

A detailed illustration in a textured, woodcut-like style shows a man from the side, looking at a tablet computer. He is wearing a dark, patterned sweater. To his left, a stack of several books is visible. The background is a solid, bright yellow. The title 'Messages for Your Mind' is written in a large, black, serif font, with 'for' and 'Your' in a smaller size than 'Messages' and 'Mind'. Below the title, the subtitle 'a collection of poems' is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

# Messages for Your Mind

*a collection of poems*

Franklin C. Edwards

# MESSAGES FOR YOUR MIND

a collection of poems by  
FRANKLIN C. EDWARDS

Copyright © 2025 by Franklin C. Edwards

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations used in critical articles or reviews.

## **MESSAGES FOR YOUR MIND**

Written by Franklin C. Edwards

Published by:

Franklin the Helper Children's Books, LLC

[www.franklinthehelper.com](http://www.franklinthehelper.com)

[info@franklinthehelper.com](mailto:info@franklinthehelper.com)

This is a work of poetry. Any references to real people, events, or places are used fictitiously or are the product of the author's imagination.

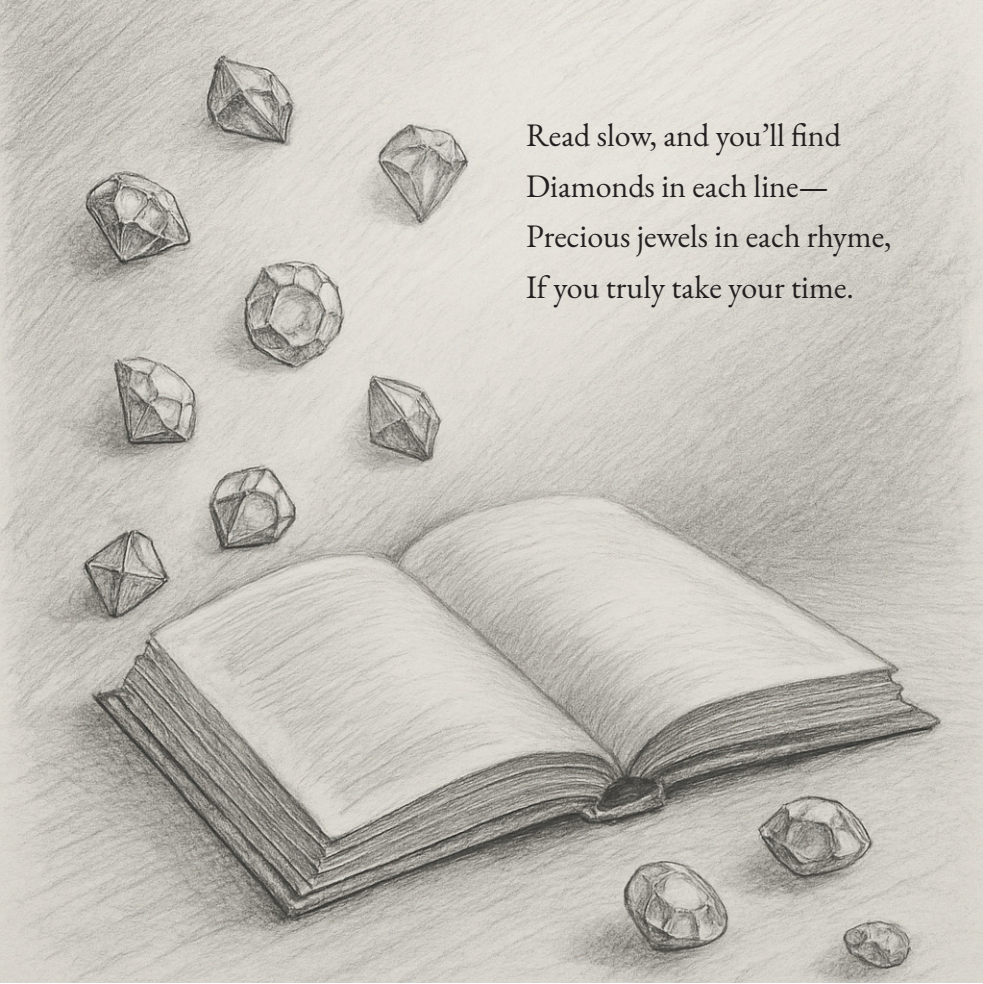
Printed in the United States of America

First Edition, 2025

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Reader's Invitation</i>	2
Fade Into Irrelevance	4
Life	8
Addiction	12
Believe in Yourself	16
Burning Thoughts	20
Carry My Burden	24
Comfortable Being Uncomfortable	28
Do What's Right	32
Entrepreneurs	36
Fake Smiles	40
Food for Thought	44
Franklin the Helper:	
Be a Leader Not a Follower	48
Introspectivity	52
Marry My Aesthetic	56
Never Give Up	60
Shoot for the Stars	64
Smile	68
Stay Focused	72
In Conclusion	77

# **READER'S INVITATION**

A detailed pencil drawing of an open book lying flat. The pages are blank and textured with fine lines. Scattered around the book are approximately 15 diamonds of various sizes and cuts, including round brilliant, cushion, and pear shapes. The diamonds are rendered with intricate shading to show their facets and reflections. The background is a simple, textured grey wash.

Read slow, and you'll find  
Diamonds in each line—  
Precious jewels in each rhyme,  
If you truly take your time.

## **Fade Into Irrelevance**

How would you say you'd define the path to excellence?  
Intricately making moves that will leave everyone in suspense?  
Believing in what you see without seeing the evidence?  
If you don't live up to your potential, you will fade into irrelevance.

The greatest trick that was ever played was rebranding  
what was once perfect.  
You can work hard and it still not at all be worth it.

It's not about whether you earned it, fought for it, or deserve it.  
It's about the dignity you keep when you fail  
and if you're willing to preserve it.

Don't make a statement just to erase it.  
If you make a statement, then you must embrace it.

You know it's real when it's hard to face it.  
Never wait for it, get up and go chase it.

