

PSST!

People's Song SocieTea - A Night of Music, Artful Words & Personal Reflections

Thursday, June 25, 2026

The Dark and The Deep

By Matt Eddy

Our hearts call us back to the garden
where there's nowhere to hide your gold
Where all we have is our body and soul,
there's nothing to Cesar that's owed

Our hearts call us back to the garden
where we are all justly exposed
Where it's your turn to eat until it's not
and then you are stripped to the bone

But we are none of us willing
To live and to die by chaotic rhyme
Our cities, governments - fortresses all
To cower and hide behind

Our hearts call us back to the garden
where it's time to step out on the sea
When all of our judgement and witnessing
will sink down to the dark and the deep

Human Resource

By Kylie Koch

You're not cut out for this honey
So don't you even try
You just sit there, get it done now
So the boss won't lose his mind

Put a smile on your face now
Would it kill you to be kind
What's a-matter? It come early?
Bet it's prob-ly bout that time

Well hey there – hiya honey
Sorry for the late reply
I was busy in Las Vegas
Almost cheatin' on my wife.

Could you help me out with something
Here's a penny for your time
I'll just let you do the work
And all the credit will be mine

Cause you're not human
You're just a resource
Living a company lie
I'm not human
I'm just a resource
So you can get by

Another day to clock in
All those weeks of wasted time
Please stop letting bossman's problems
Weigh so heavy on my mind

The rich get even richer
Tell the poor to get in line
Another shift just to be told
That I get nickels – you get dimes

Cause you're not human
You're just a resource
Living a company lie
I'm not human
I'm just a resource
So you can get by

I don't wanna be
Just another one
A cog in the machine

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You were busy in Las Vegas
Almost cheatin' on your wife.

Poem Collection

By Brett Sanders

Re: Introduction

It's come to my attention that we haven't been
properly introduced.
Not that it matters much.
Even an untrained eye could tell that I am a product
of my youth.
But where to start.
There are many ways to tell a story.
Should I focus on the pain?
How about the glory?
Should I scatter it all out on the floor and invite you
to explore me?
Maybe the best place, surely, is who I come from.
But I warn you.
Prepare for more than you bargained for, and then
some.

My father. Steel City raised. One of five.
Though by the time I write this just three would be
left alive.
The others passed on. Alcohol could be the culprit.
If I was looking for one.
His parents before him, one strong, one sweet.
Taught him the power of strength with planted feet.

Also, responsibility, duty.
The cost of chasing your dreams.
But with that came violence. Ruthless, and clean.
When he is taught that the correct response to
disrespect,
is to exact a price, paid for in flesh.
The first time I saw him hit someone else.
Late one eve, storming, from an old, white, station
wagon's back seat.
It was my mother.
I think I blacked some of it out.
For one reason or another.
But it instilled a sense of fear, that I had known in no
other.
And it wouldn't be the last time, and it would get
rougher.

Speaking of my mother, cornfield raised.
One of many.
Though by the time I'm reading this, none of them,
would remain friendly.
For she comes from trauma.
Heavy enough, it's impossible, to put down gently.
Raped, trafficked, a life of neglect.
One that she would never let herself forget.
From seven to nineteen when she met my father.
I dare you.
Ask anyone in her family, If any one of them cared
enough to bother.
As you can imagine, that taught her, that anything
good can't possibly be real.
So no matter how much she wanted to love, she went
to work,
making sure the best things in her life would go
unhealed.
And the scars that would leave, on my sisters and me,
would go unrevealed.
As she reeled.
From man to man, and drunk to drunk.
Trying to chase anything that could make her feel.
It would happen so much, it became part of the deal.

So that brings us to me.
Oldest, and one of three.
And by the time you all hear this we are all still
(thankfully) here to see.
How I turned a life of pure chaos, into a way to see
differently.

It's easy to hear this story, and assume the worst.
That I hated my parents.
And my grandparents.
And all the ones who came first.
But rest assured.
The reality is reverse.
Because even though they made mistakes, they never
gave up.
Never stopped growing.
And never stopped trying, to better fill the cup.

