

## Prologue: Victim Driver Killer Mistress

### Blurb

One's past leaves physical traces of itself here and there - photographs, letters of promises and compromise, the scars that were left to heal - but for the most part it is just a story to remember, and one's memory is malleable. What we experience in our dying days can color the story of our childhood. The tale changes while remaining the same. Does that mean it's possible that we might never know someone until long after their story is over? And if we then find that a story is not finished when it ends, would it also not have begun at the start?

### Lyrics

The Victim lies face up in  
what used to be his blood  
As he drifts away he wonders  
if there's peace where he wakes up

The Driver catches his pulse when  
his hand is on his brow  
For what it's worth his course was true  
and it's almost over now

The Killer clears the barrel  
of his cold and smoking gun  
Just another passing moment  
while life is passing on

The Mistress walks a fine line  
the sinner and the saint  
If her love is true  
then this just might turn out okay

# Chapter 1: A Tyrant by Any Other Name

## Blurb

The strength of any man can fail given the right circumstances. Even one coddled by truth and love can fall to temptation. What chance then is there for a man raised in lies and malice?

## Lyrics

True men will always tremble when  
the truth becomes their slave  
Cause nothing tempts an honest man  
like the good he could achieve  
And they lost it on the river  
while we were lost at sea  
And these aging men will find their drift  
and get lost inside their dreams

Yeah you build it up so sweetly  
by design I'm sure you're told  
You never need to care 'bout no one else  
you never think about your soul  
My mom always said that fools rush in  
so take some time and find your place  
Cause it's better to rent an apartment  
than buy a house you can't maintain

A bullet shape in your logo  
won't encourage anything  
But a bullet shaped like lies  
will always find the thing it seeks  
And a deviled thought may cry alone  
and see he's heaven made  
While a Godless man will seize the Earth  
and salt it all to taste

## Chapter 2: How She Copes

### Blurb

The walk back from the Victim's manor seemed a blur, and she gained no comfort by her return home. The Mistress was alone here, and she knew that part of her would now always be alone. She resolved to make that part of her a sacrifice. A slice of her must wither to keep the greater part untouched. "I'll lock this inside of me," she spoke to herself in a hollow tone. "I'll bury it, and try to keep it there... until I must return."

### Lyrics

So we try the things inside  
And everything great  
about me concedes  
never to think  
more than I need  
So I try the thing inside

## Chapter 3: Pike

### Blurb

The Driver entered the state chambers with purpose. "Sir, I trust you've heard the news from the coast. If the public were to find out..."

"Yes," the Victim spat, "I know exactly how it would look." He sat forward in his seat and slid a file across the desk. "I have already selected the man who will take care of Pike."

A meaningful edge in the Victim's tone caught the Driver's ear as he claimed the folder. He tensed as he understood his ruler's intentions. "Is this wise?"

"As you can see from his service record, he has unique qualifications to deal with the matter."

"Is that your only reason for sending him?"

The Victim settled back in his chair, and met the Driver's glare. "Two birds with one stone."

### Lyrics

I'm looking for a man  
by the name of Pike  
You shouldn't help me  
but you could save my life  
He hit my girl  
He spent my gold on silver spoon  
I'll wring his throat  
I'll make him pay his dues

And I know Pike  
like his brother might  
His fear tastes like wine  
but his wrath has eyes

Pike's a wraith  
but I fear no man  
I'd light his pyre  
as soon as I'd shake his hand  
The wind's back East boys  
You can turn around  
No crew of mine get in a fight  
just to walk out

And Pike knows your eyes  
like the water knows the rain

He's more human than you or I  
and I would be afraid

His ship looks dead  
It caught itself in a hellish wind  
But I stay my course  
I'm sick of chasing him  
This is it boy  
Your run is done  
But I'll stay my hand  
You're just a pirate's son

And I know Pike  
like his father might  
His tears taste like booze  
but I see right through

We sail in force  
We rape the seven seas  
The world is ours son  
We'll bring it to its knees  
And then the mist clears  
The Red Navy... oh  
Well this is it boy  
Our judgment's on

And Pike knows my eyes  
like the water knows the rain  
He's more human than you or I  
and now I'm not afraid  
And Pike knows my eyes  
like the water knows the rain  
He's more human than you or I  
and I won't be afraid

## Chapter 4: A Mass of Voices for the Voice of the Masses

### Blurb

The foreign media was the only honest criticism the Victim could count on these days. It hadn't always been like that. He can't remember when it changed, but he understood why it did. Now, as he wrapped himself tighter against the cold, he followed the accented correspondent, "... as unrest continues since the 'High Ruler's' birthday last week. Reports are coming in of peacekeeping units using high levels of force to disband unarmed public protests. I had the chance to speak with one protester who wished to give an anonymous statement saying, 'He has gone too far this time. The propaganda won't pacify us now. He will pay for what happened just as he will pay for all of his sins.'"

With that he turned off the feed leaving himself with only the silent judgment of the dark room. "So it would seem."

### Lyrics

Pocket full of cash  
from the bottles that we had  
from the beer we didn't drink  
cause we poured it down the sink  
Now the cops are asking questions  
about everyone's intentions  
and just why we don't use guns  
in the revolution

Grateful and screaming  
My faith intact

Everyone's a critic  
when you're asking their opinion  
so you turn the conversation  
to someone else's relationship  
And out with all the secrets  
that your friends had asked you keep for them  
cause gossip's always true unless it is about you

Grateful and screaming  
My faith intact

## Chapter 5: This Wall of Sound

### Blurb

It is peaceful, at the end. Concerns, both small and large, drain from you, anger and jealousy burn away into the ether, and you are left suddenly with a clear view. This fresh picture of all things reweaves the world before your waning sight. Oh, what wonders both splendid and terrible could we know had we the eyes of a dying man: we could plot the shadows of the swells of time; we could see and understand the one substance from which all is constructed; we could know of Death's preference for the vocoder...

### Lyrics

This wall of sound extends to the heavens

We walk in the shadows of the night  
cause we can't show our faces in daylight

We're walking through the shadows of the night  
cause we can't show

No

Why'd you leave us here  
there's no one left to claim you

## Chapter 6: Ruler of All – Friend to None

Blurb

The trouble with living inside your own head is that it's very difficult to get out.

