

Poetry Series

**Jerry Buckley**  
**- poems -**

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# Jerry Buckley(08/07/1957)

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# American Nightingale

How proudly then, you wear the mantle;  
'American Nightingale'.  
Enter into evidence the royal crown,  
the streamlined torso, the twitching tail.  
Any living creature could be forgiven envy;  
of such intelligence and beauty.

You perch, conspicuous outside my keep,  
lording it over me.  
Contrast my frailties to your enduring charms,  
monogamy, audacity, unswerving loyalty.  
Preaching social gospels to all you would embrace;  
chastising those who should earn disgrace.

Well-placed within the scheme of things; strategic,  
you stake your claim,  
fixed and focused, in the face of changing climes.  
In Darwinian nimbleness, you maintain  
carnivorous, when convenient to your reasons;  
yet vegetarian, in meaner seasons.

How rightly envied then, you lift toward heaven;  
your heartfelt songs of praise,  
in looping strains of replication.  
In mimicry, your voice is raised.  
No role is exempted from your repertoire,  
no actor escapes your commentary.

Sensuous, serene, so sincere is your canto,  
a tonic for your mate;  
How wistful still, your plaintiff warble,  
when the bough is empty, and the hour late.  
Of all those that ply the heavens, I envy you alone.  
Would that I could make your song, mine own.

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Bagworms

Suspended. They hang like Christmas ornaments from our spruce trees.  
Our spruce trees, planted to anchor the corners of our brick house façade.  
Scalwags sucking the life from our cherished landscape specimens.  
Attracted - or so we discovered on Google - by marigolds we planted in the  
spring.

Little do they care that they are unwelcomed carpetbaggers into our ordered  
world.  
We pulled the squishy shit-heads off, and tossed them into a pile, stemming the  
tide.  
Or so we thought. Until tomorrow discovered the hideous amputees inexplicably  
trekking  
back toward the comforts of base camp, like swallows returning to Capistrano.

Little rat bastards of silk and cellulose, these sap-suckers know no  
boundaries,  
save to survive; to pass their life-force on toward progeny; to pay it forward.  
Juvenile delinquents hanging out, smoking weed and listening to thrash metal on  
iPods.  
I don't know if I have the heart to wipe them off our landscape with pyrethroids.

Jerry Buckley

# Before Adam

Before Adam's first election  
Must have been the thought of Eve  
Nothing less than pure perfection  
Should he so easily deceive

Before Cain vain claimed his brother  
There was gain and thus defeat  
Before Jacob conned his feeble father  
and Esau took that bite to eat

Before Aaron's staff stretched fateful  
When a night light led the way  
Only then a remnant are found faithful  
And just those few allowed to stay

Before Moses dreaded Zion's thunders  
There were visions of how it ends  
We kick the pricks against our blunders  
And refuse half the help he sends

'Voice of One'@ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Bradford Pairs

Staged in horizontal rows: linear like so many Bradford pear trees  
Beaming out at us from the 'Society' section of the Sunday newspaper  
Complete with full frontal smiles of idealism grafted onto ignorance

'McNeil weds Mullins at Our Lady of Perpetual Sorrow'  
'Thompson and Blakely to say vows in garden ceremony'  
'Spencer and Lyons to wed at Second Presbyterian Church'  
'Barton and Smith exchange vows at Cheekwood Tea Room'

Don't these lovers read the articles in 'Life' section of the paper?  
Have they not spoken with experts in the field; and learned that their odds of  
survival intact are no more than fifty-fifty at best?  
And even if they do survive: that the blooming season is so truncated.  
Afterward there's fifty drab weeks, staring over coffee every morning  
at a snarling mangle of branches grappling with an overwhelmed trunk

Scenario A discovers the blushing bride cannot be expected to be constrained by  
such mundane concepts as decorum and property rights; yhat she finds wings on  
warm breezes and elopes into the wild, to be exposed and recognized by any and  
all as an invasive pest.

Scenario B reveals that any good thunderstorm or sheer wind past the third year  
of planting, easily snaps off one of the main branches;  
and so the homeowner is wed to an amputee flaying in a chorus line..... And  
what on earth can you possibly do about that?

'Voice of One'... Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Buckley's Antique Emporium

Whenever you've the need to vanquish a frown  
or need something special to adorn your castle;  
Just drive yourself over to a spot in midtown,  
where there is never any hint of a hassle.

Step back in time, to a not so far away place;  
share a wee cuppa', or a glass of Chablis.  
You're sure to go home with a smile on your face  
And your afternoon will gush over with glee.

Buy a gift for the missus, or treat your own silly self;  
Daddy Clock Clock will help you to choose.  
Hung high above your mantle, or displayed upon a shelf;  
with antiques - well, you just can't loose.

Here's Staffordshire doggies and majolica ware;  
there's Toby jugs, glasswares, and coronation plates.  
He won't look cross-eyed, if you linger and stare,  
But do take advantage of his goodly rates.

It's midtown madness in the middle of the day  
Much better than any visit to the Forum! \*  
It is a far-away kingdom, a few short minutes away  
I'm talking, Buckley Antique Emporium

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

\*The FED-EX Forum is the home court for the Memphis Grizzlies professional basketball team.

Jerry Buckley

# Cicadas

Shrouded behind a pale and gloaming light  
This fair evening has lost its appetite  
But it's too lovely out to go inside  
I'd much rather sit here alone and hide

This yellow wine is truly impressive  
Although I don't chardonnay that often  
She's smooth and soothing and inexpensive  
and so my fixed outlook slowly softens

Dog day cicadas are chiding this town  
A loathsome and eerie unearthly drone  
Now that traffic has worn itself down  
The red warrior ascends to his throne

Kronus plods onward like a slew-foot boy  
Too sadly encumbered to join in play  
Night marches forward like a wind-up toy  
As she anticipate more wakeful day

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley



## Circa 1886

It was our personal and private historical society museum -  
Circa 1886; a traditional southern pioneer familial habitation  
Gasping now with the dying last breaths of a departed generation

Outflanked now by cookie-cutter brick fascia indwellings -  
Two-car garages cramped and cluttered all up with import SUVs  
Bass boats and lawn mowers and orphaned mechanical exercise machines

Defiantly standing firm on seven thistle-choked acres -  
As renegade wisteria vines suffocate mottled white-washed walls  
While solemn stone-faced ancestors stand at sentry in the halls

Intergrated carnival glass and depression glass trinkets  
Mix-matched and crammed elbow-to-elbow on a communal knick-knack shelf  
Each holds a southern Gothic story to be told, kept quietly to itself

Stacked in the closet, Aunt Milly's hand stitched quilts -  
Redbooks and Reader's Digest magazines heaped up in a head-high stack  
Brought latest trends those way back whens, but nobody much looks back

On top Grandma's sewing machine sits Papa's replica Conestoga  
Handcrafted a hundred years ago, to scale, and whittled in fine detail  
And propped up in the corner over there, his axe for splitting rail

Careful in the kitchen! There's a film encasing the gloom  
Of thousands upon thousands of sausage patty and fried egg sunrise  
So many skillet cooked splatter-burgers, with greasy hand-cut fries

School Days photos recall the way we were; you so scarecrow thin!  
Plastic bags stuffed fat-full of Christmas presents past, and mildew  
Brim full of baubles, boxes, bows; re-gifting extoled as a virtue

Moth-pocked moldy church clothes and bonnets from way back when -  
Great-granny's wire-rimmed glasses lend an insight back to the day  
When the greatest of all sins, was to throw anything at all away!

