

*dried
flowers*

(1992-2002)

by phalen
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Summer Nights (July 5, 2002)

If I was represented in the scene
It was by a blade of grass

If my theme played amidst symphonies and movements
It was in measures of silences

If I was cornered or caught in frame
My eyes were tilted away from the sun

If they were not words that I spoke or things I wrote here
There were no solutions, rendered in series or pair.

The Source is the Mouth (May 6, 2002)

Where is the river that carries
The world on it's surface...
Between this Elysian desert
and the shores of Abbadon.

The turtle lies on his back,
We are thirsty, Let us drink.

Nails, Rope and Glass (December 7, 2001)

Wind outside is blowing fast,
A ten year old boy that wants to break some windows.
There's sorrow there too, like he's finally done,
But he's scared to be caught by police or tree branch.

Waiting for the final shards to twinkle down,
And fall on the ghost of summer flowers in soft dirt below.

Doesn't seem to know of the wind that's inside,
Filled instead with bitterness and rage for time past and gone
from sight.
Bones broken, never set, never healed,
This man is twisted, twisting hanged from a tree.

Bring a thick rope and a handful of nine-penny nails,
Meet outside the middle, where still sleeps sound and air,
then hurry back.

Solace (1992)

Diseased in fashion
My bones passing
Through my skin
So that I can use them as crutches
and then
Falling to the floor
Where I can be there with you
Fucked up

A martyr kneels
Touching the ground
And being taken in
You're lying there
not breathing
I'm lying here
Not feeling my lungs
While I'm inside of you

Whatever possessed
The thread to fix
this
Somehow it slips my mind
(Back to when
1984 was a book and not
the year that Reagan
was reelected)
like an ice cold hug
It never was thought
But it certainly was said
That to pass through
A world

Solace (continued)

Is to give up any hope and let
the blood carry you
A rhythm that you knew
kind of a soft
how do you do,
descending
twisting
double helix
scientific words
not good enough for this
beauty
absent

Watching From Above (1998)

Sunlight drops down
Brings gold as if from the depths
And surface tensions

Melting it to the sky

A woman walks across the water with me
Skirts composed of waves
Spirals appear
Then wink out
Challenging that there is a wisdom
Which cannot be seen.

*What Do We Do with the
Dried Flowers of Our Lives? (April 11, 2000)*

when our hearts have grown tired
our eyes hollow

our dreams like splinters caught in lace

and the objects of affection striped with dust
atop a shelf or inside an otherwise empty box
the grains of sand become stone
through some alchemy of pain, without release

And we'll sing of samsara
But first with shaking hands...
Attempt to touch...
Failing...

So...
what do we do with the dried flowers of our lives?
the whispers written from mouths on small papers
our youth spent in black and white?

Finally with trembling lips
In wordless motion, with covered eyes...
Please believe us...
Please, believe us...

I Pretend It's Winter (July 7, 2000)

Surfaces made of human skin; bones made of flour and paste.
The Sound is from your ears moving
They imagine the air is around them; it is not.
The sky is made of your memories; lies told by senses
unkind.

Slip away now, perhaps you'll awake.
Slip away now, towards my arms.

Every motion, a note, trapped inside the glass globe of your
skull
The whole world shaken and upside down,
Tears fluttering insects fall towards the air, in clouds;
They try to descend into heaven.

Slip away now, let yourself be revealed.
Slip away now, towards an ending.

You watch the swirling snow slow down; floating.
You're still, soft, righteous, full of grace—
You watch your caricature with interest; how she speaks,
Closed inside fairy tales, figure in three four time.

When insects are stirring the wind, when lotus blossoms are
closed

Slip away now, separated by identity
Slip away now, to world dissolved

Pride of the Foothills (February 27, 2002)

I remember Santa Fe
Northern Railroad boxcar overpass
Triple-X Bookstores
Dust coated
on Compromise Line

Their doors rusted
Watching 3 A.M. infomercials
Through neighbors' plate-glass
Then shit on my own sperm.

