

A SKINNY A BOOK OF SKETCHY POETRY

BRIAN HANCOCK





**A SKINNY
BOOK OF
SKETCHY
POETRY**

BRIAN HANCOCK



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Dedicated to those who struggle to rhyme
but still have a good time

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POEMS

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THE ELF ON THE SHELF

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MARRIAGE IS NOT EASY



Marriage is not easy. There are a lot of burps and farts and a lot of red hearts. And, sadly, sometimes, some broken hearts

There are hook ups and cookouts and walks in the park. I've found that piña coladas don't work. Neither does getting caught in the rain

We tried yoga once but that ended in tears. What usually works best for us is to crack open some beers

Marriage is not easy. There is love and there is laughter. And looking forward to the forever after

But there is the here and there is the now. And somehow we make it work; by neither of us being a jerk

Marriage is not easy. There is always the issue of sex. On a bed that creaks. With a wife that

groans and a husband that moans. It's a necessary evil best done in the dark. Or sometimes, on a bench in a park. Or on special occasions, with her other best friend Mark

"You fill up my senses like a night in the forest," the song went. My wife says, "can you fill up my coffee cup. And then feed the pup. And then let the chickens out. And then take the kid on his paper route."

Marriage is not easy. Especially if it's your third one. This one came into my home like a ray of sun. Like a ray of sun that lit up my life. A ray of sun who I now call my wife

EVERYTHING FADES TO BLUE

Everything fades to blue

Watch a wave as it crests and breaks. It fades to blue

Watch a mountain in the late setting sun. It fades to blue

Even as the sun sets with its golden hue. The mountain still fades to blue

Watch a winding road winding through a desert. The cacti are green, but after dark they fade to blue

The cornfields are yellow. But when they are cut down they too fade to blue

I am not going to fade to blue

Not yet

I see the wave as it crests. I see golden sunlight reflect off the spindrift

I see the spindrift white and frothy. Fighting to
not fade to blue

I see the mountain. The light is fading; the
mountain fights back. Instead of blue it fades
to black

I see the winding road. The twilight is fading.
A full moon is rising. There will be no blue
tonight

I am not going to fade to blue

Not yet

I will fade to blue when it's my time

I might just fade when I can no longer rhyme

Until then I will watch the late summer sun

I will follow the winding road. Through yellow
cornfields and high mountains

I will arrive at the edge of a cresting wave

And know that it's time

Only then will I know it's time to fade to blue

But not yet

There is still too much to do

THE COVE

Romeo and Juliet drifted slowly on the evening
breeze

A light puff of wind rippled across The Cove

Romeo said to Juliet. "Any more of this breeze
and I think that we might just freeze."

Juliet tucked her head under her wing. She
started to sing

Well hum mostly. At first

The icy cold bitter winter cut her to the bone

She looked around. They weren't alone

Ducks and seagulls paddled by

Juliet said to Romeo, "Oh My."

Then she hummed her favorite song

"And talk of poems and prayers and promises."

Romeo said, "You have always kept your promise to me."

Juliet said. "It's easy when we mate for life."

Juliet said, "The sea smoke is rolling in."

Juliet said, "Let's paddle into The Cove and take shelter. We might see our friend Mr. Dove."

Their friend Mr. Dove was there. Shivering in the cold, early evening air

Romeo said. Come let me take you under my wing

Then Juliet started to sing

"How sweet it is to love someone. How right it is to care."

The Dove cooed. "I was in a wedding once. They set us free. Free to be us. Free to be me."

Juliet sang, **"How long it's been since yesterday. And what about tomorrow?"**

Mr. Dove cooed. "I was set free to be me. And I landed here with you. Now I am not just me, I am us.

Us as in me and you.

There is love in this cove. I am a simple dove but

Romeo you keep me warm. You kept me warm that night of the big storm.

And Juliet, you sing so beautiful it takes my breath away. Especially on a cold winters day."

Juliet sang, **"What about our dreams and all the memories we share?"**

Romeo said, "We dream together because we care."