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Circumcircular

Around and around I navigate, from small town to sleepy city  
Forward, then sideways, I back-paddle now; bobbing from same to same  
Rarely the 'chosen one' anymore; I'm so seldom considered pretty  
Always the last chosen; a rag-armed fielder in a sandlot game

Over and over once again, Red Duck Drake is the foremost pick  
Or one of my slutty sisters; younger than myself, more agile  
And damn those outlandish NewKids; those quacks from the blue duck clique  
No one harbors any nostalgia, for one so faded, frail, and fragile

So, on and on I swim without complaint; a circumcircular spinster  
A guarded gleam gazes hopefully out from distant downcast eyes  
Looking forward to the day when some tow-headed hay-seed youngster  
Picks me up, and turns me over; and choosing me wins first prize

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

## Clacks On Cobbles

My shadow hitch-hikes on ahead of me  
on timid tippy-toes toward tomorrow.  
As daylight dissipates beside the lee  
so then settles sentiment's sad sorrow.

My echo resonates behind my back  
to the tune of leather clacks on cobbles.  
It does it best to keep itself on track  
as it skitters, it hops, and it wobbles.

My heart hums happily inside its cage  
like a loquacious Black-throated sparrow.  
Its only thought is just to turn the page  
and awake to you again tomorrow.

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Crucifix

I keep a crucifix, dangling from my rear view mirror  
A pendulous representation of something far away superior  
A simple rosewood relic of blood droplets linked on rope  
So gaunt, yet it gives me strength, my harbinger of hope

It is looking ever forward and so slightly to my right  
Guarding a sort of blind spot, with its paradigm of light  
Vigilant yes, but unlike a silly rabbit's foot you'd hold  
More akin to a family photo, carried in your wallet's fold

Fortunate me, this rosewood emblem, looks the other way  
Unworthy as I often am, to gaze upon that face most days  
Just let me retain a visual, of a spear-torn side in sight  
Behold one blood sopped brow, recall one Holy Roman night

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Dragonfly

Relic of a bygone age:  
You were hunter, when fishes  
swam blindly through virgin seas.  
You will abide,  
until the oceans begin to boil.

Rising from obscurity  
to assume your place in the sun

Helicopter of the insect world:  
gliding on iridescent wings,  
you dart or hover  
through lazy summer days.  
Such an appetite for living!

Master of languid waters,  
no intended prey escapes your outlook.

And we, so quick to slander;  
to judge, according to your odd appearance:  
"Witch Doctor" – "Devil's Darning Needle"  
Which of us stops to sing your tribute;  
to appreciate the beauty of your ways?

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Drip

Ghostly sound, this sucking, this swirling  
Such a hissing slow refrain  
This filthy oil-skimmed scumb encircling  
Slurping through my bathtub drain

The problem is, these waves of aqua  
Nagging at my soggy ears  
Impersonate my poor personna  
Thus descending dreadful spheres

Annoying drip, obnoxious bother  
As I step into my clothes  
Plinks of this loser's living water  
Drip, drip, drip down fortune's hose

Last coins dropped on an empty hour  
As I reap what I had sown  
Drip, drip; my towel is stinking sour  
And I feel so damned alone

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Echo

Abide with my echo  
Now my voice has gone quiet  
Prospect for my shadow  
While you still have the light

Acquiesce my muses  
May they sooth your seasons  
Bandage all my bruises  
Whatever your reasons

Fix all my frailties  
Please poison every pest  
Consign me then, kindly  
Sure hope we passed the test

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley



# Equilibrium

Thank God for grandbabies  
And things that draw people together  
Like hot pot-luck Sundays  
And parades through nice weather

Praise him for fall football  
For plump cheerleaders and lousy bands  
Grateful to have played a part  
This world still wobbling in his hands

Echos through the stadium  
Forbid it inconvenience our ears  
Or upset our equilibrium  
What's been granted us all these years

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# For Harper

Thrice blessed is she  
Loved by her and him  
and them and we  
Until six times seven  
is equal to forty-leven  
We'll cherish this girl  
She's our small slice of heaven

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# For Shannon

Pen up a poem to Shannon  
Some wee warm words how I feel  
Reverence every effervescence  
Her SweetTart zest of citrus peel

Write a song for Shannon  
Shake up a tonic for itching ears  
Isn't the whole wide world enthralled?  
Listen for her joys and fears

Tell the tale of Shannon  
Cast her in a movie with Sharif  
Green splattered Eden 'yond hill and vale  
My heart's been stolen and she the thief

Write the book called Shannon  
To reduce to words should be my curse  
Fair Shannon speaks to my bumbling best  
She wraps herself up inside her verse.

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Frozen

Take my hand and hold it  
You've already stolen my heart  
Touch my life and mold it  
May it complement yours equal part

Keep my dreams they're frozen  
In you Love already come true  
From any and all others chosen  
For the rest of my life only you

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Game Ball

It's out there now; soggy on the sprinkler soaked lawn.  
What was once a nearly bursting bladder is now near totally deflated.  
The red, white, and blue octagonal panels, scratched and sorely faded.

At a Major Indoor Soccer fixture, this was our 'official' ball.  
Was flummoxed in frenzied and frantic mania, as the stadium clock expired:  
another anti-climax, another losing season, a dozen dreams retired.

For a time it was kept up - displayed on a shelf - then was cloistered,  
in my closet - forsaken and forgotten - a moth-balled memory,  
out of sight and out of mind; the keepsake of a referee.

Shame on me, that with time's passage - neglect of vigilance and care -  
my souvineer devolved into a muggle, just a kick around ball for boys,  
it now wallows in a backyard puddle, just another of my children's toys.

No, my game ball wasn't autographed; wasn't guarded under glass;  
but it was coaxed across those magic carpets by Stan the Pizza Man,  
and bannana-bent free-kicked into play, by our dashing Yil Orhan

Too ugly now, insists my wife, to bring that thing inside!  
With no cause to fault the boys at play, oblivious to any claim,  
that called to mind a time and place, when everybody knew my name.

No lo contendera; mea culpa! I admit the blame lies on me.  
Despite my attempts write it off, there is no rhyme or reason,  
such a souvineer should thus be squandered, my keepsake of a swan song  
season.

