

Poetry Series

Eric Cockrell
- poems -

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Eric Cockrell()

i am 58 years old... have been writing poetry for over 40 years... had a troubled youth, was in trouble a lot, was a drug addict... survived it all... have worked a variety of jobs... have 4 grown children,3 grandchildren.

was a member of the North Carolina Writer's Roundtable for a while... write poetry, songs, political and spiritual commentaries...

am somewhere between a Buddhist and a gnostic Christian...

am a renegade socialist by political nature...

believe most of all that compassion is the one true path!

16 Penny Nails!

strong harsh words,
16 penny nails driven
by a big hammer....

truth tears at the flesh
of the lie and the liar!
things aren't pretty anymore.

hurt is real!
homeless is real!
jobless is real!

hunger is real!
the streets are real!
prison is real!

prejudice, oppression,
hatred, violence....
people used, and thrown away!

persecution... over religion,
over sexual choice,
over political viewpoints....

wars fought over oil fields,
riot squads beating peaceful protestors...
women losing the rights

to their own bodies....
loneliness, suicide, drug addiction....
a harsh picture, faces put on bodies....

and yet beneath it all
there still lies a beauty...
all human beings, all human beings,

made in the image of God!
how can we not respect each other?
and how can we overlook....

the value of life?
with trembling hands wiping away
the blood, sweat, and urine of life...

trembling hands that when joined
become the hands of prayer!
16 penny nails, with heart!

Eric Cockrell

1900 Poems

1900 poems...
love letters written
in flesh,
with all the scars
and bruises in plain sight...
all the falling stars...

the thunder that came
without lightning,
lightning that came
without the rain...
broken shovels, broken rakes,
and a pen that betrayed...

1900 nails in the bridge,
1900 miles,1900 steps.
1900 seats at the table,
1900 dreams and desires!

a small fire,
we keep adding logs.
strangers come and go,
all wanting to get warm.

passing out bowls of stew,
and old worn blankets.
the night air is still,
the moonlight whispers....

we walk down to the water,
and see the reflections,
year after year, soul after soul.
all the same, yet all different...

fireflies testify to the darkness.
this long road nearly over...
leaving no footprints,
no scent, or markers...

except...
1900 poems...
love letters written,
from the hollow place
back of your heart!

Eric Cockrell

2012, Ending, Or Beginning!

the curtain is drawn,
the memories of another year,
a year of hardship and need,

packed in a box,
stored away to be forgotten.
we stand on the stage,

stripped naked by necessity,
forced to choose...
ending, or beginning?

the end of economic hope,
the end of the environment,
the end of individual rights,

the end of capitalism...
the end of the common man,
the end of morality...

the end of human dignity,
the end of the road for the poor...
or a new beginning?

people of all colors, faiths,
sexual orientations, economic situations,
rich in diversity... joining hands!

sitting down with open minds and hearts,
listening, really listening,
understanding that what is good for one,

must be good for all!
understanding that when one suffers,
we all suffer!

when one is in need,
we are all in need!
standing together for freedom

of thoughts, ideas, and words!
refusing to be made to follow blindly!
standing up and demanding

world peace!
standing up for the environment,
throwing off the yoke of oppression

cast by the oil and Wall Street empire!
standing up for people,
people, not corporations,

not governments...
accepting, understanding, compassionate,
determined, driven by dignity....

the choice is ours to make!
we've run out of time,
the lights have gone dim...

day of dawning,
or time of the end!

Eric Cockrell

30 Days

poor man talking this morning,
told me his insurance lapsed...
he went up and reinstated....
but they took his tag for 30 days....

makes about 8.50 an hour,
the only job he can find...
now he's afraid he's gonna lose it....
cant get to work for 30 days....

living on the edge....
good people, hard lives....
just trying to get by....
30 days, God only knows!

Eric Cockrell

64 Jesus's

64 Jesus's died in the bombing...
some were small children,
others were women!
and capitalist bibles fell from the sky,
spreading salvation and hellfire
in the name of profit!

Eric Cockrell

9/11, And The Days After

how many died that day
at the World Trade Center?
how many died
in the field?

and how many have died...
how many young boys
sent off to war?
how many citizens of Iraq?
Afghanistan?
how many women and children?

how many deaths
does it take for
us to finally understand?

killing is wrong!
one death does not
justify another!
murder does not
heal wounds...
or bring back
loved ones.....

one decade later....
and we still dont understand
the value of life...
and therein lies
the cause for mourning,
and the sadness!

Eric Cockrell

A Badge

he wears her like
the badge of honorable
abuse....

silently listening
to her rantings,
picking her up

when she falls.
layers of anger
misdirected to him....

yet he takes the blame
without complaining,
and keeps on.....

till too long ignored,
too long in the silence...
he walks out the door,

without a word.
love's not a badge,
not even a cross...

it's a highway
that must be walked
together!

Eric Cockrell

A Beer And A Shot!

a beer and a shot....
two old men sitting
on the stoop. talking...

about old times, jobs,
women, and life....
changing the strings

on a battered old Gibson...
the old dog just happy
to lie at their feet....

the sound of bacon frying,
the clatter of pots and pans....
a hawk soaring in circles

over the fields turned brown...
a couple of songs,
a few flakes of snow....

a beer and a shot,
as time draws short!

Eric Cockrell

A Better Idea

they want to
ban books, ban abortions
ban gay marriages
ban free thinking
and if they could
ban the poor!

i have a better idea!

why dont we
ban wars, ban prejudice
ban offshore drilling
ban the greedy
ban the judgemental
ban ignorance

and just for good measure
ban whaling around the world
for any reason!

Eric Cockrell

A Bowl Of Rice

sad, but true...
for so many
people in this world

redemption is
a bowl of rice,
and a tent that doesnt leak...

what do you believe in?
what do you hope for?
do you believe enough
to make an effort?

a bowl of rice,
and a tent that doesnt leak!

Eric Cockrell

A Buddha, Or...

a buddha...
or just another homeless man,
standing on the corner
of the street going nowhere.
what do we hold in our hands
that will remain?
even daylight is swallowed by night,
and night disappears into the dawn.
and love in the end
is merely a moment given,
a grain of sand
on a deserted beach.
the trees shed their leaves
for the winter cleansing,
and so we lay our bodies
down into the earth's embrace!
o to be ocean,
filling the great chasms of history.
o to be mountain,
and bridge the earth to the sky.
o to be wind,
to come and go without restraint.
o to be fire,
to consume, and yet to give warmth!

and o to know,
that we are each and all,
that we are none and nothing.
both the falling star,
and the blackened sky...
and yes a grain of sand
beneath the traveller's feet,
the home that cannot be taken,
but is freely given!
and hands that have no need to hold!

Eric Cockrell

A Buddha's Eternal Moment

one lone rose
opened by the sun,
the faint memory of rain,
and the dark damp earth.

reaching to the sky,
petals yearning, at peace...
then, without regret,
wilting back into nothingness...

and no one saw!

Eric Cockrell

A Buddha's Last Prayer

may every breath i breathe,
help relieve the suffering
of the many...
may every step i take,
be on the path of truth.
may my eyes see myself
in all living beings,
may my heart do the work
that compassion demands.
may i feel every tear,
every hurt, every need.
may i touch with sacred hands.
may my body be a bridge,
and my spirit healing ointment.
may my words fall like rain
on the desert of need.
may i give without hesitation,
and without expectation.
may i grasp the hand that needs help,
and let go of all else.
may my life be both prayer,
and the much needed answer.
may my identity be both lost
and found in all living beings!

Eric Cockrell

A Buddhist Christmas

sitting on the bed
with my old blind dog...
breathing in, breathing out...

breathing in suffering,
all the suffering of the hungry,
the homeless, those in prison....

those ravaged by war....
of the lonely, those filled with despair,
the angry, the fearful, the lost....

breathing in deeply,
wrapping it all in snowlike stillness...
and then breathing out....

breathing out compassion,
total, unconditional, free compassion...
the oneness that feels every feeling,

hurts with every hurt,
prays with every need....
not judging, not holding back,

asking for nothing in return...
just breathing out....
and listening with gratitude

to the heartbeat of my faithful dog...
to the heartbeats of all that live...
lost inside life itself!

Eric Cockrell

A Call For Revolution!

a call for revolution...
rivers rise, and overflow their banks!
branches bud with leaves in the autumn,
butterflies arrive to bring the snow!
every window opened, every lock is broken,
every pot is filled, every table shared.
the language of ears sees no colors,
and dignity wears no chains.
prophets return to being carpenters,
and poets till the earth.
soldiers lay down their guns to become fathers,
nations give way to family.
the faces of god all become one,
the hands of god become many!
freedom becomes a verb not a dream,
hunger is buried by compassionate hands.
forgiveness a way of living,
respect the bridge all must cross.
truth is applauded for asking questions,
as the young and old exchange gifts.
every moment sacred and shared,
the earth revered and protected.
a call for revolution....
just as far away as near!

Eric Cockrell

A Child Is Born

a child, a child, a child is born
to a mother who lies near death;
no food, no home, no place to go,
smell the stink of fear on her breath.

you build and destroy, and build again,
pound your chests with arrogant pride.
litigate and over populate,
sell your vision while children die.

if there's a God He doesn't live
in your temples and your shrines.
but in the cry of the hungry child,
and the ones you've left behind.

a child, a child, a child is born....

Eric Cockrell

A Child Is Dying

for every tree you cut down,
a child is dying.

for every barrel of oil that
you drill and spill,
a child is dying.

for every coal mine you
rape the earth with,
a child is dying.

for all the nuclear waste
you cannot dispose of,
a child is dying.

for every country you bomb,
a child is dying.

for every chemical you spray
on your vegetables,
a child is dying.

for every river you dam & drain,
a child is dying.
for every oil field you own,
a child is dying.

for every animal you drive
to the brink of extinction,
a child is dying.
for every smokestack, every sweatshop,
and every synthetic thought,
a child is dying.

for every tree you cut down....

Eric Cockrell

A Child's Books

if you take away
a child's books,
you take away his spirit's
ability to dream!
if you close his mind,
you close the door
to his future!

Eric Cockrell

A Chill

a chill in the air,
drinking coffee, and listening
for the groan

of leaves beginning to turn.
and the sight of your eyes
undressing you heart

in the simplest moment...
the wrinkled smile, talking
softly about nothing....

and giving it meaning.
some things just are...
and destiny is a small wind

that blows the falling leaf
into the almost sound
of laughter on your lips...

a chill in the air...
we build a small fire
with the hands of companions,

and lovers.

Eric Cockrell

A Conscious Decision

everyday...
a conscious decision,
to live with arms outstretched,

or to run and hide.
to dare to be
what you believe....

or to hide in someone else's shadow.....
to walk to the edge,
spread your wings and fly....

or to cower in fear in the nest.
to get your hands dirty,
or to turn the other way....

to fall down, and get up,
or to lie there and quit.
to give unconditionally,

or to take without remorse.
to speak the truth...
or to settle for the lie....

everyday...
a conscious decision!

Eric Cockrell

A Cup Of Water!

watching falling stars....
or the look your eyes
dont lingering give...

the tone of your voice
haunts graveyards before children,
silences the final clock!

and we walk not alone amid ghosts
and disembodied bodies....
all reaching out with bleeding lips....

no murmur, no cries, silent soldiers
bearing the burnt cross of life....
searching for freedom, and

a cup of water!

Eric Cockrell

A Few Old Men

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there's still a few old men
who can shoe a horse,
plow with a mule....

build their own house,
hunt for their food,
and grow the rest...

talk to you about books
no one reads anymore....
sharpen a knife, bait a hook,

teach a boy to be a man...
and a girl that she's loved.
work all day and love all night....

string their own guitar...
treat a woman with respect....
stand beside you through

both good and bad...
what you gonna do when
all the old men are gone?

Eric Cockrell

A Footprint, A Face...

do not mountains,
trees, and rivers live
their time, and die?
does not the sun
rise in the morning
only to lay down at night?
are not universes born of dust,
only to return to dust?
why should we be any different?

all that lives but a fleeting glimpse
into the workings of eternity.
yet everything that comes and goes
leaves an indelible mark,
a footprint on the water,
a face put to the wind!

Eric Cockrell

A Friend

i think sometimes
what we need most of all,
more than money, possessions,
sex, or accolades...
is a friend.

someone to walk beside you,
that you can talk to,
and listen to...
someone that you can
laugh with, cry with, fight with,
be crazy with... and they still
walk beside you.

someone who can see you
for what you are... and they still
walk beside you....

a friend! ... and they say
the only way to find one
is to be one!

Eric Cockrell

A Gift

i go back and look at my life...
and the things i'm not happy
with were caused by my own
decisions, my own mistakes.

i have been blessed to see
and to feel and to touch deeply...
i have immersed myself in both
life and love... and i am thankful
for that.

what i've learned is that life is
precious... every moment, every
word, every action. i, like many
of you i'm sure, have wasted
too much time, have overlooked
or rushed by too many things.

it's too easy not to see the worth
of a grain of sand, a rainstorm, a
rose blooming, the smile of a child,
the laughter of a woman that loves you...
the forgiveness and acceptance of
a friend.

to those that are young, if you dare
to listen... live every moment like
it's a gift... because it is!

Eric Cockrell

A God That Has No Heart

we have made
blood sacrifices to oil,
till we are covered
by the filth and the sludge
of our own greed.
leaving our children,
and their children,
suffocating at the altar
of a god that has no heart.
we have eaten their flesh,
and drank their blood!
we, the guilty,
cannot remain blind!

Eric Cockrell

A Good Thing!

God! it tastes
and feels and smells like
i'm still alive!

and that's a good thing!

Eric Cockrell

A Great Way To Start!

for my many imperfections
in thought, word, and deed...
i ask your forgiveness.

anyone that has harmed me in
any way, on purpose or by chance,
i forgive.

a great way to start!

Eric Cockrell

A Guinness, And A Book!

gonna curl up
with a Guinness, and a book,
blow smoke rings and think,

back over time and time....
songs sung, battles fought,
scars that never fade....

love won, love lost,
the feel and the curve
of the lover's body pressed...

the sounds she made,
talking in passion....
small children, thunderstorms,

good dogs, and good fires....
sun coming up over mountains eternal...
big mistakes, and small victories...

a couple of moments when i could fly!
lives wound together, pain, suffering, and joy....
dreams never lost, truth that still stands....

a Guinness, and a book...
pages yet unturned!

Eric Cockrell

A Human Statement!

i dont do churches
with stained glass windows
and pews, and copper plates

held by hands beckoning salvation...
my church is lined by trees,
with great rolling hills,

wild animals roam freely,
birds fly overhead!
i dont do dogma,

hellfire and damnation....
we speak compassion
with silent voices!

our prayers are hands,
reaching out to help,
with eyes that see sameness,

and hearts that have ears....
knowing that we are what
we do and have done....

there is no coincidence,
nothing happens by chance.
if you want to know that

God is real, if you want
to see God...
look in the eyes

of another human being!
the path to salvation,
the path to being human!

Eric Cockrell

A Land Gone Black

the sound of gunfire
rapes the virgin night...
another innocent goes down....

the soldiers of petroleum
buy a whore, a dime, a quarter.
dine on the flesh of children;

pray to the neon god.
waving the flags of mouths
that only speak with teeth.

nothing holy that cant be bought....
step on bodies without faces,
piss on the graves of babies....

winner take all, all is nothing!
and the wind of the beast
knocks at the blackened windows....

in the empty houses of the poor,
the worthless, the forgotten.
the sound of gunfire rips the stillness....

the gods of anger and self
fornicate in the stench,
keeping time to the rhythm

of oil rigs in a land gone black!

Eric Cockrell

A Letter

someone sent me a letter,
and asked me if i was black or white, , ,
i cut my finger, signed my name
in blood at the bottom,
and mailed it back!

i dont care about walking on water...
walking naked in your garden
is hard enough!

dont pray for me...
i have no longer a soul!
i am only the wind,
carrying your prayer
back to your heart!

Eric Cockrell

A Life Of Their Own....

if you give a poem to the world,
there need be no explanation.
for each one that opens it,
will find something different.
and you yourself,
if you come back three days,
or three years later,
you will see something different
in what you've written.
poems are not identity,
they are a gift....
they have a life of their own!

Eric Cockrell

A Little Help

just a broken down car,
had to push it out of the road....
put my last ten dollars in gas....

and didnt make it home.
almost had the damned thing
paid for... almost, walking...

this boat has too many leaks....
pay the rent, cut off the lights;
pay the lights, cut off the phone....

pay the phone, run out of food....
everytime i plug one leak,
three more pop up.

working too much for too little,
feeding the machine that's
leaving me behind....

brother, need a little help!

Eric Cockrell

A Living Wage!

a living wage....
seems like not so much
to ask... after 40 years

of
...working
.....daylight
.....to
.....dusk....

feeding someone elses dream...

America the great,
...America the fallen,

can
...you
.....not hear?

can
...you
.....not
.....feel?

the men and women
that built your highways,
your cities and towns...

worked your mills,
your factories, your farms,
are crying out!

we have to eat too!
we need shelter!
we need hope!

honest hard working people...
is this
...how you

.....pay us back?

do you remember our names?

Eric Cockrell

A Lonely God!

a lonely God...
from dust made flesh,
and filled it with
the haunting spirit of wind.
eyes that open
both in and out,
a fire kindled of bones!

who are we
to run blindly
into the sun?
to hide from the rain
that weeps for us?

idols made of fear,
the soul chokes the spirit.
we stand on the porch,
afraid to open the door!

dust and flesh,
wind and fire...
bones that cry out,
tears lost in the rain.

a lonely God...
walks away!

Eric Cockrell

A Moment Lived!

what if we just closed
the history books,
and you placed your hand in mine?
what if we walked away
from the stink of gunpowder,
would they know that we were gone?
what if we gave what we owned,
however small,
to the homeless and the hungry?
what if we shared a cup of coffee,
and took a long walk in the evening rain?
what if we laughed and listened,
and drank in the stillness?
would it be such a crime?
what if we made love
beneath that old willow,
and the star light covered us
with a moment lived?

Eric Cockrell

A Moment Of You

small tiny prayers,
passing thoughts,
a moment of you....

maybe just the sunlight
sifting through the blinds,
the wind blowing a branch

against the windowpane.
the sound of the train
on the distant tracks....

the ticking of the clock
in the dead stillness.
a child laughing and talking,

walking down the road....
a sudden pain in my heart,
that lingers, then is gone.

an empty bird's nest
on the ground beside the shed....
a stray cat begging for food....

small tiny prayers...
clouds in the afternoon sky...
water dripping, an old spicket.....

a moment of you!

Eric Cockrell

A Mother's Son

a dirty needle,
a sawed-off shotgun,
and a stolen car...

a one way trip to hell
on a dead end road...

a mother weeps
by an unmarked grave...
no one came to the church.

the guilty and the innocent
both suffer and die...
sometimes its hard to say
which is which...

when the sun doesnt come up
in the morning sky.... and
it's raining darkness all around...

who casts the final judgement?
and who grieves?...
when a mother's son
kills a mother's son?

Eric Cockrell

A Naked Poem

i unbutton your blouse
with a naked poem...

the same poem that lit the fire
on a snowfall morning....
brought you breakfast in bed.

the same poem that held the baby,
and wiped the tears from your face...
that wrapped around you

when we buried your daddy....
that kept the lone candle
burning all that night....

that helped you pack to go,
and opened the door
to let you back in....

that stood in front of you
when the storms came...
that walked by your side

through the darkest nights....
the poem that unlocked
your heart thirty years ago....

the poem lying beside you,
listening to two hearts racing....
that plunges into you

till all else is lost!

Eric Cockrell

A Name And A Face

and so we made love for an infinite moment,
when my hand brushed against your shoulder....
when i answered the question you forgot to ask,
when you brought me my coffee without a word.
while i watched you sleep (you seemed so tiny) ,
when moonlight stroked your hair (you seemed so vast) !
when you asked if i was all right,
as i sat staring into the darkness.
when i whispered something and you laughed,
when you swept the kitchen, and didnt know i was there...
when i brought you your supper, and woke you,
when i watered your plants (you forgot) .
when we walked the dogs in the brisk morning air,
when sunset said farewell to the day.
when beginning became ending became beginning,
when hunger chose a name and a face!

Eric Cockrell

A Nameless Old Poet

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an old wrinkled man,
with hard eyes that cut like ice,
and bled tears soft and deep.....

smoked too much,
liked a drink after dinner;
tossed in sleepless rhymes

of faces he couldnt name...
colors drained to black and white,
throbbing in his hands...

carving the whispers of demons
and angels deep into the flesh,
pulling infinity from human misfortune....

possessed by a love
for the beaten and downtrodden,
carrying buckets of water

up the hill till he could
walk no more.....
writing the scriptures of human desire

in the face of the hellish and numb!

Eric Cockrell

A New Day!

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lay down your guns,
your knives, your flags.
get out of your tanks,

your planes, get off
of your carriers.
stop the bombs,

the rhetoric, the patriotic march....
unball your fists, open your hands.
proclaim this a new day....

the first day of forever...
when humanity decided
to become human again!

Eric Cockrell

A Pebble Is A Mountain.....

i was there the day you were born...
you were there the day that i died....
i entered your mother with fevered passion,
you were the grandmother knitting outside.
i killed your son in battle,
you buried my wife in an unmarked grave.
you baptized me in the river,
i lit the fire when you were martyred.
you went to sea in search of a new land,
i sat in my tepee waiting for death.
you slew me with righteous indignation,
i prayed to the Great Spirit for your soul.
i worked forty years to feed you,
you stole the cross from around my neck.
i led the immigrants by night,
you waited with a gun and a badge....
you died inside my prison,
i felt the blow of justice.
i starved outside your window,
while you drank and danced till dawn....
i was an addict and a murderer,
you fed my addiction with greed.
you saved the world one winter night,
while i wandered lost again....
or perhaps, the other way around,
i cannot tell the difference.
there be no walls in an empty room,
and a pebble is a mountain!

Eric Cockrell

A Pigeon's Remorse!

will you kiss
the broken teeth lips
set firm by death's stillness?
will you lay
your naked willing body,
against the body cold as stone?
will you close
eyes frozen staring inward,
lost to all green and bursting?
will you whisper
your innermost secrets
into ears lost in oceans?
will you cry,
your tears falling
like ashes on ground now bare?
will you scream,
shaking your fist at god?
knowing...
you cant roll
away the stone,
with a pigeon's remorse!

Eric Cockrell

A Poem

i wrote you a poem,
that stood naked on
your doorstep,
but you didnt notice...

so i wrote you a poem,
that bled on your kitchen floor,
yet the mop stood untouched
in the corner!

i wrote you a poem,
that set itself on fire
in your bedroom,
and you opened the window.

so i wrote you a poem,
from the land of death...
your tears only an echo,
that couldnt touch...

couldnt taste, couldnt feel...
will you write me a poem?

Eric Cockrell

A Pound Of Flesh

you're a pound of flesh
you're an overdue book
you cannot take
what's already been took
now baby you've got the feel
and you've got the look
you're a pound of flesh
you're an overdue book

you're a prayer for judgement
you're a shooting star
blind man in the alley
playing slide guitar
you're way too close
to be going this far
you're a prayer for judgement
you're a shooting star

incurable sickness
you're a runaway train
you're an addiction
stronger than cocaine
you shake them hips
you drive me insane
incurable sickness
you're a runaway train.

Eric Cockrell

A Real Future!

</>

instead of medicating
our depressed children...

why dont we try liberating them
with a constant diet of family love,
both father and mother!

with open minded listening,
and the assurance that
we accept them for who they are...

and by living our lives in an
involved and compassionate way,
every step, every day...

thereby insuring they
have a real future!

Eric Cockrell

A Real Man!

when a man
is no longer treated
as a man...

no longer respected
as a man...
then a real man

stands up,
and stops it!

the first word in humanity
is human...
the second word is man!

both equal dignity...
and both demand freedom!

Eric Cockrell

A Room... (You Dare Not Enter)

there is no hope among vagabonds,
infidels' prayers return 'address unknown'.
Jesus rode a donkey to India,
to burn incense by Buddha's grave.
while Magdalene wept,
in her childbearing bed,
for the sound of small feet unheard...
so then must love betray,
the bed defiled by neglect?
as the tears of hunger fall
on pillows creased by ghosts!
the throb no more,
than the heart inside walls,
of the room you dare not enter!

Eric Cockrell

A Sad Statement

it's a sad statement
on the 'land of the free',
when the fights at Wal-Marts

during black Friday rushes,
received more news coverage
than the abuse of those protesting

for the rights of America's workers....
a sad statement.....
enough said!

Eric Cockrell

A Series Of Deaths

love,
a series of deaths
by design...
self immolations
by candle light.
intimate Gethsemenes,
crosses that smell familiar.

bodies left silent
by unmarked roads.
small furry animals
killed by cars in the night.

yet i stand by your window,
with unrestrained eyes...
hands opening and closing,
drool on my chin.

watching you sweep the floor,
of any last trace.
naming the demons
that stole the night!

Eric Cockrell

A Shared Fire

light the fire...
put on some coffee!
i care enough to listen,

if you care enough to talk.
the wall of angry silence
between us must fall....

this road is long,
and we have a long way to go!
what we feel when no one

can see us, when no one
else is near, when darkness
wraps us up in secretive blankets,

must come to light!
this world full of danger and hate,
the earth itself moans for change!

bodies walk by in ghostlike trance,
empty stares, feet moving without sound....
mouths open, waiting for deliverance....

the snowlike stillness swallows need,
new birth groans beneath frozen death....
we are the candle, we are the flame,

the road waits, as if a friend!

Eric Cockrell

A Shared Fire!

evolving...
through inter-action,
interbeing, involvement.

dead people dont walk,
dont fill the bowls,
dont wipe away tears.

an island at the mercy
of a raging ocean...
but wind and mountain co-exist!

only the rhythm
of the soul walking beside,
validates the journey.

ashes, ashes, new plowed earth,
two sets of hands on the plow!
we fill each other's bodies

with a shared and dependent fire!

Eric Cockrell

A Simple Handshake

sometimes an honest
thought spoken eye to eye...
and a simple handshake

stops the war!

what are we fighting for?
who are we fighting against?
and why?

most of what we hate
in other people is the
reflection of ourselves....

most of what we fight
about or over...
wont be here tomorrow!

most of the violence
in this world is based
on lies.... the cancer of lies...

when the simple truth
would set us free.

Eric Cockrell

A Simple Kiss

a simple kiss...
eyes open exchanging
secrets, and intimate thoughts...

deeper than words,
stronger than rings or
passion's thrusts....

worth more than anything
that can be bought or earned.
a simple kiss...

nothing else asked, or needed!

Eric Cockrell

A Simple Touch!

you touched my hand,
and raised this body
from the land of the dead...
you touched my heart,
and freed this soul
from the dark maze
of its own prison.
you touched my eyes,
and restored sight
to a blind man.
you touched my ears,
and filled them with
the song of every living creature.
you touched my desire,
and brought stone and fire,
and the echo of the whipporwill's song.
i touched you,
and the earth stopped turning,
rivers stopped flowing,
and mountains fell...
all in a simple touch!

Eric Cockrell

A Southern Gospel...

he carefully pried at the screen
with his pocketknife... laying low
against the building, almost dissolving
in the shadows.
the probing lights of cars passing saw
nothing, no sign of life.
slowly, without sound, he removed the
screen.... pushing the window up just
enough, he pulled himself up and through
the window like a snake.
it was some kind of office at the back of
the church. he waited a minute for his
eyes to adjust. his body hurt, even his
soul hurt! every breath cut like a knife.
making his way to the door, he slipped
out into the hall. the silence was deafening.
on down the hall to the sanctuary... opening
the double doors, he made his way into the tomb!

waves of stillness.... and the smells...
redemption, morality, and sin... delicious,
tortured sin...
he slipped onto a bare wooden pew, and
the memories flooded back....
angels, demons, right and wrong defined
on chalkboards by hands that couldnt have
been human!
scriptures beaten against the mind... pictures
of a life he'd never quite found!
he took a deep breath, and winced... thought
of the hymns. peace everafter, always some
distant shore. yet they're often been a strange
sense of healing there.
he touched the offering plates, and shook his head.
the nickels and dimes of salvation, the cost of the
soul.
standing up, he made his way to the altar... and
fell in a heap to the floor...

agonizing, he looked up to see moonlight pouring
through the stained glass window... lighting the
face of Jesus, hanging on the cross...
the cold floor seemed to clutch at his heart...
his mind opened, and the waves rolled in.

Eric Cockrell

A Southern Gospel... (Part Two)

he lay still on the floor,
wrestling with the darkness.
his life flooded his senses,
and the lives of all others!
he stood again by his mother's
grave... felt again that emptiness.
and the first time he'd ever been in love,
the softness of her skin, the gentleness
in her eyes. the way her lips tasted
when they kissed, the way her body
felt beneath his... the eternal sadness
in her voice when she said goodbye!
the birth of his children, the house and
the home... the same 8 hour shift, year
after year...
the day they announced the layoffs, the plant
shutting down... the day the unemployment
ran out...
times of war, acts of courage, and murder that
bruised his conscience.
the taste of whiskey, corner tables in lonesome
bars... the homeless streets, the thugs, heroin stoops,
and jail cells....
if god wasnt dead, well... maybe he was!
maybe that was it, maybe he'd been dead for
a long time...
sometimes hunger was the only way he'd known
he was real...
that, and the smells, the tastes, the touching...
hell, if he had to do it again, he'd do it even harder!

he lay shaking on the floor, tears rolling down
his face, the taste of blood on his lips...
thinking... maybe this is god, the hurting,
the memories, dirty hands and tired feet...
and lapsed naked into salvation without a name!

the next morning, the custodian found a dead
body beneath the altar... he called 911...
and the preacher he'll preach next sunday on
heaven and hell... never knowing, never realizing,
they'd lain there at the foot of the altar!
the true religion, the life and death of a common man!

Eric Cockrell

A Sparrow's Thoughts... (Number Eight)

'steady rain, black dirt,
birds singing, to the clouds.
streets wet, cars passing,
time turns inward, so do i...'

a long slow Sunday afternoon.
winter whispers, almost forgotten.
spring turns the page, life begins again.

we are faced with so many issues;
poverty, joblessness, hunger, homelessness,
wars fought for profit, the corruption
of Wall Street and big business,
the oil companies raping the earth....

people fighting over religions,
over politics, over pieces of ground...
forgetting, we dont own the earth,
we belong to the earth.

and anyone who believes in god,
would have to know, that if god
is a real god, he/she wouldnt love
just one type of people...
if you believe in god,
god created all of this rich diversity
for a reason!

if we quit fighting the endless wars of the elite,
we could take the money spent and feed the hungry,
and house the homeless...
if wages and goods were distributed in a fair manner,
people could live!
there should be no divide between rich and poor,
only people, working and living, side by side.

those who have excessively taken for profit need to be tried,
and convicted. we absolutely have to find a way
to replace our dependance on oil, and now!

we need to go back to teaching respect,
we must learn to accept people for who and
what they are...
we need to go back, and find our way!

will end the same way i began, (we all do!)

'steady rain, black dirt,
a sparrow leaves the nest behind.
the simple faith of beating wings....
time turns inward, so do i! '

Eric Cockrell

A Sparrow's Thoughts... (Number Seven)

when we sit numbly staring
at the six o'clock news...
at the cops in riot gear
dispersing the student protesters...
protesting against Wall Street excess,
against the greed of big business,
against the destructive thrusts of big oil,
against the wars over seas...
against human rights being taken,
against the lie we're being fed...

when these young people are beaten,
gassed, and arrested for standing up
for their ideals of freedom...
do we remember that these are our children?
do we know?

even more, do we remember,
when we were young and believed?
the anti-war protests,
the civil rights marches,
women's rights, farmworker's rights...
when we dared to believe we could
change the world...
we live again in our children!
do we understand this?
are we just going to sit still and watch?
are we dead?

Eric Cockrell

A Sparrow's Thoughts... (Number Two)

forgiveness comes easy for those
who have dared to look in the mirror!
it is most difficult to judge the
reflection of ourselves!
hate is merely love poisoned by fear...
and fear, the bloody sword of ignorance!
if we spent less time preaching about
superficial morality, and more time
acting out of compassion, being aware
both of our own humanity, and the
humanity of all others....
we would come much closer to being godly!

Eric Cockrell

A Sparrow's Thoughts....

we live our lives communing
with angels and demons, that
dwell within us.
whose voice do we hear?
whose image do we bear?
whose work do we do?
the most profound truths,
often so simple,
that it confuses us!
deep wisdom lies in the conversations
between real people
daring to be honest.
deep wisdom, and healing!
and the ears that have eyes,
are the wings of the eternal!

Eric Cockrell

A Sparrow's Thoughts.... (Number Five)

god doesnt live in 'holy books',
in doctrines, in denominations,
in churches, in certain countries,
in the color of skin, in the form
of government....
she lives in the faces of the children
that you bombed, in the frail bodies
of the families you left to starve,
in the raging silence of the young
man who hangs himself because he's
been discriminated against...
if we say it's not our concern,
that we are not personally responsible,
then we are liars!
and not worthy to speak of god!

Eric Cockrell

A Sparrow's Thoughts.... (Number Four)

we go to war because we're
afraid to lose what we dont own!
because we are fed the propaganda
of the elite, who use the bodies
of our young men and women to
make change!
because we have been numbed by
ignorance, and have been led like
sheep to the slaughter...
because we are afraid to take on
the responsibility of being human!
because by our indifference we allow
ourselves to be!

Eric Cockrell

A Sparrow's Thoughts.... (Number Six)

you can send the lie in the form
of the unemployment check, in the
form of food stamps, in the form
of Medicaid, in the form of new
policies, in the form of charity...
but the truth is you dont give a damn
until you are willing to share all
you have with fairness, until you're
willing to put your shoulders to the
load, until you're willing to get
involved in the work of equality!

Eric Cockrell

A Sparrow's Thoughts.... (Number Three)

the man at peace with himself
accepts the other person as they are...
without trying to change them,
without trying to make them conform,
without trying to make them a clone
of narrow perceptions....
walk with respect,
live from respect,
act out of respect...
dare to be silent,
to listen, and to learn!

Eric Cockrell

A Thankful Note To My Readers

i managed to cross the 500 poem count on Poemhunter today.
i am thankful to Poemhunter for the opportunity to share them here.

and i am thankful to each and every one of you that has taken the time to read them, and to interact with me...

poetry should be, in all its forms, a communication between hearts.

thank each of you again... may this relationship continue!

Eric Cockrell

A Thought Forgotten

rain swept branches strewn,
small testaments of living.
frail egos broken
in morning sunlit pieces.
of such is life...
hands made of flesh
building hearts.
storms come unannounced,
and forever shattered.
the rain soaks the embers,
a thin wisp of smoke.
stirred by the stick of time,
praying for flame.

are we then fire,
or just smoke?
small branches clinging
to the tree...
lightning in the distance,
or hearts made of thunder?
buds on the broken branch,
or the fleeting instant
of the storm's fury?
all of these, or something else,
or a thought forgotten
by a lonesome God?

Eric Cockrell

A Thought To Live By

a small boy
slid into his pajamas,
and knelt by the bed...

to pray.
closing his eyes,
he bowed his head:

'I'll try to do better tomorrow.'

a thought
to live by!

Eric Cockrell

A Time

i knelt down and talked
to the old turtle, trying
to get out of its box...
in a low voice telling him,
there'd come a time,
there'd come a time!
you smell good!
we pass like familiar strangers
who've forgotten the words
to the song...

and the roar and the din
of the circus and its clowns
drowns out the silence!
i turn, and take you with
a glance, a thought, an inadvertent
touch...

the cash register rings again!
and all is lost...
carried out in a buggy
to a borrowed car!

Eric Cockrell

A Torch, A Hand, A Cross!

the silent graves are shouting,
the waves come for the shore.
the time of thunder beckons,
the page is left unsigned.
miracles turn to ashes,
in the hearth of limitless time.
love burns in small fires left unnoticed,
the copper kettle is blind.
there's nothing left to say,
for words are tiny shells.
tiny shells cant hold oceans,
still oceans seek a home!
i only pray perhaps the snow will bring,
a torch, a hand, a cross!

Eric Cockrell

A True Companion!

we collide,
rogue stars travelling darkness,
upper lip and bottom lip,
the knife and the flesh.
searching, forever searching,
for the sound inside raindrops,
and the way stone tastes,
where no one has walked.
fire and log, or log and fire,
we care not...
drinking the paint off the walls,
releasing storm, scattering dust.
sound and echo, or echo and sound...
we lay naked on the steps,
of journey and fire!
if just for a moment,
lived before, perhaps again...
we find a true companion
who asks nothing more than time!

Eric Cockrell

A True God!

religious fanatics,
immoral moral extremists,
of all faiths,
has killed more people
in the name of god,
have spread more prejudice
and hatred in the name of god...
and have taken more
from the innocent and poor,
in the name of god...
whatever god!
than all the tyrants
throughout history!

true faith,
of whatever flavor,
is based in compassion.
any action done
outside of compassion
has nothing to do
with a true god!

Eric Cockrell

A Wind That Has No Name

there is a wind that has no name,
that comes from within afar;
a song that wears a human face,
dust from a distant star.

a river that flows from heart to heart,
a fire that feeds itself.
a ship unmanned on stormy seas,
the hand that rings the bell.

a child is born, a friend has died,
and so the circle goes on.
the memories of the outstretched hand,
lives in the stillness before dawn.

i cannot hold or form with words
that which begins and ends.
so i'll fly to you with a robin's wings,
your lover, and your friend.

Eric Cockrell

A Woman's Rights

no man ever owns a woman!
her body, mind, and spirit
are her own...

no man has the right
to legislate a woman's body,
to judge a woman's thoughts,
to fetter a woman's spirit.

if we're really lucky
we get the chance
to walk beside them!

Eric Cockrell

A World Yet Undiscovered!

naked, and walking in the darkness,
things smell better without names.
and the things we touch in spite of,
are the better part of who we are.
i travelled the world,
or perhaps it was your heart.
yet go to sleep a stranger,
in a world yet undiscovered!

Eric Cockrell

Actions Of Respect

plant and animal rights,
human rights...
no difference here!
all built on
the actions of respect.

and sadly,
what we've lost,
and cant seem to find,
is respect!

Eric Cockrell

Actions, And Inaction!

there is no blood
...runs deeper than
...the greening of the earth,

nothing as bitter as
..the taste of rust
....in your mouth,

as you sit by helpless,
.....and watch it die!

your father's gift,
...and your mother's breasts,
.....no epitaph but greed!

and if God lives the fatal blow
...of actions, and inaction!

Eric Cockrell

Addict (Holiness)

the arms that hold the addict shaking,
the hands that wipe his vomit stained face...
the ears that listen to his need,
the heart that stays beside him.
the mind that shows him a better way....
the spirit that believes!

Eric Cockrell

Addiction (Voices Of The Dead)

addiction...
the whore that takes
the last gasp of soul's breath

from the broken and wounded...
the lie that erases memories
for just a moment,

and then whips the heart with them....
the car hurtling towards the cliff,
out of control with no brakes....

the voices of the dead
calling from the streets of hell!
the chain around your neck,

that only you can unlock!

Eric Cockrell

Address Unknown

morning coffee;
a touch of the news,
goes down bitter....

shoe leather, and trash
blown across the horizon,
pregnant gas pumps heaving....

another napalm morning,
gunpowder and grease,
tiny bodies in flower gardens,

unattended.

sunday school teachers
with bayonets and cell phones,
small childrens fingers curled

around stones and broken limbs.

ring the register, take off
your hat, close your eyes.
put your lives away

in cardboard boxes
wrapped up in duct tape.
address unknown...
.....address unknown!

Eric Cockrell

Admiration... For Those Who Work!

i have a deep admiration
for the common working people
of the world...
having lived among them,
worked and sweated with them,
i sing their struggle!

farmers toiling day and night,
nurses pulling double shifts.
factory workers doing time and again,
carpenters and masons building.
black and white and all colors,
working their lives by faith.
and immigrants, often called illegal,
(though no human beings are illegal!) ...
who come here and work for whatever wage,
trying to build a dream for their families.
let us not forget women,
too often underpaid and treated as less...
truckdrivers, and those who work the docks,
steel workers, cooks, and trash collectors...
all leave me in awe...

there are many who cant work,
these should always be taken care of.
but the ones that could work if they would work,
who can work, and wont...
well... i have a problem there!

i was taught to work as a child...
taught respect, dignity, and honesty...
and so i believe, and so i live...
in admiration for those who work!

Eric Cockrell

Affinity

to say that i have a deep affinity for the Tibetan people would be correct... but i also have a deep affinity for all oppressed peoples.

for too long Americans have been insulated from the hurt and suffering experienced around the world. now it's come home to haunt us!

we can never forget: as long as anyone is hungry, we are hungry. as long as anyone is struggling for freedom, we are struggling for freedom. as long as anyone is in need, we are in need. as long as anyone lives in poverty, we are poor!

Eric Cockrell

Affirm The Fragile!

i cannot fix
the broken branch,
so i use it to build the fire.
and in the quiet of evening,
i sit in mourning with the tree!

i cannot bring back
the wind after it's gone,
so i look for the traces left behind.
the curtain swept, the lamp put out...
and sing praises with silent awe!

i cannot make the human being
to be more human,
so i love both the weaknesses
and the strengths...
and in doing so affirm the fragile,
with the faith that moves mountains!

Eric Cockrell

Affirmative Communication

affirmative communication...
we as humans are diverse creatures,
with diverse beliefs, histories, and needs.
we share the common bond of being human.
that is the beginning of the bridge.
we are not meant to be exactly alike.
but we are meant to flow with each other.
beginning with respect....
i am what i am, you are what you are...
and that is good.
let your words be tempered with kindness.
harsh words, excessive profanity, are forms of hate...
hate never accomplishes anything!
never judge anyone but yourself.
forgive for the sake of your own forgiveness.
listen... for that is how we learn....
and when it comes to matters of god...
dont preach god... be the god
you want others to know!

Eric Cockrell

After It's Gone!

wild eyed strangers...
kids wearing dirty clothes,
and hand me down coats.
people walking, head down,
in the early morning cold.

just a few stores open,
the price of gas up.
smoke rises from chimneys,
all is quiet, as if waiting,
for the next storm to come.

life goes stumbling down,
the mail falls from the box.
families sleeping in cars,
gotta move with the sun.
the town clock strikes, echoing,

the steps of boots long worn...
empty buildings shout out
the rage of the dispossessed.
all that was, or could be,
now nothing more...

than the bitter taste of coffee,
two hours after it's gone!

Eric Cockrell

After The Shores

when the Buddha in me
sees the Buddha in you,
he leaps with joy!

as if great waves of stillness
arise from a calm, placid sea,
to lap at the shores of...

we are those shores,
and yes, we are the waves,
but most of all...

we are what remains,
after the shores are stripped bare!

Eric Cockrell

Again And Again!

woodsmoke, and flannel;
old couples and young lovers
curl into each other....

one travelling the roads of memory,
one writing the path
as they go...

or perhaps we're all
stepping in footprints left
by shadowed images of

life pounding the beaches
again and again...
every touch, every feeling,

pulled by the gravity of yearning;
finding form after form
on the long journey to love....

strange pilgrims talking
with their bodies in a language
that wont fit their mouths....

coming again and again
inside the seam beneath
and beyond the souls...

great clouds of frozen breath,
and the taste of our naked identities!

Eric Cockrell

Against Amendment One!

equality...
should never be defined
by personal moral values.
equal means equal.
each person's values are different.
we are not qualified to judge!

every person...
has the right to love,
and to be loved.
has the right to happiness.
we cannot define love by fear,
cannot define justice by ignorance.

if we were all meant to be just alike,
we would be clones.
we are not!
the beauty of life
is in our diversity.

whether you are gay, straight,
or bi...(i hate labels) ,
you are human...
i wish for you love,
peace, respect, and happiness.

i vote against amendment one,
and for humanity!

Eric Cockrell

Age Questions

age questions...
the validity of both journey,
and sacrifice...
but the shadow i've cast
wouldnt even fill a thimble!
my ego rears up in outrage,
swearing at least the thimble
would bear my name....
while my soul walks off laughing in disgust,
at the absurdity of identity!

Eric Cockrell

Ah!

i am not your poet,
not even your rising poem.
i am but the simple sound, 'ah',
that comes between
your irregular heartbeats!
i am the sperm
that fell to the floor,
the dust wiped from the cover
of an unread book.
i am the rust on the plow,
the burp of the earth.
i am the nest made of straw.
i am the old clothes,
washed in the creek.
i am the pot simmering.
i am the child
forgotten by god,
i am the body
left for the crows.
i am the silence that overwhelms,
i am the healing without name.
i am the lover, the cross,
and the road not walked.
i am the embrace of death,
and the quiet companion.
i am the still beauty
of scars and bruises,
the kiss that lights the night.
i am the hope
that looks like you...
the simple sound,
'ah'!

Eric Cockrell

Aint Got A Friend

listenin' to an old owl,
waiting on the world to end.
just listenin' to an owl,
waiting on the world to end.
baby, if you aint my woman,
you know i aint got a friend.
i's prayin' for deliverance,
just reaching for a line.
prayin' for deliverance,
reaching for a line.
aint got nothin' in my pockets,
nothin' that is mine.
read the holy book, highway signs,
and a letter that you wrote.
read the holy book, highway signs,
and a letter that you wrote.
you think i'm past my prime,
baby, you cant smell my smoke!
well, the babies are all gone,
and the car dont crank no more.
well, the babies are all gone,
and the car dont crank no more...
your mailbox is empty,
there's a wreath upon your door.
when your good luck turns bad,
and you come back this way.
when your good luck turns bad,
and you come back this way.
when you're knocking on my door,
you better have something to say.
love's a bitch, love's a war,
it'll turn you inside out.
love's a bitch, love's a war,
it'll turn you inside out
when you heart turns to ashes
you'll know what i'm talking about!
listenin' to an old owl,
waiting on the world to end.
just listenin' to an owl,

waiting on the world to end...
baby, if you aint my lover,
you know i aint got a friend....
you know i aint got a friend.

Eric Cockrell

Aint Jesus Calling!

tick tock, growling thunder,
fire falling from the sky....
the ghosts of death

walk among us....
with faces we can
almost remember, almost...

nowhere to hide!
cant wipe the taste
from our lips....

we look in the mirror
at swords drawn
and bitter eyes lost

in the blindness and the fury....
self destroys self...
tick tock... this aint Jesus calling!

Eric Cockrell

Albums Of Loving

he walked ten miles
through the winter night,
then laid in a ditch

for over an hour....
waiting on her husband
to leave.....

Farina, Hesse, and
talking naked... vodka,
and enough passion

to almost save the world.....

2

he came home from work,
dog-tired, took off his
boots at the door....

he could hear the sound of music....

he walked into the great room...
she sat naked at the baby grand,
playing Tchaikovsky....

she smiled: 'i thought you'd like...'

3

it snowed a lot that winter.
he could still see her
in his mind's eye...

carrying buckets of water
through the snow...
up the hill....

heating water on that old woodstove,
baths in the galvanized bathtub.....

then as the fire went down...

they made love all night;
shadows in the moonlight,
great clouds of hungry breath....

no man ever had less, or more!
nothing else need be said....
love is the one moment in a thousand

when we really dare to live!

Eric Cockrell

Alive Right Now

listening to a kid
who had cancer,
and was dying... talk...

and all he wanted
was to be alive,
to really live, ... right now!

he knew there was no tomorrow.

how much we could learn,
and how much more grateful
we'd be... if we listened!

Eric Cockrell

All God's Hands!

how many Jesus' babies
have to die before
we wake up to the fact
that all life is sacred?

how many dead bodies
wearing God's face?
how many hands holding the gun,
how many hands on the shovel...

all God's hands!

Eric Cockrell

All He Really Needs

old man sitting
alone in the afternoon
sunlight....

listening to the wind.

tired of the fight,
tired of the struggle,
tired of bailing water

in a sinking boat.

tired of having less
and working more....
tired of the want and need....

when all he really needs....
is a friend, a good book,
a cup of coffee....

maybe a drink!
a little time for himself,
and a lover who

doesn't want anything more
than his company!
and dammit, that's not

too much to ask!

Eric Cockrell

All Headed Home!

sundown,
color drenched mountains,
new budding trees
reach out to touch.
just a hint of coolness,
the distant smell of woodsmoke.
people pass in a hurry,
all headed home.

and so we are,
at sundown and waiting.
remembered in color,
forgotten by touch.
hurrying after
a scent in the distance,
all headed home...
all headed home!

Eric Cockrell

All Living Beings Are Spirit!

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all living beings,
human, animal, or plant,
are spirit....

all should be afforded
the same dignity and respect...

any being taken for your
sustenance should be thanked!

all living beings need
to live in accord and harmony
with each other....

for we all need each other
for life to be full, and
to stay within balance.....

all living beings are spirit!

Eric Cockrell

All Of This, And More!

the color in the stone,
the green in the grass.
the language of the wind
whispering through the trees....

the mountains that listen in stillness.
the baby's mouth, eyes follow suit,
the thundering wings of the moth,
majestic in flight.

the bleet of the sheep,
the low growl of the bear.
the rhythm of the water,
pounding the shore....

the moan of the lover,
universal and primitive.
the scent of the rain,
just before it comes!

the fit of the light
in the darkness of empty,
the lips on my heart,
sucking the fire from my blood.

all of this, and more!

Eric Cockrell

All People...

the people who were killed
at Pearl Harbor, at Hiroshima,
in the Nazi death camps,
in Vietnam, in Iraq, in Afghanistan....

on 9/11....
were all people,
many with families, all with dreams
of living and loving....

it is both tragic and sad
how they died, and that they died....

it is also a sad truth
that all the killing in the world
wont bring them back,
and will never redeem what happened....

Eric Cockrell

All That Dies

derelict, spasmodic, dry lightning flashes...
no rain, no wetness, no balm for the ache.
all that dies, dies alone today!

Eric Cockrell

All That Lives....

all that lives yearns...
for love, for shelter,
to be fed, to be a part of.
it is only fear that isolates us!

we have made ourselves
to be islands of self.
self-fulfillment, self-worship,
self-attainment, self...

do the grains of sand on the beach
cry out to god for names?
does each wave declare itself an ocean?
do the trees suffer from no identity?

the walls we've constructed
are nothing but a lie!
that which makes us the same
allows our difference to be enough!

Eric Cockrell

All The Same!

i am the illegal immigrant,
picking your fruit.
while my children are hungry,
and my wife scrubs your floors.
the young black man in your prison,
the anger of the poor.
i am the books,
you forbid us to read.
i am the Vietnamese family,
whose children speak english.
the young Sioux poet,
whose words sound like tears.
i am the white man's reservation,
and the white man's god....
the sound of the gas pump,
the feet of soldiers marching to death.
i am the grandson of the miner,
who never came out.
the body of the union organizer,
buried beneath rubble.
i am the picket line,
the cold floor of the cell.
i am the old woman who died,
alone in her nursing home bed.
the sound of the church bells,
on midnight's empty streets.
i am the needle and the crack pipe,
the sound of the window breaking.
i am the whistle of the train,
so near and so far.
i am the child adopted,
by two women in love.
i am the mission, the soup line,
and the shelter....
the body in the alley,
and no one cares.
i am the song of America,
i am the wind of freedom.
i am the torch of justice,

the bridge that has no name.
i am the god of many colors,
and all the same!

Eric Cockrell

All We Have

i know how it feels
to be strung out...
heroin and i
were lovers
many years ago...

and dependence left
a bad taste in my mouth...
it just aint worth it!
it's a waste of time,
a dead end road...
it's not the answer.

no matter how hard,
how hopeless, how lonesome
it gets...
life's still the best
thing going...
it's all we have!

live it!

Eric Cockrell

All...

all people just want
to be free, to be free..
white, black, Hispanic,
Asian, and Arabic...
chains an offense
to all that breathe...
one cannot be free
without the other!

there are no illegal people,
or invented people...
the least worth as much
as the most powerful.
put down your fat bellied guns,
and your patriotic rhetoric...
all are created in the image
of the eternal!

Eric Cockrell

Almost

the beginning of light
wrapped in the warm wet darkness,
before time, or the concept
of being...

in each word we almost speak,
in each thought we almost form,
in each feeling we almost allow...

do you know me?
i danced the day you were born,
pulling stillness out of the falling rain.
my name is written in the
deepest cavern of your soul...

i sweep the steps of your temple
while you pray and offer sacrifices
from my body to yours!
from your body to the children!

in each word we almost speak,
in each thought we almost form,
in each feeling we almost allow...

now time waits for the fire
beneath the window...
waiting to devour and remove
the last vestige of having been...

and the liquor of our loving shimmers
in the beginning of light...
in the radiance of the fallen.

in each word we almost speak,
in every thought we almost form.
in every feeling we almost allow.

Eric Cockrell

Alone

it is embarrassing to me
to be a citizen of this country,
or any country, where
acts of prejudice and
racial hatred are still committed
on a regular basis...

where people can run for office,
and win, backed by the dollars
of prejudice....

where minorities, children,
and women are treated
with disrespect....

where the elite 10% are filthy rich,
and are not taxed! ...
while many of us go without food,
housing, or medical care...

where our children are shipped
off to fight money wars,
or left to die in our prisons....

where crooked businessmen
are more respected than teachers,
nurses, farmers, and carpenters....

where the morality of those
that lead is the pursuit of the dollar,
and freedom is an illusion....

where human dignity has been traded
and sold on the slave blocks of capitalism....

am i alone?

Eric Cockrell

Already Open!

are we called to love?
or driven, by an unseen hand?
are we the fire,
or the memory of?
is it he who plants the seed,
or the seed itself?
are we alone,
or do we walk with the dead?

concepts! mental cages.
who builds the cage?
who fights against the latch?
in loneliness we struggle,
never knowing ourselves.
painting the picture
of the bird in flight...
not knowing we are the bird,
the flapping of wings,
and the sky!
not knowing, not knowing...

still we dream,
dreams that taste and smell!
are we dreaming?
or part of the dream?
abstract and vague,
we fumble for the key.
never knowing, never knowing,
the door is already open!

Eric Cockrell

Already There!

what you gonna do
when they take away your house?
what you gonna do
when they take your job?
what you gonna do
when they take away your healthcare?
what you gonna do
when they take away your children's education?

what you gonna do
when they take away your rights?
what you gonna do
when they take away your freedoms?
what you gonna do
when they take away your thoughts?
what you gonna do
when they take away your hope?

you want to know, to understand,
why people are protesting in America...
because we're already there!

Eric Cockrell

Always Coming Home

why is it every time
i think of the south
i can taste...
cornbread, beans,
fried chicken,
hell, everything fried!
barbeque, good whiskey,
southern baptist revivals,
dark eyed girls moaning,
fresh turned earth on the plow,
oak split by the axe,
squirrels, rabbits, and frogs...

and yes, the hanging tree,
the buses partitioned by hate,
the factories sucking life's blood,
now shut down and haunted.
the milk cows gone dry,
and doors that are now locked.
the meth lab taste of plastic,
hillbilly heroin by the pill.
graveyards desecrated,
the lakes and rivers poisoned....
that long walk across mississippi,
and old cars up on blocks.
trailer parks rusting down,
old depots, and empty tracks

sundown over the mountains,
and spirits in the night....
her prodigal son,
always coming home!

Eric Cockrell

Always There!

we unlearn faith, wonder, awe,
and unconditional love as we
grow up... we are taught to turn
away.

it takes most of us the rest of
our lives to find these qualities
again...

but as a friend reminded me, they
were always there!

Eric Cockrell

Always Walking, Never Alone!

always walking, never alone...
be it the wind,
whose voice has comforted me
for longer than i can remember.
be it darkness,
my lover, passion unfolding.
be it the lights in unknown houses,
signaling life to the traveller.
be it the whisper of stone,
and wood aging and holding.
be it the cry of emptiness,
vacant buildings, desolate streets.
be it the smells of food cooking,
of woodsmoke, of flesh on flesh.
be it the taste of rain,
the cold touch of falling snow.
be it the stillness of graves,
row upon row, life upon life.

my god walks with me,
naked in the night.
we listen for the whimper of babies,
the meow of stray cats.
for the sound of the shot,
and the body falling.
for the key turning the lock,
and the creaking of the swing.
for the perfume of the pines,
for the man picking up the trash.
for the heart moaning
low and guttural in need.
for the sound of the man weeping,
having given up,
and the woman that holds him.
for the prayers of small children,
and the echoes of longing...

always walking, never alone!

Ambrosia

your tongue
...wrapped
.....in mine;

you open an old book,
your fingers caress the pages....
you take in the scent

of words built on lifetimes...
struggling together...
ambrosia!

read me!

Eric Cockrell

America Revisited

put down your crack bowls
and your republican flags...
and let's go walking thru
the streets and alleys of America....

let's walk past the empty houses
with foreclosure signs in the yard...
past the vacant factory buildings
where the homeless break in
at night and sleep...

past the lily white churches
and the dead zone schools...
past the county jails and the courthouses
and the rooms where lawyers
buy and sell justice...

past the housing projects
where babies buy groceries...
down to the tent cities where
dreams hang in the air like opium.

down the dark streets where young
girls and boys sell their bodies
for their vampire pimps...
and everyday citizens buy them!

down to the unemployment offices
where angry people stand in
numbered lines...
past renegade gas pumps
guarded by dollar store slaves...

past the words of Jefferson, Franklin,
and Thomas Paine....
to the hypnotic ads of puffy-faced
liars with titles and plans...

down to the cemetery where

the last shreds of freedom
lie in unmarked graves....
and we call this....

America!

Eric Cockrell

America, America...

i remember...

\$1.55 an hour, furniture row,
55 hours a week.

getting up hay, milking cows,
and them cotton mills

we worked in...

family member to family member,
generations of workers.

no running water,
carrying buckets up the hill,
spiders on the outhouse wall.
the hoe, the shovel, and the plow.
reading by candle light,
and writing socialist manifestos
on a 1913 underwood typewriter!

making love in the front seat
of a 1966 Rambler Classic.
raising babies, raising hell,
renegade thoughts...
climbing mountains, picking music,
living, living, just living
and working!

America, America...
where did you go?

Eric Cockrell

America, Grieving

America, grieving...
your oily fingers on
the wheel of the world,
your black heart of prejudice...
you pull the crumbs
from the mouths of the needy,
and litter your walkways
with the bones of children.

you poison your own crops,
and defile your own water.
you educate your children
in prisons dark, and
on foreign sands fighting...
for freedom, no!
you batter the people of color,
bruise them with your stars and stripes...
your hanging trees condemn you!

you cut the hearts out
of your working people,
and feed them fear and lies.
the stench of your excesses
rises to meet god,
the god you've created
in your blackened jealousy.

you taunt the spirit
with cries of freedom,
free speech, free thoughts...
and then break it with the
oppressive load of your debts.
Wall Street and big oil,
and the corporate demons...
no democracy here!

America, grieving...
your own will rise up,
and take down your flag!

Eric Cockrell

America, My Lover!

i dreamed...
America died,
and woke up to find
all the great cities empty!

so i went back to the hills,
searched beneath trees,
and inside of caves.
beneath the stones

on the riverbanks...
in the deserts, atop the mountains,
till exhausted and spent,
i sat down and closed my eyes.

i dreamed you loved me again,
and woke up to find,
people walking the streets,
and cars passing by.

America, my lover!

Eric Cockrell

America, The Truth

George Washington
did not part the Red Sea,
and lead us into the

Promised Land...
God, not even a white God,
did not tell us to...

slaughter the Native Americans,
and take their lands by force!

we are not the 'chosen people'!

we're just people, people
like all other people
around the world!

first, and foremost,
we are citizens of the world.
any blessing we have received

comes with the responsibility
to share it with the world...
not to force our ideologies

whether for profit or pride...
if we stand for freedom,
it means freedom for all...

regardless of color, creed,
or nationality...
we cannot rise any higher

than our actions...
cannot liberate without
first liberating ourselves...

cannot build a future
without including all

of humanity, great and small!

Eric Cockrell

America... The Fallen!

America...

lady of freedom weeping
in your streets broken,

cluttered with the bodies
of the jobless, homeless...
the hungry faces of your children

struck dumb by your apathetic hand....
do you hear? do you see?
do you feel?

whose graves will you mark
with your oil tinged pride?
whose god will you worship now?

and who will be left to carry
the heavy mark of your sins?
America....

the fallen!

Eric Cockrell

America.... Revolution, Or The Fall!

America, America,
your pale skinned death testifies!
the cross of your democracy laid down,
the blood on your hands names your guilt.
your bodies laid in soldiers' graves,
strewn across your planted fields.
while wild fires rage,
and your tenements boil,
as your children march to death.
the poverty of indifference,
strikes the bell that cannot ring.
while the wealthy drink the blood
of your disembodied men.
and your hallowed god turns his face,
disgusted by what he's seen.
blood sacrifices on your borders,
blood sacrifices in your mills.
your families driven from their homes,
while your prisons turn the wheel.
and the hungry walk your streets
wearing familiar shoes.
the haunting cry of liberty,
rattles against your walls.
while justice is bought and sold
in your sacred halls!
and the colors of equality,
bleed into your angry streets.
your schools struck numb
by propaganda's thumb,
your daughters sold like meat.
America, America,
revolution, or the fall!

Eric Cockrell

American Flag

i've had mixed feelings
about the American flag
ever since they lowered it
for President Kennedy...
it took a beating during
the civil rights movement.
and then there was Vietnam,
all the atrocities, the lies,
the wasted deaths...
the marches, the protests,
the Kent State killings...
and the flag was burned
in anger, and i understood
the anger
and now the corporate takeover,
the loss of human rights,
the loss of dignity, and hope
how many deaths does it take?
JFK, Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King
forty thousand plus in Vietnam
how many in the lying oil wars
in Iraq and Afghanistan?
how many homeless and jobless
does it take?
how many migrant workers treated
like animals?
how many old people have to lose
the benefits they've worked for?

and i think back to my old hero,
Thomas Jefferson what would he say?
maybe something like this:
'the real American flag isnt made of cloth,
it's drawn on the backs of the American workers.
male and female of all races and religions,
the people that built this country
the heart blood of this country.
when you put these people down
with your greed, your lies, your apathy

then you lower the flag.
and it can never be raised again
till all Americans walk heads up together
with hope till all have an equal opportunity
to live and be in freedom
until such day you have no flag! '

Eric Cockrell

American Flags Burning

melted down candles,
boots by the door...
the taste of stone walls

lingers in my mouth.
sunlight sifting through
blinds faded by time...

the sound of birds
breaks the deep stillness.
American flags burning,

an old deserted station...
a rusted Ford up on blocks.
the weight of the waiting,

at the foot of the mountains.
the smell of coffee,
and church bells ringing.

time coiled like a viper,
the hammer, and the truth...
they're cracking eggs at the mission,

a lone sign laying beside the road:
'we are the 99%'...
a police car eases by.

melted down candles...
smoke rising from a vacant house.
American flags burning,

and the body count goes higher!

Eric Cockrell

American Heroes

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she had one hand on her Bible,
the other at her throat.
they fired the volley,
folded the flag....
and buried her only son.

she didnt know about politics,
didnt know much about the war.
she only knew what she believed,
about right and wrong, , , ,
about her country, and salvation.

he'd been a good kid,
all boy, found trouble pretty easy.
but he listened to her,
and he believed what she believed....
he died fighting, scared, and unsure....

she had one hand on her Bible,
the other at her throat.
the sheriff.s dept. brought the notice,
foreclosure, she just couldnt pay....
the deputy looked down, and walked away....

American heroes, loss after loss.
clinging to the values they were taught.
she packed her clothes, her Bible,
and a picture of him....
smiling in his uniform.

Eric Cockrell

American History 101

they came with long rifles and Bibles,
raped your women, stole your lands.
their God devoured....
yours, with open hands!

built the land of the free
atop your teepees and your bones;
and went out to conquer the world,
with eyes of glass,
.....and hearts of stone!

Eric Cockrell

American Made (Nowhere To Turn)

American made....
in the fields, backs bent,
working the earth....

in the factories,
hands, eyes, and machines,
moving in well oiled unison....

in the mills,
cloth woven into warmth
and cover.....

on the sites,
buildings going up,
block by block.....

in the trucks,
barreling across the highways,
carrying goods coast to coast....

in the hospitals,
skilled hands healing,
hearts with shoes.....

American made,
standing in unemployment lines,
vacant buildings, trucks shut down....

American made....
not needed anymore,
with nowhere to turn!

Eric Cockrell

American Slaves

blatent mediocrity, constant uniformity,
tongues pierced with an anvil.
eyes fogged from realization,
minds trained for situations,
paper hearts, electric candles.

cry of desperation, self becomes a nation,
stepping over bodies without heads.
the newscaster plots his story,
selling condoms in purgatory,
fanning the flames o'er the dead.

ghosts in hell, souls without conscience.
take another pill for deliverence.
children buried in unmarked graves.
oil rigs pumping, American slaves.

flag waving, constant craving,
neon lights blink on and off.
sex heals, addictive thrills,
money dressed in naked bills,
drool on the chin, barking cough.

color fears, political cures,
families lost to the raging sea.
morals traded, hard and jaded,
the sick are shunned, the poor are hated,
only the few can afford to be free.

ghosts in hell, souls without conscience.
take another pill for deliverence.
children buried in unmarked graves.
oil rigs pumping, American slaves.

Eric Cockrell

American Tragedy, Channel 36

with hollow faces
and vomited lips,
they turn on the stage
as the people gawk...

enamored with their lies...
both hypnotic and addictive,
they sell an American tragedy
complete with commercials.

the circus wheel turns,
and the roar of the beat
deafens all hearts to the truth.
while out on the street

human mouths bleed,
and the memory of the living
falls back into the shadows....
as great owls swoop the night!

Eric Cockrell

Among The Shadows

i need you now more than ever,
yet your name has a hollow ring.
i stay up all night praying for you,
soon there will be time for sleep.
and all the wars of history
come to nothing;
as creation's lamp grows dim!
i have walked through the ruins
of a hundred times,
now each one bears your scent!
the ancient oak reaches
to embrace the sky,
as the sky walks through the final door!
the moon no longer has a face,
as mountains prepare for the journey.
and the birds left today in frantic haste,
the windowpane cracked by the storm!
i need you now more than ever....
my body lives among the shadows!

Eric Cockrell

An Addiction, I Cannot Kick!

i put the needle in my arm,
my drug of choice, you!
i cannot go on without a fix.

sell everything i've got,
destroy my dignity.
trade tomorrow for one quick rush.....

it's the price of loving,
when love's a disease,
an addiction, i cannot kick!

Eric Cockrell

An Afterthought!

even stone shudders,
groans and cracks...
shifting on it's axis,
changing!

squirrels find erections,
and name them trees...
homes that reach to infinity,
beds fulls of nuts!

only people build houses
out of things dead...
feeling safe in the numbness
of walls that cant touch!

ah! but birds build nests
out of straw discarded...
waiting for angels to fill their wings
with stardust and magic!

and if god created breasts,
rainbows, and sunsets...
then rainbows and sunsets
were an afterthought!

