

## when imagination dies

when imagination dies, what's left floats to the surface like bloated cargo from a slow-sinking ship / unsalvaged debris lost at sea / like so many things far from familiar shores / faint and forgotten like childhood and dreams / like an over-inflated ball / rudderless and floating on a wet mirror / spinning in circles atop a neon pool / sanitized and safe / the deep end removed.

when imagination dies, everything tastes the same / flavor fades and smells dilute / subtlety no longer satisfies so you improvise / compromise / season it until your eyes aren't offended / spice it until you cry the only tears you can / sweeten it until it tastes like childhood / the kind you barely remember / the kind you still crave.

when imagination dies, the spirit soon follows / the morning fog no longer dreams / its rolling mystery burns up inside a choking smog / strung-out and strained over a gray cityscape / trying to escape the rat-race below / running and driving and striving to some end / hard to know now when or where things begin / too hard to follow / hard to swallow when insides turn hollow / hard-packed frozen and hermetically-sealed to keep things in / other things out / mother nature got tossed with the leftovers last night / lost her freshness, her virtue, the dirty-little whore / her curves take up too much space / such a waste / better served for fat profits and large lazy asses / let the masses roam free on less manicured grasses.

when imagination dies, colors mute to shades of get-along gray / intensity bleeds and fades obscure / bored and insecure / unsure of what we feel / of what's real what's not / emotions scream to paint themselves loud / in red black purple and gold / begging to be bold / from young to old / from bitter-cold to blood-hot / to a perfect warmth / tangled-up tender in another's eyes and touch / to everything else behind and between / above below and beyond / makes no sense not to sense it all / let colors bleed / let them go and let them flow / every heart-felt, head-felt fucking last one of them.

but this is no pulpit, no podium, no shiny whiteboard / there's enough of that and nothing to teach / nothing is missing, merely misplaced / buried beneath a high-tech spit-shined shell / high above 'the wishing well' / far below the twinkle of wished-upon stars / hidden behind deep and unseen scars / washed out beneath layers of grimy light / industrious blights to holy plights / flooded by global to personal frights / preaching left and reaching right / wise ones and answers abound all around / caught up in the show / stuck in middle ground / halfway down to nowhere / somewhere in between / looking for something / and waiting on a dream.

buried deep / still pumping / bulletproof and all.

beneath the latest and greatest gadgets and gizmos / saying hello and wishing you well / stuffed with the latest buzzers and bells / beneath too much to see and too much to do / beneath quickies, quick fixes and shallow warm wishes / beneath take-overs, make-overs and sculpted physiques / beneath cover-ups and corruption— more packaged sweets / beneath sun-dried skin so hard it lost its touch / beneath a faceless moon that never changes its mood.

but things here haven't changed / here on the surface / where wisdom hides behind a worn-out toothless guise / where vanity and poverty wander the same lost lonely streets in search of a smile / untainted and unadorned / where fear befriended ignorance long ago— a match made in disneyland, wonderland or Washington d.c. / hard to know in a place where everything's surreal

/ where packaged politicians sound bite new deals – their pompous promises packed with lofty ideals / where the news rarely speaks and entertainment barely asks us to breathe / where genocide is alive and well and the promise of heaven still keeps us in hell / where the smog keeps getting thicker making the world a little sicker / where still we bicker and fight over who and what is wrong or right / where the sick and hungry get forgotten and the fat keep getting fed / where the last four-leaf clover got run over and left for dead.

here on the grimy bloated surface / where nothing much has changed  
spinning atop a neon pool / above and below reflecting the same  
lost at sea and in the cracks / can't see ahead / no turning back  
spinning far too fast / out of rhythm and lost for rhyme  
going nowhere fast / out of touch and lost for time  
far from imagination / even farther from dreams  
on a carnival carousel that's not what it seems.  
and round and round and round it goes  
and where it stops nobody knows.

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