

Poem Time Capsule

By Rodney Rountree

Here are presented a collection of poems written over a 15 year period of my life from a teenager to age 30. Dates are approximate, and in some cases guesses. Poems chronicle periods of romance, growth and despair, often reflecting attitudes of achievement against all odds, and wonder of the universe. Some, especially early ones, are rather simplistic, sappy love poems (e.g. “The Fairest of the Fair), while I’m quite proud of others (Lost at Sea). Many of the poems derive their imagery directly from nature and reflect my lifelong observation of, and love for, the natural world around us. Several of the poems were inspired by Edgar Allen Poe and emulate his style (especially Mythical Dream and The Dock), though they do not have themes of gore or horror. “A Man on a Rock” was written as a song late at night while I was procrastinating from studying for an exam. It was intended to be eerie and turned out quite creepy. The poems are presented just as written at the time, except for spelling and typo corrections. Structure and grammar are left as written. Grammar is not always correct as I often use extra commas and other punctuation in an attempt to control the way the poem is read. I hope you enjoy my little time capsule of poems.

Table of Contents

<u>HER HAIR, IT IS SO LOVELY</u>	page 3
<u>WHEN FIRST YOU SAID HELLO TO ME</u>	page 3
<u>THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR</u>	page 4
<u>HER EYES</u>	page 5
<u>LONELY</u>	page 6
<u>MYTHICAL DREAM</u>	page 7
<u>I KNOW A PLACE</u>	page 8
<u>A SPARK OF LIGHT</u>	page 10
<u>UNTITLED</u>	page 10
<u>THE DOCK</u>	page 11
<u>TO THE SEA I ROAM</u>	page 12
<u>DISCOVERY</u>	page 12
<u>TERRI</u>	page 13
<u>IN BOOKS OF MEN</u>	page 13
<u>THE ASHTRAY</u>	page 14
<u>A MAN ON A ROCK</u>	page 15
<u>THE RUNNER'S HIGH</u>	page 16
<u>THE BALLET OF THE DUNE GRASS</u>	page 17
<u>CUSK-EEL LOVE</u>	page 20
<u>LOST AT SEA</u>	page 21
<u>LIFE AND DEATH IN A SALT MARSH</u>	page 22
<u>A COOL GREEN FIRE</u>	page 25
<u>A MIST INHALED IN DARKNESS</u>	page 27
<u>STARVATION</u>	page 29

HER HAIR, IT IS SO LOVELY

Rodney A. Rountree

1976

Her hair, it is so lovely
Like a river, it flows so gracefully
This river of red, of a height does it fall
This the most beautiful cataract of all
How, like a man's admiring heart does her hair,
Dip and swirl so gracefully
How dost' this red river, look so lovely

WHEN FIRST YOU SAID HELLO TO ME

Rodney A. Rountree

1976

When first you said hello to me
I thought my heart would leave me, for thee
But alas, my heart, it did not go
But stayed behind in sorrow, to grow

THE FAIREST OF THE FAIR

Rodney A. Rountree

1976

How do I describe you, the fairest of the fair
You with skin of satin and silken hair
How do I describe you, the fairest of the fair
You with eyes of diamonds set in sapphires fair
How do I describe you, the fairest of the fair
You with teeth of purest ivory, and lips of rubies rare
How do I describe you, the fairest of the fair
You whom the stars, they envy, and the sun adore
How do I describe you, the fairest of the fair
I can only say with mingled happiness and despair,
You are indeed, the fairest of the fair!

HER EYES

By Rodney Rountree

Circa 1977

I look into her eyes and see tranquility,
In the depths of a deep blue sea.
And as I drift in this sea of infinity,
I lose all worldly memory.

I look into her eyes and sea amenity,
In the expanses of an unbounded galaxy,
And as I wander through this galaxy,
I feel the cosmic energy.

And as I gaze into her eyes,
I hear the roar of a mighty sea.
I hear the waves so rhythmically,
Crash upon the sands of the galaxy.

And as I gaze into her eyes,
I see a world formed by the action of the sea.
I watch in awe the majesty,
Of an island's birth within the sea.

And as I gaze into her eyes,
I am aware,
I am free in the recesses of our island galaxy.

LONELY

By Rodney Rountree

1977

I am lonely.

Why am I lonely?

I did not choose to be, yet it is so.

Why?

I have many a friend, yet no friend have I.

Why is this so?

I am well known, yet a stranger am I.

Why?

I am surrounded by people, yet am I alone.

Why is this so?

I cry out in anguish, yet am not heard.

Why?