Eric Cockrell

An Atheist, And I Dont Know!

an atheist told me:
'i dont believe in God....'
'okay, what do you believe? '

'well, you know,
there's something out there,
something bigger, beyond

all our conceptions,
some reason behind creating
and destroying....

i dont know... just dont know....
some reason we feel the things we feel,
some reason we do the things we do.....

some reason we live our lives,
some reason we love who we love....
something that knows why things are,

why some people are hungry,
and some have too much...
some reason there's so much suffering...

some reason there's so much beauty...
i dont know, just dont see some bearded
old man casting judgements...

i just dont know....'
i thought for a little bit and answered:
'that's kinda like what i believe,

i just call the 'i dont know',
God! '

Eric Cockrell

An Easter Thought...

to be a real 'Jesus person',
the Jesus inside of you
has to be willing
to walk that path,
to be crucified,
for your own sins,
as well as the sins
of the world!
this involves a
conscious decision...
to take responsibility,
for yourself,
and for others!
it is not something
done long ago
to be remembered.
it is now, the choice is now!
only then,
will resurrection occur!

Eric Cockrell

An Ignorant People

as long as we allow hunger
to exist in our modern world,
we remain an ignorant people!

a short poem, a bent nail,
a heavy hammer!

Eric Cockrell

An Immigrant Here!

i am an immigrant here,
i claim no nation,
choose no side...
but this earth is my home,
formed from it's dirt,
it's bottomless oceans...

my friends are trees,
mountains, and rivers...
the long grasses my beard,
the great plains my soul.
i am the birthing of spring,
the death of the snow...

i am an immigrant here,
many colors, all human.
i am the hunted, and the hunter,
i am the pounding of waves
held in the tiniest shell.
i am wind, fire, and darkness...

i am an immigrant here,
i am the plow of the man,
the valley of the woman.
i am the roar of the cities,
the hush of the forests...
i am the water spilling o'er the dam!

i am an immigrant here,
illegal only to those who fear!
the river i crossed,
i will cross again!
my only map the lines
in an old man's hands!

Eric Cockrell

An Offer To Pray!

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a prayer group stopped a man
walking down the street,
and offered to pray for him....

he turned and said:

'dont pray for me unless
you have something i can eat...

maybe a cup of coffee...
and if you havent got anywhere
for me to sleep... maybe,

just a blanket, or a coat...'

he thought a minute, and spoke again:

'i tell you what, forget all that....
i dont want you to give me anything...

except a chance to work, and earn my way! '

they were speechless...
he turned and walked away!

Eric Cockrell

An Old Man's Prayer

i pray for the sounds
of leaves falling in timeless glory;
for the bark of the dog,
and the paw of the cat.
for the laughter of children playing,
who have a home and food to eat.
for the tired smiles of working parents,
for the ears and stories of grandparents.
for the kiss and the touch of lovers,
for the dreams of the young that know not bounds.
for the gurgle of creeks and the sighs of mountains,
for the crow, the turtle, and the squirrel.
for the plow, the shovel, and the axe, ...
and hands that know each.
for eyes that see beneath color and nationality,
for the spiritual who dare not name god.
for the silence of guns at last laid down,
for bridges built by caring hands.
for shoulders that take on responsibility,
for feet bound by determination.
for the face of justice drawn by the hands of compassion,
for the way equality feels!
for sundown, darkness, and dawn...
for stars that do not need names.
for the wisdom of trees, and the taste of dew,
for the howl of moonlight that shakes the night.
for the nearness of companions when life seems far,
for the stillness that makes the heart dance.
for passion, simplicity, and understanding,
for the gift of every moment....

i pray....
giving thanks with a pilgrim's feet!

Eric Cockrell

And Eat Our Own Flesh....

we who are not alive,
and yet not dead.
poured into cups,
that dont exist.
held by a hand,
no more than shadow.
we cling to memory,
yet do not remember.
lighting fires with darkness,
drinking kerosene in circles.
we pray to old tires,
never seeing the wheel.
having made peace with war,
entrapped by our concepts.
we drain oceans of thought,
while dying of thirst.
afraid of the image,
the acorn worships the tree...
while the tree reaches feeble branches
to embrace eternity.
ships lost at sea,
drifting aimlessly towards home...
yet we came from that same ocean
that we call our path.
'who are we? ' we shout!
no answer to be heard...
we turn both violent and righteous,
and eat our own flesh....

Eric Cockrell

And If There Be Peace....

and if there be peace,
it lies in this...
when stars collide,
and turtles bump in the night.
when the stray cat sleeps
in the homeless man's arms.
when the poet
becomes the poem....
when the carpenter
creates the world,
and the farmer divides
the land from the sea.
when the candle exultant,
lights itself....
and the wind puts it out
with a kiss...
when friends speak the language of ears,
and follow unmarked trails to nearness.
when the song becomes the grunt,
of life born inside itself.

Eric Cockrell

And Nothing Less

that which we say,
that which we knew;
that which we feel,
that which we do....
that which we know
in the end to be true....

and nothing less!

Eric Cockrell

And Nothing More!

only gods dare farewell,
small things always enter,
and keep entering,
in a thousand different ways,
and myriad forms.
we are no more than this,
this coming and going....
i dont know whether
to tip my hat,
or leave my shoes at the door.
the taste on your lips,
that you cannot name,
is me, and nothing more!

Eric Cockrell

And So Found Dawn

it was in doubt
that i found faith.
it was in forgiveness
that i found forgiveness.
it was in loss
that i found passion.
it was in suffering
that i found understanding.
it was in letting go
that i found freedom.
it was in the mirror
that i found prayer.
it was in darkness
that i found light.
it was in jail
that i found dignity.
it was in addiction
that i found determination.
it was in giving
that i found love.
it was in fighting
that i found reason.
it was in reason
that i found dissatisfaction.
it was in questioning
that i found truth.
it was in truth
that i found the need for silence.
it was in silence
that i found kindness.
it was in working
that i found respect.
it was in respect
that i found acceptance.
it was in living
that i found god.
it was in god
that i found the need to touch.
it was in caring.

that i got dirty...
and so found dawn...

Eric Cockrell

And With Faith....

i have tried, especially in my later years,
to surround myself with people who know
more than i do, whose understanding is
deeper...

people of diverse backgrounds, who hold
strong opinions... strongwilled people, who
are not afraid to speak and to stand...

and i've worked hard on learning the art
of listening... you'd be amazed what there
is to hear!

especially old people, who've worked and
struggled for years, passionate people with
dreams, hopes, and needs.

what i write is a mixture of my journey and
theirs.... but arent all journeys interwoven?
it seems i'm in constant contact with god,
in various forms, simple acts, usually when
least expected.

i guess what i'm trying to say is thank you...
something i think we all forget to do.

let us live these waning moments with passion,
with storm, with gratitude, and with faith!

Eric Cockrell

And, Magic!

and so once again,
spring hath violated
the tomb of god,
and brought forth magic!

shadows dance,
seeds are planted.
life bursts through
the frozen casket...

light begins anew,
poets too long slumbered,
cast the webbing from their eyes,
birthing words into being.

thunderstorms, and magic.
the sun carries the hands of time.
summer dares come, wave upon wave,
poets dance naked in the moonlight.

lovers come together,
fission, and creation.
worlds are formed,
history testifies!

wine lusts for the lips,
as flesh for flesh.
the drums beat wildly,
death is but orgasm!

all too soon,
autumn approaches.
the harvest of desire,
fires built in the night.

hair turns grey,
thoughts lose form.
leaves begin to turn,
and fall, tis magic!

and poets rhyme the turning
of the earth and the sea.
worship the shell shocked earth,
dance in the memory....

then leaves turn brown,
decay, and return.
poets lose their eyesight,
follow the beat of the heart.

the winter chill comes,
barelimbed trees offer prayers...
at the graves of the poets,
marked by fresh fallen snow.

words lost, or engraved forever,
in the coming of spring,
in darkness to light...
what else could it be...

but magic!

Eric Cockrell

Andy And Opie

shots ring out in the middle
of the night...
tires squeal, a body falls.
the shades are drawn, better
turn out the lights...
9-1-1, nobody calls

old woman lying
in a pool of blood,
her check is gone, check long gone...
crackin, crankin,
swept away by the flood
you're all alone, all alone...

there are bars on the windows
there are locks on the doors
young kids dying in the alleys
dont know what they're dying for
no one has the time to care
and no one is keeping score
Andy and Opie just
dont live here anymore....
Andy and Opie just
dont live here anymore.

baby girls got a baby
the daddy's lost
dreams crumble, ashes to dust...
left her in a dumpster
cant pay the cost
feel the heart beating, weeping to rust...

there are bars on the windows
there are locks on the door
young kids dying in the alleys
dont know what they're dying for
no one has the time to care
and no one is keeping score
Andy and Opie just

dont live here anymore...
Andy and Opie just
dont live here anymore...

Eric Cockrell

Anger (Lightning Haiku)

i'm different - so!
my hair, my eyes, my color...
my heart same as yours!

i work long and hard.
give you more than i should.
but i'm not your slave!

Jesus was not white!
never killed to convert the heathen.
never sold the truth!

there are no chosen
people, no special people,
just human people!

i cannot judge you.
i can barely judge myself.
compassion, i pray.

dont dare tax the rich!
take it from the old, the poor...
they just dont matter!

Koch brothers, devils!
wrapped in layers of money,
the cancers of greed!

not Republican,
Tea Party, or Ku Klux Klan...
God's not a hater!

so we killed bin Laden,
and Crazy Horse killed Custer...
not much difference!

deport the migrants.
let the fruit rot in the fields!
get what you deserve!

Eric Cockrell

Anger!

early morning anger,
raw, jagged edges,
cant-feed-my-family,

cant-pay-the-rent....
anger!
pounding my fists

against a stone wall,
anger!
working, scuffing, trying

to just get by...
anger!
just like so many others,

all of us, struggling
just to keep going...
anger!

standing up, marching,
sitting down, making a statement,
anger!

turning this anger
into positive action...
the key!

Eric Cockrell

Angry With Love

i love to watch your face,
...angry with love.
your talons wrapped in feathers....

your spread your wings,
call your chickies home!
you stamp your feet,

eyes wrinkled with loving's cost.
your voice soft and firm demands
that your love returns again.....

for a moment forgetting,
all the lies that darkness sold you,
and your passion finds your heart

as if it never left!

Eric Cockrell

Animal Eyes Staring

we have become hunger,
animal eyes staring,
waiting on movement.
there are shadows that talk,
and those that have nothing to say,
when time itself becomes an enemy.
do we walk on water,
do we dive and swim?
or do we drown with hesitation?
when illusions become empty plates,
filling stained cups with nothingness.
there's always another door,
another path yet untrodden.
and there are small victories
in footprints in fresh fallen snow.
for now we watch the cat,
and pray for those in the news.
following the trail of the ants,
to the edge of the spider's web!

Eric Cockrell

Animal Lives

i howl at night.
like a wolf trapped
in a small room.

staring through
the window.
calling on the
moon goddess

for deliverance.

sometimes i build webs
in the darkness like a spider.
waiting to catch you
in a hungry moment.

or i sit motionless
in the darkness
like a cat.
eyes aglow with primal
passion.

i come stampeding
into dawn like a
rogue elephant.
tramping and trashing
the last vestiges

of loneliness!

Eric Cockrell

Animal Rights

</></>
animal rights...
they're people too!

often more so than we are,
with a deeper reverence
.....for life,

and a deeper understanding
...of the sacredness
.....of the mundane!

give them back
...their rights to life!

Eric Cockrell

Animal Rights!

animals have feelings
thoughts, needs, desires,
and emotions just as we do.
they're less likely to hide them,
or to lie about them...
and they love,
with undying hearts.
they have learned the beauty
of being who they are....
would that we could learn from them!

the next time someone tells you
that your dog or your cat,
your horse, or whatever,
doesn't have a soul,
slap them back into reality!

wolves pray when they howl.
whales talk across oceans.
birds define freedom with flight.
elephants teach us of family.

they are all a part of our families,
as we are of theirs...
we are responsible for each other.
let's live and love with respect!
we need each other!

Eric Cockrell

Another Baby Born!

another baby born...
dependent...
on a system
that dictates economic
despair...
on a system
that mandates educational
opportunities.
on air and water,
defiled and sucked dry.
on a mother's love,
who is still a child.
on a father's help,
who turns and walks away.
on a faith,
that is worn and failing.
on a tomorrow,
made up of todays.
on a freedom,
sold and bartered away.
on equality,
ravaged by prejudice,
and fear.
on respect,
that must be taught...

another baby born...
a Jesus, a Buddha,
a star in the sky.
the gift of life most precious,
the responsibility, ours!

Eric Cockrell

Another Chance To Fly!

build a fire....
gathering round,
stomp your feet,

trying to get warm....
hard wind from off
the mountains.....

sunlight opens the day.
and all that was yesterday,
all the dirt and grime,

all the bruises and words fallen,
the shadows of mistakes.....
are gone!

another day....
good fire, the company of friends....
another chance to fly!

Eric Cockrell

Another Day, Another Adventure

another day, another adventure! started off writing
in one direction, and then turned like a wave with
a mind of its own... i never know, and rarely plan...
the more i look for beauty, the more simple raw
ugliness i see!

and so again am reinforced by the sacred in the mundane,
the thousand tiny universes of the common and simple...
the strength that rises from weakness... the courage born
of fear... and the hunger for truth that defies and stands
in the field of the lie!

it's too easy to see the mistakes of broken people, the misery
that binds them, the hard way they live... and to think 'i'd never
be that way'.... but you already have, for they are a part of you...
often a part you dont wish to see, to acknowledge...

i've lived among broken people, have been broken myself... and
i know how hard it is to break free... some dont have the strength...
many need a hand, often more than once...

i cast judgement on no one... for when i look at people, no matter
how far they've fallen, or what they've done.... all i see is me!

Eric Cockrell

Another Page Turned!

another page turned,
torn, and thrown
into the fire...
time passes.

angry people say angry things,
things they dont really mean...
not even sure who or what
they're angry at...

even when you walk quietly
behind the plow, storms come!
the paint on the wall peels,
but the wall remains...

dogs barking at the stray cat
in the rain... all the cat wants,
is in! we are no different...
none of us like the rain for too long!

we are a people lost,
on a journey we dont understand.
our minds cannot grasp
the infinite, cannot define...

that which we long for,
and cannot speak of...
for lack of better words,
we call it god, or truth.

and yet there's no more to life
than can be seen in a leaf,
in an acorn, in a pebble...
in a baby's tiny hand grasping.

so turn the page,
feed the fire...
the beat of a single sparrow's wing
holds my life, and my destiny!

Eric Cockrell

Answers The Call

black feathered wings,
with marble tips.
eyes covered by shell,
blood stained lips.

lost somewhere between,
sky, and the fall.
limping with hesitation,
still answers the call.

with mortal bruises
in the shadow of immortality.
takes the final curtain,
senses raw with spirituality....

destined to be human
by a God who longs,
to put form to hunger,
discover light in the dawn!

Eric Cockrell

Anybody's Idea Of Eternity!

i'd rather be a leaf torn
by a sparrow's beak...
a snail, a moth, the spider's web.
the old man passing out blankets
at the homeless shelter...
the mother nursing the child,
refugees of war.
the old dog curled against
the old man's leg...
the cigarette shared after making love.
a trash collector, a cashier in an all night store,
an immigrant picking fruit
with eyes in the back of his head....
the soldier who deserted,
and turned his back on the war.
the lover left with the scent of memory.
the young girl giving birth
on a bare apartment floor,
a rose petal wilted,
falling to the ground....
the last wolf wandering the endless night.
a spoke in the wheel of the wagon loaded.
the love letter written never delivered...
a pair of old boots standing in the corner,
a rain dropp lingering on a blade of grass...
then to be an angel playing a harp,
in anybody's idea of eternity!

Eric Cockrell

Anymore # 2

by the light of the day,
by the light of the moon.
the black horse is coming,
cant get here too soon....

forgiveness doesnt come with nuclear tears,
you cant buy back the moment by selling the years,
we are no more than our dreams and our fears,
if hurt's the disease then love is the cure,
a man bows his head, a woman endures,
catastrophe is close, but salvation is near....

and as the wind blows hard on freedom's shores,
we stare in the mirror and unlock the door....
our sons their victims, our daughters their whores,
we're not gonna take it anymore!
.....just not gonna take it anymore!

Eric Cockrell

Anymore # 3

and if we choose nothing,
then where lies the choice?
the body has to be willing,
for truth to have a voice....

there's sharks in the water covered with oil.
the melting pot simmers, comes to a boil.
it's struggle and try, hard work and toil,
the talons bared, and the snake is coiled....
as slavery takes hold on American soil.
equality the plan, the plot is foiled!

and as the wind blows hard on freedom's shores,
we stare in the mirror, and unlock the door....
our sons their victims, our daughters their whores,
we're not gonna take it anymore!
.....just not gonna take it anymore!

Eric Cockrell

Anymore # 4

so where lies the truth?
and where lies the answer?
do we kill the soul
to get at the cancer?

we've marched to their beat, danced to their tune.
if forever is coming, it cant come too soon.
with hollowed out eyes, needles and spoons.
politicians for change, prophets of doom....
the windows closed, no air in the room....
take it to the streets, it's high noon!

and as the wind blows hard on freedom's shores,
we stare in the mirror, and unlock the door.
our sons their victims, our daughters their whores,
we're not gonna take it anymore!
.....just not gonna take it anymore!

Eric Cockrell

Anymore!

now where will we go
and what will we do
the price is too heavy
and the payment's come due

we stand and face our own raging egos,
the mistakes of the past taunt us from the shadows,
if we cant redeem today they'll be no tomorrow,
we were born to run never born to follow,
we look in our hearts and find that we're hollow,
confessing our sins and drowning in sorrow.....

and as the wind blows hard on freedom's shores,
we stare in the mirror and unlock the door....
our sons their victims, our daughters their whores,
we're not gonna take it anymore!
.....just not gonna take it anymore!

Eric Cockrell

Anything Less!

<
even the rocks
rise up and shout
to meet the day....

how can we do anything less?

the trees join hands
in bare limbed prayer,
the clouds wink,

and shed a tear!

the grasses swell in harmonious praise,
and the wind comes whispering home.
the earth embraces the fire and the ash....

how can we do anything less?

Eric Cockrell

Anything!

</>

malnourished bodies
walking in clouds of dust.
open sores on the face

of the human condition....

yet we sit transfixed,
...with marble dumb stares,

numbed by the drug
...that fills the hollow

with 'i cant do anything about it! '

Eric Cockrell

Apocalypse Means....

apocalypse means...
revelation!
in our case,

the revelation
of what we've done
to ourselves!

we hold the keys,
the map, and the gun...
no need to blame

any higher power,
or fate....
the keys, the map,

and the gun....
held by hands
that are human!

Eric Cockrell

Apocalypse, And Good Bourbon

apocalypse, and good bourbon.
the beat of the news feels like
shovels digging graves by themselves...
deaths without purpose, lives
without purpose....
the cash register rings,
someone else is evicted,
another factory shut down!

the stench of oppression
is almost unbearable....
fresh manured fields of lies,
pull the strings of the puppet,
make him dance....

(you cant see them,
cant touch them,
they're insulated, shut off
from the sounds of hunger
and naked hearts beating!)

and down the street an old man
dies alone in a rundown house.
the shades are pulled, no one
notices... his old dog
guards the body, waiting....

while two young lovers make love
in the back of an old car...
two young gay men hand in hand
walking and talking....
two babies are born,
and two more die....

apocalypse, and good bourbon.

Eric Cockrell

Are Filled!

when our hands...
are filled with weapons,
and our fists are clenched...

God's hands are tied!

Eric Cockrell

Are We?

the body hanging on the cross,
was bread, medicine, and human...
ears alive, eyes seeing, heart beating,
till the end.
hands open, feet walking,
till driven by nails...
of such is true religion!

are we then any of these things?

Eric Cockrell

Armageddon Diaries

throughout history, when the working people
of the world have been oppressed, and made
to live lives of bondage, they have risen
up and overthrown the government that oppressed them.
when the few have ruled out of their greed,
forgetting where their bread came from, they
have been taken down.
now, more than ever, both here and around the
world, the common, everyday, decent, believing,
working people have had enough!
knowing, money doesn't make a better person, and
shouldn't make a different set of rules!
it's time for a new day, and what has to be
done, has to be done! there are too many hungry
and homeless, too many people without.
seize the day!

Eric Cockrell

Armageddon Diaries (Number Three)

the root of ignorance is the
inability to see yourself...
to see yourself in others!
when we cross this bridge,
and dare to look, and to
understand, the symptoms
fall away!
prejudice, hatred, greed, pride..
all fall away! what we discover
is the sacred human, the kingdom
of heaven, nirvana...as simple
as changing a baby's diaper!
we learn to love, first by
loving ourselves, and then loving
others. we learn to forgive, by
forgiving ourselves, and thus, others!
what we have perceived as difference,
is only sameness! we who have searched
for god, find him/her in the face of
a neighbor...

Eric Cockrell

Armageddon Diaries (Number Two)

change involves getting your hands dirty.
it also involves opening your eyes, and
seeing what's going on around you...
opening your heart, and feeling what's
going on around you. we are surrounded
by need, and we are the only answer!
forget your own hunger, feed your neighbor!
forget your loneliness, you are a wave
in the sea of humanity. forget your ideas
of right and wrong, and do the dirty work
of compassion.
forget your fear of dying, and dare to live!

Eric Cockrell

Armageddon Diaries (Number Four)

the fact that society defines
people by their sexual orientation,
both perturbs me, and pisses me
off.
gay, straight, or bi... i even
hate the terms.
folks, people are just people!
human beings! and human beings
are born with the right to love,
and to be loved.
if we put half as much effort
into respect as we put into judgement,
we'd be a lot better off.
live, and let love!

Eric Cockrell

Around

race division, bad decisions,
put us where we are.
ignorance, intolerance,
self-imposed bars.

children know, without a doubt,
we're all just the same.
to true to pretend, be a friend,
the heart means more than names.

and the world comes crashing down.
in too deep, the fearful drown.
stand up and be, or just sit down.
what goes around comes around!

Eric Cockrell

Around # 2

lost your job, lost your house,
just standing in a line.
aint got a prayer, nobody cares,
feel like you're doing time.

your family gone, now right is wrong,
what you believed has disappeared.
stone upon stone, bone upon bone,
nothing left, nothing endured.

and the world comes crashing down.
in too deep, the fearful drown.
stand up and be, or just sit down.
what goes around comes around!

Eric Cockrell

Around # 3

the hand of God, the hand of fate,
where do you cast the blame?
humanity, cursed by apathy,
acts of murder in God's name.

national pride, guess what they lied,
putting money in the bank.
bombs falling, terror crawling,
putting gas in the tanks.

and the world comes crashing down.
in too deep, the fearful drown.
stand up and be, or just sit down.
what goes around comes around.

Eric Cockrell

Around # 4

overthrow, it's time to go,
enough is finally enough.
the heart dont lie, the tears you cry,
the hard work of human love.

look to God, look back at self,
the burden's on our backs.
the future's there, if we care,
enough to take it back!

and the worrld comes crashing down.
in too deep, the fearful drown.
stand up and be, or just sit down.
what goes around comes around!

Eric Cockrell

As A Child...

i have spent my time here
as a wonder filled child,
struck dumb with awe
by the smallest of things!
i have stood on the shore,
and felt the pull of the waves,
feeling both tiny and large beyond definition.
all my time my eyes upon the lighthouse,
strong whether there be storm or calm...
am i here or am i there?
i do not think it matters!

i have spent my time here
as a wonder filled child...
i would have it no other way!

Eric Cockrell

As Far Away.... (As Near Can Be)

there is a still joy in the night,
every sound, every movement.
when shadows come to life,
and time is forgotten.
and intimacy is restored.
one can almost taste the darkness,
the scent of trees, and grasses,
bathing in moonlight.
the dog barking in the distance,
is as near as only far can be.
somewhere lovers wrap in passionate ardor,
and children sleep in make believe wombs.
and god walks naked beneath windows,
and by locked doors, sprinkling the dust of hope.
while alone i drink in the stillness,
dying with the moths drawn to the lantern.
thinking of rain i smile, and whisper to lightning,
as far away as near can be!

Eric Cockrell

As If A Gift.... (Write Not)

write not...
from the need for fame,
or in the hope of success.
write from necessity...
the same necessity
that governs your breathing.
and from the urgency
of the darkest hour just before dawn!
write not for yourself...
for in writing for others
you will find yourself.
and above all, be honest,
always remembering simplicity,
and naked touch!
write as if a gift,
expecting nothing in return!

Eric Cockrell

As If Just Me!

my soul,

as black as
the night sky....

starving for starlight,
or the hint of a moon.

my teeth,
razors on the path,
devouring the flesh

of my dreams.

my feet,
the soldiers of destiny;
life wrapped in life...

wearing the bruises,
the welts and the pus,
like ribbons given

for the price of my being!

my spirit,
the light of the dawn,
of determination and forgiveness...

forgiving myself, and all others
as if just me!

Eric Cockrell

As If Never!

your mouth tembles,
cannot form the word love;
your body storms,
breaking windows and doors.
your hands sweat,
your eyes close, and open.
the embers deep,
sputter, and flame...
beyond your control,
your winds laps it's tongue,
just for a taste,
for one stolen moment.
the earth stops turning,
poles begin to shift...
and mountains, cities, and
rivers swallowed in an instant...
as if never!

Eric Cockrell

As If You Know!

the next stranger you meet
will be god...
in whatever color, whatever form,
speaking whatever language...
act as if you know!

Eric Cockrell

As If... (You Never Owned A Thing!)

if you listen at night,
the trash in the alleys comes alive.
there is a whispering
that fills the cardboard boxes.
the cans and bottles play
an unearthly music.

and vacant houses talk to god,
or perhaps the demons of poverty.
the wind stops blowing,
and the stink hangs like a cloud...
the evidence of blind excess!

the bodies of the nameless ones,
rise from the filth of forgotten.
the rats join ranks with stray dogs,
and testify against your indulgence!

soon, probably sooner than you think,
your eyes will be covered with dirt.
and the worms will take what you have hoarded,
as if you never owned a thing!

Eric Cockrell

As My Children....

i watched the old woman die,
and listened to her last breaths...
and all i could see was a small child,
offering me the feather of a sparrow.
i walked down to the creek and listened,
and heard the voices of a thousand years.
none were near, yet none were far,
i could feel them press against my skin.
do we come and go,
or is that just an illusion?
i think we just are,
yet we are not we....
by the way i named each of her breaths,
and raised them as my children!

Eric Cockrell

As Simple As That!

the bottom line is...
until we realize that
people are just people,
regardless of race, religion,
or sexual orientation...
that one person is worth just
as much as any other...
that money, or the lack of,
does not define a person,
and that we are all responsible
for each other, and to each other...
we will never be able to fix
the world's problems,
and never be able to build a tomorrow!

it's as simple as that!

Eric Cockrell

Ashes

it took ashes...
for me to draw
a picture of your living
in black and white...

yet containing all
the colors of your being...

it took ashes...
for me to lay down
all my wants and desires,
and the fear of losing you...

it took ashes...
for me to quit pretending
that this kingdom
is invincible...
and this island will remain...

it took ashes...
for me to taste
death's lips and
still surrender to
each naked tick of living...

it took ashes...
for me to be
honest with myself...
to let go of the reins,
and stand free

on the shore of tomorrow!

it took ashes...

Eric Cockrell

Ashes And Debt...

they dress for the slaughter,
in thousand dollar suits.
faceless and colorless,
spinning webs of deceit.
with tongues made of plastic,
bony fingers on buttons.
drunk on the rush,
worshipping neon gods.
pick your next president,
sell your job in a blink.
foreclose your grandfather,
kill your son in a war.
the american pinnacle,
with eyes steeled by drones.
they drink blood for breakfast,
and oil for dessert.
manipulating classes,
the propaganda of fear.
prejudice and patriotism,
it's all over quick!
leaving your children's children,
ashes and debt...

Eric Cockrell

Ashes For Justice!

when i die,
you can burn
this body,
and take the ashes
to the street
down in front of
the housing projects,
where people live
day to day,
moment to moment,
just trying to survive...

or you can take them
to the countries ravaged
by starvation,
and pour them out
on the side of the road
where families are dying...

or you can take them
to any street corner
in the world, where young
boys and girls are sold like meat,
and take your hands
and rub them on their ashen faces...

or you can take them
to Washington, DC,
to where the Congress
is meeting, and pour them
on the floor, each tiny flake
of ash screaming out for justice!

Eric Cockrell

Ashes, Dirt, And Wicker

dead bird lying
in a wicker cage.
hands on the old clock...
..... stopped!

train tracks that tremor,
and nothing comes.
you cant build a fire
in ashes....

look back. the fields
behind you are brown,
and barren...
the memory of rows
gone back to dirt...

just dirt!

the stranger at the door
never speaks, never asks,
never waits for you
to gather yourself...

words lose their form
and fall like raindrops
that disappear into thirst...

thirst, that creates anew,
and never remembers falling!

ashes to ashes... remember,
you cant build a fire
in ashes...

dead bird lying
in a wicker cage...
hands on the old clock...
..... stopped!

Assimilate!

assimilate...
the act of wholeness;
that which you're fighting

is another part of yourself!
we use each other as mirrors
that reveal our darknesses...

yet we are no different,
there is no separation!
one cannot breathe

without the other's breath...
one cannot be free
unless all are free!

there can be no healing
unless all are healed!
what we blame or put on others

is the part of ourselves
that we're afraid of!
greed, lust, hatreds, fears...

that can't be healed
until we recognize....
for the light to reach

across the cold and lonely night,
we all have to lift a torch....
we all have to leave the boxes

in which we hide!

Eric Cockrell

At Best

a poet, at best,
is merely the bridge
between the small child

inside each of us,
and the Mother's breast!
the simple striking

of the common match,
that lights the fire,
the broom that sweeps,

yet has no name or need...
the words of the prayer
we pray with every breath!

Eric Cockrell

At Rest

my garden is silent...
and all the bees have sacrificed
their very beings to the unmarked graves
of flowers fallen.
the squirrels left the trees
like lovers spurned...
and small birds left feathers
in way of epitaph.
in some ways autumn tastes like
the bruise on my lips,
that you left the last time you kissed me,
the one no one can see!
the old car in the drive,
the one that wont crank,
moans in the rust of betrayel.
there are things i couldnt write,
or even speak for a long time.
it's funny how free you feel,
with a noose around your neck!
funny how sharp your eyes become,
on the very edge of darkness.
funny the sound tears make,
the ones we cry inside.
the creaking of the door,
that opens into unknown.
the way the hand feels,
when it throbs for touch.

by the way i saw Jesus today,
with a basket in the store...
standing in line to pay with food stamps,
talking to a bent over old woman.
and Aristotle and Plato,
picking up trash in the parking lot...
perhaps that was Rilke sweeping,
or just a stray dog.
and the young boy walking
down the road and singing....
perhaps that was my heart,

trying to remember your face!
or perhaps it's just me,
listening for the sound of your feet.
my garden is silent....
my soul is at rest!

Eric Cockrell

At The Crossroads

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at the crossroads,
kneeling before the fire,
exchanging spit

with the shadows.
surrounded by ghosts,
familiar, and real.

laying aside all else,
reaching deep within,
kicking the ashes

from my boots.
flesh unto flesh....
daring to live.....

Eric Cockrell

At The Door!

'feed the hungry,
heal the sick,
help the poor...
dont judge others,
treat people the way
you'd want to be treated...
turn the other cheek,
lay down your swords
and take up the plow...
forgive to be forgiven...
the kingdom of heaven
is within you! '

if that's your religion,
i'm in!
you can leave the rest of it
at the door!

Eric Cockrell

At The Edge Of....

at the edge of the universe,
there is a door....
that leads to the center of understanding.
it's as far away as your most abstract thought,
as near as the vagrant leaf blown
against your window by the storm.
as complex as Einstein's theories,
as simple as the screwdriver and the screw.
be it eternity, or a dropp of rain...
be there any difference?

Eric Cockrell

At The End Of The Day!

i am not the light,
not even a shadow.
i am not the rain,
nor the grasses that yearn.
i am not a prayer,
am not the answer.
i am not the war,
nor the peace that is coming.
i am not the truth,
i am not a lie.
i am not your saviour,
i am not a stepping stone.
i am not forever,
nor am i yesterday.
i am not holy,
nor am i evil.
i am not the sunset,
nor am i the dawning.
i am not a hero,
nor am i a fool.
i am not the best,
nor am i the worst.
i am just a man,
no more, and no less.
i am just a man,
a man who has loved you...
and at the end of the day,
that is enough!

Eric Cockrell

At The Window!

at the end of the day,
i dont want anything more
than the respect i've earned,
shared compassionate action,
intellectual, stimulating conversation...
or deep stillness revealed.
a good plate of food (i'll share!) ,
a walk with my dog,
a good book to read,
maybe a stiff drink,
a bed to sleep in,
a woman that wants to sleep with me...

a few lines of poetry written as heard,
and the sound of the wind at the window!

Eric Cockrell

At What Point....

the seasons of births and deaths go on....
waves come in to the shore,
yet then go out!
leaves fall from the tree,
while new buds wait...
stars explode into dust,
then new stars are born.
infinity changes shoes again and again,
yet the same feet walk the endless path.
are not bodies then just cups,
into which light is poured again and again?
and souls are just chapters
of an unending book....
what do we really know?
at what point do we shout hallelujah?

Eric Cockrell

Autumn's Door...

who am i?
i just dont know anymore!
every page turned betrays the last,
no footprints left on stone!
even crows curse the coming storm,
the pilgrim trudges snowbound fields.
memory dimmed by time and ghosts,
sacrificed to the need for sin!
be that your body?
clothed in naked heat...
or the intimate beckoning of death?
am i then the spring that never came,
that you buried by autumn's door?
the sticky guilt of love unfulfilled,
splattered on the casket's walls!

Eric Cockrell

Autumn's Hint....

the leaves on the tree are whispering...
squirrels panic, and fireflies disappear.
birds prepare their wings for journey,
i sharpen the axe, the woodpile grows.
the fields mourn with stomachs filled.
the chimney moans with an ache.
brandy waits on the shelf in silence.
mason jars filled with beans.
the air pregnant with chill and woodsmoke,
this body ripe with the taste of love.
unmarked graves wait for headstones,
pumpkins wait for the knife.
eyes turn, waiting for the fall...
autumn's hint, rust on my lips!

Eric Cockrell

Awake.....

even the stones praise infinity
for the form given,
and the smell of being....
why are we not awake?

Eric Cockrell

Awakening Means....

awakening means....

i can hear you!

i can see you!

i can taste you!

i can feel you!

i breathe in our suffering,

i breathe out our freedom.

awakening means...

no need for a name!

no need for possessions.

no need to conquer!

no need to convert!

i breathe in our humanity,

i breathe out our equality.

awakening means....

i cannot help but care!

i am already involved.

i am immersed and drenched.

i have countless forms.

i breathe in our common labor,

i breathe out our sacred journey.

awakening means...

the journey is the destination.

we are the journey.

we are the destination!

Eric Cockrell

Awareness Notes...

what we are talking about today
is living in awareness, the costs
of our actions and inactions, and
not being owned by the things we possess.

what it comes down to is responsibility,
and the vision and knowledge to make
good choices.... conscious living.

living with respect... for all living
beings, for the costs and results of
our own actions... for every breath
that goes into each moment, for every
sacrifice that goes into meeting each need!

Eric Cockrell

Awareness Notes... (Part Two)

it's not the bullet that killed
the man... bullets by themselves
are harmless. it is the intent
of the man that loads the gun,
that points the barrel, and pulls
the trigger.

it is also the inactions of the
people who knew his anger, and of
the system that allowed him the gun.
the apathy of those who didnt get
involved, and the moral code that
fed his anger

but taking the gun away doesnt solve
the problem. an angry man will pick up
a stick, or a knife, or even rocks,
to act out his anger.

to disarm the angry you have to remove
their anger, and that begins with getting
to the cause. the cause must be met, and
dealt with.

you must repace the 'moral code' of retribution
with the code of compassionate forgiveness.
human justice begins and ends in the heart.
you have to get involved!

Eric Cockrell

Awareness, Now!

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awareness...

walking in awareness,
breathing in awareness,

giving in awareness,
touching in awareness,
listening in awareness,

doing in awareness,
speaking in awareness,
living in awareness....

awareness,
.....now!

Eric Cockrell

Baby!

fresh plowed earth...
i cry out for rain!
baby, cant you hear

the sound of distant thunder?
the candle cold,
naked, and left alone,

baby, light the match!

turn the page, break down
the walls of this prison cell...

hungry, panting,
four feet running....
baby, cant you feel

the need for flesh?

Eric Cockrell

Baby, I'M Gone!

well, i've searched the skies
and followed the wind.
there's not any place
that i havent been.
i've known hunger and sorrow,
walked poverty's streets.
with my heart in my hands,
and my faith in my feet.
i've drowned in the water,
and felt the fire's heat.
i've tasted the thunder,
and felt its dark beat.

and i'm alone,
still strong,
still waiting for the dawn...
baby, i'm gone!

i've heard the great guns,
saw the bodies of children,
seen men do things
for which they cant be forgiven.
i've heard the stories of God,
and the lies of men.
i've left a part of me
everywhere that i've been.
i've known the light inside,
and my evil twin.
gave away my soul,
and owned my sins.

and i'm alone,
still strong,
still waiting for the dawn...
baby, i'm gone!

Eric Cockrell

Baby, I'M Gone! (Part Two)

if tomorrow dont come,
then today is the answer.
love is the key,
and hate is the cancer.
every man searches,
for freedom's birthright.
still every man waits
for death to get right.
pushed in the corner,
and ready to fight.
it dont seem to matter,
who's wrong and who's right.

so give me my hat,
i going out the door.
you've got all i had,
there's not gonna be more.
i'm gonna find a land
where men are equal and just.
where the knife's still sharp,
but covered with rust.
where flesh honors flesh
before its ashes to dust.
where you look a man in his eyes,
and shake his hand with trust.

and i'm alone,
still strong,
still waiting for the dawn...
baby, i'm gone!

Eric Cockrell

Back When.... (The World Was New)

we used to say 'i love you'...
rushing out doors we never locked.
leaving the fire untended,
and dishes in the sink.
summers came and died,
and neighbors seemed to follow.
as the footprints of small children,
became shadows that grew and left.
we who were forever young,
drinking dawn after dawn.

who are we now?
forever rusting in autumn....
the old spicket drips,
and dogs sleep as if they knew.
even the bricks begin to crumble,
the tin torn from the roof.
the setting sun names its own births,
and validates its deaths.

we who never speak,
words that seem strange to lips.
the flowers rest in peace,
the ashes cold and still.
as locks become the way,
the last winter looms in dread.
seems every house is vacant,
as the world drowns in transit.

we used to say 'i love you'...
back when the world was new!

Eric Cockrell

Bailing Water

you measure the level
of success of a man's life
not by how many people

show up at his funeral;
but by how many people
show up to help him to

bail water out of a sinking boat...

usually in direct correlation
to how many boats and how
many people he's helped

bail in the past!

Eric Cockrell

Ballad (Bells Of Eternity)

with garbled tongues and mouths ablaze,
we walk this hallowed ground.
with angel's wings and demon's dreams,
trying to rhyme the holy sound.
into the depths of human need,
far past the touch of grasp.
the broken glass feel of the naked real,
that doesnt have to ask!

we forge our peace with weapons of war,
our gods are never satisfied.
swords converting, phallic spurting,
deciding who lives and who dies.
we drink the earth with maddened thirst,
and burn the pages of the book.
leaving smoking trails and personal hells,
for those who dare to look.

i cannot but speak, i cant go on,
the silence clutches at my breath.
to live this life in toil and strife,
to be forgotten in your death.
still glass images of the faces,
whose eyes burn but never turn.
whose hearts darkened by the angry blow,
sacred flesh that time discerns.

to be continued....

Eric Cockrell

Ballad (Bells Of Eternity, Part Two)

and the bodies of the children,
testify against the night.
we cover the graves, mechanical slaves,
never dividing wrong from right.
leaving the ghosts of eternity
to sweep these dusty floors.
by the fire of our own desires,
waiting for the knock upon the door.

and battered hands never reaching,
bridges we never crossed.
too drunk with fear to name our tears,
too blind to count the loss.
only the few who dared to bleed,
who made the human sacrifice...
will wear the wings of freedom's dreams,
when the truth defeats the lie.

we take the plunge of consequence,
cursed by the die that's cast.
the future written by choice discretions,
the past is still the past.
by Jesus's tomb, or Allah's shrine,
prayers burn throughout the night.
but only the caring of the daring
can restore the blind man's sight!

Eric Cockrell

Ballad For The Forgotten Workers

down by the river, down on the street,
past the empty factory buildings,
smokestacks that no longer smoke.
past the run down tenements,
past the vacant store fronts.
to fires that dont burn, and...
...engines that dont stroke.

down the road, leaving the city behind,
there's miles and miles of fields,
stone silent and turning brown.
tractors rusting in the sun,
a bucket by the well...
old house lies empty, falling down.

the sea of hands lost forever;
red and white, brown, and black.
headstones in the parking lots,
but they're never coming back.
built your cities, built your country,
plowed your fields, fed your hungry.
thrown away in your quest for power...
but their names mark the hours!

(steel workers, no more steel!
teachers, no more books!
farmers in the food lines,
no carpenters, no cooks.
cotton mills moved to Asia,
we cant even make tables and chairs.
no time clocks and no paychecks, ...
... nobody really cares!)

Eric Cockrell

Bare Feet!

your religion smells like
shoes left in a corner, never worn!
i want to know what
your bare feet smell like!

Eric Cockrell

Barefooted

walking barefooted
on broken glass....
playing a flute;

listening, listening,
for the sound of
the Lover's voice....

waiting, for the familiar
touch, for the smell
of the last rose opening

as the wings of autumn
approach.... listening,
for the sound of my own heart,

or the sound of planets evolving;
waiting for the gift of emptiness,
and the dance of flesh on flesh....

walking barefooted
on broken glass....
whispering to the stillness!

Eric Cockrell

Bare-Limbed Tree

summer gone to dog days,
autumn approaches on a
strange wind....
i long to watch the leaves turn,
and fall, tiny love stories

that no one else can see.
and the sound the bare-limbed
tree makes... reaching for the sky,
reaching through winter for
the spring....

the smell of woodsmoke,
coffee and brandy by the fire...
a thousand memories turned
to brown, lost to eternal moments,

i am that bare-limbed tree!
reaching for the sky, reaching
for another spring.... reaching
through death, reaching for you!

Eric Cockrell

Barrel Of Oil

falling stars
from a tattered flag...
young men killed,
their lives sold
to an unjust cause...

you've wondered
where hope went...
the price of a
barrel of oil!

Eric Cockrell

Bars, And More Bars!

without your lips on my soul,
i can taste nothing.
without your eyes in my darkness,
i am gone blind.
without your tongue on my desire,
my heart stops beating....
without your wetness on my prayers,
my god is dead!
without your moan in my stillness,
even the tomb is harsh and cold.
without your kiss upon my freedom,
everywhere i look...
bars, and more bars!

Eric Cockrell

Battle Cry

overpopulation, deforestation,
linear salvation...
who gives a damn?
educated hobos, West Point Nero's,
girl cant keep on her clothes,
kingdoms in the sand...

sexual confusion, holy transfusions,
nuclear fusion...
time is running out!
on the edge of class wars,
subjugated workforce,
pimp kings and crack whores,
consumed by fear and doubt.

thoughts seered by fire, drunk on desire,
fake prophets, well paid liars,
nothing's what it seems...
puppeteers well hid, never know what they did,
empty jars with gold lids,
something's burning in your dreams...

right wing dictators, death comes soon or later,
packs of rabid haters,
selling souls for oil and power.
Wall Street leeches, cancer on the beaches,
history never teaches
neither the day nor the hour!

(we're standing on the edge of the light.
lost in the deep darkness of the night.
armed by anger, with no one left to fight...
when right becomes wrong,
and wrong becomes right...

Eric Cockrell

Battle Cry 2

underpaid, overworked, high anxiety near beserk,
took it all now you cant hurt...
the memory of a man.
styrofoam lips, fake rack, shake your hips,
illusion sunk a thousand ships,
there's a curse on the land.

burden's beast, you'd think at least,
you'd be invited to the feast,
but you stand outside the door.
God's man or Satan's boy, nothing but a sex toy,
looking for the real Mccoy,
you never reach the shore.

pedophiles, cartel gangs, cell phones, getting strange,
tell me brother how it hangs,
there's blood on the door.
faded love, faded jeans, everything to extremes,
shotgun poets on the scene,
pedal to the floor.

Romeo and Juliet kiss, another number on the list,
a fatal blow, a narrow miss,
there's some things you cant ignore...
One World Order, patrol the border,
days speed by, the night is shorter,
what is coming came before...

(we're standing on the edge of the light.
lost in the deep darkness of the night.
armed by anger, with no one left to fight...
when right becomes wrong,
and wrong becomes right...)

Eric Cockrell

Battle Cry 3

point of light, point of death,
passion stinks on your breath,
child of Cain, child of Seth,
there's no reason to believe...
patriot games, hollow masks, stolen names,
mountains crumble, acid rain,
you gotta give to receive...

man and feast, swear allegiance to the Beast,
till all is done and all has ceased,
the painter's brush is ash.
children lost, cant pay the cost,
necessity rules, the truth is tossed...
writing checks we cant cash.

(we're standing on the edge of the light.
lost in the deep darkness of the night.
armed by anger, with no one left to fight,
when right becomes wrong,
and wrong becomes right.)

Eric Cockrell

Battling Ignorance

i know that it feels like
that we are surrounded by,
almost engulfed by, ignorance...
it never fails to amaze me
that people spend so much time,
and energy, looking for someone
to blame.
is it easier to blame, than to take
responsibility?
is it easier to hate, than to love
the unlovable in ourselves and others?
is it easier to close our eyes, and
look the other way, than to see:
1. the faces of the faceless
2. the needs of those in need
3. the facts that your face is
...one of these, and your needs
...the same!

than to feel:
1. the hunger of the hungry
2. the loneliness of the lonely
3. their hearts beating inside
...of yours, and yours in theirs.

than to understand:
1. each human being is part of
...every human being!
2. what we perceive as difference
...is an illusion created by fear.
3. that we in fact cannot make it
...without each other!

Eric Cockrell

Be Drunk With Living!

drink the cup till it's gone,
take off your clothes,
embrace the darkness!
dance barefoot on the embers.
cut your finger, and bleed!
step from the nest,
open the door and walk outside.
leave your treasures behind.
set sail without a destination.
never pray with words,
love without hesitation...
breathe in the dust and the grime,
be drunk with living!

Eric Cockrell

Be It Love?

be it love?
then there must be thunder,
lightning, and wind!
the moon must be shaken,
the waves drift askew!
snow's falling in summer,
roses bloom in December.
stars that fell from the sky,
rise up and walk!
tears taste like brandy,
the tongue smokes with desire.
the trees go naked and dance,
to the song of the mountains.
men are bearing children,
while women smoke cigars.
and soldiers sit down in dialogue,
every child is fed.
the wolf lies with the rabbit,
darkness lights up the world,
and prayer takes bodies....
hallelujah has a face!

be it love?
or am i dreaming?
if so whose dream do i wear?

Eric Cockrell

Be It Mission Or Bad Decision!

the bastards lied!
gunpowder doesnt taste like sex,
and the bombs exploding,
dont sound like liberation.
while the flesh torn faces
running in fear,
haunt my sleepless nights.
victory doesnt rhyme with oil,
freedom doesnt stink like dead bodies...
my brothers that fell beside me,
are not heroes, they're just dead!
as democracy nails down coffin lids,
while the traders wear new suits.
and the real terror is exposed
in the money on the table!
sure they hate us, you would too!
terrorists come in the middle of the night.
in foreign tongues killing the innocents,
in the name of a foreign god...
no weapons of mass destruction,
what the hell are we doing here?
be it mission or bad decision...
the bastards lied!

Eric Cockrell

Be It Right Or Wrong...

be it right or wrong,
today i leapt from the steeple.
set fire to my past,
and turned in my keys.
drank the rainwater from the gutters,
and walked past the edge....
searching, just searching,
for the home of the wind!

Eric Cockrell

Be It Then For This.....

be it then for this
that we are born,
again and again,
moment by moment...
the cat curled against your chest,
sunlight dancing in a raindrop.
the baby's cry, the old man's groan,
wildflowers on the hill where bodies fell.
woodsmoke, and snowflakes,
the cup with handle broken.
flowers placed on your mothers grave.
the inside of the turtle's shell,
the scent of fresh cut pine.
turnips boiling on the stove,
the stubbled beard of the homeless man.
the child that goes to sleep on your lap,
heartfelt words, heart driven ears.
the toothache of the soul,
for something more....
the gentle kiss on troubled eyelids.
the simple cry for help....
the sound of your own heartbeat!

Eric Cockrell

Be Still, And Listen!

be still!
the One whose thoughts
conceive universes

out of particles of dust,
walks within you.
can you feel the ebb

and flow of the tide?
listen! you can hear
voices binding darkness

and light....
are they not merely echoes
of the living written

and etched into your memory?
what you call wind
is only the breath of God....

what you call rain, Her tears...
the empty place that's always
been hidden in your heart...

is only Her hand cupped
to catch your dreams....
whisper softly; Her voice blends

with yours.... and calls the robin
that builds a nest in your prayers!

Eric Cockrell

Bears Our Names!

sometimes i think
that those of us,
the old road warriors,
need to pack up and go...
go where we have to go,
do what we have to do,
give what we have to give...
to bring the change!

we have both seen,
and felt the wind.
have touched the fire,
have reached to the sky.
we have loved with a passion,
they dont even know...
the scars we wear,
are our own!

maybe if we make the sacrifice first,
it will bring courage,
bring hope, bring desire,
to those who havent yet lived.
and maybe we'll find the strength
in our own mistakes,
to move the mountain
that bears our names!

Eric Cockrell

Because!

a simple prayer...
to be a bridge, a boat,
a cup, a key...
a candle in the night,
a small fire by the road.
an old oak that stands
through the winter storm,
a barn, a saddle,
a hand-me-down coat.
whatever is needed,
whatever can be used.
given without regard...
just given... because!

Eric Cockrell

Become A Poet (For Patti)

some hearts are born hungry,
with a hunger that makes
mountains tremble, and trees fall.
some souls are born thirsty,
with a thirst that makes
rivers run dry, and clouds weep
without aching tears.
some spirits are born reaching,
from beneath the earth
to the realm of the sky,
touching, always daring to touch.
some beings are born to love,
and love so much so hard,
that the void left by the flood
cannot be filled...
and so become a poet!

Eric Cockrell

Become Deliverance!

when the darkness is so deep
you can taste it,
and the shout of silence
rattles your bones...
there is a candle
on a bare table
in the room hidden
deep in your heart...
light it, and carry on!

when death taunts you with superstition,
and your hands grasp
for things you once held...
there is a wind that has followed you
since you were a child...
let go, open the door, let it in!

when sorrow tugs at your heart
with the gravity of the tides,
and the faces of the suffering
smell like burning flesh...
there is a bridge
made of your own mistakes...
cross it, and become deliverance!

Eric Cockrell

Become Food!

your hand on the wheel,
Mayan bolt notwithstanding...
where do we go from here?

my fingernails still dirty,
from digging and planting the seeds.
your eyes cloud over...

the promise of rain?
another chapter finished,
boots laced, and my hat,

your smile, a cup of coffee...
the dog waits at the door.
the mailman passes without slowing down.

the world keeps turning,
from dawn to setting sun.
and seeds become plants...

plants become food!

Eric Cockrell

Become God

the day we
dropped the bomb
on Japan

humanity stepped
from the shadows
and chose

to become God!

a job for which
we were not,
and are not
qualified!

Eric Cockrell

Becomes The Poem!

there comes a time...
when the artist lays down the brush,
when the carpenter lays down the hammer,
when the lover walks out the door.
when the child turns away
from childish things.
when the mother steps back,
and opens the door.
when the old man stomps out
the fire with his boots.
when the sky falls,
and the earth rises.
when the poor just will not
take it any more.
when the sacred reveals
itself in a back alley.
when the truth steps up
and cuts the throat of the lie.
when the wind returns
from whence it came.
when the poet lays down his pen,
and becomes the poem!

Eric Cockrell

Beekeeper

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walking like water
through the swarming roar,
hands moving like waves,

hypnotic in the face of danger!

taking the goodness,
with thankful eyes seeing;
from that which stings and clings....

presenting to the world as a gift.
walking like water....
...seeking the shore!

Eric Cockrell

Before....

before we needed crucifixion
to identify love...
there was, 'Om'!

before we built eternity
of straw, mud, and bricks...
animals knew the theology
of moon and bare branches!

before we defined life
by what we owned,
life expressed itself...
clouds kissed lonely mountains!

the sparrow knows more
than we can ever hold!
dont speak to me of salvation,
i know death, and beginning!

till the earth, build the fire,
hold your children close.
love your woman with awe,
and wait for your dog!

'Om'!

Eric Cockrell

Begger's Fart

the begger's fart
a prayer more sacred
than lines well rehearsed
in Sunday morning temples...

the addict's vomit
a poem more relevent
than eight years of pompous degrees
can buy or claim...

the homeless man's cup of coffee
passed and shared,
a theology no master
can pass to his students...

Eric Cockrell

Beggars, Scoundrels, And Saints

trinity, infinity,
borrowed matches,
unread books.

hallowed hands, man to man,
digging deep,
with sharpened hooks.

reach to the sky, live or die,
dare to breathe
the naked air.

risk it all, before the fall,
be remembered
because you care.

children of the stars, destiny calls.
climb over hurdles, walk through walls.
what can be held holds what cant....
beggars, scoundrels, and saints!

Eric Cockrell

Beggars, Scoundrels, And Saints # 2

barrel fires, pure desire,
holy men with
dirty hands.

feel the blood, wade through mud,
you know a man
is just a man.

not what you gained, how hard you strained,
but what you gave
without looking back.

the simple things, the human dreams,
two people walking,
one set of tracks.

children of the stars, destiny calls.
climb over hurdles, walk through walls.
what can be held holds what cant....
beggars, scoundrels, and saints!

Eric Cockrell

Beginning And End (Again)

faded lines, greying hair,
life spillt from a cup.
even stars fall down,
nothing ever falls up!

world changes, still the same,
or maybe getting worse.
vanity of vanities
riding in a hearse.

and the truth kills the lie
with a savage swing.
but there's a place
inside our dreams....

a door only time can open,
a peace beyond all our hoping.
where beginning and end begin again.
the home of lightning and howling wind!

faith burned, anger earned,
fists against the wall.
you cant see what can be
when you cant hear the call.

the house you built, the spirit killed,
the love that in the end devours.
when seconds turn into lifetimes
in your final hours.

and the truth kills the lie
with a savage swing.
but there's a place
inside our dreams...

a door only time can open,
a peace beyond all our hoping.
where beginning and end begin again.
the home of lightning and howling wind.

Eric Cockrell

Beginning Just Begun!

we walk barefoot the stony path,
in the company of crows.
our eyes wet with the dew,
dreams clinging to our tongues.
and the song of the ancient ones,
from some dark valley within.
we carry the cross of self denial,
on the path to find ourselves!
to the beat down house
that time forgot...
up the steps to an open door.
while spiders race across broken glass,
and rats race across the floor.
we sit across the table,
and light a single candle.
then one by one confess our thoughts,
and undress the pain of being.
then drained, and strangely empty,
warmed with release,
we touch fingers beneath the flame,
and whisper silent prayers.
and rising walk out together,
companions first, then lovers...
we find the world, both new and just born,
as if beginning just begun!

Eric Cockrell

Behaving Like Monkeys!

revolution, evolution...
the lid to the mayonnaise jar,
contemplates.
blackberries, strawberries,
and blueberries mingle on a plate,
perhaps plotting upheaval.
the leaf from the oak
blown onto the needles of the pine,
his brothers yell, 'dont be too long,
you might be converted.'
rainwater running from a rusted gutter,
repentance, absolution?
the leaf being formed, an unseen bud,
on a snow covered limb...
DNA?
the stray cat lays down with the dogs,
neath the spider's gigantic web.
the grass runs naked in the dew,
we know! moonlight saw them!
and mountains embrace whichever cloud comes,
with unadulterated passion!
while men behaving like monkeys,
dress in suits, and eat with forks!

Eric Cockrell

Behind The Clouds...

the old man who
lived by himself down
by the highway...
died this morning in his sleep.
passing cars never even slowed down,
and the mailman left another faceless bill.
the meter reader stopped to read his meter,
and the hands on the clock
continued their crawl....
yet the stray dog walked up
on the porch and howled,
and the trail of ants stopped to weep.
the wind seemed to stop,
for just a moment...
and the sun went behind the clouds.

Eric Cockrell

Behind The Final Curtain

it is then only this....
the bark peeled from the ancient tree.
the yowl of the cat in hunger,
the slap of wings against gone.
tis the height of passion;
i have turned my deepest colors,
yet my dreams have begun to fall...
i cant stop them.
and the sound of voices like hammers on tin,
be the bottle broken before it hits.
when memory becomes history,
and tired clouds wink and disappear.
the setting sun tastes of vinegar,
as smoke rises in wistful plumes.
and beliefs crawl in empty nests,
while squirrels madly drink and die.
as holiness runs like rain,
down the trunk and into the ground.
the sacred dance of the senses,
while lovers touch in secret closets.
and the world pregnant with desire,
waits behind the final curtain!

Eric Cockrell

Being At Best Human!

i go to the church of human need,
pray to the God inside each face,
inside trembling calloused hands....

in tears on battle worn faces.
inside the broken hearted,
the beaten down, and the abused.

in the addicts need, the murderer's
repentance, inside evry child.
in the stray dog's lonesome....

in the cheater's remorse....
in those too tired to be
anything other than honest....

in naked sweaty grimy humanity
being at best human!

Eric Cockrell

Being Born!

continually being born...
...a thousand tiny deaths,
.....a thousand tiny births.

season to season,
....leaf to limb to bud,
.....conceptions to grasp,

to letting go of....
..snow like stillness,
....bringing new birth!

Eric Cockrell

Being Honest With Myself

being honest with myself
i realize that i am
the cause of my own problems.
that by my choices i am
where i am today.
and that the man
in the mirror
is both my
best friend and
my worst enemy.

blaming no one else.
blaming no other causes.
i take responsibility
for who i am,
for where i am,
and for where i am going!

if there's gonna be any changes,
i have to make them!

Eric Cockrell

Being In Love...

being in love is a state of awareness...
the voice you wait for is only
the wind whispering to the trees...
the body you long for
is only the night undressing
the loneliness of the living...
the hand you reach for
is that of the dawn...
bringing the simple promise
of hope!

Eric Cockrell

Believing We Can Fly...

do we stand on the floor of our thoughts?
in the basements of our heart?
or on the edge of the nest made of straw....
pounding our chests, believing we can fly?
do we stand on precept or illusion?
are mountains then made of sand?
and again chant the way of the gods,
'we feel with our thoughts,
and think with our hands'....
truth speaks in the unspoken,
and liberty is but remembering...
the best we can do a simple touch,
a farewell kiss, and....
a key to your most precious door!

Eric Cockrell

Belligerent Acts!

speaking the truth,
and standing up for
individual rights,

standing up for collective
rights, and for equality...
are not, are not

belligerent acts!
we're not buying the lie!

Eric Cockrell

Bells Ringing

bells ringing...
thousands and thousands
of bells.... ringing....

the chorus of crows,
the sound of the whip
cracking on thousands

of backs, , ,
black and white,
brown and red....

the fat-bellied ticket taker
stands with hand outstretched...
cant pay the fare... cant ride....

left standing on the corner
of lost, and nameless.
marching to death, leaving

no trace, no footprints....
the bastard children of freedom,
no home to return to....

look up, look up!
the skies full of wings!
bells are ringing!

thousands and thousands
of bells... and each one
has a name!

Eric Cockrell

Beneath The Feet Of Love....

be it only then the phoenix
that rises from the ashes?
then who walks the valley of bones,
hearing voices from another world?
whose footprints in the waters?
whose scream etched in stone?
whose hands rising from the darkness,
whose grunt births the dawn?

can you feel this heat of nearness?
the softness inside this shadow?
even the candle's flame flickers,
as if whispering some hidden truth!
and the moments tick by shaking tambourines,
while words undress revealing sound...
it must be the sound of silence,
or the name not yet revealed.

i am the tongue cleaving to your breastbone,
the taste of hunger bitter on your lips.
i am the song of the ages,
you the conch shell of desire.
i am the hollow in the mockingbird's longing,
you the grain of the weathered oak.
i am the rhythm of the pounding waves,
you the shore that never ends.

perhaps the light of the faraway lighthouse,
or the hint of beckoning stars...
will guide this ship to its destination,
to lie beneath the feet of love!

Eric Cockrell

Beneath The Tree

how many deaths
must i die?
how many times left alone
on some nameless shore,
watching the storm carry
my boat off to sea?

how many blackbirds dead
beneath the tree?

if i die inside of you
will you remember my name?
or am i just an old coat
hanging in the back of the closet?
a hat your grandfather wore....
a deck of cards forgotten in a drawer....
a spider's web clinging to your feet!

Eric Cockrell

Benediction

Speak to me as if you knew me...
there are no walls, no distant shores.
the stones on the path will not
hurt your bare feet....
the fire will not burn your hands.
eyes fly like crows across distance,
be it across the room,
or across the world...
and pages are written
with the pens of angels,
to be thrown into the wind.
my heart cries for deliverance...
your tongue rests against my arm....
seize the moment, for there is no tomorrow,
the world waits in benediction!

Eric Cockrell

Bent By Time....

the old man wearing
'past the point' of caring boxers,
alone on the step with the stray cay...
suicide eyes, dare to fly glint.
whispering forever truths,
both human and animal tongues...
darkness weeps from the gutters,
mindless cars hurtle by.
angry people shout and curse,
while young lovers drink each other...
and death waits as certain,
as feathers asunder and a broken claw,
neath the tree bent by time.

Eric Cockrell

Betrayal

the only loss one cant survive,
is the betrayal of one's own heart!
anything you're not willing to die for,
is less than a moment lived.
who are we if not to leave this mark,
to give this body as a gift?
for this breath to be bridge and lantern,
and this howling to light the dark!

Eric Cockrell

Betrayed By A Kiss

you got Judas feet,
30 pieces of silver.
you swallow the lie,
hesitation quivers....

all the cards laid out,
smoke fills the air.
burn down the house,
if you can if you dare.

true hearts pawned
for a drink and a smoke.
till the naked are left
angry and broke.

putting years in the meter,
a nickel, a dime...
lovers are fools,
destiny, and rhyme.

still beneath the heat,
the curse, and the hiss...
your lover, and your friend...
betrayed by a kiss!

Eric Cockrell

Betrayed By The Soul!

religion,
and capitalism,
both sell the spirit
to numb the soul.
we would construct god
out of victory,
and burn the bodies of defeat.
while men in black masks
kill women and children,
and turn the bodies of color
into nickels and dimes.
hunger feeds on itself
neath the lash and the gun.
they trap the last wolf,
and kill the last whale...
as the spirit grows numb,
betrayed by the soul!

Eric Cockrell

Better With Age!

whiskey gets better with age,
so do well made guitars.
mountains become more serene,
and old trees are majestic with power!

the soup that simmers long
has a better taste.
old clothes are more comfortable.
old songs never get old...

old lovers know without asking.
old houses have their ghosts.
inside of me there's still a storm,
a rainbow, and something...

waiting on the dawn!

Eric Cockrell

Between Man And Man!

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the most heroic of men
expose themselves to the outrage,
and the ugly edge of indifference...

without a thought
for their own well being,
risk it all to bring about change.

not bound by the morality
of the fearful self-indulgent,
they open the wound

of their own failures and mistakes....
and so find the strength
to become fully human....

and so renew the bond
between man and man!

Eric Cockrell

Between Me And Me!

when i meet a stranger
i subconsciously remind myself...
the only distance between
me and him/or her...

is the distance between
me and me!

Eric Cockrell

Between My Teeth!

it is in the darkened hallways
of the mind that has no boundaries,
in the silent moment between sin and glory,
when there really is no difference....
in the pause between thunder and lightning,
when mountains are oceans,
and oceans are acorns.
in the infinity between breaths,
and the illusion between death and life.
in the cardboard box that holds lifetimes,
in the universe beneath tiny wings.
in snowflakes, and tiny crumbs of starlight,
on the wet lips of the hungry wolf.
in the droppings of a thousand bats,
and the swinging trunks of elephants.
in the drunken stagger from the grave,
and the space between notes where music is born.
in the sound of waves a hundred miles from the shore,
in the cleft beneath the tongue where god sleeps.
in the frozen wasteland between our bodies,
where fire waits for the few who dare.
in the crucifix, the cock, and the prism,
in the empty glass,
and the book unread.
it is there that you will find me,
with your heart between my teeth!

Eric Cockrell

Between Us... (Breathes)

when my heart smells like your feet,
then this journey is shared.
when your loneliness lights a candle,
then i will come as wind to blow it out.
when your tears fall onto my scars,
then the silence between us breathes....

Eric Cockrell

Between!

your love,
cyanide and rose petals,
covered with oil and vinegar,

set ablaze
on a bare table
in a haunted room....

the sharp edge
of the razor softly stroking
the small hairs on my soul....

the taste of blood
and chocolate lingering
just outside my desire.....

the last breath,
the first day,
and the pulse that

lives between!

Eric Cockrell

Beware The Wrath

beware the wrath of the man
whose degree is written
in the callouses and bruises

on his time worn hands...
who gave it all, and then some,
never quitting, nor looking back.

whose family his world,
whose faith in the others
who worked and walked beside....

whose life you've destroyed
with unthinking greed,
who now has no identity

other than a number....
beware the wrath of the man
who built your home!

Eric Cockrell

Beyond

there is life beyond
the salt shaker on the table,
the hand that moves

the curtain, unseen.
the empty bowl, rain walking
through the grasses...

the child, the nipple,
stars appearing in darkness,
moving oceans with silent

commands written in a shell,
left unnoticed on the sands
that have never known footprints...

life beyond the cup,
the fire, and the shadows,
opening the bloom,

as leaves fall and crumble.

Eric Cockrell

Beyond That Door

you burn madly,
an out of control flame...
a car racing madly

towards the cliff.
hungry for life,
and groping the shadows

for the forms of light
that you can't quite touch.
slow down, slow down,

be still, and listen with your feelings....
wait on the knock, the strong voice
of the stranger who lives....

beyond that door!
don't be afraid, and don't run!
that stranger is you!