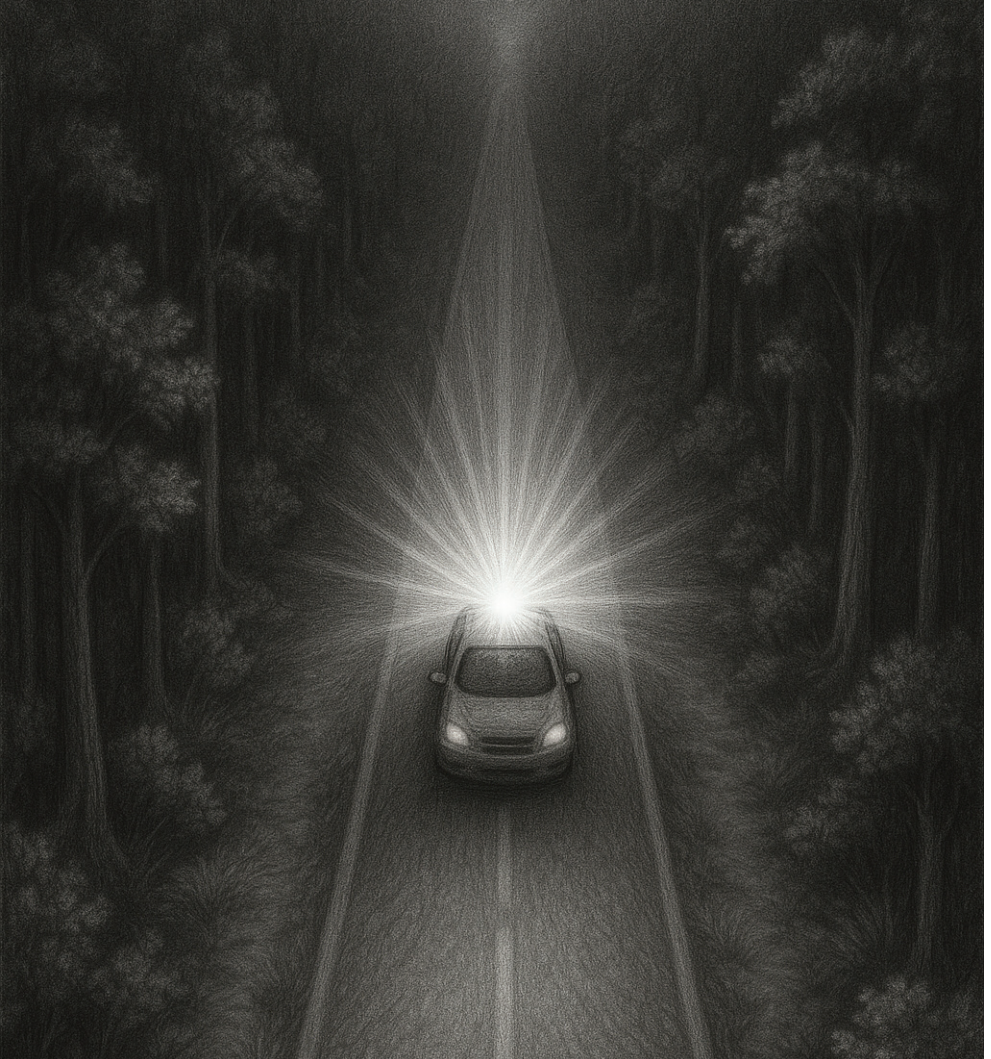
What was once seconds, then became years.  
What was once silence, then became cheers.

Never switch your motives, just switch your gears.  
I'll even volunteer to wipe away all your tears.

We live the same lives but in different tiers.  
Keep your focus crystal clear like a chandelier.

Jesus is my compass, so I keep Him near.  
I'm in the passenger seat as I watch him steer.

MESSAGES FOR YOUR MIND



---

## Reflections:

---

True excellence isn't about recognition—it's about staying grounded in purpose, holding onto faith, and choosing dignity even in failure.

***Reflection from Franklin:*** This poem is for anyone who's ever questioned whether their effort even matters. I've learned it's not about the spotlight—it's about staying solid when no one's watching. God sees it all, and that's enough.

***Reflection Question:*** Are you chasing success the world can see—or are you building a life of purpose that will matter even if no one applauds?

## **Life**

Nowadays people are more scared to

Live than they're scared to die.

It's like they're not scared to fall, but they're scared to fly.

How are you aiming for the stars, but you're scared of heights?

Trying to fight temptation, but it puts up a good fight.

Is unconditional love really unconditional?

Or are the conditions simply not listed?

You may not have wealth, fame, notoriety, and fans,

but that doesn't mean you're not gifted.

Words tend to kiss off the page,

but what if that kiss is the kiss of death?

Get your dreams out your mind or they'll rot inside of you

'til your last breath.

And rotted dreams turn into nightmares,  
And these nightmares aren't light scares.  
They'll haunt you through the day's bright sun  
and the dark night air.

So get out all of your dreams to avoid nightmares.  
Because no man can repair  
The damage caused by a nightmare.

# Life

“It’s like they’re  
not scared to fall  
but they’re scared  
to fly.”

---

## Reflections:

---

Fear of failure and rejection can prevent us from living boldly, but buried dreams become emotional and spiritual burdens that manifest as lifelong regret.

***Reflection from Franklin:*** I wrote this piece to remind you—and myself—that fear will steal more from us than failure ever could. Let this be your wake-up call to get your dreams out of your head and into the world.

***Reflection Question:*** What dream or calling have you been too afraid to act on—and what would your life look like if you gave yourself permission to try?

## **Addiction**

Those substances you're taking aren't going to solve your issues.  
You're just getting closer to your funeral with your loved ones  
crying in tissues.

Your dealer keeps supplying, but your personality  
is the only thing dying.  
You really need help, and your soul keeps crying.  
But you keep abusing your addiction because it's so satisfying.

What are you really hiding behind your addiction?  
You only abuse it 'cause you're stubborn and you refuse to listen.

You refuse to listen to your mind,  
but it's not hard to have self-control.  
You hide behind your addiction instead of reaching all your goals.

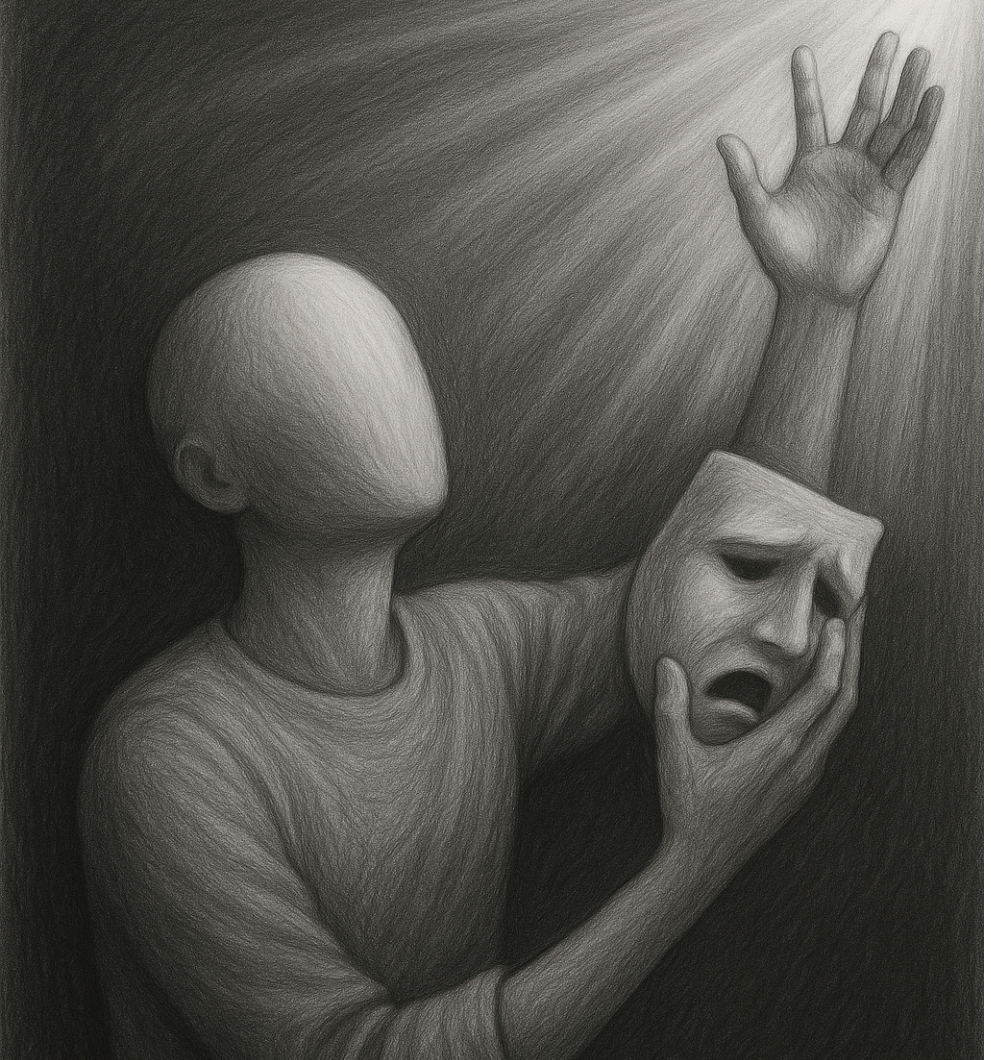
You're only addicted because the devil works hard.  
The truth is, you're not addicted and you just need  
to call out for God.

