

A close-up photograph of a person's face, focusing on the mouth and nose. The person is smiling, showing their teeth. The image has a slightly grainy, artistic quality. The text is overlaid on the image in a stylized, purple, outlined font.

MARK JANICELLO

"UNSAID"

NOTES FROM A LIFETIME
OF OBSERVATION

UNSAID

*It was on the tip of my tongue.
I was just about to say the things that come to mind
Whenever I think of you.*

*I almost said them.
But then I became afraid.
Afraid that you might laugh at me.*

So, I didn't say anything.

*I hated you for making me confront my own fear...
But only for a moment.*

*To let go.
To be the fool.
To feel the exhilaration of my flight to you.*

*It was on the tip of my tongue,
But it slid off the face of the world and was buried,*

UNSAID.

**„UNSAID: COLLECTED ESSAYS OF MARK JANICELLO“
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Home

*Though no poetic genius I,
With tear and laughter in my eyes
Did sit to write this little verse
And with a pen, my joy converse.*

*At home, 'twas bliss to fin'lly be.
Much wealth have I in family.
Had been too long since I was there,
Having taken fortune's dare.*

*For years, my life hath led me far,
My sights been trapped by distant star.
Around the globe hat my work led,
But home is where my soul is fed.*

*Maternal love and paternal joy
Were lavished on this weary boy.
Such tenderness did warm my heart,
And happy recollections start.*

*My youthful dreams found friendly ear,
Within those rooms I held so dear.
That company, seen all too rare,
Spoke with no shame, our hearts we bared.*

*Fraternal games and traps all played,
Departure moment plans all laid,
With rested soul, I waved goodbye.
Armored for the world, went I.*

Daddy

This afternoon, I saw a beautiful little girl with her father.

*Her hair bounced in the sunlight
Her dress was brilliant white
and made a crackling noise every time she moved.*

*Her face beamed with pride as her entire hand
gripped her father's forefinger while they walked.*

As I watched them, my heart longed for a normal life.

A family, a house and children.

What has happened to my priorities?

My life is so selfish.

What I want.

My dreams, my hopes, my needs

*In that one brief moment, I realized that
one day, I will want a life outside of my work.*

It never dawned on me before.

Something in the Touch

Something in the touch.

*Instinctively, I respond.
The warmth. The safety.
A peace that escapes me when I'm alone.
Relaxation.*

*At times, I feel so isolated.
A candle's flame in the eternity of night.*

I feel your hand, your touch.

*Suddenly, my skin jumps to life.
Every motion is magnified, intensified.*

*Your gentle voice.
The warmth of your breath on my neck.
You play with my hair.*

My eyes are closed, but I am not afraid.

*I almost wish I could do this by myself.
Fortunately, I cannot.*

*I open my eyes.
I am surrounded by light.*

The Warriors

Warriors.

Battles. Defeats.

No real victor. Everyone loses.

*The weary troops retreat for rest.
Strategies planned.*

Never give up. Fight till the death.

Destroying the puzzle of our relationship.

*Rebuild. Destroy.
With each battle a new piece is missing.*

*Eventually,
You cannot recognize the scene,
Or the players.*

You cannot rebuild what no longer exists.

*And imagine,
We like each other.*

Know

*You woke up this morning
And you left our bed*

*Then you packed your bags
And you were gone.*

I'm still lying right here, where you left me.

*I don't know if I turn my head
While I still see you there?*

*I couldn't sleep last night,
I was waiting for dawn's first light*

I can't say the words that make you love me

Now, there's no way clear for me to make it right.

*Know
That wherever you go
My love is yours
Even if your not mine*

*Know
that you've touched my soul,
Until the end of time.*

Possession

*The room is mostly black.
A few shafts of moonlight steal in
from the cracks around the window shade.*

The fan drones on and on.

*My body begs for sleep,
But my mind is racing.*

*Words, images and ideas flood my awareness.
My eyes will not close.*

*I stare at the ceiling, but see nothing.
My imagination has taken over.*

I toss and turn and try to get comfortable

*Eventually, I give in.
I turn on my nightlight
and fumble for a pencil and some paper.*

*As each idea moves
from the viewing screen in my mind,
down my arm
and onto the paper,
I feel my body release.*

*With each pencil stroke,
I move one step closer to rest.*

It is as if I am possessed.