My father showed me, through hard work, and no
fluff.
That no amount of rage will ever be enough.
To quell the demons inside, when life starts asking
too much.
And my mother, well, as she learned how to love
something, (mostly herself)
She showed me that no amount of running will ever
be able to make the ground stable.
Safe from hurting yourself.
The both of them showed me, to live is to err.
That fighting the darkness is a life long affair.
That your next choice could be the one to clear the
air.
The one to leap the next bar.
To step over the next goal.
To be the choice you always wanted to make.
If you'd only been whole.
They did the best they could.
In spite of the answers they never had.
So when I'm asked who am I?
And what about my past?
I smile politely, and say, I am who they made me.
I was loved and I laughed.
Thank you very much for asking, It was an absolute
blast.

Violence of Man

Have you ever heard the violence that occurs
from the silence that incurs the wrath of man?

It sounds like 62 million thunderclaps, battering.
Against the shape of a mother that just took another
hand
across the marred map of her face.
Simply for wanting to protect her beloved.
It sounds like 62 million heavy footfalls as she is
chased.
Down the halls of her own four walls, as she weeps.
For what she knows will happen if she cannot stall.
One second more.
One foot behind the other.
It sounds like 62 million aggressive advances, and
accusatory glances.
As she passes the ghosts of her life and strangers that
tell her:
"Your eyes are a pair of a kind...and by the way
what are the chances of a smile hun...?"
As she fixes the curled corner of her lip.
A familiar shade of blood.

I have heard, and seen, what silence can bring when
62 million wretched things.
Go unchecked by those that claim to protect.
By those that would be kings.
62 million reasons and we still wonder why she is
terrified.
To ask someone to help pick up the pieces of her
heart.
She broke under the weight of that last bottle of pills.
She choked under the pressure of the will to live.
The will to breathe, the will to love, the will to leave.
While we parade and self soothe, while our pride
shrieks and seethes.
While we sit here, spineless, choosing to believe.
That 'not all men' kill.
While she silently bleeds.

Is it Weak of Me?

Is it weak of me?
To say that my strength is found in the softer folds of
my personality.
I want to know, honestly.
Because these days it seems the world would have you
believe.
That the parts of you that tend to hurt.
Are the parts of you, that you should leave.
Perhaps, I was raised to see things differently.
Maybe, I was given a soul that spent a few millennia,
pondering.
What it really means to be the kind of strong that
doesn't make others feel weak.

Like the quiet brush of a gentle breeze that was just
enough.
To cut limbs from the canopies it combs across.
Or the bed of moss, lush enough to rest on.
Whose roots keep the ground underneath it from
becoming lost.
Like the way water carves crust into the earthen
curves that sign the diary.
Of our time here on earth.
Or the way the touch of someone you love.
Can turn a deep breath, into spiritual rebirth.
Like the strands of silk used to suture the scars I
created to protect my heart.
And the veil of dark.
That anchors the heavens.
And allows them to shine in such a way they could
never fall apart.

I've spent so much time thinking those softer parts of
me,
were the ones that needed to go first.
Now I choose, to fuel them.
To feed them.
To let them hurt.
That's how I know I can touch fire, and not burn and
succumb.
That's how I know I've earned, this glowing hearth,
you now call home.

Am I Really a Poet?

Am I really a poet?
I ask, because they say you are supposed to just know
it, right?
Or is it, that I'm not supposed to know it?
It's confusing. I'm confused.
It's like we've set the bar so high.
I struggle to see myself anywhere other than below it.

Sure, I can stand here all chill and flow with it.
I can reach deep inside myself.
Tear out the dirtiest darkest bits to share with you.
And even then, still grow with it.
But really, I'm terrified of this.
Standing here, hoping you feel it, close your eyes, and
just go with it.
While your mind's eye watches as I peel off my skin.
And muscle. And bone.
And just throw it.
Out into the void. Or a crowd.
Even though there is a very high probability that I
might simply just blow it.
You know, as I meticulously pack and wrap my pain
and loss with a bow.
For quiet snaps. Oohs and aahs.
Maybe just a small round of applause?

