

**RABBIT
EAR
MOMENTS**

dream
poems

mack rogers

for Dr. Kallet

“The discovery that dreams are deceptive must have been made countless times at sunrise, but everything suggests that from early on, this discovery was coupled with the certainty that if a dream is not real, it can at least affect the course of reality.”

Sidarta Ribeiro

thanks for the day residue

Dreams often tell banal stories meant for an audience of one. But change the delivery method and it morphs into something worth reading, hence dream poems.

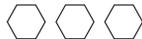
As a fiction writer and poet, dream poetry is the perfect creative outlet for me. I make an entry in my dream journal, edit it into flash fiction, then I write a poem about it.

Here, you'll find some of my favorite dream poems. I like to stick to this format in which I give you the poem as well as the dream itself. I learn a lot about myself each time because I like to think of my dreams as conversations with my subconscious. Which makes the poetry my way of making it more digestible.

What I end up with is just about what you'd expect— a mess.

Even if poetry isn't your thing, I still recommend keeping a dream journal. If your subconscious is trying to tell you something, you may as well listen. Plus, it's fun with low stakes. Your dreams are filled with your memories, or, as Freud liked to call them, day residue. So why not explore them?

You can find more of my dream poetry on my blog.



dream as if
the sky is
your eyes
because it is
reflected stories
written in
the ocean lifted
into clouds
given a name
to watch it
fall



a beach made of rainbow

At the edge of a world afraid,
there rests a place
where the sea collects gems,
weaves them into jewelry,
and adorns them on her beaches
like lives to a bookcase.

A safe space for folk of all kinds
to come together and meet their end,
I found myself there with her,
sealed in amber and stolen from the blue,
surrounded by natives, the sort that you
smile at and pretend to comprehend.

Among the jade and the turquoise,
they blend her into a sand grotto
stretching below and through
where she'll spend the rest of her days
as one hue become two
on a rainbowed beach of
fallen stars.



My mom and I were living on the east coast. The government had installed these huge blast shield zones around the entire country and around each state. To travel, there was be a short window of time each week in which you could travel to the top of the wall and climb down into the next zone. We were coming back from a vacation when that short window of time closed during our trek. We were stuck at the top and the only other way down was this ladder that ran up the side of the shield.

Regardless, it was the only way down. I went down first and, to my surprise, Mom seemed to be handling the descent well. She complained about the coloring of the shield and how she hated the color purple, which happens to be my favorite color.

But then she fell. All I could do was watch her fall and there was this solemn look on her face, like there were worse things than dying like this or dying at all. I screamed and scrambled down the ladder to the bottom and dived into the water, surprising since I don't know how to swim. But I punched through the water, right up to her body, and wrapped myself around her.

I brought her ashore but she wasn't a corpse anymore, rather an assortment of yellow boxes. Not sure how or why, but I knew these boxes were her. So I got up on dry land and suddenly I was surrounded by chanting islanders. They didn't seem to speak English so I just kept yelling back "mom" back to the beat of their chant. Later, they chanted it back.

So a few of them helped me bring the boxes up the beach. We came to a sort of circular clay hut on the beach where some others tried to take the boxes away from me. I threw myself on top of them but they wrestled me back. They lined the boxes up against the walls of the interior along with other boxes of different colors— greens and blues and even more yellows.

Then the boxes melded into the walls and this sand-colored hut came to life with color. Down the beach, there were more and more huts, bursting in a rainbow of colors. She could've been any one of these colors so, in a way, she was all of them.

how i know you like me

you always knew how to

fuck with me

not like that tho

that woulda been nice

traffic cone stealing

badass you

remember we stayed up

24 hours playing halo at

your place

fomo more visceral

than allergies

I'm not your dawg but

I don't want this

to end

just give it to me

give me all

the answers

like you used to

the cheat codes

the gas money

text messages

give me something

to live for

An old high school friend was teaching a college class and he listed an address none of us recognized on campus for the final exam. The exam was a series of three essays, one at home and two in class. My at-home essay was about *Dragon Ball Z* and I had outlined an essay about Muse to write in class.

