self-discovery, with a plastic bottle filled with left-over vodka and Iron Brew. I have no idea what will happen to me now but I do know one thing. The friends I’ve made in this week are going to last forever. When you experience things with people you tend to keep a piece

of them with you as you grow up. I look forward to telling *my* gents that I had sex for the first time. I look forward to new music from the brothers. I can't wait to get back to my real home so that I can chill more with Keshlin. I'm eager to see how close Rocco and I will get. In short – these are not friends, these are my brothers.

When this is all finished I will return to my gran. We will talk about things like usual and I will discuss my emotions like poetry. I will return to school a new person and start the next year off with a bang. I'm in my last of being a teenager and I'm not afraid of turning eighteen anymore. I am reborn as someone beautiful because I finally know who I am.

Seven days in autumn, seven days of heaven, seven days of freedom, seven days to be young.

The end...

Word of Thanks

It took me an entire year to complete this book. All these poems were written in a moment of inspiration. The whole reason I did this was to encourage other people that what you feel is actually really normal.

I thank all my friends at rehab for igniting the fire again. We call ourselves the ‘animals’ and without them this book would not have happened.

I thank all my close friends for believing in me and my family for having faith that I could do it.

Finally, I thank you the reader for taking your time to read my book.

Love always

Keegan Badenhorst