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# Look Ma! No Hands!

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## **Baggage Issues**

The plane wouldn't take off just yet due to baggage issues.  
"Don't we all have baggage issues?" quipped the stewardess.  
We've been cleared for take off, cleared for the flight of a lifetime.  
It's funny how traveling can more trippy than any drug.  
You have your own unique perspective that you filter  
This foreign culture through, cracking jokes,  
crying at the loss of what could have been.  
The things we get preoccupied with in order to stay sane.  
How I consciously sit in row 18, always choosing life.  
I wonder if my seat mates are doing the same,  
But they've got their heads up their tablets.  
I'd love to ask you a million curious questions,  
But you're too preoccupied with your own.  
I'd love to just sit and pick your brain,  
But your eyes are on your phone.  
What would we pay attention to,  
If we were really paying attention,  
And not so concerned with our baggage issues?

## To my Strawberry Fields

I alone return to your natural sanctuary,  
Playing the fool on the hill.  
20 years have come and gone,  
Since we first stumbled on your beauty.  
Your train whistles still comfort me,  
In my dark insomniac nights.  
Your railroad shack and rusty classic cars long gone.  
Your 100 year old bridge marred by graffiti that glorifies the death that I feel.  
My friends are long grown and busy raising their own kids and careers.  
Blanton is but a dot on old maps with its origins lost to history.  
The greenery, trees, and streams of my youth are long destroyed by tank shaped bulldozers, my worst childhood fears come true.  
I long for days spent with my friends,  
Pretending to be musicians with log drums and stick guitars,  
Sharing first smokes, and living in fantasy lands where dreams came true.  
Memories of magical dusty pillows, swinging on rafters, climbing trees, hiking along the tracks, root beers, and toy pistols.  
I brought everyone here who meant something to me,  
from best friends to soulmates, immortalizing this place in album covers and music videos.  
Just like then, escaping my troubles to the silence of the shooting stars,  
Meditating on what could have been.  
Just like then still misunderstood.  
In the middle of the night,  
Before the sun arises, it almost seems like it was back then,  
A magical place that unites us all.  
But I'm the only one here.  
One lone sentimental soul,  
Reminiscing to a different soundtrack not in sync with this time,  
But blending into the scenery.  
It's just me, God, and the roar of locomotives on their way out west. And that's where I am soon to return.

## **If you want to be a Poet**

You can be a person who writes poetry,  
Or you can become a poet.  
Be wide open to life.  
Be loyal to your loves.  
Be courageous.  
Be bluntly honest when it counts.  
Accept your truth even if it hurts.  
Find yourself but fight for the best of that person.  
Learn to listen carefully.  
Cultivate a great sense of humor.  
Watch what good speakers do.  
Be down to earth, but keep day dreaming.  
Pay attention to patterns.  
Be selectively apathetic, but care about people.  
Put the value into your values.  
Only fight for justice.  
Find commonality.  
Help others find unity.  
See the good in everyone.  
Find a community.  
Recognize your tribe,  
But recognize not everyone is your tribe.  
Pursue peace.  
Learn many languages.  
Entertain new philosophies.  
Learn from all history.  
Travel often and hike long distances.  
Seek spirituality.  
Seek new experiences both real and imagined.  
Use your inner toolbox.  
Let your soul lead.  
Let your heart guide.  
Let your mind expand.  
Look for symbolism.  
Look for meaning in everything.  
Be a hopeless romantic.  
Overdose on positive music.  
Don't forget to laugh.  
Don't be afraid to cry.  
Study your heroes,  
And your heroes' heroes!  
Learn from all mistakes,  
Both yours and others.  
Be idealistic, not realistic.  
Know that fear is often a lie,  
But know your limits.  
Respect life and find humanity.  
Be aware of your temporary existence.  
You only control your art, not other people.  
Find and trust your team, even when they fall short.  
Money is not the reward in this game.  
Think in puns and multiple meanings.  
Your inner child is your identity.  
Hug freely and kiss your life.  
Run with the flow, no, fly!  
If you make it, and even before,  
Give, give, give back.

## **Parked on the Bay**

We found the best parking spot in the universe.  
On the edge of the bay in Berkeley  
The sunlight glistens across the waters,  
As the sailboats proclaim freedom,  
The rush of the city is visible in the distance,  
And we are directly across from the golden gate,  
Viewing the chain links that tie this broad community,  
From the city of my dreams,  
To the city of my Jewish soul,  
To the beaches of my inner explorer,  
To the epic mecca of hippiedom,  
To the city of protests,  
To the city where I occupied,  
To the city of opportunity,  
To the wine fields and the growing grass,  
To the happy cows and hippie souls.  
I see you all from this place,  
Hearing the train whistles of my past,  
And the oceans in my future.  
San Francisco where even the graffiti is friendly,  
Where the few billboards you see are messages of positivity.

