

Addicts Are People Too!

A Poetic Anthology

Introduction to Poetic Anthology

“Addicts Are People Too” is a poetic anthology inspired by the stories of alcoholics and drug addicts I have known... and by my own experiences. The verses capture the pain and suffering of the addict, as well as that of their families, friends, lovers and co-workers alike, and illustrate the sense of powerlessness and hopelessness of those who live with the disease of addiction. As important though, this anthology celebrates the struggles and successes of those who have faced their disease with courage... overcoming fear, shame, loss, and the scorn and stigma of society in the battle to find a better way of life.

There is no middle ground for the addict... we are either miracles of survival or bums! Most of us never recover from our sicknesses. We are the down and out drunks, the skid row addicts, the petty criminals and the crack whores who break the law to support our habits. We are the alcoholic businessman or woman, the lonely housewives and single mothers, the blue-collar workers just trying to get by, and the teenagers who feel they have no future... and we all embarrass and harass those around us in our futile escape from the brutal realities of life.

We are the “secret” drinkers and drug addicts who miss work, who do not come home to our families at night... and if we do, we abuse them in response to their concerns and criticisms. Sometimes we just disappear for days or weeks... or forever. We are the thieves, the liars and the con artists who will do ANYTHING to feed our habits... our addictions have become our absolute masters, and our slavish behaviors are determined by our compulsive needs to use and abuse our “drug of choice”. Most alcoholics and addicts become increasingly sick, mean, desperate, and isolated... and drink or drug until they die. This is why the disease of addiction is considered “progressive”.

These poems commemorate these lives.

Addicts Are People Too

*addicts are people in every way
unique, not freaks, not in decay
hiding human qualities
beneath veneers and frailties*

*well past denial, but still on trial
protagonists in a Kafkaesque quest
we've paid the price and sacrificed
survived the chaos, and scarred by loss*

*yet one can never rest at ease
for this terminal disease
haunts us through each day and night
lurking, smirking, endless fight*

*so, addicts are as addicts do
stepping through life with a different view
recovered, we're the chosen few
who can make a difference, with the help of you!*

What's The Rush?

*her silver spoon is placed before me
cradled so it cannot spill
its precious, potent, pungent powder
promising an awesome thrill*

*now gently add the purest water
impatient as it blends, distills
I'm pacing as the paste transforms
becoming lethal liquid pill*

*my hands are softly shaking now
spasm-ing, strung out and raw
be careful with the "rig", the "point"
the needle poised within my claw*

*I suck the cocaine mixture in
then tap until the bubbles burst
extend my arm and torque
to pump my vein, don't need a nurse*

*I find my favorite blue ridge mountain
slightly scarred but pulsing still
and jam the instrument of pleasure
through my skin... against my will*

*now slowly draw the plunger back
thrilled to see that crimson gusher
now I know I've hit the vein
I just can't wait to feel this rusher*

... continued ...

*pull the trigger, light the fuse,
bang it home and watch it flow
then throw the dirty needle down
in seven seconds, I'm gonna blow*

*and as it launches off my rockets
blasting up towards my brain
I pray for one more miracle
to take away my lifelong pain*

*buzzing... fuzzing...
 num bing... hummmmmming...
 rushingcom... ...ing
 now it's **HERE!!!***

euphoria, flavoria, in gloria

h i s t o r i a . . . H Y S T E R I A > ? <

before-y-ya, ignoria

sensoria,

and finally

in

mem-

or-

i-

ahhhhhh !

Cry For Help

*dark profound desperation
can't escape their condemnation
no one cares to see within
the turmoil tearing through my skin*

*all they care about is light
surface calm, pretend all's right
while lurking in the deepest waters
gloom and guilt is all that smatters*

*true friends care and lift the soul
when life turns into that of mole
when clawing blind through dirt and muck
needs helping hands to get unstuck*

*beware of those who turn you in
throw you out when lights grow dim
pronounce you fit for no mankind
then cast you down, back down the mind*

*resources wearing paper-thin
dig down once more, but where begin
and why begin at all, again
my blood runs cold, and runs in vain*

*human blindness overflowing
fear and shame can't keep me going
throw away the keys to life
surrender by the edge of knife?*

Fear Is A Prison

*fear is a prison, lacking hope, sparing light
where the walls wear the tears that bleed through the night
where the cold touch of stone is as warm as it gets
where despair is a comfort, each desire a regret
where the sense of my sentence is madness, a crime
and the voices I hear are the echoes of mimes...
fear is the prison I fear.*