Eric Cockrell

Beyond The Veil.....

nothing lives here anymore.
they closed that tiny bookstore,
and the bar on the corner is gone.
the sidewalks swept and empty,
windows covered with dust.
would be lovers ride by radios blaring,
cell phones grafted to their ears.
no one makes love anymore,
masturbation detoxification.
crows hanging on the brick walls,
apartment doors bolted and locked.
caught a meth lab in the church basement,
and they've cut down all the trees.
no one jumps from windows,
babies born in sterile rooms.
tongues lie dormant in desire's mouth,
perfume suffocates the senses.
the threat of rain, everybody scatters,
for fear of getting wet!
cept the old blind man walking his dog,
who sees beyond the veil!

Eric Cockrell

Bhakti Path

Bhakti path,
dance of pure being,
drunk with breath,
alive, and electric!

open the door,
let down your hair...
the Guest is coming,
with the gifts of love!

why worship from afar?
make love to the divine.
to the hand that wipes
away grief and sorrow.

Eric Cockrell

Bhakti Path (Memory Of God)

if you think the wind
comes from nowhere
with no reason...
you are a fool!

your scriptures
are the ashes
of a fire long dead!

the bodies of those
you have killed
by your choices...
a sacrifice to your god!

you cannot deny
the blood on your hands,
the soot on your faces...
cannot muffle the cry

of babies unwanted!
holiness, pus,
semen, and sweat...
the hands on the shovel

that digs the shallow graves!
the wind prophesies,
with the memory of God!

Eric Cockrell

Bhakti Path (Surrender)

the Lover...
has built a fire.
what will you feed
to the flame?

your possessions,
your titles, your masks,
not needed...
not worthy to be...

your heart, your soul,
your innermost desires,
the very breath you breathe...
stand naked, and surrender...

your self to the flame!

Eric Cockrell

Big Black Crows

big black crows
keep following me
everywhere i go....

and this morning i heard
the trees whsipering,
as we rode down the road.....

drifting clouds, and vacant buildings,
people walking, heads bent down.
children's faces staring out frosted windows,

old dog lying in the sun.
shadows forming faces,
then dissolving back to shadow.....

memories hang like nails on the wall,
that the Painter's brush cant quite hide.
the scent of perfume, wind devils and rust....

big black crows and ashes drifting,
from a heart set on fire!

Eric Cockrell

Birds Of Prey...

we keep ending up
back at the Little Big Horn...
victims of our own aggressive greed.
Crazy Horse wept
with the tears of God,
while the birds of prey
picked the flesh from the bones.

you cannot ease your own suffering
by causing suffering to others.
what we do to feed our insatiable mouths
leaves scars on the bottoms of our feet!

freedom doesnt conquer,
righteousness doesnt judge!
equality means everybody,
and i mean everybody!

Dylan said: 'money doesnt talk,
it swears! '... i say money is the disease,
and almost never the cure!

Eric Cockrell

Birds Turning South

stacking wood,
chill morning air...
birds turning south.

axe and boots,
old truck loaded down....
birds turning south.

dreams and passions,
tied down and loaded,
birds turning south.

memory stained moments,
when the earth stoppt turning...
birds turning south.

now nothing more than
empty nests, a stray feather...
birds turning south!

Eric Cockrell

Birth Of A Star

brick upon brick,
every action a wave,
every thought, every desire,

every dream an ending,
and a beginning...
every word spoken

clothing countless words
unsaid, not conceived.
every touch a grain of sand

on an unknown beach.
every fire built in the night
finally swallowed by darkness...

darkness unto darkness,
and only memory ignites
the birth of a star!

Eric Cockrell

Birth Pains (Day Of Change)

world in turmoil... time of the end, or birthing pains?
peoples of all countries... common, everyday, honest,
hard working, dreaming... battling against the oppression
of the few, those who control, those who profit at the expense
of human life, without remorse! and now we can communicate!
we see each other, we hear each other, as if side by side,
in the battle for human dignity.
should there be hunger? should there be families without
shelter? should there be children without chance? can this
world continue with the elite having too much, and so many
people suffering? no!
birthing pains, a new world, a new day! a cohesive journey
taken together!
freedom demand equality, acceptance without prejudice,
and a fair distribution of what life has to offer! no free rides,
all working together! accepting the need for intelligent
questioning, and for diversity!
the voice of the peoples grows stronger, almost a roar!
it is the day of change!

Eric Cockrell

Bitter Hemlock

i would rather drink bitter hemlock,
or walk naked into the night...
would rather starve in the streets
of Haiti, amid the cholera and despair.

would rather hide in unknown caves
from the bombs that split the earth.
would rather rot in a prison cell,
staring forlorn through the bars.

would rather work in the sweatshops
or pick cotton with the migrant workers.
would rather take a bullet,
swift, and hard, and final!

would rather stand at the gates of hell
with every mistake i've ever made.
than to open this door, and say nothing,
and watch you walk away.

Eric Cockrell

Bitterness

your tears uncried
shout at me from
across the room...

or from across
the great divide.
i cant turn back the seasons...

cant keep the leaves
from turning... or
you hair...

were the cries in the night
the birth of a new cosmos,
or just lies written

with invisible ink?
you open your mouth
and cobwebs fall....

the reflection of fire
doesnt warm the room;
the sound of the whispers

haunts my dreams.

Eric Cockrell

Black And White! (Spirits And Flesh)

black and white,
not different kinds of souls,
merely skin tints!
Americans, and Middle
Eastern people,
worship...
not different gods,
but different understandings
of the same god!
and common people,
all around the world,
have worked too long,
for too little,
are tired of being numbers,
numbers without faces!
tired on being enslaved,
being treated as possessions....
for they have faces!
faces with hearts,
hearts with spirits,
spirits made of flesh!

Eric Cockrell

Black Caskets

abandoned boxcars,
shanty towns, and tents...
tumbleweed blown across the land.

day work, no work,
cigarettes, roll your own,
keep a fire under the pot!

old cars rusting,
just left by the road...
women and babies bathing

in service station sinks.
desperate hunger,
knock down the clerk,

grab the cash and run...
while ghostlike cities moan
and groan in the sun....

smokestacks still write epitaphs,
black caskets in a line!

Eric Cockrell

Black Cloud

dont pray for me
like i'm a photograph
in black and white
turned yellow by time...

like i'm a field already worked,
my crops already picked...
now baked by the sun,
rows lost in dry dust.

like i'm the bones of death,
left in the path of famine...
the muffled cries of the dying
heard no more!

look up! i am the black cloud
on your horizon... heavy with
thunder and rain....
i am the coming winter...

i will bring the spring!
i am the eyes that saw
to take the picture...
i am the hands that touched it...

and brought it to life!

Eric Cockrell

Black Crows

Darkness and light, wrong and right
thoughts bleed and dissolve, dreams evolve
paper and smoke, churn and stroke
prayers drip like sweat, slavery and debt

White trash fires, unholy liars
truth falls off the edge, desire walks the ledge
political drugs, who picks the judge
hammers of fear, moments lost to years

Graves open and close, nuclear rose
black shadows turn, pages crumple and burn
lightning or gunfire, stakes higher and higher
death clock chimes, wind thru the pines...
black crows on the lines... black crows on the lines...

Mothers crying and cold, babies bought and sold
welfare Cadillacs, anxiety attacks
trailer tub meth, lonesome last breath
kneeling by the bed, prayers for the dead

Runaways lost, who pays the cost
nursing home ghosts, headstones and posts
pictures turning yellow, goodbyes and hellos
people folded and spent, no messengers sent...

Graves open and close, nuclear rose
black shadows turn, pages crumple and burn
lightning or gunfire, stakes higher and higher
death clock chimes, wind thru the pines...
black crows on the lines... black crows on the lines...

Eric Cockrell

Black Hooves, White Snow

black hooves, white snow
candlewax dripping,
water from a rusted spicket.
brass doorknobs,
forbidden rooms,
where spider webs cover
forgotten books.

and the chant of the ancients
rolls like thunder!
strike the bell, mountains quiver!
somewhere the gods of old
walk deserted streets,
while the shepherd kings
raise their flutes and play.
and the old mad monk
walks into the hills,
never to be seen,
or heard again.

black hooves, white snow
the taste of blood,
the smell of need.
bows drawn tight,
the archers wait
for the sun to rise
in a blackened sky.

the wheel turns
in the desert sand
(nothing ever stays the same)
water wears down stone
until it finds it's way.
while trees fall in
a desolate forest,
and the hawk flies alone
down through the gorge.

black hooves, white snow

till we find our way!

Eric Cockrell

Black Sheep

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in the silence of the fallen,
we walk hand in hand through the fire.
through the streets of hell unashamed
we who are written by desire.

with prayers for the wounded,
for the bodies left beside the road.
with a hand for the children
bowed beneath a heavy load.

speaking truth without deception,
living by the code of the heart.
knowing there is no difference
in the shadows between light and dark

risking it all for a stranger,
might be your long lost brother.
standing for what we feel
standing for one another.

and the souls of the weary weep....
in the ground where the beaten sleep.
knowing the life given's all we keep.....
fallen angels, fugitives, and black sheep.

Eric Cockrell

Black Sheep # 2

near the end of our journey,
feels like we've just begun.
truth be known we've failed,
more often than we won.

your heart and my heart,
grown together hid inside each other.
to be a real man and a woman,
gotta be friends first to be lovers.

you walk away and shut the door,
but i catch you when you fall.
then you come running when
you know my backs against the wall.

right and wrong, we've done both,
and we've lived out every breath.
just shadows of each other,
we fly past the kingdom of death...

and the souls of the weary weep....
in the ground where the beaten sleep...
knowing the life given's all we keep....
fallen angels, fugitives, and black sheep.

Eric Cockrell

Black Thunder

black thunder/ broken pieces, tired eyes.
church bells silent ringing, crow feet scarred pillows.
small children walking, without tongues praying,
wagon wheels bogged down in sand.
black thunder/ second hand lives, worn out lies.
dead soldiers mournful singing, borrowed tomorrows.
blind mouths moving, talking without saying,
unlit rooms forged by fugitive hands.

black thunder/ pregnant women without faces.
waves lapping orphan feet, ships lost in the storm.
refugee stars lost in unmarked skies,
an old tree dying rotting on the ground.
black thunder/ families disappearing without traces.
trash blown deserted streets, old men waiting to be born.
molded crucifixes, covered with flies,
clouds chant scriptures without a sound.

(guns silent weeping,
angels prayerful sweeping.
dreams born dying, dreams unfolding,
looking without seeing, touching without holding.)

black thunder/ hungry barefoot ghosts whisper.
priests covered in blood, empty windows open.
tiny infinities wrapped in colored matchsticks,
nowhere standing lost by the road.
black thunder/ brothers burying virgin sisters.
dialogue without talking, homeless heroes smoking.
ants' prophecies well hidden, time worn bricks,
strangers huddled against the cold.

black thunder/ salvation starved borrowed clothes.
smoke charred walls, forever dripping to the floor.
flesh tokens paid, lifetimes yet unforgiven,
candles dressed in cemetery suits.
black thunder/ nobody cares, nobody knows.
horses stomping stalls, doors open to doors.
while the dead barter for the living,

with bayonets and religious boots....

black thunder!

Eric Cockrell

Blackbirds (For Smoky And Patti)

blackbirds...
the spindly children
of blood red skies,
walking barefooted
on the dusty path,
cawing!
demons?
no, the demons
walk upright with
sharpened swords,
cutting the tongues
from the beaks,
breaking wings
with moral hammers!
blackbirds...
spirits set out,
left to dandelion clinging,
and morsels of bread
thrown out by
those who belch rules...
spirits,
that die to fly,
to taste forbidden clouds,
cawing!

Eric Cockrell

Blackened...

blackened steel...
blackened faces,
blackened hearts,
blackened roads...
blackened eyes,
blackened dreams,
blackened prayers,
blackened gods...
blackened memories,
blackened fingers,
blackened windows,
blackened rooms...
blackened thoughts,
blackened nails,
blackened shovels,
blackened tomb!

Eric Cockrell

Blame

who to blame?
we spend all of our time
pointing fingers, looking
for who to blame for

wars, poverty, injustices,
disease, overpopulation,
racism, enslavements,
hunger, homelessness.

who to blame?
men, women, white people,
Muslims, conservative Christians,
right-wingers, gay people, straight people,
the elite, illegal immigrants.

wake the hell up!
all of us bear equal
responsibility in this blame.

we are all a part of the cause.
we are all a part of the cure.

if we spent half as much time
working to fix our problems
as we do pointing fingers.
we'd fix them!

each of us has the right
to our own individuality
but each of us have the
responsibility of our collective
unity

Eric Cockrell

Blame It On God

i hear the clamor,
i feel the roar.
waves pounding against the rocks,
bare feet walking the tiny cell.

the lies we've told
much less than the lies we've become.
blame it on god,
and kill the insurrection.

for every bite we take,
another does without.
for every turn of the page,
another grave is dug.

we pray to war,
afraid to sleep by ourselves.
and borrow from the darkness,
to silence the dawn.

even the children of hate,
cry, shit, and need.
we throw rocks at the dogs,
smoke churning from the stack.

with blood on our lips,
we recite the faceless chant.
walk away from the fires,
cold and unaffected.

god shakes the lice from her head,
covering bodies with ashes and dirt.
rocks the orphan in stillness,
feeds the begger from her breasts.

cleans the urine and pus,
from the old woman dying.
holds the shaking addict,
hears the murderer's prayer.

fills the bowls of the hungry,
covers the homeless with blankets.
sits all night in the cell
of the falsely condemned.

walks like moonlight
through the barelimbed trees,
to stand outside your window...
or could it be just the wind?

Eric Cockrell

Bleed!

smile...

even in your weariness,
there is a beauty
that the gods of eternity
weep for!
and god almighty!
hug the closeness,
cross the bridge,
light the candle,
kiss the lips of desire....
love with abandon....
and give till you bleed!

Eric Cockrell

Blood Becomes!

black and white,
brown and yellow,
hands disappearing
into hands...
we leaves the sites
of graves untended,
walking towards life,
with both grief and joy!

the smoke still lingers,
and the smell of wet ashes.
but we are more,
we choose to be more!
faces long lost
gather purpose, and names,
as blood becomes,
our peace and our striving!

Eric Cockrell

Blood Sacrifice

do all of your gods
...demand blood sacrifice?
.....no!

your actions
...speak otherwise!

Eric Cockrell

Blue Collar Hero

old gnarled bruised hand,
can either close in a fist,
or open and reach out...

either way, you'll know!
he aint selling nothing!

too tired for anything less,
or anything more than...
the truth!

Eric Cockrell

Blue Collar Joe

blue collar Joe,
he's standing in line...
aint no trains to hop,

aint no trucks to pop...
he's standing in line,
for a handout, and a hand up....

he made your furniture,
he made your cars.
he wove your cloth....

he made boxes and tools,
he worked your steel.
he made just the right parts

for the right time.....
now you dont need him
to make anything anymore...

cheaper, more profitable,
to ship from overseas....
so he's standing in line....

a line going nowhere!

Eric Cockrell

Blunt Questions!

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does a falling star
know that it's falling?
does the green leaf know
that autumn comes?

does the unborn child
know his mother's face?
does the murderer know
his victim is himself?

does the cloud know
that the rain is needed?
does the day know
it was born at night?

does the peacemaker know
that the bullets are his?
does the liar know
that the truth has won?

does the lover know
tis only a moment?
does the moment know
that it holds eternity?

and do the hungry, sick,
and the homeless know.....
do they really know
that they are human?

Eric Cockrell

Bodhisattva Journey

from a renegade Buddhist
point of view...
we come to carry torches,

over and over,
again and again,
till all the night sky be lit!

Eric Cockrell

Bodhisattva Nightmare

i felt the bullet
as your body fell,
the sickening gasp of light

lost in the void...
i felt the empty
of your stomach turning,

as you staggered weakly
down that long dusty road.
i felt the bone crushing pain

as he struck your face,
again and again....
i felt the sickness

of the stench of the alley...
i felt the fear and despair of the cell,
the not knowing when

it was going to come...
i felt the hatred and fear
they tormented you with,

for who you loved,
and the way you lived....
i felt the hopelessness

of the hard ass streets,
the gun in your pocket...
the monkey on your back....

i felt.... and still feel!

Eric Cockrell

Bodhisattva Pledge (Do Buddhas Weep)

i weep when you weep,
i am hungry when you are hungry.
i hurt when you hurt.
i bleed when you bleed.
i need when you need.
i thirst when you thirst.
i am alone when you are alone.
i am angry when you are angry.
i am broken when you are broken.
i am tired when you are tired.
and i will always be there,
feeling what you feel,
living what you live,
until suffering is removed...

do buddhas weep?
look in the mirror,
and name your tears!

Eric Cockrell

Body Of A Soul

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with hands of fire,
and feet of clay,
forming worlds from
insignificant thoughts....

taking moments peeled
from a glance by chance...
forming stars from dust
that come raining down,

echoing in the empty....
for what is not oft is,
each and all have purpose...
when what cant be seen,

cant be held or defined...
given by the spirit that waits
and calls us to our selves;
and that which is finished

begins anew and afresh,
when our journey takes us home!
when hands of fire and feet of clay
inhabits the body of a soul!

Eric Cockrell

Body Of Christ!

body of Christ...
small unwanted baby
lying dead in a dumpster...

old homeless man
curled up in an alley...
young addict,

shaking on the steps
down in the project...
young mother's body

lying across her childs...
killed by the bombing!
body of Christ...

you and i!

Eric Cockrell

Body Of God!

forgive me, i erred,
i thought God contained
in the wind.... but twas

only one breath of infinity!

i thought i saw God
in the starving child's eyes,
but twas only one heartbeat

of compassion!

i thought i heard God
in the cries of the dying
on the battlefields of greed...

but twas human despair!

i thought i found God
down in the homeless shelter,
but twas only the faces

of my brothers and sisters!

so i walked away,
thinking God didnt care....
then a voice startled me...

'but you're my body! '

Eric Cockrell

Bombs Falling (Who Pays The Price?)

the horror of
...bombs falling,

...bodies running,
.....split apart,
.....torn to shreds,

warm pulsing blood
...screaming injustice
.....from earth plowed

by patriotic greed.....

which side?
...doesn't matter!
.....both wrong,
.....both lies;

children's eyes,
...fixed, staring
.....as if to point,

who pays the price?

Eric Cockrell

Bonfire

stoke the fire!
sticks of prejudice
and hatred...

sticks of greed
and apathy.
sticks of profit

and loss....
sticks of capitalism,
and oil....

sticks of guns,
and patriotism.
sticks of sexual abuse

and addiction...
sticks of oppression,
and slavery....

stoke the fire!
build it up till
it's all gone....

maybe we'll find
...tomorrow..
in the ashes!

Eric Cockrell

Books

When I hug you,
I smell books.
When I kiss you,
I taste paragraphs.
When you talk,
I hear pages turning.
When you smile,
You beam chapters.

You...
The library of my soul!

Eric Cockrell

Books Of Color

autumn leaves falling
in slow spirals to the ground...
books of color and richness,
turning brown, waiting on sleep.

the sea of hungry human faces,
reaching out through the darkness...
books of color and richness,
turning brown, waiting on sleep.

the souls of the weary
fall like tiny flakes of snow
covering the stillness with hope....

for a new spring,
new books of color and richness....
from the seeds of memory
of those that have gone before!

Eric Cockrell

Borne By The Wind

what if i made you a pair of shoes,
from the soles of these tired feet?
and gave you a lantern,
lit by the fire in these eyes...
would you walk naked in the darkness
down the path past the creek,
to the small clearing where stillness waits?
would you sit neath the tree,
bent with time like me?
would you eat from the bowl,
made of the hollow of my heart?
would you close your eyes and listen,
with the ears of my soul?
till you hear the name that god whispers,
borne by the wind of this love....

Eric Cockrell

Borrowed

borrowed shirts, borrowed shoes,
borrowed books, borrowed thoughts,
borrowed bed, borrowed lover,
borrowed dreams, borrowed salt.

borrowed children, borrowed mothers,
borrowed study, borrowed lives.
borrowed God, borrowed heaven,
borrowed killers with borrowed knives.

borrowed flags, borrowed lies,
borrowed virtue, borrowed freedom.
borrowed bombs, borrowed bullets,
borrowed puppets, borrowed kingdoms.

borrowed soup bowls, borrowed numbers,
borrowed tents, borrowed bridge.
borrowed hope, borrowed survival,
borrowed till it's sacrilige!

Eric Cockrell

Both (Darkness And Light)

every baby born,
both Jesus and Hitler!
both the slave,
and the slave owner...
both the cross,
and the gun!
both the sheep and the wolf,
both the fire, and the rain.
both the truth and the lie,
the spirit, and the profit.
both darkness and light,
both the cell, and freedom!
winds blown by choice,
choice molded by experience.

Eric Cockrell

Both Familiar And New!

i have an inherent belief
in what i have seen, felt, and heard...
in evolving through experience,
i do not follow well!

and yet i know things,
beyond definition or reason...
and have no need to limit
by concepts or by theory!

every leaf belongs to the tree,
but each is distinct, and individual!
even the wind has a name,
that few can hear or comprehend.

god is much more than god.
truth so simple it's complex.
death no more to be feared
than the coming of winter....

spring will come, spring will come!
this cup, half empty or half full,
holds just enough to drink.
fire burns hot, then burns down,

the body of today becomes worn and tired.
cosmos, or the simple barn and manger,
again and again the wise men search.
the journey long and arduous,

begins and ends in the self!
the only things that mark history,
are what is given and what is taken.
and in the end the face of god

looks both familiar and new!

Eric Cockrell

Both Home And Grace...

are we running out of time?
the sands in the hourglass
stained by blood, and want...
whose face on the milk carton?
whose footprints in the alley?
whose tongue turns the nut?
whose breath stagnant with hurt?
we write our stories in lifetimes,
lived, or burned...
the fire itself dim with age.
is love then destiny, a curse,
or a storm?
doth the night ever end?
and the unknown ship
sailing unknown waters,
carries the scent
of both home and grace!

Eric Cockrell

Bottomless Buckets

we cannot be delivered from,
what we continually deliver our selves to!
one cannot be healed of the disease,
he does not acknowledge having...
we cannot escape the grasp
of our mortal feeding egos...
until we break the glass,
and see the sky beyond,
and taste it for ourselves.
the primitive man discovering fire,
the first living beings that moved
from sea to land...
the mountains the day after,
the waters divided,
the snail, the spider, the moss covered stone...
are all a part of who we are...
the murderers, thieves, explorers,
native peoples, wolves, wild horses....
stars being born, worlds dying,
the darkness of forever night,
the first dawn, and the last...
the saints, the tyrants, martyrs,
starving children, soldiers killing and being killed...
all a part of who we are, and we of them!
all thoughts conceived by thoughts,
all desires born by desires....
creation merely the repetition
of waves lapping forever shores...
love, the journey of lifetimes interwoven...
souls contained by souls,
held in bottomless buckets!

Eric Cockrell

Bottomless Chasm...

i have cast my stones
into the bottomless chasm
of infinite longing,
now i wait...
for sound, for evidence,
that there is a ground
in my heart!

Eric Cockrell

Bought And Sold

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feathers and Bibles,
the priests of rhetoric
masturbate in hidden rooms,

by the bodies of young boys,
the price paid without doubt.
the neon screen blares,

cancer has a new name...
dressed in pride and patriotism.
street vendors passing laws,

feed the monkeys!
the truth is
it's all a lie!

they drink martinis behind smoked glass,
sell the souls of the poor
to pay the rent!

leaving black scars on the faces
of children who were never born...
in a world already bought....

bought and sold for nickels and dimes!

Eric Cockrell

Bread And Wine!

i saw the buddha
in the eyes of the prisoner,
waiting to be executed.
our system of justice,
demands retribution,
as long as it's someone else!

preferably,
someone poor,
addicted, uneducated,
black, Hispanic,
or just plain old
white trailer trash.
the homeless man,
the man who's lost it all,
the man with no job,
no future, no dream...
no one will miss them anyway!

while the 'gods of success',
wheel and deal on the market,
playing with lives,
as if playing cards.
starting wars that make them rich,
raping the planet, even richer!
and taking from the poor,
always the poor.

immune?
above the law?
a different set of rules,
and a phony morality.
they kill the buddha
for bread and wine...
bread made of flesh,
wine made of blood!

the cost of justice...
afforded by the few!

Eric Cockrell

Bread Crusts

Do bullets see colors?
Are bombs saved before
They fall?
Do bayonets go to heaven?
Does terror ever pray?

And rape, some baptism?
Do tanks carry Bibles?
Is starvation repentance?
Do the dead bodies of children

Ever find God?

Or is not war...

The bread crusts our demons
Feed upon?

Eric Cockrell

Break The Glass!

fire comes from the crotch of darkness...
darkness comes from the tongue of god.
what we see, smell, and taste...
are but curtains on the window!
break the glass!

Eric Cockrell

Break Your Laws

when your laws
are applied and enforced
differently to people
according to their religious,
political, or sexual orientation...

when they by application
favor the rich over the poor,
the few over the many.

when they take away dignity,
and individual rights...
when they are used to abuse,
manipulate, and enslave...

when they are immoral,
unjust, and demeaning...
when they stand against freedom...

i will break your laws
with total commitment!

Eric Cockrell

Breaking Down Walls!

they broke down the Berlin wall
with the hammers of freedom....

..the

...wall

....around

.....your heart,

much tougher!

hammer breaks stone,

..it takes love

....to break down fear,

and compassion

...to break down

.....apathy!

Eric Cockrell

Breaking Point!

you can only take so much
from the man who built your house,
before he'll come back
and tear it all down!

people aren't cattle,
aren't meant to be herded...
even a man of peace
has a breaking point!

when you finally take away hope,
then the man becomes a beast...
trapped with back to the wall,
he'll turn and fight!

Eric Cockrell

Breasts Of God

the breasts of God,
sore from nursing all
of those left to
die of starvation...

in a godless world!

Eric Cockrell

Bridge To Peace

the bridge to peace
is not constructed from nuclear weapons,
not made of modern technology,
not built out of political jargon,
or religious zeal...
this bridge is dialogue.
only the naked and honest may cross!

Eric Cockrell

Bring The Dawn!

i am the page earmarked
by an angry god,
the end of tired thought,
the beginning of passion.
i am the spirit of fire,
setting buildings ablaze...
the bell ringing,
in the ancient tower.

i am the dark skinned lover,
who comes in the night.
the sharpened axe,
the hammer of dawn.
i am the eyes of hunger,
and the voice of need.
i am the weight of conscience,
the trench dug, and feet planted.

i am the smell of the heart,
you cant wash off your hands.
the phlegm of the homeless,
dried blood on the lips.
i am the flag of the faceless,
raised high and strong.
i am the bodies given
to build the bridge!

you can take me,
but you cant own me.
you can chain me,
but you cant stop me.
i am the changing seasons,
and the coming storm.
i am freedom, dammit!
hear my roar, bring the dawn!

Eric Cockrell

Bring The Sun

under the blade
of the Fascists
we stumble, and stand...

in the name of freedom,
equality, and justice,
eyes set on the goal...

human hands rebuilding
that which is broken and shattered...
believing that dignity

is not just a word!
the common man the hero,
no longer the pawn...

if a new day will dawn,
we must bring the sun!
Woody Guthrie,

we need you now!

Eric Cockrell

Broken / Rambling Haiku

leather boots, hands worn
dark shadows beneath tired eyes
house on fire, broken

small child, hungry eyes
lips tremble, hands reach for you!
across miles, broken.

President, homeless
CEO, without a job.
debt explodes, broken.

turtle crushed, car gone
Casey's baby, same damn thing!
no respect, broken.

cancer's shadow, fear!
poor people cant get no care.
let them die! broken.

down to the river
baptize me again, stay down!
call me home! broken.

man needs a woman
woman needs a man as much!
alone, lost broken.

Eric Cockrell

Broken Cup

every living being wants
to hold and be held...
even the tree embraces the sky,
drops its leaves, as its sap
runs warm...

do you hate me so much?
no, that would take passion.
and to you i'm nothing
but a cemetery, a headstone,...

a vagrant crow...

a yellowed page in a book
no one takes off the shelf.
moth balls and insulin,
a broken cup on the floor.

Eric Cockrell

Broken Glass

broken glass,
autumn chill,
the spoon tarnished...

with time.
an old lid turned up,
half filled, half empty,

wearing a spider's web,
and time earned rust.
a dog barks, a truck

goes by....
an old mattress
on the bed...

a baby's born
in a rundown trailer,
an old woman dies

alone in her chair.
life turns, the hands
of the clock sharp....

cut the fingers
at the touch....
the untamed heart,

on the unknown path,
fallen leaves left
by the door!

Eric Cockrell

Broken Shutter

a spark of fire
from the devil's forge,
a meteorite cut

from an unknown planet.
the memory of God
drawn on cave walls...

a nuclear blast,
dust forms from formless!
the heretic's trial,

fire and defiance.
cold rain falling like needles
to the frozen ground.

darkness and light;
evolve and change....
the human heart opens,

wolves howl, babies cry.
the wind blows a broken shutter
against an empty house!

Eric Cockrell

Brunt Of The Storm

the old woman
sits on the floor,
talking to the vacuum cleaner,
and laughing with the broom.
and the pictures of children,
like leaves turning seasons,
stare silently from a distance,
both chosen and not!
the dog bows her eyes,
with worry and love.
and the drone of the tv,
bores holes in the wall.
long grey hair glistening,
as sun sifts dirty blinds.
and the smell of passion,
has turned to old feet.
and no one gives a cold damn,
or understands why...
she has no need of people,
no need for chatter.
she feeds the dog and stops,
staring at the urn on the mantle...
and curses softly,
then breaks down and cries.
only the dog, and the spider in the corner,
hear the whimper,
and feel the brunt of the storm!

Eric Cockrell

Bucket Of Water

carrying a bucket of water
up a hill... careful not to spill.
whose life will i come
in contact with today?
and what kind of impact
will i make?

do i do enough?
or am i deluding myself?
do i really care?
or am i just going
through the motions?

when someone talks,
do i listen?
when i listen,
do i really hear?

when someone is hurting,
do i feel it?
or am i so hardened
and calloused from the battles,
that i dont really feel
much of anything?

when someone else needs,
do i take the time to really
be there?
or am i so blind
that i just walk by?

when this day is over,
will i really have lived
every moment?

hard questions you ask yourself...
carrying a bucket of water
up a hill...

Buddha Answered!

i looked in the mirror,
and saw all of time,
the history of the ages,
creation and destruction.
saw passion and faith,
wars, freedom, and hunger.
saw the murderer and the murdered,
the philosopher, and the thief.
saw both justice and injustice,
ignorance and understanding.
saw peoples of all colors,
crying out for help.
saw fury and forgiveness,
saw beauty and ugliness.
saw the face of my neighbor,
saw the image of God...
i shook my head,
and looked again...
and saw an old man familiar,
saw the hand of the wind...
and Buddha answered,
with the smile of silence!

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Born, Buddha Dying!

the buddha in me
looks like the buddha in you,
smells like, tastes like,
feels like, talks like....

i feel your need,
for you are part of mine.
you taught me about love,
when you were hurting.

the buddha in me,
reaches out to the buddha in you.
we inhale and exhale,
and night becomes day.

the buddha in you,
the question and the answer.
each a part of the other,
one must be for both to be.

the buddha in me, the buddha in you...
light born of darkness,
darkness comforts light.
the buddha born, the buddha dying,

no difference, no loss,
the journey goes on.

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Eyes

Buddha eyes,
seeing beyond the visible,
and beneath the crust.

Buddha ears,
hearing what is not said
wrapped in the spoken.

Buddha thoughts,
connecting with all thoughts,
creating and forming.

Buddha heart,
feeling every beat of every heart
inside each beat of my own.

Buddha freedom,
letting go of...
becoming a part of!

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Nature (Evolving!)

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every person,
..Buddha nature,
....evolving,

returning....

uncarved blocks,
waiting for the Woodcarver's
...deft hands,

cutting away imperfections,
weaknesses in the grain....

returning to cosmos,
...an ant working,
a mountain slowly

changing shape over time....

evolving,
..from ashe
....back to fire/

to the moment before
....it
.....was
.....lit!

to the moment before that!

the Woodcarver's hands so familiar...
...as if ours!
and the journey undertook

by no one else!

returning...
...evolving...

back to the uncarved block...
for there are no imperfections,
, , , grain lost in grain,

the stars reappear!

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Nature (Present In All)

Buddha nature....
dormant breath imprisoned
in greed's slobbering mouths,

the distant echo of flight
to wings broken by apathy....
darkness without being,

the stranger locked
just outside the door....
waiting on the wind

to blow the shutter away....
open the window,
and name the stars....

Buddha nature,
present in all....
sold much too cheaply

by feet that wont walk!

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Steps # 7

take all of your clothes off!
stand in front of a long mirror.
there you are!

no costumes, no makeup, no lies.
just you.

greying, wrinkled, toes and fingers
bent;
shadows under your eyes,
bruised, and worn.

there you are!
in all the beauty
of years and scars.

breathing, aching, just being.
lifetimes and stories written
in human flesh, and hope.
beauty!

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Steps # 3

everyday,
i try to let go
of something else

this just makes me
realize
how many more things
i have
to let go of!

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Steps # 8

the trees are alive!
even in the dead of winter,
if you're still,

you can feel their pulse,
waiting....
chainsaws and axes,
matches and hearth.

you are alive!
just below your numbness,
if you're still,

you can feel your pulse,
waiting...
chainsaws and axes,
matches and hearth.

God is alive!
just beyond your conceptions,
if you're still,

you can feel eternity's pulse,
waiting...
chainsaws and axes,
matches and hearth.

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Steps #4

i cant hate you!
no matter how angry
you make me,
how many times you hurt me,
use me, abuse me.

no matter what you believe,
what language you speak,
what color you are.

what party you're a part of,
how you dress,
who you screw.
or what you dream of.

because everytime i look at you,
i see me.
and everytime i hear you cry
i feel the tears of God.

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Steps-5

you can learn more
following a blind dog
across the yard

to the woods, in
total awareness...

then by listening to
most of the 'spiritual-religious'
leaders of our time....

without making a donation
or bowing three times
towards the East....

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Thought

undressing in the light
i find you
whether your face be black
or brown or white
whatever language you speak,
whether you're male or female,
old or young, fat or skinny

whatever you call God,
or whether you believe in God
whatever you hold to be truth

struggling and fighting
for food, shelter, and dignity
loving your family
or all alone

angry, sad, loving, joyous,
with or without hope
with all your mistakes,
your triumphs, your bruises

i find you
and so find myself!

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Thoughts (Every Flower)

for every flower that opens,
a hawk kills a rabbit.
for every bushel of corn,
another child starves.

for every bullet fired,
another mother weeps.
for every coming of dawn,
another face is forgotten.

for every hand extended,
another door closed.
for every prayer prayed,
a homeless family waits.

for every flower that opens...

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Thoughts (From The Grave)

he said he needed
two dollars, he was hungry...
the image of a cheap
bottle of wine dripped

from his eyes...
i gave hime the money,
and a couple of smokes.
time has a way of bringing,

even from the grave!

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Thoughts (Go Home)

he took the gun
from his shaking hand,
unloaded the chamber,
tossed the gun into the trash...
'go home! '...

the police officer asked:
'do you wanna press charges? '
'against who? ... maybe against
the system, that sold away all
the work, that sold this boy's hope! '
might as well give him the gun back!

go home...
do they have a home
to go to?

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Thoughts (Hands On The Clock)

the old woman
shot and killed
the boy that broke in
and tried to rob her...

she sat staring into space
while the policemen
did their job...
suddenly she began to weep...

they tried to comfort her,
but she just wept harder.
they told her it was over,
that she was all right.

she finally spoke in a broken voice:
'i was thinking about my son...'
'where is he? we'll get him
for you, bring him to you...'

'he's in prison... he got messed up
on pills... ran out, and robbed a store...
he killed the woman behind the counter.'
frozen in deathlike silence,

one by one, they looked down.
they loaded the body into the wagon,
her old cat ran from the porch...
an empty swing hung from a gnarled old tree...

a small trail of blood,
and there was no wind!
her old Bible unopened...
the hands on the clock kept crawling.

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Thoughts (Heavy Fog)

Buddha thoughts...

tiny pools of rainwater,
containing thunder, lightning,

and the buds of coming spring...
tainted with oil dripping
from an old car that wont run.

sunlight dances, almost held,
every dawn and sunset
that has been, or will be...

heavy fog, waiting...

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Thoughts (Meditation)

emptying the old
woman's bedpan...
sunlight sifting

through dirty blinds.
the cough of the clock,
the body, and stillness!

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Thoughts (No More)

we are an archaic,
infantile people who
would crucify Jesus again,

and take Buddha's outer kingdom
over his inner one!
we limit our concepts

God and infinity
to our own understanding,
when that which created

the cosmos lives within
each of us, within
the tiniest insect,

the branch soon to bud!
enlightenment, the pile of dung
you just stepped in,

knowing that you stepped in it!
there need be no more!

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Was A Long Haul Trucker...

i dreamt...

Buddha was a long haul trucker,
and i met him in a roadside diner...

i asked him:

'where you been? '

'everywhere! '

'where you going? '

'nowhere! .

'well. what you hauling? '

'well...', he smiled.

'i was hauling myself,

but i unloaded that

back down the line...

now i'm hauling nothing! '

i bought him a cup of coffee,

and walked away,

silently shaking my head!

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Within

the Buddha within
waits just beyond
everything we do
to avoid seeing ourselves!

the Buddha within
has no color or creed,
no political party,
is totally human.

the Buddha within
is the pathway that joins
the tongue to the heart,
the eyes to the spirit...

the hands to the infinite!

the Buddha within,
not owned, never owning;
not held by the few,
the home, and the gift...

the expression of humanity
making love to life!

sameness, unity, freedom!

Eric Cockrell

Buddha Within....

Buddha's tears...
on the faces of every
hungry child in the world.
Buddha's emptiness,
in the hearts of every
person who has no home.
Buddha's sorrow,
in the eyes of every
victim of the bombings.
Buddha's silence,
at the roar of every
religious fanatic.
Buddha's compassion,
in the dirt of every
human being fallen.
Buddha's forgiveness,
in the anger of every
person driven by prejudice.
Buddha within,
seeks to evolve!
Buddha within,
just to be!
Buddha within,
already there.
Buddha within,
always has been!

Eric Cockrell

Buddhist Lesson

</>

'either let go,
...or get dragged! '

negative emotions,
....self oriented wants,
.....any and all prejudices,

jealousy,
...anger based in ignorance,
.....ignorance itself,

false pride,
...false morality,
.....false judgement,

the need to own
....anything, or anyone,
.....distorted images of the self.....

that which you let drag you....
..... owns you!

Eric Cockrell

Buddhist Lesson # 2

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enlightenment,
the act of opening,
like a rosebud,

like a mother,
opening the door...
like a child

opening a present,
like a woman
opening to a man....

opening...
all the hidden chambers,
every door to every

secret kingdom of the soul.....
opening the box that holds
your secret thoughts, desires....

opening...
the door of the cage,
letting the winged breath fly....

opening....
your heart to itself,
and to all hearts beating....

opening....
the vault of conceptions,
the entrance to the tomb

of past lives and memories....
opening...
your hands to the world

as if it were your neighbor,
and you, it's home!

Eric Cockrell

Building Bridges

the human heart builds bridges...
that the ego seeks to destroy.
whether you strike a match,
and light a candle,
light a fire in the stove,
or light a lantern...
you are creating light....
light by any other name is light.
we are all born seeking the same thing,
in that way we are the same.
the paths we take, the choices we make,
the battles we fight, the society we live in...
make us different.
the real journey is in seeing through
the differences...
whether you call your father daddy,
father, pops, the old man, or Bill...
he is still your father!
whatever color your skin, whatever language you speak,
whatever your sexual orientation or your religion...
you are still human!
the sacredness of life is in the shared experience...
when we extend the hand, it is to all,
without discrimination or reservation!
real change and real dialogue occur when
the ears are grounded in the heart's work....
building bridges!

Eric Cockrell

Bullets

war is the action mankind takes
for fear of knowing God! ...
an actual fear of living.
we fear death, not because it's
the end, but because we havent lived!

and so it's 'easier' for us to kill our
neighbors than to face ourselves,
and see ourselves in other peoples...

we fear God, we fear life and death,
and we're terrified of ourselves!

Eric Cockrell

Bullets

the child that comes to you when
he/she has done something wrong,
admits it, often with tears, and promises
to do better... knows more than we do
most of the time! ...
we are given the gift of life with a responsibility....
to do and be something no other living
being can be... and all living beings depend
on us to do so!
when we fail to realize our true selves, we
have failed the world!
and so, like the child...

Eric Cockrell

Bullets

if all human beings are created in God's image....
and all, as i think, are the bodies of God's dreams....
then the ones we're dropping the bombs on,
the ones hungry, sick, and homeless,
the ones we hate out of fear....

are...

Eric Cockrell

Bullets # 2

when i opened the door, and really saw myself for what i am,
with all the dirt, grime, mistakes, and desires....

i began to understand the problems, the struggles,
the hurts, and the needs of humanity.... began to know
what love feels like...

as for loving God, we cannot begin to till we learn to
love each other!

Eric Cockrell

Bullets # 3

how can we profess to follow any sacred
tradition, and desecrate the earth?
it's like peeing in your bed!

even my dogs when they were puppies,
knew better!

Eric Cockrell

Buried...

a half a fifth of brandy
sits quietly on the shelf...
a tired old hat hanging
on a forgotten peg.
the flower garden bare,
the windowpane sighs.
the old rusted spicket,
covered by the spider's web.
empty boxes in the closet,
filled with nothing that remains.
wood stacked against the porch,
even the old dog knows.
letters falling from the mailbox,
the ink wet with rain.
my hand buried by the wellhouse,
my heart buried neath the gravel!

Eric Cockrell

Burn And Rage

alone...

in a room of voices,
dirty curtains sweating,
bodies without heat!

you buried me,
a 100 miles back...
poured milk on my grave,
and answered the phone.

but even the scar throbs,
the moon calls...
and the fire in the fugitive field,
burns down.

old men tell stories,
old poets burn and rage...
run with wolves, mad and hungry,
for touch, skin, and need!

when the soul becomes a tongue,
and fingers break windows.
the water in the well boils,
owls tremble and undress.

the hand that calls rain...
shakes, lights a smoke!
sweat sings on the pillow,
the scent of wild flowers.

travelling the night...
looking for a match!

Eric Cockrell

Burn Down The House

47,000 factories shut down
over the last decade in America....
we still export more oil than
we import....

there's not a damn stitch
of clothing in my closet
that reads 'Made In America'...

you tell me!

it used to be you worked
and fought like hell to send
your kids to college....

now, dont worry about it,
they'll end up in prison
with all the unemployed teachers.

and the gulf between the elite
and the rest of us grows deeper.
send your kids off to war,
cut social security, and medicare.

something has to change now!
if we have to burn down the house,
and rebuild it from scratch....

so be it!
we cant go on like this!

Eric Cockrell

Burn Me Down

Burn me down,
In the stubble of
Your armpits.
My hand, a bookmark,

On your thigh.
Death, taint of rust,
Your eyes dripping...

On my floor!

Eric Cockrell

Burning Brush

burning brush out back,
sticks and twigs and limbs...
when the pile got low
i started throwing in,
memories, feelings, and dreams.

the fire blazed high,
but just for a moment...
then died to embers,
steady and pulsing...
and so does time to the heart!

the flame that gasps for air,
strangled by its own ardor...
till the outer body burns,
what's left is pure fuel...
warming the feet of God!

Eric Cockrell

Burning Flags

they're burning flags again....
sit down stand up protesting,
cracking heads like eggs,
yolk running down on hallowed ground....

they're burning flags again...
soldier boys coming home
to no work, living in cars,
no help, without a country...

they're burning flags again...
your sister died giving birth.
your brother-in-law cant get work,
making meth in the tub...

crying at night 'neath a picture
of Jesus hanging on the cross....

they're burning flags again...
small town football heroes
in prison cells learning
to live outside the law....

they're burning flags again....
and the words of Jefferson
fall in the empty rooms
where justice and equality lived....

they're burning flags again!

Eric Cockrell

Burns, And Burns, And Burns....

the poet burns, and burns, and burns...
warm your feet, cook your meal,
read by this light...
tell the ones you love
that you love them...
here where shadows cannot destroy...
take the bread of this body,
and feed just one of the hungry...
take these eyes, let humanity see justice.
take these feet, and walk the path.
take these hands and build a home.
take this heart, and love your neighbor...
take these wings, fly free at last!

Eric Cockrell

Bury Me Now!

bury me now,
at the feet of your freedom.
bury me now,
in the bowl of your hunger.
bury me now,
in the healing balm.
bury me now,
in the hand that comforts.
bury me now,
at the foot of the birthing bed.
bury me now,
in the march for peace.
bury me now,
let my body be the bridge.
bury me now,
and give names to the faces!

Eric Cockrell

Busy With Dying

we spend all of our lives,
busy with dying...
making final preparations,
for a trip across the room!

the prisoner makes preparations,
anxious for days...
anticipating his release.
almost afraid of freedom,
afraid of the unknown...
yet when the cell door opens,
the weight is lifted!

so busy with dying,
that we forget about living...
and so miss eternity,
in each moment!

the cell door is open!

Eric Cockrell

But The Prayer, Unspoken

I am...
but the prayer unspoken,
In the tiny petal
That fell from the rose

In your garden.

The quiver of your lips
As you lay sleeping.
The grey streak,
In your hair.

The hurt in your heart,
When you don't hear from.
The stop and go,

The journey of your hand,
To my heart.

The bark of the dog,
Long gone.

Eric Cockrell

But The Song!

nightingale...
sing for me,
turn my heart inside out,
unlock the door,
pull down the shades!

tired and weary,
gonna lay down my cross.
this war is over,
and the rain has stopped...
sing for me!

dont need tomorrow,
cant change yesterday.
everything i've ever owned,
crumbled to dust...
unlock the door!

nightingale,
sing for me,
till there's nothing
left of me...
but the song!

Eric Cockrell

But Your Name....

who are we then to linger?
the pine needle bed turned brown.
the sky filled with emptiness,
where wings once sang in glory.
the mountain path deserted now,
footprints borne away by the wind.
as time exacts its heavy due,
leaving nothing as if a gift.

we who dared to speak of love,
who drank deeply with abandon.
who lit the candle as if it would last,
who dared the darkness to answer.
who kissed neath moonlit trees,
and danced till we were drunk.
who made love as if we owned the clock,
as if the leaves would never turn.

do you remember? lest we forget,
what was done, what was the cost!
when rivers flowed on summer's eve,
and the mockingbird naked prayed.
when wars were fought and lives were given,
and old women wept for they knew.
while the child slept in a dresser drawer,
and the dog bayed at the wind.

now passion curled in the stump of the tree,
the axe takes with head bowed low.
the trail of lovers sap gone dry,
on the bare belly of infinity.
the owl struck mute leaves the night,
with only the sound the wind betrays.
tis not god nor judgement but your name,
that pens damnation on salvation's breast!

Eric Cockrell

By A Thousand Doors

perhaps now this ark is finished,
i can smell the distant dawn.
the light against the window be no stranger,
nor the sound of bare feet in the night.
the crows gather neath the pine tree,
as the wind prepares to die.
voices fallen from the trees,
mine a cloud, a branch, a stone.
it seems tonight the stars finally answer,
all this time i thought i was alone.
a child is born, a life is taken,
streetlights blink in perfect time.
while redemption sleeps in alleys,
and poets silently sweep.
the heart revealed no longer journeys,
for the destination be now the feet.
the tears of god gleam in the darkness,
a stranger's kiss, a soldier's prayer.
infidels gather jewels cast aside,
feed the hungry with human souls.
the song wrapped in plain brown paper,
left by a thousand doors!

Eric Cockrell

By Not Caring...

who did we kill today...
by our actions, by inaction,
by our thoughts, by our desires?
whose bread did we eat?
whose shelter did we take?
whose hope did we steal
by not caring?

Eric Cockrell

By The Fire...

i have returned from that death;
it is not the old man that you must fear,
but the new man, who will not be owned,
neither by man nor possession

Eric Cockrell

By The Fire... (Part Eight)

build a bridge, or build a bunker...
your choice!

Eric Cockrell

By The Fire... (Part Five)

i dont know who or what
i'm more angry with...
the fact of injustice,
or the fact that i've allowed it!

if we dont stand up
to stop a wrong,
we become part of it!

Eric Cockrell

By The Fire... (Part Four)

it is not ignorance we should fear,
but our addiction to ignorance,
fueled by indifference and self centeredness...
the door is not locked, unless we lock it.
the chains are not real, until we don them,
and parade around like they're jewelry!

Eric Cockrell

By The Fire... (Part Seven)

if you choose to walk away,
it is your self you're walking away from!

Eric Cockrell

By The Fire... (Part Six)

you do not have the right
to treat me as a non-person.
i will not allow that.
i am not an 'it', or a statistic,
i am a man!

Eric Cockrell

By The Fire... (Part Three)

when we stop using schools for refrigerators,
a place to put children till they're grown...
and infuse our schools with open minded passion,
and the unrestrained hunger to learn...
when each child is given equal opportunity,
is presented all sides of issues,
and given the freedom to choose....
when we stand behind our teachers
with both respect and awe....
only then, will education be both real and just!

Eric Cockrell

By The Fire... (Part Two)

when we stop treating women
as objects of sexual desire,
or as trinkets to be won...
and accept the worth of their humanity,
treating them with the respect of equals...
only then, will their true sexuality be defined!

Eric Cockrell

By The Fires Of Hell

i kissed the cyanide lips,
of the god of my childhood.
walked the desolate streets,
strewn with human refuse and garbage.
under the heavy curse
of false morality and judgement.
to the edge of town,
where the hanging tree stood.

the sweat stained pits,
of bodies faceless and rotting.
a black and white movie,
dirge of the pilgrim.
walls made of wax,
and ideals with numb fingers.
church bells ringing,
forever just ringing!

why is it true souls are always homeless?
i hear the voices, i feel the weeping.
poverty breaks the glass,
and hunger melts the candle.
when sins become as real as death!
so who pays the price?
and who bears the load?
in the end we are always naked!

i wait beneath the tree,
by the shadow of the rope.
whose hands? my hands?
whose retribution? my guilt?
then soft as the wind,
and light formed from shadows...
i hear the voice of the Lover,
calling, from beyond the door!

Eric Cockrell

By Unmarked Graves....

i read the labels of soup cans,
the poetry of mechanized food.
while children starve in the back seats,
of cars up on blocks.
and cell phones pray with neon glow,
to the souls of the fathers
buried in unemployment lines.
heartless bastards wave numbing flags,
guarding the border, masks and rifles cocked.
bars on the windows of pregnant schools,
where freedom unravels with sterile yawns.
the fields are quiet, bodies decompose...
crows pick fruit from trees long dead.
microwave Jesus's fill plastic bowls
with fingers severed from forgotten hands.
live or die, most choose death!
young lovers taunt roaches on motel walls.
the wheels of justice groan in the heat,
and darkness erect, prophecies.
the labels of soup cans,
and the brim of old hats!
leaving only tongues left naked
by unmarked graves!

Eric Cockrell

Calendar With No Date

he turns over
on the doorstep
of an invisible alley....

his puke stained collar
greet the morning sun.
he focuses his eyes,

sets his jaw, and stands up.
the beeper of the trash truck
bounces off his mind.

fumbling for a cigarette,
his last, he lights up...
kicks the empty bottle aside.

squinting at the sun,
too early for the soup kitchen....
a patrol car passes, going slow.

the memory of a lifetime
bitter in his desert mouth...
just another day, calendar

with no date!

Eric Cockrell

Call It Eternity

kiss me, dammit!
just for a moment
i want to feel
like i'm still real

close your eyes
and lay with me
your heart beating
as rhythmic as the sea

tides going out,
tides coming in
salt spray on your face!

let the night last forever
i dont care to see the dawn
i've seen forever in the softness
of your eyes undressed with want.

love me,
then close my eyes,
and call it eternity!

Eric Cockrell

Call To Arms!

teachers, unite
farmers, unite
carpenters, unite
factory workers, unite
small businessmen, unite
women, unite
families, unite
small towns, unite
neighbors, unite

taxed without representation!
our livelihoods sold, no compensation!
our dignity taken by undignified men!
our freedoms bartered for barrels of oil!
lied to, trodden on, used up!

we're not gonna take it anymore!
it's time for change!

Eric Cockrell

Can You... I Can!

can you hear the murmur
of the empty vase?
the moan of the cupboard bare?
can you feel the coldness
of the empty room?
the heartbeat of the chair?
the hammer cast aside?
can you touch the tremble
of the mailbox full?
of the grass wild and haggard?
can you smell the absence?
the memory, and the grain?
can you light the match?
can you taste your breath?
can you shovel the dirt,
head bent with prayer?
can you lay down the box,
and cut the strings?
can you... i can!

Eric Cockrell

Cancer Of Lonliness

too many men
...nothing more than

.....buckets
.....of
.....sperm

poured onto
...the cracked face
.....of fear

sick to death
...with the cancer
.....of lonliness!

Eric Cockrell

Candle

if we lit a candle tonite
for every child that's hungry,
for every family that's homeless,
for every drug addict without hope,
for every soldier fighting
in an unholy war

for every immigrant
fighting for a chance,
for every prisoner
that becomes a victim
of the system.
for every victim
of violent crimes.

for every husband and wife
who cant find their way,
and give up and walk away.

for every child with a disability
that doesnt get a fair chance.
for every child that grows up
without a father or mother.

for every person who feels
deserted by God.
for every person afraid
to be who they are

for every victim of prejudice,
whether it be racial, religious,
or sexual.

for every person alone,
without hope or direction.

we'd have a fire so bright
it'd light the universe.
the fire of compassion.

warming the feet of humanity!

Eric Cockrell

Cannot Be Confined (For Romeo Della Valle)

the truth...
cannot be confined
to concepts,
or even words.
sometimes what is felt
is too deep to express.
or perhaps the spirit moans,
and only a few can hear...
usually the ones
who've been beaten the most.
that fire in the gut,
that burns the last thing
grasped for...
and leaves the heart as naked
as the whore on the corner.
but even she knows
more than priests or philosophers...
she lies sleepless in the dawn,
with the taste of blood in her mouth!
and the small boy cold
in the empty room...
praying for his mother,
hunger gnawing at his face.
the people who hide,
in huts and in caves...
from the sounds of the bombing,
from a war they dont understand.
and the old man hard,
who doesnt say much anymore.
who just stares out the window,
clenching and opening his hands.
the fire burns slowly,
and the night is long!

Eric Cockrell

Cannot Wash Off!

i am the stranger
whose body stained
your trembling lips.
the man who came
in the night and
hailed away your trash.
the bird that sat
on your windowsill,
and sang unanswered.
the flash of lightning
that startled without
the warning of thunder.
the old socks you wore,
till they were full of holes.
the cry in the night,
and the arms that answered.
the explosion of light,
that named the darkness.
the phone that rang,
and no one was there.
the book closed on the shelf,
covered with dust.
the shade of the tree,
you cut for firewood.
the smell of death,
you cannot wash off!

Eric Cockrell

Cannot, Or Can I?

i cannot stop world hunger,
tho i've been one of the hungry.
i cannot heal the brokenhearted,
tho my heart has been broken.
i cannot put an end to prejudice,
tho there are many colors in my soul.
i cannot disarm the violent ones,
for i've been violent too.
i cannot put an end to greed,
tho i am a victim of its hand.
i cannot heal the environment,
that i've been a part of killing.
i cannot fill the cup of the lonely,
tho i've drunk from it often.
i cannot free the political prisoners,
that my apathy put in chains.
i cannot change the path of despair,
on which i walk, numb and faceless....

i cannot... or can i?

Eric Cockrell

Cant Get No Justice

black man
in them poverty chains
cant get no justice
in them sterile white courts.

blue collar man
in them grimy working chains
cant get no justice
in them insulated courts.

freedom man
in them speak out chains
cant get no justice
in them walled off courts.

poor woman, ha!
in them second class chains
cant get no justice
in them man-god courts.

you and me
in them angry tired chains
cant get no justice
in them fictional courts!

Eric Cockrell

Cant Save Your World

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i cant save your world for you....
when you dont care enough
to take out the trash.....

when your eyes are blinded
by your stomach, and your ears
hear nothing but the ring of the register....

when your hands, clutching and groping,
never open, never reaching out.
when your ego convinces you

that you're better than all of this;
and your heart's closed for repairs.
when your mind is closed,

and your door is locked....
i cant save your world for you,
because you just dont care!

Eric Cockrell

Can'T!

i cant kill any more children
in the name of oil....
cant starve any more people
in the name of wealth.
cant evict any more families
in the name of success.
cant bomb any more foreigners
in the name of God.
cant steal any more lands
in the name of patriotism...
cant lie to myself anymore,
and call it freedom!

Eric Cockrell

Capitalism (The Sword)

capitalism...
the sword of the godless
raised against the children
left without a country!
the fire never quenched,
that consumes the nameless,
and scorches the feet
of those of conscience.
the empty house padlocked,
the stove unlit...
the vampire kneeling
before the cross of the lie!

Eric Cockrell

Capitalism And Conquer

capitalism and conquer,
sword of an angry god,
feeding the hunger of take....

one person over another,
just and holy rewards...
the losers per judgement,

have no place in your kingdom....
but the hallways of your hearts,
ring empty and tainted....

as the house that you built
falls in on you!

Eric Cockrell

Capitalism Battles Freedom

when capitalism battles freedom,
you get what we've become...
profit begets slavery,
the many become enslaved.

founded on freedom?
we took this land from
the Native Americans,
took their way of life,
their rights, their dreams...
in the name of God?
of progress?

we brought over the slaves
from the African shores...
to work, to use, to abuse...
we took their lives, their way of life,
their hopes and dreams...
in the name of free enterprise?
of profit?

we treated our women like possessions,
second class citizens at best.
they were expected to be silent,
to obey, to bear our children,
to cook and wash...
they had to fight for years
to get the right to vote...
even longer for equal wages...
in the name of righteous judgement?
of divine directive?

and now, we the poor,
of all colors and creeds,
are corporate owned.
held under the thumb
of the elite, put down
and trampled on...
our way of life taken,

our hopes for the future dashed...
faceless numbers that stink of poverty!
in the name of wealth and power?
in the name of apathetic profit?
profit at all costs!

capitalism... or something else,
fair, equal, with hope and chance
and dreams...
the way of freedom,
when dignity overcomes profit!
when the human being is worth more
than the dollar and the deal!

Eric Cockrell

Carbon Killers

we are the carbon killers,
dressed
...in
....pretentious
.....arrogant
.....robes,

burning sacrifices of coal and oil,
on the
...altar
.....of
.....self-worship!

devouring our very flesh,
wild
...hogs
....without
.....remorse,

blindly following the fire,
drenched
.....in
.....gasoline,

masturbating
...in
....the
.....halls
.....of progress!

Eric Cockrell

Carnivore

carnivore...

i dance round your fire...

pant 'neath your image,

bare my teeth,

moan and growl!

your darkness calls,

the distant beat of the drums.

owl, and shadow,

the trees bow in awe!

Loba,

i answer your call,

my flesh, your fury,

and the coming storm!

Eric Cockrell

Carry The Torch

carry the torch high
through storms, wind,
and waves....

through battles against
forces unseen and unknown....
through night and day....

through want and need,
through living and death,
through prayer and doubt...

through hope and hopelessness....
carry it high, carry it always!
the torch that can only be lit

with human kindness!

Eric Cockrell

Cats And Dogs!

whose hand on your heart,
whose back beneath the load?
whose time in the memories,
that color your world?
whose identity the touch?
whose image in the stone?
whose kiss on your lips?
whose stillness in your night?

i am the turn,
and the lantern without price.
i am the touch,
you thought was the wind.
i am the bed,
where your prayers go to sleep.
i am the intimate stranger,
throwing logs on your fire!

you wrap up pieces
of your heart in cardboard boxes.
close the curtains,
turn off the light,
waiting for death to arrive.
and i spend my time
just sweeping your floors,
with an eye to the window...
praying for cats and dogs!

Eric Cockrell

Cave!

i lived in a cave
one time for weeks....
bathed in a creek,

built small fires,
watched them slowly
burn down...

and slept,
wrapped in primordial
stillness...

i always think of that
when i think of you!

Eric Cockrell

Caylee's Prayer

Mommy!
why are you so angry?
you didnt want me.
you didnt love me.
you couldnt look at me,
and see yourself.
you didnt want me to talk.
what were you afraid
that i'd say?
you were so angry
you couldnt even give me away...
you couldnt allow me
a chance to live!

i'm not angry with you.
i'm free now.
no more pain, no more hurt,
no more fear...
i'm free now.

will you ever be free?
what are you so afraid of?
why are you so angry?

Eric Cockrell

Cemetery

making love on
the ground in
a cemetery.

fallen leaves,
silent stones,
and the cat cry

of your passion.
bringing the dead
to life!

Eric Cockrell

Change The World, Change Me!

change the world, change me!
the revolution reaches autumn.
the wings of my dreams join the birds,
preparing to fly south.
the fireflies of my passion,
lay down the final gauntlet.
i let go of my thoughts,
and listen, just listen!
we walk a thousand miles,
to become seed and dirt.
the world that was distant,
now the sweat on my brow.
for i am the world...
change me, change the world!

Eric Cockrell

Change The World?

do you know what
will really change the world?
when we learn how to listen...
not just with our ears,
but with our minds,
with our hearts,
with eyes that have seen,
and known...
and so can see
our selves in others!
listen...
with compassion...
without condemnation,
or judgement.
with silence,
no need to correct,
or give advice.
with our hands,
open and willing to help.
with our feet,
ready to walk beside!
to listen...
as if to the sound
of our own hearts beating...
to listen,
and to understand!

Eric Cockrell

Change! Change! Change!

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change! change! change!
everybody talkin' about change.

change your look,
change your luck,
change your politics,
change your religion...

change the country,
change the world....
change the day!
change your underwear!

loose change, pocket change,
winds of change, march for change....

but all real change begins within...
let's work on that,
and then everything else
will change in turn!

Eric Cockrell

Change? Or Just Returning?

change, evolving,
with every breath,
with every step...

journeying inward
in the search for
where we began...

or perhaps where we end!
is there any difference?
other than the memories

of breaths shared,
steps taken together....
meeting as if by chance

at the crossroads....
walking together for a time.
of such is history.....

and the seeds that germinate
in the frozen ground waiting....
are but the bodies of our dreams....

change?
or just returning?

Eric Cockrell

Changeling

changeling,
dervish lover...

you're all
tongue and
groove!

you salt my desire
like no one else can.

hidden beneath layers
of self-imposed hurt,
and walls you built,
hiding from yourself.

you rage against the storms
of life, your hand quivers
at the wheel!

i wait; a small bird
on your windowsill....
for time to bring you back

from the land of the dead!

Eric Cockrell

Changing The Dressing!

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changing the dressing,
carefully, so as not to hurt,
prayerfully, with old hands...

that have loved you for years....
stirring fires and creating worlds
of passionate fission....

that have worked with you,
believing against all odds....
that have wiped away tears,

and held our children gently....
on the edge of distress,
like so many others....

we are an open wound,
to be tended with care.
we are the scar of love's doing

against all that has been done!

Eric Cockrell

Changing The Face Of God

are we changing the face of God?
if you want to see God,
look in the mirror!

if your mirror does not show you
the reflections of all those in need,
all those who are suffering...
you're not true to yourself...

much less to God!

perhaps, search for God?
no, God is not lost!
if your heart does not hurt
every time someone starves,
or a child dies,
or a family is put out on the street,
then you are lost!

you dont need someone to
die for you on the cross...
you need to carry the cross yourself!

we change the face of God
by changing ourselves!

Eric Cockrell

Chapters In Bodies

we write chapters in bodies
wrapped around shared thought...
constantly dying, constantly being born.
sweat, semen, urine, and breast milk,
spilled on the altar of being.
the nipples, lips, and balls of the infinite...
we create fire from darkness's tears.
hands come together across lifetimes,
bridging oceans, distance, and time.

what fools to think it is by chance!
perhaps miracle, but neither magic,
nor opportunity!
we are the tree falling,
the ground waiting,
and the space between.
we are cosmos, litter, and dust!

the kiss a cross, the touch a journey,
the beating of wings that shudders and joins!
angels and demons both stand breathless,
in awe of lovers returning, and burning...
with a blaze, so hungry it's gone!

Eric Cockrell

Child Of The Wind!

I am...

a child of the wind!

where it goes, i go!

where it ceases, i cease!

when it speaks,

it is with my voice.

when it rattles the shutters

on your windows closed...

it is just me,

wanting to come in!

when it moans and howls,

it is my body

burning for yours!

when it softly blows,

i am caressing your face.

when it brings the rain,

i am coming for you...

with a torch and the gift

of life renewed!

I am that wind!

Eric Cockrell

Child Of Their Tears

i stood in the darkness,
watching Jesus pray at gethsemene...
and turned to find the trees,
insects, the mountains, and the seas,
all weeping...
i am the child of their tears!

Eric Cockrell

Childlike Hands

your head upturned,
like a baby bird...

sunlight in the rain,
turning colors o'er
the prism mountains...

hungry for life,
to fill the empty
that you cannot name...

naked, unashamed,
you wipe the wrinkles
with childlike hands!

Eric Cockrell

Children For Sale

'children for sale,
...children for sale, '
the street vendor cries...

'we've got all kinds...
...black and white, brown
....and red...
..boys and girls, take your choice!
...spin the wheel, take a chance! '

who chooses what opportunities,
what chances, what quality of life?
how much education?
what kind of family life?

a degree, a job, a future?
or work with the hands, skilled labor?
or menial work, no work at all....
a life of crime, taught by the prisons?

hope, or starvation?
free, or oppressed?
loved, or hated?
finding a place, following a dream...
or cast to the side?

who chooses?
and why should anyone choose?

'children for sale,
...children for sale...'
the street vendor cries!

Eric Cockrell

Children In America!

one out of three
children in America,
living in poverty?

what happened
to the land of promise?

children hungry,
children homeless,
children that wont

get a good education!

children, broken families,
children without future.
children without love....

turn to hate!

build your cities,
build your banks,
build your kingdoms

drunk on oil and blood!

your children, dying....
who digs their graves?
who closes their eyes?

who prays for their souls?

Eric Cockrell

Children Know Better

my best friend
back in the second grade
(early sixties south)

was a black boy named Gary...
it was the first year they'd
integrated schools... and

we just liked each other...
just boys being boys...
and we hung together all year...

sadly, he couldnt come to my house,
and i couldnt go to his...
there was still a lot of tension then,

and everybody was afraid....
except us... we figured we
were just people, just boys....

sometimes the children
know better than the adults!

Eric Cockrell

Children Of Dreams!

contraception, or conception?
diversity defined.
religious, or spiritual?
walk the fine line!
sexual, or sensual?
erection of the soul.
what they fear most
is what they cant control!

truth, or illusion?
which is easier to sell?
war, or peace?
profit paves the road to hell.
skin color, or blood?
the differences the same!
too easy to forget,
the people without names!

the moment of truth upon us!
we choose now what tomorrow brings!
be it salvation or damnation!
children of the earth,
children of dreams...
children of the earth,
children of our dreams!