*Ideas are like demons that torture and torment me.
They will not release me, until I commit them to paper
and set them on the path to fruition.*

Nightwork.

Ambition I

Why am I so afraid to stop?

*I think that I might miss something.
I don't really know what.*

*Whatever it is,
it certainly must be the most important thing ever.*

*Much more important,
than any of the important things that I already have.*

But, I really want the one that I'm the most unsure of.

*I want the one that I don't have.
The one that will make me anyone else but me.
Isn't that odd?*

Ambition II

Anything that is different is wrong.

I want to be in a class by myself.

*That's exactly where they want me to be;
In a locked room, alone.*

Thank God, I can still laugh.

*There are some things that you just know.
Things, that no matter what anyone tells you,
Will never change.*

*I have no doubts.
I will not be wrong.
I am not.*

They'll see.

Ambition III

*No.
I never escaped.
I'll claw at you to keep you here with me.*

*I could never overcome my fear.
What would have happened if I failed?*

*What I might have been.
What I might have been..
What I might have been...*

Don't be so sure of yourself.

*I couldn't do it.
What makes you think you're better than me?*

*You have some nerve.
You'll be back, just wait and see.*

I'll be here.

Everybody's going to laugh at you.

*You had better get something to fall back on,
In case things don't work out.
Things won't work out.
Things never work out.*

Oh, but I had dreams.

The Clown

*Around and around ---- 1,2,3,4,5.
Juggling clown at the circus.*

*You have to work very hard.
Nothing can be deprived of your complete concentration and attention.
1,2,3,4,....*

*I have a problem.
I am terrified of being ordinary.
I don't want to be like everyone else --- 4,5,1,2,....*

*My solution.
I take on more work than I can possibly do.
I add more people and relationships to my life,
Than I can handle at one time --- 3,4,5,...*

*And then I juggle.
Around and around --- 1,2,3,4,5.*

*Complicated must be
at least a step closer to extraordinary.
Don't you agree?*

*Sometimes, I add more of everything,
Just to see if I can do it.*

Here we go --- 1,2,3,4,5,6,7.

*The only problem is,
That sometimes, something gets dropped.*

1,2,3,4, ooops.

*And people,
Unlike apples or baseballs,
Can break when they fall.*

Say Goodbye to Wonderman

*This Child, he was so special.
Everyone could see.
So handsome, so talented, a jack-of-all-trades.
He lived not too far from me.*

*This child, he had potential.
There was nothing he couldn't do.
All he touched looked just like gold.
A trick known to very few.*

*He thought that life would be different for him.
He shouldn't have to work like the rest.
But, great deeds come at a very great price.
The work is really the test.
He reached a point where he had no life.
He worked all day into night.
No, it's not fair, but nothing is.
To reach the top, you know you must fight.*

*Wonderman was a bodybuilder.
Steroids, those were his drugs.
He said he could fly over mountain tops,
If he could get up off the livingroom rug.
Wonderman was a man just like me.
He wanted to do it all.
But if you don't know how to pli?
Giant leaps lead to great falls.*

*Say Goodbye to Wonderman.
There's no quick path to the stars.
Brilliance is reached one step at a time.
Your work's what will take you far.*

*Say Goodbye to Wonderman.
Come down to earth with your friends.
There's no easy way out,
There's no quick roundabout
That you won't pay for in the end.*

A Small Thrill

A small thrill.

*I walk into my private room.
A double bed with fluffy pillows.
It is turned down and awaiting my arrival
A carpet, a mirror.*

Anyone else may not have even noticed.

*Just little things.
An ounce of the respect that I've been killing myself to get.
An ounce.
I'm working my way up.
Yes, I've clawed up one rock higher than I was before.*

So far to go.

*But, I can't help but smile inside.
A quiet, secret smile.
Unshared. Private.*

I almost feel evil because I'm being treated a little differently.

*Who cares!!!
I love this.*

Horizons

Daylight.

Pick a point.

Horizon.

All lines converge, smoothly, deliberately.

Perspective.

Pinnacle of a lifetime.

Every man has some point to which he strives.

Evening Sky.

Millions of points from which to choose.

Each as bright as it's neighbor.

Limitless possibilities.

How to choose???

Some may fade.