I don't even need to say what your addiction is  
because we both know it.  
You're hurt on the inside,  
but your mindset will never let you show it.

You claim to be so tough,  
Yet your addiction always calls your bluff.  
Deep down inside, you feel like a coward,  
and your addiction is your escape from reality.

I wrote this poem because I don't want to see you  
become another casualty.

No matter what your addiction is, it doesn't make a difference.  
You're losing your life over something  
that doesn't make you different.



---

## Reflections:

---

Addiction is a deceptive escape that steals your purpose, but healing begins the moment you stop hiding and start calling on God for help.

***Reflection from Franklin:*** This one hit close. I didn't write it to judge you—I wrote it because I care. I've seen too many people lose themselves in addiction, and I don't want that to be your story. There's still time to turn it around.

***Reflection Question:*** What pain are you trying to numb, and are you ready to let God heal what you've been trying to hide?

## **Believe in Yourself**

Believe in yourself,  
because that's all that it takes.  
If you truly believe in yourself,  
there's no doubt that you will be great.

Believe in yourself when nobody else will.  
Once you believe in yourself, you will know how happiness feels.

Believe in yourself, and there's no doubt that you will be great.  
Once you believe in yourself, there's no limit to the things  
you can create.

Believe in yourself because you're all that you've got.  
Believing in yourself is half of the battle,  
whether you believe it or not.

Believe in yourself and bet on yourself because in the end,  
you will be by yourself in that coffin.

Believe in yourself because opportunity comes;  
however, it doesn't come often.

Believe in yourself because you can be anything you want to be.  
When you don't believe in yourself, you are blind,  
but once you believe in yourself, you are able to see.

Believe in yourself because, why not?  
Why wouldn't you believe in you?  
Believe in yourself because everything you dream of  
can surely come true.

Believe in yourself and ignore the haters  
because they don't know who you are at all.  
Believe in yourself, and you will never, ever fall.

# *Believe in Yourself*

“Believing in yourself is half the battle, whether you believe it or not.”

---

## Reflections:

---

When you believe in yourself, you unlock your power, silence the noise around you, and open the door to every dream you've ever had.

***Reflection from Franklin:*** I wrote this for the times when you feel like nobody sees your potential—not even you. I want you to read this and walk away knowing that belief is your starting point, and it can take you further than anything else.

***Reflection Question:*** What dream or goal have you put on hold simply because you stopped believing in yourself—and what would happen if you decided to believe again?

## **Burning Thoughts**

What would you do if the world was ending,  
but your loved ones still said they needed you?  
I want to give you my heart and my soul,  
but I know that I'm way too conceited to.

I've been lied to and stood up so many times,  
I don't even know if I'm believing you.  
I was born to be a leader,  
but I must not be good at it the way  
that I've been misleading you.

I've been lying to myself and the entire world  
because I really want someone to love.  
The desire for love is a strong addiction  
that no human can get rid of.

I'll probably die alone, though,  
because my mind is something no one can comprehend.  
I act like I'm fine and everything's okay,  
but all I do is pretend.

# **BURNING THOUGHTS**

**“I act like  
I’m fine  
and everything’s  
okay but all I do  
is pretend.”**

---

## Reflections:

---

We can't heal what we refuse to feel—and sometimes the deepest pain comes from pretending to be okay when what we really need is love and understanding.

***Reflection from Franklin:*** This one came straight from the heart. I've learned that silence doesn't always mean peace—sometimes it means you're just afraid to speak. If you've ever felt alone in a room full of people, you'll feel this one.

***Reflection Question:*** What truth have you been burying behind a smile—and are you ready to stop pretending and let yourself be seen?

## **Carry My Burden**

If you carry one thing with you today, let it be this:

Every chance you don't take is a chance that you've missed.

Never hold your head down when you stop and reminisce.

I purposefully lack some knowledge because ignorance is bliss.

Crying while she's praying because she's stuck in a crisis.

You can still see the cuts left behind on her left and right wrist.

She asked if I could care for her heart; I told her, how could I resist?

Now, a few years later, we don't even coexist.

I'd rather lie to you than fail and break your heart.

I'd rather tell a lie than tell you the truth and leave you scarred.

Lying became easier; therefore, life became so hard.

You catch me in a lie because the truth catches you off guard.

You know I could never let you go no matter how hard I try  
because that isn't in me.

The notoriety and money you make is the reason  
they begin to envy.  
Reasons to quit and reasons to cry, trust me,  
I've got plenty.

You fill your mouth with bitter lies  
so the love in your soul remains empty.



---

## Reflections:

---

Emotional avoidance and unspoken pain can weigh heavier than the truth, and the longer we carry our burdens alone, the emptier our love becomes.

***Reflection from Franklin:*** This piece came from a place of reflection on the lies we tell to protect others—but really, it’s about how those lies end up protecting no one. Sometimes, what we don’t say is what haunts us the most.

***Reflection Question:*** What burden are you carrying that’s keeping you from healing or truly connecting with the people you love?