*fear is a prism, it's the lens that I find
that distorts and distracts the content of my mind
it warps all my visions and precious ideals
and it flatters them, shatters them ... do you know how it feels?
it's as clear as kaleidoscope's fracture of light
deflecting, reflecting the chaos, the fright
of the schisms through prisms like the prisons I fear.*

*fear must prevail, when faith cannot find
a place in my conscience, a home in my mind
fear is a jailer, and a brutal ordeal
that captures my essence so that I cannot feel
the love and the power of being alive
nor the soul of existence where love used to thrive...
oh fear is the prison I fear!*

The Genie In The Bottle

*infirmity is lurking deep
sleeping, creeping, leaping faith
much like the genie, poised in bottle
when oh so gently shined, caressed
releases such profound possession
its magic becomes sole obsession*

*igniting auras... mystical...
it proffers fantasies and wishes,
imbibed in well-worn rituals
like voodoo's sacrificial arts
with sorcerer's demonic curse
of "one more round" ... of course*

*it has its own dramatic forms
biting satire, comedies
it stimulates romantic fare
and soothes the senses, unimpaired
but the most befitting stories
are truly tragic allegories*

*this malady goes to extremes
to soaring highs and sorry lows
it crosses all the boundaries
from hemispheres to frozen poles
it's volatile, organic, seething
and at some point... may stop you breathing*

*but one can find serenity
if one surrenders willingly,
remission is within our grasp
but vigilance can never lapse,*

*and company with one another,
a drinker with his sober brother
has the power of oracles
to help us reclaim once lost souls!*

Soul Thief (Cocaine)

*soul thief, soul thief, lookin' for a score
lurkin' in the alleyways, bangin' down my door
for richer or poorer, till death do us part
throw caution to the winds... it's an affair of the heart*

*soul thief, cold thief, dressed up like a whore
her costume is enticing but she's rotten to the core
she'll get you nice and high, and then she'll suck you dry
this siren has me beggin' like a loser bout to die*

*soul thief, bold thief, ain't you had enough?
you've put me in a prison, and I'm shackled in these cuffs
how could one so white and pure, lead me down the aisle
singin' halleluya while the devil wears a smile?*

*soul thief, old thief, you've taken all my friends
they're drowning in the gutters, they were haunted till the end
you've turned us into animals, like Pavlov and his dogs
your power's too invincible... Satanic analogues!*

*soul thief, soul thief, I'm just gazing into space
and the black hole that I see there, is leading to disgrace
you've stolen everything I love, you've raped my life apart
what a barren, lonely marriage... till death do us part!*

Wheeler Dealer

*there was an old fool with an M.B.A.
a successful entrepreneur
a corporate, conservative, consummate clown
pretending his life was pure*

*but he played on the dangerous fringes - the edges
flirting with greedy young peelers
until he finally tripped over himself
and married a sexy heart stealer*

*she led him astray, with proverbial chain
firmly attached to his member
corrupting his mind and flying him high
churning his brain in her blender*

*and after inhaling copious ounces
of high-grade crack cocaine
his marketing genius turned on to drugs
he would change all the rules of their game*

*so he boiled and roiled and toiled and troubled
till his cracker jack scheme unfolded
making potent new flavors called 'Crack Creations'
the dealers all loved it and sold it*

*it was laced with liqueurs, food colors and spices
carefully branded and packaged
it was premium priced, with a guaranteed high
(but only when used as directed)*

*there was "Yackety Crack", but don't come back
if you want a refund you'll be sorry
it tastes like Kaluha, and you'll talk till you're blue
cracking jokes with bizarre oratory*

... continued ...

*“Black Jack Crack” was a favorite too
mixed with Tequila and lime
for the gambling class who liked takin’ a flyer
a high roller’s junket, high times*

*there was “Wacky Cracky”, the bubble gum rock
its vapor a pretty pink cloud
and “Cadillac Crack” made with Dom Perignon
for the upper society crowd*

*and for teens he packaged up “Happy Deals”
conveniently sold as “McCracks”
“cause you deserve a break today”
try a hit with a “Super Big Mack”*

*there was “Tacky Cracky” for those underprivileged
sold by the gross on the street
and for lunches and munchies a “Snack Crack Pack”
yes his lines were segmented, complete*

*he rapidly rose to the heights of the industry
confident, still in control
but the chaos created by his share of the using
began to take its own toll*

*he retreated alone to his ivory tower
losing touch and losing his grip
till he crashed and burned and bottomed out
the inevitable slippery trip*