Lyrics

I don't know if I could ever be alone  
I connect to faces that could make me whole  
It's difficult to make such friends for an introvert  
Unless she talks to me the way I talk to her

I listen to my heart even though I make a thoughtless sound  
I slip into her place to replace what her god is now  
And I know this keeps me down but whoever said I wanted height  
Though I'm thinking maybe now it'd be better just to stay inside

I don't know if I could ever make her whole  
I connect to things that make me feel alone  
And it's difficult to say some things for an introvert  
Unless she talks to me the way I want to talk to her



## Chapter 7: The Trouble With Plans

### Blurb

So much waiting is involved in the best laid plans. Prudence always dictates caution, and caution means being ready ahead of time, and being ready ahead of time means there's always time to wait.

No one ever wants to talk. Any man with a sense of dignity knows not to. You can't be calm with your mouth open. That's when thoughts become words.

### Lyrics

I drive away everything I needed  
and everything else in flames it goes  
Probably end up in time succeeded  
by someone who knows the things I don't

Yeah I tried so hard to beat them  
living on the edge of seats and  
always thinking things would go my way  
I thought I's a blessed creature  
never had to try to please you  
even though I always made mistakes

I drive away everything I needed  
and everything else in flames it goes  
Probably end up in time succeed  
by someone who knows the things I don't

Yeah I'm slipping down the line  
cause I have never had to try  
and now I think that I am on the wrong path  
But as I pull the car aside  
I take a moment just to lie  
under the shelter of the overpass

It's blasphemy to take apart and never pick back up again  
It's blasphemy cause when we dream we never think of consequence  
It's blasphemy to live a life and never find a favorite song  
It's blasphemy for me to think that I am never truly wrong

## Chapter 8: For God and Country

### Blurb

The clink of lock and key rang in the darkness, and the sudden flood of light through the opened doorway revealed only a silhouette to the prisoner. "I'm here to free you. You have work to do."

The Killer rose slowly and presented his shackles. His liberator stepped forward to undo the chains, and his face was revealed.

"You don't seem surprised to see me," said the Driver. The restraints dropped to the floor, and he observed the free man before him.

"I expected somebody." The decay of silence had left his words in a whisper. He took in the wary look from the Driver and a wry smile drew across the Killer's face. "Though it is interesting that it's you who came."

A tense moment flitted past before the Driver grabbed the Killer by the arm and guided him out of the forgotten hole of a cell.

### Lyrics

The vapor trail is indistinct  
A wisp of smoke resembling me  
The painful memories finish fast  
to shift my memory to the past

Heaven asks something of me  
Don't judge the clouds from underneath

I let my senses understand  
how I'm supposed to be a man  
It's not about maturity  
It's all about moving your feet

Heaven asks something of me  
Live for love and die for free

I picture things I want to be  
that are not yet a part of me  
I see the things I would forsake  
for just succumbing to mistakes

Heaven asks something of me  
Break the glass and shake the tree

## Chapter 9: We Rape the Seven Seas

### Blurb

Serving the men that come through here has always been its own sort of trial. A place like this in a town like this draws all walks of life, but they share one thing: to each of them Mary only exists so long as their stories touch hers. She's not a person. She's no more than a fly on the wall with their drinks. On a night like tonight she's grateful for that status. The two men in the corner are her customers, and she wishes they weren't. There are things you can see in a person's eyes if you're paying attention. Mary sees that both of these men are dangerous. The first should be feared for his disregard, well, for everything. The second should be feared because he shares the first man's company with a chilling calm.

Mary takes their order and returns as quickly as possible. As they are settling the bill, a drunkard stumbles toward the table. She tries to warn him away with her eyes, but he has no mind for such subtlety at the moment.

"Good sirs, how are you this evening?" The stink of booze fueled swagger washes the air. He braces himself against the table. The Man With Disregard slides out of his chair and grips the poor soul in one arm.

"My companion and I were just numbing ourselves to discuss the finer points of life. Will you be joining us?"

The drunk straightens himself and seems to realize that he may have made a mistake. "Do I know you?"

The dangerous man laughs without humor and replies, "You may." He leans his head closer and points to the Man With Calm. "See him? He's a Killer." The drunk shows his discomfort as the Man With Disregard tightens his grasp and finds his gaze. "And I'm a wraith," He forces the drunk into a chair. "And you're our new friend."

### Lyrics

Everyone I know is irrelevant  
So all I really need is a second wind  
You know I think it's all my time we always spend  
I've got your answers in the ground like a second bed  
And the leaves on the trees are forming  
And everybody knows what's coming

The babies on the river always drown  
unless they've had enough of it by now

Hey man the summer's over  
Everyone's coming over  
We gon' get messed up

Yeah, like you never told me everyone is real  
Yeah, why are you always looking for something to steal?  
Yeah, like you always say that everyone's the same  
Yeah, like you always think that everyone is sane

## Chapter 10: Follow the Whispers Through the Dark

### Blurb

So here she sits, eyes closed, to the right of the most powerful man in the country. Some envy her, others revile her, but the Mistress pays no mind. Every day that she suffers here delays a much greater suffering. Though, thankfully, the pain cannot touch her like it used to. Her love is a ghost now. It is that shade which she follows with the faith that it will lead her through.

"Please lead me through."

### Lyrics

I'm sitting in place  
hands on my knees  
I'm moving in close  
just as I'm told  
And their hands are outstretched  
adjusting the lens  
in case someone sees  
pictures of me

I hear something right next to me  
It's in the space I needed  
I think about my way back down  
because I hear it leaving

I'm reading the signs  
waiting in line  
As I move up the queue  
the line splits in two  
Well the path on the right  
takes you outside  
And of the other one left  
the signs do not tell

I hear something right next to me  
It's in the space I needed  
I think about my way back down  
because I hear it leaving

# Chapter 11: The Silence of Humility

## Blurb

The Killer sat flanked by two guards behind a chill metal table. His hands and feet were bound, and he ached from the beatings of the past day. A heavy chink rang from the only door into the dark chamber. An officer in dress uniform stepped into the cramped room and sat across from the Killer. "I am Commander Smith, Warden of this prison."