So the deeper into the game it goes, the more I miss those nights;  
when I was the man in the middle, the whistle fit between my fingers;  
the clock's incessant tic-tic-ticking: since time for no man lingers.

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Gyroscopic

December sky morphs from sullen toward soggy  
And weebegone eyes from forlorn toward foggy  
My downcast visage sets up, distant to deeper  
The simple truth is, I'm unworthy to keep her

There's a chasm divides us, grown wide with neglect  
A gap in our union, far too frayed to correct  
Ripped apart by resentments that well up inside  
Such unspoken words found so convenient to hide

Weary I waiver, from locked down toward dizzy  
My thoughts gyroscopic, all mind-bending busy  
Groping for some semblance, some sense of balance  
Scratching at my scabs of self-pity and malice

Blindly I stumble, as though enveloped in fog  
Forsaking the pathways, I slog through the bog  
The north wind curses at me and I'm blown off track  
Oh my God, how I wish she could want to come back

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Heart Shaped Box

One long stemmed rose should indicate indifference  
toward these my joys in you discovered.

No valentine's dozen, nor floral arrangement,  
disposed to complement one another.

This store bought card, such cliché unfolds,  
envelops muted appreciations  
for all you've encountered, were the whole story told.  
all the trials and the tribulations.

One heart shaped box thumps incessantly true,  
in piques and pulses until it's sore.

Long past searching for anything novel or new,  
it lays daffodils at your door.

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Intersecting Circles

Do you recall, we learned in high school geometry class, that two circles might intersect in two imaginary points, a single degenerate point, or two distinct points?

And so I dreamed of a circle of life, unique from the other circles I had enclosed - concentric circles - ripples from a pebble thrown into a pool of water. I was a rock planet orbiting a star, constrained by its gravity, warmed by its light; yet fully and fatally detached; the distances between two bodies too vast to foster any merger.

Then, per chance one mid-summer's evening, when I least suspected any geometry - outside the rotation of pitched ball, or the arch of a line drive - to have any relevance; my dreams intersected my waking realism - a non-concentric circle intersecting mine - an invasive meteor hurtling toward my space station. Or then, was it my blocking your dash toward home base that brought about the collision?

Therefore, two circles converged into a single degenerate point - where two worlds collide - and two distinct terrestrial bodies fell under the influence of gravity. Or was it magnetism? Tugging the two cores closer and closer, overlapping axis upon axis, diminishing the total diameter of the coupled union, as the merger constricted.

Two dissimilar circumferences, adapting to spaces allotted on a grid; yours expanding as mine contracts. Two intersecting circles impelled by forces of nature until merged into a single orb.

"Voice of One"@ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley



# It Skips A Generation

It seems to me, it skip a generation  
As it leapfrogs towards some salient separation  
She harbors few affinities for purebred prototypes  
Just as soon create us ugly, and then listen to our gripes

A game of checkers, she crowns her king  
Yet a royal coronation is so surreal a scene  
Declining to touch down to earth before she takes our measure  
Must be easier to clone DeVito, than to replicate Schwarzenegger

She plays a child's game of pin-the-tail  
Calls a blind man's bluff to find her alpha male  
She waits and baits her timeless trap; she sets the clamping jaws  
And so transmutes to their progeny, her grandfather's countless flaws

White knight jumps across the squares  
A two-step to or fro - and then one toward making pairs  
Until he feigns he's won the game, and gains the blushing bride  
Pays forward a congenital cul-de-sac, and so sadly stems the tide

It crosses over, and it forever squirms  
Gets hopelessly entangled like a box of worms  
In female pattern baldness; or through eyes of beady gray  
Heredity delights to come and go, but she so seldom cares to stay

Jerry Buckley

# Jesus Takes A Stroll

Celebrity Jesus climbed down from a magnificent Franz Mayer window, and removed his clip-on halo. He washed his face and hands in the elegant alabaster baptistery, and turning his back upon the assembly of stained glass followers and paparazzi; he plodded out past rows of carved Flemish oak pews, and descended the front steps of the brownstone Cathedral of St. John Baptist.

He was reported to have mumbled, (to who knows who) as he rounded the corner of the well kempt grounds; "I know I am to be about my father's business and all, but I need some space to myself; some small sanctuary of sanity where I can recharge, to reflect, to reconnect." He nodded in respect to a statue of St. Francis feeding the birds, on his way out past the fountain.

Dispirited Jesus found his way to the walking tour of Charleston's churchyards, gardens, and courtyards, seeking a respite from his tiresome ministry. He shushed away the trailing James and John, close on his heels, insisting that it was impolite for him to walk out on his audience in such a manner; implying that he had a contractual obligation to finish his lecture and provide lunch as advertised.

He sat for a while upon a concrete bench behind St. Phillips Episcopal Church, admiring its splendid steeple, pointing the way to heaven; high as any Tower of Babel. But the grounds were so formal here, so prim and proper, the grass groomed to perfection, the stepping stones edged and swept clean from the very appearance of evil; and his solitude was disturbed by echoes of sermons past.

Ambivalent Jesus weaved his way through moss draped live oaks until found himself admiring the harmonic Romanesque architecture that was Circular Congregation, surrounded on three sides by cemetery. He paused to contemplate arched tombs, burial vaults, and weathered slate headstones, many of them etched in skulls and crossbones, as if in tribute to a brigadier's horde.

He shook his head in bewilderment at the confusing array of "death heads" and "soul effigies", wherein Angel's wings replaced cross bones, as if to emphasize the flight of the spirit, and skulls had been face- lifted and Botox treated, or chiseled into the likeness of Roman demigods, in vainglorious attempts to appear saintly, or to cover a multitude of sins.

Disconsolate Jesus distanced himself from the aura of the morose cemetery, and following an azalea defined pathway though yet another set of wisteria wrapped

wrought iron gates, he bypassed the crowds assembled to tour the Gibbes Museum of Art - itself an altar unto Humanism - as he ducked into a fragrant secluded courtyard.

He admired the tastefully landscaped grounds, the geometrically balanced plantings of Japanese maple, holly, and cherry trees; accented with perfectly spaced groupings of adagio grass, of begonias, and inpatients, coleus and bee balm. Yet this was beauty according to the eye of the beholder, an aesthetic fusion of man's dominion upon the glory of nature. It bore very little resemblance to Eden.

Deliberate Jesus followed the sounds of a woodwind duo, along a myrtle lined promenade toward the Unitarian Church. He strolled past a prim row of well maintained brownstone townhouses, exchanged by the unfettered interplay of flute and oboe. Stepping into another enclosed yard, he paused and rubbed his eyes, as if in disbelief at what he was beholding.

He stepped into a confusing tangle of headstones and low iron fences; a half-acre overwhelmed with passion flower vines and phlox; a free-for-all of Jessamine and woodbine; sweet ferns, and yarrows, and Lantana bushes flashing in spastic arrangements. There was no order in the court here, no rhyme or reason; only the abundance of nature running free, left alone to follow the director's baton.

