

**SOME
THEY
CAN'T
CONTAIN**

[BY BUDDY WAKEFIELD]

SOME THEY CAN'T CONTAIN [BUDDY WAKEFIELD]

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INTRODUCTION

There is a gnawing desperation evolving from the invasive over-stimulation of media and the high speeds at which prices are being put on passion, humility, integrity and balance. From that desperation flies myriad indigo voices proclaiming that the need felt by government and religion to dictate individuality will not succeed. The greedy heart attack grind of "intelligent" life has claimed so much unfounded power through fear that we have literally allowed infinity to be bent in half, an apparent effort to run in circles, headless chickens on a mission.

As you read this book, thank you for remembering that I am of a gripping and blazing generation of performance poets who have pulled their ribs apart to heave out their voices and give you God, swiftly. We are the fed up grass roots movement of goose flesh, hell bent on living this one life by the way we feel our spines, saying what we mean, refusing to allow the few to preach to the many when it is the many who need to be hearing each other. We are outlaws of the proverbial box determined to expose the shackles of conditional freedom. We are vulnerable with our thoughts and our bodies and we have left the page exponentially bound for the stage to celebrate voice and nuance, body and presence, sphones, flow, people and resonance; to witness the face of a crowd be redeemed, revived and released in the same moment.

Yes there were the Beat poets and, yes, there are hordes more labels of poets who poured a foundation for us, but this book is not for them. This book is dedicated to the stage poets who have taken it to the next level despite intense criticism, who challenge comfort, who vibrate viscerally, and who I've witnessed in 3-minute bursts of verse do more for a mass than Mass ever did for the congregation.

Performance poets like Tara Hardy, Derrick Brown, Michael Cirelli, Jeffrey McDaniel and the artists of Youth Speaks/Brave New Voices will be revered by the next generation of professors and students studying the poets of today, able to detonate the page as competently as they do the stage. These are performance poets who can take hyper-literary page poets

up to the school for a spankin' and back again, consistently, but I digress because we do not come without bite.

It is important to me that the reader knows the poems in this book are intended for personal delivery from me to you through the stage. This written compilation of performance poetry is only happening because of the generous folks at The Wordsmith Press in Ann Arbor, MI and Write Bloody Publishing in Nashville, TN, so that those interested alongside myself might have a keepsake. The poems and completed thoughts in this book hold up well enough on the page, but I boast no claim to being a page poet. It's not my aspiration. I would rather the audience see my eyes in person when I get so sure of flight; see my arms swing open like zoo gates to let you in when I know that there is life being pumped through the dilating pores in this room. In anticipation of my being so vulnerable you'll throw stones, I sometimes shake my head like the Bible was literal and I just might burn forever. That's something I can only show you most days, not tell.

There are close and respected friends who've tried to sway me, and I've wanted to be swayed, but more often than not when I pick up a book of poetry I put it down soon. I was not influenced by poets of the page because I don't have that attention. I don't play that instrument. Performance poets and music remain the mediums that excite me, only second to experience. I often wonder whether you will know the intended impact by simply reading my work from a book.

In the fall of 1984 Anchor Bay Entertainment released a movie called *Children of the Corn* while I lived in front of the cornfields near Niagara Falls, New York. This traumatic event – coupled with extensive exposure to Kenny Rogers – is why you will no doubt find me losing a grip often in this book and in my life. If at any point I reveal too much or too little, refer to my disclaimer:

Usually I'm everything, just not today.

With Much Love & Respect,

Buddy Wakefield

.....

NOTE: To each and every person of religious conviction and spiritual acceleration reading this infinitesimal book, thank you for your awareness that — despite my sharp tongue and abrasive referrals toward religion — I deeply respect and appreciate your pursuit.

However, if your faith feels like an abusive juvenile corrections facility, or causes you to writhe with guilt to the point of needing medication in any form, or convinces you that there is a god hateful enough to stick you inside a pit of fire forever just because you yearn to be your own savior and your own rapture, then I challenge you to find a god less cruel.

SOME THEY CAN'T CONTAIN

CONVENIENCE STORES [2 0 0 2]

We both know the smell of a convenience store at 4 a.m.
like the backs of alotta hands.
She sells me trucker crack (Mini-Thins... it's like Vivarin).
She doesn't make me feel awkward about it.
She can tell it's been a long drive and it's only gonna get longer.
Offers me a free cup of coffee, but I never touch the stuff.
Besides, I'm gonna need more speed than that.