"Nice to meet you Warden." The Killer reclined and put a smug slant on his grin, "You know you can save the interrogation for someone else, I have no idea where Pike is going or what he's doing."

"Oh, we won't be wasting any time on that. You see, I could care less about Pike. It was you the fleet was after." The grin faded from the Killer's face. "There will be no interrogation; there will be no trial. In fact, I don't even really need to be talking to you." It was Smith's turn to be smug, "I was just interested to see your face when I informed you that you would not see the sun for the rest of your natural life."

He waited for the Killer to post some reaction. When none came, the Warden exhaled, impressed. "Fascinating."

## Lyrics

You ask me no questions about where I'm from  
You don't ask no questions about where I'm goin'  
You tell me my mind, but you've got it all wrong  
You've hummed through the tune, but your rhythm was off

No ship set sail that's good with no breeze  
Vessels sit dark and dead on the sea

I don't use a lot of words to describe  
everything that I'm feeling inside  
cause I'm feeling like I'm out of time

Quiet are those that don't make a sound  
when saying the things they don't know right now

I don't use a lot of words to describe  
everything that I'm feeling inside  
cause I'm feeling like I'm out of time

## Chapter 12: No More Dreams These Days

### Blurb

"There is a certain kind of dream I have. It always starts like every other dream. Typical stuff: forgotten school work, walking through exaggerated settings, talking with exaggerated versions of the people I know... But at some point, I do something - it's never clear what - that just ruins everything. I make some mistake that completely alters my life. The feeling is horrible. It's like having every inch of you pulled inward by a gentle breath that never yields. The world seems to speed past me in a blur, though each moment contains years of torture. That weight on me feels so surreal and foreign that I actually realize I'm dreaming. I begin to call out to myself, 'Please wake up! Please!' When I do, I'm so thankful to have the terrible pressure relieved. It makes me realize how bad things could get."

"They could get pretty bad."

"I'm so sorry."

### Lyrics

The truth  
is hard to know  
You need to  
want it told  
You see  
I can't believe  
that something good  
could come to me

Too late  
I am on stage  
I watch my mistakes  
made as I'm made  
And now  
I feel the crowd  
all watching me  
head towards the ground

The breeze  
drifts through the screen  
I watch my machine  
like I'm seventeen  
Then I awoke  
The message unfolds  
I know what I know  
about the cold

## Chapter 13: Opening

Blurb

The only sound was that of their life.

"How can I reconcile the things I should do, with the things that are expected of me?"

She recognized his rhetoric, and she forgave it, and gave in to it. The Mistress closed her eyes as he spoke again.

"How can I do that without feeling alone?"

Lyrics

I give  
everyone I know  
the list  
I wrote upon my notes  
And it feels like  
everyone's to blame  
that I feel like  
I cannot relate

I give  
all of it away  
if I go out  
to try to save the day  
And it feels like  
choices become known  
cause I feel like  
my stories can't be told



## Chapter 14: Just One Other

### Blurb

"You know you come off as arrogant sometimes?" The Mistress nudged the Killer with her elbow.

"Me?" he said with mock surprise.

"Yes, you! And it's not very endearing either." Her smiling voice carried a critical edge.

"Are you not endeared?"

She stopped their walk home and pulled herself close. "I've always known what I signed up for." She was serious now. "But who else have you given a chance to know you?"

### Lyrics

You'll find the darnedest thing in a jar at the top of the road  
You'll find, well, everything you would need should you go it alone  
I got a lot of space for the things that I grow and release  
I got a peaceful fist should I ever really need to retreat

My pull is a different way

All the things I do could be seen as a difficult job  
You're living in some fear should your dreams never make it on top  
I always find my way even though I really should've been lost  
It sucks you can't relate cause you never really think about God

My pull is a different way

## Chapter 15: The Rise and Flow

### Blurb

There were some times when he could not be reached.

And then there were some times when he would hear everything she said.

### Lyrics

Hands release  
everyone we reach  
with intent to keep  
part of them with me

I seen a man live for his family  
I read once death comes naturally  
I breathed some air that made me think  
and kept me from just canceling

I'm just the sum  
of all of the parts  
of the things we are  
that we might become

I know what you say about me  
when I'm dreaming of  
swinging from the trees and shouting  
emptying my lungs

There's no way I'm staying here  
while you all go into the night  
What about your brother's sins?  
Yeah, what about his life?

Cause he's just the sum  
of all of the parts  
of the things we are  
that we might become

Don't use the way that will cradle temptation  
Some who are in you continue to take it

So don't  
let anything go

Keep your eyes upon the road  
Find someone to hold

Cause we're just the sum  
of all of the parts  
of the things we are  
that we might become

## Chapter 16: But not Longer than the Wind Blows

### Blurb

"That part of you is over now. I know what happened. I know you're sorry. I know it's not your fault."

The Mistress dug herself in between the Killer's arms, "Thank you... but my time to grieve is much longer than the time it takes to apologize."

### Lyrics

I stand beneath the bough  
naked from the Fall  
and underneath its leaves  
I find something unseen  
Cause nothing here will grow  
though many seeds are sown  
The leaves all feel obliged  
to soak up all the light

And a mighty wind will blow  
arranging as it goes  
the things we left unsaid  
The wind will say them best

The sea she loves to dance  
uplifting throngs of men  
who would use her to retain  
everything they've gained  
But she will not be made  
some elemental slave  
She calls her brother home  
to let her anger show

And a mighty wind will blow  
The sea rages below  
Filling sails with grief  
and pulling men beneath

And a mighty wind will blow  
The reed that bends will grow  
but the tree that tries to take the wind  
will surely break

And a mighty wind will blow

## Chapter 17: But a Word Makes it True

### Blurb

The Killer sat alone, bracing the weight of his thoughts.

How do you get rid of someone who's been so close to you?

How do you do that to someone you've been tied to?

How do you put them away?

What words make it okay?