Why am I so lonely?

I do not know.

MYTHICAL DREAM

By Rodney Rountree

1978

If ever I had known it blew in skies unblown,
The sails above the sea; this sea that heaves and tosses still
To recapture for delay the ship upon its way.
I would have seen, an evading dream blown faster on its way.

If ever I had known there bloomed in place unsown
A flower in the dust; the dust that chokes and strangles still,
To wither for dismay the blossom on display.
I would have seen an ever growing dream bloom more brightly every day.

If ever I had known it rained on place unshown
On a bridge above the mere; the mere that squirms and struggles still,
To recapture for decay the bridge above their way
I would have seen a hopeless kind of fiend,
Washed away by the never ending stream,
. . by rain from a mythical dream.

I KNOW A PLACE . . .

By Rodney Rountree

Circa 1978

I know a place, not too far from here,
Where there is a beach. . . unlike other shores,
For it laughs. . . it is a very old place.
If you listen, (very quietly in the dawn of night),
You can hear the beach laugh, and the waves crash. . .

I know a place, not a long way from here,
Where you can see the waves crash while the beach laughs.
The waves are fierce, and the beach - it laughs. . .

I know a place, not too far away,
Where the beach laughs and the waves crash.
The beach is old - the waves are many.
The waves crash and the beach laughs,
And the waves are many. . .

I know a place, not too far from here,
Where the waves crash and the beach laughs.
But can you see - a grain of sand
Is washed into the sea - is drifting silently?

I. know a place, not a long way from here,
Where the waves crash, and the beach laughs.
The sea is raging, still unchanging -
As a grain of sand silently, (ever so quietly),
Settles on the bottom, in the murky depths of gloom.

I know a place, not too far away,
Where the waves crash, and the beach laughs.
(Not a little time has passed. . .)
Something strange is happening—
A mound of sand is growing, (the sea is all unknowing),
A mound of sand is straining
Is reaching for the light!

I know a place, not too far from here,
Where the beach laughs and the waves crash.
Now the sand is grown up high. . .
(The sea is still unknowing).
There! Can you see--- that with every wave,
A grain of sand is washed back up on the shore?

I know a place, not too far away,
Where the beach laughs and the waves crash.
The sand is nearly all back. now,
The sea is still un -- , wait!
The sea is changing, (it is now not unknowing).
The last grain of sand is hurled,
Is tossed far out to sea. . .

I know a place, not too far from here,
Its been a long time, but the waves still crash
And the beach still laughs. If you listen -
You may not hear, (till the night of dawn),
When the waves crash and the beach laughs. . .

I know a place, not a long way from here,

Where once the beach laughed and the waves crashed.

It is silent now. . .

Listen - can you hear (from very far away),

Can you see? There is a heap. . . a pile of sand.

Isn't it strange. . . the sand is smiling.

I know a place, very far from here,

Where there is a beach. . . unlike other shores,

For it laughs. . . it is a very old place.

If you listen, (very quietly in the dawn of night),

You can hear the beach laugh, and the waves crash. . .

A SPARK OF LIGHT

By Rodney Rountree

Circa 1978

A spark of light - , far off in the distance.

A shimmering glow, alone in the dark.

What is its power, that holds my captive stare?

And what is the force that attracts my thoughts?

Is it a magnet that pulls me away,

Or is it a beacon, my guiding light?

A spark of light, in the dark it calls.

Why do I listen, or wonder at all?

UNTITLED

By Rodney Rountree

Circa 1978

Laughter in your eyes,

Laughter in your smile,

Sadness in your heart.

THE DOCK

By Rodney Rountree

Circa 1979

On the other side of town,
Past the fallen, ruined stores,
On to where the sidewalk leads no more _ ,
Through the litter and the trash of long ago,
There, where footsteps tread no more _ ,
A dock is sinking in the mud along the shore.
The pilings fallen, eaten away by the ancient tides,
Are reclining - sliding to their sides.
And then there is a pause -
The tides, they seem reposed - ,
The moment lingers. . . till (with hardly, a stir),
The water closes slowly over the dock.

... TO THE SEA I ROAM

By Rodney Rountree

Circa 1979

How often down to the sea I roam;
Down where sea and sand combine,
And magic leaps where moonbeams shine.
There where echoes come to life,
And mix with sea spray and star light.
There where foam and seashells play,
Amid the fragrance of the sea -
And to the place where winds blow free.
This is where I often go. . .
To see how it is - that I should grow.

DISCOVERY

By Rodney Rountree

Circa 1979

Alone; darkness.
Lights – everywhere, all around.
Wandering; floating.
Emptiness. . . emotion!
Awareness. . . always?