Some will not.

“You must narrow your focus!”

„Why?“

I prefer to work a night.

Soundtracks

*I wear my walkman in the mall.
The soundtrack for my life.*

*Shop. Beat. Beat.
Hummm.*

*There are a lot of mutes at the mall today.
Ha! Ha!*

"Huh?" "What???"

*Shop. Bop. Bop.
Click.*

*"Oh, I'm so sorry. My eyes were closed.
Let me get that for you.
I'm really sorry!!!"*

*Click. Bop. Bop. Sing.
"What are you looking at??"*

*Beat. Beat.
"What? No, I am not yelling."*

Shop.Beat. Beat.

"Huh? No, I'm just looking, thank you."

*Shop.
"Who's Zoomin?Who? Take another look and tell me baby..."
This store never looked so good.*

Sing to me Aretha.

Dreamland

Dreamland.

White sheet transformation.

Magical back wall.

*White light.
Projected essence of life.*

Cool darkness.

*Envelop my seat.
Take me to the light.*

Never leave the sheet.

Reel life.

Crossroad

Scarecrow in a cornfield.

*Uninvolved.
Day after day goes by.*

*Never participates.
Steps back and observes.*

Crossroad.

Condor in flight.

*A vantage point not often attained,
When you live life in a hurricane.*

You cannot see the shore from the middle of a storm.

*Condor soaring.
Peacefully, calmly.*

*Where you've been.
Where you're going.*

It all looks different from here.

A new map.

The Rescue

Sidewalk Sallys call from their wrought-iron fortress.

Their voices rise, above the din of the evening's battle.

*They call to the red-bricked tower
in which their Comrad has been imprisoned
by a ruthless, ancient dictator.*

*In vain, they wait for the calvary's appearance.
Their battle cry fades, unanswered.*

*Their hero, Mr. Softee,
melts only a few yards away.*

*His magical white steed
overcome by the ferocious heat
of the asphalt desert.*

*The music retreats until it is obliterated
by the roar of city-owned chariots;
It's sweetness shrouded*

until there is nothing

but the nasal whine of the warrior's voices...

Liquid Air

*Darkened Rooms
Ceiling Fans
Temples drippp....
Eyes sting.*

Moisture.

*Liquid Air.
Every breath's an effort.*

*You cannot escape.
Earth Oven.*

Slow Motion.

*Burning Soles.
Glistening Skin.
Squinted Eyes.
Asphalt Oceans Disappear.*

Steam.

Summer in my hometown.

The Conversation

Debate.

Yes.

No.

Yes, I think.

Like walking to my grave.

Heart's pounding.

Shirt is moving.

My last few steps.

I see it.

My stomach.

Pick it up.

I'm afraid.

Familiar drone.

Take a breath.

Turn the page.

Can't find the number -- there it is.

Finger's moving.

Touch the buttons.

Why?

Stop. Now!

I can't

I hear music. I'm so nervous.

Relax, it's only a call. I can't breathe.

Ring.

"Hello?"

That voice.

I'm crying. I can't see.

I want to speak -- Nothing.

"Hello??"

It sounds so wonderful.

Why do I feel sick?

Speak.

"Hi. It's me, remember??"

The White World

*Leave your shoes on in this temple.
Watch your toes.*

*Black screens, bright green letters.
Numbers flash.*

*Grey walls.
Grey desks.
Grey floors.*

*Wilted white dress shirts.
Perry Ellis ties, blue pants.
Rumpled jackets.
Don't stand out in the White World.*

*Short hair.
Flourescent lighting, strained eyes.
Glasses.
Young men, old before their time.*

*Quiet voices.
Don't make waves.
No questions asked in the White World.*

Money jokes. Quite a place.

*Their goddess decided to take a dive.
The stock market fell along with their faces.*

Lunch at your desk.

Hand to mouth, but I'm my own man.

*Just a visitor.
Don't think I could live my life
In the White World.*

Metal Sky

Metal sky.

*Ants scurry miles below,
Dwarfed by aluminum corn.*

*Air-conditioned honeycombs.
Workers slave
For their Green Queen.*

*Mirrored walls,
Potted Plants.*

*Street roar.
A river of endless movement.*

Feeding time.

*Crained necks search for sun.
Lunch in a carpeted park.*

Where's my wallet???