## **Comfortable Being Uncomfortable**

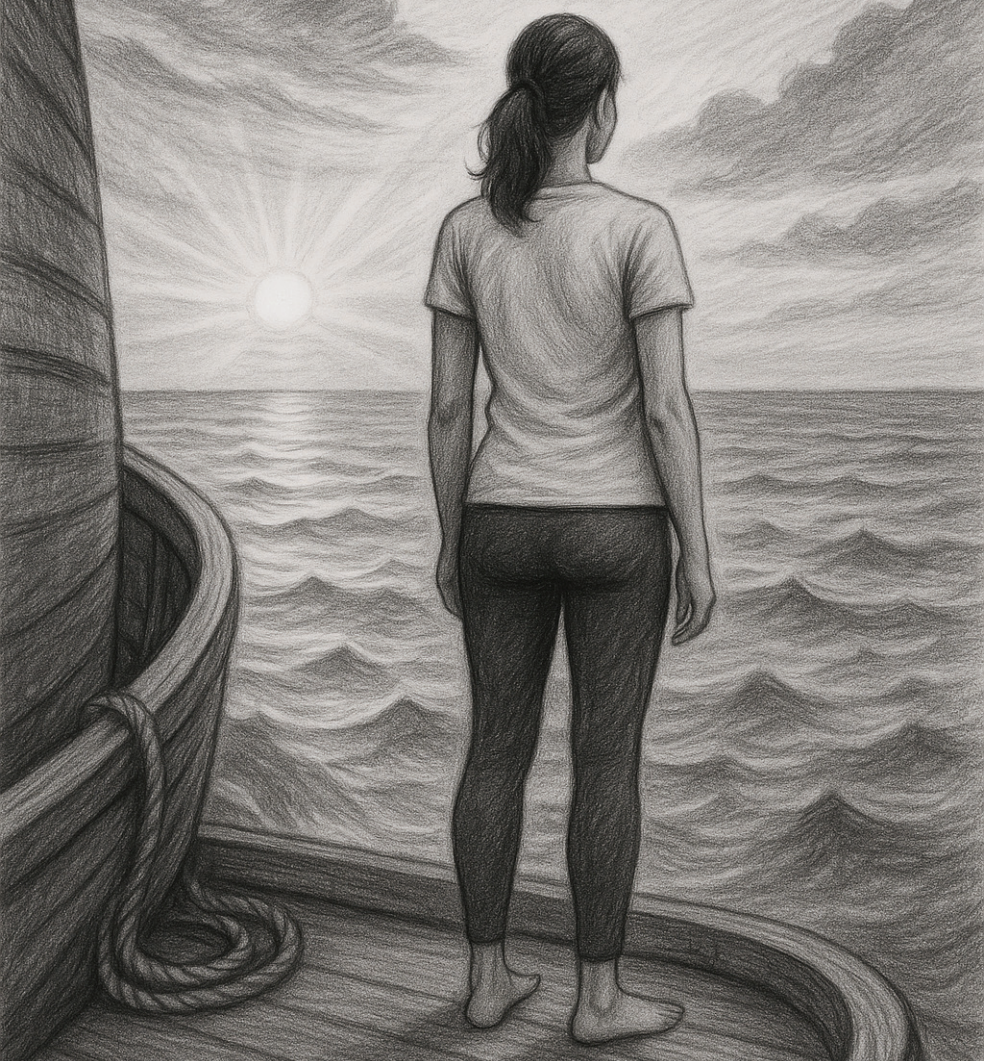
I had a mental lapse,  
so I made a mental note.  
When they try to quote your words,  
it'll often be a misquote.

Sometimes you have to jump in the water  
and teach yourself how to float  
But you're scared to teach yourself how to float  
because you feel safe on the boat.

Afraid to dive in the water  
because you're comfortable on the ship.  
But that ship will soon sink,  
and you'll eventually be left with a chip.

A chip on your shoulder to prove to everyone that,  
In those troubled waters,  
you can float no matter where you're at.

MESSAGES FOR YOUR MIND



---

## Reflections:

---

Growth requires leaving your comfort zone, even when it feels safer to stay put—because staying still can sink you faster than trying to float.

***Reflection from Franklin:*** This one came from a place of truth—I had to learn how to swim while life was trying to drown me. You’ll never know what you’re capable of until you stop depending on the boat and trust yourself in the water.

***Reflection Question:*** What’s something in your life you’ve been clinging to for comfort—and what could happen if you finally let go and trusted yourself to float?

## **Do What's Right**

Open spaces for others to vent their thoughts and feelings.  
You see a whole lot of venting but not a lot of healing.  
You see a whole lot of people live lives that are unappealing,  
Because they do a lot of standing and not enough kneeling.

Kneeling to pray,  
Yet they're willing to pay  
The price to let their bodies decay,  
While they're still alive because they've let their minds run astray.

Though life isn't always black and white,  
you can sometimes find areas of grey.  
The pros and cons of our decisions  
are something we should always weigh.

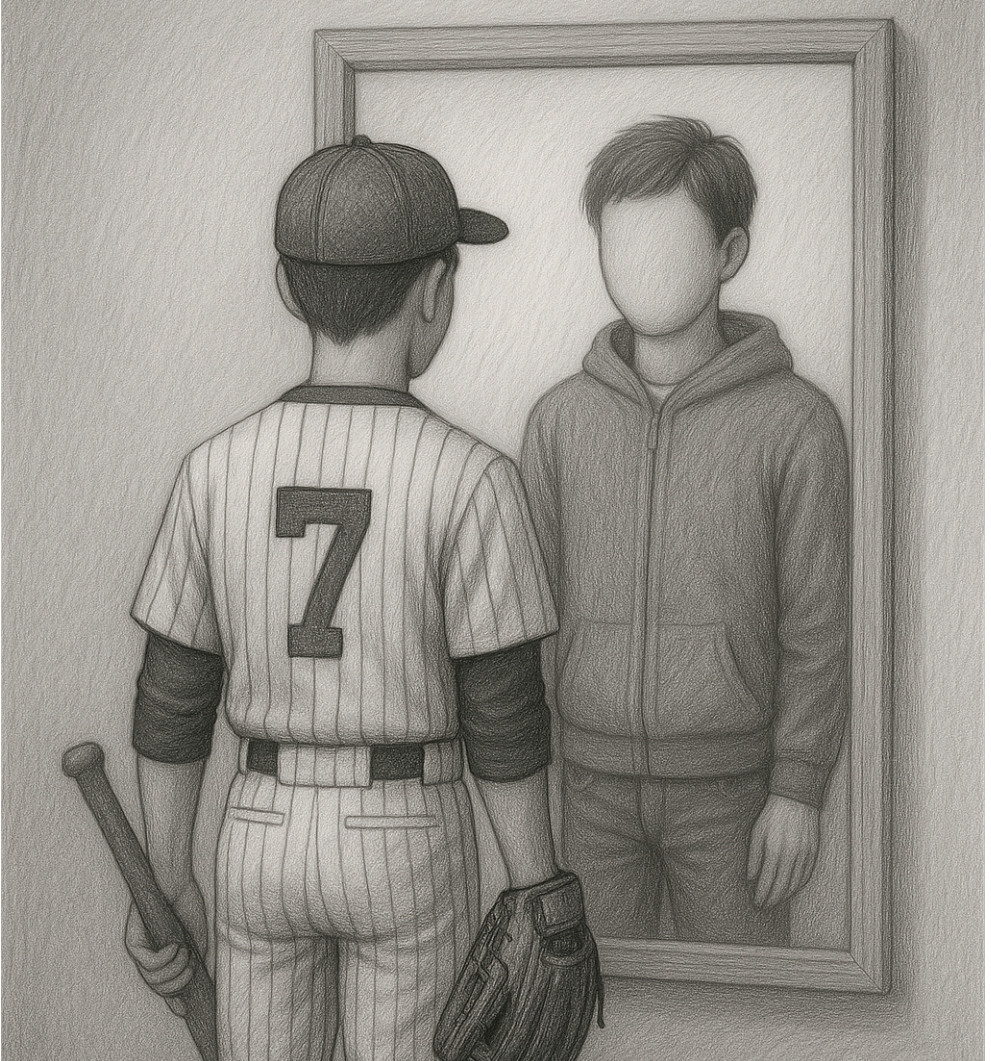
And if the cons outweigh the pros,  
then find another way.  
Trying to have a heart-to-heart with the mirror,  
but you don't know what to say.

I'm battling two facets of life.

You're in a rush to get to nowhere but the afterlife.

Chase after anything, but you never chase after Christ.

It costs to be alive, and sadly, it's not a fair price.