TERRI

By Rodney Rountree

1979

It is a mystery to behold – the beauty of her.
Her body is a flower's pose,
Still fresh with the evening dew.
Her voice is like the melody, of a soft summer breeze
As it passes, gently, through the trees.
Her eyes are pools of twilight,
That inspire thoughts of candle light.
Her hair is as soft as summer fun,
And as golden as the midday sun.
Her lips are as the summer moon,
Glowing as embers of warmth and passion,
And I can only sit and gaze with wonder,
At the beauty of her.

. . . IN BOOKS OF MEN

By Rodney Rountree

Circa 1980

There is so little there
In books of men.
So little known.
Here I sit and struggle,
Losing sleep to write a little more.
How wonderful to struggle so –
With so little . . . and yet with all.

THE ASHTRAY

By Rodney Rountree

1980 (In class English assignment)

In the center of the table, in a puddle of spilt beer,
A fat and ugly ashtray squats, and seems to jeer.
A monstrosity in porcelain, its insides blackened by
Countless.ash-- stuffed with cigarettes and food,
It accepts with an indifference of air,
A mass of paper napkins inscribed with poesies fair.
All offerings, hideous or grand, into its bowels it takes
As if a part of some sinister plan.

A MAN ON A ROCK

By Rodney Rountree

1981

In a time long before our present age,
A man was sitting on a rock,
In the sunlight by a stream that flowed down a hill,
Filling a crystal clear lake.

The man just sat and looked about,
Until the sun sank down behind a sparkling mountain top.
In the dark the man got up and stood,
-- He stood so still he seemed unreal. . .
And then as the bloody moon rose above the lake,
He began to dance.
He danced slow and quiet -- did not smile or make a sound.

The moonlight that shown upon the lake and stream,
-- Filtered through the trees, and focused on he who danced.
The stars came out and filled the sky--,
And shown in the dancing man's eyes.
The man danced round the rock,
Until the moon went down and the sun began to rise.
He stopped his dance when the moon had gone,
And sat on the rock in the sun.
He just sat and looked about— on the rock upon a hill.

THE RUNNER'S HIGH

By Rodney Rountree

Circa 1981

The runner runs through the shadows of the night.
He runs not fast- He runs not slow.
His feet lift and fall in a steady thud-
Echoed by the rasp of his heavy breath.
He looks only where he runs,
But his eyes do not see
The hills, the trees. . . , the lake he runs right by.
On and on the runner goes,
His thoughts drifting casually- oblivious of the run.
The runner's body passes along,
And blends with the shadows of the night.

THE BALLET OF THE DUNE GRASS

By Rodney Rountree

Circa 1985

Waves crash in mighty splendor
On a lonely beach below a star filled sky.
Haunting stars, that promise from far away.
They twinkle softly, like the sparkle in lover's eyes.
And the splashing waves repeat their endless sighs,
Echoed by the moaning wind.

The moon sadly lights the midnight beach.
And from each ripple of the frowning waves,
Glistening, distorted moonbeams reflect
Their sorrow and frustration.

Bits and fragments of seashells tumble in the surf,
The remnants of former shells,
Perhaps the Glory-of-the-Seas or the common clam,
All carelessly intermixing and tossing about.

The moon seems a spotlight on a sandy stage
As the wind sings a sad song,
Accompanied by the drumming of crashing waves
And the rattling of tumbling shells.
It sings of love it has never known,
Of warm and splashing eyes,
And swiftly fluttering hearts.

The ballet of the dune grass,
Tells of an aching known only to the lonely.

The grass gently sways with the breeze,
Brushing together in a tender mock of a warm caress,
While the rustling leaves imitate the soft, hesitant,
Breath of two lovers in their first embrace.

Sea foam leaps from the clasp of a wave
And is caught by the swirling breeze.
Like a ballerina it dances along the shore,
Twirling and leaping before the wind.
Lightly, she teases the breeze
And together they dance to the rhythm of the beach.

From behind a dune a ghost crab scurries across the sand,
Moving in short, quick bursts of activity
Before crouching in a pause.
His movements seem to mix with the rustling leaves,
The wind and water, as if part of a silent play.

The stage is full of sounds and colors,
But there is no one to see or hear,
Only the actors. . .

Abruptly, as if to listen,
Silence and stillness comes over the scene.
From far off a sound of laughter drifts by.
In a moment, a pair of figures are seen strolling
Along the water's edge.
Hand-in-hand they walk, talking in muffled voices
Which seem to resonate across the waves.