Romeo and Juliet wrapped their long swan necks around each other and paddled back out toward the open ocean. They disappeared into the sea smoke

It was a while before Mr. Dove spoke. "Come back and visit soon."

(with thanks to John Denver for the song lyrics)



MUM

Mum died of a broken heart

It happened quickly. We were apart

I was serving my country

She was serving her family. As best she could

She was doing her best and her best was good

But in the end it was not good enough

She told me once that she would die of a broken
heart

That's how I knew

But as a child you never expect it to happen to
you

Mum died of a broken heart

I am not even sure where to start

Mum was kind

Mum was loving

Mum was beautiful

Mum was my Mum. There is not much more to add

Mum had addictions. They were all bad

She drank and smoked. Too much. And it made her family sad

"I'm leaving you." Those words were uttered by my Dad

And he did leave her

Weeks later my Mum died of a broken heart



Yvonne Fay Hancock 1930 - 1976

SEEKING ME

I see stuff float by on the breeze

It must be in a different language. It's not something everyone sees

But I see it. I see Bora Bora. I see Vanuatu. I saw them clearly as they floated by on the breeze

I see warm air. Wet air. It lands on my skin and my skin starts to weep. I am not weeping

I see stuff float by on the breeze

My home is in a crust of ice. Even the turkeys out my window are shivering. Our cat Fat Cat is shivering. I see the fronds of palm trees and they are not shivering. They are riding the trade winds

I will ride the trade winds. I have done this before. I will ride the lip of a cresting wave. I have done this before. I will chase the sun until

it sets spluttering and sizzling into the ocean.
I have done this before because I saw stuff float
by on the breeze

And I grabbed it

When I am asked, "How do you know that you have
had a charmed life?" I reply, "because I saw a
charmed life float by on the breeze. And I grabbed
that too."

When I see my life I see it in full HD. I hear it
in surround sound 3D

The traffics and jams of life have robbed me of
my youth but I will grow my hair back blond and
long. I will work my body until it's lean, but not
mean. I want to be me as I was when I first saw
things float by on the breeze

An African on the shores of Africa

I can hear the palms rustling. I can feel the
trade winds blowing, wet and hot. I know that
when my boat heels to the new wind, that I will
hear the slap slap of the bow wave and know that
I am young again

Young enough to still see stuff floating by on
the breeze

A RAUNCHY RIDE

I fingered a girl on my way into Boston

I fingered her sister on the long winding road
into Austin

Is this just a Texas Tall Tale; or not?

I was also with their mother in a parking lot

Now that's a true story

I'm not saying this to brag. She was a bit of an
old hag. It would be an understatement to say
that her tits had started to sag. But in the end
she was better than a half decent shag

She was sweet and she was kind. And believe me,
she loved to grind. In the end it had to end. And
in the end there is just the memory, a memory of
a friend

And a memory of her daughters too

SALVADOR THREESOME



They say that the best things all come in three's

I think that they are right

It was a hot, Salvador night

She glanced my way. "Eu tenho um amigo aqui - I have a friend here," she said

She also said. "I have a nice warm bed."

I looked down at my fries and tried to avert her eyes, but soon we were in the back of a taxi

It was a tight fit. And then suddenly, right out of nowhere, there was a naked tit. Then two. Then three. then four

Did I mention that it was a hot Salvador night?

Her place was sparse but she had a nice arse, or what I could see of it as she stepped into the shower. My knees were knocking when her friend

came knocking. She too was naked. I thought that I might faint but someone had to stand up for Queen and Country. So I stepped into the shower

It was even tighter than the back seat of the taxi, but not as tight as..., well never mind

The humidity was a killer. There was sweat everywhere, but not from the humidity. There was lust in the air

She told me that her 'English' name was Serendipity. And that her friend's name was Sally. I lied and told her that my name was Harry. Like from the movie, 'When Harry met Sally.'