I left about an hour and a half early to find the classroom and I decided to walk after a small fiasco with my car/segway thing. A classmate walked past me so I chit-chatted about the address. He had no idea about the weird address either but was grateful that I told him about the location. Still no idea where I was headed, I bumped into more classmates on my way to campus, all of whom looked pale.

I input the address into Maps and led the march to our final exam. Eventually, we found ourselves in a faculty area with rows of cubicles and faculty and staff running around like *Wolf on Wall Street*. I was pretty sure this was the right building but the elevator was blocked by some particularly condescending professors who refused to let us through.

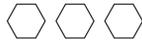
So we raced out of the building where there was now a giant fountain in the center of a lake. At the other end, there were at least a hundred students with streamers, waving them to the beat of a song I hadn't heard before. Then we realized that those students were all from our lecture. And that we should've started this process yesterday.

i have to water my cat

imposter
run like you always do

the cats are on the loose
leaping through the grocery
ocean too

must be twenty-one or older
to eat at this popcorn stand
or at least give a damn
when the floor turns blue



So I went to the grocery store with my classmates from this super-hero academy. A few of us were up front when this shady character comes in streaming from his phone. He put his free arm around a classmate and said “You’re the winner of free THC-infused, roasted cashews!” He turned his hand over and, sure enough, there was a cup of cashews in his palm.

I ran to grab my other classmates— but before I did that, game show guy gives me two handfuls of the cashews and ate them all. I told them what was happening a few aisles away and that I was worried his superpower could get out of hand really quickly.

We went back to the front and now he’s made a popcorn machine but filled with alcohol and a small cup attached to a crane dangling above. I Vulcan nerve pinched him and he slumped to the floor. Immediately, I grabbed his phone and threw it into the popcorn machine and somehow it landed in the cup— but teetering out— and we all stood over him questioning whether he was actually passed out.

At that point, it was clear that the dude was still conscious but the phone was slow-mo falling into the vat. As soon as it landed in the vat of alcohol, he started freaking out. His body started glitching and he shot off across the store with water jetting out of his hands. I yelled at the employees to get everyone out but he'd already started jetting in all different directions including in front of the door.

Suddenly, I had my cat, Garth. I sprinted out the emergency side door and appeared in my apartment. So I plopped my cat down and explained what was going on to my partner. Garth ran out the window and I jumped out after him, snagged him, and ran back in through the window and right out the door, back into the grocery store.

Things were quiet. There was some shouting in the distance but no sign of anyone. Garth jumped out of my arms and ran into the furniture department. That was when my partner's cat Memine showed up. Memine ran after Garth, growling and hissing, then they got into a little fight. Garth won and Memine ran away.

I carried Garth back to the apartment and dropped him off. Then, I ran back into the store to help fight the game show guy but the police were already escorting him out.

there was a tornado that lifted us to heaven

and there

 i met my daughter for
the first time

 i planned her
funeral but it

 was mine
too we scratched lottery
 tickets and cried

like we used

 to and i laid you to
rest when i woke up

 you know you
are in heaven when

 winning is the same
as dying

My partner and I were having a little weekend getaway at his sister's house in Atlanta. The day was about what you'd expect, we weren't exactly doing anything, just kinda hanging out. Around 2:00, they decided they wanted to visit their mom. Totally caught off guard, I threw some clothes on and sent out a message to my writing group that I wouldn't be there (we meet virtually at 2:00 on Sundays). When I got ready, I found them in the backyard looking up into the sky where a giant vortex was forming directly above us. Rather than run away or seek shelter, we stood there watching it and it eventually sucked us up.

After a few minutes of surprising calm, we floated down to the floor of a Walmart where there was a queue of people and a reverend checking them in. I got separated from my family and headed for the end of the queue. Each person I walked past seemed to know me and each of them gave me a \$1 scratch-off lottery ticket. By the time I got to the end of the line, the tickets had transformed into a celebration of life program. I opened it up and immediately recognized the deceased as my daughter. I was her mother. Then it hit me that I had just walked past her in line. I went to her and she was already crying as she had been when I first passed her. We hugged and cried together. She didn't remember me, so I told her a story about her graduation party. As I told it, I realized that I had made these programs myself.

