

5-26-2020

## Poems by Jeffrey Wilkinson

Jeffrey Wilkinson

*College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University, [jwilkinso001@csbsju.edu](mailto:jwilkinso001@csbsju.edu)*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/obsculta>



Part of the [Religion Commons](#)

ISSN: 2472-2596 (print)

ISSN: 2472-260X (online)

---

### Recommended Citation

Wilkinson, Jeffrey. 2020. Poems by Jeffrey Wilkinson. *Obsculta* 13, (1) : 78-135.  
<https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/obsculta/vol13/iss1/9>.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Obsculta* by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@csbsju.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@csbsju.edu).

**ABSTRACT:**

This is a selection of eight of my best poems. I think they all pretty much speak for themselves. These particular works span the last five years or so, in no particular order. I have pretty much always written poems, but only in the last five years do I consider that any of them began to start revealing a good quality. I usually only write a poem if I feel a particular urge to do so, and it's never premeditated. Once I start, it might take a while to finish, perhaps an hour, but once it's done I usually don't edit it again unless I want to change a word here or there.

# Warp and Weft

*by Jeffrey Wilkinson*

The crackle  
of life  
like Cheerios  
Or old guitars  
Begins that strange  
Process of warp  
That flesh  
Does badly  
And only mind,  
Which  
When weft wins, can wind  
From flesh through  
To kind and borrowed  
Time,  
Loves as only bent  
Things do Who  
can't see or care to see  
Straight.



# Physic's Journey

*by Jeffrey Wilkinson*

To embrace the dark with light,  
We must know why we like to fall.  
And as why lands subtly on the where,  
We may find ourselves more tangible there  
In the space where truth has called.

I write to fend the pain that body rends off.  
I seek to mend the mind and well to end off.  
In hope I cling to sound advice to smash my false alarms:  
To grope, to fall, in bounded love to ash in tender arms.  
Heart, mix, with loss of sight in resolute abandon,  
To fly to towers stark and bright,  
To realize with caged delight  
The universal tandem.

Stars, sun, exhort my cry to heaven with an arrow;  
The light of yours is mine to share  
Along the straight and narrow.  
I wish to go where joy must trip;  
I wish my journey found its grip;  
I wish my love straight from the hip  
Would penetrate the marrow.  
And as the marrow the morrow would know goes surging through the course-  
I wish the day to be aligned by pleasant genial force.  
To wish the peace upon Thy head from heaven should return;  
The body of our days in waking truth, the past to spurn.



# Molting

*by Jeffrey Wilkinson*

Nothing quite rhymes with uncertainty  
Like the dreams I feign unconcertedly;  
The rhetoric of former lives  
In irony sails past my eyes.  
To molt these feathers, I commence  
Intention raw to my defense;  
Before the words slide down to masquerade,  
I turn my cares to lemonade.



# Applemind Manners

*by Jeffrey Wilkinson*

Letting go of youth  
Is an invitation to youth,  
The paradox of aging.

Among the whine  
Of sirens and cicadas  
I dream of your wide embrace  
Flanking more patience  
Than I could buy with  
A nuclear arsenal.

I flash by  
The cracked facades  
And tunnel vision  
Of the poor  
Whose eyes are grown  
As long and useless  
As the history of money,



And I try to pretend  
You are here picking apples

But what I really see  
Is a faint woman  
Dim and yellow dress on,  
Fondling the dry leaves  
Growing in the grey trees  
Across from the old train tracks.

I sense her shimmer in the wobble  
Of the day's heat coma  
Like a candle in a convent  
Burning secretly among flames  
Set by mad arsonists,  
Or the mud in a drought's mirage.

The apples of my mind's eye  
Are fond desires here,  
Even under the sink  
Of the cicada-beaten numb brown  
morning  
That sucks the blasted pavement  
Of this ghetto.  
I hate to see poverty  
When all I want is passion,  
Yet my heart is full  
Of the special ice  
That keeps me cool in hot weather,  
That condenses without warning,  
And makes me think  
My love must be selective.