City life.

Subway Goddess

*The ding-dong of the subway doors
was overwhelmed
by the clanging of multi-colored beads.*

*Silver braided cap.
Shoulder-length hair*

Beads.

Red, Blue, Yellow, Silver and Gold

Beads.

A “crystal” cacophony.

A metallic snake writhed around her forearm.

*And as she sat next to me,
I could see she was reading
“Spiritual Power and You”*

73rd Street Grandma

*A third of a man,
existing only from the ribs up, pulls himself
through the subway car on a skateboard,
Begging.*

*Every time they approach me, my heart begins to race.
I do not want to see.
I do not want to hear.
I turn my walkman up loud and try not to look.*

*A black woman with grey hair and no underpants
bathes her cracked, swollen feet in Union Square.
She pours from a filthy gallon of water.
A bettered tin cup stares up at me from the pavement
beside her.*

I walk to my friend's house.

*An old Italian woman, not unlike my grandmother
sits on a bench on E. 73rd Street.
She has no shoes.
A pin with 2 rhinestones missing adorns her filthy dress.
A kerchief covers her head.*

I begin to feel sick.

*“Can you help me?
„I'm hungry. My welfare has run out.“*

*“I do not want to beg, I need money for my baby.”
“I have just been released from Beth Israel Hospital
for the sixth time in the last 18 months...”*

*„I need you.“
„ I need your help.“
„ Please, help me!“*

*Every day I am assaulted.
My heart screams for these people.*

I cannot help them all.

*There is so much deceit.
I do not want to be made a fool..
They are not my responsibility.
I can barely make ends meet.*

*Yet, everytime I pass them
On the street
Or on the train
And do not help,
I feel a small part of my own soul die.*

*How can I turn away?
How can I look?*

Temporary Stranger

*Just some girl
from the temporary employment agency,
There to replace vacationing staff.*

*Nothing unusual
Except that there was something
very different about this girl.*

*Her eyes were a vacuum --
Holding the emptiness and defeat of the entire world.
Her shoulders stooped with the weight;
Her lifeforce poisoned by this spoiled cargo.*

*I was unwillingly sucked
into that land of desperation.*

*Every glance from her
provoked a shock in my system
that emanated from the very core of my spine.*

*Her stare was intolerable,
but I could not break free.*

*The day was stolen by the clock,
and I was unable to speak with her.*

*But with no contact other than a glance,
I became obsessed with this woman
I had never met before*

*I could not dismiss this temporary stranger.
I was driven to contact her,
but her agency would not give me her number,
nor mine to her.*

*In my sleep, she found me.
I saw this nameless lamb,
carelessly sacrificed by an uncaring world.
Never acknowledging her existence,
nonetheless her demise.*

I want to help you temporary stranger.

*I don't know why
or how,
or if you even need my help.*

I only know that you haven't left my mind.

*I'm afraid I'll be too late.
Another statistic on the 14th page.*

I'd be there for you, if I could only find you.

I wish I knew your name.

Evening Safari

*The hungry eyes digest the room.
Every person.
Every move, laugh and gesture.*

There's a piece of glitter on the left shoe.

*The feet slink across th floor silently.
Sinew and muscle move harmoniously.*

A tense body in search or release.

The clink of glasses.

*The clock is moving too quickly.
Pressure.
Relentless Desire.
A panther on the prowl.*

*All movement slows.
An extended glance.
A quick smile.*

Pulses race.

The trap is set.

The Date (Part I)

It's really funny.

*There was something about the way the mascara
Stuck to your bottom eyelashes.*

*Your Eyes.
They were do dark and so warm,*

*All of a sudden, I began to wonder how soft
your skin might feel next to my hand.*

*I really wanted to kiss your neck
And mess up your hair,
And talk to you about all my dreams.*

Isn't it funny?

*I almost thought that that part of me
had died.*

The Date (Part II)

*I don't know what I was expecting.
Obviously, something other than what I got.*

I somehow thought that it would be different.

*I thought that I had found someone who could take the loneliness
out of my life for a little while.*

*I wasn't looking for forever.
Just a day or two or however long it would last.*

I knew almost immediately.