### Lyrics

Yeah, I'm getting to the point  
where I'm forgetting to write  
the first line of the point  
that I wanted to type  
Oh man I dig just who I am  
when I frustrate you sometimes  
Yeah, it's too much a part of me  
to rip it out and leave the part that's liked

What will remain  
of our problems  
with light slowing down  
to solve them?  
Trees wilt as planned  
in the autumn  
and we think that we  
could have stopped them  
in the cold

What  
you hope to find in law  
you'll only find in faith  
Cast it out  
it's lost its taste  
it's lost its taste  
But the salt is  
collecting in the halls and  
I find the door still open  
though I'm pretty sure I closed it

all the way

What will remain  
of our problems  
with light slowing down  
to solve them?  
Trees wilt as planned  
in the autumn  
and we think that we  
could have stopped them  
in the cold

## Chapter 18: Blood

Blurb

He has taken many lives. This one, however, will be different.

Lyrics

I pick the lock on the door  
I find my eyes on the floor  
A trickle turns into screams  
It's such an interesting dream

Endeavor  
to change  
cause I'm always  
the same  
cause I'm never  
alone  
whatever  
I know

Finding all my meaning in the cadence  
What good are we at practicing behavior?  
Now legally I think we might be safer  
if I finally know why we have been savored

And I'm thinking about  
my decency  
All these people from roofs  
on top of me  
while I'm writing these lines  
to help me see  
that there's nothing of mine  
but vacancy

Never content to bow my eyes  
Falling asleep I should have tried  
but never have I consented trade  
an amount of respect until it's gained

Never have I to bow my eye  
Thinking of things I should have tried  
but never would I allow to trade  
keeping it real until today

I pull my hands up my sleeves  
I feel my pockets for keys  
I mark my face with a grin  
I start all over again

The snowfall  
is brief  
It freezes  
It sleeps  
I'm watching  
the coals  
They're melting  
the snow

Never content to bow my eyes  
Falling asleep I should have tried  
but never have I consented trade  
an amount of respect until it's gained

Never have I to bow my eye  
Thinking of things I should have tried  
but never would I allow to trade  
keeping it real until today



## Chapter 19: No Trade Exists

Blurb

"You know our situations are not as different as you might think."

"Pardon me, Warden. I am already suffering the shame of imprisonment; must I also suffer the shame of your taunts?"

The Warden warms into a grin. "Hear me out."

The Killer shrugs indifferently while placing his stones. "Go ahead."

"Think about it. Are we not both given the same food? The same stone walls? The same monotonous repetition?"

The Killer steepled his fingers on his chin as the Warden takes his turn.

"Are we not both confined here? I am not allowed to see my family. I don't even know how they are, or what they're doing. I haven't in a long time, and I don't know when I will next."

The Killer's move scrapes the board.

"The only real difference between you and me is that it is my place to be in power, and it is your place to be in my power. Each of us fulfilling our part."

The Warden's grin grows to a smile, as he lets play drift. "You know," he begins, "I was once posted in the islands. The locals played this game with leather satchels each filled with rocks to a third of the player's weight."

"Really?" asks the Killer.

"Yes, it was a rather impressive mix of strategy and athleticism."

"Was it very popular?"

"Quite." The Warden stops to take stock of his position before continuing. "The game was used to decide the leader of the village."

"How fabulously simple of them."

"Don't mistake simplicity for naivety."

"I wouldn't."

The Warden raises his head and checks the Killer's eyes. "No, you wouldn't," he admits before making his winning move.

The Killer's poise momentarily trips over the board. He says, "Best two out of three," and the Warden laughs.

### Lyrics

Try to sing a song or hymn  
cause they think it comforts them  
but it's unique like none before it  
it might complete, it might pull from it

I wonder who this piece belongs to  
when I let it go  
Yeah every piece will have a place  
and some of them might know

Check the clock  
and try to buy another drink  
The barkeep's gone  
cause he knows his counters deep  
The band plays on  
as everyone was headed home  
They get turned off  
just in time to let it go

I wonder who this piece belongs to  
when I let it go  
Yeah every piece will have a place  
and some of them might know

I wonder who this piece belongs to  
when I let it go  
Yeah every piece will have a place  
and some of them might know

I wonder who this piece belongs to  
when I let it go  
Yeah every piece will have a place  
and some of them might know

## Chapter 20: What Shall a Man Give?

Blurb

He weights his sole to speed away.

Projected silhouettes flit through the moonlit car.

He trades expectation for reflection while he is allowed his silence.

Lyrics

If peace  
should come again  
and I've wandered off the scene  
well I know my sins

## Chapter 21: What is Lacking

### Blurb

"...won't pacify us now. He will pay for what happened just as he will pay for all of his sins."

The recited quote could barely be heard across room, but it resounded. The Driver picked up his head from his hands and took note.

"This civil unrest comes at a difficult time as rumors recently surfaced that the Provincial Governors have been convening in secret under executive authority."

The Driver sighed with joyless humor. "Of all the rumors to report on." The room creaked as he stood up to turn off the feed.

In the fresh silence he considered the beams of streetlight striking the floor. They were just barely able to glow the dust that happened through their path. To the Driver it appeared as if the particles disappeared outside of the rays. He supposed they were still there and with the right light he would see them, but the illusion held sway none the less...

Regardless, he thought to himself, if he were to be completely impartial, all that finding those particles would really prove is that they would be there if he looked for them.

### Lyrics

The truth says the files understand  
Yeah, truthfulness lies under written hand  
The word above the doorway lets us know  
The word is from my lips  
I never spoke

It slips under your feet and grinds by stone  
It runs along the floorboards in your home  
It's like a metaphor for how we think  
and when the grain is good we all believe

Patients try to live and never die  
so they take the things doctors prescribe  
Now what if they could really stave off death?  
The soul will leave the body in the end

## Chapter 22: Delivered

### Blurb

Her reproach lingered with the Victim, even days later.

Sometimes he considered putting her to death.

Though, most times he considered the opposite.