How about that, Freud?
I tie it all up
In masks in old string
Wearing or is it worn

"I don't feel good
don't bother me.
I won't write my poem
till I'm in my right mind"

(last stanza from Allen Ginsberg's "America")

Down in Misery (1997)

I went down to Missouri
Left all known things
My thoughts fled, along seven parallel tracks
Gave me my just desserts

I went down and saw Missouri
Laughing while I crossed the double railroad tracks
Aimless and single-minded
Fame was a road, to the side

As your tongue went where I
I know I thought, I know it felt like what
I went down to Missouri and flat fields
Vacant land, Open parking lots

The ones who saw me...
Their eyes sparkled, My eye was down
Down in misery — left among the wrappers
Husks and mudcaked on the wayside.

I went down to Missouri to become whole

Looking both ways, I was laughing
While I crossed the double railroad tracks
Aimless and single-minded
Fear was replaced with
That happiness that we — We all say that we want
When we just want to fuck (up) the other
Person

Out of sanity and calm and take them
Down with us, into Missouri

Down in Misery (continued)

Where the dust settles
On your shoes

And they demand that you feel
Down, falling down in misery
The drains of your newly purchased freedom

They are all too human, down in Missouri
The down, in Missouri
Down, on Missouri's Big,
Empty

I came to know,
I was brought out, to see
That it's all the fucking same
Even when you take, down in Missouri.

Raindrop Fell (1995)

An Icarus child
Fell laughing
Plans and windsongs
(Fancies unspoken)
In discomfort's arms.

Hysteria
Dropped a smiling mask
Cut my skin with blackened edge
And light of false dawning
His spit in my mouth, drip,
I swallowed.

I was draped in the shroud
As my body was placed in some savior's hands,
Stigmata etched my face dark
With a vision, as of demon dreams, tattooed on cloth and eyes.

Sharp taste
It was acrid and strong
Mixing inside with me
A seed of self
Plans and windsongs
Rainfall fell, God's spit, drip
I swallowed
Growth
Blood nourishment
I rose.

What is the Why? (January 22, 2001)

I made patterns on skin
Like sand spilled in water,
With a feather I found in the desert;
Need I remind?
Need I whisper again,
"This isn't weather, it's endemic."

I felt measured last night,
Like a bride's gown in springtime,
By the circumstances I suffered;
Need I promise?
Need I break down again,
"This isn't fortune, it's affection."

Sure, and echo
Every list I've written,
Pin to my forehead,
By time, I remember.

I laid prayers on an altar,
Like a dove that has fallen,
For the death of my meaning;
Need I forget?
Need I consider again,
"This isn't heaven, it's eternal."

Elysium (1994)

Elysium
Pretensions
Strange interaction
Polymer formed skin
Blankets
Membranes
Against steel

Refuse to improve
Progression
Heaven

Self-mutilating
Bound, constricts
Cuts from the flow
Feverish
Gleaming from within

We approach
Faith
Elysium

Self-fulfilling
Man-made: perverts
Mantra for the faithless

Refuse to improve
Progression
Heaven
Elation

Elysium (continued)

Self-professing
Binds, inverts
Leaves it to rot, here
Feverish
Gleaming from within

We approach
Leave silence behind us

Aren't Hours Ours? (May 6, 2002)

graceful maya
why did you show your face
and thus when apprehended
turn and give instead a turbulent way

New Providence (June 25, 1999)

A new kind of providence
of silent echoes
and smoking down to the filter
Backed among the flowers

(His hairs are forced tightly together
to take this life and gladness
we knew even after)

He dials the phone with his left hand
And counterclockwise turning
click click click
He can be anywhere in the world
Once he was in Egypt and
Israel
China and Germany

And he knew even after
We went forward

Sea Between (1998)

Face surrounded by clouds,
Reflecting the light of the sun;
I am set on a string above the sky's ceiling
To him.
He looks at me from beneath
Close-cut brown hair,
Which lies across his eyebrows

Asks,
"Do you remember when I was born?"

Pictures; texture of skin
I move his mother's naked thighs apart.