*There are no words to describe the emptiness that you feel
when you realize that things won't work out.*

*I feel the brightness fading from my expression.
The glimmer of hope that danced in my eyes has stilled.
I feel powerless.*

*How much abuse can the child inside me take?
I'm afraid he will go away and never return.*

*I'm re-packing my suitcase and wondering
why it went wrong.*

*I'll leave tomorrow.
I'll polish all the old tricks and work on my stories.
The same ones that I've told so many times before.*

*But for today,
I'll sit alone with the lights burning.
Listening to music, reading an album cover
and thinking of nothing.*

50/50

*Hard nose.
Never budge.
Never Move.
Never give 1/10 of an inch more than you're getting.*

*You can't.
Relationships are supposed to be 50/50,
Aren't they?*

*If I give more, you get to take more.
That's not fair.
Everything must be equitable.*

*Sometimes, I want to do something
Just because you want to do it.
But, I squelch that feeling right away.*

*I'm not going to take a chance.
If you expect more than 50%, you're selfish.*

*I remember a long time ago,
When I didn't measure how much I gave,
As opposed to how much I got.*

*I just gave.
I didn't care.
I wanted to... And it felt wonderful!*

I was really stupid then.

Blind

*Through the bars of the prison that I had built for myself
I caught a glimpse of light --- reflected, not direct.*

*Obstacles, placed in my line of vision
Yet, undiminished brilliance remained.*

*A momentary glimmer...
Longing for things not seen
Not thought. Not touched. Not possible.*

*Desire, buried, but never forgotten
A very shallow grave.*

“Remove the pale!” I screamed.

*Blindness of the self-induced variety.
Held in place by an inertia constructed of fear, and
Cemented with the expectations of others.*

*Curious, tortured and desperate
I willed myself into action.
Bent the cage, and
Slipped my head through
defying nearly insurmountable resistance*

*As I emerged from the shadows
For a few moments,
I was confronted with life – with you.*

*Clarity.
Intense enough to burn through the years of loathing
Searing its way to the core of my being
Mocking my fear.
Laughing at my excuses.*

Leaving no escape ...but to LIVE!!

Pretty Baby

Such a pretty face.

*Mannequin-like.
A frozen expression of happiness.*

*You hair is always perfect.
Your outfit has the right label.*

*Plastic Baby.
Bends to any shape required.
You always fit in.*

*There is nothing genuine.
Even your laugh has been planned.*

*You are a worm in a cocoon.
With every move, you entangle yourself,
Until you are trapped.*

*But, the butterfly never emerges.
The worm just keeps spinning.*

*I don't believe you can acknowledge,
Even to yourself
The real reasons for your actions.*

*All ends against the middle,
so you never face the world alone.*

It's fun to watch you squirm.

Such a pretty worm.

Your measure of success is the depth of your tan.

Puppy Dog

*I watch you scramble for attention.
Any kind, it doesn't matter.
The loneliness you feel pervades your entire being.*

*Come over.
Let's go out, to the movies, dancing.
I'd love to, whenever you'd like.*

It never ends.

*You would drive me crazy, except that I was / am just like you.
I know what it is to want to be a part of something
that will not accept you.*

There's a plan of attack from every angle.

*Eventually, you will penetrate the circle
But you will never be a part of it.
You know it.
So do I.*

Still, you try.

*Laugh with me at my jokes.
I'll take your point of view.
Anything.*

*I will invade your space
Until you make me a part of it.*

*But the farther you push,
the more isolated you feel.*

*Incessant comments.
Drivvel on any subject.
Even if you hate me, I've provoked a response.*

Puppy dog that follows you home.

Broken Record

*The dingy walls are cut
by pyramids of light
cast from tabletop lamps.*

*The vinyl booths are torn.
Their stomach's storage of cushioning bursting through.
The floor is encrusted with dirt.*

*In the corner,
A couple slowly moves,
oblivious.*

This music sounds so familiar.

*My heart has played that song
again and again...*

*It is the saddest song,
But, I cannot seem to change the record.*

*You would recognize the tune,
But you are never here to listen to it.*

*I sit a table, alone.
I've almost run out of quarters.*

I don't know what to do next.

Writer's Block

I'm usually so free with words.

*When I think of you, though,
My thoughts are confused.*

I don't know what to say.

*I am deluged by thought and emotion so varied,
There is not one word or phrase to describe it all.*

I get stuck every time I begin.