She knew that I was lying

Neither had asked for payment, but I wasn't quite sure

They were both asleep when I crept to the door

I found my pants on the floor

Which was a bit of good luck, after what had been a good and long lasting..., hmmm, well never mind

The door was locked and the night dark. I could hear the girls snoring and the occasional fart.

I needed to leave but I was locked in. Locked in, in a palace of sin

I looked up. Jesus looked down. He was hung on the wall wearing a tiny thin thorny crown.

It didn't seem to bother him

I think he smiled at me for just one short second. Then I realized that he knew that I was a man locked in - locked in, in a palace of sin - and that's when I knew that he was probably laughing

And that he also had the keys to the door

So I lay on the floor

I found the deadbolt. I slipped it quietly, and then I bolted out. I think that I heard one of the girls say, "Onde você está indo - where are you going?" It might have been Jesus talking; I have no way of knowing

The night air was still. Damp and dark. I started to walk. I had no idea where I was going. At least it wasn't snowing. In fact it was hotter than a real ripe fart

I heard a car approaching slowly from behind. It was a taxi and the driver was ever so kind.

He agreed to drive me to an ATM. It was on the corner of a gas station. A block from my hotel

The rest of the story I probably shouldn't tell, but moments after I slipped my card in, I heard it fall and land with a slight clunk; into an empty bin

I knew that I had to run. I had to get out of that place. So I ran, at a pretty fast pace. It was just getting light, it was the end of the night. One of the best nights of my life

I found my car where I had left it. My hotel room was clean. In the morning when I woke, I realized that it had all just been a dream

THE ELF ON THE SHELF

I saw the man in the window. He was sitting as still as can be

I saw the blue light from his computer reflect on his TV

I am a voyeur. I can't help myself. So I picked up my binoculars and that's when I saw the elf on the shelf

On the shelf. Right behind him. Sitting there with a big, fat, wide grin

I looked again. He was gone. The man that was. The elf was still there. The blue light from the screen gave the elf a nice, half milky sheen

Then the little bastard was gone

We were at a hotel in Boston. My wife said, "come to bed. Your voyeurism is messing with my head."

I said, "there was an elf on his shelf."

My wife said, "You are seeing things."

I thought that she might be right. Recently I had been a tad uptight

But where did the little bugger go?

Then I looked out the window and what did I see? A half naked elf; taking a pee. I knocked on the window. He turned and looked at me and gave me the finger.

I thought that I might just go to bed. There was no reason to linger

But the elf had some intent. He was a little hell bent. He was suddenly right outside my window

He knocked on the pane. His look was of utter disdain

He said to me, "I saw you staring."

I said, "staring's not a crime. In the distance I heard the bells on the Clock Tower chime

Then the little bugger came in through the window. He had pulled up his pants and came in through the window with an army of ants

I said, "hey dude, I have seen you in the nude. Pissing all over Commonwealth Avenue."

He said, "That was Boylston. But it's winter now and I come in peace."

I said, "I would like a piece of you. You and your army of ants."

"I was told that voyeurism isn't a crime," said Mr. Elf. "But you can't make it go away with just the flick of a dime. I saw you looking at me. And that might not be a crime. But my friend here. His name is Mike. He rides a bike. He's a lawyer, and he says that it's not good to be a voyeur."

"Yea, so what?" I looked down at my socks. He was talking to an ant. I was talking to an elf. The very same elf that spends eleven months in a box

I was glad that my wife was sleeping

"Let's make a deal," I said. "Take your ants and your ant lawyer and go down to the foyer. Ask for Jim. Funny name for him because never goes to the gym. He's not what one might call slim."

The elf gave me a look that said 'don't judge.'

"Tell Jim to give you and your ants my breakfast pass. I will call ahead. That way you will at least get some bread."

Suddenly he was gone. I looked across the way.