We notice each other's smiles immediately.
It's our favorite thing for people to notice
our smiles.
It's all either one of us has to offer.
You can see it in the way our cheeks stretch out like arms
wanting nothing more than to say, "You
are welcome here."

She
shows brittle nicotine teeth with spaces between each one.
Her fingers are bony, there's no rings on'm
and she'd love to get'er nails done someday.
One time she had'er hair fixed.
They took out the grease, made it real big on top
and feathered it.
She likes it like that.
She will never be fully informed on some things
just like I will never understand who really buys Moon Pies
or those rolling, wrinkled, dried-up sausages.
But then again, she's been here a lot longer than me.
She's seen everything
from men who grow dread locks out of their top lips
to children who look like cigarettes.

I give'er my money.

I wait for my change.
But I feel like there's something more happening here.
I feel
like a warm mop bucket and dingy tiles that'll never come clean.
I feel like these freezers cannot be re-stocked often enough.
I feel like trash cans of candy wrappers
with soda pop dripping down the wrong side of the plastic.
I feel like everything just got computerized.
I feel like she was raised to say a *lot* of stupid things about a color.
And I feel like if I were to identify myself as gay
this conversation would stop.

It's what I do.
I feel.
I get scared sometimes.
And I drive.

But in 1 minute and 48 seconds I'm gonna walk outta here with a full tank of gas, a bottle of Mini-Thins and a pint of milk, while there's a woman still trapped behind a formican counter somewhere in North Dakota who says she wants nothing more than to hear my whole story (all 92,775 miles of it).

I can feel it though, y'all, she's heard more opinions and trucker small talk than Santa Claus has made kids happy, so I only find the nerve to tell'er the good parts, that she's the kindest thing to happen since Burlington, VT, and I wanna leave it at that because men – who are not smart – have taken it farther, have cradled her up like a nutcracker and made her feel as warm as a high school education on the dusty back road, or a beer, in a cozy.

I feel like she's been waiting here a *long* time for the one who'll come 2-steppin' through that door on 18 wheels without makin'er feel like it's her job to sweep up the nutshells alone when she's done been cracked again, who won't tempt her to suck the wedding ring off his dick, but will show her – simply – *LOVE*.

She doesn't need me or any other man but she doesn't know that either,
and I'm just hopin' like crazy she doesn't think I'm *the one* because the
only time I'll ever see North Dakota again is in a Van Morrison song late
(LATE) at night, I Promise.

Y'all, I feel like she's 37 years old wearing 51 badly, dying inside (like
certain kinds of dances around fires) to speak through you, a forest, if
you weren't so taken with *sparks*.

But she was never given those words.

She has not been told she can definitely change the world.

She knows some folks do

but not in convenience stores

and NOT with lottery tickets

so

I finally ask'er what I've been feelin' the entire time I've been standin'
there

still

gettin' scared like I do sometimes

really (REALLY) ready to drive

I ask,

"Is this it for you?"

Is this all you'll ever do?"

Her smile

collapsed.

That tightly strapped-in pasty skin

went loose.

Her heart

fell crooked.

She said (not knowin' my real name),

"I can tell, buddy, by the Mini Thins and the way ya drive that

we're both taken with novelty.

We've both believed in *mean* gods.

We both spend our money on things that break too easily like people.

And I can tell
you think you've had it rough
so especially you should know

it's what I do
I dream.
I get high sometimes.
And I'm gonna roll outta here one day.

I just might not get to drive.

.
In the ridiculously thick June humidity of Huntsville, Texas, when Sam Houston State University's campus resembles most ghost towns, I was there, a Resident Assistant in training.

I believe it took my employers three years to finally hire me because an R.A. is supposed to be this all-inclusive, really diverse tub of butter with closeted aspirations for becoming a prison guard.

The fact: at this particular point in my journey I was the president of The Christian Cowboys & Friends Fellowship (Christian Cowboys are no different than regular Christians except that they're cowboys...-I'm gonna pass on this question); and I was a bull rider. Typically, folks who boast such titles don't get a lot of experience with diversity. I can vouch for that.

I was assigned to live in Kirkley Hall that summer essentially by myself, training and assisting the occasional soccer camp. In fact it was a soccer camp that helped me realize I couldn't blow pot through the bathroom vent without it circulating throughout the rest of Kirkley's four stories.

"There's funny smoke coming from our vent," said Young Soccer Camp.

"Hey, you don't worry about that," I told'm and shut the door.