Like now.

*My feelings are generally clear-cut,
Black and White.*

But, I cannot commit myself with you.

I feel impotent.

Why?

When Will I Stop?

When will I stop looking for you?

*I look for you everywhere I go.
TV, the movies,
the music that I hear,
the people that I meet.*

I love the part of them that reminds me of you.

*When I speak to them,
I'm listening for your voice,
For your words.*

Will it ever end?

*When do I get to close the book and put you behind me?
I keep waiting for you to go away.*

*I want someone to replace you and it hasn't happened yet.
Maybe it never will.*

*The problem is,
that you're a ghost that I want to haunt me.*

*As long as you are here, I can't let go.
I can't forget how much I loved you.
How much you meant to me.
How much I love you.*

*I dream of you, it's always the same.
I wake up and I'm alone.*

*I can't let it die.
I'm afraid.*

I just want to hold you one more time.

I'll be Alright.

*Trapped.
But nothing's changed.*

*The walls are closer.
But nothing's changed.*

*Trapped.
These rooms are darker.*

*No.
Nothing's changed.*

*The rain.
The rain is harder and it never seems to stop.
It never seems to stop.
It never stops.*

*I can't stand it.
Stop.
Run.
No.
The room is getting darker.
There's no light.
Where did the light go???
Where?
Run.
The ceiling is lower.
The walls are grey.
The room. Is darker.
Run.*

*I leave.
Every room's the same.
No.
Every room's the same.
Run.*

*My face is wet.
There is hair in my eyes.
My clothes are heavy.*

*My face is wet.
I feel water in my ear.
Run.*

*There is salt on my lips.
My knee is bleeding.
My hands are scraped.
There's grass on my arm.*

The rain.

*I hate that sound.
Just leave me alone.*

*The grass. In my hair.
On my face. I'm in the grass.*

What's wrong with me?

*I'm in the grass.
There's water everywhere.
I am drowning.*

*I hear a noise.
The water.
I am drowning.
No. Don't.*

*A hand. No!!!
Leave me alone.
Don't touch me.*

Don't. I'm alright.

*Yes, I know.
Just leave me alone.*

*I know. Yes.
Yes, I'll be alright.*

*I'll be alright.
I'll be alright.*

Frozen Statue

*Sometimes, I question my sanity.
It never ceases to amaze me.
Out of nowhere,
the thing I've dreamed of drops in my lap
And suddenly, I'm not so sure that I want it.*

*Only 2 minutes before,
I would have killed for it.*

*But now, something seems askew.
I can't put my finger on it it.*

I pause. Wait.

*If I stand still long enough,
whatever is wrong will miraculously right itself.*

Pose. Smile.

I hear words, but nothing penetrates the ice.

It's still there.

*If I really needed it, I'd take it. Wouldn't I?
Maybe, I didn't want it all along.*

*For a moment though, it seemed so right.
Sooo, right.*

*I'm a statue now.
Oh, God.
Please make it go away!*

Withdrawal

*There was no burn.
There was no itch.
There was no headache.
Only a silent step toward death.*

*From the innermost depth of my being
I sense the emptiness,
Confronting the intolerability of
an existence that I can continue no longer*

*The click of the light switch
thunders through the apartment.*

The taste of death pervading the rooms.

*The scream of silence engulfing the cacophony of thoughts
racing through my head.*

*Every second, thrusting
one step closer to the end*

*Thoughts in my head can no longer be ignored.
They cannot be buried
They will not be stilled.*

Life seeping out -- drop by drop.

*To be filled with Sun,
with Life.*

Withdrawal.

I'm Still Here

*There are those who think
that they can suppress freedom.*

*There are those whose idea of control
is to smash anything that opposes them.*

*There are those who have spent
great sums of money
and enormous amounts of energy
to kill an idea.*

*However, once a man has tasted freedom,
no amount of pressure will ever relieve him
of that greatest of all pleasures.*

*It is not the province of any country, party,
belief or system. It belongs to anyone
who strives to achieve it.*

*Freedom burns its way
into the human soul,
never to be removed.*

*Freedom cannot be crushed,
broken or bought.*

It must be earned.

*All that to say,
“Sorry boys, I'm still here,
and I'm not going anywhere!”*