The man in the window was back. So was the elf. Sitting on the shelf. There were no ants. Just an elf sitting in his pants. He gave me a sly grin. I reached for a bottle of gin. The elf on the shelf was looking for a win

The man in the window just sat there staring at the screen. And then the gin..., well, it started to kick in. I shimmied out of the window and landed on the ground. It might have been easier taking the elevator. But I wanted to show the elf, the elf on the shelf, who was boss

Even though I knew that he wouldn't give a toss

The man in the window didn't notice me come in. The elf on the shelf was still sitting there wearing his silly grin

Then he mooned me

I couldn't believe it. I thought, "you little shit." I grabbed for him but in a second he was gone. I saw him again in my hotel room across the way. He was smiling at me

So I hurried down to the first floor. This time I used the front door. I entered my room. There was no sign of him. I heard my wife say, "when did

you come to bed?" I looked on the bed and there he was, kissing my wife on the head

In a second he had vanished. I was famished. I went to the kitchen. He was there by the microwave; trying to shave; with my razor, but what he didn't know was that it doubled as a remote controlled taser

And that, my friends, is how I won the war with the elf on the shelf

Well sort of

As I went to bed I looked across the way feeling quite pleased with myself. I saw the man in the window staring at his screen. This time he had that half white, milky sheen. And right there, right behind him, on the shelf, laughing to himself, was the elf

FAT CAT



We once had a cat. We named him Fat Cat. Not because he was fat. We just liked the way the two words went together; Fat Cat. To be honest he could sometimes be a brat

But he was our brat and we loved him. He was actually quite slim. Especially in the summer when he hunted rats under the garden shed. He would bring them inside and leave them on our bed

But enough of that. He fancied himself as The Cat in the Hat. He fancied himself teaming up with the Elf on the Shelf. Together they would rule the neighborhood. In an effort to do nothing and especially no good

Seemed like a reasonable idea from where we stood

But Fat Cat was lazy and the Elf on the Shelf couldn't keep his hands to himself so they went

their separate ways and so this was how Fat Cat spent his days

He would hold court. Always trying to drum up support. He would lay in the sun, or sit on his mat. Until the Town Turkeys came along looking to have a chat. They talked politics and discussed the weather, and sometimes they talked about Root Beer's mom Heather

Root Beer was a great dane that lived two streets over. His ears were large

He once told Fat Cat that he had lived on a barge. On the Seine River in France. He said "we lived there free of charge."

Fat Cat said, "no way. If that was the case why didn't you stay?" Root Beer said, "My heart is America. We couldn't stay away so we came back here and we are here to stay."

Fat Cat loved Root Beer. Although he actually preferred Coke. He would always tell Root Beer that as a joke

Fat Cat's best friend was a gray squirrel named Chadd. He was small and he was tough, at times a little rough. But Fat Cat loved him like a brother,

especially because he knew that Chadd never knew his mother. Or his father for that matter

Glenda the Goose came by each Sunday. She was a part time model and spent much of her time strutting down a runway. She told Fat Cat that he could make some extra money with his good looks
Fat Cat said, "No thanks, those modeling agents are all just crooks."

Glenda said, "suit yourself. I'm going to offer the job to Mr Elf, you know, the one that lives on a shelf."

Fat Cat said, "Go ahead. He's only going to mess with your head."

The chickens were also his friends. Emma and Betty. It's sad because they are gone now thanks to Rocky Raccoon. Gone too soon

There was also the GOAT. Jimmy Spithill. He had come a long way and it had all been uphill. He lived on a farm and he never meant no harm. It's just that he was a goat; who knew how to sail a boat. He had once won the America's Cup

True story. Google it

Fat Cat has two mentors. Romeo and Juliet. They

lived in The Cove along with their friend Mr. Dove. Fat Cat knew in his heart that they would never be apart. They were serene in their love for each other. And in their love for Mr. Dove

His other best big friend was Tall Tom Turkey. Tall Tom Turkey had once thought of joining the clergy. But he was too tall to fit through the door. So he decided instead to do some good deeds, so wherever he went, he spread happy seeds

There was also John Wayne, the tiny terrier from across the street. Fat Cat had once taken him on a meet and greet. It didn't go well