Eric Cockrell

Children Of Ignorance

the children of ignorance
with bits in their mouths,
led blindfolded to the slaughter
without a thought or a prayer.

whipped into a frenzy by lies,
wrapped with golden ribbons,
sold by street vendors in suits
with hollow faces and marble eyes.

fed the 'word of God' with shotguns,
wearing crucifix painted robes;
selling their daughters for gasoline,
and their sons to political wars.

marching to hatred and violence,
leaving the weak to suffer and fall.
in the name of patriotism and Wall Street,
led like dumb sheep to die.
and they're already dead!

Eric Cockrell

Choices, 2012

children standing quietly
in a long line, expressionless,
maybe a tear, just waiting...

waiting to be euthanized!
a sign hung over the desk
in front of the door,

that said simply:
'Choices,2012! '

Eric Cockrell

Choices, Or Destiny (For Aufie Zophy)

right and wrong,
division and hatred.
moral implications,
immoral men.
ignorance and pride,
hearts restrained by fear.
the hammer of judgement,
hands buried in pockets!

do we fly?
or watch pictures of flight?
do we care?
or live by token gestures?
do we pray?
or recite mechanical cures?
do we live?
or exist behind walls?

choices, or destiny?
truth, or salvation?
gods carved in stone,
cannot weep for the poor.
and the stranger we meet,
smells like something we've lost.
choices, or destiny?
to fly, or to watch?

Eric Cockrell

Christmas Eve

dawn creeping
o'er the mountains,
and through bare limbed trees....

Christmas Eve...
amid the hustle and bustle,
colored lights and wrapping paper....

families and friends....
the streets still alive with those
who have nowhere else to be....

empty houses, empty trailers,
stray dogs and abandoned cars....
somewhere church bells are ringing.

a baby born in a bare apartment,
the rats scurry to meet him,
the pot on the stove empty.

no curtains on the windows,
bare bulbs, no shades.
no angels, no wise men,

an eviction notice on the door...
yet another baby Jesus,
will he make it, will he die?

will he bring light and salvation?
or will they find his small body
in a dumpster with the trash?

fate, or understanding,
holiness knocks on the door,
again, and again!

Eric Cockrell

Christmas Trees

old homeless man...
watching then sell
Christmas trees from

a gravel lot...
thirty dollars, half memories,
faces or shadows,

long gone!
shuffles his feet,
his hands in his pockets,

fumbling his change...
old man, move on!
maybe come back tonite,

swipe a tree in the dark,
drag it on down to the tracks....
a bare Christmas tree,

and a lonesome old fire....
shadows and faces,
waiting quietly on death!

Eric Cockrell

Christmas Zen #1

small children with dirty faces
playing on a cold floor;
rags stuffed in cracks,
'round the windowsills
roaches run up the walls,
Christmas music on the radio
cut off notice on the table;
young woman stares, half dreaming,
of stockings with nuts and oranges
(& the remembered scent of hot chocolate!)

crack pipe falls to the floor
as snow begins to fall
small children with dirty faces
playing on a cold floor

Eric Cockrell

Christmas Zen #2

pickup loads of wood,
stray dog running beside the tracks...
young girl hauling a baby,
old coat pulled across her face.
somebody somewhere is crying,
the hands on the clock slowly crawl,
... bare Christmas trees in a parking lot.

& already a line at the soup kitchen,
the sound of bells, water dripping from a spicket...
old man in coveralls, selling...
pickup loads of wood.

Eric Cockrell

Christmas, All Over The World!

i watched them loading
their car with what was left...
dirty faced kids in the back....

you could tell they'd been crying.
'you got gas money, bud?
have them kids eaten? '....

'we're fine... thanks for the help...'
and they drove off on
fifteen dollar tires...

to find a new life!
and it's Christmas
all over the world!

Eric Cockrell

Citizens

citizens...

of America, of Russia,
of Africa, of China,
of Syria, of Israel,
of France, of Italy....

no more!

citizens of the world!

no longer can one country
make it at the expense
of all others....

the walls between us were lies,
and they have fallen....

now we are a people
whose homeland is family!
there's no other way
humanity can survive!

citizens of the world!

Eric Cockrell

Citizens Of The Wasteland

children of hate,
children of greed,
fight and struggle,
enslaved by greed.

freedom by color,
freedom by class.
equally unequal,
the future is past.

under the flag,
under the Bible.
strike out, lash out,
kill for survival.

and the children die
the day they're born.
citizens of the wasteland,
left bare by the storm!

Eric Cockrell

Civil Disobedience

civil disobedience...
daring acts of courage?
peaceful rebellion.

when, by choice, the freedom
of one is sacrificed for the
freedom of many.

believing that all men, and
women, are indeed equal...
in needs, rights, beliefs, and desire.

believing that no man
ever owns another man....
that dignity is not for sale.

believing that no man, or woman,
is ever free until all are free....
and all share the right to respect,

and the right to be individual,
with the need for community.
obeying the law of liberty

over the threats of the
law of the land... choosing
to stand, stay firm, and deliver.

putting feet to ideals, and
hands to the plow....
now you must choose!

civil disobedience...
a criminal act.... or
the cost of freedom!

Eric Cockrell

Class Warfare,2011

class warfare?
you've hidden this one
well for years!

black and white,
red and brown,
northern, southern,
immigrants, prisoners....

male and female,
Baptist or Muslim,
old and young....

all human!
all hearts beating!
all have red blood.

there are only two
classes of people!
the 10 per cent
that own everything,
that own us...

and the 90 per cent
of us that are in bondage.
guess what! we've opened
our eyes! we're gonna
quit fighting each other!

now we're gonna turn our
anger on you!

every human being,
every single one,
should have equal rights
to work and eat and take
care of his/her family.

there shouldnt be hungry

children in the 21st century!
we shouldnt have to settle
for handouts and homeless shelters.

there is no reason to invade
other countries, to bomb them
and 'liberate' them at gunpoint!
war is a lie, and we're not
buying it anymore.

it is time for the human family
to be a family.... we wont accept less!

share the wealth, share responsibility!
NOW!

Eric Cockrell

Close Your Mouth!

close your mouth!
if a man is hungry,
feed him!
if a man is sick,
give him medical care.
if a man is homeless,
take him in.
if your leaders demand war,
vote them out,
or overthrow them.
if your system is unjust,
tear it down and start over.
if any other person,
regardless of color, politics,
religion, or sexual orientation,
comes to you...
respect them!
if they come to in in need,
help them.
if they are oppressed,
free them!
mouth still closed?
then your path is true!

Eric Cockrell

Closeness Without Cost

let's go find a quiet bar.
and find a corner table
we'll have a couple drinks,
we dont have to talk.

and then we'll go walk
the streets, smoking
hand in hand, seeing,
feeling, tasting, touching

just enjoying the stillness
of closeness without cost
the wind blows through your hair
i'll stop to kiss your eyes.

Eric Cockrell

Closing The Blinds

little dirty faced boy
in the parking lot
in the rain...
no coat, no shoes...
hiding behind cars,
playing with his
imaginary friend...

the old woman at
the window shakes
her head...
'somebody oughta
do something
about that boy...'

closing her blinds,
she pours another
cup of coffee,
and sits down
to read her Bible.

Eric Cockrell

Clouds Blow Away!

vomit stained lips quivering
on a street corner lost
between human and forgotten....

clouds blow away!

bloody feet children walking
behind despair blinded bodies
not even pretending to be alive.

clouds blow away!

gun in the belt rogues
behind blacked out windows
snorting forever dust, wild eyed....

clouds blow away!

old man eating canned dog food
with a rusted spoon,
sitting on a milk box, empty room...

clouds blow away!

young boy in the hole,
blood crusted swollen lips
cannot even cry in the darkness....

clouds blown across
....the face of the moon!

Eric Cockrell

Clouds Make Love....

yours lips wet with desire,
tremble the flame....
curtains shout,
and seas divide!
while rain drenched leaves
tempt the wind with touch,
as small children play
hide-and-seek in the shadows.
time burns the edge
of page and thought,
armies disperse, abandoning cars.
rainwater stands in half empty pots,
your hands open and close.
the tongue wrapped around
the butterfly's wings,
heat waves lap at unknown shores.
your breasts rise and fall,
be it dream, or want...
while thunder rolls,
and clouds make love!

Eric Cockrell

Coat Of Many Colors

Joseph's coat of many colors,
Buried for too long beneath
The blood of sacrifice,

And repentance...
Amid the broken bones
Of struggle,
The cry for fire,

On the coldest nights.

The arch of denial,
And the blind thrust
Of anger

That divided the sea,
We could have walked on!

Joseph's coat of many colors,
Hangs on a peg by the door.
Will we dare to put it on,

And wear it like skin,
As we walk into the long
Dark night?

Eric Cockrell

Cocoon (Illusions)

illusions...

sand blown by the wind....

the reflection of fire

on the coldest of nights;

the cry of the empty rice bowl.

the violin played in an empty room.

sunlight glaring off fresh fallen snow.

the axe and the boots

standing alone in a corner...

the ticket takers through a glass window....

oil pumping into the mouths

of starving children....

the exploding bombs, bayonets

draped in bright colored flags.

the moment you give,

as if by accident;

and then steal away,

wrapped tight in your cocoon!

Eric Cockrell

Coexist!

'when i inhale, you exhale....' Morrigna.

pretty much nails it!

what does it mean to coexist?

day would have nowhere to go,

if night didnt come.

one needs the other to identify itself.

one is not the other, but one is dependent
upon the other.

the garden you plant needs both sunshine,
and rain... sunshine and rain are seperate forces,
yet one cannot be without the other.

and the garden wont grow without both.

we are ebb and flow, coming and going.

as diverse beings with diverse beliefs,

yet human beings needing each other.

we are not all night, we are not all day.

but we each are worthy of respect.

if we would turn the page, and walk away from indifference,
then we begin as seeing each other for what we are,

without a need to convert to our way of thinking,

without a need to change that person to be like us!

the hand needs the foot, the foot needs the mind.

it is in our difference that we find sameness.

and it is in our sameness that we find common need.

whether you're black or white, Asian or Hispanic...

whether you're Christian or Muslim,

Buddhist or Hindu....

whether you're straight or gay, male or female...

whatever your politics, whatever your thoughts...

you are a human being, as am i!

we must maintain our dignity, respect,

and a strong sense of equality...

coexist is a verb...

working, living, sharing, breathing...

together!

Coffee Pot

coffee pot, , ,
old, worn, stained
by service...

faithful,
ready to give
warmth and needed...

sharpness, clarity.....
we are no more,
and often less....

on our best days,
in our best worn jeans,
boots laced and ready.....

Eric Cockrell

Cold Dark Night...

is it easier to believe in God?
or to hold the hand of the old woman dying?
does freedom ever have a flag?
do the starving really care?
be love an orgasm and a ring?
or the broom that sweeps the floor?
whose footprints on the windows?
whose fingers walk across the floor?
why does truth smell like dumpsters?
is it a crime to forget?
is it easier to believe in God?
or to wipe the blood from the small child's face?

write me a letter, sing me a song...
tell me the wind brought us to your mind.
were we always really strangers?
who told lies beneath the bed....
the call to war, or the casualties?
names written in the tears of god....
is it too late to walk on water?
the crow's wings bent by snow.
once more for love,
or to hell with it all...
nothing else has any meaning.
old branches burn the best,
and the fire with intimate strangeness!

is it easier to believe in God?
or to walk beside her in the cold dark night?

Eric Cockrell

Cold Desperation!

</></>

he had a gun in his hand;

his hand was shaking...

i looked into his eyes

as he reached for the till.

i could see the faces of

his woman, and his children....

could feel the hungry murmur

of their waiting in the darkness.

could smell his fear,

maybe even my own....

could hear the siren

of the coming blue...

cold desperation....

the hands on the clock,

stopped!

Eric Cockrell

Cold Realization!

</
my life....
nothing more than....

cigarette
...ashes
.....falling
.....to
.....the
.....floor/

nothing less than....

sudden
....pole
.....shift,
.....life
.....begins
.....anew!

how much does forever weigh?

Eric Cockrell

Colored By Oil

your wing has healed;
the door to the cage
is open.

we go on walking
as if the war never happened;
the line of dead bodies
are just roses that bloomed.

and now are gone.

if love is a cross,
then the nails are twisted.
those that run at the first sign
of gunfire never really lived.

day by day prayers,
folding clothes and washing dishes.
it's hard to think
beyond each nickel and dime.

hard to cross bridges
we cant even get to.
it's hard to be violent
when your heart is gentle.

is this then love?

or are we ghosts
in the land of the living?
letters to Jesus, a cat's litter box,
a puddle of rainwater.
colored by oil!

Eric Cockrell

Come Dance!

lover, come dance!
i have grown weary
of fireflies and spiders.
the bark of the tree tastes like need,
and the howling has a face.
i am mad with desire,
in the tooth of the wind!
the dust on my feet only memory!
the key is gone, but the lock is broken,
the shadows have agreed to leave.
the hawk rises to taste the sky,
rough hands born to caress.
lonliness doesnt even build a good fire,
the waves lap at the shore!

Eric Cockrell

Come On!

we live in an angry world...
victimized by indifference,
by greed, by intolerance...
we have lost direction.
and we are to blame.

we can go to the moon,
build great buildings, cross oceans,
talk to people around the world via the web...
yet we cannot stop hunger,
cannot eradicate poverty,
cannot provide shelter and medical care
to the masses...

come on!

we are led by insensitive wealthy people,
who sell our souls and bodies
for nickels and dimes...
who send us to fight their unjust wars,
who divide us by prejudice and religion.
and we let them!

we devour the dreams of our children,
for a moment of instant gratification.
we cast our elderly aside,
and prescribe pills for every occasion...

we speak passionately of god,
but dont even know ourselves.
we trade sensuality for cheap sex,
and fill our prisons with the hopeless.

are we then sheep?
or just cowards?

come on!

Come To The Point!

i've come to the point
when i dont care what anyone
thinks about me!
with what time i have left,
i'm going to do and say
exactly what i feel,
and remain true to myself,
and my beliefs.
i will question all things,
and honestly examine all things.
i dare to be what i am.
i do not need agreement,
permission, praise,
or anyone to follow.
i expect the same from you,
and will respect you for it!

Eric Cockrell

Come!

come...

let us wash our bloody hands
in the river that does not choose.
let us take our vengeful hearts
and lay them at the door.
let us drop our arrogant poses,
and reveal who we are.
let us forgive, and be forgiven...

for every child that dies of starvation,
for every bomb that's dropped.
for every homeless family,
for every broken home.
for every prisoner, every victim,
every hater, and their hate...
for every man and woman beaten down,
living day to day in poverty.
for every winner and every loser,
for every unwanted baby...

for every war,
for every tree cut down,
for the smoke that fills our skies,
the oil that defiles our waters...
for every deal made at the expense of humanity...
for every lie sold as the truth!

for every bullet,
for every nuclear accident,
for every act of discrimination...
for every prayer not prayed.

for every apathetic action,
and inaction...
for every voice of freedom
we allow to be imprisoned or killed.
for every chance we let pass by,
for every time we just walk away...

WE ARE RESPONSIBLE!

come!

Eric Cockrell

Come, Night...

come, night...
night of the holy,
open arms outstretched,
wrapping all that hurts
and burns in cooling blackness.
come, night,
night of the candle lit,
of the curtains blown,
of the silent whispers.
come, night,
night of the glass upturned,
of the laughter of comrades,
of the talking of the eyes.
come, night,
night of the bodies wrapped,
the tongues electric,
the hardness and the wetness.
come, night,
night of quiet reflection,
of soulful introspection,
of prayer beyond words.
come, night,
night of sleep eternal,
of the wind that leaves the body,
and searches the depths of emptiness.
come, night...
let us walk!

Eric Cockrell

Coming Back....

would like to come back as a candle,
a bowl of soup held by hungry hands.
a simple wooden crutch for the crippled,
a bedpan for the aged.
a blanket for the homeless,
a small fire for the cold.
and the sound of a mother's voice,
quieting the child afraid.
a leaf, a turtle, perhaps a drink of water,
a tear that needs to be cried...
the straw that forms the sparrow's nest,
i could ask for nothing more!

Eric Cockrell

Common Sense (Truth)

wars are started by men
with agendas... usually profit,
or religious reasons, or both.
the men that start these wars
seldom fight these wars...
they manipulate the masses to
do their dirty work...
these are the elite people that
control our world. their weapons
for control include:

1. poverty
2. ignorance
3. prejudice
4. religion.

if you keep the people struggling
for food and shelter, they wont have
time to stand against you.
if you keep the people ignorant, they
will blindly follow without questioning.
if you divide the people by prejudice,
they will not unite to overthrow.
if you convince them that theirs is
the only true religion, and that God
is on their side, they will commit
unspeakable acts.

the time of wars is over... there can be
no future if we continue.
we must quit chasing riches, and find a
more equitable way to share what we have.
we must be responsible for each other...
we must lay down religious pretensions,
fears, and pride, and become the spiritual
people we are called to be.
we must be human!

Eric Cockrell

Common Sense Tells You...

common sense tells you...
when you break into a poor
working man's house,
and try to steal his food,
possessions, or whatever he has...
and try to harm his family,
he's gonna fight back.
it's just a given.

so why dont our government,
our bankers, and our corporate leaders
understand this?

Eric Cockrell

Communicate

communicate...
a deadly disease,
a random curse.
a book half opened,
a candle hid in the shadows.
do i dare?
do i dare?
to take off my clothes
and dance?
to speak one word
that really means,
really rhymes,
the beat of my heart!

Eric Cockrell

Communicating

i have been to the edge
of nevermore....
have seen falling stars, rainbows,
and majestic mountains....

have ran with the wolves,
watched elephants proudly
march.... and turtles stroll....
seen whales come up for air....

but i've never seen anything
like the beauty of two
human beings communicating!

Eric Cockrell

Communicating!

it's fairly easy for us to pretend
to be something we're not... we all
are guilty of this on occasion. but
it leaves us with a hollow feeling,
the feeling of emptiness...
pretending hinders us on our journey.
it is only in the revealing of who
we are, and what we are, that we grow.
it takes courage to reveal our intimate
natures.... but only by doing so can
we continue to evolve. only by this
chosen action are we able to really
communicate. and only by communicating
do we truly live!

Eric Cockrell

Communication (Creation)

communication demands honesty,
honesty demands nakedness,
nakedness demands knowing who you are!

the act of creation merely
god communicating with herself!

Eric Cockrell

Communion (Dance Of The Lovers)

if you can hear me
before i speak, and
know what i'm saying
even before my heart knows...
if you can touch me
across the miles,
leaving no doubt
that it was you...
if you can smell me
in the wind... and your
lips quiver, your heart races...
if you can taste me
in the rain... and your body
burns with a holy fire...
if you can miss me
amid the lights and
the hustle and bustle
till your soul moans
with darkness....

i can hear you
before you speak...
i can touch you
across the miles...
i can smell you
in the wind...
i can taste you
in the rain...
i can miss you
amid the lights...

neither kings nor kingdoms,
beasts of the night,
nor fogs of illusion...
nor the death chimes
of time can keep
us apart....

i live in you,

you drink deeply in me...
we are one flame
that lights up the
entire night sky...

wave upon wave...
lapping at the shore!

Eric Cockrell

Companions....

we are not two...
we are one!
the distance between us
is our silence.
the bridge that joins,
again our silence!
the scent of the shadow,
is only me.
i looked in the mirror,
and saw your face.
raised the fork to my mouth,
and fed your hunger.
you raise the cup,
and my lips part.
i breathe,
and your eyes open.
my skin has no color,
yours changes with the seasons.
i plant a tree,
you rake the grass.
i weep for the hungry,
you weep for the homeless.
we keep building boats,
and giving them away.
i am a man, a woman,
you a woman, a man...
we are the earth,
redeeming herself!

Eric Cockrell

Compassion, A Verb!

when
compassion
becomes
a
verb...

humanity
becomes
human!

and
God
becomes
as
real
as
the
stranger
on
the
street!

Eric Cockrell

Composing Silence

i have no desire to be anyone's echo...
nor for anyone to be mine!
original sounds in a sea of sounds,
all composing silence!

Eric Cockrell

Concept, Or Beyond?

religion,
often a drug,
that cripples the spirit
on the long path to freedom!

God?
male? female?
concept, or beyond?
or as simple as...

the light in a
small child's eyes
when his mother tells him
she loves him!

or the look
in the stray dog's eyes,
when you feed him...

or the hand of a neighbor,
who just helped you
pay your rent...

or the feeling
in the prisoner's heart,
the day he is set free!

Eric Cockrell

Connected.....

how easy it is
for us to forget,
both the value of each moment,
and the value of each person
that we encounter.
we encounter no one by chance!
what is given, truly given,
remains... not much else matters!
the gift of life
is the gift of touch.
and so many touch our lives,
so many we dont seem to notice.
take the time to listen,
to say thank you,
and to touch in return.
that is what makes us eternal!
we are more connected than we know...
often the suffering we endure is shared.
so must be the freedom.

Eric Cockrell

Conquered Me

i climbed your highest mountains,
waded your raging rivers.
went stomping with elephants

through you darkest jungles.
stood between you and the gun!
walked barefoot in your snows,

sat imprisoned in your cell.
made the leap, and dared to fly,
wiped the tears from your face.

built a home for your heart,
with human hands and sweat....
bandaged your wounds,

took your curse...
how is it then...
that love conquered me?

Eric Cockrell

Constant Awareness

in constant awareness...
with every bite i take,
someone is hungry.
every night when i go to
sleep in my bed,
someone is homeless.
every time i speak out,
someone is oppressed.
every time i walk
down the street,
someone is imprisoned.
every time i open my eyes,
someone else is blinded.
every day that i live,
someone else is dying...
every time i know i am loved,
someone else is alone...

responsible!

Eric Cockrell

Constantly Denying

War

Is mankind's way

Of eating our young

Of betraying the future

Of lying to the mirror

Of remaining in bondage

Of feeding our fears

Of constantly denying...

That God exists!

Eric Cockrell

Conversations Angels And Demons (Part Four)

standing in the middle of a parking
lot, talking to an old man...

he said: 'i've never seen it
this bad... everybody on edge,
struggling, scared...
nobody knows what's going to
happen...
and hell, half of everybody you
meet, or more, taking them damn
pills...'

'yea, they come in here all the
time, middle of the day, whacked out...'

'pills and poverty go together... you
cant make it, cant stand the pressure,
they prescribe you the pills.'

'i think the medical profession got it
started, and it's mushroomed... into
some kind of evil disease.'

'i know a man, worked with him for twenty
years... him and his wife used to come over
and eat with us, play cards... they were
like family.
him and her got to having problems, he started
beating her... found out he was on the pills.'

'what happened to them? '

'well, he lost his job. they lost the house,
pretty much all they had. she left him. he tried
to kill her, but the law stopped him.
i tried to talk to him the other day. he told
me 'he couldnt live without her'...
i told him, 'no, he couldnt live without the
pills'...

tried to talk him into getting some help...
but he wouldnt listen...'

'yea, it's tough. you cant help somebody
that wont admit they need help... the woman
all right? '

'she's working, trying to start over... it's
hard for her...'

i shook his hand, and walked away. pills...
another weapon of ignorance!

Eric Cockrell

Conversations With Hune

who names the flower a flower,
and the weed a weed?
and are not names
cardboard boxes
meant for the fire?

from the womb of darkness,
the sun reborn again and again...
each time with different faces,
different fingers, different hands...
or perhaps we see with different eyes!

do we speak the truth?
or doth the truth speak us?
perhaps 'we' are an illusion,
and there be only truth.
or perhaps truth is an illusion...
and we are only what we are...

what we are...
nameless particles of namelessness...
forms of the formless,
formless by nature.
words spoken by word,
or not spoken at all...

leaves fallen from the tree,
nests of straw left empty...
the sound one wing makes without the other,
the way air cries beaten by wings...
the sound the tree makes
when cut through by the saw...
the scream as it falls!

Eric Cockrell

Conversations With Hune (Part Two)

does rain fall,
or does the earth rise?
is the moon the mistress of the sun?
do trees mourn when leaves fall?
do mountains dance when the earth is sleeping?

do wars express man's heart?
are they blood sacrifices to man's fears?
are the gods men worship
merely extensions of their selves...
be the self the disease,
or the cure?

does love always demand crucifixion?
and who is it that we crucify?
is the darkness of night
any different than the light of day?
who wrote the book
before there were words?

the more alike we are
the more we hate!
do we worship birth by killing?
are we then fools to define the wind?
much less try to hold it!

hands were made to be open,
yet we always grasp.
we are born to die,
yet we are afraid!
of what?

time itself much like sand...
always shifting,
and hiding footprints!

Eric Cockrell

Conversations With Hune (Part Three)

if the child becomes a parent,
and the parent becomes a child...
is growing older an illusion?

does salvation denote
being saved from oneself,
or from all else?

is prayer something we say,
something we feel,
or something we do?
or merely the act of breathing?

do whales laugh at our ignorance?
do dogs weep for our fears?
do birds intimately know freedom?
if so, why are we
the 'dominant species'?

or are we whales,
dogs and birds...
and just too blind
to know it?

is the truth then complex,
or just so simple that it seems...
who built the walls between us?
was it not us?

if we could put god in a thimble,
and then took it out to look...
would it not appear to be empty?

is empty then the cup turned down?
or are we looking at it from the wrong side?
could it be then that empty is the cup filled?
and that fullness is found in empty?

is love then a returning

to what we never left?
are we not then the wind,
collecting bodies!

Eric Cockrell

Conversations: Angels And Demons

was talking to a truckdriver
that just came in off the road
yesterday.

he said: 'pretty much the same,
everywhere i go, people either
aint working, cant find work,
or if they are working, cant
make enough money to get by on...
dont care what they say on the tv...'

i told him, ' it's the same thing here,
people keep coming in and telling me
they dont know what they're gonna do.
a friend of mine called me last night,
50 years old, worked all of his life,
and said he just cant make it... cant
find any work.'

Eric Cockrell

Conversations: Angels And Demons (Part Three)

i sat down to talk to a
young gay man the day after
Amendment One passed...

'so, what do you do now? '

'i dont know... dont know whether
i'm more saddened or angry. and
i dont want to be either.'

'why do you think it passed? '

'i dont know if the majority
of people here are afraid of
people like me, or they just
hate me. for what i believe,
for my lifestyle, for whomever
i choose to love...
and the thing is... there's nothing
to be afraid of... i'm a human being
just like them.
and i dont hate them... what they believe
or how they live... i dont hate them
for loving. and i dont hate their God...
i believe in God just as much as they do! '

'it's funny you mention the God thing...
i felt like it was the underlying problem.
their definition of what God is, and what
God allows... and their sense of 'moral
judgement'...they're building walls when
they need to be building bridges! '

'if we're all created in God's image, and
yet we are diverse... then what's the problem? '

'all human beings have the right to love,
and to be loved... i think what we're most
afraid of is something in ourselves we dont

understand... i dont think we know who we are,
or who God is...'

'we're all just human beings, and we need to
live in a way that is respectful... that's
the only real answer...'

'agreed... wish you luck! '

enough said!

Eric Cockrell

Conversations: Angels And Demons (Part Two)

the trucker went on speaking:

'you know, it's even worse for
the old people.

they dont draw enough to live on,
cant pay for their medicines, the
rent, the lights, and still buy food.
and their kids are scattered, or so
close to the edge trying to raise their
families, to just survive, that they
cant help...'

'yea, i was behind an old man in the
grocery store line the other night...
just buying dog food, Alpo canned dog
food. the cashier asked him what kind
of dog he had... he just shook his head.
i knew what that was! '

the trucker replied: 'you know, my mom's
over across town in that rest home. i felt
bad about it for a while, but now i dont
know. she's better off than a lot of them!
still, my dad's probably rolling in his grave.'

Eric Cockrell

Corporations, Not People!

corporations,
are not people.
democracy and plutocracy

are not the same thing.
equality doesnt come
with class structure....

and you cannot brutalize
citizens peacefully protesting
in a land that's really free!

promises dont feed hunger,
homeless doesnt mean worthless.
freedom doesnt invade other countries

for barrels of oil and back room deals.
poverty doesnt denote ignorance,
and lies never make the truth!

corporations are not people...
and the people have had enough!

Eric Cockrell

Could Be!

spring...
redemption, rebirth.
the limbs of death bud,
the grasses sing
from their deep stillness.

shave the head,
let go of...
the arms of darkness,
frozen blankets of snow.
sweep the floors,
sweep the ashes,
leave the past for the fire.

scarred souls become gardens,
life birthed from experience.
that stranger smiling at the door,
could be love... could be!

Eric Cockrell

Could Bear To Look!

broke down,
system.
faces peeled,
razor knives.
hands cut off,
feet bloodied.
mouths open,
gulping air.
eyes plucked out
by the lies.
souls bartered
for a cup of rice.
flags burning,
bodies strewn.
the well oiled wheel,
turns in spite.
no god,
could bear to look!

Eric Cockrell

Could It Be The Wind? (For Dave)

is it then the wind,
that rattles the pane?
causing the candle to flicker,
the curtains to walk?

could it be the wind,
making shapes of shadow?
and that long shaking moan
you feel in your bones?

the wind that whispers
in voices almost remembered.
that tugs at the door
to your forbidden room?

that taste of blackness
from an empty cup?
could it be the wind,
or something more?

Eric Cockrell

Crawling Without Feet

women that smoke cigars,
and books that start with the ending.
the things dogs smell
written underneath stones.
the day guns rise up and walk out,
in utter protest.
the long trek cows and pigs and fish make,
on the way to becoming part of you.
the sound potatoes make
when you dig them...
the fire you built before you built it!
the things green beans whisper in the rain,
the groan of tomatoes ripening.
the sound of rust and leaves turning,
the name written in the first autumn chill.
the day we left the sea,
crawling without feet to the land.
and the day we'll return, utter failures,
or with the memory of a thousand small victories.

Eric Cockrell

Crayon

your lips, the crayon,
color me hungry, wanting
to open your eyes!

Eric Cockrell

Cries

the sound of gunfire
and the pound of bombing
rhyming...

the cries of dying children,
the cries of a dying earth,
the cry of humanity seaching

for itself!

Eric Cockrell

Crime, And Justice...

crime, and justice,
how do we decide?
the crime committed,
but what caused the crime?

poverty, need,
addiction, hopelessness.
the anger of the owned,
lashing out indiscriminately.

but the choice is still there.
in the final it is!
but violence breeds violence,
and greed breeds violence.

we bury the victim,
listening for footsteps down the hall.
the executioner closes his eyes
as if to absolve.

and we bury another.
those that have still have.
well protected, well insulated,
and the courtroom is empty.

choices?
who owns the choice?
in the final judgement,
whose hands will be clean?

Eric Cockrell

Crippled!

when you take the crippled hand,
and put it to the plow...
a healing takes place!

when you take the crippled heart,
and put it with other wounded hearts,
compassion begins!

when you take the crippled spirit,
and teach it the words of freedom,
wings are loosed!

when you take the crippled man,
and restore his dignity...
he changes the world!

Eric Cockrell

Crossbow...

crossbow...
my desire aimed
for your beating heart,
your tongue,
pulling the dreams
from my rusty soul...
destiny,
dialed in
on the time we share!

Eric Cockrell

Crosses Burning

black-eyed poverty,
angry negativity,
sanity or vanity,
aint nobody free...

still the wheels of life
keep on turning;
in the land of want,
crosses burning.

hate me, hate yourself,
liberty on the shelf,
worthless unless it sells,
drawing water from the well...

still the wheels of life
keep on turning;
in the land of need,
crosses burning.

black and white bleeding red,
cant feed the poor, raise the dead,
drinking water laced with lead,
nooses hung around our heads...

still the wheels of life
keep on turning;
in the land of hurt,
crosses burning.

children sold into slavery,
homeless tents, misery,
wars without victory,
governed by plutocracy...

still the wheels of life
keep on turning;
in the land of sorrow,
crosses burning.

microwave Jesus, tattered flags,
boys come home in body bags,
buildings crumble, bridges sag,
numbered souls without a tag...

still the wheels of life
keep on turning;
in the land of lies,
crosses burning.

Eric Cockrell

Crosses Burning # 2

Native America tragedy,
cant escape the curse of history,
poverty has its remedies,
none of which are good.

crystal meth and crack cocaine,
Devil drives that old train,
cant fix the hole or ease the pain,
and wouldnt if it could...

still the wheel of life
keeps on turning;
in the land of illusions,
crosses burning.

small town heroes falling,
the ghosts of freedom calling,
yet the truth is quite appalling,
pawns in the game.

Wall Street ghouls in trench coats,
tax incentives, life boats,
dont know which way the wind blows,
numbers without a name.

still the wheel of life
keeps on turning;
in the land of manipulation,
crosses burning.

cant tell the truth from a lie,
you live and work and then you die,
cant take it with you if you try,
lost inside a maze.

redemption or salvation,
the train has left the station
for a greedy soulless nation,
who profits and who pays?

still the wheel of life
keeps on turning;
in the land of denial,
crosses burning.

addicted to foreign oil,
incursions on foreign soils,
enough to make your blood boil,
when enough is enough.

while children starve and women die,
paint the picture but you cant hide,
your hands are bloody, you cant deny...
stop, in the name of love!

still the wheel of life
keeps on turning,
in the land of promise,
crosses burning.

Eric Cockrell

Crossing The Bridge!

we cross this bridge,
never looking back.
we left all our baggage

on the other side...
with nothing more
than what we believe...

what we feel, and what we are!
no longer victims,
we choose to take hold,

our eyes set on the higher goal.
without guise or agendas,
we stand unashamed...

believing in tomorrow,
dedicated and consecrated
by the actions of today!

Eric Cockrell

Crucifix

we, who walk with shoulders bent,
leaving bloody footprints in the snow.
our very lives a crucifix, by design,
our hunger unabated by the stars...
pray with calloused hands grimy
with the work of the heart.
whispered deaths lost to the wind,
nothing held back, or denied...

we, who walk with shoulders bent,
leaving bloody footprints in the snow...

Eric Cockrell

Crucifixion

she drained every ounce
of being from his heart,
and left his body lifeless
in an alley...

took every ounce of feeling
from his senses...
every streak of light
from his darkened path...

took his every original thought,
and the identity of his desire,
and wadded them up like paper
for the fire...

now every reason she had to live,
every thing she ever knew about love...
all lie betrayed by her tears
in a shallow grave that she dug!

Eric Cockrell

Cry In The Night...

one last drink,
and a cobblestone prayer,
a hat creased by dreams,
boots made of flesh.
nickels and dimes,
revolution and light.
while shadows dance,
amid cobwebbed desires..

and the sparrow's lament,
mourns over buildings lost.
over lives soon forgotten,
over hunger and loss.
while the faces of children,
burned into the grain.
to the words of a god,
forgotten by name!

now liberty's nails,
rust beneath the load.
bodies piled on bodies,
under circling crows.
and justice lies beaten,
stripped in the alley.
while confusion reigns,
and indifference shouts!

who am I? ... you ask,
with threatening pose.
while the stink of your fear
burns books in the night...
i am the voice of your heart,
the dignity of your soul.
i am the cry in the darkness,
that bears your name!

Eric Cockrell

Cry Of The Lonely...

i have heard the cry of the lonely,
the tree bent with grief for the ocean.
the squirrel who dreams of wings,
the mountain melting with need to wander.
the child orphaned by war or poverty,
the monk on fire for a world that's blind...
the beaten body in the prison cell,
the door opened, no one there.
the naked body weeping on an empty bed,
the voice calling without echo.
the tongue that walks the rainy night...
the moon hidden by clouds cold and distant.
the lonesome sound of the faraway train,
the lover who walks the garden...
the empty streets, the hollowed houses,
where not even the scent of memory lingers.
the bruised hand stuck in the pocket,
the letter never addressed.
the flower that bloomed, and no one saw,
the bent nail on the back of the shed....
the candle snuffed.... the last words lost...
lips swollen, set, and driven...
am i the cry, or just the shell,
that brushes against your heart without name?

Eric Cockrell

Cup Now Empty

the body lowered in the grave,
has nothing left to say.
and the list of things to do,
falls from the dresser to the floor.
yesterdays, all that remain,
tomorrow never came.
both the candle,
and the book of matches,
turn away!
the lips set firm and cold,
never to kiss again.
eyes closed and locked like doors
that no one has the key to.
the heart wrapped in brown paper,
put away in a forgotten closet.
and the smells and tastes of dreams,
cannot bring life to silent bones!
what is done is done.
the brook turned quiet,
the pine tree weeps.
and the cawing of the crows,
haunts the dreamless...
the cup now empty!

Eric Cockrell

Cup Of Water

if i never write another word,
let my life be remembered simply...
as a stepping stone for others,
as the hand that unlocked the cage,
as the fire that warmed the stranger,
as the food that fed the hungry.
as the candle that lit the darkness,
as shelter, as the wind that
cried freedom in the darkest night...
as a cup of water!

Eric Cockrell

Curl Of Smoke

a small fire...
blue skies through barelimbed lenses....
frost bitten grass turns,

the hymn of death continues....
the taste of life, sharp, and pungent!
every touch turned electric,

even the air, alive, and heady!
the sound of lives, wind blowing tin,
and the silent grieving of the stricken!

prayer falls like sweat from dirty faces,
the axe feels good in my hands.
a nip of brandy, a curl of smoke,

alive, and singing the living!

Eric Cockrell

Cutting Edge

the cutting edge of truth,
sharper than diamond;
with no sympathy for slivers
of illusions that fall.

our greatest fear lurks
in smoke-filled mirrors...
we spend all our lives
running from ourselves!

but death takes no prisoners,
no half-truths or pretensions.
we are but what we have given
when this house of cards falls in!

Eric Cockrell

Cynicism, And Hope

as i grow older
my cynicism grows...
i've grown tired of paper kingdoms
& dreams that end
with the taste of blood in my mouth.

i do not believe that
God lives in synagogues & churches,
or in the exhortations of evangelists,
or in the rituals of priests...
or in hell-fire & damnation,
the sword of judgement, the end of time,
or in holy graves...

i see God in the eyes...
the eyes of small children,
of homeless men beneath the bridge...
in the eyes of young lovers
madly lost in each other...
in the eyes of the old woman dying
in the empty house where she raised her children...
in the eyes of the activist arrested
& confined to a cold cell for believing
in human rights...
in the eyes of the addict
whose life is lost in the hole of the memory
that the needle fills...
in the eyes of dead soldiers
forever staring into the rage of war...
in the eyes of those struggling to survive
drowning in the despair of cold reality...
in the eyes that stare at me in the night,
& wont let me sleep without feeling...
in the eyes of the dog lying faithfully at my feet,
with no need to be anywhere else...

who is this God? of form & formless,
of light and shadow, dissolving, redefining...
who's not always male, but often female!

not owned, and not owning....
like the waves that carve the shore,
& leave it nameless...
(hungry for the footprints
of human desire!)

not aloof, but immersed,
almost drunk with sadness & joy...
not bound by dwelling or canyon,
but as free as the wind
that cant be spoken!

do i believe? yes! madly! ecstatically!
in life, & stillness, & even death!
in the song that takes no prisoners,
leaving dew in the parched grass...
& in the Lover who opens & closes the door
of eternity in the human heart...

Eric Cockrell

Daddy, Come Home!

a young woman holding
two babies stands by
a soldier's grave...

while the would be politicians
keep pimping for the vote,
and Wall Street keeps on

doing business as usual.
with her foot she brushes
the leaves from the marker...

and the oldest child whispers,
daddy, come home!

Eric Cockrell

Damnit... (To Live!)

i dont want to sit at a keyboard
and send messages...

i want to sit at a dimlit table
in a quiet corner bar,
and talk, really talk!

i want to make love in a library,
slow dance in a laundromat...

i want to pee on the grave
that bears my name!

Eric Cockrell

Dance Naked

go to the burning bush,
and touch!
walk across the sea
that has been divided.

put your hand on the cave walls
and feel the etchings.
jump into the Mayan pool
of sacrifice!

sit among the unmarked graves
of soldiers killed in battles,
reading poetry to the souls
lost to the violent storm.

dive for the ruins of Atlantis,
for the memory before memory.
stand in stillness at Stonehenge,
listen for voices in the wind.

feed the hungry! heal the sick!
free the oppressed....
stand in the face of life,
bare your teeth, and howl!

Eric Cockrell

Dance Naked #2

pull back the curtains,
tear down the walls!
open the forbidden door,
break the egg, and fly!

hold the child dying
of cholera in your lap.
wash the feet of the leper,
wipe the old man's ass...

kiss the cheek of the boy
who hung himself.
pick up the homeless man,
feed him, take him to a shelter.

clean the old woman's house,
help the single mom with her kids.
pick up the prostitute on the corner,
and offer to take her home!

take the gun away from
the boy strung out on dope.
take the preacher's donation
and give it to the soup kitchen!

plant a tree, plant a garden
leave your car at home, and walk!
give an illegal immigrant some work,
and pay him well!

read the Bible for yourself,
pray with people of different faiths.
take God off of the altar,
and be compassionate action!

feed the hungry, heal the sick,
free the oppressed!
stand in the face of life...
bare your teeth, and howl!

Eric Cockrell

Dance Naked #3

hold Thor's hammer in your hand,
learn from the annunaki...
sit at the feet of Plato,
wander the worlds with the Hopi...

draw swords with the samurai,
search for the codes of da vinci...
watch the times and the seasons,
and be hungry for change!

hold the beating heart in your hands
till all names are forgotten...
till all colors are one color,
and the language is blood.

sit beneath the tree with Buddha,
and understand time, past and future.
walk the water with Jesus,
do the Ghost Dance again!

take the hand of a hungry child,
take in the unwanted dog.
stand on the shores with the Irish,
and chant the waves in!

feed the hungry, heal the sick,
free the oppressed.
stand in the face of life...
bare your teeth, and howl!

Eric Cockrell

Dance Of Joy!

take down your hair,
let the rain soften your eyes.
sway with the trees,
listen! the grasses whisper.
the fire is lit,
the heart divides the sea...
the hand on your breast,
speaks, whispers, and cries!
tis not the wind,
but your lover has come!
the dance of joy has begun.

Eric Cockrell

Dance!

dance!
in the light of the dawn.
dance!
as if there were none.

dance!
to the call and the cry.
dance!
today you live, tomorrow

you die....

dance!
without holding back.
dance!
the color between white

and black...

dance!
for the gift of the pain.
dance!
in the sunlight, in the rain.

dance!
let two become one!
dance!
till all is said, and

all is done...

dance!
let your life be a prayer.
dance!
because you can, because

you care....

Dancing

if i have
to sell my soul
to the devil
to watch you dance...

why arent you dancing?

and who plows the field
left barren?

Eric Cockrell

Dare We Call This Love?

dare we call this love?
the iris courts the wolf.
the handmaiden of the night,
sews stars into the emptiness.
and water drawn from the deepest well,
runs amuck down our chins.
eyes turn inward, light breathes forth,
the hand beats with longing.

i cry out,
and the moon catches my breath...
the willow reaches out to touch.
the perfume of the scented glove,
turns pine needles into brandy.
the tongue strips and takes the want,
nothing else remains...
be there eternity let it be this,
be it hungry and never filled!

Eric Cockrell

Dare We Speak Of Freedom?

dare we speak of freedom
when children are starving?
when families are lost without homes?
when speaking the truth has become a crime?
when we bomb women and children
in the name of oil?
when the jobless roam long forgotten lines?
when religions persecute each other?
when prejudice is so deep we dont even see it?
when poverty's children have no means of escape?
when the prison business thrives?
and justice for profit be the way?
when medical care is a privilege for the few?
when everything we do, and everything we say,
is being watched?
when hatred beats the drum, and rattles the swords?
dare we speak of freedom?

Eric Cockrell

Dark And Hungry

Dark and hungry,
i grope for your mouth,
swallowing lava burnt air,
lips blistered with prayer.
ducks quacking in flight,

Nickels and dimes in the ashtray...
a song on the radio,
cant remember the name.
hands shake just a little,
unbuttoning your shirt.
a small trail of sweat
between your breasts disappears.

You breathing in gasps,
or not breathing at all....
slide my hand to your longing,
tilt your head, close your eyes...

Grey clouds on the horizon,
miles go by without markers...
two horses in the pasture
not yet victims to time.

Eric Cockrell

Dark Southern Skies

faded sign falling down
from an abandoned mill
mailboxes full of
unopened bills
houses with no curtains
old cars up on blocks
all the stores are empty
all the doors are locked

dark southern skies
no one's home anymore
no one hears the cry
no one sweeps the floor
man without work
his woman turns away
dark southern skies
and there's no one left to pray...

empty crib gathers dust
a Bible by the bed
workboots in the corner
with this ring i thee wed
pictures on the wall
dont answer in the night
and empty still looks empty
in the morning light

dark southern skies
no one's home anymore
no one hears the cry
no one sweeps the floor
man without work
his woman turns away
dark southern skies
there's no one left to pray....

Eric Cockrell

Darkness Dream

i dreamed...
i was lost in the night,
making my way through the trees.
small branches lashed against my face,
i could feel stone beneath my feet.
and somewhere near, but far, the sound of water.

wrapped in the stillness of night,
that has its own sounds,
its own smells.
haunted by something i couldnt define,
almost the feeling of being stalked.

i finally made my way to a moonlit clearing.
a flock of small birds rose in front of me.
in the field were children,
different colors, different languages,
all different ages...
children, playing together.

i looked closer...
and noticed their eyes...
something wrong, something odd.
a steel hard voice spoke in my ear...
'these children have never seen daylight,
and never will...'

i awakened with a start.
one word on my lips...
CHOICES!

Eric Cockrell

Darkness Unto Darkness!

'over the hilltops,
silence,
among all the treetops
you hardly feel
a breath moving.
the birds fall silent in the woods.
simply wait! Soon
you too will be silent.'

Goethe

a knock on the door,
Hermes,
the messenger,
come to gather and disperse!

we run like maddened chickens,
to escape the mossy hands
of the grave.
yet time comes, again and again!

all the shiny things
we stuffed into our bags,
fall like empty bells
to the floor.

the dogs of passion
like the festered wound.
the nest of straw
blown away by the wind!

flesh returns to dust,
leaving bones to testify.
the echoes of loving
haunt the stillness.

darkness unto darkness!

Darkness, Man, And God!

lonliness...

the soul cried out for
the presence of god,
even while held in the womb!

and so stars appeared,
for we feared darkness...
forgetting darkness our mother.
and we howled as wolves,

until there was fire.
yet the flesh we cooked
was our own...
darkness wept, and created dawn.

and the tribes of man rebelled
against the scent of the mother...
and civilization was born.
and men created distance,

between themselves,
between themselves and god.
so man created progress,
fueled by conceptual learning...

and so fed his fears,
and the distance widened!
so men created images of god,
faces cold and wrathful!

and men killed each other,
being drunk with blood.
and men raped the earth,
as savage beasts,

without the heart of animals.
prophets came and pointed the way,
men sold their words for profit!
unable to love, men learned to hate...

till the world aflame screamed, 'stop! '
and hunger became the way of the masses...
hunger for bread, and something more.
the great mother's tears fell like rain...

and the womb shuddered in silence.
till one by one, pilgrims extending hands,
formed a bridge, and lit a lantern.
and the children, born and yet unborn...

returned to the womb of darkness.
praying love and touching human faces,
aware of the presence that never left.
the sun set in glory on the cool dark night...

knowing dawn, as sure as the stars,
was coming! the howl of wolves,
the barking of dogs, the flap of wings...
suddenly silent with awe...

and connection!

Eric Cockrell

Day By Minute...

love is the part of me that dies,
the stain in the silent sink.
the lip crusted with obscurity,
the finger gnarled in the oak.
the glance that parts the clouds,
the broom forgotten on the porch.
the single parent cooking macaroni,
the dog curled at the foot of the bed.
the rent receipt in the ashtray,
grass that needs to be mowed.
the same jeans the third day,
dirty laundry, and shoes left by the door.
the book closed, the turned down page,
the light bulb that burned out Tuesday.
the distance you stare into,
shaving with a dull razor and cold water.
wilted flowers on the mantle,
the cup of coffee grown cold.
the split of lightning across your thighs,
the bark just before you came.
knee prints in old graveyards,
while protestants flinch in disgust.
your grandmother's grave,
and your father's silence,
beneath eons of dirt and time.
the tongue that startled ancient Greece,
and built pyramids by hand.
the ancient ruins of my soul,
where your demons dance by firelight.
and my body stinking of ashes,
left too long in the rain....
love is the part of me that dies,
time and again, day by minute!

Eric Cockrell

Day Is Done

nuclear fission, sins of omission,
hide your eyes, buy the lies!
hearts gone numb, minds struck dumb,
the flesh dies, stink and flies.
roll down the window, just past tomorrow,
trading souls, fighting for control.
politicians kiss and tell, on the road to hell,
the fire gone cold, nothing left to hold.

broken down, running on empty.
packs of wolves roam the cities.
children's bodies down in the alleys,
nowhere to run, day is done!
nowhere to run, day is done!

the curse of invasion, profitable occasions.
fly the flag, drums and bodybags.
different shades and colors, forgotten brothers,
it's easier to kill, than it is to feel!
the cries and the voices, ghosts of our choices,
rome burns, with every turn!
poverty's needle, almost inconceivable,
blood on the hands, blood on the hands.

broken down, running on empty.
packs of wolves roam your cities.
children's bodies down in the alleys,
nowhere to run, day is done!
nowhere to run, day is done!

Eric Cockrell

Dead In The Wombs

those same children
who died in the waters
that swallowed Atlantis....

those same children,
starving 'neath Africa's sun....
dead from the bombings

in Iraq, Afghanistan, and soon Iran....
their bodies thrown into dumpsters
here in the United States....

dead on the borders,
dead in the oil filled waters,
dead on the cocaine streets,

dead in the prisons...
dead in the colleges,
dead in the unemployment lines....

dead on the picket lines,
dead, handcuffed, and beaten....
dying, and dead, world crazy spinning...

as the 'light of the world'
sputters, and goes out....
dead in the wombs of the

homeless, hopeless, and forgotten...
dead by our hands!

Eric Cockrell

Dead Man Walking

dead man walking,
fisted hands in empty pockets.
eyes that never look up
and feet that just know the way.

small children running in a graveyard
chasing shadows, silent and grey.
an old burnt out house still smolders,
bare limbs grasping at the sky.

and love is an old bucket,
rusted, leaking on the ground.
that calls your name and
draws your face
in a room that no one enters.

there's only today and now;
yesterday lied, tomorrow died.
the taste on my lips cold and bitter
as arsenic on a rose petal.

Eric Cockrell

Dead Poets

dead poets; old cars
junked in heaps
in front of
abandoned houses...

empty mailboxes
rusting to the
ground...

empty swings creaking
in the late evening breeze;
a bottle of wine,
half-empty,
moans in the shadows.

the fields have been picked,
nothing left, but sweat stained dirt....
even the embers have grown cold,
and the pot is empty.

the sounds and smells of living
linger by unmarked stones...
dead poets; old cars...
running on empty!

Eric Cockrell

Dead Poets... In The Night

dead poets visit me in the night....
we walk the darkened hollow streets.
talking softly, or not at all....

listening to the sounds of darkness.
doors closed, curtains pulled;
those who can, sleep....

and lovers wrapped inside each other
talk in a language known only by gods.
while the broken ones stumble by,

the sound of their weeping heavy,
and cold as the night....
clouds race across the moon

leaving scars on the homeless and hungry.
young women cry out giving birth
to the screech of the owl....

churches stand empty and sterile.
the suicides and the penitents
go about their business quickly.

we stand on the corner of doubt and hope,
brothers and sisters in arms.
raise the last bottle, light a smoke....

and wait, shivering, for the endless dawn!

Eric Cockrell

Dead Silence Of The Heart

I dreamt of strawberry-rhubarb pie,
and fresh brewed black coffee...
long slow tender sensual sex,
lips hungry for mine.

The sound of rain in the night,
wrapping the earth in stillness.
walking in the frozen sunrise
with my old dog by my side.

Climbing Hawksbill on a spring day,
looking down over the gorge in awe.
barefoot, planting a garden,
believing in the sun and the rain.

Playing an old Gibson on the porch,
deep rich tones lost in the breeze.
the taste of good bourbon, and a smoke,
paying tribute to the sunset.

Standing by the stone in a cementary,
talking without words, still heard.
writing poetry with a shovel,
and a borrowed pen...

Flying with the hawk to eternity,
sprouting green leaves
on frozen branches... listening
for the sound of your voice...

In the dead silence of the heart.

Eric Cockrell

Dead Soldiers, And Bones!

dead soldiers...
beating on tin drums
with bones,
that used to wear faces!
small children singing,
songs of coming and going,
leaving the eerie taste
of things forgotten.
the field fresh plowed,
drowned by morning rain,
waits for the bodies
that seed the future.
while priests chant
neath stained glass windows.
the sun weary with bringing,
finds its way on the path.
the fresh dug graves
mourn with the ache,
longing for the thrust
of love's denial.
and dead soldiers march
across fog driven plains,
beating on tin drums
with bones,
that used to wear faces!

Eric Cockrell

Death

the shadow lurking
just outside my window;
faintly smelling like spring rain
remembered in the fall.

the first lips you kissed,
the first time you tasted
your own blood.
a good cigar, and
a shot of french brandy.

the film of time
covering the eyes.
taking away sharpness,
finding form in the vague
and near forgotten!

a Bible that smells
like damp newspapers;
shovelfuls of earth,
and an old Irish hymn.

and the weight of the undone
swings like a pendulum;
words never spoken,
almost touches, almost tears,
chances almost taken

and the fork in the road
i never took
the hoot of an owl.
water running over rocks.
pine needles carpet the ground
never walked on.

a shadow lurking
that knows my name!

Death By Civilization!

when we lit the first fire in the cave,
i heard the mournful weeping of the wolf.
the trees walked away as if they knew,
rocks resigned themselves to silence.
darkness packed her belongings and left,
the night shuddered with cold.
waves hid in oceans, moonlight hid her face,
even the wind changed her address!

Eric Cockrell

Death!

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death, not a distance,
but a door....
your heart opens

with your tears,
with your words.
not an ending,

but a different journey,
so much the same.
not a time for sadness,

but a time for awe....
standing 'neath the wings
of flight....

as the gifts of loving,
remembered,
fall like rain....

death. a cool drink of water
for lips parched and swollen....
death, the shadowy stranger

that feels like a lover....
new fallen snow
on earth preparing for spring!

death, the turning of the wheel,
the birth of a holy child,
the prayer our spirit prays!

Eric Cockrell

Death, And Life

so many forms of
death so many chapters
ended abruptly without
resolution
the father or mother
you thought you'd never lose
that you didnt spend enough time with
the son lost to a foreign conflict,
draped in a flag
the abortion you opted for
cause you couldnt see
any other way and now,
years later, you have doubts
the teenager who committed suicide,
that you couldnt reach,
somehow couldnt tell them or
show them they were not alone
the young man who overdosed
alone in an empty apartment
the baby left to die
in an alley and the teenage mother
who died there too!
the companion who walked away
after so many years and the
best part of you died there
the old man diagnosed with a cancer
that they cant treat and the death
of waiting to die.
the young family who loses everything,
and the dream of a future dies
as they become numbers lost
to the din of hopelessness
but what is death?
is it an ending?
or a beginning?
time worn brown leaves crumbling,
dissolving into dirt,
waiting through the winter
for a new spring to come

winter doesnt last forever!
spring is already there
in those time browned leaves
open your eyes, open your heart,
life never ends!

Eric Cockrell

Deck Of Cards

a deck of cards
missing the Jack of Hearts....
a revolver on the table,

one chamber empty...
an old family Bible,
the inscription page torn out...

a broken pane in the window
that the sun never hits.
a bottle of whiskey,

half empty, or half full.
an old rug by the chair,
that the dog slept on.

a grandfather clock,
hand stuck at midnight...
an old truck, broken axle....

a deck of cards...
your deal!

Eric Cockrell

Dedicated Being...

we are no more than the experience
of our giving written in each other...
not in books or letters,
not even in spoken prayers...
for our most true prayer is indeed
the interaction between us and other human beings,
with the sole purpose of dedicated being!

Eric Cockrell

Deep Into The Wood

the scars of love,
ingrained and stamped
into the wood....

rivulets worn deep
into the face of stone...
the coming of spring

in a brown crumbling leaf....
the light trapped
on the bottom of

the cave's darkness.....
the look of fear hidden
in the lines neath your eyes

as you brush lightly with death,
and squeeze my hand
against the cold....

the prayers i lift
with unspoken yielding,
trading my heart for yours....

trading my eyes
for the soft underside
of your feathers....

resting against lifetimes
stamped deep into the wood,
the tree strong, and standing

against the coming snow!

Eric Cockrell

Deep Level Concern

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deep level concern;
our own national parks
used as collateral

on loans from China!
water rights to the Great Lakes,
and other bodies of water here...

sold to China!
our jobs, Joe blue collar working
families.... sold to China!

our oil profiteer wars,
financed by China!
sleeping with the country

with the worst human rights record,
dancing with the devil!

and now, our own police forces
committing acts of violence
and oppression against Americans!

against American people protesting,
standing up for freedom and equality!
standing against the profiteers!

reacting the same way,
and with the same types of oppression,
as China!

our rights,
...our freedom,
.....our dignity.

even our rights to work and survive....

sold to....

.....and even worse,
.....sold by!

Eric Cockrell

Defiance!

standing on the cliff's edge,
we look down through clouds
to the jagged rocks below.

wings scorched, flying too
close to the sun....
eyes stinging with the dust

of a thousand worlds
that have come and gone...
sweat glistening on the marks

and bruises left by struggle.
the stink of fear clutching
at our throats, heavy on our chests...

we stare into each other's eyes,
without a word, join hands,
and make the leap....

flying, or falling....
as one!

Eric Cockrell

Defining Love

love looks like...

the bruise on the face
of the man,
who stood between you,
and the oppressor.

love smells like...

the blood and shit
on the boots,
of the man shovelling
in the ditch,
pulling still breathing bodies
from the smoking ruins....

love tastes like...

the hungry lips,
that just gave you
their last morsel of food.

love acts like...

God, before you named 'him' God,
before you bound her in concepts,
drawn by your fears!

Eric Cockrell

Degradation

the ultimate degradation,

peeing

...in

....your

.....own

.....bed,

what we have done,

.....and are doing,

...to

....planet

.....earth!

Eric Cockrell

Delicious Torture....

ah.... delicious torture!

my lips drip like rain
around your body in dust.
swallows starve, cracked windowsills,
as sunlight courts the trees
with lies too intimate to be...
cobwebs refracting daylight's passing,
snails burp in disgust...
always, only, the scent of your trail!

while somewhere old milkmen
die in horse drawn graves.
and dead soldiers dance
in a world drawn of shadow.
red wine, pipe tobacco,
curling in plumes...
the cat on the ledge waits,
a tongue etched in claw!

are we gunshots and sirens?
flood waters on the rise?
books throbbing with heat...
bodies waiting on the pyre?
turning points, and water,
boiling on the stove?
wind blown curtains startle...
i awake, alone!

Eric Cockrell

Deliver Me

deliver me...

from the fury, the noise,
and the roar of the wheel...

deliver me...

from my own insecurities,
my unconscious greed,
and my self driven fears.

deliver me...

from my conceptual understanding,
my limited knowledge,
and my worship of knowledge.

deliver me...

from all anger and hatred
in whatever disguise...

deliver me...

from being driven by
mouth and stomach unchecked,
from what i think i need.

deliver me..

from my countless mistakes,
and the excuses i make!

deliver me...

from any kind of pride
that closes the open hand!

deliver me...

from any sense of self
that would seperate and divide.

deliver me...

from laziness and tiredness,
from bitterness and loneliness.

deliver me...

from all forms of apathy,
and the want to possess...

deliver me...

and bring me to realize myself!

Eric Cockrell

Democracy Died

democracy died...
and no one noticed.
freedom flew from the window,
left a shadow on the perch.
they buried equality
in an unmarked grave.
put the faces of unborn children
on milk cartons no one saw.
they sold justice on the block,
and invested in oil...
now the only sounds in the wasteland,
oil rigs pumping, and the cawing of crows!

Eric Cockrell

Democracy... (The Cost)

every time i vote for president,
someone dies in a far off land...
and i become more guilty,
under the weight of their lies...

Eric Cockrell

Dependents

we are all dependents,
in one form or another...
that being said,
let us be working dependents,
allowing others to lean on us,
to find refuge in our living,
to count on us.

at the same time...
let us not be enslaved,
used, abused, or treated
like property!
let our actions be
the actions of a free people,
that have chosen to be involved!

Eric Cockrell

Desperate Man

with hard desperate hands,
and cold desperate eyes,
he stands on the precipice
looking for a way...

and all his ideals, morals,
and convictions fade
into one pulsing need...

to survive.

hand on the gun,
eyes fixed....
back against the wall!

Eric Cockrell

Destiny's Breath!

the face of my god is dark,
her eyes coal more precious than diamonds.
she whispers to fallen petals,
and mountains and rivers speak forth.
her lips call crows and name them eagles,
her hands are filled with bowls.
she names the darkness morning,
and from the light she weaves the night.
she bathes the human spirit,
in the sweat of tribulation.
she nurses the unwanted child,
and places flowers on unmarked graves.
she gives lost lovers candles,
builds bridges for weary pilgrims.
she forges doubt into the journey,
and plants dignity in fields gone fallow.
she walks with poets in intimate silence,
from grieving she harvests prayer.
from prayer she forms bodies,
filled with destiny's breath!

Eric Cockrell

Detainee!

detainee...
uncharged,
no rights to speedy trial....

subversive? radical?
or just daring to defy?
citizen? cant happen?

mowed down by the machine...
they do it in China all the time!
freedom of speech....

as long as you say the right words!
bill of rights?
as long as you can

afford their freedom!
corporate army....
armed thugs!

Eric Cockrell

Determined To Live!

is my skin too light, too dark?
my hair too long, too short?
am i too poor, too radical, too passionate?
do i live too hard, love too hard?
do my thoughts and feelings scare you?
too raw, too honest, too prone to make mistakes?

guess what! i'm just a man!
a human being, just like you!
sometimes a train wreck, always a believer,
always ready to get up and try again!
no apologies, no regrets, determined to live!

Eric Cockrell

Dhammic Socialism

if you break down the teachings...
of Jesus, Buddha, and all the great
spiritual teachers...
looked at their lives,
and their paths,
would this not be it?

break down prejudice,
profit, and materialism...
to the core of our beings,
we are family.

we need each other,
need to be needed by each other.
compassion demands
that we are responsible!

the fact that we allow
people to go hungry,
to be homeless,
to suffer...
while we seek to acquire
with insatiable thrust...

is nauseating!

the fact that we go to war
over territories and oil...
killing women and children,
is atrocious!

we are part of each other...
individual parts,
but parts of the whole.
we are responsible,
to and for each other.

not nations, not parties,
but communities,

involved, living
to and for each other...

Eric Cockrell

Dharma Stones (Bottomless Haiku)

battered and bloody
i face myself one last time
- opening my hands!

truth beyond the lies
that paint life as me and mine
- nameless and selfless!

awaken, let go!
there are no walls between us,
sameness, unity.

cold water, deep breath,
the flower opens, and dies...
and life remembers.

follow no one else
your heart is the universe
your mind holds the sky

limitless, be free
give without thought, without need,
plant the seed, go home!

Eric Cockrell

Dharma Stones (Bottomless Haiku) # 3

step into the rain
lose all notion of yourself
water clinging, petal!
i loved you more than
i thought i could bear to lose,
i opened the door!

fullness, emptiness,
owning nothing, part of all
unbound by no needs!
your Buddha nature
somewhere beneath your hunger
feeds instead of eats!

compassion, intent,
thought, drive, and humane action
live deeper, immersed.
fire needs the candle
candle needs fire and oxygen
hand, foot, mouth, and ears!

listen! hand given,
both written in the moment
eternity, breath!

Eric Cockrell

Dharma Stones (Bottomless Haiku)-2

i am you, you me,
we are one prism defined
by our hands, molded

colors, smells, feelings
are set free by not grasping
- touch without holding

tired of coming back
walking the same road again,
again and again...

not for me, myself
by my suffering, set free
those bound by sorrow

i would not achieve
greatness, acquire kingdoms - but
wipe away your tears!

Buddha within you
light bound by darkness breaks free
rain dances in the dust

Eric Cockrell

Dharma Talk

i'll share your suffering,
i'll hold your hand.
i'll walk beside you,
i'll give you my coat,
and my heart...
you are free to be
who you are inside.
you are not alone!

Eric Cockrell

Dharma Talk # 2 (Cry For Help)

the growl in your stomach,
your neighbor's hunger.
the wet spot on your pillow,
your neighbor's tears.
the sharp pain in your heart,
your neighbor's eviction notice.
the sadness in your mirror...
your neighbor's cry for help!

WAKE UP!

Eric Cockrell

Dharma Talk # 3 (Giving)

you own nothing
but the act of giving...
your identity,
what you have given!

Eric Cockrell

Dialogue

dialogue...

honest, naked talk,

undefined listening.

we are the bridge,

the tool, and the result...

but only if we dare!

you cannot heal

what you cannot touch.

you cannot touch,

without dialogue!

Eric Cockrell

Dialogue

when dialogue becomes a way of living,
the lamp is always lit.
the door is always unlocked,
the window is always open.
the river flows from,
and returns to the source.
when identity becomes community,
the part is whole, the whole a part.
there is infinity in nothing,
when emptiness fills the soul....

what we call god is merely the fire,
deep within our darkest being...
poured forth as gift, taking simple forms,
a cup of coffee shared,
and the moment given to listening!

Eric Cockrell

Diamonds

what am i running from?
do my feet betray my thoughts?
i have smelled the scent of the Beloved,
my eyes fixed upon her hem.
and day itself undresses,
without guilt or hesitation.
what has been the night has fallen,
like leaves beneath my feet.
beauty oozes and explodes,
into tiny simple things.
love drives the nail and pants the deer,
stamping by the fence rail.
i want to touch i cannot deny,
and will sacrifice all else.
to feel her skin against my soul,
leaving scars that glow like diamonds.

Eric Cockrell

Did I?

did i vote for the man
who sent the plane
that dropped the bombs

on the family kneeling together
in a tiny dwelling?
did i?

did i pump the gas
to drive around town
that sent the army

to invade a small country,
rich in oil....
well, did i?

did i waste the paper
that came from the tree,
the whole forest cut down....

that left the earth bare,
and choking for air....
did i?

did i throw out the food
left on my plate,
while near and far

whole families are starving.....
without a thought...
did i?

did i turn my head
as i hurried to work,
and missed the family stranded,

their car broke down
on the side of the road...
did i?

did i fail to hear
what the woman, hysterical,
and lost was saying....

as i said the 'right words',
and patted her on the back....
well, did i?

in the court of compassion,
when only the truth remains...
who bears the guilt....

will i?