### Lyrics

Situations change  
It happens every day  
Snow turns into rain  
and showers wash away

And colors  
on the street  
in oil and gasoline  
alone  
don't mean that much to me  
Well I'm trying  
to go right back to sleep

Slow  
like the morning sun  
It rises from beyond  
the buildings and the cars

Well colors  
on the street  
in oil and gasoline  
alone  
don't mean that much to me  
Man I'm tired  
I walk right by the scene

Teach me belief in the city  
cause the streets all wind away from the road  
Change all the ways I am willing  
to greet all the days left to go

And colors  
on the street

in oil and gasoline  
alone  
don't mean that much to me  
Well I'm trying  
to walk right by the scene  
Yeah, I'm tired  
I'm going back to sleep  
When I'm tired  
I go right back to sleep

## Chapter 23: The Victim Lingers

### Blurb

The footfalls of the Victim echo through the hall as he approaches her chamber. He stops at the doorway, and she feels his eyes on her.

"Why did you leave?"

She angles herself towards him. "I couldn't stomach being there any longer."

"We're going back. My birthday isn't over yet."

"Anything for you." She stands up and looks him in his eyes. "That is the bargain, is it not?"

Taking advantage of his silence, she slips past him back to the party.

The Victim lingers.

### Lyrics

And I begin to think  
that I am not the only  
one of us who's called  
And now I start to see  
another piece around me  
filling gaps in walls  
Soon I begin to feel  
something real is moving  
out beyond my gate  
And I begin again  
cause what is moving  
will leave behind my age

And in time  
And in space  
And inside  
And in place  
And in faith

Across this isometric view  
all the lines that are drawn to scale are true  
And now we can't know how the plot is laid  
cause the artwork only gives it shape

And in time  
And in space  
And inside  
And in place  
And in faith

And if the shot looks wide  
you gotta reach to save it still  
cause it's better that you try  
than lay in bed with all that guilt  
And if your shot goes wide  
and we're all just standing still  
you'll be better for the try  
You'll be better for your guilt



## Chapter 24: Till Death do us Part

Blurb

"Please don't go."

Her eyes waver.

"It's been so long."

He stops at her words, places his bags on the floor, and turns towards her.

She has already composed herself.

"I promise you I'll be okay. So will you." He brushes back her hair. "This is something I have to do. Nothing can change that."

His escort calls him by rank from outside.

"Goodbye."

The Mistress holds him one last time. Then the Killer walks away.

Lyrics

And you and I  
will find our separate ways  
A chance to love  
that loves to walk with pain  
And you and I  
will find our separate ways  
We'll drink from cups  
We'll cup our hands to face

Still I feel the sea upon my skin  
seasoned with the salt and blowing wind  
Who am I to say what we all know?  
Maybe we don't understand  
Maybe we don't understand at all

And you and I  
will find our separate ways  
We'll save a life  
by signing one away  
And you and I

will find our separate ways  
There's one way down  
and that's the way we came

Still I feel the sea upon my skin  
seasoned with the salt and blowing wind  
Who am I to say what we all know?  
Maybe we don't understand  
Maybe we don't understand at all

And you and I  
will find our separate ways  
before the sun  
and while the seasons change  
And you and I  
will find our separate ways  
We'll meet back up  
amidst the end of days

# Interlude: Victim Driver Killer Mistress

## Blurb

Here lie the Victim, the Driver, the Killer, and the Mistress. Forever buried in pictures. Penned into fairy tales that are always happening. Tied to everything but their lives.

There is not a service for this. Only your thoughts.

## Lyrics

In a roundabout way  
I am fine  
Were it truly realistic  
to understand a system from inside  
I might not be entirely surprised  
Overwhelmed maybe  
but truth means no surprise

I turn my breath back inside  
and quietly I struggle beside  
a need to recognize trends  
so I don't have to struggle again

You see, giving up so easy  
is all part of the user agreement

Parallels to world and dominion are weak  
Trials are held and verdicts found

Somewhere ushers time  
Placebo comes alive  
A killer climbs

Faced past environments  
and climate changes V2.0  
lingerie at our feet

Honey wine is sweet  
It puts me at the end  
and though I skipped the route  
I find it was worth the journey

There is this piece of me in the way  
It does not like to be moved

It is far too confident  
and self conscious  
and concerned  
It thinks too much

So I asked what could be done to make that part stop thinking

Now I am given lessons by an unlikely teacher  
with the hope that I will take what I know

The words I am given now are the words I should speak  
but I communicate best when I'm alone  
So all I can give you is whatever comes out

I've sat here all day  
All that's produced is words  
but words are what create

I hear snippets of conversation flying around various places  
and I make conjecture

People do bad things  
Why is this so surprising?  
There can be no walk for the cure  
for original sin

## Chapter 25: Consciousness

Blurb

The Victim lingers.

Without really thinking about why, he sits down at her chair.

Leaning on his elbows, he stares at his hands and touches his closed eyes, curious about their owner.

Lyrics

I'm so used to seeing  
always the side  
that when I face up  
I frustrate my eyes

And I understand  
I'm never gonna get back in

I'm dealing with this pressure from inside  
and it's mine  
and if it could leak I'd better alone  
when I'm fine  
But structure and balance all lead back to habit  
and crimes

And I understand  
I'm never gonna get back in

Signs in place that are taken down  
This time of day comes sooner now  
I'm unconscious

A break from this greater employment phase  
to break from the ground and the soil and waste  
Man I'm cautious

Cause the time that I spend  
as I toil and plan  
is the time that I need  
when I understand  
my conscience  
and my conscious  
and my conscience

Am I conscious?

And I understand

I'm never gonna get back in

## Chapter 26: Self Righteous Exile

Blurb

"What are you thinking?" The Driver was waiting in the hall, blocking the Victim, his court, and his Mistress.

"I was thinking that I don't suggest continuing your recent tone." The Victim continued on.

"I see. Does the reward deserve the deed, then?" The Driver stopped him with his words.

While looking straight ahead, the Victim commanded his men. "Remove him."

The guards returned to the Driver. "Well, I guess it is about time I stopped sitting here after all."

The Driver turned and led his escort out of the building, allowing himself a concerned glance back to the Mistress.

Lyrics

When I  
over cast my line  
I find  
that clouds will fill my skies  
in kind

If I don't reel my cast in  
in time  
my line will catch on sin  
and die

Tribes  
not clans  
alive and well  
inside my hand  
The knife  
The plan

## Chapter 27: It's an Experience

### Blurb

The corner of the room is lit with a dry light. Physical perspective and law set it there upon the living silhouette. Where there should be features, we lean closer to see only variance. The figure's leg releases out straight: its cares for posture neglected. "There was a day when one would be punished for this thing. This is an age of forgiveness. For some."