I remember his crown
Forcing its way through
His mother's cunt
(Like my fist on that dark night)

A smile that flashes
From the mouth of a whore
I took her when I was twelve.

"You will always remember,"
I answer
"You'll understand when you are a man."

He nods, slowly
His hair lifts from his brow
And his eyelids are only slightly closed.

Autumn Lens — For Elizabeth (2000)

Watch the flight of leaves stutter
The hollows of curled stem rustle the air
Elizabeth twists in a circle of time-dreaming and seasons of
loss
She's twinkling like the orange and gold stars

"I wish tonight,
I wish I might,
With eyes of brown,
Be shown the light,
That'd cleanse the soil, that opens hearts."

She shivers, a warm wind on skin white
Is that the moon, reflecting who she sees?
An image which has burned
With deep pupils into thin paper film

She will express a nature
which can focus into a point
that exists without the centered void
A smile will settle her own desires

"And if my love would but awake,
The dream of op'n-eyed lovers make,
Finally the world known,
My portion take,
Equal and true, of life's endless reward."

I Met My Maker (1993)

Broken down again
I met my Maker
Inside of his glass house
We passed the time by
Throwing stones at passing cars
Our eyes remaining inside

Their black orbits

Dreaming God's good golden light
Smoldering down here amongst devils
With men's faces
My mouth is silent

Life drips down the well
Feeding every bound child
Happiness and gravity
Loosening their holds
As empty empty air
Comes rushing in
Floods the spaces between
Me and my Maker

Destroying the walls that weren't made to be broken.

Tracing Light Becomes a Fulcrum (1999)

Her slight and open hand
Traces a path along the edge of her lip

Her first finger questions her own voice
and her left hand lies in her lap
Describing the wound in Christ's side
In imitation of a child through his mothers hips

I've ceased to argue, even with myself
and she crisscrosses her nails
Mapping out the back of her hand
I smile, quietly and swallow a sip of wine

Waiting for a fulcrum point laid on time's track
If I picture following her mouths' lines -
I only stare at the palms of my hands
and wonder where the joining ends.

"I've come across from the other side..."
"...no one answers your piper's call, sweet thing..."
"I'll be the voice of all the things which sleep;
I'll be a speaker for the dead."

"But you, you're nervous."
"Only because I've seen you like this before..."
"You're scared of me, then? You moved away..."
"and as I sighed you've turned inside of me..."

A glow leaks slowly from my eyes
"If anything, I'll become a martyr;"
"What will you die for?"
"Nothing, I'm already a man..."

It Goes Off! (1997)

Aimless and single-minded
I scratched my markings into the soft mud

Jealous, pointless and pure
We are ashes now, control
Treasure me...
Even the old are young when spoken so.

My mouth is a starving hole;
My mind is a ball of yarn
(With no pretty kitten
I am winding me tighter and tighter)

I am surely playing it close to the hip
Another side; gone through with again
My cards are face-up on the table
No question: motivated by survival
Greed and animal lust — for Love

The stars are falling on my cheeks tonight
Glitter and saltwater
A glue made of desolation
And soon... come back, in peace
I wait for truth — My sky will cease to exist

I starve for beauty, I die for life

Shhh... don't turn over.
I have a gun pointed at my head
And ready, to go OFF.

Journey into my Inbox (September 11, 2001)

Girls Who Love Anal Sex
Manhattan's on fire
Are you OK?

Words for July 14, 2002 (July 15, 2002)

I could have let a tear fall
Instead I watched you wash your face
A slow ritual held you every night
Godless to my tired eyes

Tonight I saw my friend's wife, or her twin
Skittish and wild crossbones decorated
Watching the robots parade
Dancing to mad sciences

I was dim light
And staying up past my time
Putting myself in situations
But I'll never experience

I was grieving with watered depths
Shivering and rippled gazes
Open the pack and flick like I was still "Sparky"
Just another thing that's hard to give up.

I said goodbye and still love lies waiting
I left my home but I've followed myself
Wherever I go, whenever I can
I guess I'm hoping for the best

Thank you for reading.

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