Eric Cockrell

Did You Live? Did You Dare?

when the stage goes dark,
and the crowd goes silent...
whose voice whispers in the quiet?
whose hand upon your shoulder?

when the show is over,
and they roll the credits...
will your name be called?
what will they say you have done?

did you feed someone hungry,
throw a blanket over the cold?
did you wipe away a tear?
did you hold the hand of a frightened child?

did you stand against the wars?
did you grow your own food?
did you listen, did you care?
did you risk it all for a moment of love?

did you live? did you dare?

Eric Cockrell

Different

thank god we are different...
yet beneath all our differences
there lies a sameness,
that joins us together!

Eric Cockrell

Dignity Demands...

dignity demands...

i be who i am,

i stand for what i am,

and i do so with respect!

dignity demands...

i see others for who they are,

that i accept them for who they are,

and do so with respect!

dignity demands...

that i live freedom and equality,

bound by no man nor creed,

and that i live with respect.

dignity demands...

that i do this job,

of living and giving well...

knowing respect brings respect!

dignity demands...

Eric Cockrell

Disability

she has a disability,
she's not an alien,
not some freak!

she has feelings and dreams,
just like you!
she works hard, harder than most,

and gets things done,
in spite of.....
she loves to read and to think,

her mind is not warped....
she doesn't want your pity,
she wants your respect.

she's human, not a joke,
she's nobody's mistake,
with a heart open and caring....

she can do what you can,
and maybe even more....
for her disability is not

the judgement of ignorance!
a human being, beautiful young woman,
whose dreams may change the world!

Eric Cockrell

Discrimination Is Wrong

whether it be
old and young
white and black
Asian and Hispanic
man and woman
or man and man
woman and woman
rich and poor
liberal and conservative
everyone has the right
to love and be loved
discrimination is wrong!

Eric Cockrell

Distance, Or Connection?

it is time to throw the damned tea into the harbor again!
every thought we have, every feeling we have,
every word we speak, every action we do...
either creates distance between human beings,
or creates a connection!

distance equals death,
connection equals life!

i am sick and tired of the bullshit that says:
we are right and they are wrong,
we are good and they are evil.
our religion is right, and theirs is wrong.
we're going to heaven, they're going to hell...
a damned lie!

every human being deserves the right to be human.
every human being deserves the right to love, and be loved.
every human being deserves the dignity of equality.
every human being deserves the right to work,
to have shelter, to be fed, to dream!
every human being deserves to be free!

i choose connection!
if you choose distance, walk away.
my religion is human interaction.

Eric Cockrell

Do Buddhas Weep?

do buddhas weep?
do trees bend in the moonlight
as if to touch the grass?
do mountains groan in their stillness?
do the bird's wings taste the sky?
do the mouths of the dying
form prayers that the living
cannot hear, or understand?

does the wind know
from whence it came?
does it care?
does it know where it's going?
does it matter?

when we lay the clothes
of suffering down...
and walk naked into the night,
will we be alone?

and if i made love to you
across this distance...
would you dream of wolves,
and candles?

do buddhas weep?

Eric Cockrell

Do I Believe

do i believe...
in Jesus?...

a perfected human being
walking in total compassion...
totally involved in life
and living... immersed
in meeting needs
by selfless action...

'the Way, the Truth,
and the Life...'

Eric Cockrell

Do I Believe-2

do I believe...
in Buddha?...

a perfected human being,
letting go of self
and all grasping...
one with the true
nature of living...

compassionate?
yes.... you cannot be one
with all that's around you
without living compassion!

allowing questions,
shining the light,
but the path is
your own!

Eric Cockrell

Do I Believe-3

do i believe...
in you?...

i could not believe
in myself, in God, in life
itself without believing
in you!

on the road to perfection,
one hand needs another,
one heart is joined
to another...

we make it together,
or not at all!

Eric Cockrell

Do It All Again!

empty water buckets
on a porch long deserted,
the old house falling down
like a tree sheds its leaves.
the chimney stands cold,
almost roaring with silence...
and there's still a marker
in the back yard where we buried the dog.

love yellowed sheets,
and maggots in the flour.
spiders march on the outhouse walls.
empty mason jars that remember green beans,
a hoe, and a shovel with a broken handle.

ghosts walk cobwebbed halls,
the old floor sags.
and the sounds of two young lovers
haunt the ticking of an unseen clock.
damn! to go back...

and do it all again!

Eric Cockrell

Do Not The

do not the leaves love the tree
even as they fall...
and moths love the flame
into which they die?
and shadows in the night
love the stillness,
as they lay down to meet the dawn?
so love then is a series of deaths,
and each funeral has a face...
it is in the stillness when breath is taken,
that we learn to touch
with the eyes of body and soul!

Eric Cockrell

Do The Right Thing!

just one time...
do the right thing!
go the extra mile...

give more than you
can afford to lose.
risk it all to care...

stop what you're doing,
listen with an open heart.
stand up for someone

who's being abused
for just being different.
and as you're getting off

the ground from your latest fall...
help someone else who has fallen...
he's just like you!

after all, you're the one
you have to sleep with tonight!
do the right thing!

Eric Cockrell

Do They Come Clean?

at the end of the day,
when we wash our hands,
do they come clean?

homeless people, young girls
sold on the block,
hungry children, AIDS victims,
gotta watch your stocks.

black and white, brown and red,
gunfire and poverty;
kids afraid to go to school,
aint no profit in honesty.

SUV's, invaded countries,
oil doesnt buy liberty.
the takers take, the hurting weep,
at the cost of dignity.

politicians lie, preachers sell
narrow minded philosophies.
prisons full, bodies in the street,
the faces of reality.

smoke fills the air, oil fills the seas,
trade the future for the fix.
unemployed standing in line,
faceless numbers, brick upon brick.

close your door, shut your windows,
turn up the sound....
of anger, despair, and loss....
cries for help as they drown...

tell me....

at the end of the day,
when we wash our hands,
do they come clean?

Eric Cockrell

Do We Sleep....

do we sleep in the stillness,
the moment after the guns are laid down.
the day the war on terror
becomes the war on poverty.
the day different colors means rainbows,
when fists are retired, and ears are opened.
the day when the distance to god
becomes two hands open in dialogue.
the day we see ourselves naked,
and are not ashamed!

Eric Cockrell

Do You Care? Do You Care?

there are people dying everywhere,
do you care? do you care?
there are people hungry everywhere,
do you care? do you care?

gunshots, bomb drops,
thunder splits the sky.
preacher on the tv,
says you're gonna die.
patriots, deviants,
doors ripped off the hinge.
children eating fathers,
freedom on the fringe!

equality, dignity,
slam the prison doors.
bodies in the ditch,
aint nobody keeping score.
nuclear rain, cocaine,
oceans full of oil.
god died, the president lied,
coming to a boil.

there are people dying everywhere,
do you care? do you care?
there are people hungry everywhere,
do you care? do you care?

black skin, white skin,
grated till they bleed.
angry men without hope,
taking what they need.
well paid lies, cut the ties,
glass figures stand in line.
love screams, shattered dreams,
the blind lead the blind!

trees cut, doors shut,

food stamps and day old bread.
schools closed, books burned,
hear the cry of the dead.
injustice rages, guilty pages,
we reap what we have sowed.
this world on fire, with desire,
the truth the final code!

there are people dying everywhere,
do you care? do you care?
there are people hungry everywhere,
do you care? do you care?

Eric Cockrell

Do You Even (Know My Name)

for your strong scent of love,
and the dew of your wetness...
your lips that color the night sky
in deep layers of black...
your animal spirit running
through fields in the moonlight...
the taste of your flesh,
your blood on my chin...
the howl and the hoot,
and then the great stillness...
the earth shakes and tremors,
great waves rise from the sea...
and the wind itself lonesome,
fumbles with the latch to your door..
the snow fast approaching,
the last fire fed by you!

can you hear me calling?
the whisper, the moan?
or am i only an old train,
running empty on tracks leading nowhere?
do you even know my name?
the tracks beneath your eyes,
be they tears, or my coming...
gone in an instant,
fire leaves nothing to remember!

Eric Cockrell

Do You Have A Name?

perhaps you then are my heart,
do you have a name?
in the outlines of your face,
do i sense destiny?
are your eyes the last chapter?
are your feet the lamp?
am i just an old fool,
waiting on the grave?

Eric Cockrell

Do You Know What It's Like?

do you know what it's like...
to have nowhere to go,
nowhere to turn,
no one to talk to,
no one who cares,
no one who will listen?

to lose everything you've worked for?
to be homeless, hungry, and broke?
to feel the anger of hopelessness?
to act out of desperation?

think for a moment tonite...
do you know how many people
are in this position?
these people are just like you!
and but for a simple twist of fate,
you could be there too!

do you know what it's like?
do you give a damn?

Eric Cockrell

Do You Know?

do you know...
from day to day
that you have a house
of some kind to live in,
that no one's trying
to take away?

do you know...
when you go home at night
that you can put food
on the table?

do you know...
if you get sick
you can go to the doctor?

if so, you're luckier
than many in this country,
and around the world...
think about it!

Eric Cockrell

Do You Love God?

</>

do you love God?

do you love your neighbor?

do you hurt when he hurts?

do you feel need when he needs?

do you care enough to be involved?

do you believe all people are equal?

do you love yourself?

do you love God?

Eric Cockrell

Do, Say, And Stand!

the whole force and mission of the Occupy movement lies in the action of re-occupying the body of freedom itself, bringing about a fresh and new sense of equality, fairness, and hope for every citizen.... a mission we are all called to be a part of...

in every facet of daily life, freedom demands that we do, say, and stand in a way both moral and based on community... living the truth!

Eric Cockrell

Does My Vote Still Count?

i am not a corporation, i do pay taxes!
i dont take from the poor to fill my plate.
profit is not my first and only thought...
when i look at other people, i see human
beings, not numbers!
i dont believe that i am above the law.
i dont own much of anything, and i do feel
compassion....
this being said... does my vote still count?

Eric Cockrell

Does Not Own

the garden does not own the crop,
nor does the tree own the leaf.
the night sky doesnt own the dawn,
clouds do not own the rain.
coyotes do not own the desert,
fishes dont own the seas...
only man is so foolish to think he owns,
what a sad state we're in!

Eric Cockrell

'Does Truth Live Here? '

i walked down liberal boulevard,
turned left on anarchy and doubt.
made a final right on questioning...
and knocked on the door of an old house.
when the old woman answered i asked her,
'can you tell me, does truth live here? '
she laughed and shook her head,
'that's who i hoped you were! '

Eric Cockrell

Doesnt Allow Dissent!

they're using our attacks
on our own students,
on our own children....

for daring to raise a voice of dissent,
for daring to question....

as an excuse in Egypt
to crackdown on their own....

apparently, freedom
...doesnt allow dissent!

Eric Cockrell

Doesnt Smell Like

blasphemy!
equality, not equal.
dignity, dont qualify!
bill of rights, big brother....
one vote, doesnt count...

spirituality, apathy.
patriots, body count.
liberate, invade!
speak out, shot down.....
educate, imprison.

working pride, beg for food...
land of plenty, homeless.
elite few, faceless numbers.
society, depravity...
humanity, self-indulged....

doesnt smell like,
...doesnt even smell like...
FREEDOM!

Eric Cockrell

Dogma

dogma...
mankind's attempts,
however feeble,
to draw the wings of the hawk
with broken crayons,
with which to fly.

never knowing they're
already flying!

Eric Cockrell

Doing Small Things

doing small things...
with big hands,
old hands that shake a little,
fumble a little,
but know their way.
aches and pains,
memory's reminder...
and all in all,
it's a good day to be alive!

eyes grow dim,
but still have a spark.
pages written and sealed
for whatever comes.
the soul ferments,
aging like good wine.
two glasses on the table,
waiting... for the guest to arrive.

cant change the past,
and probably shouldnt.
what we've come to be,
step by step...
fresh flowers in the vase,
and the floors are swept.
as if to say 'thank you'...
for the chance to be!

Eric Cockrell

Done!

done!
past the point of caring,
what anyone says or thinks
about my life!
now to the business
of just living!
without limit,
without hesitation!

no time for regret,
no stone left unturned.
love, at all costs,
they can build the fire
after i'm gone!

i am the man that i am,
and nothing else!
let it be said i cared!
let the talk and the judgements
fall like dust...
leave my grave unmarked,
and my soul to time...

done!

Eric Cockrell

Dont Call Me God!

dont call me God!
dont limit me to your tribal names!
dont wrap me in your conceptual boxes,

i'm not a trinket or a talisman!
dont imprison me in your temples,
i am not aloof and untouchable!

you cant buy me with your offerings,
you cant use me like a sword!
dont limit me to a frail body,

dont call me father or mother!
for i am life itself,
evolving in a thousand different forms!

you pray to me when you give,
when you reach out to those in need.
you praise me when you live,

when you dance your precious breaths!
in all, through all, the sacred and mundane,
even the dirt beneath your feet...

is holy, for i am there!

Eric Cockrell

Dont Cry For Me, Jesus

dont cry for me, Jesus,
it should be me crying for you.
when those that invoke your name,
do so on the field of battle;
in the name of prejudice and hatreds,
from well insulated rooms,
padded against the cries
of the needy and hungry.
in the name of a 'holiness'
that forgets the sacredness of life.
in the name of a justice
that sees colors and wealth and privilege.

dont cry for me, Jesus,
for they would leave you
on that old cross,
and invoke your name like magic
to absolve well planned sins.
dont cry for me, Jesus...
cry for those too deaf to hear,
too blind to see,
too callous to feel...
and okay, maybe a couple tears
for me!

Eric Cockrell

Dont Talk To Me!

dont talk to me about Jesus,
when you wouldnt sit down
and eat with Him...
dont talk to me about patriotism,
the only flag i allow
is the one that burns.
dont talk to me about freedom,
bought with the blood
of Native Americans...
Asians, Africans, Middle Eastern peoples,
and renegade fugitive Irishmen.
dont talk to me about equality,
when you treat your women as possessions.
dont talk to me about morality,
dont even go there!
dont talk to me about sexuality,
when you hide in darkened rooms,
doing things in secret
that dont rhyme your Sunday prayers.
dont talk to me about truth,
and try to sell me the lie!
dont talk to me about fear,
and then try to use it against me.
just... dont talk to me!

Eric Cockrell

Dont Tell Me (That You'Re A Man)

dont tell me
(that you're a man!)
how many nails have you driven?
how many cows have you milked?
how many fields have you plowed?
how many women have you loved?
how many loves have you lost?
how many sick children
have you sat up with?
how many diapers have you changed?
how many double shifts have you pulled?
how many fights have you won or lost?
how many times have you got knocked down,
and then got back up?
how many times have you stood up,
when everyone else stayed seated?
how many times have you spoke out,
when everyone else remained silent?
how many times have you given,
more than you could give?

no, dont tell me
(that you're a man) ...
prove it to yourself!

Eric Cockrell

Dont You Think It's Time?

children have rights,
women have rights.
lovers have rights.
people of all religions,
and even atheists have rights.
people of all colors,
speaking every language have rights.
trees and rivers have rights.
cats and dogs have rights.
cattle have rights,
homeless people have rights.
prisoners have rights.
democrats and republicans have rights,
even socialists have rights.
the jobless have rights,
old people have rights...
and the hungry have
the right to be fed!

damnit! dont you think it's time?

Eric Cockrell

Door Mat

dormant
doesn't mean
door mat!

old men need
a little loving
too!

fan the embers, baby...
this old fire's
not gone out!

and the long dark
night is coming.

Eric Cockrell

Door Of Death (For Smoky)

the door of death,
just that, a door...
the face of god
shaves in your mirror.
the fire of understanding
lit by the match,
held in the hand
at the end of your arm!
eternity but total
and conscious awareness,
finding the universe
in each petal of the rose.
the leaf just budded
will turn and fall,
to lose itself in sleep,
and become leaf again!

Eric Cockrell

Double Tragedy!

when they notified him
that his only son had been
killed in Afghanistan...

he went out in the yard
and draped an American flag
across the windshield of
his '57 chevy...
and drenching it in gasoline,
he set it ablaze...

and he sat on the porch
with his Vietnam Vet hat
pulled down low over his eyes...
sipping good Kentucky bourbon...

when it had burnt down
and he could hear the sirens,
he took the 38 caliber smith and wesson
from his lap, and putting it to his temple,
pulled the trigger!

in the paper they called it
a double tragedy!

Eric Cockrell

Down In The Ditch

the shattered eye,
the haunted soul.
the borrowed heart,
spinning out of control.

the maddened push,
to go on and on....
the remembered tug,
after the moment's gone.

the naked prayer,
the mirror of fire.
the hurricane
simply called desire.

the savage tear
that shakes the ground.
take the hand, give a damn,
cut the body down.

the stink of truth
makes the face melt away...
take off your hat,
empty your pockets and stay.

give all or nothing,
no time to pretend.
get down in the ditch,
and dig with your friends.

Eric Cockrell

Dream In B Minor

i dreamt Jesus came back last night
& walked thru the tents & tarps
& the mud & the cholera of Haiti...
amidst the bodies & the children crying;
and He turned back towards Jerusalem,
weeping for the sins of apathy
to be crucified again.

i dreamt Jesus came back last night
& walked thru the streets & the cities of America...
thru the addiction & the poverty,
the homelessness, the prejudice, the lostness...
to the halls & cathedrals of Washington
where life is bought & sold & blood is cheaper
than oil...

& He turned away from the cross,
and went fishing!

Eric Cockrell

Dream Of A Laughing God!

conceptions...
all too often wrapped
in packages of 'me'!

yes, i was there
when the universe
was created!

yet i was only dust,
released from creation's
hand... only darkness,

cut into logs
and burned for light!
only the echo of the sound,

the dream of
a laughing God!

Eric Cockrell

Dreams Of Home

i guess i always wanted to be,
the gristled old man whose life
is folded up in the pocket
of his coveralls...
who sits with the small boy,
teaching him to whittle,
unfolding stories like chewing gum.
who fixes the kite,
finds the lost dog...
and builds the fire
on a winter's night....
who, staring at the first flakes of snow,
smiles, and dreams of home!

Eric Cockrell

Dreamt!

i dreamt of snowfall,
silence wrapped around silence...

or maybe it was just what's left of you,
kissing what's left of me....

or maybe it's the only reply
that i have for God...

or maybe just my lifetime,
staring back at me...

or maybe it's the answer
to the question i cant speak....

or maybe it's just death,
coming around like an old friend!

Eric Cockrell

Drilling For Oil

flesh colored ghosts
walking through the
oil fields... carrying

mannequin babies
on their shoulders.

draped in American flags,
carrying Bibles, and
pearl handled revolvers.

past rusted out chevrolets,
stepping on books that
were banned....

singing the songs of Jesus
to corpses that cant hear....

past tomblike houses
where strangers lived and
died... pictures of dead presidents...

empty Jim Beam bottles in
the windows, covered with soot!

drilling for oil...

Eric Cockrell

Drink Me Then!

drink me then,
my arms, my feet, and my dreams.
i've spun my web out of moonlight,
and now the trees come to bury the dead.
there are small stones that hold infinity,
whose very smoothness holds myriad maps.
while raindrops speak of salvation and seduction,
and the boxes are wrapped and eternally silent...
the lies we planted on fevered nights,
still hold moments of magic and touch.
and now the fire itself has come for cost,
as the falling star claims a name for its own...
sweat and tears, semen and the shake,
of the old man's hand as he paints the night...
let us not speak, tis a time to listen,
a time that hands redeem...
for we are no more than love and failure,
no less than the hunger that drives the wind!

Eric Cockrell

Drinking Silence...

drinking silence,
i leave this body behind.
the body i long for,
is both fire and darkness.
the land i go to,
has neither walls nor shores.
it flows with the oceans,
and gives and takes!

Eric Cockrell

Drown Out The Rain

the quiet beauty of
rain swept streets...
the deep sadness
in the lost stares

of people walking them,
no direction, nowhere to turn...
and the agony of the apathetic,
standing behind windows,

curtains closed,
who turn up the music
to drown out the rain,
and so, feel nothing at all!

Eric Cockrell

Drunk On Grieving

we get so drunk
in our own personal grieving:

lost loves, lost family members,
lost jobs, lost houses, lost dreams....

we forget that grieving
is a part of the human condition....

and most important, we
are a part of the human condition!

that which hurts one hurts all.
healing is a joint endeavor!

Eric Cockrell

Drunk On Jesus

she walks barefoot,
clad in panties, and
a long flannel shirt...

her long hair falling
down her back...
she's drunk on Jesus,

sunlight dances in her hair...
she smells like coming home,
her eyes soft as she hums.

nothing needed, nothing asked,
a prayer wrapped around...
light born from shadow,

the flower opens!

Eric Cockrell

Drunk, In The Eyes Of God

walking with Rilke
down these varicose streets,
hands trembling, and bruised.

amid the sirens of war
and the stupor of greed;
fish come to the surface

gasping for air...
vacant buildings breathe,
exhaling smoke, and

something else more sinister...
faceless strangers hurry by,
bundled up in their fears.

stone deaf, or just stone!
the door padlocked, and guarded...
flesh becomes shadow...

and stinks... a flock of birds
headed south... blood red
rain beginning to fall...

the call of living
like a faraway train...
that no one dares answer...

drunk, in the eyes of God!

Eric Cockrell

Duct Tape World

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rice and beans,
in the slow pot...
morning hangs,

duct tape lives
in the balance....
eyes wide open,

looking both ways...
grab a smoke,
and a shovel....

join in!
wiping last night's love
from the corner of the eyes,

or maybe just memory,
and an empty chair....
long autumn day

on the path to deliverence....
rice and beans,
in a duct tape world!

Eric Cockrell

Dust

the old man puttered around his bushes...
taking his time, ... time was all he had left.
since his wife had died, it seemed like everything
was suspended. just him and the dog now, and
the dog was old and blind.
Maria watched him. everyday the same thing, in
his yard, or walking his dog. she thought to herself,
'that's just sadness walking...'
Maria was 28, never married, kinda plain, but clean.
her boy Tyler was seven, a boy's boy, and in school.
she put the pie in the oven, and walked over to the
coffeepot. she paused for a moment, then poured
two cups, and walked out the door.
'hey, George, want a cup of coffee? '
'thank you, dont mind if i do.'
they exchanged small talk...after a bit the old man said,
'getting a little tired, gonna have to sit down. you wanna
come in? '
'yea, just for a bit.'
they went in the back door, and sat down at the kitchen
table. she noticed things were a little dusty, but otherwise
ok. there was a stillness that permeated the house.
there were pictures on the wall, mostly family pictures,
most in black and white.
'how're your kids? '
' ok i guess, dont hear from them much. every now and then
they'll call and tell me how the grandkids are doing...'
she opened the Bible on the table. 'guess you read this a lot/'
'used to... now i dont see so well to read anymore.'
she looked down to where she had opened the Bible. a passage
was marked. 'to everything there is a season...' she closed the
book
'guess you get awful lonely? '
'not so bad during the day, pretty bad at night...'
'i just put a strawberry pie in the oven... maybe tonite after i put
Tyler to bed, i'll bring you a piece.'
'thank you, i'd appreciate that! '
she walked back across the road, wondering what he ate, or if...

Dust # 2

the old man fell asleep in his chair, and dreamt:
he was swinging the sledge barechested in the
hot summer sun, driving iron fence posts. his
daughters were pulling the wire fence every
now and again he stopped to help them pull it
tight. the dogs ran free, chasing each other, and
barking

finally, he stopped. 'gonna go in and check on your
mom. y'all watch the dogs! '
he opened the sliding door, and walked into the coolness.
letting his eyes adjust for a moment, he stared across
the room. his woman sat on the counter, her feet in
the sink, shaving her legs. grinning, he walked across
the room.
she looked up. 'what are you grinning at, fool? '
'the prettiest damn thing i've seen in a while! '
she wrapped her legs around his sweaty waist. 'well,
what are you going to do about it? '
he picked her up. one of his daughters came to the door.
'you coming back out now, daddy? '
'not right now, baby.'

Eric Cockrell

Dysfunctional

a dysfunctional
delusional family,
battling and babbling
incoherantly over

borrowed money!

while their own children
lay dying of starvation....

and the world turns away
in shocked disgust!

Eric Cockrell

Each Other's Eyes

what if we built a fire,
and put down our books...
and read the silence
in each other's eyes!

Eric Cockrell

Each....

each step we take
resonates in the halls of eternity.
each word we speak
like thunder foretells rain.
each helping hand we offer
discovers another universe.
each thought we dare
changes history forever.
each desire we realize
brings forth new crops.
each truth we commit to
unlocks another door.
each tear we cry
reveals the face of God.
and in each person we love
we find our true selves!

Eric Cockrell

Early Spring!

early spring?
windblown sunlight,
patches of shadow.
the threat of thunder,
storms drip from the cup.

bare branches budding,
sap on the rise.
this old body rises
from its wintry grave!

the fire that smoldered
laps out in flame.
the need to touch,
to create, and to die.

early spring?
a tornado, or just echoes.
the ghost of winter still lurks,
and tugs at the door!

Eric Cockrell

Ears Gone Deaf!

rich people pray
with their eyes closed,
hands in their pockets...

poor people pray
o'er shared fires,
the cooking pot names

the faces of their children.
whose God listens?
whose God cares?

the earth keeps turning
with ears gone deaf!

Eric Cockrell

Easy To Be Godly....

it's easy to be godly
beneath a tree on a warm afternoon....
much harder in the alley,
scuffing for food,
picking up needles,
and burying the bodies
of unwanted children...
yet there is no difference!

Eric Cockrell

Echoes Of Oceans

why is this road so familiar?
as if my feet knew the way.
even the trees by the side
seem like old friends,
every fork is sure!

i thought i was going out,
to find freedom and salvation.
but i keep winding inward.
the soft rain that falls
feels like my own tears,
the wind smells like my heart.

the tiny shell on the shore
is smooth against my palm.
i hold it to my ear,
listening to the echoes of oceans,
where my spirit resides!

Eric Cockrell

Ecstasy (As You Sleep)

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ecstasy,
sheds the skin,
comes out of the shell....

leaves the firelit cave,
for the darkness,
and shadows' whisper

among the trees....
takes the kiss of wind
over the door well latched....

jumps from the ledge
never knowing how deep
or how cold the water below!

walks the forbidden mile,
fights the battle already lost,
with the conviction of desire....

brushes the nipple with fingers
piano key walking.....
almost kissing with fingertips

well worn and sure....
blows on the rain wet ember
believing in fire....

brushes the hair from your face,
watching, as you sleep!

Eric Cockrell

Education!

education, education, education!
every child, regardless of race,
gender, religion, or living status....

deserves the same chance
for a good education!

quit laying off teachers!
lay off corrupt brokers!
lay off ineffective politicians!

give the children a chance!
it will cost us more if we dont!

Eric Cockrell

Ego/Soul

the ego spurts
onto fresh laid sheets,
pounds its chest and shouts,
'i have left my mark! '
yet the soul laughs quietly,
shakes the dust from its feet...
and turns with a grin,
knowing well the banter of fools!

Eric Cockrell

Electric Pulse

i follow the trail
of your longing
from your neck down

to your inner thighs....
finding the beginning
of the cosmos... wet,

dark, hot, and hungry
for new life 'neath the
touch of the planters hands...

oceans i find, and pounding
waves... forests primeval,
and darkness creating light...

surging with electric pulse!

Eric Cockrell

Embrace!

body bruised,
burning in the fire
that consumes and names!

living by hunger,
fed my memory...
and the scent of something

from that faraway shore!
stories written in ashes,
the crackle and the smoke...

winter, and stillness.
but the light still burns,
the room stark and empty!

hand extended,
naked, unashamed!
calling forth the lover

dressed in flesh and touch!
breathe on me!
softly blow the ashes....

still fire beneath...
waiting for embrace!

Eric Cockrell

Empty Boxes

woke up to Voltaire
and Tolstoy, black coffee,
and cigarettes....

heavy fog on a crooked road,
Christmas lights blinking,
and a dead stillness....

the moan of empty houses,
empty factories, empty streets,
and the whisper of children,

food stamps hung in their stockings!
an old stray cat waiting to be fed,
and the heaviness of the mongrels,

left to work the streets.
somewhere bells are ringing,
right here not the scent;

a cross painted on a brick wall,
empty boxes blown by the wind!

Eric Cockrell

Empty Cans And Shoes...

the old blind dog curled in the memory of....
faces on milk cartons whisper in the pews.
the blade held steady against the turning wheel,
while armpits leave paragraphs for simple gods.

there is no gunfire here,
only the sound of haunted church bells,
and the gnawing of hunger in hand me down jeans.
the scent of black coffee and borrowed cigarettes,
and the lie of random snowflakes.

whose voice beneath the ground?
even the streets shudder with need.
the pimp and the street preacher,
both with something to sell...
someone else's body for your sins!

abandoned cars with broken windows,
used needles, Bibles wrapped in brown paper.
small boys walking without coats or names,
sirens wail and cash registers ring....

memories? breasts and moonlit eyes!
upturned lips, crosses of silk and birch.
ghosts wrapped in fingers of flesh,
and candles no one thought to light...
god lives in mirrors, empty cans and shoes!

Eric Cockrell

Empty Paper Cups

i do not wish to be great,
to turn and bow on the final stage.
i have no desire to be the train,
just a common plank on the track.

i do not brandish light for the blind,
i walk among shadows without a noise.
my name could be key, wellhouse, or pump...
my voice the sound of a sparrow hatched.

i taste like old trees,
and rain falling from a rusted gutter.
i've had long conversations with dogs,
walked window ledges with cats.

i know the stories of old tires,
i've hung my hat on rusted nails.
i pray in the moonlight with spiders,
and sing praises to the ants.

i am the lick of the tongue,
the bent finger stroking your eyes.
i come rushing like the wind,
leaving stray leaves and empty paper cups!

Eric Cockrell

Empty Pockets

what does it mean to be free
does anybody care
the lost sounds of liberty
the last honest prayer
if Jesus died for my sins
then why do i still hurt
cant justify where i've been
drawing circles in the dirt

does love have a face
or no face at all
yes, and is there any place
for the little man to fall
and if God still cares
why are things so hard
crosses burning in the night
empty pockets in the heart

now what's the price of life
will anybody pay
children lost in the night
children lost in the day
no work, no jobs, and no hope
and nothing left to pawn
at the end of my rope
chasing shadows in the dawn

does love have a face
or no face at all
yes, and is there any place
for the little man to fall
and if God still cares
why are things so hard
crosses burning in the night
empty pockets in the heart...

what does it mean to be free...

Empty....

birds of prey
picked the shell like flesh
from my bones till
they were bare...

and that which had echoed
the pounding waves,
and had held the wind...
bare bones, and empty...

no longer an echo,
no longer a cup...
the sound, the waves, the wind...
all empty!

from emptiness we come,
to emptiness we return!

Eric Cockrell

End Of The World!

pan fried tators,
grilled trout,
cool clear spring water.
smoke rising slow,
the coffee starts to boil.
black crows circle,
eyes down in the brush.
clouds chasing forever,
nowhere else to be!

night fall coming,
you can feel the trees whisper.
mountains in the distance,
nod without a word.
curl up together
to the crackle of the fire.
while the old dog watches
for the end of the world!

Eric Cockrell

End Of The World....

i'm not concerned about the end of the world...
for me the world ends every day that we're
still fighting wars, that children around the world
go to bed hungry, that families are left homeless,
that men and women cant find jobs, that people
are denied justice and equality, that children cant
afford to go to school, that old people cant get
medical care, enough to eat, or a place to live...
that lonely people cant find love.... and that nobody
seems to give a damn!

Eric Cockrell

Endures

in the end...
it's not what you own,
it's what you give...

that endures!

Eric Cockrell

Enlightenment

</>
enlightenment....

sweat...
...dripping
.....from
.....the
.....forehead

of the old man cutting wood
for the single mother of three....

tears
...falling
....from
.....the
.....eyes

of the young woman holding
the orphaned child close....

the sky lit up with 'enemy fire'....

the open hand

that
...does
.....not
.....ask
.....questions!

Eric Cockrell

Enough Just To Know!

what is change?
a radical move to
the right or left?
a leaving of the past,
and all its baggage?
a fresh coat of paint?
a new lover?
the death of a friend?

seasons pass to seasons,
and then return...
changing, or evolving?
maybe an endless cycle!

where are we going?
do we know?
do we have to go?
will it be better or worse
when we arrive?
what are we looking for?

are we the picture,
or the paint not yet dry?
whose hand holds the brush?
and who is the painting for?

is it change we seek for?
or a return to something long forgotten?
must we create again and anew?
or is something there that we have lost?

does the wind know or care
where it came from,
and where it is going?
or is it enough just to know,
just to be, the wind?

Eric Cockrell

Enough Said!

if bigots breed bigots,
and hypocrites breed hypocrites...
and old heretics
rarely breed at all...
where are we now?

if our addictions
to our religions cause...
division, hatred, prejudice,
inequalities, and wars...
maybe we need to look
at what we believe!

i am so sick of
racial slurs, sexual slurs,
and ignorant fears...
i could vomit!

freedom...
inclusive,
not exclusive!
spiritual...
compassionate,
not judgmental!
enough said!

Eric Cockrell

Enough!

dead tired from work,
fell asleep in my chair.
woke up with a start;
dreaming of sex, and death,
and the ten thousand things
i worry about, but cant change.

get up,
sweep the floor,
pour a cup of coffee,
stare out the window...
night falling over the trees
like an anvil.

who am i?
a scarecrow with
a cardboard heart,
an adjustable wrench,
broken, and discarded.
a candle melted down,
a doorbell that
doesnt work anymore!

an aching back...
a set of lips in a jar.
a sign thrown in the street
when the goon squad came...
saying: 'Stop The Wars! '

an iron barred teepee
built over silent ground,
bones scattered and buried
by the layers of time.
enough!

a shot of brandy,
curl up with a book...
spirit and flesh,
and whispering ghosts!

Eric Cockrell

Epilogue

Part 1

a '69 Chevy truck,
making its way slowly
up the old logging road,
centipede crawl, the scent
of the pines...
to a small clearing,
where we set up camp.
pitched the tent,
gathered wood for the fire.

enough daylight left,
we began the climb,
up the steep grade
to the top...
the cry of the bobcat,
startles...
then laughter, and we
moved on up.

an old rattlesnake sunning,
careful, go 'round.
we stood on the face of rock,
looking down through the gorge.
the air pure and heady,
the silence overwhelmed.
two hawks gliding down
beneath us.

for a moment then,
timeless...
i'd almost forgotten,
till a few drops of rain
on this morning's windshield,
brought it all back!

Eric Cockrell

Epilogue (Conclusion)

i am a child of weeping,
i cannot lie or pretend.
the voice of those that hunger,
the face of those in need.
the cry for justice amid injustice,
the stand for equality and fairness.
the torch of liberty and human rights,
that burns without identity.
the sweat of god fallen
on the dust covered road.
the whimper of the holy child,
held in his mother's arms.
the needle laid down,
the slave set free.
the prayer of urine and blood,
the common body of love seeking love.
the hands and the feet,
nothing more and nothing less.
and destiny, but this,
to paint with raw color!

Eric Cockrell

Epilogue (Part Three)

shivering nails,
black and white coffins whisper.
bodies without heads,
strewn in the sand.
the taste of gunpowder
on my lips.
i bow, but cannot pray!

the sound of the oil rigs,
the coarse rhythm of greed.
take and destroy, take and fulfill!
the cry of sea life,
the gurgling choke,
soon to be the children
of flaccid men.

buildings like bodies,
stripped empty and bare.
the memories smell
of life that once was.
empty, and pulsing,
with the want of need,
no one hears the ghosts within.

hunger and homelessness,
heroin and Jesus.
the shelves are bare,
the mother's eyes are bleeding.
the nameless and unwanted,
cast aside in the storm,
while ghouls walk amid

the rubble of the lie.

sing for me, pray for me,
take my hand, take my hand...
even when i close my eyes,
i still hear, still feel,
the faces of the wind!

and god, if there be,
in each and every tear!

Eric Cockrell

Epilogue (Part Two)

picked up late summer,
convict pipe streets,
cuffed and stuffed,
tagged and thrown
into a cell of fourteen.

plaster walls,
cold iron bars,
playing poker for smokes.
drunks, thieves,
an axe murderer no one spoke.

and crazy old Walt,
spinning stories for all.
town barber, church deacon,
came home to find his wife
in bed with a friend.

had been drunk ever since,
more time in than out.
still said a prayer
when he thought that
no one could see.

watered down coffee,
grey food on metal plates.
sometimes a scuffle,
usually just words.
time passed in an opium dream.

looking through the bars,
out the lone window.
i watched the leaves turn,
then fall,
as the days grew shorter.

now those leaves have turned,
the same or different,
no matter.

and freedom seems as far,
behind the bars of my life!

Eric Cockrell

Epiphany, Dead Man Walking

i learned to walk again,
the day you drove away
and left me standing in the drive...

i learned to see again,
staring at old photographs
in a book hid away.

i learned to think again,
thinking, and rethinking
every move and every action.

i learned to feel again,
struck dumb with waves of sorrow,
with blood on my lips.

i learned to cry again,
in the dark and sleepless night,
when no one else could see.

i learned to fight again,
pushed back against the wall
with nothing left to lose.

i learned to pray again,
to a God that doesnt answer,
from the gates of hell.

i learned to dream again,
violent shaking nightmares,
waking up to a cold sweat.

i learned to love again
to cherish every moment,
every touch forgotten.

i learned to walk again,
and walked off into the sunset
with our hearts in my hands.

Eric Cockrell

Epitaph

love is a forest fire,
the burning bush, smoke
rising from the embers
of a moment lost to eternity...
love is a healing touch,
the nourishing hand,
the echo of the self
whispering from its deepest
recesses... and answering!

love is murder... destroying
everything in its path.
love is a knife, cutting the soul
from its prison of identity...
love is a trash truck...
picking up the pieces of
lifetimes thrown to the curb...
love is a broken window
in a house where nobody lives...

love is the bitter taste
i keep spitting, walking down
this old road again...
yet love is the epitaph,
written in blood and sweat,
that my living leaves behind.

Eric Cockrell

Epitaph In Dust

hands that were open,
never grasping.
eyes that saw and knew,
without judging.

ears that heard what was said,
felt what was unsaid.
heart that wrapped around darkness
without needing light.

a soul that preferred to be nameless,
life remembered for its living.
a moment in time, eternal...
a spark of flame, then stillness.

Eric Cockrell

Equal

equal,
..equal,
...equal,
....equal,
.....equal,
.....equal,
.....equal!

dont it sound good?
wouldnt it feel good?
think about it,
and then do something about it!

equal!

Eric Cockrell

Equal Rights,2011

equal rights to live,
equal rights to love.
equal rights to believe,
to speak out, to stand up
and be counted.

equal rights to work,
equal rights to study.
equal rights to build.
equal rights to profess faith,
equal rights to pray.

equal rights to give...
equal rights to live,
equal rights to love!

Eric Cockrell

Equality... (In A Word)

equality...
in a word,
no more talk of
the 'land of the free'.
you founded this country
over the scattered bones
of 100,000,000 Native Americans.
built this country
on the backs of
African-American slaves,
and poor Scotch-Irish refugees,
who turned your earth,
and built your homes.

'give me your tired, your poor...'
more cheap labor?
to build your cities,
your railroads, work your steel.
how many faceless bodies buried
in your cold dark mines?
how many second class young men
sent off to war?
how many women paid less,
treated as less?
how many farmworker immigrants
paid too little,
treated like trash?
how many slum children
sent off to prison?

how many lives sold off
for bottom line profit?
disembodied jobless,
driven from their homes?
how many minimum wage slaves
praying for food stamps?
how many 'cant afford an education'
futures written in stone?
how many sparrows on the fence?

you want to honor those who've served?
all of these,
the people who have served you!
who have met your needs!
Memorial Day, an epitaph!

Eric Cockrell

Equally Holy....

there is no difference,
in the man painting the walls
of the chapel,
and the homeless man pissing
in the alley...
in the Madonna,
and the young woman
giving birth on the floor
of a welfare apartment.
in the Buddha,
and the child starving
to death in a third world country...
in the doctor saving lives,
and the addict on the street.
in the peacemaker,
and the soldier afraid on the battlefield...
in the leader, the priest, and the whore.
in black or white, and the illegal immigrant.
all are equally holy!

Eric Cockrell

Eternal

like stars falling
from an unknown sky,
tiny sparks that explode
and are lost forever
in the never ending darkness....

ghost ships sailing
on uncharted seas...
with no destination,
and no way home.

mountains that rise
to stand for an infinite moment,
and then are lost in
pages of history long forgotten....

we live our lives!

too often unaware, ungrateful,
too self-indulged to see,
to taste, to touch, to feel;
to do anything that makes a difference,
to leave anything in our passing
that's eternal!

stars falling
from an unknown sky...

Eric Cockrell

Eternity

i felt eternity for one moment
and it was like...
the first night we made love all night,
watching our children being born...
standing naked in the yard
during a thunderstorm at night...
a new set of strings on a Martin guitar.

as if God had escaped from the great churches
built & watched over by self-righteous men;
and blew like the wind across the fields
of time & space & understanding.

as if the Great Mother held me to her breast
while the waves lapped at my feet...
and i felt the rhythm of silence
in a single beat of my heart.

i felt eternity for one moment,
and there was no difference between
you & i & anyone else...
there was no anger, only hunger...
hunger for the truth,
hunger for the moment!

Eric Cockrell

Eternity And Hell!

i know that
eternity is real,
for i've seen the love

in a small child's eyes!

and yet i know
that hell is real...
for i've seen what we're doing

to these same children!

Eric Cockrell

Eternity Borrowed

eternity borrowed,
....when old lovers kiss
.....like strangers meeting

for the first time...

rainwater dripping from tin,
...tastes like yesterday forgotten,

as lips
...and tongues,
.....explore!

Eric Cockrell

Eternity Then..... (One Small Flicker)

eternity then,
one small flicker of the flame,
a comma in the book of life,
the point where roads meet,
and diverge...
a tiny shard of broken glass,
a dropp of sweat on the back of a worker,
ejaculation, and echo...
each vein of the leaf turning,
a stray dog's turd.
the creak of the wheel that needs geased,
the sound between the gunshot
and the thud of the body.
the moment just after the body is covered.
the whisper of an empty plate,
the marching order of the ants.
the silence when your lover walks out the door.
the color of the bent nail,
the wrinkle on the pillow.
the shout for peace no one hears,
the rattle of justice breaking chains.
the flap of wings when the bird lifts off.
the groan of the mountain stripped.
the funeral dirge of oil stricken fishes.
the turn of the key in the lock.
the sound of god's footsteps,
the mourning cry of the empty room.
the brush of hands when the spirit shudders,
the tremble of lips forgotten.
the collision of ending and beginning,
but a moment, memory, and dust!

Eric Cockrell

Eternity Wrapped

empty nest,
fragments of shells,
and small indentures

of living...
sunlight echoes,
haunting memories....

of wings flapping
against the emptiness
of pure being....

eternity wrapped
in small creatures
and simple things!

Eric Cockrell

Eternity, And Such...

eternity, and such...
the stain in the coffee cup,
the holes in the old man's underwear.
the rough tongue of a stray cat,
the shadow moving in the alley.
the trail left by the snail,
paper cups blown by the wind.
the blood left on the highway,
the dog dead in the ditch.
the glass shattered on the floor,
the stink of the body
three days after...
the limb torn from the tree
by the memory of storm.
your pillow, my hat,
a shot of brandy in an empty room.
the sound the heart makes...
when no one can hear!

Eric Cockrell

Even Buddhas Die

even buddhas die...
but without mourning,
without a sense of loss,
without asking for tears.

but they do feel mourning,
yours...
they do feel a sense of loss,
yours....
and they shed tears,
that are yours....

and so reborn by choice,
to help carry your bucket,
and walk beside you...
for buddhas help buddhas
till all are free!

Eric Cockrell

Even More!

we too often forget
that love is unconditional...
that it is demanding,
that it must be all and not less...
that it gives to the point of bleeding,
that it forgives terrible scars...
that it takes and one must be willing,
to die or even more!

Eric Cockrell

Even Stones Shout Hallelujah!

have i then lived my life
to be the stones beneath god's feet,
as she climbs the pathway to eternity?
to be the lantern, no, just the match,
just outside the door to your heart?
to be the dew lying with the grass,
the voices of trees whispering?
the hand that takes the small child's hand,
the howl that names the wolf?
the passion inside the thunder clouds,
the soft prayers of the creek gurgling o'er rocks....

to be the lullaby of mountains and valleys,
the redemption of the robin's nest.
to fall like snowflakes undressing the night,
with the very wonder of being.
to be the sound of the lonesome voice heard...
or just the moonlight dancing through windows.
to fill the bowl that's empty,
and empty the one that's filled....
to be the perfume of the shadow,
that knows you better than any....

if so then, let it be...
let my footprints be the echoes...
time calls for the waves it sent,
and the shore is long in waiting.
be that the moon,
or the smiles of unnamed pilgrims?
what's done is done,
yet what ends begins....

and even stones shout hallelujah!

Eric Cockrell

Even When Alone

the blackened plow,
the blood stained glove.
the hammered blade,
some call it love.
the bottomless well,
cant drink enough....
the blackened plow,
the blood stained glove.

the eyes of hunger,
empty face of loss.
the wheel of man
turns despite the cost.
when you're lost at sea,
and your ship is tossed.
the eyes of hunger,
empty face of loss.

and still the takers take
till the blood is drawn.
while the innocent pray
in the dark before dawn.
the weak sacrificed
to feed the strong...
the takers take
till the blood is drawn.

love plots no revenge,
stands even when alone
with the heart of right
forgives the wrong.
knows there has to be more
than just flesh and bones...
love plots no revenge,
stands even when alone!

Eric Cockrell

Every Action Creates A Like Action!

the quickest way
...to turn peaceful protest
.....into violent rebellion,

is to attempt
...to violently suppress it!
every action
..creates a like action...

the surest way
...to make freedom stand up
.....and fight,

is to fight against it!
you cannot put out a fire
.....with gasoline!

you'd think they would figure this out!

Eric Cockrell

Every Breath We Breathe!

a part...
of the movement,
one grain of sand
on a limitless beach.
one dropp of water,
in an ocean filled with life.

commitment = action = change!
love = action = human!
compassion = action = feeding!

every breath we breathe,
shared!

Eric Cockrell

Every Child!

the faces of...
every child who'll
go to bed hungry tonite...
every child afraid to sleep
for fear of the soldiers,
the bullets, the bombs....
every child abused
by his parents...
every child humiliated
for being different.
every child who's never
known his own father...
every child with no hope
for an education...
every child sleeping
in homeless cars.
every child alone,
lonely, without love.
every child of every broken home,
every child, every color, every country...

staring at me this sleepless night,
tearing at my heart...
all my children!

Eric Cockrell

Every Color!

'prepare for war with Iran,
with the Islamic Republic'...
God! what irresponsible,
ignorant asses!

when are we going to understand
that you cant go around killing
everyone you dont understand?

no God picked us out to save the world
from color, and other religious views!
democracy does not divide and conquer!
we are not the 'chosen people'!

every human being is responsible
to and for every other human being!
we're not here to kill each other,
but to learn how to live with each other.
dammit, we need each other!

diversity is like the rainbow,
one color doesnt run the show!
but every color is needed!

Eric Cockrell

Every Drop Of Rain!

i am too old (and stubborn)
to change direction now!
my feet, though tired and weary,
have walked this path for years.

my battles have left me stripped
of the things i didnt need....
of the things that had hold of me,
the things that had no value...

knowing that i know no more
than what i have felt and seen.
knowing that i know no less
than who i've touched, where i've been...

eyes grown dim still fixed,
on that light on a faraway hill.
hands and heart steady open,
giving as fast as i receive....

with gratitude for each moment,
passionate hunger that never fades...
i'd say farewell but i'm not leaving,
i'll remain as long as the wind,

in every dropp of rain!

Eric Cockrell

Every Man (And Woman)

if every man in America
could reach his own member
with his own mouth,
we wouldnt have a problem
with gay rights!

if every man and woman
in America knew they were
as responsible for their thoughts
as for their actions...
we'd all be on death row!

if every man and woman
in America spent as much time
trying to help their neighbors
as they spend trying to get ahead...
we'd all be taken care of!

if every man and woman
in America were color blind,
we'd have equality!

if every man and woman
in America were honest with
themselves, we'd have justice.

if every man and woman
in America got off their but
and on their feet
we could do something
about this mess!

Eric Cockrell

Everybody Soup

everybody soup....
arms and legs,
hands and hearts....

boiled in the broth
of human experience....
seasoned by time,

and salty tears...
till fused together
with the sweet taste of life!

Eric Cockrell

Evolving Hurts!

evolving hurts,
shedding
...skin,

soul turning colors,
waiting,
...waiting,

for the long cold stillness.

death by death,
learning
...to
.....live,

blow by blow,
till
...the
.....shadows
.....disappear.

left as it began,
no baggage,
...empty hands,

covered by the snow,
long
...stillness
.....to
.....spring.

evolving hurts!

Eric Cockrell

Evolving, Constantly Changing (For Jan)

i look deep
into the depths
of my soul...
behind the doors
long closed,
darkness layered
in darkness...
before there were words!

i see stones, wind,
and great bent trees.
and their voices sound
like mine!

evolving,
constantly changing,
molded by light
and desire.
what have i become?
what will i become?

time,
an illusion,
drops of water
clinging to the leaf.
evolving,
the hand unseen,
the face deeply ingrained!

Eric Cockrell

Except...

a hard ass old man,
bent over with time and work,
stopped to pet a stray cat.

without a word,
or a second thought,
just stopped for a moment.

no one knew him,
no one understood him,
what he'd done or been through...

except, maybe, the cat!
stray cats, in a world
gone hard and cold!

Eric Cockrell

Extended...

the world will be redeemed
not by the clenched fist...
but by the open hand extended!

Eric Cockrell

Eyes Glowing!

eyes glowing in the dark,
human fireflies,
forgotten faces,
hands grown numb.
tiny lights in a sea of blackness,
each one has a name!

breath stale as hunger,
looms over the altar.
all the sins of humanity
sold in multicolored booths.
an army of children marching
to the edge of understanding!

eyes glowing in the dark...

Eric Cockrell

Eyes Gone Blank

with every breath i take,
the ache of your nearness hurts more.
the lone figure skating on ice
inside the glass globe,
falls and cries, for a moment real!
the sun has left for unknown parts,
and the storm clouds have no conscience.
the doe hit by the car,
quivers in the ditch,
in a bed of empty beer cans,
and shattered headlights.
the faint dampness on your lips,
taunts the half light with tortured madness.
i speak into the void of eyes gone blank,
leaves messages with spiders neath your doorstep!

Eric Cockrell

Faces On Hands, Hands On Heart

police brutality, freedom mortality,
Big Brother at your back!
riot squads, sent by gods,
to lash out and attack....

fear oppressive, greed obsessive,
the plantation ran by force!
slaves kicking chains, runaway train,
let the river run its course!

faces on hands, hands on heart.
a small fire strong against the dark.
all God's children doing their part...
faces on hands, hands on heart!

Eric Cockrell

Faces On Hands, Hands On Heart

news blackout, streets packed out,
politicians inside trade deals....
feed the poor, Communist whores,
dont know how despair feels!

Jefferson raise a cup, Crazy Horse rises up,
freedom's a blood filled rainbow...
homeless jobless, insulated snobness,
fighting for today and tomorrow.

faces on hands, hands on heart,
a small fire strong against the dark.
all God's children doing their part....
faces on hands, hands on heart!

Eric Cockrell

Faces On Hands, Hands On Heart # 3

unclaimed liberty, demanded by dignity,
human flesh not for sale!
well disguised invasions, profitable occasions,
come home dead or go to jail.

pipeline destruction, money based selection,
madly racing to the end....
keep them stoned, throw them a bone,
but change is coming in the wind!

faces on hands, hands on heart.
a small fire strong against the dark.
all God's children doing their part...
faces on hands, hands on heart!

Eric Cockrell

Fading Into Black

her daddy drank cheap whiskey
her momma never said much
she lost her virginity
in the bed of a pickup truck
ran away at seventeen
vowed never to come back
now two abortions later
she's fading into black...
 fading into black...

lost child of a forgotten God
a number without a name
with nothing left to lose
and nothing left to gain
racing down a dead end street
half crazy and nearly sane
too tired to stop the running
too numb to feel the pain

her daughters a crack whore
her son was killed in Iraq
her husband lost his job
after his second heart attack
now she's fifty and waiting tables
living in an old mill shack
food stamps and day old bread
she's fading into black...
 fading into black.

lost child of a forgotten God
a number without a name
with nothing left to lose
and nothing left to gain
racing down a dead end street
half crazy and nearly sane
too tired to stop the running
too numb to feel the pain

Fair Tax Plan

a fair tax plan:

(based on a family of four)

0 - 20,000 = 0 percent (poverty)

20,000 - 30,000 2.5%

30,000 - 40,000 5%

40,000 - 50,000 7.5%

50,000 up to - 10 %

250,000 up - 12.5%

take the load off of the poor,
and put it where it belongs!
no loopholes!

make adjustments for single payers,
and families of different sizes!

Eric Cockrell

Faith And Destiny!

we live on faith,
as if by chance,
yet every step ordained

by destiny!
my father thunder and lightning;
my mother the wind,

i cannot call by name,
but am always in its grasp.
through bruise and scar,

despair and suffering.
i may question the night,
i may despise the day....

but i keep moving with the rhythm
of waves stroked by the moon....
my father speaks!

my mother wipes my brow;
and my lover, the rain, lies with me
on the earth turned by passion

from the wind and rain i came,
to the wind and rain i return...
naked in the arms of hunger!

Eric Cockrell

Fake Dreams!

snowflakes coming,
Christmas, and what it's become.
a mad rush to Walmart,

a fight for the deal....
too many lights, too many adds,
credit cards and borrowed diamonds....

plastic Jesus's 'neath plastic trees!
and all the while the soup kitchen
struggles to keep up....

the shelters already full....
and the homeless walk the streets.
young men dying overseas,

young men and women dying on our streets...
a boy waits in his cell
for a card that wont come....

old people shiver without heat,
the food stamps run out.....
the bankers get their bonuses,

the kids in the project go without.....
and i'm sick of the whole damned thing,
fake America, fake freedom,

fake lights, fake dreams!

Eric Cockrell

Fallen Angel

she stands on the corner,
shaking with the cold;
reeking of sex, whiskey,
and cheap perfume...

just a kid, really;
somebody's daughter...
lost in a maze of crack,
and violent retribution...

bruises on her face,
her arms, and her heart...
no way to go back,
nothing to go back to...

around the world, or
just a little head...either way,
she gotta pay the man,
gotta feed her need...

and somewhere there's
an empty room, in an empty
house, on a forgotten street...
a child dead, but not buried!

Eric Cockrell

Fallen, Empty, And Broken

fallen soldier
fallen sky
fallen angel
from on high
fallen heartache
fallen soul
fallen man
losing control

empty bed
empty arms
empty dreams
empty heart
empty wallet
empty hands
cant take nothin'
from an empty man

broken promises
broken vows
broken spirit
wont allow
broken fences
broken lives
broken tomorrows
broken nights

fallen, empty, and broken
every road is the same
bent, bruised, and shaken
still numb from the pain
now you dont answer
when i call out your name
fallen, empty, and broken
walking in the rain...

fallen, empty, and broken...

Falling Down

falling down poets,
falling down rain,
falling down reactors,
falling down planes.

hollow men with masks,
hollow dreams, hollow drugs.
hollow patriots, hollow Jesus,
hollow bodies, hollow hugs.

drunk men drunk on power,
drunk preachers drunk on salvation.
drunk drivers lost in the night,
drunk politicians anebriate the nation.

lonely men carry the biggest guns,
lonely children follow behind.
lonely widows blame themselves,
lonely lovers lose their mind.

truth slaps against the glass,
truth breaks down the door.
truth never compromises....
truth kisses the vagabond,
..... and weds the whore....

truth breaks the greedy man,
.... burns down the house,
and feeds the poor!

falling down poets...
falling down rain.
falling down illusions,
falling down pain.

Eric Cockrell

Falling Off The Face (Of The Earth)

falling off the face
of the earth....
going too fast for the curve.

running headlong into a stone wall,
losing my grip on the ledge.
plowing too deep...

standing too close to the fire.
feeling the blade on my fingers,
tasting the poison on my lips.

standing beneath my work,
watching it fall back into my face.
poised on the wrong end of the barrel,

ready to fight, unarmed, outnumbered.
two steps beyond doubt takes faith....
yea, i've been there just like you.

falling off the face
of the earth....
together!

Eric Cockrell

Falling Star (The Stranger)

i heard a knock upon my door;
a stranger's voice, i almost knew.
against the pleading of my soul,
i turned the key, and let him in.

'gather your things, it's time to go! '
'better yet, just leave them here.'
i rose and dressed and took his hand,
and left without looking back.

what we fear the most is sometimes the best.
what's done is done, the curtain falls.
as every creature great and small
looks upward to catch a falling star!

Eric Cockrell

Falling Stars...

distance,
100 miles,
across the room.
unholy wars,
kingdoms built by ghosts.
chapters,
or maybe commas.
clouds,
or falling stars!

Eric Cockrell

Falling Thru The Cracks

wild eyed man in the parking lot
got a pistol in his hand
his old lady holds the baby
motor running to the van
factory shut down, aint no work
havent eaten in three days
good hearted man gone desperate
somebody's gonna have to pay

what the hell! who cares?
lives falling thru the cracks
born too early, born too late
on the wrong side of the tracks
fighting for every breath you take
just fighting to survive
falling down and getting back up
just trying to get by...

she pours herself another drink
dont remember how many she's had
dont know whether she's crying
cause she's mad or she's sad
her feet hurt from her day job
her back hurts from working nights
her baby's sick again
and they just turned off her lights

what the hell! who cares?
lives falling thru the cracks
born too early, born too late
on the wrong side of the tracks
fighting for every breath you take
just fighting to survive
falling down and getting back up
just trying to get by...

what the hell! who cares?

Falling, Without Restraint....

it is no longer about living or dying,
but merely falling like rain...
on the good and the evil,
the wanted and unwanted,
on both the poor and the rich.
on the man, the woman, and the child,
the stray dog, and the empty field.
on the broken, the wounded,
and the sorrowful...
falling, without restraint!

Eric Cockrell

Fallout Shelter

</>
your arms,
my personal
fallout shelter....

when i grow weary
of the world's assault!

and, baby,
i need you now!

Eric Cockrell

Families Falling Apart, Together

families falling apart,
together...
jobs lost, houses lost...

pooling what little
they have left...
just holding on.

no insurance,
mailbox money,
food stamps, and

whatever they can scuff.
travelling in beat up old cars,
or walking... nowhere to go.

same clothes they wore yesterday,
and the day before...
the youngest daughter's pregnant,

again... but hell,
they're passing out cheese
and potatoes at the church....

Jesus died for their sins,
but no one else knows their names!

Eric Cockrell

Family Farm (Season After Season)

his granddaddy built
the old house from the
ground with his bare hands....

that old tractor has plowed
fields season after season...
how many winters has

that old barn seen?
how many buckets of water
from that old well?

how many children
conceived and born
under that tin roof?

how many times has
that fence been mended?
how many potatoes and

canned goods stored
in that old cellar?
how many nights spent reading

by candlelight....
how many pensive eyes
staring through that window?

how many cows milked?
how many eggs picked up?
and that old dog who's

been here forever.....
tomorrow the 'bank's' coming
to take it all away.....

and all that's left of a family
is that which can be loaded
on his old truck...

Eric Cockrell

Farewell Notes...

looks like we may lose internet connection after today for a while...

if so, will be back when i can..

in the meantime, live each moment as if it were the only moment,
for it is...

as for the upcoming election, one must vote his/her heart, but vote.

as for me, i will support President Obama, and continue to believe
in the cause of human rights, in dignity and respect for all, and in freedom of
speech, irregardless of what they do.

we, the human race, are a family... we will never be at peace until we both
understand and live this. we are responsible.

Eric Cockrell

Farewell Notes... (Part Two)

no more wars! we cannot allow poverty and hunger to continue!
we have to live in a way that celebrates our diversity. we have
to listen to each other. every word we speak or write, has a cost.
whatever we must sacrifice for the truth is well worth the cost.
question, seek, doubt, try all things for their validity in your lives.
respect each other's paths, but walk your own. keep your hands,
hearts, and minds open. take the time to care, get involved.
my heart and soul are with you all... be at peace, nay, be peace!

Eric Cockrell

Fear

what am i most afraid of?

losing my health?

losing my job?

losing my family?

losing my virility?

losing my self-image?

losing my dignity?

losing my sanity?

losing my life?

or ending up alone

in the darkness

without reason or form

or direction.

what am i most afraid of?

and why?

Eric Cockrell

Fear Has No Name!

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moss, clinging to rock,
waiting for the water
to free...

only shadows stand between
this world and that,
fear has no name

other than we allow.
stripping away
the last vestige of clothing,

dance naked in the presence
of that which abides....
dance naked with gratitude

for that which endures!

Eric Cockrell

Fear Of Death

why do we fear death?
our fear of death is based
in our fear of living, or more,
our fear of not having lived!

life is a calling, an adventure,
a mission, a duty....
the gifts we are given, the
trials and turmoil we go through,
prepare us for what we're called
to do....
each living person's calling is unique...
and no one else can ever judge...
we judge ourselves by what we give,
and how much of our 'selves' we are
willing to risk!

we often have to 'die' in order to live...
die to our mis-conceptions, die to our
clinging, die to our own petty wants....
die to what the world expects... die to
comfort.... die to that which does not last!

what we call hell is the result of not answering
the call.... the choice is ours, day by day,
moment by moment....

dare to live!

Eric Cockrell

Feed The Beast

rapid fire, pure desire,
hunger by the tooth...
bullet holes, wounded souls,
fighting for the truth.

kill the whales, fill your jails,
with your mother's sons.
pray for peace, nuclear freeze,
gotta pay for what you've done.

the wheels of justice keep on turning.
you keep spending more than you're earning.
people keep dying, bodies are burning....
feed the beast, the world keeps turning!

Eric Cockrell

Feed The Beast # 2

cocksure, religious pure,
a double set of rules.
rich or poor, different doors,
they play us like we're fools!

Wall Street, dressed in sheets,
burning crosses in the fire.
homeless eyes, the future dies,
to feed the well paid liars!

the wheels of justice keep on turning.
you keep spending more than you're earning.
people keep dying, bodies are burning....
feed the beast, the world keeps turning!

Eric Cockrell

Feed The Beast # 3

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fallen idols, sterile Bibles,
close your eyes dont touch.
give them rice, roaches and lice,
just dont give them much.

truth too strong, sell your song,
keep them marching to the beat.
riot squads, in the name of god,
kill freedom in the streets.

the wheels of justice keep on turning.
you keep spending more than you're earning.
people keep dying, bodies are burning....
feed the beast, the world keeps turning.

Eric Cockrell

Fellatio

you took my soul
in your mouth and sucked
the colors from the last
leaves of autumn...
the snow from the night sky
before it touched the ground.
the sense of danger
from the little boy's heart,
before he climbed the tree.
the sadness from the body still,
in the casket no one dared touch.
the sound of crackling from the fire,
in the shelter of the cave...
the light from the dawn,
as if night holding on,
clinging to what has been!

Eric Cockrell

Fertile Earth

walk with me this fertile earth,
breathe deep, and unashamed.
touch the petal, the thorn,
lie naked on the ground....

know the wind as your lover,
bathe in the rain.....
touch the one beside you,
really touch.... read with

the tips of your fingers....
paint your hunger with your lips
upon her neck, her breasts...
run your tongue deep inside

her thoughts, her secret garden;
suck the darkness from her soul.
breathe light into her longing,
unlock the chains that have her bound....

kiss her shadow as she flies....
walk with me this fertile earth!

Eric Cockrell

Fertile Earth # 2

come, my lover,
walk with me this fertile earth!
undressing with autumnal passion....

can you hear the groan
of the leaf turning from green
to red to brown?

can you feel the stamp of the deer?
the alert fear of the squirrel
hiding on the bare branches?

can you smell the earth laid bare,
uninhibited, awaiting the cover of snow?
can you feel the hardness of this ghost ship,

preparing to sail your stormy seas?
can you taste the resin of the pine
cut down for the fire?

your mouth opens in anticipation
of the first flakes upon your tongue.....
and the chair by the fire awaits in stillness

for your body curled into mine....
come, my lover....
walk with me this fertile earth!

Eric Cockrell

Fertilizer

an animal shelter
in Caldwell County
took in 5000 animals
last year
and only managed
to adopt out 300!
the rest were euthanized.

pretty soon
(sooner than you think)
if our political machine
continues its current path.
they'll have these shelters
for people
old people, sick people,
poor people, unwanted people
and if they only manage
to adopt out 300
for every 5000 they take in
then, the rest will be
fertilizer!

Eric Cockrell

Field Of Death

we make love
in a small room
underneath a tin roof...
your body praying for rain.

or perhaps it's just delusion,
or memory twisted by passion,
or what an old man settles for
in the echo of his life!

kissing's like undressing,
slowly turns the spit,
not conscious of mirrors
or the need to hurry....

soft words almost forgotten
fall like stones in a bottomless well...
and the only cry of passion
is the hawk circling
the field of death!

Eric Cockrell

Fifty Eight Years

fifty eight years,
step after step...
pathways of stone,
of water, of wind...
no footprints behind.
small fires on dark nights,
waves of stillness opening...
the eyes of the breathing surround.

touch! touch!
echoing against the roar.
words sealed on paper
for future fires!
when scars become gifts
left on strangers' doorsteps...
for there are no strangers,
soul unto soul.

step after step,
rain falling softly.
smoke from the chimney,
hangs like a prayer.
face to face,
lips touching lips,
a small bag of dreams
left under a child's pillow.

fifty eight years.

Eric Cockrell

Fight Back

fight back!
another store robbed,
broad daylight.

over the counter,
grab the money
from the register...

tries to run...
clerk hanging on,
another clerk joining in...

an elderly black woman trips
the suspect, another old man
jumps in to help....

had him down twice,
but he got away...
battered and bruised...

he'll think a while
before he comes back...
common everyday people

just trying to help....

an old car broke down
on the side of the road...
an elderly man standing there,

looking lost... two more old men
stop, and slowly but surely
push him down the road

to the nearest station....
common everyday people,
just trying to help....

the old couple evicted,

trying to load up what they can...
two sets of neighbors

come out and start helping,
borrow a truck, and start loading,
and scuff a few dollars

for gas and food....
common everyday people
just trying to help....

lay down your pipes,
your guns, turn off your tv's.
stop what you're doing...

fight back!

Eric Cockrell

Fill The Cup

pour the water
from the cup and
watch it drip to
the floor...

salvation is
merely the spirit
leaving the body
to go on a long journey...

and then returning,
bearing gifts...

fill the cup again!