### Lyrics

Birth  
and death  
beginnings  
and the end  
tricks  
and trades  
fashion  
and taste  
written  
and seen  
people  
and kings  
pressure  
and rest  
sins  
and the flesh

When you  
attend the funeral  
memories of them illumine and awake  
of that which rested  
of those with ties to heaven

I don't see  
right from wrong  
I only know  
how it relates  
to God

When you  
attend the funeral  
memories of them illumine and awake  
of that which rested  
of those with ties to heaven



## Chapter 28: Familiar Ties

Blurb

"Don't make this harder than it needs to be."

He turns away.

"It's what you're supposed to do."

He nods, then walks on.

Lyrics

Flames push softly down  
and find their way back up  
I don't need to breathe  
when covered in heat  
I'm drowning in flames of God

We shall see the sequel  
when it is showing  
draped across the back of a chair  
Entering the picture  
Pertaining to story  
Showing how we got to prepare

Dragons on the parapet  
turn their eyes to the ground  
They only see those looking up  
and never who is looking down  
I try to not to speak for myself  
cause I find that I disagree  
I try to take over everything  
I try to take over me

## Chapter 29: Do You Dance Enough?

Blurb

"Do you dance enough?"

Tick;

the space was there;

tock:

it was taken;

tick:

in reply

(tock

tick

tock

tick),

"What?"

Lyrics

You can't just help someone  
give them what is left  
You have to help them  
help themselves

Why do you cry  
when I want to dance?  
Yeah I see you behind  
the back of your hands  
Do you dance enough?

Changes in things we can't explain  
Dropping our rates at seventeen  
Teaching only things we find will stay the same

Why do you cry  
when I want to dance?  
Yeah I see you behind  
the back of your hands  
Do you dance enough?

## Chapter 30: A Civilized Take on Honesty

### Blurb

"I feel lacking in every meaningful way. All the things I do, the choices I make. I feel like I could just be so much better, but I can't be."

The Mistress had been caught in mid chew. Slowly she finished as the Victim opened his eyes to her. She supposed she should feel anger, or maybe compassion, but instead, his sudden admission broke the ritual silence of breakfast and left her feeling... awkward.

### Lyrics

Congratulations  
you've just won the game  
It was so easy  
to watch you play  
Your prize will be delivered  
when we all have gone away  
Hours endeavored  
ending today

When the wind has blown  
I let all the islands on the horizon go  
I sit back and watch  
as the current surrounds my boat  
I don't know when I'll die  
but I'm sure it will be when I'm told

Who are the good days always in front of?  
Like it's an easy call from above

## Chapter 31: The Narrative

### Blurb

The Killer lets go in a prison cell about the same time the Driver weeps for his son, a fortnight before the Victim thinks of their release, and well after the Mistress knows what to do.

### Lyrics

My knowledge of the beast  
becomes a vaccine  
when Grace steps behind  
my veil

So I'll pay

\*Amazing Grace  
\*how sweet the sound  
\*that saved a wretch like me

\*I once was lost  
\*but now am found  
\*was blind but now I see

\*Twas Grace that taught  
\*my heart to fear  
\*and Grace, my fears relieved

\*How precious did  
\*that Grace appear  
\*the hour I first believed?

So I'll pay

\*Lyrics taken from Amazing Grace by John Newton (1772)

## Chapter 32: Sometime Before You Know It

Blurb

The Killer feels his hair cling to his skin as his body skips behind Pike. He sees the life of his crew creep down the arm onto him.

"I knew you, so I'm going to give you a rare chance." Pike pauses as he throws the Killer across the deck. He draws from his belt and shows his captive. "Six places to find death." He sits before lone survivor and raises his hand to his head. "Me first."

Click

"Your turn."

The Killer takes the weight into his hands.

"You can try just pointing at me and pulling the trigger a couple times." Pike spoke with no expression. "I don't mind counting it as a turn; it doesn't seem to work."

Slowly the Killer lifts and considers his options.

Click

"So we play then."

Click

The Killer's hand is still heavy. He reaches out for the burden, and sets it towards himself.

Click

Pike doesn't hesitate.

Click

Pike grins. "That's five. One place left. The deciding round as it were."

The Killer is steady now. His motion is smooth, but Pike's hand interrupts.

"Though, there is an important question to be asked." Carefully, he releases the Killer. "Are you the type

of person to hope it doesn't fire, or are you the type of person to think about what will happen when that's the case?"

Click

Lyrics

It's time to sink  
A look comes to my eyes  
I finally breath  
shifting to my side  
The prophet reads  
hope is come alive  
The look will speak  
to my inner mind

I'm half asleep  
and wholehearted instead  
so cautiously  
I drift on off to bed  
Now I can see  
there's no more need to die  
I cling to the  
throne that's built inside

Changing  
Though it will drip  
the main thing  
is to realize that Man is aging  
It's part of growing old  
A food for a perfect home  
And I fight myself sometimes  
Break rank from other sides  
Plan learning and taste  
for how it will stay  
alive

## Chapter 33: On the Topic of Choice

### Blurb

The Killer stands staring into the growing night as the Driver sits near the door making a case.

"This way is best. How long will a trial take? Years. The end will be the same. Action needs to be taken, but we can at least be merciful."

"Please," utters the Killer softly, "stop justifying. It will be done." He turns to the Driver with a compassionate look before stepping away from the lit door and into the darkness.

### Lyrics

The suit  
tries to force my hand  
My body's loose  
like the change on the wind  
and the truth  
is that I realized my dreams  
are coming true  
right as I rip at the seams  
Well that suits me

The bottle harvest is easy  
You reap what has been sown  
But walking outside every night  
will tend to set you all alone  
Well I don't know what I think of reasons  
that don't want to make me agree  
Speaking of the first and last  
the middle never changes their seat

The suit  
tries to force my hand  
My body's loose  
like the change on the wind  
and now the truth  
is that I realized my dreams  
are coming true



right as I rip at the seams  
Yeah, well that suits me

## Chapter 34: No Thing Goes Wrong

### Blurb

Some stories were never meant to be told. So we do not know them. There are words that should not have been spoken, and as such, they have not been heard.