When he sat down and thought about it his best friend was not Chadd with two d's. His best friends were Dominique and Daisy. I know that sounds a little crazy. Dominique and Daisy were the two cows at Stonybrook Farm

He had gone there one day, meaning no harm. Just looking for milk in the milking barn. But you see things happened. Fat Cat got splat. Daisy had shat. For the first time in a long time Fat Cat was wearing his hat

It was something he immediately regretted. The complaint he filed with Mrs. H has already been

vetted. They were not guilty. "It's what cows do," she explained. They eat straw and poo

Mr. and Mrs. H ran their home like a farm. There were gardens to heed and chickens to feed. Fat Cat loved to lie in his own patch of weed; a catnip patch named 'Kitty Can't Cope'. Sometimes catnip was the only thing that gave him hope

Then one summer night Fat Cat died. He was fine one minute and the next he was gone. Gone to Stonybrook farm. Gone to all his happy places. Surrounded by his friends. Even in death he could still see their faces

We miss you Fat Cat. You were more than just a cat. You were loved; by all the animals of Waterside, and especially by Mr. and Mrs. H



Fat Cat - unknown date - 2021



SHAKE

My friend Shake promised me a budgie

He said, "tomorrow, I will bring you a budgie,

And a cage."

The next day he told me. "Tomorrow I will bring
you a budgie,

And a cage."

I met him each day at the gate at the bottom of
our garden

I was seven

I told Shake that I was eleven. He just smiled

Shake was our newspaper man

He had a wide smile, some missing teeth and a
broken bike

But he had no budgie

He said, "tomorrow I will bring you a budgie."

I waited by the gate

Sometimes he was late

When he came around the corner he rang the bell
on his bike

He always waved at me

He said, "tomorrow I will bring you a budgie."

He never did, but he gave me a gift that was more
precious than a budgie

He gave me the gift of hope

And friendship

And a sweet, sweet memory

MANSON THREESOME

We had just had a threesome. Then we three went
for a walk in the park

It was dark

The short one asked, "is your name really Clark?"

"I said, "no it's Brian, and it's beginning to rain."

We ran for shelter

I said, "did you ever read the book, Helter
Skelter?"

They said, "no, what's it about?"

I said, "it's a neat little story

Although a little bit gory."

The short one said, "You told us that your name
was Clark."

I said, "Well, that was just a lark. I lied. I never

thought that you would have sex with anyone named Brian."

The tall one said, "well that would have been a crime. You managed just fine."

"Back to the book," she said. "Now I remember. I read it when I was seventeen. Charlie Manson seemed to be a bit of a bad dream."

"A nightmare," I said, "especially for those who are now dead."

"Wasn't it just all about sex?" the tall one asked

"There is sex and then there is sex," I said. "And now more than a few people are dead

Sex should be fun. Like going for a run. A lot of effort and sweat involved. It should not be about young girls being controlled."

"Wait, wait," the short one said. "Was he the guy that liked to have sex with the dead? And then eat them?"

"No," I said. "That was Jeffrey Dahmer

He was a total bummer. That Dahmer."

Understatement of the year

I said, "Manson organized the crime and then he did the time. Evil comes in many different ways. He paid for his crime until the end of his days."

The tall one said, "I can see now how these things can happen. My first boyfriend had sex with me while I was napping. I didn't mind; he was ever so kind. I didn't even wake up."

"That's not the same thing," I said

The short one said, "Oh you mean that Charlie Manson? I thought that you were talking about my first boyfriend. Chuck Manson. He was ever so handsome."

Then the rain stopped

I said. "Any interest in going back to bed? It's getting light out."

"I'm already wet," the tall one said

So we went back to their room. It was very early in the morning. The sun was rising; and so was I

I was rising just fine until I gave Red Bull a try

The rest, my friends, is what you read about in Penthouse.

BAG OF NAILS



I went to the Bag of Nails. It's a gay night club in Wales. There was a guy there named Giles. He was all full of smiles. And quite good looking too

He said to me, "Are you in or you out?" I had no idea what he was talking about

He said to me, "are you straight or are you gay?"