The plaintiff, wistful wind again begins to sing,

But now a quiet serenade.
The breeze becomes a cool caress,
And the couple moves closer together.

One-by-one the actors join in.
The waves rush towards the shore in a hypnotic rhythm,
And the rustling leaves whisper into uncertain ears,
Hinting softly of promises to come,
While moonlight baths the beach in gently tones,
Which dulls even the hard lines of the scattered rocks.

With a gasp of delight the pair gaze at a shooting star
Before continuing on their way.
And as they disappear in the distance,
The moonlight catches a motion in the shadow of a dune.
A pair of gleaming eyes are trust up through the sand,
And a newly hatched young turtle begins its race to the sea.

The meaning of the play is clear,
Though many do not see.
Love brings joy and harmony to all who are near,
And gives meaning to the beauty of nature.

CUSK-EEL LOVE

By Rodney Rountree

Circa 1990

I've never heard a sound so sweet
As a cusk-eel croaking to his mate.
Eagerly waiting in the sand,
Only his bumpy head exposed,
He earnestly sings for any lady who happens by.
But coyly he borrows deeper still,
When one takes the bait,
Until she, with anxious kisses, draws him to her side.

His long, soft whiskers caress her back,
As their bodies intertwine.
And with each kiss she changes course,
Not sure of where to swim.
And soon she forgets that she's a fish
And reaches for the sky.

Her head reared up,
Her back arched back,
She gulps in the salty air.
Then sinking back into the sea,
She spies a shrimp and goes off to feed,
While nearby a cusk-eel sings his song again,
For another long, slim, and whiskered beauty.

LOST AT SEA

By Rodney Rountree

Circa 1990

I am lost in an angry sea.

The sky is dark.

Black clouds shroud the moon and stars.

All around me the waters rage.

Foaming brine splashes my face.

Salt spray tastes sharp on wet lips and stings blood red eyes.

Rushing winds urge on the swift water and howl in tired ears.

Bones ache with the cold as I lean into the wind.

My vessel tosses in the chop and I pray my anchor holds.

My hands shake and I shiver in the driving rain.

As I grow tired and weak,

I hear voices in the crying wind.

I start and look up,

But no one is there.

In a tempest I am wrapped in solitude.

I peer into the storm,

Straining to see a light, a ship, anything....

The rocking boat, and the noise from the wind and sea, mesmerizes me.

Like a crackling fire –

The water swirls with icy flames of flickering waves

And sparks of salty brine.

White foam rises from the crests of waves,

Like smoke in the whirling wind.

I see shapes and faces in the ocean depths.
Images of home, of a stranger I saw the day before,
An old love with smiling eyes.
They come and go amid the splashing flames.
And my ship strains and groans in the heavy seas.
I hold on tight lest I'm swept away.

Wearily I wipe the water from my face
And struggle to clear my eyes.
I look deeply into the dark waters
...As though her eyes.
And I dream.

A gull cries shrilly –
And I awake to the glaring sun and a gentle sea.

LIFE AND DEATH IN A SALT MARSH

By Rodney Rountree

Circa 1991

I sat on a dock and looked out over the water.
The moon, crescent and bright, reflected from its glassy surface.
I rubbed my arms against the chill, and listened to the marsh.
Birds called from every direction –
Oystercatchers, seagulls, and occasionally the disarming scream of a Great Blue.
A light breeze blew through the grass,
I could hear the grasses rustle as they swayed back and forth.
Behind these were the sounds of water.
Water lapping at the dock and shore,
A popping gurgle of rushing currents in the bay,
And the muffled rumbling of distant ocean waves.
I glanced up to see the sky was clear and full of stars.
The water was full of life.
Small fish and crustaceans darted and glided about.
A seahorse floated in lazy circles.
Reaching out – I splashed my hand in the water.
It felt cold.
Ripples from the disturbance grew and spread.
The fishes fled.
Even the seahorse sank into the depths.
The birds seemed to cry louder, the breeze picked up.
The noise became confusion, as if the ripples moved through the marsh itself.
It grew to a crescendo of sounds...and then slowly died in the distance.
I felt very alone. Restless, listless.
I watched as a small school of fish danced around a piece of floating grass, as if playing a game.
I longed to have her sitting next to me...

One of the fish darted to the side to snatch some piece of food I could not see.
To hold her in my arms –
Another piece of grass passed by,
Twirling crazily as in isopod speed it along –
As if on some drunken sled ride.
To whisper in her ear.
A flash of color and sound caught my eye –
I turned to see a night heron swallow its catch.
It was not to be.
I stood up and walked away.
Behind me a game of life and death continued –
Before me...
I didn't know.
Another game?
Perhaps real life, or maybe just another dream.