A tyrant may rise to plague the masses. People will speak of injustice. Those standing will ask the seated to rise and join, and those seated will ask *why*.

As the Driver watches his son, he wonders if there are actions for this moment, or for the next, or for the one after that.

Clear choices are succinct: able to be summarized in books and essays. At the end of the arguments, we are all left with a personal definition of the evidence. In the dark we have the option of every direction. As the light turns on we find ourselves in a corridor, and the choice is no longer which way to go, but whether or not to walk.

### Lyrics

The pen sets it tip upon the page  
but the ink is running late  
so the words just float away

Yes I understand  
how long a time I have

Every garden has  
fountain water and  
simple figures in stone  
Heavy rain will drip  
from my finger tips  
flooding houses and homes

We're bruising so easy  
Someday we'll die

## Chapter 35: Blessed Escape

### Blurb

The Killer sat slumped, cradled by the seat and door as visions of passing lights mingled with the reflected interior before his eyes.

Finally, the question the Driver had been avoiding rose to claim the Killer's attention. "What happened back there?"

With his head resting upon the glass, the Killer considered the truth of the answer. "You came to free me," he began, "then we escaped."

### Lyrics

And now  
amidst the shouts and screams  
alarms have filled my head  
The Driver turns to me  
and says this isn't what he planned  
He reaches for a gun  
and gives me what he has  
Though my hands are weak  
I watch them make him put it back

Slow  
he leads me through the halls  
we find we know the way  
We're met in force by guards  
who try to blockade our escape  
Now it's difficult to say  
what exactly happened next  
We could not be seen  
or they just let us pass

## Chapter 36: Like More Yourself

Blurb

"What would you have yourself become?" she asked.

"I'm not really sure." The Victim looked to his plate for answers. "I'd be kinder. Less... excited."

"Less excited?"

The Victim sighed, "I let myself run. I carry myself away. I don't think: I just speak and act."

Before she could stop herself, the Mistress defended him, "You don't think that's served you well? Your stature is slight, but armies rallied to you; you came from the masses, yet great men bow. Your fervor is contagious. It's what built this land."

"Now it's pulling it apart."

Lyrics

I know why  
and even though  
it is a secret  
you are my ghost

I've got a soul  
It's drinking back home  
It would have loved  
to go on alone  
You're my ghost

I know why  
and even though  
it is a secret  
you are my ghost

## D.S. al Fine: Victim Driver Killer Mistress

### Blurb

From moment to moment, they focus and fade. They are specters waiting to be asked inside. They are symbols aware of their significance. They are warnings. They are comforts. They are meaning, and inconsequential, and inevitable.

### Lyrics

I leave for a time again  
under written hand  
and bleeding pen  
Who are these thieves  
under hand  
and under siege  
making plans  
we believe?

Pictures of Atlantis  
The city has sunk  
and lo  
no edition holds

## Chapter 37: Certain Uncertainty

### Blurb

"Excuse me sir." The Victim's aide interrupted the silence at the table. "There is some news you may wish to take in private."

The Victim followed his man into the manor. Waiting in the front hall was one of his lieutenants. "I regret to inform you, sir," said the nervous officer, "that there was an escape last night."

"How many?" asked the Victim, already knowing the answer.

"Just one, sir. The one."

The Victim let his attention drift through the window next to him. The soldier opened his mouth as if to speak, but held himself. The moment passed, and the Victim returned. "Thank you, that will be all." He left the lieutenant still bracing for an impact that would never come and returned to breakfast.

"Is everything alright?" asked the Mistress.

"Yes. Just a different path to the same end."

### Lyrics

And I pretend  
I don't want to go back  
inside again  
and wall myself up  
till I'm higher than  
the laws that would try to make me  
die for them

I dissolve  
and we fade  
Time removed  
I'm remade

And I pretend  
I don't want to go back  
inside again  
and wall myself up

till I'm higher than  
the laws that would try to make me  
die for them

Where will I go  
when I'm home  
cause I'm lost  
and seen  
as great  
as kings

And I pretend  
I don't want to go back  
inside again  
and wall myself up  
till I'm higher than  
the laws that would try to make me  
die for them

## Chapter 38: Spoken Record

### Blurb

"I wish you hadn't tried that." The grim look on the Warden's face reflected the truth of his words. "I was growing quite fond of our friendly competitions. Naturally they cannot continue."

The Killer took his hand from his head. "Thank you for the ice."

"It's my pleasure." Smith nodded to the guards and turned to leave.

"I'm sorry," apologized the Killer, "I just want to leave this place."

"Understandable. Though you'll be happier if you can want different things from now on."

The Killer shook his head. "How can you change the things you want?"

The Warden's eyes were not without compassion. "You will have all the time you need to answer that question."

### Lyrics

I'm dreaming  
for the very first time  
My dreams will come alive  
when they align



## Chapter 39: And Sometimes I am Stone

Blurb

The Killer stood loose.

In his hand, down his arm, was his gun.

It was part of the conversation, but it had not yet been introduced.

"She is not given to you."

The Victim's face moved with the breeze.

"I see that now. I've always seen that."

Lyrics

Ground rules are set  
for my defense  
It's typical of the times  
but I digress  
I pick up my pace  
to match her steps  
her heels turning slow  
upon themselves

I make an excuse  
to close the gap  
Her hair's in her face  
as I say things  
to make her laugh  
and I don't know

I listen to God  
when I hear Him talk  
I'm always in place  
but I find  
that sometimes  
I feel lost  
Pictures of face

will help lead me on  
I picture her face  
leaning on the inside  
of my arm  
and I don't know  
anything

## Chapter 40: The Oak is Old

Blurb

"I can win, but I cannot succeed. I can obtain, but I cannot wield."

Her eyes spoke with perfect recollection.

"Words carved into a tree on your family's land."

The Mistress paused to question.

"Whose are they?"

Lyrics

With my teeth  
in hand  
floating home  
again  
I lay out  
to eat  
cause my home  
is in me

A barracuda

I consume  
the bleed  
I react  
and I feed  
I write this  
when I sing  
I forget  
so many things

A barracuda

## Chapter 41: The Institution of Misconception

### Blurb

"I love you," pled the Victim.