Revitalized Jesus lingered in the cemetery; perhaps it reminded him of Gethsemane. He stooped to pull back some tangles of vines to read the inscriptions of hidden grave markers. He sat down upon a simple concrete mourner's bench, and he spent an hour in reflection about his ministry; or was it a prayer to the Father? How, I wonder, does one really know where the one leaves off and the other begins?

He was witnessed walking over to the water spigot, where he opened the tap and took a deep drink of refreshment. Then Jesus thoughtfully filled the birdbaths in the side courtyard, before walking resolutely up the front steps of the church house; and tossing his halo aside, he stepped into a nondescript stained glass window, and began washing his disciples' feet.

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Kneading You

Kneading you, again and anon.  
Prodding and plying your defenses  
with friction, with lubricant and pressure.  
Wistful to compel your falling listless;  
a sort of Raggedy Ann embracing Valium.

'The other side, please'.  
Again it's a left-brain treatment;  
the mercy seat of torque and tension  
resides beside residual resentments.  
A major source of a minor irration.

I'm jealous then, of the gnarly knots,  
cinched around about you like a noose -  
affixed themselves, so much closer to you,  
than I, from where I've set myself so loose.  
Hugging you like a ring you can't pry off

'... as long as we both shall live'.

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Knock-Knock

Knock-knock. Who's there?  
Anyone I know behind that stare.  
Knock-knock. Well then?  
Still the same as it's ever been?  
Knock-knock. Go away.  
Rather be by myself today.  
Knock-knock. Still here.  
Get so lonesome when you're not near.  
Knock-knock. Don't crowd.  
You've no reason to act so proud.  
Knock-knock. You're nuts.  
You don't love me, hate my guts.  
Knock-knock. Poor child.  
Get like this every once a while.  
Knock-knock damn it let me in.  
Any idea how long it's been?  
Knock-knock. Say what?  
Only want me for what I've got.  
Knock-knock. Not true.  
You know I love every bit of you.  
Knock-knock. Don't say.  
Where were you all those other days?  
Knock-knock. Chill out!  
You don't know what your talking about.  
Knock-knock. Me chill?  
You yell so loud, your voice goes shrill.  
Knock-knock. I don't shout.  
Just get emotional when we talk it out.  
Knock-knock. You're blind.  
And you act the same way every time.  
Knock-knock. Time out!  
You know I really don't mean to shout.  
Knock-knock. Boo-Hoo!  
Always something going on with you.  
Knock-knock. Get real.  
You know I can't help the way I feel.  
Knock-knock.

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Lantern

Banished to the caves again  
by love's sour pickle satiation;  
a listless leaking fountain pen

Angry at the world tonight,  
but mostly at my self delusion;  
seeking easy ways to make it right

Cursing at my luck once more!  
Flirted with, but never took to bed  
Fortuna; fearless, fickle whore

Called to mind a Bee Gees tune  
freshly picked yet hauntingly familiar;  
like dish must have been with the spoon

Reminiscing your touch and sight,  
tonight, however distant ever drawn;  
a lunar moth to your lantern light

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Locket

I'll whittle a heart out of ivory,  
nearly pure as driven flake.  
Latch it on shimmering serpentine,  
slipped around your dainty neck.

Then, fixate a locket on chain and keep  
your cameoed crown encased.  
I can unclasp it whenever I'm lonely,  
touch fingertips to your face.

Etch our initials on a sycamore tree,  
up there; where the fireflies play.  
Cut deep enough a generation can see,  
then, forget us once we're away.

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley



## Mon Aime

Happy Birthday to you, 'mon amie'  
It's easier written down than said to wife  
Happy Birthday to you every day  
And to myself for being part of your life

Happy Birthday to you, 'desiree'  
Shimmering brighter than Eiffel's twinkled lights  
As years float by like barques on the Seine  
My fondest and wildest dreams ring true this night

Happy Birthday to you, 'mon cheri'  
My heart high-kicks in its cancan cabaret  
Arms entwined we waltz the Champs-Elysess  
Lifetimes come full circle in a single day

Happy Birthday from this 'Pope of Fools'  
Your Quasimodo rings bells he cannot hear  
This 'half-made' thief hoards his purloined jewel  
My charming Esmerelda, I hold so dear

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Mud-Spittle

It isn't always pretty  
Fact is can tend toward brutal  
Between the teeth its gritty  
Profanity mixed with mud-spittle

Not necessarily graceful  
Sometimes sheer force supercedes  
Each intention to be civil  
The will to win can over reach

Usually less exhilarating  
There's all those 'kiss-your-sisters'  
Then afterwards less accommodating  
What with the bruises and the blisters

Never is it very glamorous  
Cheer squads don't study futbol  
But it it's o-u-r foo-kin favorite  
The most beautiful game of all!

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# New Arithmetics

You and me

$1 + 1 =$  an integer undoubtedly  $> 2$ .

$1 \times 1 =$  something unmeasurably  $> 1$ .

What convoluted arithmetics

we have to learn,

to come up with the right answers

in relationships.

Seems to me,

the only way

to get a grasp on the subject,

is to attempt to unlearn

everything they taught us

in mathematics;

about divisions;

(since 2 divided by anything will  
end in a fraction,)

and subtractions;

(Because  $2 - 1$  invariably = a sum  
&lt; or = zero.)

'Voice of One @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Nothing's Too Good

Burberry cashmere shrouds her China doll neck  
It cost way too much, but oh well, what the heck  
Ann Taylor classics drape delicate shoulders  
Like a fine cabernet, gets better, not older

Prim Prada pumps protect delicate feet  
Some flaming gay stylist does her hair oh so neat  
Her personal trainer keeps her physically fit  
Some heads will be turning, no doubt about it

She knows but won't tell, Victoria's Secret  
Skin soft as suede, Estee Lauder helps keep it  
Leisurely lunching at Bistro P. F. Chang  
Nothing unusual, drops some bucks for her bang

Her Mercedes Benz transports all her travels  
When she gets home at night I start to unravel  
She brings extra lean bacon and whole grain bread  
I'm crazy for this goddess; gone out of my head

Nothing's too good for my baby  
If you knew her like I do, you'd see  
Nothing's too good for this woman I love  
But she's too good for the likes of me

Jerry Buckley

## Or Maybe...

I can't remember, just now, whether or not,  
or what sort of tulips I'd planted, last fall.  
It's inexcusable to me, that I'd forgotten,  
but my muddled memory evades recall.

Did I follow up suite again, and bury  
passles of pink pastels on promenade?  
Or is the bed pregnant with Tulip Shirley,  
her soothing, changing-colored fade?

Did I pick up a package of Parrots in Memphis,  
impulse purchased along some shopping spree?  
Then, mixed them in with the jonquels and lilacs;  
up front, so the neighbors could see?