How old is this pizza?

Yeah, I shop at Walmart.
It's a one-stop shop.

Where else can you get
your favorite pizza

& the best cookie you ever
tasted & your daily dose

of prescribed conformity?
Remind you of grade school

too? I used to eat only the top
like a picky coon.

It's all trash forwards
& backwards anyway.



My partner and I accidentally traveled to the future and landed in this conformist society, specifically in a Walmart. Everyone around us was wearing the same gray outfit, long sleeves, pants, and boots. We, on the other hand, were wearing t-shirts, shorts, and flip flops. As if that wasn't enough to make me super anxious, we also got separated.

I searched for him, which should've been easy given that we stuck out in the crowd, but I couldn't find him. But soon, I discovered the long queue for cafeteria food in the center of the store and I hurried to the back of the line, sure that he would find me one way or another there.

I waited patiently, not saying a word and not moving unless I had to— I waited a long time too. The servers had to run and get more of this gross rectangular pizza and tiny chocolate chip cookies from another department constantly. Often, they only returned with one small pallet. When I got closer to the front, they told me to wait and let a couple of people jump ahead of me while they warmed more pizza.

During all of this, I heard my partner get into a disagreement not far away, yelling at a guard or something about how ridiculous this was. They escorted him away, but I was too afraid to chase after him. I was the only person of color that I could see and the way the servers had just treated me had me feeling extremely unsafe.

I finally got my food, ate it right there as I moseyed out of the line. Then I left the building and hid, trying to see if I could use find my phone to find him but it locked me out. It said my password had expired a hundred years ago and it chose a new one for me but didn't tell me what it was.

reading steiner

I've been watching
too much tv

now I am the

disaffected butterfly on fury road
making donuts in the sand
on a windy day

dreaming my exit with
each turn

it's summer and we're running out of screen



I infiltrated a retro flying saucer that was invading the planet and activated an invisibility device as soon as I got in. The interior resembled an army barracks and mess hall, but instead of troops, there were human families with small children either eating dinner or playing. My invisibility only lasted about a minute and I spent half that time shellshocked by the scene. As it expired, I hid under a table— totally conspicuously— until it recharged. Several kids noticed me but none of them alerted their parents.

Once I reactivated my camouflage, I ran down a corridor and into another room where there were armed aliens in what looked like an overgrown city plaza enclosed in the ship. Grass and weeds had grown in between the concrete blocks but had since died and at the opposite end of the plaza there was a fenced-off alleyway. With little time to spare, I sprinted past the aliens as my camo wore off. They shot lasers at me as I ran for the fences, and, by the time I had climbed halfway up, they stopped shooting and let me go.

After I jumped down, I headed down the alley and suddenly I was back on Earth. Rather, I was on some postapocalyptic version of Earth. There were deserted cars strewn all over the street and a turned over motorcycle with a freshly dead man underneath. Among the vehicles was a black SUV, and, as I crept down the abandoned city street, the SUV lurched toward me and revved its engine. Startled, I leapt into one of the other cars, scrounging for keys that naturally weren't there. Out of the side mirror, I could see a gang of armored vehicles speeding toward me. The SUV revved again and I jumped inside without another thought. Immediately, it sped off down the road, turned down the same alley I came from and rammed through the fence gate.

To my surprise, we weren't back on the ship. We were in a city turned jungle that was filled with bees. The other people in the car told me that they had been trying to get back to their timeline for years, endlessly going in and out of the alley. They spun us around and plowed through the magically repaired fence once more and we drove into yet another version of Earth.

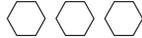
a googled bible verse

For now we see through an ass
but then face to rectum:

darkly

 now I know in part;
but then shall I know even as also
 I am known
 as food for nocturnal creatures.
Make in me a home and that
is what it shall be.