*then a young opportunist muscled right in
with a brand called “Jumpin’ Jack Crack”
it was better and cheaper; it pissed him right off
he should have thought of that!*

Annie's Trigger

*looking down the barrel of a thirty-eight special
cold steel pressed my temple, I'd become his blaming vessel
where he spewed his shame and rage*

*the stench of vomit on his breath, his cursed lips pressed to my ear
he reeked and oozed, a coward's sweat, and drooled saliva mixed with beer
grinning, with his finger on the trigger*

*he screamed at girlfriend number nine: "don't leave me bitch, don't even try
cause if you do, this pet of mine, who'll likely shit before she dies,
will splatter blood before your eyes"*

*but number nine just wanted out, she'd had her fill of scary nights
he never really could have cared, but no one left without a fight,
and you must never leave him... high or dry*

*so he propped his little puppet, 'tween his bow-legged bony knees
just seven years old, and quivering, he rammed his gun, began to squeeze
the trigger... sheer horrific terror*

*ten years later, I'm still alive, passed around, passed out, passed over
this Annie's got that gun tattooed, on every memory, mood... whatever
an eternity of pain, and soul humiliation*

*like dogs that dare to cross the highway, I dodge the bullets, duck and weave
till one real asshole went too far, and with a crowbar spread my knees
drunken, sunken, treasure huntin'*

*and all the smack and crack and booze could not obliterate my past
so with a broken vodka bottle, I ripped his chest apart - a blast
then rammed it up his dirty ass*

*it seemed the proper thing to do, cause fear and rage were all I knew
and slashing out was natural born, with consequences never mourned
please grant me peace... and quell the storms!*

Repeat Offender

*he strikes apologetic pose
humbled, but not a wilting rose
as he begs his pardon from the yard arm
acting penitent, but wary
cause life in penitentiary
in darkened, barren sanctuary
crushed his once bold attitude... the vacuum of that solitude*

*a child extra ordinary
like those born to be wary, sorry
probation was pure purgatory
a half-way house, and mandatory
yet spouting his sad oratory
filled with quips from oft told stories
cannot change his allegory*

*with each brand-new soul rendition
cheating self, he's lost ambition
repeat offender, one more bender
and when you ask him: "why -
if he's already hit his bottom -
why he keeps on digging...
to depths we cannot fathom!"*

(To my only friend with a teardrop tattoo.)

Wander Lust

*how did it feel when the love at home
struck fear and shame in one so prone
to doing what her elders taught
for their selfish pleasure... but don't get caught*

*and what was it like to be bound and gagged
with zero boundaries, drugged and tagged
because their minds were bent and twisted
life became too heavy fisted*

*again betrayed, forbidden kisses
misconceptions, soiled misses
men who should know better - no matter how insane -
just thinkin' how to take her, for their pleasure, bleeding pain*

*her silent screams were mute refrains
of blinding rage, remorse, self-blame
each time they plied their dirty game
her life became more sordid shame*

*a victim - prey for predators -
incesting generations cursed
their wander lust, both tried and trussed
shattered norms, and cratered trust*

*so as she tries to comprehend
the notion of an honest friend
she's cautious, fearful, ever wary
cause love and wander lust... were truly, awful, scary!*

Lo Siento (I'm Sorry)

*“lo siento, lo siento” - it’s the mantra she cries
I’ve heard it so often, its nothing but lies
she believes she feels sorry, she’s fulfilled with remorse
but she can’t quite recall that we’ve been here before*

*“lo siento, lo siento” - it’s the theme of her kind
it’s her anthem of darkness, the refrain of the blind
cause she cannot remember the present or past
it’s escape that she craves, placing everyone last*

*“lo siento, lo siento” - she wails while she’s sleeping
her despair a reflection of the friends she’s left weeping
“lo siento, lo siento” - are the words that I find
that undermine love, all affection maligned!*

Here Comes Sparky

*they used to call me 'Elmer' cause I sniffed a little glue
but in trying to fumigate my brain, I mixed it up like rabbit stew
then they called me 'Rabbit' - I was good at running numbers
and handicapping horses with the shakers and the comers*

*then I became 'Head Waiter' but the waiting I abhorred
so I took to tokin' weed, it became my new amour
then I became a widower and I really hit the bottle
and I hit the speed and broke the limit, had to pull back on my throttle*

*now I'm 'The Coach' and I'm clean and sober, so I tell it like it is
to the shy and weary newcomers learning life without the fizz
I am 'The Coach' and I'll show you the ropes that you need to keep you clean
and if you follow my suggestions, you might avoid the guillotine*

*and my sole obsession now is the greyhounds at Bonita
chasing 'Sparky' the magic rabbit, thinking each time: "hey I gotcha"
their behavior seems familiar, just like addicts gettin' high
with the call of "here comes Sparky", they'll pursue her 'till they die!*

(Tribute to "the Coach" who I befriended at an AA New Year's Eve party in Naples, Florida.
Retired now, he spent his 52-year career as bellboy and then other roles at an historic Naples
hotel.)