Eric Cockrell

Fill The Void...

we attempt
to fill the void left
when the self
leaves the soul,
with stone images
of a god we've created
out of iced over fears...
created in the image
of our own darkness.
a god that rains down
fire and brimstone
by our hidden whims.
a god that looks like us,
that acts like us,
and despises all else.
a prophylactic thrust
of eternity,
eternity sold on street corners...

and all the while
the stranger waits quietly
just outside the door.
his breath familiar,
his face everyman's,
his actions,
simple compassion.
his name, forgiveness!

Eric Cockrell

Final Chapter

there's a small fire burning
in the corner of a room
he had not seen
for some time...

the kaleidoscope of tiny breaths'
each one personal and real;
like tiny sparks with names
long forgotten....

the heart is a kingdom
of it's own making and design;
full of the precious now lost
in the howl of the night.

and he stands on the precipice,
angry, tired, bitter....
without choice, without meaning...
and no reason to be.

let there be peace somewhere.
let there be living...
let there be truth, honor, and dignity...
let there be hope.

he closes the door,
and walks to meet an angry God.

Eric Cockrell

Final Parting!

<

the echo of gunfire,
across distant plains.
the sky ripped with color

as is time itself turned.
the thunder of a leaf
that clung for too long...

falling as if suspended
by breath.... the silent stare,
then turn to the door;

stepping away, as if to fly.
nothing left behind....
not even remorse...

what's done is done,
he takes his final bow!
leaving the sounds of living

for the dead to discern.

Eric Cockrell

Final Preparation....

leaves, just beginning to turn,
and the silent shout of rust
deafens the empty room.
bare feet leave no tracks in gravel,
yet the birds' wings scar the sky
as they begin their journey.
the plow sits motionless weeping,
the skillet whistles to the fire.
a squirrel sits atop the woodpile,
the mountains' breathing become labored.
and the wind packs its few belongings,
tips a hat to my shadowed soul.
as we begin the long journey,
the final preparation for beginning!

Eric Cockrell

Final Statement

i have reached the age where
i dont care what anyone says
or thinks about what i do, what
i believe, and what i think and
say... i'm going to do it anyway!
and, damn, it's a liberating feeling.
i do however respect other people's
rights to opinions, thoughts, and beliefs,
and their right to be who they are.
i have no use for ignorance, prejudice,
and judgemental attitudes... i follow
no one, and ask no one to follow me!
my only goal in what time i have left
is to enhance understanding, and spread
the hand of compassion. i dont want
anything from anybody but the truth!
i believe in people!

Eric Cockrell

Finding Shelter In The Silence

my tongue probes the leaves
of your forbidden tree...
you teach me the language of wetness.
ah, to die again and again,
in the deep wells of your eyes!
the side of your neck tastes
like the bank of the river.
i dive into the dark murkiness,
my teeth bared with pulsing need.
even the bark of the fallen tree,
rises and pants...
i groan, and nations fall!
you growl, and children are born!
who are we after all these years,
lovers, owls, bats, insects burning!
or the loneliness of god,
feeding on tiny eternities....
both the sound and the echo.
it is night then that we know...
infidels finding shelter in the silence

Eric Cockrell

Finds You Naked!

as hard as you strain
to pull the pack behind you...

you
...cannot
.....do
.....it!

all the things you're clinging to:
pride,
...success,
.....possessions,
.....self-fulfillment,
.....ego.

all lost in an instant,
when time opens the door,
and finds you naked!

Eric Cockrell

Fingered Brush

hand on heart,
mouth to breast.
feet that follow
their own footsteps.
eyes that know
every layer of the petal.
tongues that taste,
soul that names.

aware, alive,
connected, set free.
bridge and shelter,
fire and crackle.
the softest
underside of wings...
and prayer is only
the fingered brush!

Eric Cockrell

Fingers!

the same fingers
that pull the trigger,
lace the shoe...
play the piano,
dig in the dirt.
stroke your face,
turn the lock.
wear the ring,
unbutton your desires.
pick up the pen,
light the smoke...
trace the hunger
of the hidden one!

Eric Cockrell

Fingertips Naked!

tis the day of lovers,
yet the world is ablaze!
gunfire, and bombings,
with machine like hands.
bodies broken and scattered,
mouths that quiver with hunger.
so many alone in the fury,
even the walls have names.

do you love me?
your eyes betray your heart.
be it gravity or madness,
that throws us together.
now destiny wears flesh,
the wind lives inside bones.
stop the lie, cross the bridge,
you have only one home!

napalm to phosphorus,
ice turns to lava...
fingertips naked,
rewrite the moment!

Eric Cockrell

Fire

feeding the flames!
pictures, awards, titles, deeds...
love letters written in blood,
bed sheets stained by passion.
medals won, cars, and scars...
houses built by calloused hands,
graves dug by the same hands!
eulogies written in small town papers...

all thrown into the fire...
feed the flames!

Eric Cockrell

Fire In The Night

by a fire in the night
meat on the spit
listen to the crackle & darkness breathing...
whispering ghosts
nothing needs to be said
stillness is the bridge

close yr eyes & stare
at drawings on the cave walls
old dog startled, stands up
as if the fur on his back
can feel the presence!

only the smell of black coffee...
& the prayers of the moon!

Eric Cockrell

Fired My Rocket!

we 'discovered' this country
on the basis of murder and religion.
we built this country
on the backs of slaves.
we made this country prosperous
with the bodies of underpaid factory workers.
we spread democracy
with the sword of felony and greed.
we fed this country,
and foreclosed the farms of the farmers.
and you wonder
why we are where we are now!

Eric Cockrell

Fireflies In The Dark

like fireflies in the dark,
those who stand firm are taken,
stamped, and put out...

you silence the human cries
of freedom, ban books,
ideas... ban all thinking.

take anything original
back to the assembly line;
to be remade, reformed....

in the image of mindless
obedience... trained to kill,
trained to follow... trained to hate.

while the lovers of trees, rivers,
and mountains... become
the new faceless minority....

in the land of coal dust excess,
the land of black and white tv.

poverty, disease, and drug abuse
will thin the ranks of the rebellious.
and children without hope

bury their children in dumpsters.
while the angry poets rage
having spent more, done more time...

in your prisons than in college.
and dead mothers walk the streets
crying bitter tears that fall unseen.

Eric Cockrell

Five Sacred Truths

nonviolence...
hands open and empty,
hearts open and given.
bodies laid before feet,
spirit given for direction.
no gun, no hatred,
no fear, no greed...
can put out the light
of compassion!

truth...
accepting nothing less,
settling for nothing less...
at all costs, without hesitation.

freedom...
has to be for all
to be for one!
equality, diversity,
responsibility...
community, family!

sacred...
all that lives,
formed by the formless...
respect and awareness.

communicate...
real people using real ears
to listen, real hearts to feel,
real hands to reach out,
real souls to stand by!

Eric Cockrell

Flesh And Bones, And Blood!

the family farmer,
the factory worker,
the construction worker,
the truckdriver...
the backbone of America!

these are the people
you've chosen to persecute,
to abuse, and throw away...
you've cut off your hands,
and started a revolution...

your fathers, your mothers,
hardworking, and honest.
the flesh and bones, and blood...
the heart and the soul...
what are you thinking now?

Eric Cockrell

Flesh Becomes Flesh!

where lovers meet,
and lay down their swords.
where song is born,
before thoughts or constraints.
where touch is formed,
in the bed of want.
where hearts are loosed,
and fire begins.
where two roads merge,
two rivers become one.
where the sparrow's wings
gain the eagle's heights.
where black and white
are filled with color.
where the mountaintop
embraces the sky.
where every dream
is laid at the door.
where time itself
looses its grip....
where thunder waits
in the silent clouds.
where scars are touched,
and flesh becomes flesh!

Eric Cockrell

Fogging Up The Windows

the sound of a small child crying
hungry in the night
of a young woman sleepless
waiting for daylight
the sound of church bells ringing
not too far away
the sound of an old man dying
remembering how to pray

the sound of two hearts breaking
a thousand miles apart
of the last tear a fallin'
unseen in the dark
the sound of lifetimes wasted
of a love that didnt last
the sound of memories forgotten
of a time already past

can you hear?
can you hear?
a lone tree a fallin'
a hoot owl callin'

life and death, a lover's breath
fogging up the windows
of an empty room...
fogging up the windows
of an empty room...

the sound of the nails driven
into His screaming hands
the sound of salvation
entrusted to a man
the sound of bodies falling
of buildings swept by flame
the sound of different voices
whose souls are the same

can you hear?

can you hear?
a lone tree a fallin'
a hoot owl callin'

life and death, a lover's breath
fogging up the windows
 of an empty room...
fogging up the windows
 of an empty room....

Eric Cockrell

Folks Are Just Folks!

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black folks just like white folks,
gotta eat, sleep, need somewhere
to stay, need a job...

just want to be treated like people,
equal in every way....

and my Hispanic neighbors,
hard working, working together,
(we could learn from that!)

taking care of families...
human beings with human needs,
just like us....

Asians, Native Americans...
all just the same....
all of us just people....

want to be treated that way!
folks are just folks!

Eric Cockrell

Follow (Bhakti Flute)

i follow...

the sound of the flute,
the footpath of the sparrow,
walking on air
to infinity's arms.
the rustle of the skirt,
bare feet on the floor.
the hum of the pot,
simmering on the stove.
the cry of the spider's web,
falling ever so slowly...
from its home in the corner,
safe from the broom.
the lick of the dog's tongue,
both raw and gentle.
the snail trail of the bead
of sweat on your neck.
the pole shift of your hair,
from brown to grey.
the quake of your lips,
pulling me in.
the wetness of darkness,
sucked down the drain...
into emptiness that swallows,
breaking down the last note!

Eric Cockrell

Follow (I Am The Flute)

i follow...

the hoot of the owl,
the smoke that leads
to the fire.

the hollow of the hand,
to the hard and the soft.

the salt of the sea
to the dark and murky unknown.

the erection and the breast,
to the womb that creates.

lightning to the thunder,
and thunder to lightning.

the hammer to the nail,
the bullet through the barrel.

the spirit through the book,
back to the tree in the forest.

the body to the grave,
the universe back to dust.

i follow...

the sound of the flute,
till i come to see...

that i follow nothing,
and no one at all!

for i am the path,
and the feet that walk.

i am the flute,
the sound and the lips.

i am the breath,
the desire, and the vision...

for i am no one,
and nothing at all!

Eric Cockrell

Follow Not

Follow not...

The ignorant, the arrogant,
The haters, those who would
Lie and manipulate by fear..
Follow not those who would
Build walls, and divide.
Follow not those who use
The name of God to validate
Murder

Follow your heart, your
Conscience, and your inner
Desire for dignity!
With courage and open minds.
Daring both to care, and
To give.
Committed to being human!

Eric Cockrell

Food Awareness

when you go to the store
and buy food... do you think
about:

1. where it came from
2. where and how it was grown.
3. what kinds of seeds and fertilizers
...were used...
4. what kinds of pesticides were sprayed.
5. who worked the fields
6. how were they treated, how were they paid
7. who drove the trucks who hauled it
8. how much fuel was used, at what cost
(both in dollars and lives)
9. who stocked the shelves, and rang you up
10. are they paid enough to live on
11. how much electricity and/or gas
....did you use to prepare it, and
....at what cost
12. when you eat it do you think about how
....many of your neighbors are hungry
13. when you throw out the scraps do you think
....about how many children are starving...
....do you see their faces?

Eric Cockrell

Footprints (Small Minded Men)

we walk barefoot down nuclear beaches,
driven, without direction, to leave footprints.
coughing up spit, and avoiding shadows,
of small minded men following
the legend of the phallus,
to early, and inconvenient deaths.
gulls swing over in drunken glaze,
we bend to pick up a broken shell.
naming it ocean, we place it to our ears...
as the incoming tide swirls at our feet.
shark fins, and the bodies of dead fish,
the stink of salt, and the rhythm...
lost inside the sound and the roar,
we never notice our footprints washed away....

Eric Cockrell

Footprints In The Snow

footprints in the snow.
tiny unnamed orphan lifetimes
that melt without a sound
and are lost forever.

candlewax melted to the formless,
mountains worn down over a millennia...
the faces of wrinkled old men
and newborn babies, one and the same.

the fleeting dance of a butterfly,
a river singing across centuries.
70 years, 50 years, 20 years, ...
or maybe just tonite!

coming back over and over again,
or dissolving like ash into the wind.
a dropp of rain, or the surge of an ocean,
stone stacked upon stone, or thistle?

footprints in the snow...

Eric Cockrell

For A Holy Moment!

i am an old man,
with a book of scriptures,
written in blood,
and an erection,
walking towards eternity,
looking for a holy moment!

a candle willing
to be burned down,
a leaf letting go
of the tree!

Eric Cockrell

For All Of These, And More

for every daughter aborted
in China because sons
are preferred...
for every young girl or boy
sold into slavery here
in the states...
for every whale killed
by the Japanese ships...
for every expanse of ocean
filled with our oil...
for every tree cut
by the saws of greed...
for every woman and child
working in sweatshops...
for every political prisoner
that we ignore...
for every homeless person
in the 'land of the free'...
for every kid in jail
who never had a chance...
for every old person
left alone to die...
for every family in Africa
left to starvation....
for every plate of food
thrown out, wasted mindlessly.
for every mountain raped
by the miner's hands...
for every kid that is different,
that is abused and beaten...
for everyone killed in our
money driven wars...

for all of these, and more...
i ask forgiveness, as
a member of the human family.
for all of these, and more,
i take responsibility.
for all of these, and more,

i choose to live today...

with an involved hope
for tomorrow!

Eric Cockrell

For Any Time...

for any time...
i should have stood up,
and didnt,
for any truth
i should have spoken,
but kept silent.
for anyone
i could have helped,
but turned the other way.
for any injustice
i should have fought,
but did nothing...
i ask forgiveness.

for any time...
i've stood up
and fought,
extended a hand,
given more than i could,
stood against the crowd...
i feel no remorse.

i am a man...
you are either
a man, or a woman...
in the end,
that is what we are called to be!

Eric Cockrell

For Christmas....

for Christmas i want...
every child to be fed.
every family to have some
kind of roof over their heads.
everyone that wants to work
to have a chance to....
for everyone to respect
both themselves and each other.
for every gun to be silent,
for every anger to stop and listen.
for the lonely to know they're loved.
for every color of skin to be equal.
for freedom to take on bodies,
and bridges to be crossed.
for god to be more than religion,
and for forgiveness to be the way.
for the day to be as holy,
as each and every tiny moment!

Eric Cockrell

For Every Bullet

For every bullet,
A child's dreams.
For every bomb,
A mother's heart.
For every act of violence,
A better choice.
For every act of hate,
A better path.
For every body,
There is a name.
For every excuse,
There is a mirror.
For every hunger,
There is an answer...

And we are that answer!

Eric Cockrell

For Every Child...

be there not a star
for every child that's born?
and is every birth then,
not the rebirth of redemption?
is every life then not a journey,
from Gethsemene to Golgotha?
a thousand tiny deaths,
that bring salvation and hope!

Eric Cockrell

For Government To Be Fair!

for any government to be fair,
every citizen has to be
just as important as every other.
every citizen has to have equal rights,
whether black or white,
rich or poor, gay or straight.
whether they believe in the same god,
in another, or in none.
whether they speak english,
or another language.
whether they are educated,
or not!
every citizen has to have an equal chance,
for employment, for education,
for housing, for love and happiness.
and every citizen has to respect,
both himself, and others...
this government should be
a government by the people...
any leader should be from among the people.
government, small in tether,
large in affirmation!
we're not anywhere close to this in America!

we have been sold out by our own greed,
and have chosen in our apathy to follow the lie.
now it's come to a head!
what we do next determines if democracy works.
what we do next defines our level of humanity.
call it democracy, call it socialism,
it doesn't matter what you call it.
what it has to be is redemption...
what it has to bring, is freedom!
finally!

Eric Cockrell

For I Am Human....

i am not democrat or republican,
i am not christian or muslim.
i am not gay or straight.
i am not black or white.
i am not old or young.
i am not male or female.
i am not a believer or a doubter.
i am not happy or sad.
i am not rich or poor.
i am not dead or alive.
i am not good or evil.
i am not sick, or healed...
i am not ignorant or wise.
i am not... i am!
i am all these things,
for i am human,
both divine and common!

Eric Cockrell

For More!

the longest scar
on the face of a rose,
speaks with silent venom,
thunders when it opens!
a thousand deaths,
that love might live,
footprints that lead nowhere.
the bitter taste
of self, and empty...
the body plowed,
cries out for rain.
hungry, for more!

Eric Cockrell

For My Mother (For Charles James)

it is by the firm,
yet loving hand of my mother
that i am here today...
she taught me to read,
mathematics, reasoning,
and to question...
most of all,
she taught me to respect!
she beat her image of God
into every fibre of my being...

i've travelled far,
and sank low many times.
but i've always heard her voice,
seen her face in the night.

i am perhaps not
what she would have wanted,
but i am definitely me.
and i am her son!

Eric Cockrell

For One Eternal Moment!

love, then as gentle,
as your lips unwrapping
my thoughts...
for a moment your eyes flashed,
for one eternal moment!

Eric Cockrell

For Peace

stand...

sit,

march,

walk,

breathe,

live...

for peace!

there has never been a time
when this was more important
than it is now!

Eric Cockrell

For Russell Means

we walk in silent circles,
mountains rise within.
rivers weep as if they knew,
somehow i think they do.
buffalo prayers dry like bones,
crows grieve as only they can.
the Great Spirit sows deep with destiny,
the sacred hoop calls forth souls.
night bows in silent awe,
waiting for dawn to undress the day.
wild horses gallop past kerosene huts,
where children speak the forbidden way.
a voice returns to silence,
leaving the truth in battles fought.
freedom takes back her lover,
ah, but soon he'll ride again!

for Russell Means

Eric Cockrell

For Shadow, For Dust!

the old woman,
face bruised and wrinkled,
clothes dirty and worn...

lies alone in the bed,
except for the cat...
shadows whisper, she moans,

as if closing a book.
even the hungry walls are silent...
the pages of the book

tattered and yellowed.
her teeth broken or gone,
her fist clenched tight,

the comfort of no one,
the prayer to no god.
the clock on the wall ticks amen...

her spirit taken, her fist opened,
a bag of trash falls in the corner,
the old cat runs for shadow,

for dust...

Eric Cockrell

For The Elite Political Machine!

vote for me,
i'll sell your soul,
but do it in a way,
you'll hardly know.
give me your sons,
i'll give you ribbons.
give me your poor,
i'll fill my prisons.

pump that oil,
mine that coal.
nuclear meltdown,
gotta meet my goal.
stand in lines,
begging for work.
i'll take your hearts,
i'll take your shirts!

the cost of freedom,
yours for mine.
cant see your hurts,
i'm rich and blind.
i'll pave my roads
over your dead bones.
over your unmarked graves,
i'll build my home.

you're only as equal
as your money allows!

Eric Cockrell

For The Grave....

three minutes past dying...
the body still warm.
the cat and the dog sit quietly
by the grieving door.
sunlight drives shadows to corners,
as the sound of low voices.
speak up, sister!
he cannot hear!
yet the damp place in the palm,
maybe the hummingbird outside the window.
a truck hurtles down the street,
with frantic need.
dont call the preacher...
call the farmer, the carpenter,
the garbage collector,
the transient bum!
past the point of kindnesses,
shout 'ha! ', pour a drink...
give the thief an incentive,
unlock the door.
send Jesus an email,
pay the past due light bill...
if poverty's flowers be an abomination...
collect thorns and thistle for the grave!
three minutes past death...

Eric Cockrell

For The People Of East Africa

how can we go on not believing,
how can we turn our heads?
when children are starving
and people are dying...
are we alive or are we dead?

our brothers, our sisters,
we can feel your pain from here.
what can we do and
what can we change...
to see the world through your tears?

how can we see and not know
that what's happening to you...
is a part of us, is in
the very heart of us,
we're responsible, we're due!

our brothers, our sisters,
we can feel your pain from here.
what can we do and
what can we change...
to see the world through your tears?

the family of man so far apart,
we've lost the meaning in our souls.
until we join hearts to hands,
and walk side by side...
we'll never touch and never hold.

our brothers, our sisters,
we can feel your pain from here.
what can we do and
what can we change...
to see the world through your tears?

Eric Cockrell

For The Woman I Have Loved....

let it not be so
that each star that falls,
must be named...
nor each tree that is cut,
without conscious knowledge.
let us not try to confine the wind,
nor to define freedom in an unspoken sky.
let us not seek to erase the darkness,
nor to infringe on the language of whales.
let it not be ordained that we are gods,
when the words we speak are empty.
and most of all, let not love wear a face,
any face that is not yours.
if this be eternity i choose to sleep,
with the precious scent of your nearness!

Eric Cockrell

For Those Wounded By Love

i've been divorced before,
been in relationships that
ended badly...
and i know the deep level
of pain and anger and loss...

where there was great love,
there will be an even greater
sense of hurt... as if the whole
world comes crashing down on you...

one of the hardest things
for me was when there were
children involved.... especially
small children....
(and all children, in a parent's
eyes are small!)

i can remember waking up at night
in a sweat hearing my children calling,
'Daddy, Daddy...'
and this went on for years!

we are human, full of goodness and badness,
darkness and light... with desires and
wants and needs...

and love is a very human thing, as
is marriage!
it's a long journey that takes
two people walking side by side...

passion carries its own responsibility...
commitments made in the heat
have to be strong to withstand
the cold...

let's be careful how we treat each other,
and how we treat ourselves...

a lot of people carry the wounds
of love, a lot of people are hurting...

be respectful enough to not do
anything that you cannot honor...
and forgive... for that's the
only way to be forgiven!

whatever happens, be respectful!

Eric Cockrell

For Tibet....

a prayer,
a moment of silence,
and heartfelt tears....

for Tibet.
i am ashamed
that we the world

have done so little to help.
for those tortured and detained
by a most oppressive regime...

for all those left without a home,
orphaned on their pilgrim's journey...
for those who dared to protest

even to self-immolation....
there are those of us who hear,
and weep....

and stand beside you
'neath the stillness of blackened skies,
believing in your freedom!

Eric Cockrell

For Trayvon...

what color is justice?
and what does it cost?
in the end who is guilty?
the one who pulls the trigger,
or the ones who close their blinds,
close their eyes,
and go off to bed?
who gets convicted?
who pays the price?
the one who killed,
the boy dead?
or the system that
doesn't even press charges?
the ones who hurry off to work,
buying plastic dreams
with plastic cards?
the ones who sit in empty rooms,
drowning in helplessness?
the gravedigger, the preacher?
the pawn shop that sold the gun?
the fear that loads the chambers?
that hides behind the colors of skin?
the father weeping from the shock?
the judge remaining silent?
the angry ones who felt the blow?
the ghosts that sit in the courtroom?
tell me, who's guilty?
turn up the tv, pick up your phone!
but tell me...
what color is justice?
and what does it cost?

Eric Cockrell

For World Peace!

light the Hanukkah candles,
or put your baby Jesus in a manger
'neath the tree...

purify for Ramadan....
or perhaps even more sacred,
more holy than all of these....

because of what you believe,
and who you are...
join together, and work for world peace!

God, by whatever name,
created each and all in His image!

Eric Cockrell

Foreclosure Packing

Vietnam era workers,
three bedroom brick,
and a basement...

laid off, sold off,
401k gone....
Buick in the drive,

repossessed!
foreclosure packing,
Kent State and Nixon,

Reagon's America....
financial moral collapse.
the smell of napalm lingers

in houses left empty!

Eric Cockrell

Forget

the thief in the alley
behind the building
waiting for the lights
to go out...

his lights went out a long time ago,
or, maybe yesterday...
no job, his family gone,
no reason to be a man...

anymore...

the lights go out,
he steps from the shadows
with a handful of pipe,
smashing the skull of
unidentified footsteps...

takes the money bag and runs...
to the rush and the deadness
that lets him forget!

Eric Cockrell

Forget (I Was A Man)

if i turn away,
and close the window.
if i close my eyes,
and close my heart.
if i choose to believe
that nothing leaves nothing.
if i walk into
the darkness of the night.

if i give away,
everything i clung to.
if i break the glass,
and burn down the candle.
if i quit praying,
quit looking for answers.
if i turn the key,
and bolt the door.

and if i deny
what i know to be true.
if i go silent,
and never write again.
if i take the wind,
and turn it to stone...
will you forget you loved me,
forget i was a man?

Eric Cockrell

Forgive Me If I Failed...

forgive me if i failed...
when i broke my heart
in a thousand tiny pieces,
each reflecting universes
in the naked moonlight.
when i loved unconditionally,
and yet lost the world.
when i drew god's face,
on the child and the dog.
when i burned endless lifetimes,
to warm the lost in the night.
when i listened to mountains and trees,
and tried to translate.
when i fought for peace,
and ended up fighting myself.
when i gave away my soul,
when i kissed the shadows.
when i touched the forbidden,
and saw with the eyes of the ant.
when i leapt from the ledge,
and my wings werent ready!
when i wiped away your tears,
and found my name in your scars.
when i could not speak,
and i should have!
when i tried to write,
with a carpenter's hands.
when i unlocked the door,
and you were already gone...
when i went to pray,
and found i was the prayer.
forgive me when i was just a man!

Eric Cockrell

Forgiveness

forgive me...

for saying the wrong thing,
thinking the wrong thing,
feeling the wrong thing,
doing the wrong thing...

for taking what i could not
get any other way...
for not giving what i had...

forgive me for not listening,
for not getting involved,
for fighting when i shouldnt,
for not standing up when i should!

forgive me for being selfish
instead of selfless...

fogive me for not forgiving you!

forgive me for being human,
and so set us both free!

Eric Cockrell

Forgiveness (Realization)

forgiveness is the energy
of realization...

realizing, the person you're
mad at or hurt by is just an
extension of yourself, another
part of you. realizing, the act
they've committed against you
is just a human act, whether
done on purpose, or without
thinking... realizing, that you
commit similar acts in your day
to day existence...

realizing, not forgiving, holding
on to the anger and pain, only
hurts you yourself! it becomes a
form of prison, self-imposed...

realizing, the mistake is not the
person!

forgiveness, the realization of
freedom in relationships!

Eric Cockrell

Forgotten Time

bumming around
the country...
sleeping under bridges,
or just under...

the night sky...
working when i
could find it.

selling blood
when i couldnt!

gather a little change,
stop in a diner
for a cup of
black coffee...

writing poems
on napkins
with pencils...

leaving them for
my tip...

unsigned, forgotten
prayers, a forgotten
man, a forgotten
time!

Eric Cockrell

Fork In The Road

i have reached
the fork in the road,
now the choice,
both silent and grieving.
i cannot hold starlight
in aging hands,
i cannot turn the tide
with a glance or a wave.
i cannot stop the wars
with my body or my thoughts.
i cannot feed the hungry,
i can only share their hunger.
the snow is falling,
the winds almost cruel,
as the fire i built
dies down to embers...

who am i?
and what have i done?
i find i'm a part
of all that i've fought!
silent screams now echoes,
the low moans of the heart.
betrayed by my soul
between light and darkness,
my lips are moving...
but not even you
can hear the sounds they make!

the fork in the road,
just outside your door!

Eric Cockrell

Forms The Bridge

death is a door,
not an abyss.
love is an abyss...
the part of you
that you give
forms the bridge...
give your all!

Eric Cockrell

Forty Days And Forty Nights

and it rained...
for forty days and forty nights,
till all was lost
except the memory of you.

even the world anew,
born with an ache,
and an absence of heart,
that dawn could not heal.

among the ruins and the rubble,
a solitary flower bloomed.
while the dogs of desire sniffed,
never picking up a scent!

even the walls of the cave,
mumbled prayers in a whisper...
and god wept,
while ants marched to destruction!

Eric Cockrell

Forty Dollar Bathtub

a forty dollar galvanized bathtub!
carrying buckets of water up the hill
to heat on the old cook stove...
i watched you bathing in the kitchen,
in the old house down on Henry River.
fried Spam and pork 'n beans,
moonlit trips to the outhouse....
stray dogs on the porch.
endless truckloads of wood scraps;
we made love through winter nights,
so cold in the room you could see your breath!
you licked the frost from my moustache,
and the world went on without us....
a forty dollar bathtub, buckets of water,
nothing needed, nothing more!

Eric Cockrell

Forty Plus Years

forty plus years
of working day
and night...
and all i have
to show for it is...

the dust in my pockets,
holes in my jeans,
and a stack of bills
i cant pay...

no insurance,
no retirement,
no house on the hill....

just another victim
of the American Dream!

Eric Cockrell

Found You!

i searched for holiness...
and found you,
vulnerable, wrapped

in anger and hurt,
raw and sensitive to the touch....
i found you,

a small human dawning
on the first day of creation...
a crucifix, and a stone,

waiting to be rolled away!
i found you,
and stood in naked awe,

looking for the words,
the bridge, and the plow.
i searched for holiness...

and found you!

Eric Cockrell

Founded On God

you tell me...
this country was founded
on a belief in God.
looking at it from
the Native Americans' side...
it would be
belief in your God
at the expense
of their God...
and so it has been
throughout history!

i really dont believe
God kills off his competition,
nor do i think
morality and freedom
were ever won with a sword.
a compassionate God
never goes off to war,
never invades,
never conquers by force.
God is not a taker,
but a giver,
and therein lies our misunderstanding!

Eric Cockrell

Four Horsemen

the thundering hooves...
the four horsemen come,
death and destruction,

the bed we've made.
the hollowed out chime,
the last clock on earth...

destiny beckons,
with hands torn and bruised.
the wave roars as if sudden,

a long time ingrained!
even the bodies whisper,
as if friends or family.

while the scavengers wait
at the foot of the grave.
the voice of God silent,

disgusted, and cold...
and the mother weeps
for the children unborn!

Eric Cockrell

Free

we are marching,
side by side,
heads down,
in oppressive silence.

trapped in small places,
confined by our faces.
numbered, and lined up
to face the glare of darkness.

i am human, dammit!
i am a man,
i am alive!
my spirit cannot be contained
in cages of ownership
and servitude.

i will not be your boy!

i am free!

Eric Cockrell

Free Speech!

free speech....

as long as you comply,
as long as what you say
is profitable... for them...
as long as what you say
doesn't ruffle feathers...
as long as what you say
isn't the truth....

free speech....

in spite of, irregardless of,
because we must....
because if we don't,
it goes away!

free speech...

whatever the cost!

Eric Cockrell

Free!

</>

free!

free to be hungry!

free to be homeless!

free to be underpaid!

or worse, free to be unemployed.

free to be sick without care!

free to be the object of racial prejudice.

free to be oppressed by the 'haves'!

free to be subjugated to unholy wars!

free to be lied to!

free to be used!

free to be American!

free!

'freedom's just another word
for nothing left to lose! '

kris kristofferson

Eric Cockrell

Freedom (When It Speaks!)

freedom doesnt come in black or white,
doesnt always speak English,
doesnt like being lied to,
used, or bartered with....

is not a commodity on the highest shelf,
out of the reach of most....
is not concerned with owning,
and will not be owned....

freedom doesnt have any one religion,
is not capitalist, or communist!
freedom is often quiet, but when it speaks,
the whole world has to listen!

Eric Cockrell

Freedom Aint Free, Anymore!

four padded walls,
food on a tray.
no sunlight, no darkness,

bare bulbs, and time crawling by...
'speak no evil, see no evil',
watching every move...

freedom aint free, anymore!
his crime that of words,
and even worse, thoughts...

a failure to follow,
too defiant to kneel...
sitting still as a mountain,

as firm his resolve...
beaten down, in the name of peace...
freedom aint free, anymore!

Eric Cockrell

Freedom Demands Action!

this be not a free country...
as long as one child goes hungry,
one child cant afford to go to school....
as long as there are unemployment lines,
as long as there are vacant houses,
and homeless families.
as long as our sons and daughters
are sacrificed to the gods of war.
as long as our elderly cant get medical care.
as long as they burn and ban books,
as long as one is censored for speaking truth....
as long as the religion we profess
denies the rights of other religions.
as long as the young gay couple,
who want to adopt a child,
a child that no one wants...
cant get married.
as long as justice is bought and sold,
and is different for different colors.

freedom demands action!

Eric Cockrell

Freedom Doesnt

freedom doesnt starve it's children,
freedom doesnt sell it's people into slavery.
freedom doesnt see skin color,
doesnt always speak english.
freedom doesnt have one religion.
freedom doesnt choose sexual preference.
freedom doesnt regulate love.
freedom doesnt trade joblessness for profit.
freedom doesnt take your home.
freedom doesnt create reservations, slums,
and low rent trailer parks.
freedom doesnt ban books.
freedom doesnt invade and conquer.
freedom doesnt trade blood for oil.
freedom doesnt imprison those it cannot use.
freedom doesnt live by the lie.
freedom doesnt have different levels of justice,
depending on how much money you have.
freedom doesnt abandon it's elderly.
freedom doesnt turn away the sick.
freedom doesnt kill in the name of god.
freedom doesnt lie about the past.
damn it to hell!
this doesnt smell like freedom!

Eric Cockrell

Freedom Dont Turn Your Guns On Me

politics, heritics,
selling opium flavored lies.
here come the tanks,
backed by the banks!
get in line or die!

unlawful detain, torture retrain,
and the bodies disappear.
our bill of rights
adorned with Christmas lights,
we face our greatest fears!

freedom dont turn your guns on me!
beat down, pushed around, still free.
take my job, not my dignity!
freedom dont turn your guns on me!

Eric Cockrell

Freedom Dont Turn Your Guns On Me!

police state, aggravate,
empty buildings on fire!
aggitate, demonstrate,
against the potent liars!

poverty, humility,
anger buys a gun.
empty prayers, nobody cares,
desperate on the run!

freedom dont turn your guns on me!
beat down, pushed around, still free.
take my house, not my dignity!
freedom dont turn your guns on me!

Eric Cockrell

Freedom Of Expression

the last freedom they take from you
is freedom of expression...
for they fear the mind
they cannot confine!
in the shallow sickness
of their own concepts,
they label as right and wrong,
that which is simply life.
and would cut off the hand
that touches the wind!

Eric Cockrell

Freedom Of Speech (Testify)

every word written,
spoken and shared,
to be used against me...
then, so be it.
testify!

the lie will always
be the lie,
and truth, always
the truth.

the sins of mankind fester,
and stink beneath their cover.
money does not justify,
privilege does not ordain.

the masks of prejudice,
apathy, and hatred,
have fallen in the storm.
false gods crumble,
and are swept to the side.

a new day is coming.
the spirit redeems the flesh.
you can chain the body,
but you can no longer
imprison the soul!

speak, write, communicate!
stand up like a man.
the cost of liberty is honesty,
beginning right here, right now!

Eric Cockrell

Freedom Rant, Part Three... (Death Of The Poets)

humanism, capitalism,
abdicate the throne.
god on the laptop,
satan on the phone.
what we are, how near, how far,
and things we dare know touch.
recite prayers, let down your hair,
when too little is too much.
justice bartered, equality martyred,
let religion opiate the mind.
cant see or smell the guilt of blood,
when you're deaf and you're blind.
money talks, while poverty walks,
and hatred buys a gun.
anger boils, the price of oil,
and the smoke hides the sun.
desperate trance, without a chance,
children learn to close their eyes.
minds closed and lips set,
while their souls pray to die!
discriminate, segregate,
you know they're not like you.
cant hear their cries, cant feel their need,
there's nothing you can do.
follow the flag, liberty in drag,
pull their teeth they cannot bite.
when right becomes wrong,
and wrong becomes right!
heaven or hell, save yourself,
turn out the light before you strip.
masturbate, cant communicate,
your master cracks the whip.
and truth denied, narcotic lies,
but the terror lies within.
there comes a day, you cannot hide,
the trace of where you've been.
the distant shore, by boat and oars,
is as close as your hand.
the god you seek, revealed in flesh,

a woman and a man!

Eric Cockrell

Freedom Rant, Part Two... (For Greg And Terence)

socialism, existentialism,
the pages are revealed.
patriot lies, god dies,
unmarked graves in a field.
the addict weeps, cold hard streets,
poverty has a heavy hand.
discrimination, salvation,
leaving footprints where we stand.
single mothers, live for another,
food stamps and minimum wage.
desperate young men, without a friend,
commit acts of senseless rage.
the prisons turn, the money earned,
fills the bellies of greed.
children taught to kill, against their will,
to survive, to feed the need.
those who slept with goats, and came in boats,
to steal the land of the free.
buried the bones, beneath time and stone,
became written history.
now the sins of the past, come due at last,
the slaves rise against the lie.
feet cross the line, eyes read the signs,
for it's liberty or die!
the farms foreclosed, bankers pick their noses,
the factories shut down...
streets filled with ghosts, businesses closed,
nothing left but the sound.
of family trees, brought to their knees,
and babies born in empty rooms.
where roaches crawl, blood spattered walls,
black eyes, needles and spoons.
while Bibles scream, in human dreams,
of the gospel of flesh and bone.
suicides, mass genocides,
stones stacked upon stones.
hungry faces, leave human traces,
on words spoken without a voice.
beneath the gun, dare we stand or run,

we stand before our choice.
Fox News, for those who refuse,
to feel anything at all.
whose bloodless hands, sign time's demands,
on the dawning of the fall.
the guns of war, as ignorance roars,
but who falls victim to this day?
backs turned too long, hearts turned to stone,
is it too late to pray?
nay, i say! another way!
one chance to make a difference...
for it is this act, taking dignity back,
that is the cost of our forgiveness!

Eric Cockrell

Freedom Rant.... (For Greg Uhan)

burn down, tear down,
empty buildings on fire.
wages getting smaller,
the cost keeps getting higher.
gasoline, political machine,
waiting to ignite.
the walking dead carry their beds,
two wrongs dont make a right.
unemployed, polaroids,
given to the flame.
drunk on fears, unspoken tears,
even hunger has a name.
gunpoint, tossed in the joint.
making meth in backseats.
bloody coins, where nothing joins,
bodies covered with sheets.
momma's grave, cant be saved,
redemption calls for blood.
funeral hymns, unpardonable sins,
caskets made of wood.
black face, white face,
poverty goes barefoot.
media lies, freedom dies,
all faces covered with soot.
women sold, sacrifice the old,
babies born on floors.
the price of life, a gun and a knife,
close the window, bolt the doors.
the few who stand, shifting sands,
burned at the stake.
carry the cross, pay the cost,
give more than they take.
for children unborn, shoes not yet worn,
god burns inside their eyes,
chains broken, guts and hopin',
eagles mourn the empty skies.
words of truth, from aged and youth,
open doors and break the chains.
good and bad, desperate and mad,

we are the coming change!

Eric Cockrell

Freedom Speaks!

freedom speaks
without
...your
.....permission,

without
...the
.....need
.....for
.....your
.....affirmation,

in spite of
...hollow
.....threats,

in defiance of
.....censorship
.....and prejudicial
.....restraints!

never fear the truth!
fear what happens
...when
.....the
.....truth
.....is no
.....longer
.....allowed!

Eric Cockrell

Freedom Thoughts

freedom of speech
freedom of thought
freedom of being

it all begins
with the deep down
individual spark

that allows the force
of being to be whole

you can't hold the wind
in your hands
but you can feel it
on your faces

has not the wind a soul?
yet it claims no identity!
you are only as free
as what you let go of

Eric Cockrell

Freedom, Stand Back!

freedom and capitalism
are not the same thing....
neither are justice
and capitalism!

you say it's un-American
to protest against Wall Street,
and the money system.

i say it's un-American
for millions to go jobless,
homeless, and hungry....

while you pad your pockets.

you got rich by the
sweat of our brow....
you need to stand back,
and look at the truth....

before it knocks you down!

Eric Cockrell

Freedom, Or Slavery!

what we face...
is the ignorance of the gun!
the censor's immoral judgements,

the greed that takes
at the expense of need.
the patriotic drunkenness

that justifies without thought.
the violent fear that brutalizes
different skin color, different views!

the stink of the power
that crushes the voices
of our own children....

the final choice....
freedom, or slavery!

Eric Cockrell

Freedom's Talons

rage wrecked revolutionaries,
burning, self-combust, immolate...
cant seem to break the damned glass.

the bowl wont fit through the bars!
the groaning child's fingers,
open and close, open and close...

the dry stink whimper and shudder,
the child dies of hunger...
freedom's talons tear at the flesh!

Eric Cockrell

From A Poet's Desk....

i have days filled with images,
smells, sounds, tastes...
images that talk without speaking,
that ache, that cut, that bleed...
small things, never noticed, or forgotten.

remember staring at sunlight dancing
in pine sap, alone in the woods, a small boy.
the way my bare feet felt in the creek,
the way my mother talked about god,
as if they were intimate friends.
the day my best friend's brother died,
we were about seven, i think he was five...
the freckles on the face of the girl i loved,
in the fifth grade...
and the day of mourning, alone in the woods,
when her family moved away.
the day President Kennedy was murdered...
the streets i walked at night as a teenager.
the questions, always the questions...
the call i took the night
my grandfather drowned.
the funeral when my brother died...

old frame houses, wood chopped, gardens tilled...
the way factories smelled, the stink of the jail cell.
passion, sweet passion, the body of my lover,
and music, always music....
classical, blues, rock, country, bluegrass, folk...
i loved them all!
dimlit bars, silent libraries, thumb stuck out
on endless highways... going, always going...
the feel of the wind at my back.

going up, and coming down,
shaking the monkey off my back.
and one by one those i loved died...
leaves fallen from the tree...
sleeping in empty churches,

or deep south drunk tanks....
the days each of my children were born,
and each time i lost it all...
a thousand prayers, a thousand doubts,
and moments of pure faith....
black and white, and all the colors
of living in tiny slivers....
i thank each and every memory
with eternal gratitude...
images of a life lived,
that throb and haunt the night!

Eric Cockrell

From Greece To Rome

we took the Greek ideal of democracy,
and built it on bloodied shores.
wearing the mask of white righteousness,
we destroyed all in our path,
and claimed the land for god and freedom.
we fueled it with African slaves,
bodies sold on the block.
we built the land of equality,
as long as you were male and white,
had money, or owned 'stolen' land!
finally, women took the right to vote,
but we urged them (god's will) ,
to stay home and bear children.
black people were emancipated
to 'colored only' restrooms,
and a seat at the back of the bus!

/to be continued/

Eric Cockrell

From Greece To Rome (Conclusion)

the majority, the 99%,
now owned by the elite!
a new tidal wave of slavery,
that feeds the wealthy,
and starves the poor!
robbed of human rights and dignity,
faceless numbers in a line.
jobless, homeless, hungry, and angry....
again, bodies on the block!

now more like Rome than Greece,
we implode on ourselves!
fires burning, storms raging,
the howl of humanity's voice...
the bloodied shores weep and tremble!
one people, many colors, battling for freedom,
we're all immigrants here!
forced to lay it all on the line,
backs against the wall,
with nothing left to lose!
from Greece to Rome,
democracy to plutocracy,
the eagle falls from
smoke filled skies!

Eric Cockrell

From Greece To Rome (Part Two)

it took the civil rights movement,
the women's movement,
and the laborer's movement...
led by such as Cesar Chavez,
Martin Luther King, Malcolm X,
James Baldwin, Maya Angelou,
just to mention a few.
imprisonment, beatings, marches,
and many are dead now,
sacrificed to the cause.
JFK warned of secret societies,
wanted to pull out of Vietnam...
his brother Bobby stood up
for justice against the wheel...
both killed by the machine.
over 40,000 killed in Vietnam,
riots in the cities of America.
Nixon lied, America fell into stupor,
and those who believed
became part of the masses.
yet now, a turn for the worse!

/continued/

Eric Cockrell

From Summer To Autumn...

in doubt i found the faith,
that leaves know when they turn and fall...
however, i am amazed at their silence,
and the courage that turns their pain to winter.
how many winters oh my soul?
and be there a spring for each one?
and how do i pen this silence,
that just changed me from summer to autumn?

Eric Cockrell

From The Desk Of A Renegade Socialist... (Chapter 33)

morning breaks, that they have not taken
from us, for they do not know how.

and all the weary stripes of the night,
the marks of turmoil, the blood stained
sweat, the blow of grieving spirits, and
the weight of the anger, are for a moment
lifted. yet the scars remain.

coffee makes in small apartments, in trailer
parks, in welfare housing, in soon to be
foreclosed houses, in run down diners, in
farm houses, in alone, stinking alone, wanting,
needing, hoping against hope dwellings of the
common all across America.

teachers laid off, or underpaid, in book burning
banning ignorance.... firefighters who cant make
it on what they make. minimum wage cashiers,
nurse's aides, trash collectors..... without a chance.
angry lost kids who need education forced into
military service or prison.

human rights violated, or taken. free speech an
illusion. and the hatred, always the fearing,
discriminating, condemning hatred that they push,
on tv, in the news, propaganda, clothed often in religion
or morality... all to keep us divided, and so not a
threat to their kingdom.

the drug of distant success, keep your eyes on your wants,
what we tell you you should want... turn your face
from your neighbor, take care of yourself.

but our consciences know better. our hearts know
differently. our souls demand the truth. and the truth
is we are one!

one race, the human race. one family, humanity. equal
in the need for dignity, for respect. equal in sacredness.
men and women equal in value. all religions, all languages,
all colors of skin, equal!
and now begins the work of breaking down the barriers,

of extending hands, of breaking the glass of ignorance,
of getting involved.
of assuming the responsibility that is already ours. of
walking naked in the light. of being human. of listening,
and daring to learn from each other. of exploring doubt
in search of the truth. of admitting i dont understand,
the first step of understanding. of knowing the face of
god in every living being. for there is no deeper holiness.
again, of being human.
stand up, and walk! wake up, and live!

Eric Cockrell

From The Desk Of... A Renegade Socialist

WE THE PEOPLE,
..and all living beings
....on the earth...

demand fairness,
equality, shared dignity,
and a just dispersion

of all needed goods....

having the desire
and the fortitude
to work and to give

as readily as we take!

believing that all life is sacred,
and should be treated as such!
and that the only true success

feeds every hungry mouth!

daring to respect each other,
and so be respected!

Eric Cockrell

From The Jesus Papers... (Part Two)

'Follow Me...'
can i walk beside You?
i want to see what You do,
i want to be what You do!
i want to get my hands dirty.
feed the hungry, share what i've got....
heal the sick, listen with the heart.
not so much worried about calming the storm,
i just want to stop the wars!
stand up to the political and religious leaders...
i'm with You!
'forgive to be forgiven...'
'let him who is without sin
cast the first stone...'
'the kingdom of heaven
is within you...'
yeah, i knew that one!
'if you do it to one of the least of these...'
same thing! we are all joined!
sweating drops of blood, we've done that.
crucified between two thieves,
i probably know them!
thank Thee for this evening's walk!

Eric Cockrell

From The Jesus Papers....

the question we have to ask ourselves
is whether Jesus would be a member of the present
Christian church?
would He choose to be American?
or would He walk the starving roads of Africa?
would He flee with the women and children
in the countries bombed?
would He be a political force,
or a political dissident?
would He be a capitalist, a socialist, or an anarchist?
would He self immolate with the Tibetan monks
in the name of freedom?
would He carry the bodies out of the mines?
would He hold the addict's hands?
would He call capital punishment justice, or murder?
would He turn His back on the poor, the homeless, and the jobless?
would He be white, black, or brown?
would He condemn? or walk in compassion?
would He hate Muslims, Buddhists, and atheists?
would He be a patriot, or a rebel?
would you let Him in your house?
would He be an illegal immigrant?
would He throw the money changers out of Wall Street?
out of Washington? out of the church?
would you Know Him if you met Him?

Eric Cockrell

Frost Covered Pillows

the cat kills the rabbit by instinct,
to feed survival....
men kill each other
in a vain attempt
to validate survival...
and blame their failures
on god...
while their children wander
aimlessly in the dark,
and their women grieve
on frost covered pillows!

Eric Cockrell

Frozen, Forever Searching!

she killed her baby
with a crack pipe;
lying on the floor,

watching roach drawn carriages
take the prince and the princess
to the ball!

the bruises on her face
throbbing in the dim light;
the dull ache of faith

devoured by demons too
real to shake...
her baby's lips frozen,

forever searching!

Eric Cockrell

Fuel Awareness

when you go out and crank
your car to go somewhere...

do you think about:

1. the family being bombed
...on foreign shores.
2. the soldiers killed
3. the politician stating the lie
4. the profit made
5. the air filled with smoke
6. the oceans defiled by oil
7. the sea life killed
8. the food chain broken
9. what happens when the oil is gone
10. the costs, both in human and animal life,
....and in natural resources.
11. whether walking might be a better option!

Eric Cockrell

Full Tilt

running down the road
laying it on the line;
cause mercy's just a prayer,
and justice is blind

give what you got
more than hope can allow
nothing more important
than right here and now

he's a joker, he's a clown,
he's a fighter, he's a man.
sell his soul to protect you,
got his heart in his hands

wide open, and looking for
a bullet to the head...
when you stand, dont back down
somebody gonna want you dead.

love bleeds, love burns,
it turns you inside out.
takes your pride, shakes your soul,
steals your dreams with doubt.

keep on going, keep believing,
shake the dust from your shoes.
keep on giving, keep doing,
till there's nothing left to lose.

he's a joker, he's a clown,
he's a fighter, he's a man.
sell his soul to protect you,
got his heart in his hands.

wide open and looking for
a bullet to the head...
when you stand, dont back down,
somebody gonna want you dead!

Eric Cockrell

Gasping For Light

1

i built a fire in the yard.
slowly walked back into the house.
gathering everything of value.
my books, my clothes, my boots,
old photographs, letters, pictures,
everything i've ever written.
every memory.

took them outside,
and fed them to the fire!
and walked off barefoot
into the night.

2

lover, dance with me!
we call unto each other
from distances, through barriers,
breaking down walls of seperation;
through tears and angry silence,
echoing through the night.

i kiss your eyes, your lips,
the arch of your neck.
your fingertips, your feet,
the inside of your thighs.
your wetness.

you open your eyes,
and the shadow disappears!

3

spirits dance in the moonlight!
a soft wind rustles
through the trees.
the howl of a dog,

car lights on a forgotten road;
a screen door closes softly.
old house wrapped in stillness.

only a faint sound.
the footsteps of God
walking in your heart!

4

i can smell your perfume,
or maybe the scent of rain coming.
i can taste you in the
cool damp earth,
in the blood of a small animal
killed by a passing car,
in the cry of the baby
waking up hungry,
in the web of the spider.
in the hollow of my soul.

5

two moths lost in the darkness,
gasping for light.

Eric Cockrell

Gavel And Cost!

has it always been easier
to kill your brother than
to listen to your brother?

that which we kill for
fades with time,
and is lost...

the gods we worship,
printed in denominations,
shipped in barrels!

who are we lying to?
we dig graves like
we're burying treasure.

morality driven by profit,
profit at the expense of...
we drench the streets of hell

with urine and holy dogma!
the faces in the mirror,
both gavel and cost!

Eric Cockrell

Gethsemane's Wheel

too long in the garden,
too long behind the plow.
too long at the table,
too long tending the fire...
too long fighting wars,
too long in the cave.
too long, and too many nights,
burning the candle down.
too long behind the wheel,
too long on the cross...

it is finished, day is done...
roll back the stone!

Eric Cockrell

Ghost Of Jfk

the ghost of JFK
walked through my dreams....
and i could see and feel

the heartbeat of America
before the disease took us....
the voice of freedom and moral

conviction.... taking issues,
examining our own souls...
repenting of past prejudices,

searching for a way
for peace and freedom.....
but the shots rang out,

the hope of a generation murdered...
the Pentagon rolled, defense contracts,
smoke filled rooms....

J Edgar Hoover's lists...
the battle for civil rights;
and the young rebelled

against the lie in Vietnam....
against the lie, against the lie...
the search for freedom turned inward....

and the National Guard became the thugs
of the new regime.....
more people killed, more voices stilled....

Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King,
among them.....
that which we fought for now gone....

bought out by the corporate lie.....
and now the battle begins again...
now the voices, new voices,

spring up again....
and i stand amid the ghosts,
waiting on the shots to ring out!

Eric Cockrell

Gifts For The Soul

a poet is only an ear,
and a naked pen...
becomes less,
when he has a name,
even less a title.

the best lay down
their pens and
pick up shovels,
turning the earth in
stillness, season by season.

open the windows
and doors to the heart,
and sweep out the trash.
leaving gifts for the soul,
the tiny droppings of birds,

that just took flight...
a small mound of ashes,
a tiny wisp of smoke!
the imprint of a kiss
on lips long grown cold!

Eric Cockrell

Give God A Ride!

we have spent centuries
running from gods,
and making sacrifices
to our own fears!
afraid of death,
and so afraid to live,
we race maddened to the flame.
trying to conceive
an ideal, afraid
to see, to touch,
the reality before us!
god looks alot like
the people we're bombing,
smells like the homeless man
in the alley,
weeps with the hungry
into an empty bowl!
you want to touch the sacred?
touch the stranger,
the orphaned child,
the addict and the prisoner...
the one you bury,
the ones you send to war.
take a deep breath,
you can smell the desire...
of the lover, the planter,
the poet, and the thief!
stop, and give god a ride,
even better, an ear!

Eric Cockrell

Given Form

we have to quit putting it all off
on god.... like a magic button we
can push when it gets tough,
and god will take it all away....
if you must speak of god, then
let it be thus...
we are the flesh and bones of god.
we are the hands and feet of god.
we are the urn that holds the fire.
we are the dreams of god made bodies....
so we must do the work!
seeing with the eyes of god,
hearing with the ears of god,
breathing the very breath of god...
the creation is but the creator given form!

Eric Cockrell

Gives A Damn!

the day i changed
my last name to 'gives a damn',
that's when the trouble began!

why does it make people so mad
when you speak the truth?
and why so uncomfortable

when you admit your mistakes,
take off your mask and stand naked,
revealing that you're human?

and why the anger
when you treat everyone the same?
no favorites, no elite, no righteous!

no political agenda, no religious fervor,
no attempts to convert....
no need to lead or follow,

always walking beside!
equal in suffering, equal in needs,
equal freedom, equal dignity!

anti-war, and anti any government
that abuses, neglects, or terrorizes...
believing that God lives within

every living being,
not in churches, temples, or mosques....
thus believing that all life is holy,

that all beings are sacred!
'gives a damn', and always will!

Eric Cockrell

Glass Partition

she lives her life
behind a glass partition.
shuffling papers, washing dishes,
sweeping the floor.
sipping on sterile water,
her hands squeaky clean...
even her cat's been declawed!

he comes in from work,
both tired and bruised.
his pants are dirty,
his hands ache and throb.
pours a small drink,
and lights up a smoke...
sits quietly with an angry stare.

two worlds revolving,
two distant shores.
the phone rings, wrong number,
there's a knock on the door.
she turns her head unwilling to feel,
he hurls the bottle at the glass...
stands up, and looks for the broom!

Eric Cockrell

Glass Rose

a glass rose
with broken edges,
sits alone on the table

in an empty room...
sunlight stolen
from crusted shades,

glints on the petals;
the raw edges shimmer,
almost to touch!

gathering dust,
frozen by time....
a glass rose....

almost to touch!

Eric Cockrell

Glass Rose (Moan Of The Night)

a glass rose
shattered on the bare floor...
tiny pieces glinting

in the late evening light.
an old photograph,
half burned in the ashtray...

hand on fire,
slips down, fingers enter
where faces disappear.

a small crucifix,
the breeze slips through the window,
picking up the scent,

staggers as if drunk.
the cruelty of the door,
the latch, and the shadow...

that laughs as it closes
the book and turns away...
a glass rose,

and the moan of the night!

Eric Cockrell

Glee

watching my old blind dog
roll in the grass,
biting his tail.... with glee!

he's got it!
that's what we forget.
that's what we've lost...

no matter how old,
or what your health is,
or what's going on around you...

that sense of total abandon,
rolling in the grass
biting our tails...

with glee!

Eric Cockrell

Gnawing (Freedom)

freedom
gnawing
at my
gut...

a rat
gnawing
on
the
ropes...

that
my fears
use
to
bind
me...

freedom, the oldest
primeval urge,
the grunting of
the darkness
as light opens
the door!

freedom...
the
raw
heart
beating...
in the
hands
of the
priest...

as the body
is flung from
the cliff...

the sound a rose
makes when it blooms!

Eric Cockrell

God As Mother

the older i get
the more comfortable
i feel
with the concept
of God as Mother
and the less i fear death!

i've said it before,
i'll say it again
from the wind and rain
i came
to the wind and rain
i will return

nothing else needed!

Eric Cockrell

God Died

God died last night
and no one noticed...
they'll find the body
in a week or two.

funeral arrangements
in the back of the paper...
no viewing... cremation
is all that could be afforded....

and the world rushes on
in an angry ball of fury;
while children die,
unnoticed and unnamed.

and the homeless and the hungry
are stacked in the ditches...
unholy sacrifices to
His memory....

leaving the unclaimed ashes
to blow in the infidel wind!

Eric Cockrell

God Doesn't Like Her Name!

god doesn't like her name...
capital letters notwithstanding!
and the holy scriptures
we've hung around her neck,
nothing but broken shoelaces!

wars fought in her name,
used condoms cast to the side.
tainted morality in her image,
burns like old photos on the fire.
she's not buying it!

bird nests made of straw,
human nests made of concepts.
love itself doesn't wear clothes,
can't be spoken...
it must be lived!

Eric Cockrell

God Has Many Faces

we are born with the need to worship!
bound by our fears we create veangeful gods
that validate our actions!
when in truth that which
is sacred and holy is all around us,
and within us...
we cant see the forest for the trees!

God has many faces, many forms...
none fearful, none veangeful!

Eric Cockrell

God Hath

God hath not a name,
But a million faces,
A million bodies,
A million tongues.
A million bruises,
A million scars.
A million dreams,
A million hopes....

All common,
And miraculous!

Eric Cockrell

God Is Not, God Is

God is not....
white, not black,
not brown, not red...

not male, not female,
not vindictive...
not a murderer....

not limited by form,
or our conceptions...
not the property

of any one people....

God is compassion...
and works best
in human form!

Eric Cockrell

God Is Not....

god is not white,
not black, not Asian, not Hispanic...
not Baptist, not Jewish, not Catholic,
not Muslim, not Buddhist...
not male, not female,
not vindictive, not judgemental...
not the god of wars,
of poverty, of greed, of invasion.
god is not selfish,
not arrogant, not boastful...
god is not what you fear,
god simply 'is'...

dialogue, bridge, match...
the echo of your soul,
calling you to yourself!

Eric Cockrell

God Notes

i believe God is both
male and female, and neither!
both human, and spirit...
beyond our conceptual thoughts.
person, non person, creator,
and created. the image of
the life force we just cant
seem to see in ourselves, and
in others. both the question,
and the answer, enlightenment
and compassion.... the need,
and the food, the light, and
the darkness from whence it came.
the cry of humanity for understanding,
and what we would see if we stood
naked in front of a mirror!
both the path, and the feet...
and the revelation of human destiny!

Eric Cockrell

God Simply Is

god is not some distant sphere,
not the hall of judgement,
not righteous fear.
god is not the image we worship,
not a holy book or recited prayer.
god is not a purity that cant be touched.
god is not a religion,
not a concept, not a moral storm.
god is never the reason to hate,
never the reason to go to war.
god is not white,
not conservative, nor liberal,
not going to destroy the world....

god is the power between two hands that touch,
the birth of a child, the death of an old man.
the longing we were born with that drives us on...
the courage to enter the realm of the heart.
true communion, true dialogue,
the bridge over our fears.
the wings of the sparrow,
the bud sleeping through winter.
the decision of forgiveness,
that which is given without asking back.
the healing power of silence,
the eternity in each moment.
god is diversity bound by responsibility.
the power of peace, the moment of listening,
the sound of your own heartbeat calling you home.
the spirit that inhabits the body
doing the work of compassion...
god simply 'is'...

Eric Cockrell

God Smells Like...

god smells like the shoes you wore
when you mowed your elderly neighbor's yard...
like your hands when you emptied his bedpan...
like your tears when you stood alone by his grave!

Eric Cockrell

God Speaks!

no more wars in My name,
no more diseases blamed on Me...
no more global warming storms

that leave a path of destruction.
no more hatreds, no prejudices,
no acts of violence under My flag....

no more words printed on your money,
no more heathen peoples left to starve.
no more conversions by the sword,

no more calamities called My judgement....
quit using Me for your doorstep!
take responsibility for yourselves!

Eric Cockrell

God, I Am Weary

tired...
and frustrated,
walking through
endless sands...
no path ahead,
and the wind removes
all traces behind.

god, i am weary...
this body is worn,
these eyes fade.
and the songs i sing
in the desert night,
haunt the distance with sadness.

Lover, where are you?
i've forgotten your face!
even the smell of your perfume,
fades in the darkness.

the trees are weeping,
even the moon sheds a tear.
as the small fire i built
fades down to embers!

Eric Cockrell

God, I Know Mine Do!

perhaps the lips of god tremble....
with the death of every child out of season.
with the padlock on the door of the foreclosed house,
with the bullied child hanging in the closet.
with every call to war and flag that's raised,
with the bare feet of the poverty dwellings.
with the unemployed man making bathtub met,
the girl trading sex for a high...
with every affluent sneer,
and every indifferent stare.
with every tree cut for no reason,
and every tanker spilling oil.
with every dog taken to the pound,
with every racial slur.
with every elderly person left to eat dogfood,
with every unmarked grave.
with every moment of religious pretense,
with every shirt made in a sweatshop.
with every illegal immigrant shot and killed,
with every tick of the clock in an empty room.
with every tear shed by the lonely,
with every act of discrimination.
with every state sponsored execution,
with every woman denied medical care.
with every child born and orphaned,
with every woman beaten and abused....
perhaps the lips of god tremble....
god, i know mine do!

Eric Cockrell

God-Centric, For Celeste

God-Centric,
the journey
of a pure heart,
unashamed to question,
not afraid of the answers,
or lack of answers.
from the Bible God of youth,
to the land of doubt and hope,
to an understanding of the Presence,
and the calm acceptance of It's abiding.
to a knowing
of the formless
behind the forms,
to a seeing
of the many faces
of God,
each validated by love.
to a belief,
in a love beyond understanding,
and an acceptance of the wonder,
believing there is more.
sacredness,
without a need for 'righteous judgement'
holiness,
and a human being being human,
and respecting the paths
of all true seekers.
her story brings peace, and hope...
read the book!

Eric Cockrell

God's Breath

i felt God's breath upon me
as i lay sleepless....
my soul yearning to escape

the confines of flesh and bone....
my spirit burning with the need
to unlock the simple....

that my understanding could not define....
shooting stars, flash moments of brilliance
in a sky both dark and deep....

beyond striving, beyond suffering,
to the electric pulse without barriers.
beyond fear, and all discerning....

the hidden place without
beginning or end....
the touch that opens a flower,

and heals the tear before it falls!
the breath of God upon me,
defining my smallness with infinity....

and infinity in the smallest particle
of dust illumined by the light!

Eric Cockrell

God's Image!

if you are created
in God's image...
i'm not sure i like your God!
or at the very least,
not His actions!

salvation, and capitalism,
are two seperate things.
compassion does not kill,
does not starve,
does not enslave,
does not abuse!

you speak of Satan,
and his cruel horrors.
perhaps he is your god!
that would explain the
blood on your hands!

Eric Cockrell

Gods Of War!

you have made your gods
in your own image.
and so you follow war
to the brink of your own
extinction!

yet the mouths of the souls
that you starve and slaughter,
speak the names of the god
that you've forgotten!

she answers with faces,
faces you choose not to see!
you dig the graves of your children,
to feed the beast within!

you arm yourselves with moral justice,
dress the lie in prideful prejudice.
but the howl in the night
is not the wind!

it is the cry of the blood
on your hands!

Eric Cockrell

Gone Fishing

gone fishing...

Wall Street keeps grinding,
bombs keep falling overseas.

the homeless still cry out,
the hungry stare...
and the feeble old man

still needs help...
the air's filled with carbon,
the oceans' filled with oil.

corporate America keeps leeching,
and the rich pay no taxes....
the politicians keep lying,

and the preachers sell eternity.
if it wasnt for all of this...
i'd put up the sign:

GONE FISHING!

Eric Cockrell

Good And Evil!

every morning i awaken
in a manger surrounded
by wise men and cattle.
every afternoon i stand and jeer
as they nail his hands and feet
to the cross...
and every night i weep
at the distance i have travelled,
looking for the star
that i lost in the clouds!

Eric Cockrell

Good Hats And Good Boots...

enjoying the stillness of night,
the cooling hand on my brow....
so much to do tomorrow, and the heat...
but for now.... just the stillness....
my prayer for each of you...
the fabled key,
that you already have.
no need for road signs or lanterns...
the feet of your hearts know the way!
and the kiss of your most intimate longing,
the secrets that only you can know...
i will return when i can,
until then, good hats and good boots!

Eric Cockrell

Good Parenting Skills

good parenting skills...
much love,
much encouragement,
much listening,
much reading,
much teaching,
much time,
much thankfulness,
much patience,
firm discipline,
and a strong commitment
to be there
for the rest of your life!

Eric Cockrell

Good Time To Start

real conversation...
words that mean something...
honest, intelligent breathing.

we've forgotten how to talk.
we dont even know ourselves,
much less each other...

so caught up in the mad race,
computer age shots of insulin....
when's the last time you said anything

that lingered after you walked away?
when's the last time you heard anything
that stopped you, made you think?

when's the last time you took the time
to feel, to care, to risk, to bare?
dont you think now's a good time
to start?

Eric Cockrell

Gospel

you flash a picture
of a brown skinned
big eyed orphaned child,
hungry, and homeless
on the screen...

and want me to make
a donation so you can
send them your gospel...

when the gospel that they
really need is for us
to acknowledge
that we're human...

change our way of living,
consuming, and taking...
so that all people
have the chance...

and their needs met!

send food, and medicine...
yes!
send the message that
we're family....

hell yes!

Eric Cockrell

Government Owned!

she bought a bag
of cheap coffee,
a quart of milk,
and a box of pads...
bundled up in her Goodwill coat,
walked back across the parking lot,
and up the street with
tears in her eyes.

she knew the baby was crying,
and her old man sitting
there staring blankly
out the window at the world...
wondering where in the hell
he could scuff a few bucks.
just coffee and milk, and
trying to heat the apartment

with the kitchen stove...
too young to have lived,
to live on the memories
of a childhood long gone!
two more weeks till her check,
and nothing in her pockets.
the food stamps long gone,
and nothing on her table!

Eric Cockrell

Government's Heroin

the lies,
and propaganda,
spewed forth
by the Wall Street,
Pentagon pushing elite...
the lies,
that cover a dying earth,
and hide the faces
of starving millions,
that bury the bodies
of the victims in unmarked graves.
that strip the working class
of all dignity and rights...

the lies,
and propaganda,
nothing but the government's heroin,
doled out in measured doses,
numbing the souls of the masses...
but now the spoon is tarnished,
the needle bent beyond repair.
track marked arms linked in arms,
angry, and determined!