A COOL GREEN FIRE

By Rodney Rountree

Circa 1991

Flaring like embers among the coals of a dying fire,
Which is fanned by an intermittent breeze,
Fireflies flash on and off in swirls across the marsh.
As if a match struck by an invisible hand,
A green glow ignites nearby.
The soft light reveals the smooth outline of her face
And is reflected in her shining eyes.

We start – as a shadow looms towards us,
Then gasp in delight
As the silhouette of a black skimmer glides by.
Turning sharply at the water's edge
It retraces its flight across the cove.
Flying inches above the surface
The skimmer's bill silently slices through the water,
Leaving behind a wake of ripples rushing to the shore.
Like the ripples caressing the water,
I run my hand down the length of her arm.

The stillness is shattered by a sudden splash and flash of silver
When a fish erupts from the water.
I kiss her neck as she turns to look.
She laughs and throws her arms around my shoulders –
We kiss.

I can hear waves lapping against the dock,

And her heart beating.
The tall cordgrass rustles in the breeze,
And her hair brushes against my cheek.
The fragrance of her sweet perfume
Mixes with the smell of salt water.
A night heron calls shrilly in the moonlight,
And I pull her more tightly to me,
Kissing her still more deeply.

She turns in my arms and rests her head on my chest
As I lean against the rail.
Together we watch the fireflies dance over the marsh –
Like sparks blown from a cool green fire.

A MIST INHALED IN DARKNESS

Rodney Rountree

Circa 1991

(To the tune of “Turn the Page”, by Bob Seger)

I was sitting in the darkness,
With a throbbing in my head.
The loneliness was unbearable –
An empty ache in me.
Then desperation found me,
And with every breath my body took –
It began to creep inside.
A mist inhaled in darkness was filling up my soul.
And I felt my body shudder,
As my thoughts all turned cold.
I began to wonder who I was,
And where I'd come from,
But I couldn't find the answers,
There was darkness all around.
I can't remember how long I sat there all alone.

Then sunlight hit my eyes.
My head reeled in pain.
As I shrank from the glare, my desperation changed.
I could feel the heat rising from the sunlight on my skin.
The anger burned inside me,
As my thoughts turned to hate.
I felt my body's tension,
My hands were clenched in fists.
All the world was out against me,

But it didn't matter now – I would fight them all somehow!
The hours raced like seconds,
As I sat there all alone.

Raindrops fell upon me.
The fire in me died.
And I drew my arms together,
As I shivered in the cold.
Desperate sorrow shook me!
Tears began to show.
I cried aloud for someone! Anyone at all...
All I heard were rain drops falling,
Hitting hard against the ground.
I sat there in a downpour,
My thoughts were washed away –
Even sorrow drained right from me.
I was soaked through and through.

Now I'm sitting all alone,
No feeling left inside.
I can't tell if it's raining, or if it's day or night.
Do not dare disturb me,
Sitting all alone,
Cause in my world of darkness,
No pain can reach me now.

STARVATION

By Rodney Rountree

Circa 1991

I'm hungry.

My stomach hurts, my head is dizzy.

Won't you give me some food?

Anything will do...

An orange,

Smooth and round,

Firm to the touch.

Its fragrance assaults me.

My jaws hurt, the saliva flows -

But the orange is unreal,

Just a thought in my head.

Please, just a slice...

No fruit, none for me?

I must sit and rest,

My body is weak.

Look -- food is all around,

But none for me.

What did I do?

Have I hurt someone?

Please! I'm hungry.

Can you spare just a bite?

Bread.

I like bread.

Any bread.

Fresh bread baking,
Melted butter,
The taste is in my mouth,
But not the bread...
I'm hungry. Please, can you spare a small stale piece?
A crumb...
No fruit, no bread -- none for me?

So tired,
Let me lie here on the ground.

Look over there!
Their feasting!
Turkey...oh!
My eyes are watering,
My stomach is cramped.
A slice of golden breast,
Long brown drum sticks -
Steaming hot and splashed with dark gravy.
I can feel my teeth sinking in the soft, juicy flesh.
My jaws are working,
But they're chewing only air...
My face is pressed against the cold hard ground,

My mouth is drooling,
My eyes can't see.
Please, I'm starving.
Can you spare just one small morsel?
No fruit, no bread, no meat -- none for me?

Sleep...I'll close my eyes to sleep.

Oh...You're too late....