Zero Duval Street

*in the southernmost town
in the southernmost state
it's the end of the line
known as Zero Duval*

*Zero Duval is an address of sorts
a respite for the weary
the last of resorts
it is hidden away
though a well-known retreat
for those who have chosen
to accept their defeat*

*it's the home of acceptance
and it thrives in decay
if you've been run around
or just running away
it's just what you need
like shades for the soul
you're no longer worthy
livin' life like a mole*

*in the southernmost town
in the southernmost state
at the end of the line
you are zero... Duval.*

(An ode to Key West, Florida)

Faux Pas?

*a 'tabula rasa', primed and white
as the halls in her 'casa'
in dawn's pearly light
gently peeling back the night*

*revealing Merlin's labyrinth
a quest as fresh as hyacinth
in scented, oleander maze
she's blossoming... a polonaise*

*a bold apostrophe in life
suspending atrophy and strife
a past imperfect fetal form
unfurls to flourish... life reborn*

*she glows and fros, a Tinkerbell
in a Neverland where time will tell
her charisma like Peter Pan
or Pann the magic muse(sic) man*

*with lucent wings caressing walls
the artist's way, her spirit calls
for vibrant textures, tones diminished
swirling, furling strokes... faux finished*

*finally feeling free, she's pleased
with the overall effect - the frieze
no more withdrawn, but patterned after
siren's songs and children's laughter*

*she oh so slightly touches down
hovering o'er hallowed ground
the 'faux fairy' was lost but found
she simply took the long way round!*

(Tribute to Jodi, a sparkling ray of sunshine, and brilliant artist/photographer.)

Sensory Perceptions

*please don't speak
if you cannot improve
the silence, the quietude
it's essential for calm introspection and prayer
and serenity's brief interludes*

*and don't bother looking
if you really can't see
the forest for the trees
each branch of our world is interdependent
working organically*

*and don't smell the roses
before they're in bloom
for the fragrant anticipation
may turn the bouquet into early decay
in sensory deprivation*

*and don't taste the victories
before they're complete
your disease just may be in remission
cause new savory passions may come into fashion
igniting old inhibitions*

*and if you think you can hear
without really listening
you're a fool, with unmuted pretensions
and the sounds of the silence will toll with the losses
of those whom you loved... but were left with contrition!*

Karma Calling

*I thought I heard a whisper, but it might have been a roar
in mellow moody monotones, it moved me to my core
it might have been a mystic, or a muse amusing self
her presence giving sustenance, to bridge a yawning gulf*

*it must be Karma calling, a spirit's pantomime
as I wander through life's twisted maze - the labyrinth of time
she speaks to me like Socrates, in questions she'll compose
the essence of life's paradox, in oft prosaic prose*

*she proffers magic moments, like seeds upon the wind
to pollinate, illuminate the answers from within
she floats a boat of wisdom, over oceans far and wide
aiding those who to and fro, in the ebb and flow of tides*

*she comes to me in fantasies,
in dreams with broken parts,
is life, in truth, a comedy...
just imitating art?*

Potable Quotables:

“I prefer Beefeaters... but Gilbeys fits in my purse better!”

“I was just lost in thought... it was unfamiliar territory!”

“The three words we never want to hear an alcoholic say are: ‘I’ve been thinking!’”

“We’re only as sick as our secrets!”

“I finally found a cure for alcoholism... it’s called crack cocaine!”

“I am always on my mind!”

“I used to steal stuff from stores... all the time... and tell myself it wasn’t really stealing... I was just too important to wait in line at the checkout counter!”

“Expectations are just pre-determined resentments!”

“When I was alone and using... I was with my worst enemy. And now when I’m alone, I’m with my best friend!”

“Practice random acts of kindness... and senseless thoughts of beauty!”

“Staying clean isn’t everything... but using is nothing!”

“I’m a human doing... I need to be a human being!”

“I wanted to reach out for help... but it was not within my grasp!”

“I’ve used up all my sick days... I’m calling in dead!”

“I’m not an alcoholic... I’m a drunk... alcoholics go to meetings!”

“Rehab is for quitters!”