A derisive smile played across the Mistress's face. "You've never loved me. You've only loved what I could give you."

### Lyrics

Heaven is a sin  
if you covet being in  
just because you hear it's nice  
and you figure what's inside  
will be better than the life  
that you're leading at the time  
better than the life  
that you're leading while alive

You wanna see  
You wanna know  
You wanna taste  
You gotta go

## Chapter 42: Gifts

### Blurb

Suddenly every mistake he's ever made has a purpose. Suddenly he's thankful for his sadness; he's thankful for his fear. They've shaped his life, and given him a story: one that he's happy to tell despite his guilt. So the Killer raises up his head, and his tears break around his joy.

### Lyrics

Would you consider it a great insult  
if I don't begin to resist the mountain slide?  
Cause all that falls  
is come from God  
and I'm buried on  
the mountain top

When the avalanche begins  
I take another sin  
as I'm holding on to limbs

Patience is a long beach  
like the one behind me  
like the one I'm raking  
See how long it's taken  
to organize the grain  
like thoughts in drops of rain  
So I can stay the same  
So written I remain

And the avalanche begins  
sweeping up what's His  
of everything I missed  
that was upon the shore  
that was and is no more

The avalanche begins  
with wind upon my skin  
I felt it as a kid  
that the wait was on my knees  
to speak the things I see

## Chapter 43: A Quiet Walk

### Blurb

The Driver's weighted thoughts were interrupted by the footsteps of a ghost. He leaned over the porch railing and watched the Killer materialize out of the black. "How was your walk?"

The Killer focused his eyes in the new light. "Long." He took the steps in a stride, and opened the door. From inside, he called to the Driver, "Pack the car. We're leaving now."

The Driver stood quickly and followed him in. "Are you crazy? We've done no preparation. We don't know where or when. Do you plan to just walk in and hope it all works out?"

"We'll be fine if we do this right now. I'm ready. I have a life to claim. All you have to do is get me to where I need to be. Now move."

The Driver swallowed hard and obeyed. He was not ready, though that was nothing new.

### Lyrics

Passing cars

Sudden interest in  
the waning light of stars  
coupled with  
the wellness of the heart

Finding ways  
to conversate with God

Who has learned it  
under this dark  
of night?

I see yearning  
for things like  
trust and light  
home inside  
peace of mind  
kinds of time  
truth from lies

So who are we now?  
Trapped on higher parts of ground  
I don't seem to be  
quite the same

## Chapter 44: Mistaken Control

### Blurb

The Driver wondered about that poor girl as the Victim's guards led him off. How much of her suffering was his fault? All of it? How many other threads had he disturbed while he wove his plans? He answered questions with rationalizations. He could not see any other way he could have moved.

All he knew was how to plan: make a sacrifice to achieve a goal. 'Minimize the sacrifice; maximize the goal.' That was the mantra, was it not?

Maybe he wasn't seeing himself clearly. Maybe the rule was actually 'minimize his sacrifice and maximize his goal.' Shift the loss to someone else then collect what's been earned. It was obvious that he had missed something.

Now a lifetime of fear was rising up. Had he really avoided payment, or had he only increased his debt?

### Lyrics

The beach  
On my knees  
The sand  
in my hand  
It slips  
It slips  
scolding my fingertips  
the moment I close my grip

I want  
a grain of understanding

I got the note  
you had signed  
It seems you are seeking  
the same thing as I  
The pen well has dried  
I write my hand  
so try it on when I am alone tonight

I want  
a grain of understanding



## Chapter 45: Imposing Errant Thoughts

Blurb

The Mistress is tucked under the Killer's arm in the back seat. In her own arms she has the written life of her former captor. Despite everything, it feels right to hold it close.

Lyrics

5:36 am

I break open my eyes  
and remember to be awake

I stretch and breath  
on the only patch of floor that fits

I wash  
I dress  
I eat

6:15 am

I leave

The sun will beat me out for a few more months  
then it will be slow to wake  
and fast asleep

I say thanks as I cross the street

6:25 pm

I am given the words to speak  
They are blessed  
but there is nothing said

I finish my wine

11:29 am

I see faces and hear voices  
I judge and I'm alone

I say thanks that I am not in control

2:33 pm

I ask for wisdom  
and words  
and strength  
and love  
and peace  
and sight

I ask twice

9:08 am

I pass my reflection  
All this too is vanity

I move to consume without guilt

3:52 pm

I am home

I wax poetic in my own words  
I throw them away

5:41 pm

My heart skips  
and I understand the just completed dream  
but when did I drift off?

10:54 pm

I have wasted an hour  
so I lie down  
to better use my time

12:01 am

I have fallen asleep tomorrow  
I look forward to it

## Chapter 46: Impression

### Blurb

We see this instance of the Victim, Driver, Killer, and Mistress frozen in time. Named for what you see before you.

The Victim lays back his head.

The Driver turns away.

The Killer executes.

The Mistress...

### Lyrics

A wave of  
invasion  
breaks upon the passenger side

The lessons  
are blessed  
even when we're taught how to die

If it's a delicate scene  
wear some intelligent clothes  
Gift of the knowledge you seek  
dressed in the knowledge you don't

## Chapter 47: To End With Conclusion

Blurb

The Driver accelerated as he measured the silence behind him.

"There was good in him."

The Killer watched the passing night.

"We know," said the Driver.

The Killer asked her, "do you think you knew him well?"

"Yes," she said.

He no longer looked out the window.

"Then let the best of him stay with you."

Lyrics

It does not matter what I think  
It does not matter what you think

Magazines and politics  
put faces in my head

I'd like to know less  
about this overwhelming mess

Pour the wine  
back down the vine  
and drink the fruit of old

Sipping on  
the palace lawn  
drunk upon the soul

## Epilogue: Victim Driver Killer Mistress

Blurb

An open mouth is expected to speak.

Let us close ours.

We shall drape our words in the silence of our thoughts.

They will go forth unheard to arrive in waiting hearts.

While our stillness crosses this place, we examine the life it brings.

May we not be great, for then we will be blessed.

May we have greatness.

May we know that most times there is nothing more to say.

Lyrics

...