In fear of dehydrating,  
I wish rapids  
To brush the burnt faces  
Of the ghetto's starving angels

Who, wrinkled by such finite desires  
That speech is chafing,  
Must only pray with  
The square dance of sinew  
For the same apples  
As I so easily conjured from my  
mind's magic box.

Letting go of youth  
Is an invitation to youth  
Because when we look  
For beauty in the dust of the age,  
We are going to love  
Whatever we see,  
Even if it is wretched and fixed.  
And then will no longer see  
What the wretched hope to see,  
A transformed life.  
Dust that is loved is still dust.

And so since that which we see  
Fixes into human form  
An unalterable placebo,  
A grave happiness,  
The dwindling diamond of dancing  
decay,  
To etch spontaneity into code  
Requires more than our sight;  
Love requires  
An immersive  
Apple-sharing  
Of the brain's wet soul.



# Barcelona Dream

*by Jeffrey Wilkinson*

Raspberry pillars send forth on blackberry  
smoke  
Verbal, wet ripples in lakes,  
Deep under stone vaults where loves are  
found  
Drying their tears in sand loops,  
Where birds dart toward their lemon men.  
A grey nose jumps through armies  
Into fountains, where it moves like skin  
Always moves when it is brushed.  
By the dusk that strikes fire in casual peace,  
The iridescent harmony of a still pond  
Remains through cold nights and hot days,  
Reaching toward the center of the river  
That flows in still expectation  
Of all good tithes,  
Raining like soul flower headaches  
Onto desert designations.



# Echo of Eden

*by Jeffrey Wilkinson*

This magnitude of strength  
In love,  
This fire all consuming,  
Rocks wither away,  
Plants tremble;  
Nature hath a visage in us  
So proud, so ancient,  
That even our dust is sacred.  
These limbs so useful,  
These minds so nimble  
Our own magnitude  
Cannot be measured in days,  
Nor even these fair hours,  
But in only whispered glory,  
The peal of saintly value;  
The frost on our charades,  
The bloom in our bones.  
Too late we cry - let me know, do -  
Yet we still have and are.  
Our pigeon remorse,  
Our darling winding  
Of intimate memories  
In shells of the brightest intent,  
Are together bound  
By a heartbeat so profound,  
Dark but deep,  
Under the tides and troths,  
Insensible to lofty patrons  
of the fastened, sinewed objects.  
Awake! And forget nothing,

Remember this:  
More ourselves than ever,  
On top of easy, warm and binding  
sacrifice,  
Inside the gift of stars,  
Calling as a child,  
With nothing but light as affection.



# Pursual

*by Jeffrey Wilkinson*

The ghostly brown shades,  
The ache of the old image,  
twist my heart  
at irregular games,  
As I burrow into reason  
like a fireman's cat,  
thrusting ignorance  
into cheap and shoddy  
funerals, all but absent  
of mourners.  
I cannot rest from the  
pursuit  
of myth, toys  
and apologies,  
pouring my face  
into stained glassware,  
where my thirst is crucified  
at the sound of  
a far bird.





# Winter Pilgrim

*by Jeffrey Wilkinson*

The vapors of the warm steam spa  
Rush out into the night.  
I feel my head falling off,  
And empty clothing walks by without a sound.  
The well-worn is where the heart is born,  
And borne upon its own merit.  
Nobody can guess at the transparency of matter,  
Nor make maths of what anyone can see.  
Truth is an embodiment of paradox,  
That lays all other mysteries to rest.  
The warm is enfolded into the deep blue air  
That kills desire and sadness all together.  
Victory is found in existence like a stone  
Whose face is its own and no other,  
The wrinkles being ten thousand years in the making,  
The creases penetrating time.  
Sporting's muffled in cotton,  
Gastronomy in amnesia.  
Yet open doors smell of flower petals,  
Minds break walls and stories break hearts.  
The ice covers only the surface,  
Whose body is bent into itself.  
A richer, denser pilgrimage was not sought,  
Than when that unmerited answer was bought.