Did I mail order? Lady Janes? From Holland's?  
To spiff the back corner that's so confused.  
Did I go a' natural, transplanting the Darwins?  
I'm told they can winterize and be re-used.

I anticipate a blunder; can only wait and wonder,  
how these candy stripes just come from Beck's  
can enhance the value of my buried treasure.  
Will they cause a color riot, or peacefully co-exist?

... I suppose only time can tell.

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Out

Out of time and out of space  
A dropped and broken antique vase  
Out of fashion - not in step  
Some old geezer just thinks he's hip

Out of synch and off the pace  
A furrowed brow so deeply traced  
Out of options - out on a limb  
A scented candle burning dim

Outside grace and out of favor  
Chewing gum that's lost its flavor  
Out of money and low on gas  
I'm always walking on the grass

Out of cigarettes and beers  
And these damn glasses hurt my ears  
Out of patience with myself  
An unread book on a cluttered shelf

Out on the bases - down for the eight  
Way out of balance on my slate  
Out of pitons - at the end of the rope  
A class five climb with little hope

Out of my head over you  
All you are and all you do

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Overture

As you know, I have never been very good with electronic gadgets of any sort.

I haven't figured out how to use even half the features on my cell phone. I always need to have help in even setting the time on my digital watch: and so I'm now embarked upon another exercise in futility I'm sure. However, I am doing my clumsy best to program my new &quot;XM Radio&quot; satellite receiver, which you gave me for Christmas; trying to figure out how I can program one unique &quot;My Favorites&quot; channel.

I realize that I am asking the impossible of my new toy, but I would like to be able to program a station that would only play the most special and magical of songs; at just the right moments.

The channel would only play, say for instance; John Mellencamp songs on Mondays, (mixed with a smattering of Los Lonely Boys) , so I could recall the countless times we gleefully sang-along his songs together, and my mind would then wander back to that Saturday night in Freedom Hall - jamming with them Indiana boys - dancing in place until my knee throbbed.

It would be programmed to not play any worn out Billy Joel piano songs, but would with regularity mix in &quot;Just the Way You Are&quot; our adopted song, and I could think to myself how well you liked the melody, while for me it was all about the lyrics; wishing they could have come to fruition for us both.

On sunny summer days it would serve up selections from Fleetwood Mac; the &quot;Rumors&quot; album; and our minds eye would transport us away on a 'big ole jet air liner' to Cancun, where I would fantasize of a certain sun tanned Skinny Minnie gringo - all wide-eyed and wonderful -snorkeling the Isla de Mujeres, her bubble-butt bikini pointing the way to heaven: tequila-giddily asking a local Chihuahua's owner in which language his dog barks.

In the cool of the afternoon, we would float off in dream sequence to an enchanting underground river of sound where we would rewind that magic duet in musica romantica; we could déjà-vu the power of emotion shared by two exotic songbirds. I still marvel at how a canto we couldn't then comprehend, could haunt us for so many years after we would inevitably loose full recollection of the melody.

In the autumn, we would take a drive together - sunroof open - up to the Big

South Fork; and the tuner would know only to feature Keith Urban and Tim McGraw radio hits; and you would be all luminosity and good vibrations, your hair swirling and trailing into yesterday. And forlorn me - hoping beyond expectation as we navigated the back roads - that the feelings you have for the music could be a catharsis for what you are so seldom able to feel with me; that it would help you forget about your deprivations; and that could allow a small glimmer of the glow to flow toward me.

Then again, on Fridays, it would play the soundtrack to 'O Brother Where Art Thou'; and we would re-live the Great Depression together; ignorantly blissful and barefoot among the cotton fields of west Tennessee. In the sweltering afternoons, John Prine would take us down back roads in automobiles, with pants to our knees; and in the evenings, Leonard Cohen could - like the dog day cicadas - drone endlessly into the wee hours.

Of course, it would be the 'All Al Green' Channel on Saturday nights. You would be teasing and flirting with me, when suddenly it would jump up and play us some snappy Van Morrison ditty, and we would hop in the car and drive the horny mile and a half to 'Friends' nightclub where we would dance unabashedly together until we were lathered in a summer sweat; I'd perfectly hit the high harmony on 'Brown Eyed Girl', sticking my 'Sha Na Na' into your ear at the climactic moment. Then again, I'd be doing my best Johnny Cougar strut, and I would once again excite your body, and you would be so bold as to touch me underneath the table in the darkest corner.

On holidays it would always remember to serve up - with a side order of fireworks - Tchaikovsky's 'Overture of 1812' complete with deafening cannon fire and simultaneous orgasm. I would be lying back on the blanket, along the banks of the Mississippi River, with you carefree at my side. And if I didn't drink too much; and after I'd listened patiently enough, we would get to hear James Hyter sing six choruses of 'Ole Man River'; and then, as the tears would begin to well up inside my bosom, this one enchanted evening would downshift into his unforgettable rendition of 'You'll Never Walk Alone', and I could then foolishly carry on - pretending the world to be righted again - and I could then fall asleep sans struggle.

'Voice of One': Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley



# Perched

Six starched pairs of cotton khakis slacks  
Boots and belt and six crisp oxford shirts  
Gone, and I don't know when I'll back  
Do you know how much this hurts?

Tooth brush, paste, floss, Listerine  
Shaving cream and men's cologne  
Keep one another's good company  
Me myself and I'm alone

Thirteen channels - eleven inch screen  
Perched on a three drawer dresser  
A Sally Field film - already seen  
Reminds me just how I miss her

Two beers inside a tiny refrigerator  
But I don't feel like drinking  
Guess I'll nurse one a little bit later  
Maybe quench this incessant thinking

Two burner stove - one vent a hood  
A King James Bible on a table  
I know she's wishing I'd go for good  
Don't know whether or not I'm able

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Pink Red You

One persistently pesky pink-red rose,  
continues radiant at autumn's close.  
Her siblings have retired, all long past red;  
just one pink-red rose, one proudly raised head,

One persnickity part-Labrador pup,  
starry-eyed tumble of overflowed cup.  
Begs to run free, discover better ways,  
oh, please don't make me wear the leash today!

One mystical Motown sense of rhythm,  
and one pink-red rose in motion with them.  
Its fragrance lingers and clings forever,  
through one slow-float sequence dreamed together.

One perfectly balanced book of ledger;  
mixed ingredients in perfect measure  
Secure as a tightly laced running shoe,  
oh so irreplaceable, pink red You.

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Preserves

Preserve your favor lover - a little bit for later,  
patted down with spices from all four winds.  
Offered with olives and sun dried tomato  
Help me discover where the spice isles begin

Preserve your loving-kindness, forever shown to me,  
ice it down good and stick it up under the shade.  
Unnerve you see - this tiny speck I've come to be,  
show me unreservedly the many ways I've got it made.

