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A Short Stand at The Strand

With support from

Benita G. Brown

for Her

Unwavering Love and Dedication

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Brian T. Donnelly (aka Brian Paul Banning) and Marieluisse Niehus (Second Life
Chullain McMahon and Morgue McMillan)

One Summer Day

One Summer Day,
Destiny whispered,
her breath caressing my face.
Such a lovely sound.

One Summer Day,
Destiny's door opened.
Love entered, unbidden.
Petals formed, flowers abound.
Gaia smiling all around.
Her magic.

One Winter Day,
The Petals fell,
slicing Her face, bitter cold.
Life waned, entropy entered.
Unneeded.

One Spring Day,
the breath of Destiny again caressed my face.
Life returning, surging in the veins of All.
Sublime.

One Spring Day,
the vessel of life and love shattered!
Battered souls, shredded flesh.
Shards all around.
My Love dying in the doorway.

I bleed my life upon the ground,
drenching The Petals of last Summer and Winter.
Puddles of red all around.
Life without Her sound

Puddles and Petals,
once red, vibrant life,
now brown, no breath, death from strife.
A vision through time.

One Summer Day,
The Phoenix may come.
But Destiny,
She whispers no more.

Bereft of Her gentle caress,
hope drains from my veins.
My last drops of life
drip to the ground.
My dying gift to Gaia.
So tragic.

My love of One Summer lives for Her and Her, forever!
Despite the stained death upon Her ground,
may She live ever at peace with Gaia,
finding another Summer Day...

Brian T. Donnelly

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Petals in My Hand

I went through the haunted woods last night,
the petals in my hand were hard to bear,
and holding them tight while they silently cried
I went through.

The haunted wood last night left my heart so saddened,
and tired from fight in forsaken lands.

Desolate and full of despair, I went through the haunted woods.
Last night, the petals in my hand were hard to bear.

Marieluise Niehus

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Sin!

Business, Education, Government, Science, Religion, Medicine:
You all have known Sin!

"Death you are, and your present task, destruction." (Bhagavad Gita 11:32 Brian T. Donnelly translation/exegesis)

One would think that over time wisdom would surely grow.
Instead, we are pained, killed, maimed, pillaged, enslaved,
due to a lack of destruction reduction!
Wisdom appears to be a no show.

So smart we are at doing stupid things.
So stupid at doing smart things.

Sin at Love Canal!
Sin at Bhopal!

Too little, too late,
in Katrina's wake!
Drowning, helpless,
in Sin's lake.

Native Americans,
I hear your cries.
All the lies.
The sadness in your eyes.

Our Mother Earth groans,
strains, screams,
under our girth.
Castle homes.
Desire run amok.

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Hunger, homeless, hopeless,
it's not bum's luck!
End the distress,
selfish instead of selfless.

Such division from religion.
Ecumenical?
Nay, hypocritical!

Birth control testing, unregulated companies.
Women inflicted with cancer, lost destinies.
Tuskegee's greedy's, humanity's inhumanities.
Quenching the very voice of The Humanities.

Modern medicine, heal thyself!
I question your hippopotamus oath,
heedlessly cast aside,
for profit or pride, or both?

No modern energy source,
back to the horse?

A wreck in Iraq,
reported embedded nonsense!
Conceived by a quack,
living in a big white shack.
Rome is again ablaze!
Don't you smell the sickening haze?

Ethiopia, Rwanda, Darfur,
Why for?

Camping trips. Railroad rides.
Depravations, Concentrations.
Ovens laden with human lard and hides.
Horrors beyond genocide.

Hiroshima, Nagasaki,
Sins of criticality!
Rue Trinity.

Business, Education, Government, Science, Religion, Medicine:
You all have known Sin!
Repent!

Yet, don't we all harm those around us?
Through actions and inactions,
a failure to unite,
a willingness to fight,
countless distractions?

Let us, together, call a halt to this pace.
Break the tether of the inhuman race.

Join your voice with two great men
who spoke from within,
sadly silenced by bullets of sin.

"I have a dream!" (Martin Luther King, WDC March, August 28, 1963)
A dream of a promised land,
a land flowing with milk and honey,
devoid of greed and money,
where all are equal,
hand in hand.

Hear my battle cry,
a cry of reconciliation and unification.
A battle of peace.

People and nations,
we cannot live divided.
An eye for an I blinds!

It's desiccation.

Truly, "we are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies.

Though passion may have strained, it MUST not break our bonds of affection.