 I will have your children
 and they will have me.
I read it in a book once:
 it's not what you think.



A friend and I were headed to someplace around sunset when my car broke down. Neither of us knew anything about cars, but my mom's house was nearby so we walked there. I wasn't sure how this was going to help us because she probably knows less about cars than I do but she wasn't home anyway.

We decided to take the bus and fortunately there was a stop right down the road at a gas station. My friend ran to the bathroom and when he came back, I noticed he was itching like crazy and there were what looked like bugs jumping all over him. So you can really picture this, imagine the title sequence from *A Scanner Darkly*.

I couldn't stop him before he got on the bus and by then it was too late. He had this rare species of bat that are so tiny they can fit in your pores— let's call them skin bats. Their entire life cycle was spent in our pores. They dove into a pore, burrowed a little bit, laid eggs, and died, but when the eggs hatched the newborn bat would shoot out of the bat grave— already pregnant with another baby bat— and pop a U-ey and dive into another pore. And this all happened over the span of maybe thirty seconds each time.

When I told him and the other passengers, it caused mass panic. Everyone, including myself, started swatting at themselves and stomping to kill the bats that hadn't quite made it back into our skin. I ended up running out of the bus in the hopes that I could outrun or dodge the newborns.

moving to neptune

As sure as the moon is blue
and the grass is crimson,
I belong up there
in the waters hidden
under the shadows of an earth
too detached in a space made crowded
by rubies atmospheric.

I missed the ship to ol' Neptune,
a sapphire magnet so near
the fear of missing out
will, without a doubt,
end this life oneiric.



The night sky was a brilliant, royal blue. At first, I thought it was the moon colored blue coming crashing down toward Earth, but I realized it was Neptune. Earth had become its moon.

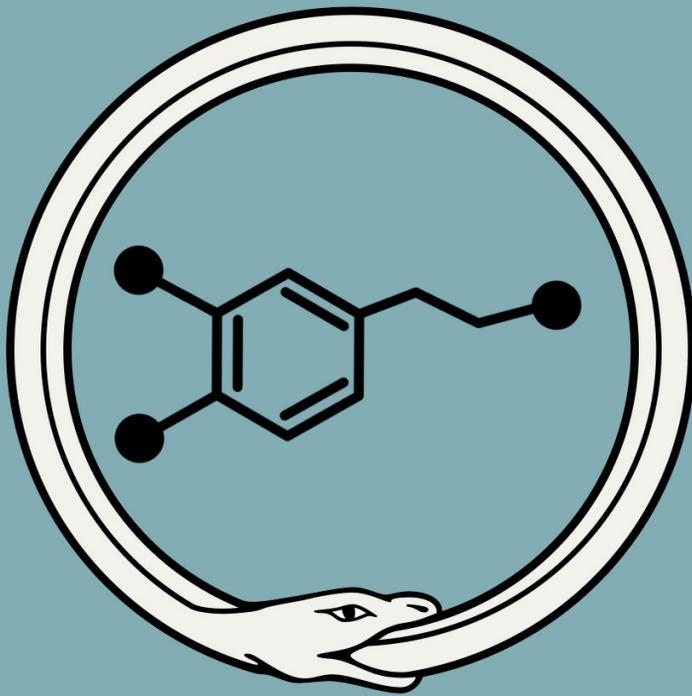
I laid in this in field of red grass, watching it and wishing I could go. Out in this stretch of nowhere without a sound, I lied there and gazed up at this massive ball of sapphire filling the sky. Every once in a while, I'd see ships traveling to and fro and I'd wish I was on one.

notes

With the exception of “how i know you like me” and “there was a tornado that lifted us to heaven”, each of these poems first appeared on my blog mackrogers.com at time of printing.

acknowledgements

Big thanks to Dr. Marilyn Kallet, former Knoxville poet laureate and my former professor at the University of Tennessee. Without her, I may have stopped writing poetry altogether.



 @mackrogers_

 mackrogers.com