Preserve your preference - please don't count it duty,  
sugar soaked in Sure-Gel and put up in a in Mason jar.  
Indulge me on occasion, an hors d'oeuvre of you beauty,  
Each course more savory than the one that comes before.

Preserve my enrapture - another moment's pause  
Saved to your 'favorites', in a folder marked 'My Man'.  
Observe my devotion, to your ever-worthy cause  
It's my turn to reciprocate, let me give you what I can.

Jerry Buckley

# Relic

I am, a hideous yearbook photograph; one just as well forgotten,  
'that guy', macro hair and swooping sideburns, the broad bell bottoms.  
My Super Sport Camero has been totalled, and then shredded into scrap,  
and since I've settled and sired three kids, I drive a four door piece of crap.

I am, a Butterball turkey stuffed into a pair of running shoes,  
all wrapped up in Ace bandages and reeking of obnoxious Ben Gay goo.  
My runner's hamstrings have tightened up, are needing some adjustment,  
while the lower lumbar of my stiffened spine, beg osteo-appointment.

I am, a no longer treasured keepsake; an old mangled Stetson hat,  
stuck way back in the closet beside the baseball, glove, and bat.  
My happy hours are spent at home, instead of at the clubs in town,  
and after dinner, instead of gearing up, I find myself winding down.

I am, a toy top - spinning upon the tiles at school - third grade;  
in the beginning, I was whirling madly, but now-days my inertia fades.  
Now, woosey and wobbling, as I've checked my joy of discovery;  
wanting to be re-strung, re-flung; twelve small steps toward recovery.

I am, a hand-crafted relic flint, rescued from a farmer's plow  
by a tank-topped teenaged punk, and archived, to show to a future now.  
How many will entertain a remnant of respect? Will stay up to hear his story?  
To ask, who was this noble and nameless craftsman? Our ancient contemporary!

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Rota Fortunae

'Rota Fortunae'; most capricious of lovers,  
you've tickled me with your fickle favors.  
Spinning another everyman in wheeled gyration,  
constant in turning, in change and variation.

Wheel of Fortune spinning; lifted I ride a cloud.  
'En glorior elatus'; though exhalted I waxed proud;  
until flipped again, spun mortified through descent,  
only to be abandoned, tortured as I repent.

'Rota Fortunae' - makes the mighty to mumble;  
your charms captivate; give us cause to stumble.  
Evidence Samson, Nero, Nebuchadnezzar;  
Alexander the Great, and Julius Caesar.

Lady of the turning wheel - wasted, I melt away;  
while yet another player is uplifted for today.  
Let he on the summit, ner' neglect his goodly deeds,  
as his status and high station compound in many needs.

'Lady Fortuna Rosa' - glows in masked jealousy;  
rides rough-shod, over every offered chivalry  
Brought low has she, many a proud lord and king;  
many others, to whom a heathen ruin did bring.

Fortuna ever smiling, hides detached behind a veil.  
Fortuna so beguiling; as she assures us all is well;  
then spitefully turns treacherous tomorrow.  
So out of happiness, acquaints everyman with sorrow.

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

## Similar Anomalies

We are a web of common causes  
Conjoined in mystery  
Inconsequential another  
Similar anomalies

We are figures upon a background  
Are convex and concave  
Lightness morphing into darkness  
Before shading into gray

We are insular, we are lonesome  
Entrapped in space and time  
Until bonded with another  
And another, intertwined

The continuance of the species  
Recurrence of a theme  
Undulating waves of motion  
Into ceaseless living stream

We are brothers, and we are sisters  
Twigs of a family tree  
We are piccolo, and cello  
Concerted in symphony

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

01/08/2013

Jerry Buckley

# Sloshed

Soggy - soaking - saturate,  
this Mississippi River delta bog.  
Yesterday's sun-bathing farm fields  
become tomorrow's torpid aquifers.  
Impromptu lakes invade outward and  
upward - irreverent toward civilization;  
contemptuous of carpentry and carpets -  
of this ribbon of asphalt over which we travel.

Strips of higher grounds appear as islands;  
patches of drooping cotton and beans and milo.  
Gnarled bare-limbed scrub oaks - pipe cleaners  
contorted into so many wee Zacchaeus perches.  
Little green houses - rectangular - two windows,  
one door - smoke curling upward and eastward;  
remnants of pinking-sheer cut felt fabric,  
Elmer-glued onto grocery-sack covered box tops.

Post-harvest cotton stalks shiver inside  
cheap over-sized dollar store galoshes;  
Community minded pecan trees reluctantly  
devolve into sullen existential giants.  
Roundup flavored Kool-Aid strangles every root.  
Even the stalwart hawks - red-tailed and sparrow -  
have abandoned their posts for Folgers and fudge.  
Only crayfish and turtles and ducks find any solace;  
everything else is huddled back into itself. Sloshed.

But tomorrow will bring a fast-food frenzy  
for migratory snow geese, dropping in to fuel up  
on earthworms driven to the surface of the mire;  
a rest stop somewhere near Turrell and I55.

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Standard Equipment

Boots? Required. Style? Optional. Mud? Mandatory.

Shirt? Button-up; stripes optional but impressive.

Belt? Just take a look at the patrons in the BBQ shack!

Only an enlightened few around here are keeping it trim;  
misfit loners, who eat pig salads instead of jumbo sandwich plates,  
who jog three miles, rather than drink three beers after work.

Trousers? Wranglers boot-cut; or Carharts for the big dogs.

Most times a round relief resides in one of the hip pockets.

Options? - Work pants which match a shirt with your name on it.

Hair styles? Oh my goodness! Such wide variety on display:

neat National Guard high and tight or your basic car salesman cuts;  
scruffy, glassy eyed buckaroos sporting 1980's mullets or worse;  
dude who hasn't stepped inside a barbershop since Kurt Cobain died;  
old geezers with more hair on the inside of the ear than on the head;  
a twenty-something homey in sweatpants, an eighteen inch horse mane  
swishing out the opening, back of his Realtree camouflaged crown.

Caps? Mandatory of course! Unless your are a salesman or a banker;  
mangled straw Stetson's allowed, but only if you ride in the rodeo  
over to State University or up the boot-heel; or else farm big plots.

And in such a case, it's customary to have the audacity to flaunt a Texas-sized  
set of ass-kickin' steer horns, fixed to the front bumper  
of your badly mud-caked, mandatory GMC, Ford, or Dodge pick-up truck.

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley



# Stapled

So now take hold my unfolded hand  
We can slow dance together through a life span  
It's forward marching and straight ahead  
We will cherish every little nothing said

We can build a nest and share a space  
and learn from each other to live with grace  
Wrapped 'round rightly whatever is real  
Every single moment we can find to steal

Stapled together - so side by side  
So tuned to each other there's nothing to hide  
Tucked in our envelope - here or there  
Where haply together - maybe two may share

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Statuary Lion

I stumbled upon it, while on memory safari, in the picture drawer at your  
Memphis apartment  
A crinkled 8"x10" glossy, black and white "Drama Club" photo; one corner dog-  
eared, another torn.  
How handsome you stood! – One of a pair of statuary lions – guarding the  
"pride" on your school steps;  
A statuesque harem - all "White Shoulders" and "Tussy" fresh, - embracing the  
morning's cool.