The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field, and grave,
to every living heart and hearth-stone all over this [world],
will yet swell the chorus of ... Union, when again touched,
as surely we MUST be, by the better angels of our nature."
(President Lincoln, March 4, 1861, First inaugural speech)

"We will be finally free when we renounce selfish desires
and break away from the ego-trap of 'I,' 'me' 'mine.'" (Bhagavad Gita 2:71 - George
Harrison translation/exegesis)

I can see
it starts with we, not me.
A reality of unity,
an end to inequity.

Or we are doomed?!
Our choice: more sin?
Or shall we look within
and then without...

Brian T. Donnelly

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Square Staircases

Eureka!

They tell it on the mountains,

from the castles of society.

They tell it over the hills,

proudly and without liability.

The world bows in reverence for the honorable man.

We know that we don't know?

Who dares to say so?

On Escher's stairs, round and round.

Where are we to be found?

Everywhere we go,

the sound.

Eureka!

They tell it on the mountains,

from the temples of imbalance.

They tell it over the hills,

proudly without delicacy.

The world bows in reverence for the busy man.

Every minute, every day,

it should make us frown,

sending cold chills down.

Making hair stand up

from toe to top.

Eureka!

They tell it on the mountains,

from ivory towers of knowledge.

They tell it over the hills,

proudly without ambiguity.

The world bows in reverence for the Nobel man.

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Entropy and complexity,
light as matter, energy,
parallel lines meeting in infinity.
Who will now sit under the apple tree,
and contemplate the gravity of humanity.
Eureka!

Marieluse Niehus and Brian T. Donnelly

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Service of Love

At 25 years – an empty crystal box.
To hold all my wishes that could have been.

At 30 years – now it is a black clock,
on a mantel shelf; no one but myself.

At 35 years – a pen and another clock.
Tick, tock. I live to serve only that sound!

At 40 years – a wall barometer:
warning bones, forthcoming pain and sorrow

The final gift – a watch for my palsied wrist!
I am useful to none, but medicine....

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Benita G. Brown (aka Benita Gail Banning)

And Brian T. Donnelly (aka Brian Paul Banning – Chullain McMahon in SL)

Scents

As the oozy dough plies and squeezes between her fingers, sticky due to a lack of flour, Blanche's thoughts begin focusing on dreams of the pie that will be. Three hours to show time: adrenaline rushes, her breathing quickens as the aroma of that wish wafts over her. "This will be the best pie yet!" she whispers.

Yet, slowly and uninvited, doubt begins mixing with that pleasing aroma, the stench of failures past poisoning her current hope's sweet scent. The painful memory of last Christmas's failed brownies begins staining her lighter thoughts a dark brown. Church Fund Raisers can be an embarrassing exhibition of unjust cast comparisons for Christ.

Ring! Ring! The phone jolts her from dark thoughts, dragging her, unwillingly, back to the now. Dough sticks the phone firmly in her hand as she grabs it. Drat! Another mess to clean. Pressing the phone to her ear, she feels yet more dough sticking in her hair and on her face. Drat!

Then, the lightly lilting, yet condescending, voice of the preacher's wife, Chastity, grabs her attention. The soft, controlled voice begins drilling into her ear, reinforcing the still rattling chains of the ghost of Christmas Past, miserable in mind.

"Blanch, you bakin' again this year? For The Church fund raiser I mean?" Chastity sings out.

"Aye, o'course I am! I do every year." Blanch replies, hoping to sound more positive than she feels.

"Ya' know, you've driven more folks away than we all wish, ya' know what I mean? Your brownies are cow pies!" Chastity blurts, loosing her melodic timbre, the shrill comment ripping through Blanch's flesh like a bullet.

"If I don't try, how can I grow? Preacher said so just last week in his sermon. Blackberry pie this year, not brownies. Somethin' different, no more cow pies," Blanch retorts, slamming the phone into its cradle, sticky bits of dough clingy

everywhere. Drat! The plates hanging on her walls softly vibrate, echoing the dissonance, as the shock passes down the wall.

Immediately, unseen impulses drive Blanch to the sink. She begins scrubbing her hands vigorously, the feeling that shite clings to her, contaminated by the interaction with the congregation's judge, jury, and executioner - Chastity. "I know what being a preacher's wife often means: hypocrisy consistently! She's mean alright."

Returning to the pie, anger venting upon the dough, forceful kneading as Blanch ponders, "Why I am so needing?" The hope, in a scent, of the upcoming baking impel her forward toward more despair, lost on the Ferris wheel of false Christian love, looping for life.