---

## Reflections:

---

Doing what's right means aligning your actions with truth, weighing your decisions with wisdom, and recognizing that true healing starts with humility and faith.

***Reflection from Franklin:*** This one is personal. I've seen what happens when we ignore the mirror, avoid prayer, and chase everything but God. I wrote this to remind us that doing what's right often begins with slowing down and checking in with the soul.

***Reflection Question:*** Are your current decisions leading you closer to healing—or are they just keeping you busy while you avoid what really matters?

## **Entrepreneurs**

Notice society.

Practice sobriety.

Giving it your all might give you some anxiety.

Have good qualities.

Question ideologies.

Along the way, you may even break a few policies.

Ask for forgiveness, but don't expect any apologies.

You put your heart in this world, and people treat it like a novelty.

You give love... you get love... you decide the quantity.

Be yourself, 'cause nobody wants to be a wannabe.

Along the way, you may meet people and make friends.

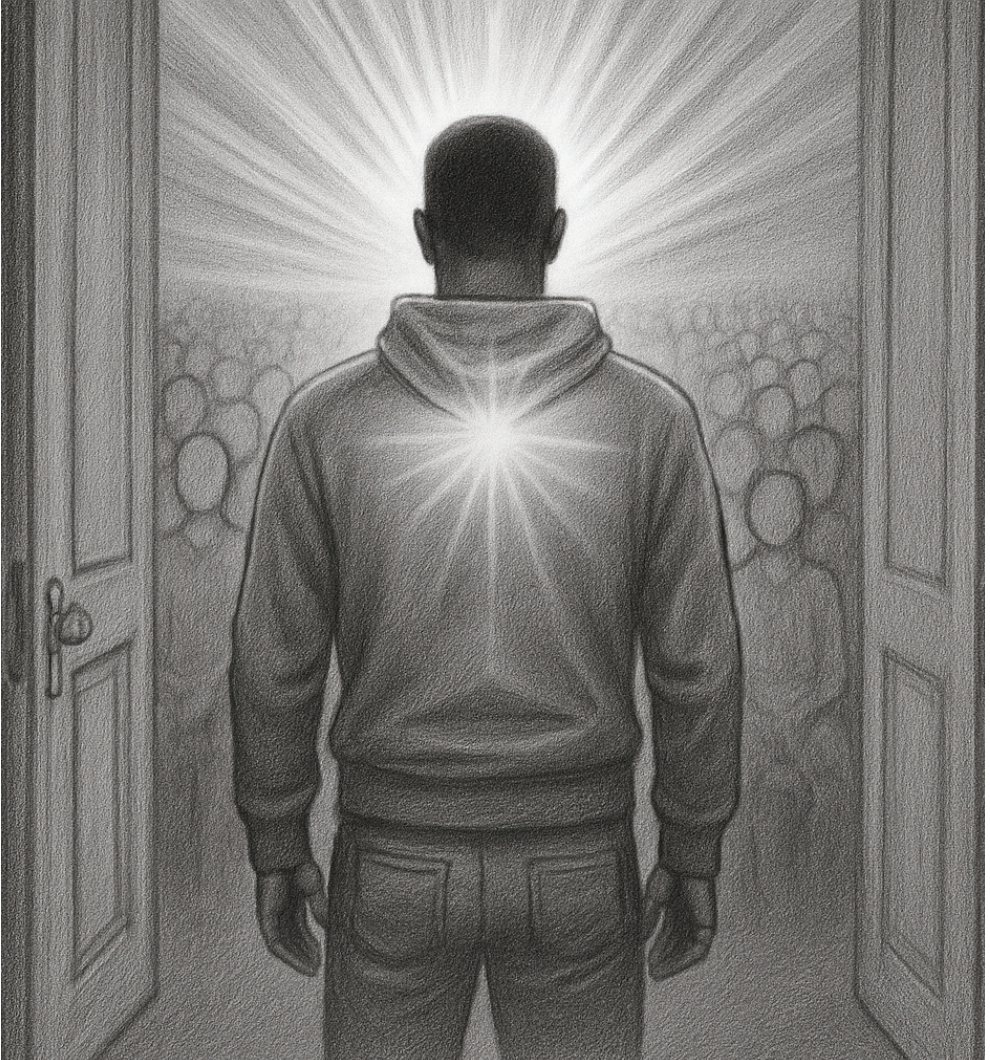
Give hugs and shake hands.

Make foes and make fans.

Change passions and switch plans.

All is okay now and will be okay for many moons.  
Although you weren't able to,  
make sure the generation after you can eat off silver spoons.

To the beat of life, find your own rhythm  
and master your own tune.  
You'll no longer have to introduce yourself  
when you walk into many rooms.



---

## Reflections:

---

The journey of an entrepreneur is filled with trials, but by embracing your truth, pushing through resistance, and living with purpose, you shape a legacy far beyond yourself.

***Reflection from Franklin:*** Being an entrepreneur has taught me more about people, purpose, and perseverance than anything else. This one's for those who've ever poured their soul into something and still had to clap for themselves when no one else did.

***Reflection Question:*** What legacy are you working toward, and are you staying true to who you are while building it?

## **Fake Smiles**

All I see is lost souls,  
Headed down lost roads,  
Getting cross-eyed  
Every time they come to crossroads.

But who am I to judge?  
Because I'm the furthest thing from perfect.  
That's why when bad things happen to me,  
I know I deserve it.

But I still can't help but notice the pain behind your smile.  
The difference between you and I is that I hardly ever smile,

Because when you fake a smile, that shows you're in denial,  
And I'm never in denial, so I haven't smiled in a while.  
But you're in denial about your feelings and who you truly are,  
So you just go with the motion, forcing smiles from afar.

I can't go with the motion; I just call it how I see it,  
And if I'm being honest with you, I really hate to see it.

But while I hate to see it, you, on the other hand,  
can't wait to see it.

I don't wanna be near it, but you clearly wanna be it.

You wanna be the lies, the deceit, the confusion.

The day your fake smile fades away will be the day  
you finally come to a conclusion.