I told him, "I haven't figured it out either way."

I said, "I have never really thought about it."

I said, "give me a moment to think."

He looked very handsome standing there all dressed in pink

Giles said to me, "Well, you will know it when you see it. Either you love it or you don't." I knew what he was talking about

I said to the barkeep, "give this man here a drink."

I needed time to think

I thought about it for a bit. And then remembered my wife's more than tender tit. She has two of them actually. Both equally sweet, although a little lopsided. I guess that can happen. I always thought that they were a little misshapen

So I said, "this is my first time in Wales; and my first time visiting the Bag of Nails. I didn't know that it was a gay bar

The man asked me again, "are you in or are you out?"

I said, "I'm out, but let me give this whole bar a shout."

I called the barkeep over. Turned out he was from Dover." I had just been in Dover. He knew the place where I had stayed; The Red Rover. I didn't know at the time that it was also a gay bar. Looking back on it now I can see it from afar. There was a reason that the musicians were all dressed in drag. Even more so now I remember that the lead singer looked like an old hag; carrying a handbag

I said, "my friends here are parched. It might be because they take it up the arse. Let me buy them a drink. The bill is on me"

Here's my credit card. Now I have to take a pee

I came back into the bar. I didn't have to go far. The men were cheering None of them jeering. They were drinking. I was thinking

How sweet it is to love someone



MARY FAY

So there was this time
And no, I'm not trying to rhyme
Just for the sake of trying to rhyme
There was this girl in Australia
And no I am not going to name her
We met on the Nullabor
It was hot as hell
But to be truthful; she rang my bell
I was hitchhiking to Sydney
She took me as far as Kalgoorlie
Then she said, "I have a nice cool bed
But it creaks. And my Mum and Dad are home."
I must have looked wistful

She said, "I live on a farm."
I asked, "does it have a barn?"
She said, "well yes it does my good sir."
Well that was that; problem solved
And that's how things evolved
The pigs thought it strange
The chickens were clucking
All the animals were watching us fucking
She said, "I think that you may have some straw
in your arse."
I said, "well, that's just a bit of a farce."
I had been trying to distract Daisy the cow
She was giving us a knowing look somehow
She said, "I love playing these games."
Then I heard the clang of a bucket
She said, "Fuck it. It's feeding time. We have to
do a runner."
It's my Dad. He will be really mad
There was a back door

But she had left her undies on the floor
I heard her Dad say, "are you in there Mary Fay?"
I didn't give her name away
But you now know it
And the memory is sweet



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

BRIAN HANCOCK is a renowned author, sailor, and adventurer with a passion for storytelling and exploration. Born in South Africa, Hancock has spent much of his life navigating the world's oceans, competing in prestigious sailing events such as the Whitbread Round the World Race. He has sailed over a quarter million miles offshore.

Drawing from his rich maritime experiences, he has penned a number of acclaimed books including two memoirs, three novels and four childrens books. They all blend technical insight with compelling narratives.

Hancock is also a sought-after public speaker and sailing consultant, sharing his expertise and inspiring others to embrace challenge and adventure.

Brian lives in Marblehead, Massachusetts with his

wife Sally and a blended family of five children and until recently two chickens, Betty and Emma, a cat named Ziggy and a tiny pooch named Maisy. Oh and let's not forget grandson Emmet and the one that's on the way, no name yet...)

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Fat Cat - Young and Restless
Fat Cat - Magic Carpet
Fat Cat - International Cat of Mystery
Fat Cat - The two Naughty Chickens

TECHNICAL

Maximise Your Sail Power - The Complete Guide to Sails,
Sailmaking and Sail Performance

POETRY

A Skinny Book of Sketchy Poetry

COFFEE TABLE

Winning Spirit - The Global Challenge 2004/2005
Chasing the Dawn - (with Nick Moloney)
Living Life - The Ocean Globe Race story (coming 2025)





Like a bird on a wire
Like a drunk in an old
midnight choir, I have tried
in my way to be free

--- Leonard Cohen

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