Eric Cockrell

Gratitude

just taking a moment,
to express my gratitude,
for all those who take the
time to read and comment
on my poems...
and to say thank you for
all the amazing poems that
i get to read of yours.
also, a thank you to Poemhunter.
be at peace!

keep writing!

Eric Cockrell

Graven Images

i took off all my clothes,
tore down the graven images
i'd made of myself!

threw away all my pretensions,
and gave away my few belongings.
learned to speak without moving my lips,

laid aside the well conceived lies.
laughed in the face of my fears,
walked to my enemy with an open hand....

only to find my enemy
was just another version of me....
and what i'd been afraid of

was the very truth that set me free!

Eric Cockrell

Graves Of Your Fathers

dead poets stacked like saltine crackers,
in the hangers where the bombs are loaded.
the smell of flesh burning
doesnt change with skin colors,
screams in the night defy language!
justice oozes from pus filled wounds,
faces stolen from bodies marching.
death falls like the rain that has no after,
on the poor and the ignorant without discrimination.
the power surges, lights flicker and fade,
the children of the poets sharpen knives,
and sleep with stray cats....
when even darkness sickens itself,
and women gather garbage by flashlight.
the beast you fed the poets' tongues,
sits staring at your mother!
and you walk blindly down the tracks,
throwing pennies on the graves of your fathers!

Eric Cockrell

Gravity And Desire

frozen...

the trees, grasses partly covered,
the smoke from the chimney,
the light in the window.

the streets with silence,
even the darkness suspended.
conversation, a stray cat,
the cup cracked in the sink.

the pouring, and the fire,
shadow held by shadow.
the heart buried in dawn,
the dawn held by the dark!

ghosts?
or just snowflakes,
no one names or remembers,
falling and gravity, gravity and desire...

frozen...

Eric Cockrell

Great Herds

there were great herds
of buffalo then...
racing wildly across
the plains,
bodies painted,
ponies nostrils flared,
bow and arrow ready...

to the victor
the spoils...
a prayer of gratitude
to the spirit
of the beast....
meat for the long winter...

maybe even a taste
of raw liver...

there were great herds
of buffalo then...
when the people
of the earth
were free!

Eric Cockrell

Great Mother

Great Mother...

ecstasy dance;
inside the fur of the wolf,
the wings of the hawk

small ants on infinite journeys,
turtles moving to earth time.
water wrapping around rocks,
old tree leaning with time.

blood, sweat, passion's fluids,
the pulse of a cold mountain.
thunder and lightning, clouds hang,
the taste of flesh lingers...

naked by the fire, shadows
on the walls of the cave....
chanting, humming, praying....
with hands bruised and grateful.

Eric Cockrell

Greed

greed
eats
its
own
children

like
a
moth
drawn
to
the
flame

swallows
its
own
light

without
remorse!

Eric Cockrell

Grey Windows...

grey windows, grey buildings,
grey streets, grey skies...
grey figures staring,
grey deals are done!

manipulate gas prices,
manipulate food...
manipulate the economy,
manipulate the election.

right and wrong,
never thought of.
hungry mouths and desperation.
win the war,
never raise a gun,
bodies strewn everywhere!

money makes gods,
without conscience or morals.
human lives just tokens,
that buy trinkets for demons!

flag draped caskets,
the stink of money overwhelms.
while patriots dig graves,
for their mothers and sisters.

right and wrong,
never thought of.
hungry mouths and desperation.
pick a President,
who'll stand silent,
as birds of prey pick the bodies!

grey windows...

Eric Cockrell

Grieving Nails, Humanity's Coffin (For Gary Snyder)

trees cut,
to widen the road,
homeless owls and spiders,
marching heads down.
napalm rivers,
tainted with oils,
spilling from the lips
of a beaten lover!
empty chants,
smokestack curls...
the body of the wolf,
in the ditch by the road.
fucking terror, endless noise,
souls lost in shards of tires,
silent goodbyes....

Eric Cockrell

Growing Up In America!

you turned your children loose,
out in the streets of poverty....
only a few given a chance,

the rest left to fend for themselves!
no jobs, unless you wanna soldier,
kill or be killed for oil....

then no jobs when you return,
and no house to return to!
food stamps and government aid,

till that eventually runs out....
then back on the streets where you started,
kill or be killed to survive....

dealing dope, dealing flesh, stealing cars,
no hope of anything more!
get caught and go to prison,

not in a gang, better join one!
poor white kids, poor kids of color,
growing up in America!

Eric Cockrell

Guillotine

the guillotine stands
alone in the square,
the pinnacle of pulse....

that drains the heartbeats....
traffic heavy, horns honking,
hurrying, hurrying....

trucks and buses puffing clouds
of death into the air....
neon signs keeping score.

billboards selling the dream,
street preachers selling Jesus....
corner whores selling themselves....

in sterile rooms atop the skyscrapers,
far from the stink, far from
trash strewn in the alleyways

like tiny lives forgotten,
gum stuck to the shoes.....
they gamble with futures,

trading hungry mouths without faces;
never looking back.... vultures
in black suits and ties...

winning, winning, or losing it all.
while the homeless and the addicts
walk the streets below....

looking for something they cant remember....
light dancing on the razor-like blade.....
heads from bodies, hearts from souls.....

profit from the last heartbeat!

Gun In The Hand

the gun in the hand
of the shadowy figure
wearing the mask of oppression,
is prejudice!

the poison gases he sprays,
are ignorance and fear.

the bomb he drops
is absolute poverty.

the flag that he waves,
is corporate and consuming.

the prophecy he speaks
is a damned lie...

we take the gun from his hand,
when we dare to stand up,
and demand the truth!

Eric Cockrell

H.A.A.R.P!

h.a.a.r.p,
military ionosphere buster!
global vandalism...

change the weather...
earthquakes, tornadoes,
hurricanes....

mental manipulation!
crowd control...
cutting through the ionosphere

like a knife...
the power to change
the universe, both without,

and within....
the power to control....
men playing gods

wearing demonic shoes!

Eric Cockrell

Had To Let Go

the hands that grasped
the ledge, clinging for life,
had to let go...

in order for the wings
to learn to fly!

the heart that grasped
your heart, clinging for love,
had to let go...

in order for your heart
to return again!

Eric Cockrell

Half Drunk In Jesus Town

church bells ringing
down by the mission
walking these streets again

down by the old feed store,
and the row of empty buildings,
listening to the ghosts of the past.

the railroad tracks stand silent,
that old train dont run anymore.
here and there people walking,

aint nobody talking,
stray dogs and broken bottles,
stopped to light one last cigarette.

i can still hear my mother calling,
can still see my daddy's tired eyes,
can still hear the preacher, and

them old songs
but you cant take me down
to the water anymore.

old signs falling in the wind
take one last draw from the bottle
cant bring back what you never had

half drunk in Jesus town.

Eric Cockrell

Half In Day, Half In Night!

what if you moved the mountain?
raised your hand and stilled the storm?
fed the hungry, healed the sick,
and stood up and stopped all wars?
what if you peeled back the mask of prejudice,
and exposed the beating heart?
what if you walked on the water?
what if you built a temple,
using only your own hands?
what if you made your life a prayer?
what if you gave all you had to the poor?
what if you did all of this,
and it still wasn't enough?
would you be willing to go on?

what if i gave you my heart,
my spirit, and my soul?
and laid my body at your feet,
sacrificing my dreams for yours?
what if i stood up like a man
and demanded an answer?
would you know,
and would you care?
what if i opened the door
and flew into the night?
would there be a light on
when i returned?

what if i just don't know
anything else to say or do?
so what if i just be me?
would you recognize the man
standing, half in day,
and half in night?

Eric Cockrell

Hallelujah! I Am Yours!

i searched till i found beauty,
in the simplest things....
in the hand of a friend,
a leaf blown by the wind,
in a blind dog's eyes,
in the cat curled close.
in the baby just born,
the old man's dying smile...
in difference, and in sameness.
in the lover's body,
in hands calloused and hard,
in moonlit nights,
and quiet conversations.
in long silent walks,
the meal simply prepared,
in the mother and the child.
in the twinkle in the homeless man's eyes,
as we shared a cup of coffee.
in thunderstorms, mountains,
and gliding hawks,
in the snail, the spider, and the ants.
in the trees that whisper,
and the dawn that shouts...
'hallelujah! i am yours! '

Eric Cockrell

Halls Of Eternity

sandaled feet, dusty streets,
Sumerian wheels turning...
pages of history written in histories

of those that came after....
walking with the gods,
listening as they spoke of

worlds far across the universe...
tales of the flood, creation and beginning,
all handed down to them....

and handed down by them....
a whisper in time, merely an echo,
as if a stone dropped in a pool...

and now our own world,
crashing headlong o'er a cliff;
do we dare believe time is over?

or are we just Sumerian ghosts
playing the same song,
dancing the same dance,

to the halls of eternity?

Eric Cockrell

Hammer Purged By Rust (Part Two)

the railed fence broken,
buildings stink with shock,
the sky falls with shattered force.
young boys with brass boners
chase burning limbs,
lips too numb to talk.
in uniforms of pretense,
that hide all remnants of fear.
drilled to perform without conscious thoughts,
their mothers prayers denied.
to the kingdoms of the poor,
unleashing the vultures of greed.
striking dead any man who dares to stand,
burying the children on trash covered streets.
to banish thought, to blacken hope,
to sever hands that join!
walls built of bones,
young mothers fight back with stones,
the match of judgement struck.
wave upon wave, led by dogs and owls,
sacrificed in sacred mud!
and the gods of eternity
beat the drums of fate.
the ghosts of compassion,
just outside the doors of hate.
truth hangs in the balance,
the covers are removed.
only the man who dares to be man
will survive the coming flood!
and hand in hand left naked
will build a garden in the ruins.
when light reveals the heart that feels,
and the skulls rise and speak...
children drenched in ash and oil,
warm by fires that stroke the night.
when nothing sleeps with nothing,
and the skies weep with stars!

Hammer Purged By Rust!

in cursed dread
with iron thoughts,
the rebel plows his fields.
neath napalm skies,
infested by drones and crows,
his hands are bound by time.
tis murder by execution,
truth revealed by blood!
the carnal cross,
the skulls of dreams,
and virgin bodies for seed.
who pays the price,
who tames the beast,
the child devoured by wolves.
with flags betrayed,
by human conscience,
and gods that shed acid tears!
and the sound of voices swells,
till the earth trembles and shakes.
faces drawn on tombstones,
with crayons made of flesh.
do we pray with tongues
stricken by disease?
do we kneel or dare we fight?
freedom's just a remembered thought,
and justice stinks of lies!
yet still the rebel casts forth,
with seeds stolen in the hour of need.
pulling nails from grey casket lids,
with a hammer purged by rust!

Eric Cockrell

Hand I Offer

the hand i offer,
the hand of peace.
the caring hand,
the giving hand,
the get dirty hand,
the pull you up hand,
the work with you hand,
walk beside you hand,
the companion hand,
the communion hand....

the hand i offer,
....without conditions!

Eric Cockrell

Hand Of A Poet

it takes the hand
of a poet
to find the heart
of a clown
and paint it on the face
of a homeless man
standing by a barrel
in the alley...
that has no fire!

to look in the barrel
and see an old man
kneeling in front of
a sobbing child,
deftly removing a splinter
from his tiny shaking hand
with an old rusted knife...

while a sparrow takes flight,
as the clouds on the horizon
come knocking...
and the trees whisper
naked to one another,
things secret, and
full of magic!

Eric Cockrell

Hand On The Pump

</>

down by the well house,
hand on the pump...
words get in the way,

when two hearts talk!
naked emotion,
and something more distant

than the remnants of fire.
stray leaves blown
by desire and whim;

the cut too deep,
the limb silently falls.
footprints scream,

with only the trees,
to witness, to testify....
too naked to lie!

Eric Cockrell

Hand To The Plow,2011

sitting outside this morning,
watching it rain.... gathering,
gathering strength from i
know not where...

seems like we're not making
any headway... teetering on
the edge of survival...
this year especially tough...

get it up, get it on...
put your hand to the plow!
all around us people,
all different kinds of people,

but people... are struggling,
are in need, are in want....
we are a disjointed family,
watching each other sink!

we have got to become aware,
to break down the walls of division...
the only way out is together...
what we have we have to share!

but there can be no more 'me'
and 'i'... no more self oriented
delusions... we cannot follow greed.
we have to turn our weapons

of destruction into shovels and hoes.
we have to join hands, and do it now.
if you're hungry, i'm hungry!
if you're homeless, i'm homeless!

no more apathy, no more doing nothing!
put your hands to the plow!
or get out of the way!
life demands hard working involvement!

Eric Cockrell

Hand-Me-Down!

got my hand-me-down boots,
and my hand-me-down jeans.
my broke down hand-me-down hat,
doing hand-me-down things.

my hand-me-down fire,
and my hand-me-down pot.
take a hand-me-down chair,
i'll share what i've got.

got some hand-me-down thoughts,
a couple of hand-me-down songs.
i've got a hand-me-down heart
that wont leave you alone.

we'll talk about hand-me-down freedom,
and hand-me-down truth....
in this hand-me-down world,
it's just me and you!

in this hand-me-down world....
paying hand-me-down dues!

Eric Cockrell

Handprints On The Knob!

bound and cuffed,
i break through
the paper veil
surrounding your body,
and lap at your heart
with my tongue.

you broke the sparrow's wings,
yet he flies with the memory
of flight and pure desire!

you speak softly,
and the waves are stilled.
even the moon
loses it's grip!

small children draw your image
in the dirt with holy fingers,
and whisper, 'mother'!

the rats in the alley
stop in silent prayer.
broken windows mourn
for the wind!

your lips on the horn
of my being blow,
the demons dance like monkeys,
for nickels and dimes.

rain begins to fall...
even god is weeping.
and the handprints on the knob
burn history into
the moments of choice.

perhaps that is all we are,
or can be...
moments of choice,

handprints on the knob!

Eric Cockrell

Hands Made Of Dust

butterfly....
flash for an instant,
then gone forever,

leaving only the echoes
of your small fragile wings
riding the wind....

eternity, an instant,
nothing else needed,
holding starlight

in the palms
of hands made of dust!

Eric Cockrell

Hang Up The Phone

hang up the phone...
let the voices in my head die down.
outside it's raining in layers,
and the cat curls against the steps.
cars pass like ships on uncharted seas,
and we are no better.
each day a battle in a war no one wins...
you looked at me with sadness,
and something i almost remembered.
we sat at a table in the park with the dogs,
and watched a deer stamping and snorting.
now you lie asleep in front of the tv,
and i'm alone with my thoughts.
somewhere deep inside beneath the turmoil,
the flame still burns on a candle forgotten.
who and what are we, if not human?
why breathe if we cannot feel?
damn the storm, i'm not afraid of the darkness...
my feet curse softly and walk into the rain!

Eric Cockrell

Hard Dog Blues

baby, i've been to Babylon,
and downtown Chicago.
i've smelled the stink
of poverty's greed.
i've lain helpless
in your burnt out apartment.
and sold my soul,
to fill the need.

i've seen god,
and walked with the devil.
i've stood naked,
while the building burned.
i've been the storm,
destruction and hunger
in the executioner's line,
just waiting my turn!

so dont give me half empty,
half full, or half lit.
dont kiss me and leave me,
saying you'll never forget.

i buried your father
in an unmarked grave.
wrote you letters in crayon,
and sent them first class.
turned my back on my future,
and laid down my cross.
now it's time for redemption,
and i'm fading fast!

so dont give me half empty,
half full, or half lit.
dont kiss me and leave me,
saying you'll never forget!

Eric Cockrell

Hard Eyes

hard eyes stare into the night...
hard eyes with calloused gentle hands.
hard eyes that have listened and seen.
hard eyes that have touched.
hard eyes that have fought
battles that couldnt be won...
hard eyes that have shared
the suffering of others....
hard eyes that have known beauty and loss...
hard eyes that make choices that are not easy.
hard eyes that have been betrayed,
hard eyes that have loved...
hard eyes that cross the threshold...
hard eyes of the sword and cross.
hard eyes that look into the soul,
and sometimes even smile.

Eric Cockrell

Hard Man To Love!

i know...

i am a hard man to love.
too busted up to be pretty,
hard headed, opinionated...
headstrong and stubborn.

i fall down a lot,
but i get back up.
keep on walking,
eyes set hard on the goal.

passionate, a little crazy,
sensuous, starving, touching,
daring the forbidden.
following the sound of the flute...

and the footsteps of the Lover.
maddened with desire,
soft hearted,
yet demanding justice!

ready to risk it all at any time...
compassionate, driven...
listening, always listening...
sometimes blinded,

and prone to mistakes...
a hard man to love,
an old man
still feeding the fire!

Eric Cockrell

Hard Questions (Change)

standing at the crossroads
what i've been, what i've done,
where i've won, where i've lost
staring at myself and my life
stark naked in the mirror

questions

what really matters the most to me?
at 57 i dont have as much time left,
as much time to waste as i've had
have i done or said anything
of lasting value?
have i done more good than bad?
(and i've done both!)

it's too easy to get trapped
in a low income job,
barely surviving week to week,
often day to day
so what do i do to get out?

what do i want to be remembered for?
does it matter?
it does to me!

i want the time i have left to be
spent on change
a change in me how i view the world,
and what i do to make the world
a better place

i want to be a better man.
i want to be a better human being.

i want to live in a way that's
both socially and ecologically
affirmative to be involved
in the sanctity of life.

i want change
and in the wanting
lies the beginning!

Eric Cockrell

Harness The Mules....

you would harness the mules,
and put blinders on them....
you would muzzle the dog,
clip the wings of the hawk.
you would cut the ancient oak,
without thought or remorse.
you would dam the river,
and the consequences be damned.
you would harness the sun,
and enslave the wind....
in the name of your god,
to the beat of the drums.
let the bones be your footprints,
of the flesh make your boots.
pluck the eyes from the truth,
rip out the tongue of courage.
yet in the dark of night,
in your neon lit rooms.
the ghosts of your children's children,
shake the panes and tear at the curtains.
and the hearts of the many,
mournfully howl and stomp...
at the door to your consciences,
neath the lamp of your souls!

Eric Cockrell

Have I Spoken Lately?

have i spoken lately
too often of death?
hard not to...
when i can feel
the hot breath on my neck.
and the shudder of blackness
that rattles my bones!
the knock, the figure in shadow,
too familiar to feel safe.
the hand as cold as ice,
that takes all,
leaving nothing behind.
but tis not fear i feel,
just a tired resignation.
and a powerful sense
of things left undone,
and stars i forgot to name!
as for love,
i know not what else,
or what more i could have done.
i just pray it's enough,
the very breath of my dreams,
and the intent beneath my thoughts.
so, so be it!
i have no baggage.
the moon is full,
the path is sure.
tis not flowers that you smell,
but the scent of my pure longing!

Eric Cockrell

Have Mercy!

Have Mercy!

with final thoughts
i walk these streets,
past vacant buildings hallowed.
in silent mourning,
my heartbeat joining,
the concrete scarred by living.
passing strangers hurrying,
as if they had a life to return to.
while the shouts and cursing of working men,
rings inside the empty walls!

past tenement buildings,
and unemployed stoops,
and eyes staring from windows.
dogs too hungry to bark,
squad cars passing slow,
tis the funeral of poverty.
while meth lab food stamp children,
sharpen knives against the curb.
and everything's grey, even the sounds,
the air is drunk with anger.

i caught a ride
with a trucker wired,
who mumbled slamming gears.
out into the country
once green and rich...
now brown and deserted.
fields not worked,
farm's foreclosed,
houses left to ghosts and memories.
tractors rusting in the sun,
the air is drunk with anger.

back into town,
past libraries closed,

and churches that ache with empty.
i can hear the sound
of the distant bells...
be it freedom or infinity.
past hospitals full,
and graveyards that move
with shadows in the night.
back to the small room
where i cant sleep...
where god weeps in the stillness.

America, America...
the air is drunk with anger!

Eric Cockrell

Have Names!

sirens and lights
rape the night sky;
beaten, terrorized,

loaded like cattle
and taken away.
while on the stage,

the puppets turn,
voices piped in from afar....
the homeless family

breaks in a vacant house....
the children hushed and
huddling for warmth....

lights from a passing car,
on the sign, foreclosed!
food scraps taken from the trash,

a dog barking down the street.
pepper spray, batons, a blanket....
and a gas station closed....

even the pumps have names!

Eric Cockrell

Have We Become...

do we fill the empty plate
with spent shells?
the empty cup with spilled blood?
do we sing of freedom
at the funerals of the children?
scratch 'equality' on their headstones?
do we sacrifice murder on the altar,
while praying to gods made of stone....
do we write infinity with an oily brush?
just what the hell have we become?

Eric Cockrell

Having Lived

i wish i could tell you
things are going to get better,
that the world will right itself,
and that the day will be won.
i wish i could mend every bridge that's broken,
and turn back the clock to a better time.
i wish i could heal those that are suffering,
i wish i could stop the seasons....
i wish i could answer every question,
and touch every broken heart.
ah, but the wind is just the wind,
and prayers are the deepest love.
sometimes the greatest miracle,
lies in having touched, having cared,
and having lived!

Eric Cockrell

He Already Took The Cat

we live our lives in sudden ashtrays...
always running over, needing to be emptied.
the old man on the corner
who drove that ancient Chevy,
died somewhere between sleep,
and the back door.
it rained for days,
and his cat hid neath the house...
then it too was gone.
they write pretty things in newspapers,
that end up resembling no one.
life goes on, the neighbor
across the street was evicted.
he left boxes of god knows what,
stacked on the porch.
the woman down the street
got her lights cut off...
she sits in the darkness with her dog.
while the man on the tv says it's getting better...
wonder how much they paid him for that lie?
and i sit quietly in my chair,
peeling potatoes and reading,
waiting on a bolt of lightning,
or a knock on the door.
wondering if god's coming back
for that old Chevy...
seems he already took the cat!

Eric Cockrell

Headstones....

i am the headstones without inscriptions,
i am old boots that dont have a face.
i am the grey beard, and the morning pains,
and conversations with parking meters.
i am the leaf that waited for a thousand years,
(or so it seemed, if not longer) ...
now turning in the furious rage of passion,
and tomorrow i will fall!
i am a snowflake on the lips of time,
the wheel steady in the worst of storms.
i am the child that died at three years of age,
that never learned to read or write.
i am first love, and the first kiss.
the first hunt by grandpa's side.
i am the salmon that swam upstream,
to sacrifice its soul for your pleasure.
i am the memory of bears and buffalo.
i am the kerosene shacks of poverty.
i am the naked corpse of love,
the nail bent in the board of the bridge.
i am the last hawk in the last sky,
the last orgasm of the trembling hand.
i am the gun unloaded and laid aside,
the incredible roar of peace.
i am the mother and child, refugees of war,
i am the bodies stacked in the nameless ditch.
i am the sound god makes choked by tears,
and the crayon in the hand of the infidel child.
i am the naked body of the ecstatic dance,
i am the smell and taste of passion.
i am the way the air feels,
when the bird flaps its wings.
i am the name that cant be spoken!

Eric Cockrell

Hears, And Knows!

if the life of loving comes in seasons,
how long will the snow lay on the ground?
i have begun to understand
the whisperings of the crows.....
can feel the ghostly embrace
of bare limbed trees...
the frozen kiss just before death!

the smoldering fire, just outside the body,
thunder out of time, maybe just memory...
only the deep stillness hears,
.....and knows!

Eric Cockrell

Heart In My Hands

if i laid down my cross,
by the riverside.
and built a fire
out of things denied.
if i took off my mask,
revealing all i tried to hide.
if i took the chance,
and let you look inside.

would you love me?
would you know me for a man?
would you see me for more
than kingdoms built on sand?
would you if i would?
i know that i can...
i'll stand where i am,
with my heart in my hands.

if we forgot and forgave,
the stumbles and the falls.
if we broke down anger,
and tore down the walls.
if you knew your heart,
would you stop, would you pause?
would your feet follow your longing,
would you answer my call?

would you love me?
would you know me for a man?
would you see me for more
than kingdoms built on sand?
would you if i would?
i know that you can...
just stand where you are,
with your heart in your hands.

Eric Cockrell

Heartland Of America!

dead bodies...

American planes scorch the air,
birds of prey, looking for a reason!

lines of foot soldiers moving forward,
tanks, machine gun fire....
no Middle East sands,

no mountains of Afghanistan....
the heartland of America!
and the day of reckoning!

the price of freedom,
.....blood vs. oil!

Eric Cockrell

Hearts Made Of Feet!

and so we struggle,
turning in the womb,
choked by the cord.
conceived in darkness,
becoming light!

we are hearts made of feet,
feet that walk the path.
feet that slip and fall,
feet that take the wrong turn.
feet that keep on walking,
sore, tired, hurting.
feet of desire, and purpose,
feet of soulful intent!

all the great philosophies
come to this...
feet that only stop walking
to bandage other feet;
then walk together,
leaving one set of prints!

Eric Cockrell

Heat Lightning...

heat lightning...
we speak hollow words,
build hollow houses,
live hollow lives.

poverty whispers,
we turn away.
poverty shouts,
we walk away!

orphans, or bastards,
we defile our beds.
our mothers lay dying,
our fathers forgotten.

the wheel turns,
we drink, and move on.
our sisters buried,
our brothers on the street.

churches and graveyards,
flags drenched in blood.
stray dogs, lost pilgrims,
heat lightning....

and an empty cup!

Eric Cockrell

Heat The Body Gave

rain falling...
cold salvation drops,
tis blackberry winter...
the earth groans, trembles,
and shakes.
birdsong and coffee,
a warm place on the sheets.
coat on the hook, shoes on the floor,
but the body is gone.
now its bad news, hate news,
gunfire and heavy fog.
night and day, black and white,
the footprints all look the same.
the tin roof whispers in rhyme
to the cobwebs and shadows.
the tree that fell last winter,
becomes a house, perhaps a home!
the angry taste of change
still lingers in the mouth.
the hammer worn, the nails heavy...
and the heat the body gave,
turns chill, and black with empty!

Eric Cockrell

Heathen

i am a heathen
walking among the heathen.
i am at home

with the wounded,
the bruised, the troubled,
those who wear their scars

for all the world to see.
i know the darkness
as well as the light....

the darkness around us,
the darkness within me....
and i know that tiny spark

of light... that lies within
the mistake made....
that lies beneath the tears

and fears of the soul oppressed....
that reaches out hand for hand
in the sea of human struggling!

Eric Cockrell

Hell, It's Christmas!

just for once...

let's unload the guns,
take the fingers off the button,

unload the planes...

open your churches to the homeless,
your homes to the hungry...

turn your prayers into ears,
that listen, hear, and care!
give somebody the best gift of all

your time!

hell, it's Christmas...

let's act like we understand!

Eric Cockrell

Hell.... Distance!

the true concept
of hell is... distance!
we burn the bridge
with fingers that grasp!

not knowing,
we will never be free at death,
unless we let go in this life!

when the sun rises at dawn,
there is light...
sadly, we spend most
of our mornings and evenings,
still waiting on the sun to rise!

distance...
the illusion of me and mine,
that falls short of, 'i am'!

Eric Cockrell

Her Voice

i believe there is a God
i can hear her voice
in the tears of the homeless

of the hungry, of orphaned children
of the young woman lying on the
kitchen floor bleeding

in the hollow ache of the young
man who just killed a family
with his M-16

in the stink of helpless
on the young boy raped
in the prison cell

in the vomiting anger
of the man who caught his wife
cheating, and shot her

in the prayers of the mother
whose son joined a gang,
and walked away from her dreams

in the cry of the baby
left in the alley
behind the church

that refused to help
his mother
in the pen on the desk

of the man at the bank
who just foreclosed
on another family

i can hear her voice
and feel her hurt!

Here Lies America!

standing in front of the
headstone that reads:
'here lies America,
home of the free and brave,
hard work and capitalism...

ran with the beasts of profit,
till the beasts turned on them,
and swallowed their souls....

here lies America!
ashes to ashes...
..... dust to dust! '

Eric Cockrell

Hero And Tracks

train tracks,
or just tracks...
either way,
going nowhere.

girl on his lap
not wearing panties;
he thinks he's god,
or at least bulletproof.

gonna ship out tomorrow,
got 'hero' written on his forehead.
she's got 'gonna crash' down
inside her, written with invisible ink...

gonna stand by a hero's grave
stand alone in the pouring rain...
gonna stand on a street corner,
just feeding them tracks.

flag flying at half mast...
going nowhere!

Eric Cockrell

Heroes

there's been a lot of talk
about heroes this week
let me tell you about heroes

the single mom making minimum wage
trying to go to school, and keep
her babies clothed and fed

the school teacher who, upon
losing funding, takes his or
her own money and buys supplies

the young businessman who stops
what he's doing, and goes and
serves in the soup line

the common joes who sit
in protest of the oil pipeline
ready to be arrested if needed

the young girls in Taliban controlled
countries who dare to go to school

the Mexican family slipping
across the border by cover
of night, risking it all
for a chance, for a chance

the human rights activists who
speak out knowing they'll be
imprisoned, beaten, or worse

the neighbor who stops what
he's doing and comes over to help
when no one else will

the drug addict who walks away
from it, and starts over
step by step

the common citizen, of this country
or any country, that stands up
and says enough is enough
right is right, and wrong is wrong

these, and many more like them
are my heroes!

Eric Cockrell

Hidden Grains

our spirit, a tree,
withstanding the storms
and passages of living....

our body, merely leaves,
turning with time and passion,
till they fall, crumble back to earth....

and that which we have lived,
fought for, and given....
just hidden grains in the wood,

that sing on moonlit nights!

Eric Cockrell

Hiding From The Broom!

i walk the paths of stillness
into the setting sun...
in the company of dead poets,
and a few mongrel dogs.
we come to a clearing,
and gather wood for a fire,
waiting on the night spirits to join us.

my hands are broken,
they cling to nothing and no one.
i see with my ears,
and listen with my eyes.
my soul rhymed by darkness
dissolves into dust,
while crickets chant eternity.

i return to an empty house,
curtains pulled, door flung open.
lighting a candle, i sit on the floor,
waiting for death, or morning.
only then i notice the spider,
candlelight tracing the web in the corner.

and in this moment i knew,
of such am i!
a moment, a corner,
my heart just a web...
waiting on love,
while hiding from the broom!

Eric Cockrell

Hillbilly / Haiku # 25

your hand lost in mine
you clutch me, the raging night
melts, smelling your sleep!

Eric Cockrell

Hillbilly / Haiku # 1

eyes twinkle, instant,
your life unfolds in a touch
that burns away doubt!

Eric Cockrell

Hillbilly / Haiku # 13

women blink, fifty,
become beautiful and know
to love with stillness

Eric Cockrell

Hillbilly / Haiku # 17

feed a hungry child
hold the addict while he shakes
the prisoner, you!

Eric Cockrell

Hillbilly Haiku # 21

i found the darkness
in my heart was only me
searching for the light!

Eric Cockrell

Hillbilly-Haiku 15

Jesus died for me.
sat with Buddha neath that tree...
but the path is mine!

Eric Cockrell

Hillbilly-Haiku 2

blind dog, blind master,
stop, swept away by the breeze...
break the grip of death.

Eric Cockrell

Hillbilly-Haiku 26

Tibet, deliver!
redmption, restoration,
dignity, freedom!

Eric Cockrell

Hillbilly-Haiku 27

food stamps and meth labs,
all that's left, America!
bondage, slavery.

Eric Cockrell

Hillbilly-Haiku 28

gasoline addicts,
suffocate and burn, leaving
track marks, no future!

Eric Cockrell

Hillbilly-Haiku 29

by the creek, campfire,
black coffee and fresh caught trout,
sizzle in the pan!

Eric Cockrell

Hillbilly-Haiku 3

your lips tremble, lost
between speech and cold silence,
memory and taste.

Eric Cockrell

Hillbilly-Haiku 33

runaway daughters
sold like meat to animals
wearing Wall Street suits!

Eric Cockrell

Hillbilly-Haiku 34

old people in homes,
bedpans, needles in their arms,
memories erased!

Eric Cockrell

Hillbilly-Haiku 35

turn down the music...
beneath sound lies a heartbeat
that cannot be played!

Eric Cockrell

Hillbilly-Haiku 4

undress, carved by light
and shadow twisted by want,
till i hurt with need.

Eric Cockrell

Hiroshima!

Hiroshima,
a way to end a terrible war,
or....
the greatest sin
mankind ever committed
against itself?

leaving atomic shadows
to point fingers at the guilty
on both sides!

Eric Cockrell

His One Demand!

morning half-frozen,
open the door and go...
issues hang like clouds

on the horizon...
bigots and racists,
money bred liars,

blowing smoke on the scene,
and the movement continues.
more and more people,

more and more voices,
standing up in all corners,
change has to come!

right way, wrong way,
too many jobless, homeless,
too many left without...

Constitutional rights taken
under pretense and hoax!
not going to fly,

that dog wont hunt!
America cries out for help
from the cell imposed by greed.

to the streets, to the capital...
to the hallowed halls...
the common man marches,

freedom and truth his only weapons,
dignity his one demand!

Eric Cockrell

His Own Small Store

he's just an old man...
working behind the counter
of his own small store
for forty years...

the young toughs
kept robbing him...
grabbing stuff off the shelves
and running...

threatening him,
and the old woman...
till they lived in fear
day and night...

then they went too far!
coming across the counter
and grabbing him by the collar:
'give me the money, old man! '

quick, and sudden,
the gunshot rings out...
the young tough falls
to the floor in a
puddle of blood...

now the old man's going to court
for excessive use of force,
and an unregistered handgun...

to the halls of justice,
sterile and cold...
the stench of dignity dying
fills the air...

and the hands on the clock
cant be turned back!

His People

the old man sat out here on the porch,
shaking, smoking a cigarette... waiting
on his ride.

i sat down to talk to him, mostly to listen...

'you know, my daughter and her husband
lost their jobs, and their house. so we
moved them and their kids in with us...
they're strung out on them pills, we cant
get them off... hell, she's took everything
in the house she could sell....'

and i just listened.... him, and his wife,
both on disability... barely able to get
from point a to point b...

every day i hear these stories... all different,
but all the same in the end.... no jobs,
nowhere to stay, no health insurance...
and dependence... usually pills...

these are the forgotten people, the people
without a voice... if Jesus were alive today,
these would be His people!

Eric Cockrell

His Story

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i asked him where he learned to write....

'tailing a saw in a sawmill,

milking cows, hoeing acres of garden,

building houses and interstate bridges,

dolphing cloth in the mills,

loading trucks and boxcars,

cutting wood, cooking on open fires,

drinking too much, giving too much,

fighting when i had to,

raising children, loving the same woman

for years, walking with my dog....'

he pulled out a smoke, and i joined him...

we watched the evening sun go down....

listening to his story....

Eric Cockrell

History (Became A Child)

the grandbaby in his arms
brings back the old house.
buckets of water carried
up the hill...
cutting wood to feed the stove.
an old mattress on the floor,
a coffee pot well stained.
spiders on the outhouse wall,
the garden, and the hoe.
the cooking pot and the rocking chair,
handmade quilts, green beans snapped.
simple beginnings that wrote history,
and history became a child!

Eric Cockrell

History And More!

tis the buttered squash,
the chipped plate that whispers.
the dumpster box the cat sleeps in.
the scar on the hand,
and you cant remember when.
the blow to the face
of the child born in poverty.
the overthrow of the kingdom,
leaving mice to run amuck.
the broken key on the typewriter,
the cricket trapped in the bathtub.
mold around the window,
the stack of old tires.
the strange feel of love's body,
too long distant and gone.
the hands on the clock,
that stopped too long ago.
the place just beyond thoughts,
where stars breathe and have bodies.
the smell of the soul,
and the taste of eternity.
the heaving breasts of the darkness,
the dirge of the trees.
the kiss of the clouds,
that would steal the moon.
the crackle of the fire,
and conversation without words...
the lines beneath the eyes,
that sing of history and more!

Eric Cockrell

Hold Hands

lovers have forgotten
how to hold hands...
and children have forgotten
the wonder of being outside.

workers have forgotten
how it feels to be appreciated.
old people have forgotten
how it feels to be needed.

everyday people have forgotten
how it feels to grow their own food.
students have forgotten
the joy of learning...

the American people have forgotten
how it feels to believe...
in equality, dignity, and hope...
how it feels to hold hands!

Eric Cockrell

Holiness Stripped Naked!

the stink, homeless man,
five days same clothes,
no way to bathe...
vomit crusted hunger,
piss, and garbage rolled.....

the perfume of God.

angry, bruised, scared,
face hollow, lips tremble....
love's fists, used, abused,
she walks the corner, alone....

the daughter of God.

crack pipe, stolen gun,
fear rush, dead despair,
concrete jungle, wrong color,
wrong place, wrong time,
prison bound, unmarked grave,
mother cries, justice lies....

the son of God.

stolen tent, hard rain,
under the bridge, under scope,
no work, no food, babies cry,
mothers tears, hard stare,
small fire, past the edge,
old car, out of gas....

the family of God.

Eric Cockrell

Holy Ashes...

if love be this house
of flesh and scars...
this pathway made of living.
the bridge of doing and done,
the shelves of dying laid by hand.
the bed made with reverent memories,
the pot of giving boiling on the stove...
then light the match,
i'll burn it all down...
and wrap your body in holy ashes!

Eric Cockrell

Home

you miss me when
i dont call...
i may be an old man.
but...

i am your home;
as you are mine.

that door inside
the heart to the
room where it's ok

to be you!

Eric Cockrell

Home (For Your Holiness)

your body,
not a set of apartments
for your desires,
but a home for your holiness!
treat it as such.
let your desires be controlled
by your heart...
warm your heart
by the fire of your convictions!

Eric Cockrell

Home!

home...

the place the heart
goes to rest,
the soul goes to find
it's lover and friend...
and the spirit goes
to heal and be forgiven....

the place no one else
can see or touch...
inside the palm of God,
close to the breast of the wind...

the place where
you can stand naked,
and never feel cold!

Eric Cockrell

Homeless

nowhere to go...
from bridge to alley,
maybe a tent.

barrel fire, robbing the trash,
a little something to eat
that nobody else wanted...

panhandle a cup of coffee,
maybe bum a smoke...
hope to hell it dont snow today.

the shelter's full,
the soup kitchen aint open yet....
nowhere to go.

houses with curtains & plates
give way to vacant buildings....
children's voices echo the sound
of rats scurrying in the dark...

no woman, no God...
only an old half-blind
stray dog
following, following....

nowhere to go...

Eric Cockrell

Homeless (Holiness)

new dawn....
same alleyway;
grey faceless buildings,

wet with morning.
one more cigarette,
thinking about coffee,

waiting on the mission doors
.....to open.
kicking through the trash,

a rat runs off...
nowhere to go,
...nothing to do.

tighten my belt,
squint in the sunlight,
just thinking 'bout how,

gonna survive this day!

Eric Cockrell

Homeless Man In The South

homeless shelter full;
no spot under the bridge,
too much traffic, and the law.

stole some plastic;
set up a tent down deep
in the woods by the creek....

up above the place where
the cows cross... hauled my
belongings, a few clothes,

books, an old rifle, a coffee pot,
and a few utensils...a little food.
built a small fire... thinking.

what to do? steal a car,
make a run for God knows where?
or just sit here watching my

food and coffee dwindle....
crows cawing in a heavy grey sky....
them cows are starting to look....

like survival!

Eric Cockrell

Homeless Spirits At Home

the stray cat that came
out of nowhere, from the field,
to jump in my lap as i

rocked on the porch.....
just lay there and purred,
while we drank in the breeze....

and the afternoon sunlight.
perhaps a messenger,
too much like me...

homeless spirits at home
in the world!

Eric Cockrell

Homeless, In America!

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he's got that
coal mine Christmas
late October stare...

sleeping in an abandoned boxcar
down by the tracks...
small pine branch fire,

eyes scour the road;
coffee, a few boiled potatoes,
a smoke as the sun goes down....

a returning vet....
with no place to go!
oil wars, bombs light the sky,

dead bodies walk in his dreams...
disillusioned, disembodied,
homeless, in America!

Eric Cockrell

Homelessness In Winter

back about 30 years ago,
living on the streets in Charlotte...
finally found a job... was lucky enough
to have a place to take a shower...

sleeping in the backseat of a broke
down Ford Maverick... cold winter...
got up and walked 4 miles to work
every morning, 4 miles 'home' in the
evening...

went on for a couple months before
i got a place to live...

so yes i know what homelessness
feels like...and i cant help thinking
about all the empty foreclosed houses....
empty houses, homeless people....

back then, even if you couldnt find a
real job, they had a place where you
could go and line up to do day work...
worked all day for about 25 dollars...
if you couldnt do that, you could always
sell blood.... i dont know what they do
now....i just know it's a hard life...and if
you've got family, got kids...

something to think about the next time
you see a homeless person walking the
streets!

Eric Cockrell

Homelessness Is!

only when they come...
deputies with papers to evict.
and neighbors stand on their porches,
and gawk... as you carry boxes and bags,
and everything you own,
and pile them into your car.
you slowly pull from the drive,
with tears in your eyes,
and anger stuck in your throat...
with no hope and no direction,
and nowhere to go...
only then, do you know,
that homelessness is!

Eric Cockrell

Honest Thoughts

where do we go from here?
our lives controlled by mechanical arms,
that oppress and drive without conscience.
we've been fed for years on a steady diet
of lies, of half truths, of illusions.
and now the walls of the false kingdom
have come tumbling down...

we have been driven by fear to participate
in their unholy wars... by misguided images
of patriotism... by a graven image of what's
right and wrong...

and we're not buying it anymore!

the American dream has crumbled... we're
jobless, homeless, desperate, and hungry!
maybe that's what it took to open our eyes!

they've taken away our hope of a future...
and even worse, our children's hopes. now it's
time for us to stand up and take it back!

Eric Cockrell

Honest Thoughts (Continued)

if you give an honest,
hard working, uneducated man
access to books and ideas, a
deep desire to learn,
and time to honestly evaluate
his own life experiences...
and then you take away his rights,
his work, and his dream for his
family...
this man will stand up and turn
your world upside down.
never underestimate the power
of the common man and woman!

Eric Cockrell

Honor

we have lost our sense of honor.
honor's not something you win in
battle, not a crown for the victor,
not something you can build or buy.

honor is a way of life... and it begins
with respect.

we no longer respect the many forms
of life around us... hell, we're so busy
just trying to survive that we dont even
see life, much less know it!

every person, good, bad, or ugly, deserves
our respect... for they are merely in all their
glory, and in all their human weakness,
reflections of us... a part of us!

every form of life... dogs, cats, elephants, ants,
whales, turtles, trees, rivers, mountains...
deserve our respect... for they are a part
of us, and we of them...

so many of us are experiencing financial
failures, hunger, poverty, and distress...
and we feel like we've lost any sense of honor...
but a man and a woman's honor is not held
in these things...

it is held in the naked truth of what we do
next... whether we remain as self-oriented
islands, or whether we rejoin the sea and
the sky of life... together as one. only then
will we be an honorable people!

Eric Cockrell

Hope!

hope turned over
like a shell on the sand,
echoing the waves,

lapping at some distant shore....
unheard, untouched,
words fall on the graves

of desire and longing,
marked by time...
who are you?

do you remember my name?
the faint memory of your kiss,
grown bitter on my lips!

Eric Cockrell

House Made Of Stone

the cell door slams shut!
staring through the barred window,
he can make out a lone crow
flying just over the treetops....

can feel the sunlight turning
the wheel, as seasons change.
can hear the big trucks
out on the interstate...

lying back on his bunk,
he closes his eyes....
can feel his spirit leaving
his beaten body behind....

turning back time, and years,
and most of all, choices....
back before the cars, the whores,
the dope, the money, and the guns....

he can see his mother
washing clothes in the sink.
can taste the beans, the cornbread,
can hear her reading her Bible....

can see the hope drenched walls
that poverty closed them in with....
and the keys... the books, the faith,
the code of living and giving....

choices... shadows and fire,
roaches on the floor....
dignity or power; and those eyes
that followed every move he made...

lone crow flying into the distance,
smaller and smaller, almost gone.
the part of him so real he'd forgotten,
lost to the hammer and chains....

and a house made of stone!

Eric Cockrell

How Can I Not Know?

</>

how many of my actions
...are shallow graves,
for the children, unnamed,

and unborn....

how many of my thoughts
...are their tombstones,
standing, testifying

in the sun....

how many of my words
...are their epitaphs,
written with the greed

that feeds the self?

how many of my days
...at the expense of theirs,
and how can i not know,

or care?

Eric Cockrell

How Could You Know?

if you've never known hunger,
how could you know?
if you've never been homeless,
how could you know?
if you've never been sick,
and couldn't get medical care,
how could you know?

if you've never hid in the night
while the bombs fell around you,
how could you know?
if you've never killed, or
wanted to but didn't,
how could you know?
if you've never been abused,
beaten, or taken advantage of,
how could you know?
if you've never been imprisoned
for something you didn't do,
or for something you did,
how could you know?

if you've never been left alone,
without hope, without a prayer,
how could you know?

but if your brother or sister,
from anywhere around the world,
has done and felt and experienced
these things...
how could you not know?

Eric Cockrell

How Did We Get Here?

full moon, low hung...
bare branches brush
darkness wet skies.
listening, listening,
to the tin roof
rusting with the dew,
to the bricks groaning
and chipping with time,
to the brown grasses weeping
for a new start...

old cars that wont crank,
window screens duct taped.
the lie on the stove
smells like long ago supper,
the mail on the table unopened.
and the light in the bedroom
flickers, almost done.
who are we?
and how did we get here?

somewhere far off a baby cries,
a dog barks, a screen door slams.
here there is nothing left,
but the smell of old shoes,
and cardboard boxes no one dares
to look into!

Eric Cockrell

How Do We Deal With Prejudice?

even those of us who've worked very hard at not being prejudiced, have some type of prejudice remaining. for example:

it could be prejudice by color, over religion, over political views, concerning sexual orientation.... prejudice against those who have money, or those who dont! ...etc.

all prejudice is wrong by nature, most of it grounded in the 'self'... in our own irrational fears, and our stubborn streak of ignorance....

it's always taught, but doesnt have to be allowed! it ofen hides under the banner of morality, or the flags of patriotism...

we battle prejudice by being open minded, being willing to listen, and learning to see ourselves in other people...

if we say we have no prejudices, we have lost, and prejudice has us bound.

if we admit our prejudices, name them, look at them with naked eyes and resolve, then we're making headway....

prejudice in the end is humanity failing to be human! being human is a 24 hour a day,7 days a week job!

Eric Cockrell

How Far

there is a farther hill
a higher mountain, a brighter star
there's a light beyond this darkness
another step, dont know how far

there are wings and poet's dreams
that free and feed the hungry soul
a cross, a tree, a hidden path
that i can feel but cannot hold

there is a justice, a dignity
a place where walls crumble and fall
there's the truth beyond all fears
that comes to one, and comes to all

there is a knowing i cant define
that words cannot contain
a stillness that heals and fills
in the wind and in the rain

there is a time and an end
from which new beginnings are made
form to formless, stone and sand
a time to dance, a time to pray

there is a farther hill
a higher mountain, a brighter star
there's a light beyond this darkness,
another step, just dont know how far!

Eric Cockrell

How Far We Have Fallen!

my ancestors walked barefoot,
followed the herds,
danced in the firelight....

played instruments made by hand,
prayed to the god of wind and rain....
made love in the moonlight....

owned nothing, owned by no one....
how far we have fallen,
how long the journey home!

Eric Cockrell

How Many

how many vacant store buildings
in small town America
does it take?
how many of our boys dead
on foreign soil
for no apparent gain?
how many unemployed people
waiting in line?
how many meth labs?
convenience store's robbed?
how many teachers laid off,
and kids that cant read
or do simple math?
how many sick people
who cant get medical care?
how many houses foreclosed?
how many homeless
wandering in worn out cars?
how many oil spills?
how many mines collapsed?
how many nuclear accidents?
how many prisoners
wrongly convicted
on death row?
how many small children killed?
how many suicides?
how many acts of rage?
how many acts of desperate hunger?
how many?

Eric Cockrell

How Many Children? (Holiness)

</>

how many children
are hungry this morning?
how many children
without a home?

how many children
with only one parent?
how many children
.....with none?

how many children
faced with no future?
how many children
thrown to the side?

how many children....
and how many know?

Eric Cockrell

How Many? (Holiness)

for every bomb that you drop,
how many hungry people could you feed?
for every time your planes fly,
how many homeless people could you shelter?

for every country you tear down,
how many could you help build up?
for every lie that you tell,
how many people would the truth set free?

Eric Cockrell

How Much Would It Cost?

nearly 1.3 trillion
in war costs so far....

how much would it cost
to feed the hungry,
and house the homeless
around the world?

which makes more sense?
which builds a better future?

bombs or bowls?
..... bullets or shelter?
..... death, or life?

Eric Cockrell

Howl (The Returning, Part Two)

gods hate, too damned late,
you worship what you fear!
while buddhas whisper
behind hidden doors,
and leaves fall from trees condemned!
souls traded, manipulated,
for a loaf of bread.
childrens' bodies, wrapped in money,
never make a sound.
bought votes, sacrificial goats,
toe the party line.
buildings blaze, justice burns,
the bells of liberty chime.
the human hand rises from the rubble,
grasping at poisoned air.
the tears of those long since dead,
fall like nuclear rain!

love me, hate me,
see me with your eyes.
feel me, touch me,
treat me like a man!
voices lost neath stained glass windows,
only the memory of need.
the final blow, blamed on god,
the result of human greed!
while naked bodies walk dirty streets,
their holiness defiled.
the stranger calls, the light falters,
as we trudge the final miles.
the eagle screams, hot flesh dreams,
the child raised by wolves...
the only hope, human desire,
and the will to light the torch!

Eric Cockrell

Howl (The Returning)

black eyed, hungry teeth,
souls drawn tight through a needle.
displaced, desolate,
lives packed on borrowed trucks.
padlocked doors, Wall Street roars,
dead soldiers coming home.
street corners, somebody's daughter,
selling shadows wrapped in dreams.
religious freaks, hangman's noose,
dark glasses see only white!
Christians and Muslims, russian roulette,
hollow threats and doomsday lies.
starving children, doors locked,
faces turned away.!
oil rigs pumping, dry humping,
the earth screams, 'it's rape'!
protesters marching, riot squads,
take away your rights.
prisons full, hard degrees,
anger has a price!

lovers meet, passion burns,
scars left by point of change.
wild eyed addicts, guns in hand,
taking what they need.
the righteous wake, it's too late,
their enemies their brothers.
mountains crumble, trees fall,
rivers full of sludge.
war cries, patriot lies,
grease the grimy wheel.
suffocate, dedicate,
dead bodies to the ground.
faceless rise, tired of lies,
too damned hungry to care.
common folk, dressed in black,
lift unspoken prayers!

Howling

the pregnant lion, the burning bush,
the hammered flute, well gone dry.
without a prayer, the eagle falls
in blackened cinders to the earth.

the food stamp mom, her head down,
children stare with blank milky eyes.
there's another man down in the project,
news at five, news at five.

deserted smokestacks stare at an angry sky,
buildings filled with rats and ghosts.
abandoned cars, abandoned lives,
old gas pumps rusting in the wind....

and the wind blows and howls,
ripping shingles from empty houses, ...
breaking limbs from trees long dead;
drowning out the sound of children's voices....

slamming doors and breaking windows,
carryng the fated owl to the eaves.
blowing at my back like the fires of hell,
blowing in my face with the freedom of loss.

the pregnant lion, the burning bush,
the hammered flute, well gone dry.
without a prayer, the eagle falls
in blackened cinders to the earth....

and no one hears....no one feels...
the lone wolf howling....
the spirits of death howling...
the eyes of God, ... howling!

Eric Cockrell

Human Blood, Angry And Red!

i put on my black skin
to walk through your lily white churches.
i spoke not a word...
my silent body exuded,
years of poverty and oppression,
discrimination and hunger.

i laid down my shackles
on the steps of your courthouse,
i spit blood on your law books,
human blood, angry and red!

and the woman i slept with,
walked beside me step by step.
she bore my children,
i washed her feet with awe.
we spoke and listened,
forever equals...
take down your sign,
ribs are made to barbeque!

my son fell in love
with a young painter from France...
a delicate young man,
features sharp and clear.
i spent dinners in their company,
conversation that cut darkness.
stunned, admiring... their devotion,
their love wrapped in thought.

i laid down my shackles
neath the altar in your church,
i spit blood on your holy books,
human blood, angry and red!

i turned away from your armies,
took the needle from my soul.
shook off the shudders of ignorance,
and laid down my gun.

sold all my possessions,
walked away from debt induced bondage.
stuck out my thumb,
and headed high in the hills.

i slept neath the trees,
could hear the song of the river.
whispered to the owl,
lying close to my dog.

intimately knew every star by name,
every blade of grass,
and the coolness of stone.
speak, o wind, speak and deliver!

i laid down my shackles,
in the chambers of your progress,
i spit blood on your agenda,
human blood, angry and red!

i crossed the border at midnight,
silently moving, shadows in shadows.
with nothing to lose but my life,
nothing to gain but my life.
hands eager to work,
heart eager to dream,
believing in the impossible dream,
of freedom!

i laid down my shackles,
at the foot of your Statue Of Liberty,
i spit blood on your Constitution,
human blood, angry and red!

kill me freedom!
rip the heart from my chest.
i wear your scars
on my back and my face.
bury me in equality,
let my name be every name.
rip the skin from my bones,

let my bones be the steps...

on the path to compassion,
on the road to human kindness...
let my memory be fairness,
my image be joined hands!

Eric Cockrell

Human Chronicles

saddened again...
to hear reports of violence
from around the world.
people, everyday people,
killed in an instant,
by rogue gunfire.

and people fighting for freedom,
standing up at all costs,
for their basic human rights.
fighting for food and shelter
in the 21st century!

the furious rabble of anger,
religions hating other religions.
fighting for the 'only god',
the 'only truth'...
and they dont even know
for whom they fight!

more earthquakes in Japan.
destruction, despair, desolation...
and yet they keep whaling!

rabid mindless fighting
in the Middle East.
threats of nuclear war,
oil, and more oil!
fighting over which side
of the street god walked on!
mosques, and temples,
weeping...
while the images of both gods,
turn away in shame!

Eorpoean countries failing,
economic collapse!
unrest in China,
boiling between the lines...

too many people
with too few rights!
Tibet, ravaged, raped, plundered...
while the world turns away!
starvation in Africa,
poverty in Haiti,
fighting in Mexico...
the list goes on...

Eric Cockrell

Human Chronicles (Part Three)

the fires grow,
fed by broken dreams,
and a sense of helplessness...
but there is hope in this,
there is a distant light!
when we wake up naked,
and see the truth for what it is.
when we look at our enemies,
and see only friends!
when we lay down our gods,
and find the god present
in all that lives...
when we find our differences to be
the fringe on the coat of sameness.
when we finally learn,
that we are indeed
responsible for each other,
and act like it!
knowing, that when one suffers,
all suffer... when one hungers,
all are hungry... when one is in need,
all are in need!
then, and only then,
we will have a chance to survive,
to reach a new day,
to find a real hope.
then, and only then,
will life have meaning,
and love be the way!
this is my prayer,
my chant, my hymn,
and my belief!

Eric Cockrell

Human Chronicles (Part Two)

and here in the United States...
the flag of freedom desecrated.
betrayed by our own greed,
by the sins of 'I, Me, Mine'...
carrying the weight of the wars,
the patriotic lies,
the lives taken,
the peoples abused.
the karmic curse
of Native American blood,
the bodies of the slaves,
buried beneath the hanging tree.
the muffled cries of the immigrants
who did our farm work,
and were herded like cattle.
the ghosts of the common workers
pounding the unemployed streets.
too long, too long,
we've closed our eyes.
too long, too long,
we've turned the other way!
and now we've come to this!

Eric Cockrell

'Human Impaired'

</>
these eyes,
'human impaired'!

they
...just
.....dont
.....see
.....color!

Eric Cockrell

Human!

human....

touching, falling,
getting back up,
making mistakes,
forgiving,
being forgiven,
trying, crying,
giving your all....

getting up tomorrow,
and doing it again!

Eric Cockrell

Hunger Is!

broke and busted,
wandering the streets...
with nothing but the clothes
on your back and
the shoes on your feet...
and havent eaten in two days.
the mission's closed,
no soup line today...
and you start staring at the trash cans,
behind houses, behind restaurants.
you watch people walking to their cars,
people going into stores,
hands in their pockets, or
pocketbooks on their shoulders...
just looking for a chance.
numb to the fear, to any feeling,
to the sound of sirens,
to the sound of voices talking and laughing...
and there's no right or wrong...
only then, do you know,
hunger is!

Eric Cockrell

Hunger They Feel

i cannot and will not stand
to watch any living being go hungry...
whether it be homeless people,

street bums, addicts, or small children...
and even dogs and cats abandoned
by their 'owners'....

the hunger they feel
is a part of me...
drives me like a harsh wind...

morsels of food, whatever i've got...
come sit by the fire....
we are one!

Eric Cockrell

Hunger, And Nothing

i cant do this anymore
i cant look into my children's eyes
my wife's tears fall like thunder
to an empty bowl
i have nothing to buy with,
nothing to trade, nowhere to beg,
and nothing to steal
the baby's sick, there's nothing
i can do except watch her die
in her momma's nothing arms
hungry, and hopeless
nothing i can do.

Eric Cockrell

Hungry Addition!

one plus one plus one,
equals a socialistic rebellion...
minus two,
equals their profit margin.

'in God we trust'
stamped on our foreheads...
the Bill Of Rights
lashed into our backs...

another spot on the assembly line,
a pair of boots without a tongue.
another position vacant,
cheap sex without a smoke!

unemployment line, or jail time.
lawyers and well paid judges.
when one plus one plus one,
sets an empty plate on a barren table!

Eric Cockrell

Hungry Is Real!

you can call it anything you like,
can blame it on whomever....
you can close your eyes,

bury your head in the sand....
say it cant be helped,
or that they brought it on themselves.....

whatever lie you wanna sell....
but hungry's still hungry,
and hungry is real!

Eric Cockrell

Hungry, Lost, Afraid!

what child is this
that haunts my night,
leaves me sleepless,

and filled with anguish?
those eyes staring at me
across the miles of darkness...

hungry, lost, afraid....
i cannot shake this image,
this feeling eats at my soul....

who are you?
where are you?
what can i do to help?

Eric Cockrell

Hunters And Gatherers

rooster crowing,
dogs barking, rain falling,
almost a tease...

the price of gas rising,
the cost of life rising,
Wall Street speculates...

gambling with human lives.
so many walk the edge,
teetering with every blow...

the sound of distant trumpets!
small people have big hearts,
picking up pieces of lives,

scattered like trash
on highways that devour.
strong candles stay lit,

flicker with the storm,
yet the light remains,
the light remains...

rooster crowing,
sleep pillows laid aside,
the hunters and gatherers

tuck their children neath their arms!

Eric Cockrell

Hymn Of The Dead

the talking faces with painted lips,
stand in nobody lines making nobody sounds.
while gunpowder hangs from cobwebbed books,
in which the pages of freedom are unnumbered.
while justice faint as a wisp of smoke,
curls just above the poor man's reach.
houses left empty except for ghosts,
that have neither name nor memory.
righteous indignation with pale white hands,
that tremble as they pour the cup....
ah, but the cup is cracked,
and blood drips to the floor...
in the hallways of indifference.

a newborn son, put a gun in his hand,
castrate his eyes, teach him hatred.
a newborn daughter, put a broom in her hands,
and prepare her for the planting.
you call this America, the shores of liberty,
dark skinned bones ground beneath your feet.
while poverty takes now two from three,
and bodies are buried in the schoolyards.
crack cocaine, pills, and handguns stolen,
while gasoline steals survival.
and churches burn both plates and pews,
as the five o'clock news fills the needle.

whose mountains and valleys,
whose roads, whose fields, whose barns?
black crows on the tractors.
whose brown hands severed by the border guards?
whose factories and mills abandoned?
whose flags draped on coffins of pine?
whose voices haunt the play yards?
whose trucks abandoned on desert highways?
whose America, damn you! whose family?

Hypertension

hypertension...
wonder why?
the whole country

in turmoil...
too many mouths,
open and needing....

too many souls,
pounding the streets.
too many promises,

broken for profit...
too many children,
honest eyes staring....

too many boys
shipped home in bodybags, , , ,
too many prisoners

by expendable choice.
too many empty houses,
too many homeless....

too many prayers,
that no one hears!

Eric Cockrell

I Am

i am, become...
i worked your steel mills,
i walked the i-beams of your scrapers.
i dug deep in your coal mines,
i plowed your fields, picked your crops...
i picked your cotton, milked your cows,
worked your furniture factories,
in your cotton mills...
built your tracks, rode your trains,
popped your trucks, poured your concrete...

my sweat and blood, the foundation,
the nails in the wall!
i an America, the common,
and the magnificent...
i am the pulse, the breath, the beat.

i am the lover, the fighter, the dreamer...
i am the father, and the mother...
i am the sinner and the holy.
i am the truth, at all costs.

i am the man behind the wheel,
the dream behind the man...
the faith behind the dream...

Eric Cockrell

I Am (You)

i am...

the shadow inside your shadow,
your breath, and your smell.

the memories of your childhood,
and the day your father died.

the cats that came one by one,
the forty dollar runaway.

the forbidden love, and the dare,
the loss, the grave never tended.

i am childbirth, and the baby,
nursing at your breast.

i am the snake in the garden,
the spider in the outhouse.

the kerosene heater, and the iron skillet.

i am the galvanized bathtub,
the water bucketed up the hill.

i am the want of spring,

the passion of summer,

the turning of autumn,

the final stillness of winter.

i am the voice inside your voice,

the hurt, and the fatal wound.

i am the tear not cried,

and the wind that cries your name!

Eric Cockrell

I Am (Blunt Edge)

i am...
the blunt edge, the jagged rim.
the cold shock of truth,
the common sense statement.
the nuclear missiles dismantled,
and the guns laid down.
the food needed for the hungry,
and the collapse of systems.
i am equal distribution,
the need and right to work.
i am Friday night, and Sunday morning,
the wedding dress put away.
i am education for the poor,
and rehab for the addict.
i am the dignity of death
made by the dignity of life!
i am the rose and the broken mower,
the cow milked every morning.
i am the poetry of the common,
and the sacred ground they walk.
i am the baby born in poverty,
and the chance that must be.
i am the prisoner who did his time,
and the job that he needs.
i am the long haul trucker,
the steel worker, and the nurse.
i am the doctor who runs the clinic
on the poor side of town.
i am the young couple making love,
twenty five years later!
i am the stink of garbage,
the incense, and the candle!

Eric Cockrell

I Am (Life Calling)

i am...
nothing evolving into nothing,
the well worn handle of the hoe.
hand me down shoes, the melon sliced,
the plate handed to the grateful.
i am the end of religion,
and the rebirth of the spirit.
i am the gay couple wed,
and the old man and woman,
married for forty years!
i am blindness to the color of skin,
and kindness without expectation.
i am the end of nations,
a new beginning to the world.
i am peace that never thinks of profit.
i am both Jesus and Judas,
i am the end of oil's dominion.
i am the plow, and the mule,
the carpenter and the farmer.
i am man and woman equal,
i am forgiveness and forgetting.
i am the human hand,
the human heart, the human spirit.
i am the language of whales,
the secret whispering of the wind.
i am life calling...
to the living!

Eric Cockrell

I Am # 2

i am, become...

i am the poet, the prophet,
the clown, the fool...
the old man running the pawn shop,
the teacher who tries but cant seem...

the whore working her corner,
the policeman walking his beat,
the old woman shivering under her quilt,
who cant pay for heat!

the murderer, the dealer,
the victim, the prisoner...
the soldier come home to no home,
the farmer whose farm foreclosed.

i am the bow, the arrow,
the hammer, the nail...
the sacred relic, the condom,
the head on the platter.

the street preacher, the pagan priest,
you'd burn at your stake!
the homeless man in the alley,
the match, and the fire.

i am the protester beaten,
the union organizer, the march.
i am America come howling,
i am, become...

Eric Cockrell

I Am # 3

i am, become...

i am the Roman gladiator,
the last Christian thrown to the lions.
the cop in riot squad gear,
the young woman arms linked
in the name of peace
whose skull he just crushed!

the Wall Street banker,
the man who just lost his job,
his company sold overseas,
the bottom line grows.

i am the cape, the bull,
the rage, and the sword.
the bank, the robber,
and the money just taken.

i am the Bill Of Rights burning,
and the vote that was bought.
i am the child going to bed hungry,
leftover food stinking in the trash.

i am coal dust, i am oil spill,
i am chemicals sprayed
and crops dusted...
i am nuclear fallout,
and the cry of despair.
i am America's angered roar,
i am, become...

Eric Cockrell

I Am (Continued)

i am, become...

i am the lonesome wail
of streets gone empty,
of factories deserted,
of shops closed down.

i am the abortion clinic bombed
by the right wing fanatic,
and the baby left with a baby
that she cannot raise.

i am the food pantry,
the mission, the soup line...
my faces used to be your neighbors.
i am the tractor rusted in the snow,
the well gone dry...

i am the young gay couple
wanting so much to marry,
i am the fundamentalist afraid
of anything i dont understand.

i am the heroin addict
on the endless stoop,
i am the black child growing up
in a neighborhood terrorized.

i am the immigrant looking for work,
i am the crops left rotting in the fields...
i am the bedpan changer, the floor sweeper,
and the emergency room nurse...

i am the single mom,
food stamps, and no work...
the young man who drives
the old woman out to vote.

i am the balled up fist,
the set lip, the phallic rose...
i am America exploding!

i am, become...

Eric Cockrell

I Am (Defiant)

i am, become...

i am the seat on the bus

Rosa Parks would not leave..

i am the fires of anger

when Martin Luther King was killed.

i am the grassy knoll,

where the true killer stood.

i am the Little Bighorn,

and Crazy Horse weeping...

i am the men that built the bombs,
and all the faceless souls screaming
through their long sleepless nights...

i am the brothers that killed each other
in the long Civil War...

i am the slaves set free,

i am the Native Americans sent
to live in poverty on reservations
in the name of a white god...

i am the farm worker exploited,
the coal miner who died...

i am the rats and the filth
of tenements and trailers...

i am the blues hand picked,
moonshine made in the hills...

i am the grandfather who built
his house with his own hands.

i am the rage of the common,

i am America defiant,

i am, become....