So then, right here in my contemporary hand, evidence beyond any doubt of  
earthly paradise;  
Chock-full to good measure; seems beauty oozes up from the Mississippi mud  
afterbirth.  
Each "Southern Comfort" wet dream-come-true kitten, more alluring than the  
one beside her.  
Implied in each Judy Garland smile, a reign as her King Leo could be blissfully  
pure divine.

Bobbie socks turned down, teasing; an enticing extra inch or two of Noritake  
skin;  
Poodle skirts, saddle oxfords, starched cotton blouses shrouding sugar wafer  
waistlines.  
Genuine silk scarves, adorned by some– so they told their Moms – were the  
latest fashion craze,  
But primarily then, an accessory strategic; disguising a tell-tale hickey, until it  
could fade away.

And oh my God, you Dad – such a catch by all considered – you must have  
known for gospel truth  
That half or more of these bonnie bells, would have given up her near about  
everything to you;  
Spread out your evening tables, enlarged her hungry hips, and birthed your  
perfect babies,  
If she could manage to be your femme de la first choice; to make herself your  
heart's desire.

Arlene Johns or Betty Lou Sparks; always ready and willing to help you get your  
lessons;  
Here's Dixie Leigh Harvey - our best-dressed junior - jostling coconut-contoured

breasts,  
Caged up in magnolia white elastic, standing at attention and arousing me upon  
inspection,  
Playing peek-a-boo with me – a half century later – winking through translucent  
sweaters.

Which of these damsels in distress? How many poor sluts not photographed there  
and then?

Fixated upon your perfect features – while cicadas shrilled the evenings– as she  
would moan,

While coaxing timid fingers into her Tupelo honey; torturing herself with her  
wistful thinking;

Or parked with you in your dad's Rambler - underneath the pines - the  
atmosphere itself afire.

How many poor dames settled down, with what second-choice husbands, once  
you eceded Serengeti? Quit the fertile delta and roamed toward preservation;  
some damn preacher school in Tennessee.

Why would you beg to be excused from Eden's dinner table, to amble off to stalk  
exotic game?

The scent mislaid; the way disdained. How could so far have strayed, to be  
snatched in such a snare?

"Voice of One" @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Straight Paths

'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness;  
make straight paths for the Lord.'

... And we followed in those paths, dutifully  
down shag carpet stairways, into Oldsmobile station wagons.  
Eight miles into town to attend Sunday school at 9: 00  
and worship service at 10: 15 - and Good Lord - afterwards,  
allowing fifteen minutes for heart-felt fellowship;  
home again giggitty-gig to fried chicken Sunday dinners.  
To Momma's home-made biscuits and mashed potatoes with milk gravy,  
the very Elmer's glue of the patriarchs I'm sure.

And we followed those paths - wide open sideways in Chevy coups,  
noisily cavorting across murky river bottoms and county lines  
to score some weed, or look up some chicks one of us claimed to know;  
gulping a bottle of three dollar fruit-puke wine on Sunday afternoon,  
barrel-assin' home before dark, in time for Sunday evening services.  
Playing freeze-out through town so our Dads shouldn't smell smoke.  
No casual Christians we! Besides we all had such nice voices,  
the Von Trapp Family singers meets Fanny J Crosby\*

And we treaded those paths, back and forth from work to school,  
in fuel sipping Datsun tin cans, and home to crash and back to work.  
Until one day we were stopped dead in our tracks by some odd girl,  
sliding into home base, where new paths are sought and tread  
and escape routes surely become a thing of the wistful past.  
Returns home - monogamous - with nearly monotonous regularity;  
my truck could drive it blind-folded if she had the road to herself;  
drags up steps to greet a loving dog, to go outside to toss a ball.

And so we traced those paths, to jobs and sometimes to promotions,  
or skittered down indistinct pathways ending in yet another cul de sac  
Dutifully in Nissan sedans, to baseball games and Boy Scout meetings,  
soccer practices, tournaments, Sunday schools and birthday parties;  
step meetings and marriage counsel appointments, and weekend retreats.  
Then follows another's Benz back home to sit in rooms large as caverns  
where familiarity and loathing stage a yin-yang dance one with another  
Maintains those paths - at least for now - for the sake of vows taken.

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# The Photograph

Something about the angle, the tossing of the head to one side;  
as if in defiance of a mother's injunctions to sit still for the camera.

Something in the clarity of beguiling brown eyes, brilliant as a harvest moon,  
taking in more of life than they could process; more than they were given credit  
for.

Something in the folding of those dainty hands, one overriding the other,  
suggesting a balance of emotions, a gravity of inner thoughts beyond her years.

Something in the attitude, a stance neither smile nor sneer; an openness to  
discussion as to what or who she was to become, a willingness, an eagerness to  
be molded into shape.

Was the schoolgirl in this photograph dreaming, another was dreaming back at  
her? Some snaggle-toothed boy in a checkered shirt, head cocked for his own  
school days photo.

Was she discerning then, her path would chart to intersect, to intercept, and  
accommodate another's? That very time itself would be warped, new worlds  
birthed, new orbits established around her star?

Voice of One @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

## The Second Ball

In soccer, at the taking of a 'goal kick' - whereby the ball is put back into play, by the attacking team from its own defensive end - there are two major mantras which are bandied about the field of play. The old school version is all about 'first to', or being the first player to contest the ball in the air; all about going out and winning the first battle, and not allowing your opponent an easy 'touch' on the ball.

The contemporary, and more enlightened refrain is all about 'winning the second ball' in recognition of the reality that the ball normally ricochets randomly from one of the two opponents trying to be 'first to' gain the header, and that the player in the best position for the rebound will most likely control the ball.

Then again there is the 'second bite of the cherry' maximum, which is all about following up a team-mate's shot on goal, to take advantage of any bobbles or rebounds off the goalkeeper. Many a winning goal is scored in this very manner.

In baseball, it's usually that second time through the batting order before many runs are scored. That's when the pitcher is more likely to get into trouble; after the batters have had a look at his stuff and the base runners have timed his rhythm in coming to the plate. After his elbow has begun to complain, and the sun has set, no longer glaring in the eyes of the batters, who now have a better look at his release point.

In cooking, it is well recognized that certain dishes, like lasagna and spaghetti, or especially cheesecake, often taste better as left-overs; after the culinary magic has had time to settle in. Only after the dish is placed center stage on a clean plate all by itself, and encountered apart from all the noises and excesses of a large meal, do the flavors sing out loud.