All the while I can't stop thinking my problems, aren't
worthy.
Just another average middle aged white guy on stage.
Complaining he is lonely.
Like for some reason I can't even see that the blood I
bleed,
is the same crimson shade of ruby.
Even as the lacerations I continue to give myself in
the name of poetry
gush the same color.
And hurt just like all the others.
Every time.

Why is it one poem isn't enough because I didn't fill
the requisite amount of buckets with liquid life?
While another is perfectly fine because the trauma
involved,
was the perfect shade of ripe?

Perhaps I'm not fawning enough over someone who
couldn't treat me right.
Maybe the reason I sleep with a light on at night.
Has nothing to do with the stage fright I feel as I run
my veins dry.
Trying to get you all to see this moment the way I see
life.
Or maybe I'm showing up as just another blind man
leading the blind.

Who knows. I know I said before that maybe a poet
does.
And maybe that's my point.
Here I am, ragged and alone.
Performing for those who chose to listen.
Entirely on their own.
And so, I breathe in through my nose.
And blow out, through the cracks in my facade that
expose
the real reason behind this verbose version of a
manifesto.
That threatens to implode, this page.
This stage. Myself. And everything else above and
below.
Why? Because, I'm a poet. Motherfuckers.
And now, I know it.

Through the Glass

By Brian Junker

I see you through the glass, but you can't see me
We're always talking past, but our words aren't free
The things that you say just don't seem to be true
But there isn't any way I can talk with you

I could write in the sky for all to read
But what's the point of it if you don't see me

Just you and your reflection, alone in the glass
Looking for connection, but all your words are cast
In a victim's ugly anger, that you were taught to feel
By another lonely stranger, in another lonely reel

What makes these shadows dance on the wall?
Is there someone there? Can you see me at all?

If we could break this glass and sit in the same room
We'd see ourselves at last, and not as some cartoon
Or maybe we would scream the same tired lies
That fouled up the stream and drew so many eyes

JUNE PSST! ARTISTS

Matt Eddy is a singer/songwriter from the Tampa Bay area living and performing in Pittsburgh. You can catch him around town performing solo or with Nadine Douds in the acoustic duo Douds & Eddy.

Insta: @hobartmatt ~ @doudsandeddy

Kylie Koch is a Pittsburgh based indie-folk artist whose music combines Americana, singer-songwriter, blues and rock influences. Her work pairs storytelling lyrics with haunting melodies to paint pictures of the tales that have inspired her work. Her debut EP is currently in progress and is set to launch within the next year.

Insta: @kyliekochmusic

Brett Sanders A bit of a rolling stone, yet still managing to gather moss wherever he goes, Brett Sanders is a poet and illustrator. And he is here to help you feel your feelings. He focuses primarily on internal conflict, growth, and the fleeting beauty of life. Through spoken word, he wants to inspire generations young and old to accept their emotions and internal struggles as who they are, rather than as parts of themselves they need to control or let go of.

Insta: @a.to.brett

Lavender Lilt Nico (lavender lilt) is genre-fluid musician inspired by global sounds and driven by a deep inability to sit still. Leaning into our digitally interwoven world, Nico creates music that blurs the lines between organic and synthetic—dreamy and real and ancient and present...like some kind of musical Frankensteinborg.

Insta: @lavenderlilt

Brian Junker writes and sings folk/pop songs rendered on traditional instruments, vignettes of the lives all around us, and covers many great but often not well-known singer/songwriters. Brian also plays in old-time jams, choirs, and anyplace else where community gathers around music, and he loves mixing live sound for mostly-acoustic groups, as well as supporting local, regional and national acoustic performers in the uosongspace.com concert series.

Insta: @brianjunker1

Hold On
Singalong; By Heidi Wilson
Sung by protesters in Minneapolis, January 2026

Hold on
Hold on

My dear ones
Here comes the dawn