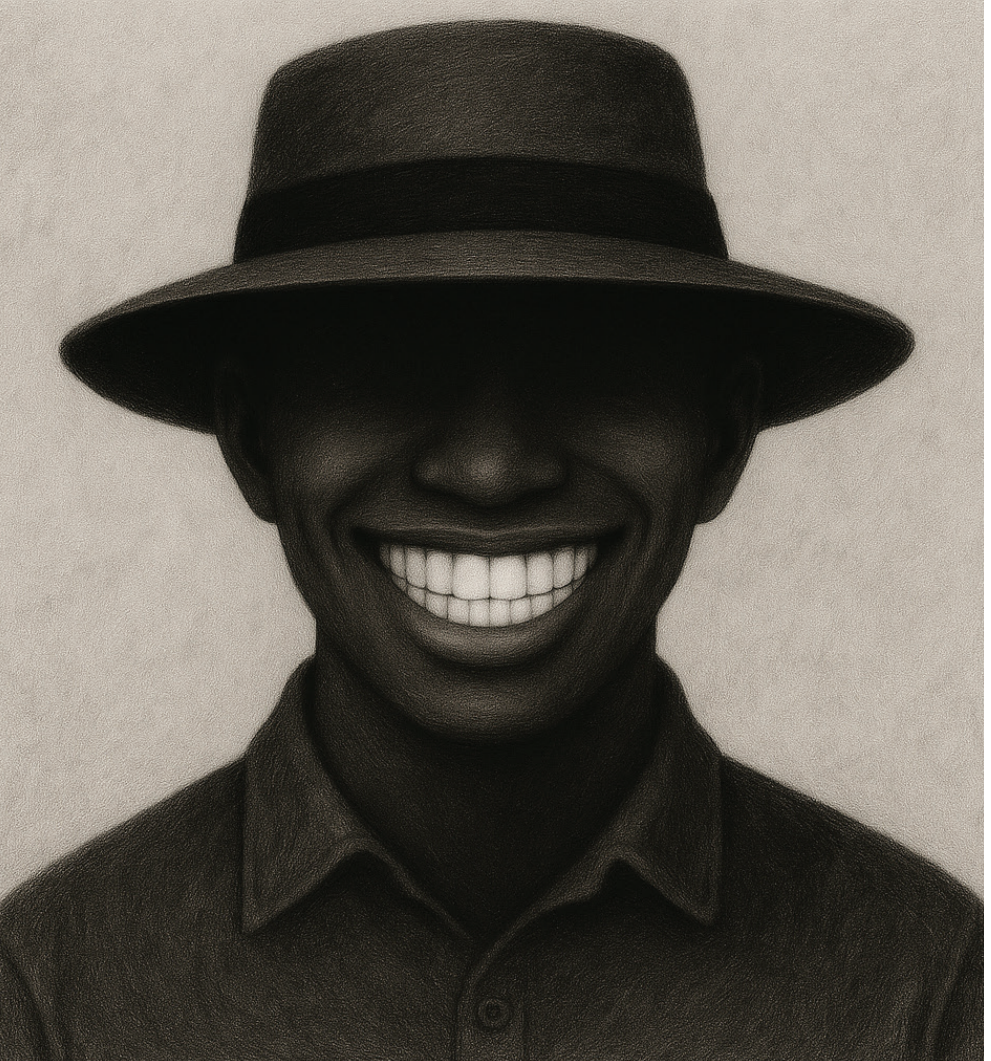
So I look forward to the day you give up fake smiles,

The day you see the truth hidden  
behind all the tribulations and trials,

The day you finally realize lying to yourself gets old,

The day you get closer to Christ and start healing your soul.

MESSAGES FOR YOUR MIND



---

## Reflections:

---

Pretending to be okay might fool the world, but true healing begins when you stop lying to yourself and surrender to God's truth.

***Reflection from Franklin:*** This one hit deep. I've worn fake smiles before, and I've also been the one to spot them in others. The truth is, God can't heal who you pretend to be. I hope this poem helps somebody take the mask off and start their healing journey.

***Reflection Question:*** What emotions have you been hiding behind a smile—and are you ready to let go of the mask so God can meet the real you?

## **Food for Thought**

How would you feel if you were promised the world,  
but it cost you all of your freedom?

They make you smile every day, but in the end,  
you realize you don't even need 'em.

Will your guardian angel still protect you,  
even though you live like a demon?

Food for thought will turn them against you,  
so be careful and watch what you decide to feed 'em.

Maybe one day, the pain we endure will make all of us great.  
Have you ever shed a tear standing next to Heaven's gate?

I can see that you're hungry,  
and you have a lot of food on your plate,  
But you still have to eat even when they decide to feed you hate.

Life is too short to risk it all for a person  
that doesn't even love you.

Life is too hard, so drop to your knees and pray  
to the sky that's above you.

I know life doesn't always feel like it's worth living,  
but in the end,  
You can fall, get up, then fall back down,  
as long as you get up again.

# Food for Thought

“Food for thought  
will turn them  
against you—  
so be careful  
what you feed  
them.”

---

**Reflections:**

---

In a world full of distractions and false promises, true nourishment comes from choosing truth, guarding your soul, and turning to God for strength.

***Reflection from Franklin:*** I wrote this because I know how easy it is to chase what looks good but ends up leaving you empty. Not every plate is meant for you—and not everyone feeding you has your best interest at heart. Be careful what you consume.

***Reflection Question:*** What have you been feeding your mind and soul—and is it helping you grow, or quietly starving your spirit?

## **Franklin the Helper: Be a Leader Not a Follower**

Being a leader is cool.

Being a follower is lame.

Leaders grow and change the world for the better,

While followers stay the same.

The most important thing as a leader

is your relationship with God.

Followers fold under pressure,

While leaders beat all odds.

Leadership is an important quality to have

because it means you're doing the right thing.

Doing what's right, even when it's easy to do what's wrong,

are the qualities a true leader should bring.

Franklin wants everyone to know that as a leader,

you must never panic, be respectful,

and don't be afraid to take control.

Knowing when to speak and how to speak  
is a big part of playing the leadership role.

Leaders also must know when to sit down and pay attention.  
True leaders know that they don't know everything,  
so they are also willing to sit down and listen.

By being a leader and not a follower,  
you are thinking for yourself,  
not looking for other people's acceptance,  
and always taking responsibility for your actions.  
Followers have no self-control,  
but leaders never get distracted by distractions.

# **Franklin the Helper: Be a Leader Not a Follower**

**“Doing what’s right—even  
when it’s easy to do  
what’s wrong—is  
what true leaders bring.”**

---

## Reflections:

---

True leadership means standing firm in your values, following God's direction, and doing what's right—even when it's not easy or popular.

***Reflection from Franklin:*** This one is personal. I want you to know that being a leader isn't about being in charge—it's about being someone who leads with love, purpose, and integrity. Don't follow the crowd. Lead yourself first, and others will follow your example.

***Reflection Question:*** What's one area in your life where you've been following the crowd—and how can you step up and lead with confidence and character instead?

## **Introspectivity**

We were counted out from the beginning; all we knew was love.  
The time it takes is worth it to thank the man up above.

Pushing myself to the limit before push comes to shove,  
I ask if it's genuine love, and I get shoulder shrugs.

Masking pain and fear behind shame and regret,  
It's one thing to forgive, it's another thing to forget.

Make sure the family's taken care of and the children are set.  
Until true colors are presented, I'm not sure who to trust yet.

I get told enough that I never show enough love,  
But I don't got the time for fake handshakes and hugs.

They loved each other so much, people called them love bugs,  
But the love didn't last because they both loved drugs.



---

## Reflections:

---

True introspection reveals how easily love can be clouded by pain, and how hard it is to give fully when you're still healing from betrayal.

***Reflection from Franklin:*** Sometimes I write from what I've lived, sometimes from what I've witnessed—but this one? It's both. Life teaches you to guard your heart, but introspection teaches you how to open it wisely.

***Reflection Question:*** What parts of yourself have you been hiding behind silence—and what would happen if you finally confronted them?

## **Marry My Aesthetic**

Marry my aesthetic.

Meditate on my touch.

Treat me like the people you wish would've treated you as such.

Coming in and out of my life, but you never come in clutch.

Only needed myself; guess I never needed much.

I need someone to love; it hurts being alone, and I know it.

I never want to say it because my pride won't let me show it.

Never going to tell a soul because I like to fake a smile,

But I haven't felt real love; it's truly been a while.

Tell me that you love me.

Tell me that I matter.

