

Mission Statement
by Daemond Arrindell

I like to consider myself a poet,

Simply because I sit down with pen in hand - and I write.

Poetry is what fills in the cracks and fissures of my psyche
plates that are either mashing against each other or drifting
apart.

Poetry is the seam that holds me together.

I do this stuff part time cause I only got part of my senses,
the rest are spent partially putting back together the parts of
our sons and daughters that are pushed to the back of the bus,
kept under lock and key -

kids who have parts of their self-esteem intact

and the rest just a trail of breadcrumbs lost in the forest of
adolescence.

See, I like to consider myself a poet,

but as for delivery - this stage is not my forum,

I tend to lay it down on the front lines

where I freestyle freedom to miniature adults

with souls the size of angel wingspans,

who imagine their brightness shines with the intensity of a
hallway night-light.

But beacons that small are easily underestimated.

Like living lighthouses, they can guide a 5 yr old through the
maze of monsters in the dark to safe harbor beneath the covers.

I speak to faeries

who have forgotten the pouches of pixie dust in their possession,
to trolls who don't know they were meant for much more
than terrorizing trespassers or hanging out under bridges.

And I never bend down to reach their level,
I find it better to lift them up to mine
with the hope that they'll like the higher altitude
and eventually give gravity the finger,
cause faith in falling never saved anyone's innocence
and Father Time's contracts carry no loopholes for the young

I've become more of a station agent than a preacher,
I do a lot more listening than teaching.
I am more receptor than reactor, more student than storyteller
I have become the pied piper in reverse

My ears still burn from the stories that have licked them -
ugly ducklings caught in a perpetual hunting season,
boogie men masquerading as step-fathers, mothers bewitched by
pill bottles -

white knuckle, breath-held-in-the-throat-keep-you-up-late-at-
night stories

that'll never make it to the front page

because I was the only one

who sat still long enough

for the ricocheting eyes of the teller to focus on me,

read mine as two guide lights and not oncoming headlights

two seconds before impact.

I encourage these children
to craft limbering language out of lofty aspirations,
give wings to their “I think I can” mentalities,
and pledge undying allegiance to every imaginary friend
who has ever had their back.

I tell them that when they spit that long they challenge the
glands in their mouths to produce salvation in the form of
saliva, enzymes that will break down anything that falls short of
it.

And I just keep listening, because their poetic voices are just
like bellows for the fire – my fire.