## Right Here

Wandering the city of my dreams,  
With my grandfather's spirit in my mind,  
Accompanying me into old fashioned arcades,  
Staring across the bay and sending love to friends who sail it.  
We wander around on this merry go round of love,  
finding the candy stores of our souls.  
I dined on a heart attack between buns,  
I longed for slower times,  
And I received them.  
The man behind the bush no longer causes me to jump,  
I gladly ask strangers for photos,  
I connect with traveling Texans.  
And a man said, "you're a steam punk,"  
When here I was thinking of hippies.  
This life is a candy store,  
But it takes trying new things,  
To figure out what's sweetest.  
And sometimes all you find,  
Is that the marzipan still ain't your bag.

### **Is this Lost or Found?**

I managed to hang on for so long.  
The turtle must exit its shell every now and then  
Or it will starve and is merely a rock with limbs.  
It is either a glorious rediscovery of self,  
Or a rejection of all the shackles of societal propriety  
That compels this brutal unapologetic honesty.  
I value the bluntness of the truth as it destroys all fantasy,  
Shattering illusions that can no longer maintain their glitter.  
Sadly so many falsehoods have paralleled the path.  
Listening to your own heart over the others,  
Yet needing the affirmation of similar minds.  
There is my straight and narrow upbringing  
who wishes me to be in line and square,  
And then there is this wild poet dying to escape,  
To travel, to make art, to scream, to hike, and to live.  
But such couples couple with the pain,  
This physical and mental torment,  
Of years gone past with lack of understanding.  
The vocational services department won't let you be a poet.  
The parental guidance won't let you be a poet.  
The financial system won't let you be a poet.  
Only you can give yourself permission to take off.

### **This Grateful Yid**

Had you merely let me find Judaism, dayenu!  
Had you merely created palm trees, dayenu!  
Had you merely turned me pacifist, dayenu!  
Had you merely created the ocean, dayenu!  
Had you merely given me artistic ability, dayenu!  
Had you merely created music, dayenu!  
Had you merely brought me to California, dayenu!  
Had you merely created penguins, dayenu!  
Had you merely brought me to my soulmate, dayenu!  
Had you merely painted sunsets, dayenu!  
Had you merely given me good friends, dayenu!  
Had you merely created healing plants, dayenu!  
Had you merely let me make films, dayenu!  
Had you merely created love, dayenu!  
Had you merely given me my poetic gifts, dayenu!  
Had you merely created humanity, dayenu!  
Had you merely made me sensitive and kind, dayenu!  
Had you merely created the mountains, dayenu!  
Had you merely made me intelligent, dayenu!  
Had you merely created open fields, dayenu!  
Had you merely given me therapy, dayenu!  
Had you merely created rainbows, dayenu!  
Had you merely let me find myself, dayenu!

### **Disability is...**

Disability is humbling to this brainy smart ass child.  
I grew up with my book smarts, ready to take on the world.  
I picked up concepts easy, not every one but most,  
But then you threw me curve balls that affected my heart.  
Yes, it is so painful.  
Yes, I must let go.  
Yes, the time has ended.  
But my gratitude has grown.  
In some ways I am healthier than ever.  
In others, I fall way short.  
But we all have our strengths.  
One may feel weak, but together we can grow.  
We can grow in empathy.  
We can grow in solutions.  
We can grow in acceptance.  
Don't ever mock someone for being unable,  
As one day, it could be you--you never know.

## **The Sign of Humility is Reversed**

Growing up I was told to remove my hat indoors  
As a sign of respect. Jewishly, one wears a hat,  
As a sign of respect. A reminder of the fact  
That we wander in divine realms.

When I was ten and socially terrified, I used to tell myself,  
"Put on this hat. It holds your confidence in."  
It would be a costume, fooling only me.  
"You'll no longer be shy. You can follow your art."

I found JROTC attractive as it was an excuse for a hat,  
And one less day of deciding what to wear.  
Even then I was a pacifist, but even that's okay,  
As I learned in my studies there, so was Amelia Earhart.

I bombed so many times giving speeches in class,  
So when I finally gave my rocking speech in English class,  
It was all about wandering the mall my British top hat,  
Seeking the shocked faces of the normal people,  
So caught up in their soulless shopping.

At some point after college,  
Conforming to company values,  
I stopped wearing hats indoors.  
Except. Except at synagogue.  
There it is my kippah, and there it is I've soared.