

# Counting the Stars

*by* Darryl Price

Everybody's trying to just not get killed. Cut flowers. It's an illusion. The grand smell of our deathly beauty. They were so afraid of the ghost dance once upon a burning time that they decided on murder to get it to stop. Those were the days. That's how these folks think to react, but it goes to show you the people power of small simple things to effect change. Everything has some power in its being. Sometimes it's a lot or enough. Use it wisely. Shooting people simply because you might want their land or their resources is murder. Those

were the days. A young John Lennon pissed on the unsuspecting head of an old German nun walking just below his window. He would later change the world with his wondrous rock songs. Those were the days. We make mistakes. Everybody's trying to just not get run over by civilization. The allotted days and nights fly by. We fade because new people do not see us clearly anymore. They are close to the fire. We look like smoke to them. Everybody's trying to just not get God mad at us again. The garden was a great place to live. Now that

we've got the whole planet to ourselves it feels kind of cold and lonely out here. Why do you think we keep looking for something in the sky besides clouds and stars? We need someone to talk to besides ourselves. The cave walls said as much. Stonehenge was an early morning telephone call that kept on ringing throughout the centuries with nobody answering. And now we're spirits trapped in a

completely pixelated screen dream of our own device. Machines would laugh if they knew how, deeply and deliberately. Still there is such a thing as ice cream. That's the rub.

For every stupid and petty crime there is a kind person who saves another with a hug. There is someone who makes you laugh in spite of your serious demeanor telling you to do otherwise. You know you want to play frisbee, tell the evening news to go eff itself. After all, everybody's still just trying to find out how to love and be loved. And that's pretty cool stuff I suppose. Someone's writing you a poem just because they can and they want to. These are the days. Everybody's got a tattoo of a soul just below the heart.

Bonus Poems:

Alone Among the Trees  
by Darryl Price

Please don't help them to manifest  
a sick and sad world anymore.  
Don't help them turn butterflies into  
ugly wanted for murder posters. The  
only thing that matters now is  
you being not that. We need

plain human beings who can let  
all beings be happy even while  
sacrificing everything. Don't help them nail

the helpless wings of bugs to  
the unable to resist bark of  
weeping trees for a hearty laugh.

The animals are scared enough as  
it is. And now the women  
are finding it hard to speak  
up again. Please. Don't help give  
dreaming clouds the electric chair. Please,  
don't help them to put their

phoney money in your lover's mouth  
and pull the trigger. Remember the  
absolute good feeling you had when  
you were kind and generous in  
your youth? Don't help them to  
sell whatever it is they have

manufactured too many of in order  
to keep you from finding a  
hidden possibly lovely way out of  
the hole. For yourself. And the  
ones you love. Please don't forget  
what you said you would do.

Please don't help them to make  
hate the normal approach to living  
on this earth together. Please don't  
excuse their vulgarity for playful interaction  
among friends. We need you now  
more than ever. Please don't wait.

Unseen Birds by Darryl Price

The ones who fear everything  
are teaching the children to  
fear everything but a glorious  
bright death. But we pray  
love no hate, we pray hate no  
kind of love. You can bury  
anything you want in your  
opening mouth, but something

always returns in the form  
of a new flower to ask  
you why. Why did you do it?  
Did you even know you were  
doing it? Are you still, still  
doing it like a beautiful  
day in your head? Why am  
I here? I don't want to be

your scaredy cat ghost. But you  
are certainly mine. We made  
this exploding body move  
together, bliss out of stone.  
It's frozen now, but it's not  
over. I mean look at them-  
still marching as if they were  
not living in burned out holes

in crumbling cities. As if  
they were only dazed on the  
foggy battlefield from too  
much of a good thing. Their hot  
helmets on sticks driven through

their blackened hearts. And the small  
sad animals come out of  
their hidden doors in the leaves.

Their cold whiskers twitching. This  
is love. This is love. This is  
love. But it doesn't always  
heal the sick. We know. We know.  
We still believe. We still look  
up to see clouds. If it's a  
proper fight we are ready  
to add our own fur and claw.

Rectangles of Yellow Light  
by Darryl Price

If it's all the same to you  
I've seen that velvet hat swearing traveler  
before. Now I'm just more familiar with  
the terrible facts about certain broken people  
who never come out to play anymore.  
They think we are hypnotized by the  
perfectly painted stars in their hammered reflections,

like eggs in the nest, but we  
were never that hopeless, shivering ones looking  
for a hidden money trail among the  
bright shiney sidewalks on parade day. We  
were always willing to accept a beautiful  
day turning into a beautiful night without  
equal pay. I suppose you can't draw

a straight line between silent dreamers all  
around you and all your own lost  
and broken words now. That used to  
be the beginning of all your baddest  
lovesongs. One day has come. You are  
sadly captured. Your brain has been wired  
to a bunch of other wires. They

are feeding you in waves. You are  
floating in tears. You are waiting to  
be eaten by the very thing you  
have imagined to be a mindless monster.  
Let me put it to you this  
way. You are in a cage. You  
are an experiment. Everything you taste is

a wonder drug. Everything you feel is  
another electric charge. They are not your  
best friends. They'll bomb you. You are  
a weaponized tick. You are in a  
play. Everything you recognize is a tape  
recording of a birdsong or a river.  
Wake up. Because you want to. Because

you can. Because I'm asking you to.  
Because I miss you. Because we used  
to have such fun together. Because I  
want to kiss you. Because this poem  
is a magic spell. Because you are  
not alone. That's a lie implanted under  
your skin. Time to dig it out.

## Crossed Fingers

When I get there--wherever it is, this hidden secret place that I've been going to all my life--I hope it wasn't just for a stupid cosmic joke. Gray Angels slapping each other on their feathery backs and grabbing their honey knees in fits of holy laughter. When they tell you the journey is the main thing that seems just as unlikely to make you feel anything like better as the rest. I mean if there

is no point except the point of motion forward what are we doing with all this awful pain filling up our hearts? Aren't the words I was hoping to speak to you but they are the words that spoke to me. Maybe yours can say it in a much different way-- that will actually matter to a special someone. I hope so. I don't want you to be misunderstood. When I get there I hope you're there too, but I'm betting

you probably won't be. More likely be dining with Saints in sandals who are all regaling you with wondrous tales of time travel and adventure, all in hopes of seeing you crack a small genuine smile without meaning to, because, after all, loneliness is the most universal of universal languages. When I

do get there I hope to see great gobs of  
free and wild butterflies again and the

joyfully trumpeting elephants and  
lots and lots of people mingling around  
the sun-drenched streets together and to hear  
many loud choruses of laughter and  
good-hearted play, not the sound of one hand  
clapping. You don't understand. When I go  
there I want to be glad I made the hard  
sad journey through the poem and over  
the crying hills. I want to see the blue  
ocean again returning as a friend.