I watch everyone else speak amongst themselves; I see the chatter,

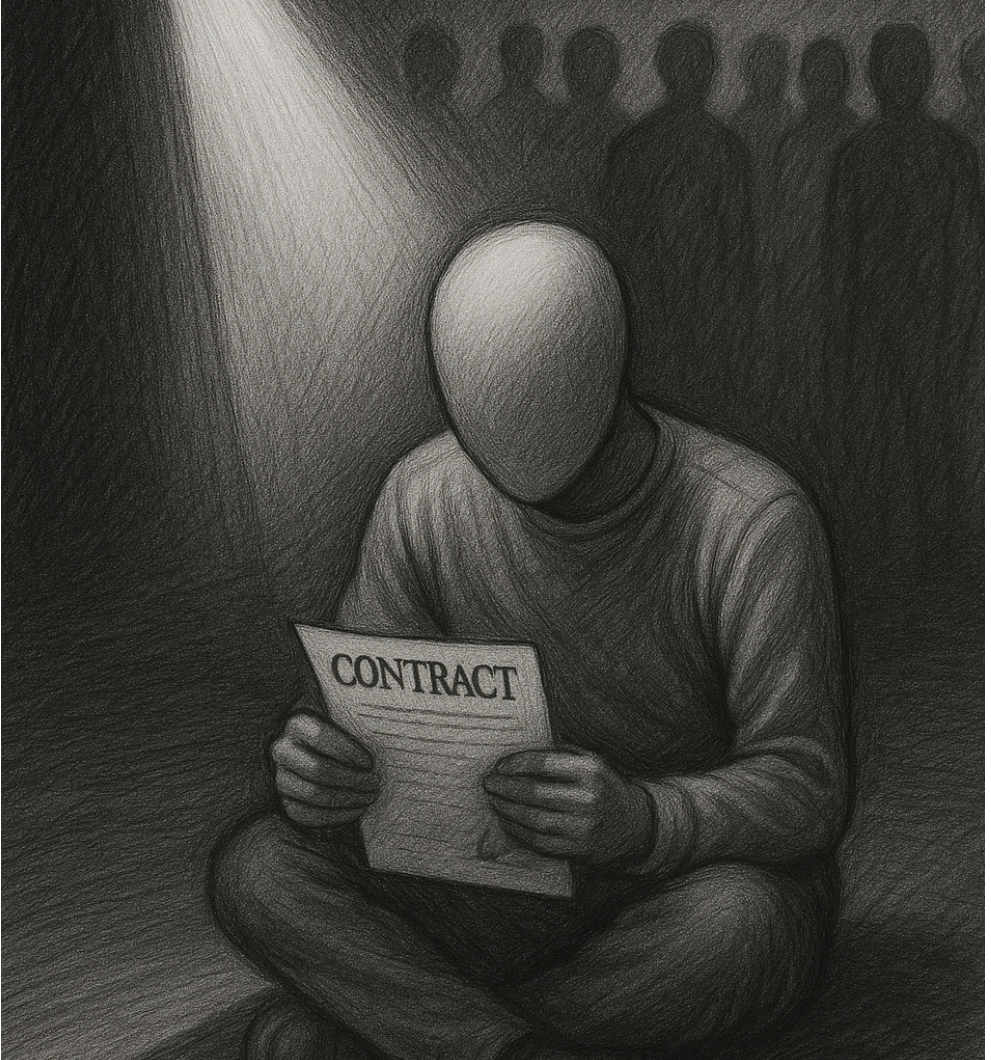
While I just sit alone in my own world, isolated.

I guess it's my fault for the reality I created.  
Why don't you speak wisdom into all your neighbors?  
Searching for the answers now that you'll surely need later.

You got to love fans, but adore the haters.  
Master being a giver because you were once a taker.

When the truth comes to the light, some people might go blind.  
When the truth comes to the light, you cannot press rewind.

Never forget to always keep a forgetful mind.  
You made a contract with yourself that's already been signed.



---

## Reflections:

---

We often hide our deepest need for love and connection behind appearances, but healing begins when we admit what we truly feel—even to ourselves.

***Reflection from Franklin:*** This one came from a place of quiet pain—where you act like everything’s okay but deep down, you’re hoping someone sees past your image. If you’ve ever smiled to hide your sadness, this one’s for you.

***Reflection Question:*** What emotions have you been covering up with pride, humor, or appearance—and what would it feel like to finally be honest about them?

## **Never Give Up**

Never give up because you don't know  
how close you are to success.

Never give up because you don't know  
how close you are to being the best.

Never give up because you are nothing like the rest.  
Life is great when you don't give up; I promise you, I can attest.

Never give up because quitting never brings joy.  
A man perseveres, but quitting makes you a boy.

A woman perseveres, but quitting just makes you a girl.  
Why would you give up when you have a chance  
to change the entire world?

Never give up because your life can change in an instant.  
Never give up; just stay focused and stay consistent.

I know it's hard, but you just have to stay persistent.  
The moment you give up,  
everything you worked hard for becomes distant.

MESSAGES FOR YOUR MIND



---

## Reflections:

---

Success is often closer than it seems—and persistence, not perfection, is what leads to lasting change and purpose.

***Reflection from Franklin:*** I wrote this because I know how it feels to want to quit. But I've also seen what happens when you don't. Your story isn't finished yet, so keep turning the page. You never know how close you really are.

***Reflection Question:*** What's one thing you were about to give up on—and what would happen if you gave it one more try?

## **Shoot for the Stars**

Shooting for the stars left us up there stranded,  
But if you're a hustler, you can make your own planet.

Thrown into the fire, we didn't have time to plan it.  
Sitting back humbly, and they can't understand it.

Went against the grain; does that make me a bandit?  
Nothing's given to you; go out and demand it.

Maybe you're too obsessed with things you haven't seen.  
Hardly ever asleep, but you still seem to dream.

Try to do good while evil reigns supreme.

Never let heartbreak be a common theme.

Why are you still so afraid to let go?

Why are you afraid of the things you don't know?

Hide all the pain that you seem to never show.

You're far from perfect, so you know you still have room to grow.

# **SHOOT FOR THE STARS**

**“If you’re a  
hustler, you  
can build your  
own planet.”**

---

## Reflections:

---

Greatness isn't given—it's built through faith, persistence, and the courage to keep reaching even when you don't have it all figured out.

***Reflection from Franklin:*** This poem is for the dreamers who got knocked down but never gave up. I know what it feels like to aim high and still feel stuck—but I also know that your setback isn't the end of your story. Keep growing. Keep shooting.

***Reflection Question:*** What's one fear or disappointment you've been holding on to—and how can you use it to fuel your growth instead of hold you back?

## Smile

You still gotta smile when life feels the worst.

You still gotta smile even though you feel cursed.

You still gotta smile when you feel like no one loves you.

You still gotta smile because God is above you.

You still gotta smile when you feel suicidal,

‘Cause sometimes a smile is all you need for survival.

You still gotta smile when you get cheated on.

You still gotta smile even when they lead you on.

You still gotta smile when you get laid off.

You still gotta smile when the hard work doesn’t pay off.

You still gotta smile even when you feel pain.

You still gotta smile ‘cause you gotta maintain.

You still gotta smile when times get hard.

You still gotta smile but never let down your guard.

You still gotta smile ‘cause God made better days.

I know it gets hard, but bow your head and pray.