I was 20.

I knew nothing.

I remember renting The World's Largest Gangbang that summer.

My mother bought me a Hibachi (mini BBQ pit). I used it twice.

I had furniture with hard wood in places my head was supposta rest.

Suzanne Sakowitz brought me a plant named Florence for my birthday.

I gave it to one of the cleaning ladies because my negligence was killing Florence.

The air conditioner allowed roaches to come and go at will.

I developed a twitch because of that creepy shit.

I played guitar a lot back then.

Somewhere in there I wrote Cannonball Man.

Years later it would be my honor and to my utter excitement to perform Cannonball Man as a duet with Tim Sanders of The Seattle Slam scene. He had written the perfect addition to Cannonball Man called Bottle Rocket Slow Motion.

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NOTE: My mention of Sam Houston State University above is in no way an endorsement or a recommendation. SHSU is literally next door to the prison where Governor George W. Bush signed off on the deaths of 135 individuals without knowing them or reviewing their cases beyond a few minutes each. The guilt of over 40 of those put to death was severely questioned. Aside from the deafening prison energy of the town, SHSU is also one of the "leading" institutions for students of Criminal Justice in the U.S., followed by a densely populated (pun intended) Agriculture Department. Translation: SHSU is comprised of mostly cops & cowboys whose conditioned right wing conservatisms and prejudices run disruptively deep. SHSU's minority students may not see a lot of healthy progress in their pursuit for equality there and seem more likely to develop prejudices of their own, thus losing a grip on what true equality encompasses. If ever in Huntsville, Texas, please find refuge in The Soul Lifters Gospel Choir or History Professor A. C. C. Crimm.

BOTTLE ROCKET SLOW MOTION [1 9 9 9]

Written and performed by Tim Sanders to precede Cannonball Man at shows.

I am not Genghis Kahn in a feverish state.
I'm not even Genghis Kahn in a wheelchair.

I am not a loaded gun.
I'm useless unless you're performing experiments on the cowardly and inane.

I am the bottle rocket slow motion.
I'm writing this as an excuse to keep the lights on.
I am not writing this to step into the ring with anybody except myself,
and even then
I go down in the second round.

I'm not singing to the stars outside the window.
I'm not at the street corner daring life to take its best shot at me
snatching fireflies from the nighttime and tossin'm down like Boston
Baked Beans.
I'm really not gonna point out to left field to indicate a homerun.

I am lighting fuses for the Cannonball Man.
I am listening to the bam crack calamity boom boom of the typewriter
machine go go go like it's got answers,
like it's not just Oz behind a curtain,
like it's a fully automatic weapon shining at high noon with the clink
clank clink of my spurs outside the saloon.

I can do anything.
I can do *anything*...

CANNONBALL MAN [1994]

On the edge of my seat
at the end of my rope
where riddles bloom
where answers fold
I've got a 20-year story
still to be told
about a cannonball man
in the circus side show.

Now that muther fucker was ready to explode.
He had pressure pourin' in from every hole.
They lit his fuse. They watched him blow
and where he's gonna stop
nobody knows.

'Cause they shot'im off over the cities and the plains
like lilacs - across the sky
like a dove - inside the flames
on a candle wax train to paradise.

But distance - began to spread
between the flight of his feet
and the weight of his head.
And as he curled it all up between his knees
he caught wads of sun breakin' up in the weeds

God, damn, that cannonball man unwound
because to rise then fall is so profound.
The 2000 clowns wanna pile from a car
with a stretcher full of mismatched cannonball parts.

But no, he picked up his brains, his eyes and his teeth.
He gathered his words and he made it all speak.

Then he backed off the show with a well-lit fuse,
stuffed 'imself down in a cannonball tube

And with a free man's grin he took to flight
right passed the battling birds in the night
who had cannonball eyes and cannonball teeth
cannonball balls and cannonball wings.
And with cannonballs stuck between their beaks
they all shot down and they broke on the streets.

And as I looked up (with feathers in my eyes)
on the edge of my seat at the end of the line
I saw lilacs hummin' across the sky
and a cannonball
inside the flames
on a candle wax train to paradise.

Out here
in the distance
in the middle
where I can breathe
from where I see a sign of stunning beings
forming
like clouds
laughing
like water
here
I
will
heal
.

.....

Pretend was originally intended to be a group piece based on the line "History is repeating itself in record time," but then I just went ahead and put my spiritual position into words alone. This is my belief system.

release