In courtships, it is more often than not, that second date when things begin to get interesting: after all the awkward first encounter yada-yada has been survived, and both parties are a little more at ease, and have a better idea of what is to be expected from each other and from themselves; a much more fertile ground for growth and development.

Second honey-moons often are more fun than the originals. It can take some couples a few years to learn how to travel effectively as a team; and to have seasoned a bit and earned the right to vacate to exotic places, without wondering whatever it is that fickle Fortuna has in store for the two of them back home.

And where would many of us be without 'second chances'? What would our lives look like today, had not some special someone been patient with one of our lesser selves? Many marriages only begin to take mature shape after some one or the other has foolishly ventured to see how much there really was to lose. There's even that cliché concept of 'Renewing our Vows' these days which allows us a sort of 'mulligan' on our misfired marriages.

Let your mind wander back to the first time you attempted to roller skate, to drive a stick shift; the first time your made brownies, or made love in an actual bed. Think of your first wobbly times on a bicycle, your first mangled chords from a piano or guitar; first casts from a fishing reel, the first tosses of a softball, the first time you tried to tie your dad's necktie or to apply your mom's make-up. How many? Really; of the things that make our waking hours worth-while, do most of us ever get right the first time out?

Point is: If things don't work out like you had once choreographed for your life, don't give up, at least not just yet. Try whatever it is you are doing at least once more. and if that doesn't work, then try a second approach, the second time, if needs.

Be ever vigilant for that second bite of the cherry; and concentrate upon winning the second ball. Even if you aren't always successful, your life will be that much richer from the effort, and from the experience.

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley



# The Sunday Morning Chair

Tiptoes on the stairwell, so as to not disturb her slumber  
Gently coaxing shut the door, I retrieve the Sunday paper  
To shuffle through the layers and segregate the sections  
Headlines, Sports, and hardware circulars into one stack  
Living, Entertainment, and department store flyers, another

Longing to go to in to her, to arouse her from contentment  
Wistful to revisit a time when the two of us turned in tandem  
To ruffle the covers before our feet would ever touch our slippers  
The rising and the falling of the empire in one climactic hour

Searching easy paths to make it right I assess my options  
A sensual massage with essential oils? Breakfast in bed?  
Pouring dark coffee, spreading apricot jam on toasted wheat  
I turn another page, to stall, to retard the tempo of the game

To wait, to wonder, to anticipate her footprints in the hall  
Requires all the patience I can coax from my superego  
So I pour another cup, and pick another stack from the pile-up  
While I wait for her to join me later, in the Sunday morning chair

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# The Universal Law Of Attraction

'Every point mass attracts every single other point mass by a force pointing along the line intersecting both points. The force is proportional to the product of the two masses and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them.'

There had to be some rational explanation for such an unlikely attraction. On the surface it was improbable, if not impossible that two such divergent courses should be coaxed to converge - to merge - to comply with a higher law.

You were a rock planet, fixed and focused in orbit around a greater light, as I swooped into your gravity, an invasive comet from some otherworldly source.

What explanation can we possibly give to the force that brought our elements together? The physiologists would have us understand it's all about physical traits and pheromones, yet neither of us were the other's "type"; you told me so in no uncertain terms.

Then again, the sociologists want to preach in terms of proximity and frequency of contact. But there we dangled - two loose ends - detached on a campus courtyard.

The tried and true conventional wisdom about the importance of shared interests holds no water, as there were few, if any common bonds that should have attracted our interests.

I am nothing like your father, and I would rather sever a finger, than to equate you with my mom, will in fact go to my grave insisting Freud was a fraud.

Oh sure, there were my broad shoulders, my cock-of-the-walk-strut, my runner's who would dismiss your demure demeanor, your hourglass figure, and your dainty feet.

However, I carried the status of a toadstool, the potential of a used car salesman, the worldly savoir-faire of a country bumpkin; and you, too naive to notice the deficiencies in my outlook.

So then it makes no sense, no logic can be construed in play, to have brought us two yet, in defiance of the odds, we live united all these years; we shake our heads in a bewildered smile to the universe, and give credit to the fates; to

Providence, to the sweet will of God; or them we simply fall back upon the scientific principle of magnetic attraction: which unequivocally states; can be substantiated in any laboratory: that opposites do - in fact - attract.

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Too Much Cotton

Tribute: Queer Eye for the Straight Guy

Jump down, turn around  
I'm wearing too much cotton.  
My eye for style and sharp profile,  
guess I'd sorta' just forgotten.

Stuck in a rut with this bad hair cut;  
sure could use a trip to Lanskey's.  
Some good advice would be right nice,  
from them good ole' manly manskies.

No I'm not fly, but I'm your guy,  
straight focused, never waivers.  
Just dress me up and take me out,  
you guys are some real life savers.

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Turn

Don't come dancing up to me on some summer breeze,  
which can dissipate and change direction.  
Nor glimmer high above me like some full moon cheese,  
in waning and waxing rote reflection.

Don't pour your love out upon me in raging streams,  
for I'm sure to be dashed on the boulders.  
Nor flutter to me lightly on butterfly wings,  
which must all too soon slip from your shoulders.

Just turn to me baby - please don't stay in your tracks,  
turn toward me twenty-four-three-sixty-five.  
Turn to me baby, like the earth on her axis;  
the more you turn the more I feel alive.

'Voice of One' @ Jerry Buckley

Jerry Buckley

# Two Tickets To The Opry

And then I blink, and realize  
A half life, almost fifty five  
Together in Tennessee with this incredible child

All my overdue appointments  
Soothe a thousand disappointments  
And far too many of them at her undeserved expense

Rejoicing in such cordial climes  
Reborn into more gracious times  
Permitting lumps of sugar to sweeten up my karma

Struck in manic realization  
Our 25th? Celebration?  
I'd best go right now, and buy two tickets to the Opry!

Jerry Buckley

# Unglued

The hairs on my head are graying,  
my mirror says it's sad but true.  
The ends of my nerves are fraying,  
as my handle on life becomes unglued.

The words from my lips are mumbled,  
just mute to explain how I feel.  
The thoughts in my head are jumbled,  
they hesitate, they stumble and they reel.

The weight on my heart is heavy,  
with an ache more than it can bear.  
Once upon a time you loved me,  
today you don't know if you even care.

The love of my life is jaded,  
light years in back of way back when.  
The gleam in her eyes has faded.  
Will I ever see that sparkle again?

Jerry Buckley

# Your Turn

It is your time to twinkle, little star.  
To smiling thus illuminate and thaw,  
the worlds within your orbit from afar.

It's your clime to blossom bashful flower.  
Unfold unfettered into sure delight,  
uproots and throw off thistles dull and dour.

Perfect for the lead role in my feature.  
Others may have cast you ugly duckling,  
transfigured, an unmasked graceful creature.

Your age little girl, prosper now and learn,  
to erase and spiff life's clouded chalkboard  
and print in bold and tidy script: 'My Turn'.

Jerry Buckley