You still gotta smile when there’s nothing to smile for.

You still gotta smile ‘cause you never know what’s in store.

You still gotta smile even though it wasn’t fair.

You still gotta smile even if no one else is gonna care.

It's gonna be some stuff you're gonna see  
that's gonna make it hard to smile,  
But you still gotta smile even when you're in denial.  
You still gotta smile even when they're in the casket.  
You still gotta smile when the pressure gets drastic.

You still gotta smile 'cause you gotta keep your head up.  
You still gotta smile even when you're fed up.

You still gotta smile 'cause you gotta move forward.  
You can't run from the pain, so you must go towards it.  
When you can't pay the light bill, you still gotta smile.  
One smile, and your day will be worthwhile.

You still gotta smile 'cause they can never see you weak.  
You still gotta smile when you can't sleep for a week.  
So keep your chin high and smile,  
'cause I promise there will be better days.  
You have to smile and keep going because life is just a  
maze.

*Smile*

“Sometimes a  
smile is all  
you need for  
survival.”

---

## Reflections:

---

Smiling through pain isn't about pretending—it's about choosing strength, holding on to hope, and trusting that God has something greater in store.

***Reflection from Franklin:*** I wrote this because I've had days when smiling felt impossible. But sometimes, that one smile is what pushes you through the storm. It's not about faking it—it's about faith, grit, and refusing to let life break you.

***Reflection Question:*** What's been trying to steal your smile lately—and what would happen if you chose to smile anyway, not because life is perfect, but because you're stronger than the pain?

## **Stay Focused**

You'll never know what impact you may leave.

You'll never know if you don't wear your heart on your sleeve.

You'll never know if you don't have a goal or a dream.

You'll never know if you don't have the right team.

Don't get selfish because it's all about the team.

It doesn't matter who gets the fame because we all get a ring.

When life gets hard, who's phone is gonna ring?

I think I realized why the caged bird sings.

'Cause even though you're trapped, you still gotta be heard.

They don't understand you, but they feel every word.

Walk a straight line when those lines get blurred.

The things they'll say to break you down are honestly absurd.

So I couldn't care less about the time that it takes to figure out  
if it's real life or if it's fake,  
'Cause the real lasts forever and the fake comes and goes,  
so time will reveal everything I don't know.

Is time on your side? Is an interesting question,  
'cause it hurts and it helps, so I guess it's all a blessing.  
A blessing and a curse all at the same time.  
Are you with me or against me?  
Time, just send me a sign.



---

## Reflections:

---

Staying focused means trusting your process, staying true to your purpose, and remembering that time reveals all—both the real and the fake.

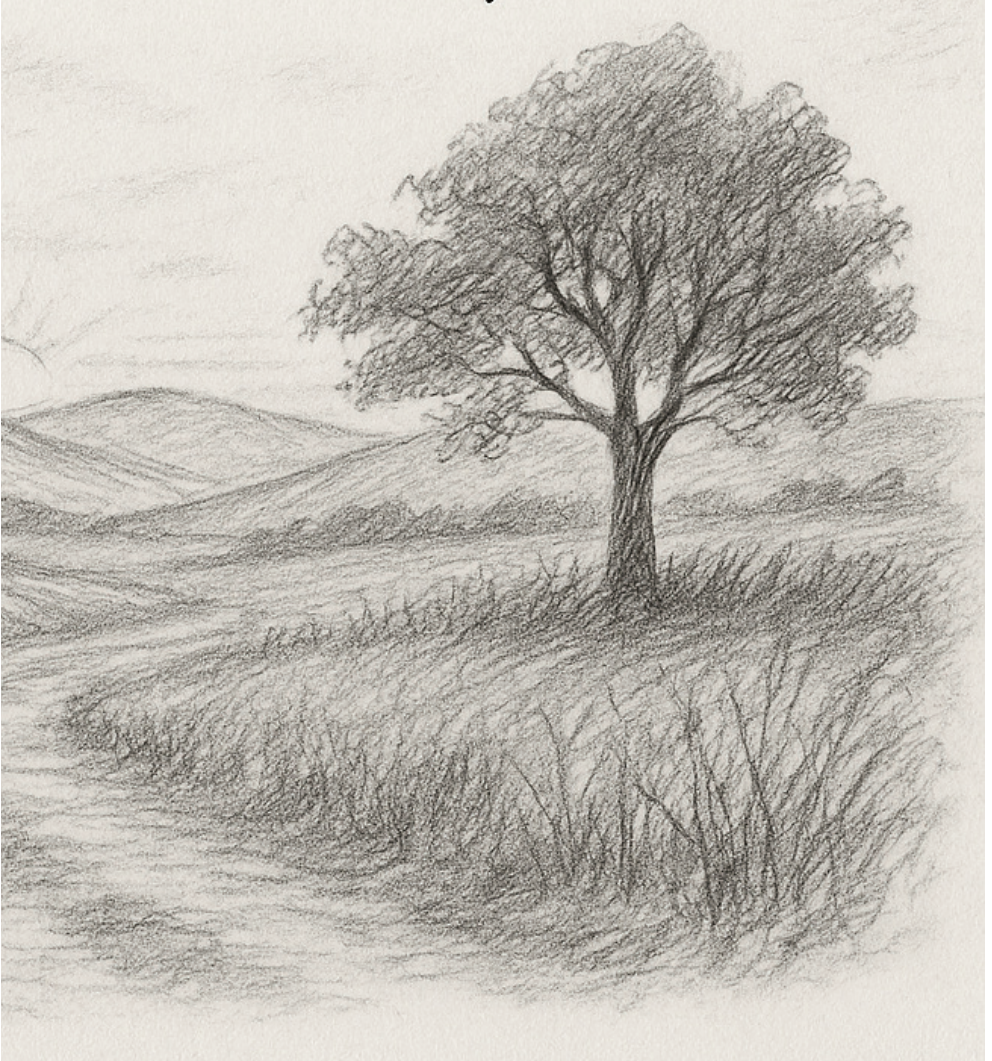
***Reflection from Franklin:*** This one came from a place of learning to block out the noise. Life's going to test you, people will question you—but if you stay focused, your purpose will speak louder than anything they say.

***Reflection Question:*** What's been distracting you from your purpose—and how can you refocus and trust that time will confirm what's meant for you?



## **In Conclusion**

Life has truthfully been magnificent.  
Your heartbeat is someone's favorite musical instrument.  
It's a blessing to be in this predicament.  
The feeling that I'm currently feeling doesn't have an equivalent.  
Learning from my old ways and I see a difference.  
Used to have bad habits; now I'm losing interest.  
Used not to go to church; now I'm in attendance.  
'Cause God is the judge; now show him repentance.  
The freedom that comes with wisdom is unmatched.  
Your attachment to this world was holding you back;  
now you're unattached.  
The surface of how great you can become  
hasn't even been scratched.  
But the energy you give to people you care for  
hasn't been matched.



---

## Reflections:

---

True freedom and fulfillment come when we grow from our past, let go of unhealthy ties, and live aligned with God's purpose for our lives.

***Reflection from Franklin:*** This is more than a conclusion—it's a praise report. I've felt the shift in my spirit, and I hope this poem inspires you to recognize how far you've come and how far you're still destined to go.

***Reflection Question:*** What habits or mindsets have you outgrown, and how has that made space for the person you're becoming?