Eric Cockrell

I Am (Desire)

i am, become...
i am the stillness of the mountains,
and the whisperings of the grasses.
i am the kiss of the river,
running o'er stones and dirt.
i am the magnificent eagle,
but no less the sparrow...
i am the wind that weeps
for the land of the free!

i am concrete and glass,
the great cities you built.
i am factories and mills,
i am trucks hauling freight.
i am rows of corn,
your tractor, your mule.
i am brick houses built,
row upon row...

i am breasts and hands,
i am lips and legs wrapped.
i am sweetness and wetness,
i am heat and the moan..
i am the cave of desire,
the ride long, deep, and hard.
i am the dance of the lovers
in the great room of darkness.

i am children taught by lamplight,
books written by the candle.
i am integrity and dignity
handed down from generation to generation.
i am discernment and questioning,
and the prayers of all traditions.
i am the hope that listens,
hears, and cares....

i am the magic belief
that awaits the star,

and the birth...
the faith that demands
that living goes on...
i am all that you are
given without holding back...
i am tomorrow believing in today!

i am, i dance, i make love, i sing...
i am America's desire,
i am, become....

Eric Cockrell

I Am (Evolving)

i am, become...
i am the cobbled path,
and the super highway.
i am the dammed up river,
and the valley plush.
i am the blacksmith's anvil,
and the super computer...
i am the stockyard full,
the closed business meeting!

i am the doctor, the lawyer,
i am the weaver, the mechanic...
the degree that hangs on the wall,
and the one written on calloused hands.
i am the lover killed in a jealous rage,
the couple married for fifty years,
i am... and more.

i am the woman pulling double shifts
to put her kid through school.
i am the letter written to the boy in prison,
who lives in constant fear.
i am the special needs child overlooked,
and funneled through the system...
i am the mother standing over her son's grave,
who died a hero for the wrong cause.

i am a peacemaker, a trouble maker,
a walking mistake and a born leader.
i am America evolving...
i am, become...

Eric Cockrell

I Am (Exploding)

i am, become...

i am the first buds of spring
on the frozen branch,

i am the soft underbelly
of the rabbit just caught.

i am fresh trout in the skillet,
and the song of the water.

i am the lone star
on the blackest of nights.

i am the cry of the woman
giving birth to the child.

i am the cry of the child
coming into the world.

i am the cry of the world
whose children are lost.

i am the foundations of freedom
bought and sold on the square.

i am the dream of liberty
America gave to the world.

i am the lies and the greed
that destroyed the dream.

i am the guts and the bruises,
the stink, and the sweat...

the man and the woman who stand
and protect the door.

i am the garden just planted,
the pup just brought home.

i am the ball and the glove,
the ninth inning hero.

i am books read and thoughts exchanged,
and honest talk...

i am the prayer that brings dawn,
and the peace that brings night.

i am family, i am neighbor,
i am friend, i walk beside...

i am gathered up, lathered up,
and ready to ride!

i am revolution, i am courage,
i am America exploding...
i am, become...

Eric Cockrell

I Am (Final Chapter)

i am, become...
in closing...
what i wanted to do
with this series was
to expose the heart of
the real America,
to lay it bare,
with all its faults
and weaknesses...
in all its beauty and
simple goodness...
to find a way to unlock
the faith and integrity
of the common..
and call us back to ourselves...

i think i've failed,
but i am human, just like you...
and i want more than anything
to try, to believe, and to change...
walk with me, side by side,
let us find tomorrow!

i am, i am,
America unfolding, dying,
and blooming anew...
i am, become!

Eric Cockrell

I Am (Identity)

i am, become...
i am the misconception,
and the fatal blow.
the angered action gone astray,
by the passionate soul.
i am the mortal in immortal,
and the man in human...

i am the patriot who rebels,
the soldier who puts down his gun.
the man who burns down the house
the day before the bank forecloses.
the worker whose pay they cut,
the citizen whose rights they took,
the husband and father, family gone!

i am the prisoner who's done his time,
the sinner baptized again and again.
the friend who takes the fall,
and gets back up to lend a hand.
i am the echo of a time passed by,
both right and wrong, good and bad...

i am the color of the human heart,
blood red, and beating strong!
i am the one who never quits,
who stands naked on hallowed ground.
my father's son, my mother's hope,
i am the same as you.

i am! i am!
i shout and proclaim!
i am America's identity,
i am, become...

Eric Cockrell

I Am (Justice)

i am, become...

i am the African slave
working in the deep Mississippi sun;
his eyes, his muscles, his back, his heart,
all shouting 'freedom'...

i am the college student,
hanging from a tree
in the sixties south,
who died for his conviction...

i am the minister
who joined the protest for peace,
dignity, and equality,
his face bashed in by the officer's club,
handcuffed in the back of the van...

i am the turning of the seasons
through prison bars,
the watered down coffee,
the tiny cell.

i am the one ridiculed and rundown
by the conservative righteous right,
for standing up for individual rights.
i am the young family left stranded
on food stamps and unemployment checks,
their future teetering...

i am the illegal immigrant beaten
in the Arizona desert,
left to die by the side of the road....

i am the working poor,
the honest and true,
driven to desperation...

i am hard and coiled,
i am America crying out for justice, , ,
i am, become...

I Am (Kneeling)

i am, become...
i am forgiveness,
wanted, prayed for, needed,
in heart and action...
i am the blood of those
you killed crying out,
in the name of God and humanity!
i am the action done with foreknowledge,
the action done without intent.
and even worse the inaction,
that turns the head and closes the eyes.

i am the earth gasping with death,
crying out to her children.
i am your children, and
your children's children...
starving at your feet!

i am the people of color
you killed without remorse...
and the poor of all colors you flush.
i am the young boys and girls
you sell into slavery,
on every darkened corner.

i am the young men you trained
and sent to die...
to feed your war machine!
i am the working class bartered away
in the game of oil and dominion...

the memory of your parents and grandparents,
all they fought and stood for
sold like trinkets on the block.
the words of freedom, of Thomas Jefferson,
whose grave you now defile...

i am the weeping that has no tears,
that tears you inside out.

i am the hurt that covers you
with shadows and agony,
that makes you sick to your soul.

i am numb with silence,
struck blind, struck down...
i am America kneeling,
i am, become...

Eric Cockrell

I Am (More)

i am, become...

i am the tear on the cheek
of the child sleeping alone.

i am the fear on the face
of the young couple
who have nowhere to turn.

i am the bullet loaded
into the gun held by shaking hands.

i am the family Bible
packed away in a closet forgotten.

i am the Muslim man
treated with contempt...

i am the sheriff of a small town,
and the meth lab busted.

i am the trailer burning,
the family that just got out.

i am the cancer patient
who has no insurance.

i am the picket line, the pepper spray,
the reporter struck silent.

i am the young kid working
the late shift in a convenience store.

i am the empty grave,
the eviction notice on the door....

i am thunder, i am lightning,

i am America's moan...

i am, become...

Eric Cockrell

I Am (Mourning)

i am, become...

i am the Agent Orange soul
of the Vietnam generation.

i am the mad rush to Armagadden,
the finger on the button.

i am the planes, the tanks,
and the weapon held close...

i am suicide by aggression,
and the profit made!

i am the Kent State students,
and the marches for peace.

i am the lone candle lit
in a world filled with darkness.

i am the body count, and a mother's tears...

i am the weeping of a land
whose morals deserted!

i am the propaganda machine,
and those that stand against...
persecuted, and beaten,
labeled as communists.

i am the election rigged,
and the unmarked graves
where individual votes go to die!

i am belief in humanity,
equality, and compassion.

i am the heart of the people,
too long at rest!

i am the truth revealed,
and shouted from the rooftops!

i am repentance, i am redemption,

i am America, mourning...

i am, become...

Eric Cockrell

I Am (Still Being Born)

i am, become...

i am the dust
of the Great Depression,
the bodies falling from windows,
when the stock market crashed.
i am the victims of Mccarthyism,
the troubadour of the working class.

i am the young boy hanging
from the arch above the door.
i am the woman washing clothes
in a stained old sink.
i am the old man stacking firewood,
i am the young man bulletproof.

i am the lovers' cry,
the backseat of a car.
i am the preacher,
the bride, and the groom.
i am the simple hard worked for,
the dream in a baby's flesh...

i am hunger and callous,
i am grit and determination.
i am honest and brash.
i am quiet and respectful.

i am history and hope,
i am invention, and drive.
i am two ears, and one mouth!

i am, and more...
i am America, still being born...
i am, become...

Eric Cockrell

I Am (Unraveled)

i am, become...
i am the fallen tree,
the broken lamp, the axe,
the message never received.
i am the flag draped
over the casket in the silent room.

i am second hand clothes,
and hand-me-down hearts...
i am your grandmother's quilt,
and your son's grave...
i am the song of the whipporwill,
and the porcupine's quill.

i am the child dreaming of a grownup world.
i am the last letter written
by the soldier far from home...
i am your father's pipe,
and your mother's favorite pot...
i am memory and woodgrain,
the fire and the hollow.

i am the smell of Jesus
in the Sunday morning sun...
i am Kentucky whiskey,
and charcoal on the grill.
i am a Chevy, a Ford, a Dodge,
and an old Rambler....

i am a fishing pole,
laying out of school...
i am the sap of America
on the very last pine.

sap, and memory,
i am America unraveled,
i am, become...

I Am A Man!

i never understood...
the need to be popular,
to be the 'in' thing,
to be cool, to be hip,
never understood the need
for fame...
never waited to be patted
on the back,
never wanted to be followed...

i am what i am!
nothing more, nothing less.
a common man,
with a common heart,
a common soul,
and common hard working hands.
i can honestly say
that i have lived,
i have loved,
i have given past
the point of giving,
i have tried my wings
on countless occasions...
many times i fell,
but a few times i have flown!
i have forgiven,
and asked for forgiveness.
i believe what i believe,
and have stood up in spite of.
i am a man!

Eric Cockrell

I Am Embarrassed!

i am embarrassed
by the insatiable greed
that has driven my generation

to own that which should never
be owned by anyone...
by the self-centered hunger

that has driven us to consume,
without thought of ever putting back.
by the blindness and fear

of our prejudicial morality...
by the excuses we've left
on our children's plate!

Eric Cockrell

I Am For

i am for...

justice, equality,

equal distribution of goods.

the right to work,

to speak out, to stand up...

i am for truth at all costs,

for freedom of religion...

i am for peace right now,

right here, and always.

i am for education for all,

for growing our own food.

for breaking the curse of oil...

i am for gay rights, and their right to marry.

i am for diversity, and unity,

and yes you can have both.

i am against...

war, bigotry, greed,

and anything that divides.

i am against the use of force,

the use of fear and manipulation.

i am against narrow minded thinking...

i am against the banning of books.

i am against progress

at the cost of nature.

i am against the wealthy

ruling the poor.

i am against anyone

who wants me to follow,

to change or adapt to

his or her standards.

i am against judgements

made by self righteous people...

i am against ignorance, most of all!

i am for...

people being people,

humans being human.

i am for you!

Eric Cockrell

I Am Human, I Am Love!

i am the stranger,
the drifter, the hobo...
the rebel, and the lost one....
my voice is a small whisper,
my body a twig.
i am the gift left
on the doorstep of the unwanted.
i am the prayer
that even god does not hear!
i am the child no one wants,
the woman no one loves.
i am blood on the hands,
i am guilt, and forgiveness.
i am the old man's touch,
that no one wants.
i am the child and the dog,
that love the old man.
i am the stray cat,
curled against the step.
i am Judas weeping,
and Magdelene made a whore.
i am the young gay boy
condemned for loving.
i am the soldier who cant
bring himself to kill.
i am the pregnant young girl
who cant tell her parents.
the old man with cancer,
who sits with a revolver.
i am the parent who failed,
and the child who walked away.
i am the broken, and wounded,
i am human, i am love!

Eric Cockrell

I Am Not... (The Journey)

i am not the journey,
not your bags, your hat,
or your shoes...
i am not your destination,
not a road sign,
not a drink of cool water.
i am not the fire that warms you,
not the cool evening breeze.
i am not the dawn,
i am not the knowing,
nor your heavy breathing
as you walk.
i am not the reason,
nor the answer...
i am not your path.
i am but the memory
that feeds your hunger,
making you hungrier still!

Eric Cockrell

I Am Nothing More...

i am nothing more
than an illiterate priest,
sharing table scraps
thrown out by the rich,
with mongrel dogs...
barking and howling,
and peeing on dreams,
in the alleys of the soul.

a blind plumber
fixing the leaks,
for a cola and a can of beans.
an old man sipping brandy
with tired ghosts,
a child left alone
with discovery!

i am the hand you reach for,
the face you cannot understand.
the tear you buried
on your angry pillow,
the prayer you stuffed in a bottle,
and put out to sea...
the kiss, and the scent
of hope!

i am nothing....

Eric Cockrell

I Am Nothing!

</></>

nothing....

i am nothing,

nothing but the breeze

walking through the trees.

nothing but the caw of the crow,

the echo of the mountains' silence.

nothing but the empty bowl

held by the hungry child.

nothing but the dark face,

the white hands,

spoken in different languages.

nothing but the blood,

of the family killed by the bombs.

nothing but the lonely terror

of the suicide just before dawn.

nothing but the footprints

the lonely traveller follows

on the way back home.....

nothing but the leaf

turned from green to red to brown.

nothing but the memories

of love calling back to you.

nothing but a prayer,

an offered hand, an unknown friend,

a tear, a smile....

the dance of the living,

a small fire on the darkest night!

Eric Cockrell

I Am Nothing.... (A Body)

i am nothing but the moth,
drawn to the flame.
no more than a body,
borrowed by god!
no more than the tear,
that no one else saw.
no less than the hunger,
that you feel.
i am nothing but the cross,
and the hurt Judas felt.
the day Buddha died,
and the day you were born!
the broken down shelter,
made of branches and leaves.
the mother holding the sick child,
through the unending night.
the rose that bloomed,
out of season unnoticed.
the last prayer of the prisoner,
walking to his execution.
i am nothing more than you,
and often less...
i am the stone that bruised your foot,
the thorn in your conscience.
i am the shadow you sleep with,
when you're left alone.
i am the hand that takes yours,
when you are afraid.
i am nothing...

Eric Cockrell

I Am Only As Old...

i am only as old
as the memory of childbirth.
dollar signs in dime store windows,
milkshakes for a quarter.
non-filter cigarettes and broken Trojans,
long hair ironed with loving hands.
when revolution smelled like sex,
and god reeked of napalm.
when young girls with hard nipples
passed doobies to wide eyed poets.
and the streets convulsed with anger,
that sat at the back of the bus.
while religious M-16's jammed,
and radical students were beaten
with patriotic pride....
as young bodhisattvas with thumbs extended,
rediscovered the land of the free.
and for a time not owned by owning,
we heard the beat of a distant drum!

i am only as old as oceans,
crossed at the cost of life.
and prison cells that defined freedom,
more by the given than the taken.
when right meant more than morality,
and intent itself became destiny.
when color became a flavor,
and all tasted good.
when freedom felt like dignity,
and every hand fit!
i am only as old as dreaming,
the dream forever new!

Eric Cockrell

I Am Resolved!

i have no need to speak,
and nothing left to pray for.
no more mountains to climb,
nothing left to conquer.
no stars to name,
no wings to try.
no door, and no key,
no fire to tend.
no truth to uncover,
and no candle to light.
i am resolved...
the wind is still!

Eric Cockrell

I Am Responsible....

i think about...
the 12 year old child
working in sweatshop conditions,
for a couple dollars a day,
who made the shirt on the shelf.

the cows, pigs, and chickens
slaughtered, after living
in horrid conditions,
to fill the shelves
at the grocery store.

i think about invasions,
gunfire and bombing,
every time i fill my tank.

i think about the hungry,
and the homeless...
every night when i eat,
and go to bed.

i know, by my actions,
and inactions,
i am responsible.
do you?

Eric Cockrell

I Am Responsible.... (Poet's Heart)

i am responsible....
for the child dying of starvation,
whatever color, whatever country.
for the young Muslim child alone,
his family killed by the bombs.
for the addict shaking on the street corner,
for the young girl selling her body
on that same corner.
for the family kicked out of their house,
who have nowhere to go.
for the young angry men in prison,
for the victims of the crimes.
for the stink of poverty,
and the abuse of wealth.
for the planes, the bombs,
the guns and the flags...
for the political prisoners who spoke out.
for the elderly going without food and lights,
trying to pay for their medicine.
for the victims of racism and prejudice,
and those that wave that banner.
for the preacher, the thief,
the murderer, and the lost....
for the woman treated as less.
for the young man who commits suicide,
and for those that caused his desperation.
for the immigrant killed crossing the border,
hoping against hope for his family.
for the 'moral' who cant feel,
for those who feel, those who suffer.
for the bones of those we've killed
on our journey to civilization.
for the Jew, the Christian,
the Hindu, the Muslim, and the Buddhist...
of equal worth and value.
for the atheist, the doubter, the searcher,
and those who question all.
for the man, the woman, and the child.
for the sins of the past,

and the path to the future.
i am responsible...
because i am human!

Eric Cockrell

I Am Sick.....

i am sick of your justice...
sick of dead bodies strewn,
sick of your bursts of gunfire,
and your bombs without conscience.
sick of the napalm fingers of your equality,
trading flesh for nickels and dime.
sick of your powder and your pills,
sick of the rape of the young girl
beneath your flag!
i am sick of your nuclear bibles,
sick of your buying and trading.
i am sick of the pound of your oil rigs,
sick of the stink of your morality.
i am sick of your hanging trees,
your courtrooms stacked.
i am sick of the money you sleep with,
sick of your colorless freedom.
i am sick of your smokestacks gone silent.
sick of your riot squads gassing.
i am sick of the amendments you've twisted,
sick of your hate and your prejudice...
i am sick of your slavery,
your prisons, your human rights violations.
i am sick of your political lies....

revolution, by common bond,
the choice of integrity, or death!
the dignity of the human soul demands,
that we live or we die!

Eric Cockrell

I Am Silence (For Dave)

i am the wolf,
hot breath panting,
teeth gleaming in the darkness...
feet running the path of the night.

i am the hawk,
sucking freedom from the skies,
great wings lifting my soul...
infinity in my eyes.

i am the wind,
born from nowhere,
blowing past destination and thought...
both creation and destruction.

i am the rain,
falling from an unseen source,
to dance in the mouths of the earth...
tears of sorrow and redemption.

i am the moon,
sifting through timeless clouds,
winding through the fingers of trees...
i am hope unnamed!

i am the night,
the intimate touch of darkness,
forgiveness, death, and rebirth...
i am the stillness of god!

i am silence!

Eric Cockrell

I Am The Door!

i have no need of religious balm,
no need of doctrines or spurious cures.
i do not close my eyes when i sleep,
i do not falter, i do not follow.

the path i walk is mine alone,
the light i seek bears my name.
the burden i carry is mine by choice,
the cost of living is this life.

yet the freedom i long for must be shared,
the part feeds the whole, the hand the foot!
for there can be no justice if not for all,
and redemption the bridge that all must cross.

who am i if not you, you if not i?
the hunger i feel wears your face!
eternity comes and goes in moments shared,
if you be the heart, then i am the door!

Eric Cockrell

I Am There... I Am Here!

the further i get from myself,
the closer i get to my self...
in variant forms expounding,
in a thousand blades of grass.
in the block long laid in the factory building,
vacant but for ghosts of unnamed families fed.
in the boat too long stuck in sand,
in the dirge darkness of the mine.
in the rabbit turd, the chattering squirrel,
in cattle feeding awaiting death.
in the sterile stink of the hospital,
in the bedpan, and the monitor silent.
in the crud of the old man's beard,
the sagging breasts of the old woman rocking...
in the cry of passion from the back seat of a car,
in the old man bumming a smoke.
in angry minds gathered at the table,
whispering of revolution.
in the picket line, and the heads caved in,
in the death row cell.
in the empty church, on the courthouse steps,
in gunshots heard in the night.
in the crack pipe, and the college textbook,
in black skin, white skin, and all others.
in the thoughts men are afraid to think...
in feelings too long repressed.
in the sacredness of mundane and simple...
in the beauty of the moment...
yes, yes! i am there, i am here!

Eric Cockrell

I Am Troubled!

i am troubled...
lord, i am troubled.
i hear the cries
of starving children.
i feel the bombs,
burning up the night.
i smell poverty,
and i taste injustice.
i shudder at prejudice,
i write the prayers
of the forgotten...
and sign their names
on unmarked stones.

what have i done...
lord, what have i done?
with this life,
this path, this cross.
i feel guilty,
and i know their suffering.
i cant help but wonder,
what i could have done
to stop the flood.

i am troubled...
lord, i am troubled.
have i been silent for too long.
and have my words
fallen like ashes,
driven by the mongrel wind.

i am troubled...
lord, i am troubled!

Eric Cockrell

I Am You (And You Are Me)

i am hungry!
can you hear my cry?
i am sick!
do you know i'm here?
i lost my job!
do you know my name?
i am homeless!
can you see my face?
i am lonely!
do you really care?
i am afraid!
will you leave me alone?
i am human!
are you human too?
for i am you!
and you are me!

Eric Cockrell

I Am... (Bottomless Pool)

i am...
the bottomless pool
at the foot of the cliff,
the moment just before dawn.
the broken window
of the abandoned house,
the tire swing casting shadows.
i am the eyes of god
in the crickets' song,
the shovel caked with dirt.
i am the thrust of the pelvis,
and the death of the soul,
the unseen sweeper of hearts.
i am the tongue that evolves,
the fish that walk on land.
i am the drumbeat of lives remembered.
i am the child we cannot return to,
and the grave waiting in stillness.
i am the crash of ideas,
the eater of thoughts.
i am seaweed in the mouth of the thinker.
i am ears that pray,
and fists that repent,
i am the mark of Cain.
i am the lover your heart desires,
the face of smoke and incense.
i am the cross, and borrowed wings,
i am the webbed feet of ancient longing.
i am the sinner, and the sin,
i am the whole man picking up pieces.

Eric Cockrell

I Am... (Hands Of The Clock)

i am...
the hands of the clock,
approaching midnight.
the world on fire,
the thunderous shout of hunger.
i am the ditch,
filled with the bodies of freedom.
i am the hammer,
that drove the nails.
i am the hated, the despised,
and the friendless.
i am the stranger,
that smells like your brother.
i am the enemy
of tyranny and oppression.
i am the blood
shed for the truth.
i am the day after,
destruction and fall.
i am the taste of death,
that burns to live.
i am dirty, sweaty,
bruised, and shaken...
i am freedom standing
when all else is gone.
i am the chant of equality,
the downfall of religions.
i am the lover, the worker,
the farmer, and the builder.
i am the ark
that carries the seed.
i am the courage
that lays down weapons.
i am justice, listening,
caring, and changing!
i am revolution, redemption,
man and woman side by side.
i am electric, naked,
sensual, and common!

i am the end of what has been..
i am the new day,
the new way, the bridge between men!

Eric Cockrell

I Am... (The Rage Of Love)

i am the gun,
in the hands of the thinker,
the last road, the last chance,
the last prayer, the last door.
i am the sickness,
that greed inflicted,
that apathy wont touch,
that stinks at the table.
i am the parents,
burying their child,
i am the stranger,
burying the parents.
i am the poor,
denied the word freedom.
i am skin of color,
covered by tasteless white skin.
i am the rope,
hanging from the rafters.
and the holy book
that tied the noose.
i am the drug of charity
that denies involvement.
i am the token gesture
made by hands that never open.
i am the dollar and the dime,
and the vast wasteland between.
i am the sound of books burning,
and the crackle of flesh.
i am the cry for justice,
lost to the din of noise.
i am the noise of ignorance,
that shouts defiantly at stillness.
i am the face of the small child,
whose parents just died.
i am the rage of love,
too long denied!

Eric Cockrell

I Am... (Human Heart Beating)

i am...

the silent tomb that has no face.
the burnt edges of the holy book.
the hand that fits the yearning hand.
the light inside the shadow.
the cross carried without a murmur.
the house built out of simple things.
the grandchild, and the old dog.
the plane dropping medicine
instead of bombs.
the oil rig shut down and deserted.
moonlight on the ocean calm.
straw huts burning with devouring fire.
lines of women and children going nowhere.
the stock market crash, and the day after.
big trucks shut down, and markets bare.
families joined together to share the little.
the wind crying freedom's hidden name.
white skin, brown skin, black skin one.
the human heart beating, red and raw!

Eric Cockrell

I Am... (I Am Not...)

i am the unions.
miners, teachers, steel workers,
nurses, factory workers,
standing strong and united,
demanding human decency,
fair wages and benefits.
i am not communism.

i am the common man and woman,
saying prayers with their hands
as they work;
driven by the faith in family,
teaching respect, gentleness,
and firm convictions
to their children.
i am not the elite.

i am the bruised, scarred human being.
i have fallen time and again.
i have built great dreams
that time has destroyed.
but i know what i believe,
and who i am.
i am not religious.

i am the multi-colored neighborhood.
different faiths, different languages,
the same needs and desires.
i am open conversation and acceptance.
i am not prejudice.

i am the day of revolution.
i am oppression cast off,
ignorance exposed;
i am equality, dignity,
and basic human rights.
i am not 'i, me, mine'.

i am the human condition...

evolving, changing, molded by fire,
i am the river that finds
it's way home...
i am not the end of time!

Eric Cockrell

I Am... (Namaste, Number Two)

i picked up the broken pieces
of glass when you threw her picture,
and closed your eyes
as you stared at the walls.
i walked with you to the mailbox,
day after day....
i am the letter
your daughter never wrote.
i helped you dig the hole
to bury that old dog,
and mouthed the words of the prayer
that no one heard.
i walked with you down the aisle,
the best day of your life.
i helped your shaking hands
sprinkle dirt on the casket,
forty years later.

i felt your excitement,
the first time you made love.
almost drunk with the gentleness,
and the closeness that takes.
when you were old and alone,
i picked up your Bible,
and read to you,
words you'd almost forgotten.

i am the drunkard,
the addict, and the whore.
i am the preacher,
the lawyer, and the businessman.
i am the boy, the girl,
the man and the woman.
i am your religion,
and something deeper and stronger.

i am the image you dreamed of yourself.
i am the body you walked in..
the hands you touched with!

i am you,
and need be nothing more,
and most of all...
nothing less!
namaste!

Eric Cockrell

I Am... (Tongue)

i am...

the tongue that sleeps inside the mouth.
the erection that falls on darkened alone.
the crack of thunder over distant hills.
the simple prayer of a child in need.
the whore, the thief, and the addict.
the liar who leads running from himself.
the young girl sold in the cattle stalls.
the shot fired before guilt could breathe.
the hammer, the nails, and hands that know.
the woman giving birth, her screams, her desire.
the fallen priest, and the migrant worker.
the truck loaded with a lifetime's ghosts.
the father, the mother, and the empty house.
the well run dry, the roof that leaks.
the willow tree, and the mockingbird.
the citizens killed by the armed squad.
the activist buried without a word.
the woman strong, the man bent and broken.
the tears of an unknown god
falling on the earth scorched and smoking!

Eric Cockrell

I Am... (Window Bare)

i am...

words spoken with dark skinned hunger,
battles fought in the realm of the heart.
right and wrong that convicts the motive.
the smell and the feel of all that is common.
the question asked in the silent church.
the blood spillt on the courthouse steps.
the language of factories, mills, and shifts.
the cast iron skillet well seasoned.
the field plowed, the seeds planted.
the man standing against the angry mob.
the body hanging from the gnarled old oak.
the prison cell, the stink of fear.
the lovers lost inside each other,
the old woman staring at dishes just washed.
the haunting whisper of buildings vacant.
the old man's body found three days later.
the fury of the neon streets,
the deal made, the blade withdrawn.
the soldier come home to homelessness.
the farm foreclosed by the unseen bank.
death and life, and faded jeans,
the lone rose wilting in the window bare!

Eric Cockrell

I Am.... (Disgust)

i am the soldier,
crying in his helmet.
i am the gas pump,
guarded by guns.
i am the foreclosed house,
weeping and vacant.
i am the oil rig,
convicted of murder.
i am the big truck,
parked in disgust.
i am the nursing home,
with grave like beds.
i am the field,
unplowed and untended.
i am the bowl,
filled with empty.
i am the boots,
left by the door.
i am the ache,
the want and the need.
i am the hand,
reaching for your breast.
i am the paper, the pen,
the letter never written.
i am the empty bed,
beneath the willow tree.
i am the darkness,
that comes and devours.
the chill of distance,
the tears of an angry god!

Eric Cockrell

I Am.... (Falcon)

i am...
the lament of oceans,
grieving lost children.
the latent sound of artillery,
mother and son huddled.
i am women oppressed,
sold into slavery.
i am the crack in the window,
through which freedom stares.
i am black skin white skin
drenched in blood,
i am sweat and toil,
fields swept by heat.
i am the american poet,
who learned his craft in sawmills...
built houses by hand,
and grew his own food.
i am pigs and chickens,
slaughtered in cells.
i am pride in prison,
and self education.
i am the grandfather weeping
over a picture of his grandson.
i am the price of justice,
names spent and forgotten.
i am the lover stalking,
the shadows of night empty.
i am the fire and the cross,
the curse and the cost.

i am mistakes and failures,
i am guts and desire.
i am balls and fury,
gentleness and understanding...
i am the prodigal son,
my mother is the wind.
i am the fighter

who stayed too long...

i am the pilgrim naked,
the owl in the night.
i am jesus and buddha
weeping over hitler's grave.
i am the victims of holocaust,
the victims of everyday choices.
i am the immoral saint,
and the renegade monk.
i am the lie of america,
yet the truth and the hope.
i am the murderer and the murdered,
and the child abused.
i am the promised land,
and the walls of jericho.
i am the reservation,
bad whiskey and poverty.
i am custer sent to
vietnam, iraq, and afghanistan.
i am the tears of crazy horse,
and the death of the earth...
i am sackcloth and ashes,
and the sin of blindness.

i am heat and desire,
i am hunger and want.
i am the heart beating,
defying all odds.
i am the falcon,
the wolf, and the turtle...
i am the kiss
that turns shadows to light!

Eric Cockrell

I Am.... (Here, I Am Gone!)

i am...

the screen half torn from the door,
the print of the raccoon,
on the hood of the car.

i am oil tinged rainwater,
caught in a bucket.

the sound of trucks
on a distant highway.

i am snake skin, and spider's web,
and the trail of the ants.

the old woman hanging clothes,
the dog on the porch.

i am children dirty half naked,
the watermelon, and the broomstick.

i am poverty boiling,
on the salted burner.

i am the funeral suit,
and hymns made of wool.

i am spit dripping,
from the chin of eternity.

the unshaven gristle
of autumn awaiting winter.

i am the kite stuck
in the highest branch.

i am the lover, the potter,
the gospel of the snail
going home!

i am the wrap of two bodies,
two tongues, and one soul.

i am the song of rust,
tempting the grass.

i am here, i am gone!

Eric Cockrell

I Am.... (Namaste)

i heard your soul whimper
from across the miles,
in the dead of night,
when you thought no one cared.
i saw the light in your eyes,
when you fed the hungry child,
and brushed the dirt from his face
with hands that trembled.
i felt the tears,
that you couldnt cry...
as you buried your only son,
killed in their wars.
i smelled the fear in your body,
but tasted the grit and determination,
as they beat you to the street
for protesting their greed.
i shook with the cold loneliness
of your tiny cell,
where they left you
with no identity or hope...
your freedom taken
for standing up for freedom,
your human rights taken
for defending human rights.

i am the song,
and the hymn of you.
i bathe in your light,
i drink your darkness.
i taste the colors of your skin,
and they all taste the same.
i feel your fears,
your desires, and your dreams.
i am the farmer, the mill worker,
i stand in your factory lines.
i am the activist, the doubter,
the good and the evil.
i feel the blows you've taken,
i can name your scars.

i've slept with your failures,
and buried your mistakes.
i am the love of your hidden names,
i walk by your sides,
know your steps and your sweat.

i am the good things you've done,
and yes, even the bad!
i am the triumph, and i am the loss.
i am the breath of god,
that fills your bodies....
you are the flesh and bones
and the feet of my dreams!
i am the sacred, the magnificent,
the simple, and the mundane...
all living within
every moment you live!

i am the song,
and the hymn of you.
i am the work
that only you can do.
i am the dance, the drive,
the passion, and the chance...
you are the words
that only god can express!
namaste!

Eric Cockrell

I Am.... (Rotting Wood)

i am...
the old man smell of rotting wood,
the stagnant pool of water,
devoid of life!
the smell of young lust,
and the stink of love over years.
i am the children raised,
and the empty room.
i am the mistakes made,
and the chances long gone.
i am the moments of joy,
that no one can steal.
i am the prayer of the doubter,
the honesty of the naked moment.
i am the naked body of an old man,
where sparrows build nests!
i am the turn of the wheel,
the hum of the beat.
i am the hunger that races
through the darkness by moonlight.
i am the magic and the mystical,
the simple and the plain.
i am the hoot of the owl,
the stranger at the door.
i am the knowing without knowing;
i am dirty, and sweaty,
and covered with sap.
i am the words hidden,
in the growl and the howl....
i am the ghost, and the remembrance,
the touch that made you tremble.
i am the moan in your mirror,
the shadow dancing by your grave!

Eric Cockrell

I Am.... (The Branch)

i am...

the branch that bears no leaves,
my grandfathers were trees of old.
i am the axe and the chopping block,
the shell of the ancient turtle.
i am the brook, and the setting sun,
i am the mockingbird's lover.
i am the moccasin sure as the path,
the chatter of squirrels, the empty nest.
i am the plant hungrily gulping rain,
i am the place the cloud came from.
i am the holy reverence of night,
i am the tomb left empty.

i am...

the clock, the breast, the curve of the thigh,
the heat that comes from within.
i am the hate undressed by loving hands,
the eyes compassion restored.
i am the dead and dying,
the helpless, and the lost,
the spirit shunned by religion.
i am the ear that hears,
the heart that beats...
and shelter from the storm...
i am the bridge that leads away
from the curse of condemnation!

Eric Cockrell

I Am.... (The Branch, Part Two)

i am...

the orphaned child and the abandoned dog,
the woman raped, the young man killed.

i am the body hanging alone and cold,
the old woman shaking in an empty room.

i am the young girl taken and enslaved,
the needle, the spoon, and the revolver.

i am black skinned, brown skinned anger,
and the bones of bodies hidden...

the speaker of truth detained and tortured,
the invisible trail left behind.

i am...

the rage of jobless, homeless, hopeless...
the unemployment line and the sweat shop.

i am the family living in a stolen car,
and the child who runs away.

i am the store clerk killed by the robber,
her minimum wage death unnoticed.

i am the shadow crossing the border,
the inmate that breaks and runs.

i am the guns silenced,
and the lies revealed...

i am human rebellion.

i am the branch covered by leaves,
waiting for certain autumn!

Eric Cockrell

I Am.... (The Fingers Of Love)

i am the fingers of love...
unlatching the door,
with silent determination.
unbuttoning your blouse,
tracing the line of your neck,
stroking your hidden fire.
playing the strings
of your heart's old guitar,
picking up the pen,
and lighting the match.
digging in the dirt
to plant your dreams,
wiping the tears from
the lines beneath your eyes.
trembling as they tie the bow,
and reach out to touch your casket.
aching with the torrent of passion,
and the years of love's remembrance!

Eric Cockrell

I Am.... (The Story Of God)

i am the barn set ablaze,
the garden covered in dust.
i am the coal mine,
and the miners lost...
the spider's web that
caught their families.
i am the refugee,
no home, no destination.
the convict released,
with nowhere to go.
i am the erection, the file,
and the hammer...
set aside, covered with rust.
i am the mirror, the candle,
and the book of matches...
i am the way stone changes!
i am the prism,
put away in a dark closet.
i am the lover,
whose name you've forgotten.
i am the end
that never ends,
i am the fire
on the tip of your tongue.
i am the smell of your heart,
the whisperings of your feet.
i am the lines beneath your eyes,
that tell the story of god!

Eric Cockrell

I Am.... (The Woodcutter)

i am...
the woodcutter,
cutting and stacking wood,
for the fire i'll never know.
i am the taste
of rain drenched leaves,
and the silence just after.
i am the soot
on the miners face,
his only mark of identity.
i am the black man,
who knowing his journey well,
having pride in his roots,
steps beyond bitterness.
i am the woman,
forced to sleep in the closet,
hands worn by the broom...
who finally steps free.
i am the poor man,
with tired calloused hands,
his jaw firmly set,
he's had all he's going to take.
i am the child,
who never knew his father,
whose mother worked two shifts,
so he could go to school.
i am the outcast,
condemned by the church,
shunned by his neighbors,
because he is different.
i am the echo,
of your guilt and your need,
the shout of your actions.
the cry of hunger in your sleep!

Eric Cockrell

I Am.... (Your Lover)

i am the broken branch,
blown by the wind.
the key left in the door,
of the empty house.
i am the creek spilled over,
the frog on the bank.
the pot stained by time,
half filled with water.
the young woman giving birth,
and the nurse by her side.
the box of canned goods,
left on the porch.
i am the body naked,
sleeping on the silent bed.
the son killed in the war,
the picture on the wall.
i am the softness of the moth,
long left the body.
i am the kiss of lovers,
at the risk of loss.
i am the body of words,
sent without hope or destination.
i am the hand you thought wind,
blowing the hair from your face.
i am try inspite of,
i am hunger expressed.
the tongue round your heart,
the tear that comes unannounced!
i am the face of the lonely,
and the feet of the pilgrim.
i am your lover,
clothed in rain and mud!

Eric Cockrell

I Am.... (Hand Of Silence)

i am the fire raging out of control,
the blade of the shadow on poverty's neck.
the broken sound when no one can hear,
the cold feel of the gallows,
the wings of the dead bird.
i am the raccoon trapped,
and the fury of loss.
i am the waiting that kills,
moment by moment.
i am the hand too tired to touch,
the baby just born that no one wants.
i am the ribs showing on the starving child,
the refugee fleeing with nowhere to go.
the smell of despair at the county dump,
the apartment without curtains or furniture.
i am the soldier killed who hesitated with conscience.
i am the prisoner afraid of both detention and freedom.
the young gay teenager who hangs himself,
the pregnant girl who takes too many pills.
i am the protester beaten and left on the sidewalk,
the old man alone without food or heat.
i am the touch of Jesus in the addict's eyes,
the street bum sleeping in the alley.
i am the farmer whose farm was taken,
the family left without a home.
the 40 year worker in the unemployment line,
the young girl taken and sold as a whore.
i am the Buddhist monk who sets himself on fire,
the rebel imprisoned for speaking the truth.
i am the millions of young who cant afford school,
the millions of workers who cant afford insurance.
i am the immigrant deported,
whose family has no chance.
the young mother caught stealing food.
i am the morals hidden by despair and anger,
the conscience of the poor holding the gun.
i am the color of skin covered with blood,
the face of god in strays of all kinds.
i am the Buddha weeping,

the body of suffering....
the hand of silence covering the grave.

Eric Cockrell

I Am..... (Beat Of The Drum)

i am....
the beat of the drum
in the electric hot night.
i am the horn of the bull,
on the streets of Madrid.
i am the body naked,
glistening with sweat.
i am tongue and phallus,
teeth and desire's pant!
i am the river surging
through mountains and valleys.
i am the house on fire,
the wail of sirens.
i am the caw of the crow,
the screech of the owl.
i am the cross ablaze,
the lone soldier defiant.
the man at the crossroads,
who wont sell his soul.
i am hate broken,
and secret sins revealed.
i am the heart pain of need,
the wind howling at the window.
i am the moon shot down,
and oceans gone renegade.
i am the prisoner escaped,
and the pursuit of the dogs.
i am the shot fired,
and the body fallen.
i am the torch, the knife,
the scar, and the prayer...
i am! i am!

Eric Cockrell

I Am..... (Feathered Wing)

i am the kiss of the feathered wing...
having no body i walk across oceans.
driven by ancestral blood i go deep in the mines,
listening for the voices of freedom.
i define hunger with faces and eyes,
i unload the gun, and tear down the idols.
i am the maker of mountains,
bare branches bringing forth leaves.
i am the winds of change,
the still small voice within.
i am the womb of the unborn child,
i am the casket, the forever dirt.
i am the groan of the lover left alone,
the shout of the old man's empty room.
i am the stink of poverty,
and the bitter taste of wealth.
i am money burning
on the altars of mankind.
i am the voice of the god
you no longer remember.
i am the touch that breaks down walls.
i am conversation without words,
i am black and white,
both male and female!
i am death unlike what you feared,
i am the bridge you're afraid to cross.
i am the pierced tongue,
and the language of birds.
i am the promised land
deep within you!
i am the wail of justice
during the height of the storm.
i am the storm, and the quiet that follows.
i am the end of human striving,
and the beginning of breath.
i am the price and the cost of condemnation.
i am the scriptures written in the grain of trees...
i am the hand that stills troubled waters.
i am nothing, came from nothing,

to nothing i return!
i am the sight that heals blindness,
the cure for the disease.
i am you...
evolving!

Eric Cockrell

I Am..... (Walls Of Fear)

i am...
the theology of mice and roaches,
hymns of praise sung by stones and moss.
i am the Family Bible, the Quran,
and the meditation cushion,
all come to the meeting place.
i am the atheist driven by reason,
the scientists' microscopes.
i am the teachings of Aristotle,
the music in Einstein's mind.
i am evolution, passage engraved in stone,
the rise and fall of civilizations.
i am wars fought over flowers in bloom,
and the rising of those oppressed.
i am the division and multiplication
of the human race.
i am the edge of freedom,
and the forbidden land,
i am the cross of self-denial.
i am outer space and inner space,
and the dimension of the dead.
i am the tree of god,
of which you've only seen the leaves!
i am the door you've dared not open!
i am the intimacy of hands joining,
i am birth and death the same.
i am the unheard cry of the bat,
hanging upside down in your heart.
i am the body rolling naked in snow,
on the day of deliverance.
i am the name you cannot name,
that resides within your spirit.
i am the children of Moses,
marching round the city of your understanding...
with trumpets blaring and a mighty shout,
bringing down your walls of fear!

Eric Cockrell

I And Thou!

i wont wear your clothes,
wont wear your shoes.
i wont live in your house,
i wont sweep your floors.

i wont share your food,
i wont wipe your ass.
i wont sleep in your bed,
i wont build your fire.

i will wear your clothes,
will wear your shoes.
i will live in your house,
i will sweep your floors.

i will share your food,
i will wipe your ass.
i will sleep in your bed,
i will build your fire.

i and thou,
defiant and reliant.
one in many, many in one,
confined, set free,
defined, beyond definition!
illusion, concepts,
or uncarved block!

Eric Cockrell

I And You

i am only as free,
as i allow you to be.
the respect i've earned,
the respect i have for you.
my idea of truth,
no more important than yours.
the hunger i feed
is the hunger you feel...
i cannot be me,
without you being you!

Eric Cockrell

I Believe So...

does the wind choose to blow?
do rivers choose to run?
does your heart choose to beat?
i believe so...

does the earth choose to turn,
in perfect rhythm, year by year?
do the tides choose to come and go,
in cadence with the moon?
i believe so...

does society choose to be oppressed,
if only by apathy's inaction?
do we choose to let people starve
when we turn the other head?
i believe so...

do we choose war over peace,
to feed the need of greed?
do we choose to destroy nature
by our very lifestyles?
i believe so....

but can we change destiny,
and avert the final blow?
can we open our minds and hearts,
and reclaim life for the living?
i believe so...

Eric Cockrell

I Believe.... (Chant Four)

i believe...
in unlimited passion,
in touching, tasting,
and smelling,
in diving into the pond.
that it is not always
the answer we seek,
but the right to question.
that the perceived seperation
between man and god,
is a creation of man's
conceptual thinking!
that kindness is the key
to understanding...
that solitude is most often
self imposed!
that the true warrior is gentle,
that the sparrow is our guide.
and that communication is the key
that unlocks the door
to the naked heart.
i believe in you, in me,
and in the breath of all that lives...
i believe....

Eric Cockrell

I Believe.... (Chant One)

i believe...
that all men and women
are created equal...
equal in worth, dignity,
authority, and sacredness.
that wars, for any reason,
are wrong...
that they constitute murder.
that any government
that oppresses the many
for the good of the few,
should be overthrown!
in nonviolent protest,
and the way of the peacemakers.
that the earth,
and all living beings,
are sacred.
that prejudice is murder,
that the faces of god are many...
and that many,
from various traditions,
have felt the presence of god.
that the path we're called
to walk is individual.
that all true paths are based in compassion.
that the way to truth
begins within...
that we are called to listen,
to get involved, to care,
to offer a helping hand.
that we have an inherent need to love,
and to be loved.
and that whom we love
is our own choice!
that every day we evolve...
that death is a beginning...
that hunger is a sin
against the face of humanity.
that justice should be the same for all.

and that love has a body!

Eric Cockrell

I Believe.... (Chant Three)

i believe...
that eternity is right now, ,
in the awareness of the moment
that a man is no more
than he gives,
and no less than his mistakes.
that what we hate in others
is most often what we're afraid of
in ourselves...
that to live we must risk,
we must try our wings!
that the child
remains your child
even when grown.
that all the children,
around the world,
orphaned and starving,
grasping for hope,
are mine!
that the true friend
stimulates both thought and feeling.
that every profession,
every walk of life,
is an art form.
that prayer is the expression
of the human being being human.
that the bridge to tomorrow
is made of what we do today.
that every coming of dawn
is a new creation...
and that stillness is the hand
that wipes our brow!

Eric Cockrell

I Believe.... (Chant Two)

i believe...
in open hands, open minds,
and open hearts.
that the banning of books is wrong.
that we have been
too long owned
by what we own.
that we are all
immigrants on the earth.
that all people are
brothers and sisters.
that we are responsible
for each other.
that animals and trees
and mountains have souls,
and that there is much
that we can learn from them.
in the simple life,
in honesty...
that forgiveness should be
as natural as breathing.
in the right to question, and doubt...
in respect... in words,
thoughts, and actions.
that none are free,
until all are free!

Eric Cockrell

I Call It Slavery!

how much do we really know?
how much of what we think we know
is the truth?
can we handle the truth?

most of what we read in the papers,
most of what our politicians tell us,
most of what we see on the news...
is a carefully directed lie!

we have been owned for decades,
herded like sheep to the slaughter,
manipulated and used by an unseen hand,
for a purpose that only they know...

conspiracy? no, more a global mission,
complete control of the world,
complete control of the future...
as Dylan said: 'only pawns in their game...'

they've kept us divided by the use of fears
that are based in ignorance....
kept us marching to their drum...
call it patriotism, or religious right....

i call it slavery!

Eric Cockrell

I Came From...

i came from moonlight,
my grandfathers were great trees.
my grandmothers sudden gusts of wind,
that came from nowhere and returned.
my mother was a wolf,
my father the hard trodden path.
my sisters brought the rain,
my brothers the bow and the arrow.
my lovers made of shadows,
my enemies demons that haunt.
i am the fire tended
by hands unseen,
the saw and the axe.
i will return on a coming night,
the pine needles will hear my feet.
for i am the sound within thunder,
and the hand that catches lightning!

Eric Cockrell

I Can Feel...

she said:

'you're not a poet,
you're just an old man...
old hat, old beard,
even your socks are old! '

'yes, and my socks
are full of holes...
when i walk across
the bare floor i can feel...'

and therein lies
the poetry!

Eric Cockrell

I Can Feel..... (The Change Coming)

i can feel the change coming,
the dark swell of the clouds.
the rumble that shakes the streets,
i can smell buildings on fire.
can hear the planes,
the sound the bombs make falling,
the pulsing hate of the oil rigs,
the shuffle of money behind closed doors.
the wail of prayers in desperate churches,
the street dealer selling a loaf of bread.
the metallic sound of shovels digging graves,
the ignorant drone of great leaders.
the sound of boots on pavement,
breath shuddering through broken windows.
the silent stare of the angry and hungry,
the thunderous clenching of fists.
the haunted sound of chains and cell doors,
and riot squad bullhorns.
the tongues of truth cut from bodies,
the last cigarette lit.
the pounding hearts of the common,
black and white joined.
coming in waves, determined as one.
and the cries of the children...
always the cries...
held in the hearts as a beacon,
the reason to live and die!

Eric Cockrell

I Cant Hear You!

i cant hear you.....
she turned her head,
and he walked away...

leaving all the years
hanging like spider webs
in forgotten corners.

numb but walking,
he could taste her
in the cyanide rain.....

down to the corner
where nobody stood,
and strangers without faces

never spoke... to the
corner of hell and third,
never looking back....

nothing to look back to!

Eric Cockrell

I Cant Help But Crying

i wont waste my time crying
over things i wanted to happen,
that didnt....

over battles i fought and lost,
over lovers that walked away.
over loved ones that died

too soon, always too soon.
over kingdoms i built that fell.
over mistakes i made

that i cant change....
over dreams that werent real....
but, dammit, every time

i see the face of a hungry child,
dont matter what color, or where,
dont even matter whose child....

i cant help but crying!

Eric Cockrell

I Carry With Me

seems i walk alone
so much of the time....
but i carry with me

tiny slivers of hearts,
many colored splotches
of cloth woven into a blanket

that warms me against the cold.
my feet are worn... my eyes near blind...
but i see with the eyes

of small children
too alive to deny
the magic in each moment....

i breathe with the breath
of human hungering....
for what cannot be contained....

my heart beats with the spirit
of light... the hope of the hopeless,
the determination of the beaten....

the prayers of those who will not quit...
whose feet tired like mine,
keep walking!

Eric Cockrell

I Celebrate Woman

i celebrate woman...
cosmos, storm, flower
opening and closing...
giver of life, bringer of death!
falling star, rhythm of seasons,
the flesh bound words of the poem...
daughters of the Goddess,
mother of earth, earth and all within.

i celebrate woman...
strong, tender, lightning,
embers smoking in the soul.
beauty, spirituality, sensuality,
wisdom of the ages.
fresh plowed dirt waiting
on seed, rain, and sun.
hope in the night,
a beacon to the lover's soul.

i celebrate woman,
mystery and substance,
hard working, strong believing,
touch, gift, and prayer...
i celebrate woman,
forever standing in her shadow,
with awe and admiration,
with passion, and gratitude...

i celebrate woman!

Eric Cockrell

I Choose To Believe!

i chose to believe
in the taste of morning,
the smell of sunlight

unwrapping the day!
in the eyes of strangers,
the stories unspoken

written on faces
by trial and fire!
in the companionship

of dogs... who know
and sometimes divulge!
in the lamp and the ashtray

and your body wrapped in sleep!

Eric Cockrell

I Dance, I Sing, I Dare Defy!

I am not the I your fear defined,
not the cloth that hid your passion.
I am not the shoes you bought to wear,
and put up for special occasions.
I am not the truth you pawned for food,
not the car that broke down on your way home.
I am not the picture you chose to paint,
using only colors that you liked.
I am not the sin you couldn't commit,
nor the reason for your failure.
I am not the photographs you packed in boxes,
nor the footprints you swept from your porch.
I am not your savior nor your twin,
not your excuse to walk away!

I am the fire that consumes all without prejudice,
I am the dawn that comes in spite of...
I am the storm that destroys all you've known,
I am the new day, the new way, the question....
I am the wolf, the tongue, the scent of the neck,
I am spring frozen in every snowflake.
I am the cliff, the leap, the fall, the flight....
the hot breath of the stranger!
I am the face of the hunger you dare not name,
I am death, and new beginning!
I am the trout in the jaws of the bear,
I am light conceived by darkness....
I dance, I sing, I dare defy!
will you walk with me on this journey?

Eric Cockrell

I Despise!

i despise...

the self centered concept
that one group of people,
that one race, or one religion,
is better than all the rest.

i despise...

any system that feeds
the few at the expense
of the many.

i despise...

ignorance, arrogance,
greed, and apathy.

i despise...

the pursuit of money
at the expense of living.

i despise...

narrow minded people
who try to lead
for the good of mankind.

i despise...

indifference, intolerance,
and unforgiveness!

Eric Cockrell

I Do Not Fear... I Fear!

</>

i do not fear....

Armagedden, not the end,
not soldiers wearing masks,

not the plague, not nuclear disaster....
not prisons, not persecution,
not being labeled or hated.

not losing it all,
not guns, not drugs, nor
one world order.....

but i do fear....
not living all that i can live,
not giving all that i can give,

not matching beliefs with action,
not seeing all people as people,
not doing what i know is right....

not standing when i should stand,
not saying what i should say....
not writing the words i'm given....

Eric Cockrell

I Dont Believe You!

you can tell me
these chains are wings...
but i dont believe you.

that right and wrong
are black and white...
i dont believe you.

that God chooses
between one person
and another...
i dont believe you.

that killing is justified,
that poverty is earned,
that you are better,
or worth more than me..
i just dont believe you.

you can tell me
that there's more
than the hand in mine...
baby, i dont believe you!

Eric Cockrell

I Dont Do Hate

i don't do hate
i don't judge
i don't give answers
to questions i cant answer
i don't believe anything
just because it's said
or written
i don't pretend to
make you more comfortable
i don't change forms
to fit the situation
i don't follow, i don't settle,
i don't quit
i don't try to change you
i work on changing me
i don't do hate

Eric Cockrell

I Dont Even Know Their Names!

his spirit left his body,
and walked through the hells.
a firm voice spoke:
'keep your eyes open,
look, and see! '

he saw dark skinned children,
their bodies frail and thin,
their features carved with hunger.

he saw women and children,
running from the bombs,
young men gunned down,
in the streets.

he saw the homeless family,
sleeping in a beaten old car,
hoping no one would come
to make them move.

he saw the young addict shaking,
the young woman helpless,
her baby crying in the bare apartment.

he saw the young man sent to prison,
trying to hide his fear,
a fear so strong they
could smell it on him!

he saw the woman who'd been beaten,
the man jobless and angry.

he saw millions of Native Americans,
slaughtered, and left for the crows.

he saw the old couple hungry,
in their apartment with no lights,
and no heat in the dead of winter...

'i cant take it any more,
what has this got to do with me?
i dont even know their names! '

'their names are anybody, and everybody...

they are why you must return.
they are your children, your
brothers and sisters, your father
and your mother...
they are your responsibility!
you must return to finish the work! '

Eric Cockrell

I Dont Think Jesus Died For This!

wars, wars, and rumors of wars...
1 in 5 children go to bed hungry.
people still cringe at the color of skin,
and religious people crucify
anyone who thinks different.
unemployment lines not moving,
soup lines getting longer.
shutting down the battered women's shelter,
funding cut off....
food stamps dont pay light bills,
and lovers face discrimination.
the clothes you got at Goodwill,
made in an Asian sweat shop....
dumping oil in the oceans,
the price of gas rising...
and vacant houses arent for vacant people.
everyone talking, nobody listening....
somehow i dont think Jesus died for this!

Eric Cockrell

I Dont Want You...

i dont want you...
sexually,
if i cant have you
spiritually,
walking...
not behind me,
nor in front,
but beside me,
as my true companion.

i dont want you...
emotionally,
if i cant have you
eternally,
aware of each moment,
alive in each moment.

i dont want you...
conditionally,
if i cant have you
totally,
immersed in the give and take,
the ebb and the flow.

i dont want you...
unless you want me,
the same way!

Eric Cockrell

I Dont Write Poetry!

i dont write poetry...
i sweat poetry, i drink poetry,
i breathe poetry, i make love to poetry,
i fight poetry, i eat poetry,
i bleed poetry, i crap poetry...
too often i betray poetry,
sometimes i dropp poetry.
once i tripped over poetry,
got angry and kicked poetry.
i rocked poetry on a sleepless night,
i buried poetry on the hill...
i lived poetry, for i am poetry...

no, i dont write poetry,
but poetry writes me!

Eric Cockrell

I Dreamed.... (Hands)

i dreamed last night...
and all i could see were hands.
sometimes hard and calloused,
sometimes soft and feminine.
skilled hands, laborer's hands,
loving hands, nurturing hands....
fingers digging in the dirt,
fingers holding a pen.
fingers playing a piano,
fingers unbuttoning blouses.

hands extended, hands gripping the rope,
hands holding the shovel,
hands covered with resin.
hands folded in prayer,
hands balled into fists.
hands stuffed in empty pockets.
hands that define both history,
and destiny!

hands scarred and bruised,
hands covered with age spots.
hands that speak many languages.
hands that know mistakes, and failures.
hands that built fires,
hands that put fires out!
hands that wiped away tears,
that picked up trash,
and revealed souls....

whose hands?
my hands, your hands?
god's hands?
does it really matter?
hands engaged and involved,
in the very act of living!

Eric Cockrell

I Dreamt...

i dreamt...
i was dead,
and they'd buried me
on a hill with
a small stone marker.

and i watched
as seasons passed,
one by one,
in constant rhythm...
the years went by.

and no living being
ever visited my graveside,
except for black crows...
again and again,
black crows!

the caw of the crows!

Eric Cockrell

I Dreamt... (Judgement)

i dreamt...
having left this body,
i stood in the netherlands,
waiting for what came next...
i heard a voice,
that made my soul tremble...
a voice that had eyes.

'are you here to judge me? ' i asked.
there was a great silence...
then these words cut through the dark:
'no, judge yourself! '

Eric Cockrell

I Dreamt... (The Mask)

i dreamt...
it was dark.
the sound of the door
being broken into
awakened me with a jolt.
i stumbled down the hallway,
and ran into the intruder.
we wrestled each other
to the floor.
we fought for the gun
he had in his hand,
till it went off.
his body went limp.

pulling myself up,
i reached down and removed
the mask from his face...
he looked exactly like me!

Eric Cockrell

I Dreamt... (The Turning)

i dreamt...
i slowly unbuttoned
your blouse in
the semi-darkness.
the faint smell of
your wanting filled
the room...

i was stunned
to find your chest split open.
i could see your heart
beating with hunger.
i softly caressed it,
and could feel the turning,
of time and season,
want and desire.

then suddenly you were gone,
leaving dust on my fingertips,
and an aching in my soul!

Eric Cockrell

I Finally Found Forever

i finally found forever...
in the laughter of a small child,
in a raindropp rolling down the window.
in a flower that opened and closed
in one fleeting day.
in the embers of a fire going out.
in the door latch opened,
the shadow walking across the room.
in the old woman dying,
her face peaceful and calm.
in the smile of the young boy cuffed
in the back of the police van...
in the revolver unloaded,
and put back in the drawer.
in the box of clothes
left on the doorstep.
in the cup of coffee shared,
the plate, the fork, and the smoke.
in the moment of eyes engaged,
and talking without words...
in the given without thinking,
the breathe that was felt!

Eric Cockrell

I Had A Chance!

i had a chance
to feed the hungry,
to stop all the wars...

to house the homeless.
to name undiscovered stars,
to know the depths of the oceans....

to fly with the hawk,
to discover fire again.
to cure the disease,

to replant the forests.
to take the secrets of nuclear
power and hide them away...

to take in the orphans,
to climb the highest mountain.
to tear down the pyramids,

step by step...
i had a chance
to rewrite history...

but i chose instead
to sit by your bed,
a shadow hidden by darkness....

waiting, in the stillness,
for the door of your heart
to open again...

may God
forgive me for that!

Eric Cockrell

I Have A Name!

roll back the stone!
take your chains
of ignorance and fear

from around my neck....
take your shackles
from my feet....

nobody owns me,
and nobody ever will.
i am not a number...

i have a name!

Eric Cockrell

I Have Always Been... Human!

i have been a fool,
a thief, and a liar.
i have been selfish,
i have been callous.
i have been ignorant,
i have been a prisoner.
i have been an addict,
i have been a loser.
i have been wrong,
i have been angry.
i have been a taker,
i have been a demon.

i have been a hero,
i have been a man.
i have been a husband,
i have been a father.
i have been a seeker,
i have been a worker.
i have been a believer,
i have been a leader.
i have been a giver,
i have been spirit...
i have been a warrior,
i have been forgiven!

and i have always been...
human!

Eric Cockrell

I Have Always Believed!

i have always believed...
that only the heart should speak.
that the mind should always be open,
that questions validate the path.
that ears are the greatest gift we have,
and that the truth is worth the cost.
that honest mistakes are the bricks
that build the house,
and that forgiveness is the human condition.
that life in itself is sacred.
that death fulfills the life.
that every word written or spoken,
must remain true to all of this!

Eric Cockrell

I Have No Body....

i have no body...
i am starlight and dust.
i roam fields and pastures,
and pound city streets.
i haunt the owl,
chase shadows into hiding.
i am the howl,
the wolf cannot speak!

i walk through locked doors,
and blow through open windows.
i am the moan,
that startles your sleep.
i burn in the lighthouse,
and walk stormy seas.
i dance barefoot on pine needles,
leave no tracks in the frost!

i have no body...
i am breath hot and hoarse.
the unseen hand,
that travels your body.
the break of the veil,
that causes you to sit up and cough.
the trembling in your hands,
as you light a smoke!

i am not alive,
yet i am not dead.
i carry no chains,
and leave no memory.
would you name me a dream,
or a secret desire?
i am the mark,
on the inside of your thigh!

Eric Cockrell

I Have Risen

I have risen...

The fallen leaf

Has become the tree!

The tear, a shout of joy.

The hand, a heart revealed.

The prayer, a sweat stained
Body.

The body, an unnamed star.

The silence, a bridge,

A mountain.

The hunger, an open door.

The grave, the birth of
Wings!

Eric Cockrell

I Hear The Cry

i hear the cry....
oppression, enslavement,
beatings, torture, rapes,
and killings.
people of heart,
slaughtered like sheep.
monks self-immolating,
crying out for justice,
and freedom,
for basic human dignity,
for basic human rights...
i hear the cry...
of Tibet on fire.
and am ashamed
to be part of a world
turned blind and deaf!

free Tibet!

Eric Cockrell

I Hear....

i hear the cry of a thousand naked voices.
i hear the sound of the turning wheels.
i hear the guns, and the moment after,
i hear the blood of bodies in the fields.
i hear the cry of babies without mothers,
i hear the hunger of faces without names.
i hear the whisper of god in the homeless,
the hearts of the poor in the falling rain.
i hear the truth beyond all lies,
i hear the hand that takes another.
i hear justice's cry for deliverance,
and the prayer of the stranger that is my brother.
i hear the hammer and wings of freedom,
i hear equality chanted and sang.
i hear the beat of life calling forward,
to dare, to give, tis not in vain!

Eric Cockrell

I Heard...

i heard...
the roar of silence,
and sat motionless
till it became a whisper.
a whisper that filled
every ounce of my being
with the electric sense
of being alive!
i drank the cup of forgiveness,
and wiped the tears
of the holy from my eyes.
i saw the human heart,
and felt its beat,
in the small child
reaching up for hope.
i prayed the prayer without words,
and found the hand in mine...
and walked beside the stranger
to the home we both desired!
i heard...
and acted!

Eric Cockrell

I Know Better Than That!

in my thousand weaknesses
my strength is formed,
in my endless failures,
triumph is born.
in every flaw a glimmer,
in every darkness a light.
in my hunger there is fullness,
in my restlessness a home.
in every bruise and scar,
beauty is forged.
in every moment of silence,
passion set free.
with every stumbling step,
another step is taken.
be there any difference,
i know better than that!

Eric Cockrell

I Know, I've Been There!

in each heart
there is a universe
never before seen, ...
i know, i've been there!

in each soul
there's a photograph of God
that's unlike any other, ...
i know, i've been there!

in every mind
a dream different but the same,
a thought that finishes, needs finishing, ...
i know, i've been there!

in every destiny
an individual path,
yet a part of the whole, ...
i know, i've been there!

in every hidden longing
names put to faces,
and hands put to touch, ...
i know, i've been there!

in every prayer,
the need both unique and shared,
both mortal and immortal,
i know, i've been there!

in every tear,
wept by every living being,
the call to return, to go home, ...
i know, i've been there!

Eric Cockrell

I Laid Down God!

i laid down God,
and found the stranger
at my door....

hungry stare, dirty clothes,
nowhere to go...
i let him in!

i laid down God,
and found the orphaned child,
crying in the darkness,

the darkness that swallows souls.
i took the child in my arms,
and whispered, 'you are home'...

i laid down God,
traded my guns for hammer and nails...
began building houses

for the lost and dispossessed...
i laid down God,
and quit thinking about me...

found peace in involvement,
with no need to possess...
i laid down God,

and God found me!

Eric Cockrell

I Like Smells

i like smells...
woodsmoke, and food,
black coffee in the morning.
the smell of rain,
of mud, of wetness.
the smell of the walls
of the cave, of the stone,
of the moss...
the smell of sex, of arousal,
of a woman's neck.
the smell of pine needles,
of an old house,
of fresh turned earth...
the smell of old books,
of old dogs, of shadows
without form...
i've even become accustomed
to the smell of death!

Eric Cockrell

I Looked At You

i looked at you,
and saw the fugitive
in my mirror.
i looked at me,
and saw the child in you.
i looked at God,
and saw the stranger waiting.
i looked at the stranger,
and saw my brother in need.
i looked at freedom,
and saw the bars of the cell.
i looked at the bars,
and saw my spirit walk free.
i looked at anger,
and saw forgiveness waiting.
i looked at forgiveness,
and saw the hands of love.
i looked at my body,
and saw the bird leaving the nest.
i looked at the nest,
and saw a world made of straw.
i looked at today,
and saw the scars of yesterday.
i looked at yesterday,
and saw the dawning of tomorrow.
i looked at the seed,
and saw the plant in fullness.
i looked at fullness,
and saw emptiness the seed.
i looked at you...

Eric Cockrell

I Looked Deep.....

i looked deep in my heart....
i saw a lover, a fool, a warrior,
a peacemaker, and a clown.
i saw an activist, an apathetic ghoul,
a healer, and a killer.
i saw Jesus, Buddha, Gandhi, and King...
i saw Hitler, Manson, Bush, and Cheney.
i saw JFK, i saw Oswald,
i saw the shooter in the distance.
i saw the monk immolated,
and the napalm skies.
i saw equality and prejudice,
i saw compassion and indifference.
i saw the truth and the lie,
i saw god, and satan.
i saw greed and hunger,
and small children dying.
i saw the eyes of the stray dog,
and the gentle hand that cares.
i saw faith, and doubt,
i saw reason, and questions...
and most of all...
i saw responsibility!

Eric Cockrell

I Looked...

you killed me last night,
perhaps that was enough...
to make up for all those nights
left to sleep alone!
when i awakened with eyes
that darkness had kissed,
i saw hearts beating,
and an owl pouring coffee!
trees conversed, branches intertwined,
and the creek sang to the wind.
now dogs spoke of god
with learned eyes...
while thunder undressed lightning!
and the hollow in my cheek
that bore your name...
filled with fireflies glowing...
fingers walked by carrying souls,
i looked, but could not find yours!

Eric Cockrell

I Love You

i love you as the leaf,
shouting, 'i am tree'...
i love you as the piece of straw,
woven into the sparrow's nest.
i love you as the pebble,
dreaming, 'i am mountain'!
i love you as the rain,
licking the thirst of the grasses.
i love you as the weathered old oak,
bent and gnarled, still strong.
i love you as the cave,
and as fresh fallen snow.
i love you as time itself,
weeping as it sweeps your footsteps.
i love you as the wind,
coming when you need it most!

Eric Cockrell

I Love....

i love...

that's the reason i walk,

the reason i breathe.

the reason i grieve.

the reason i dance.

the reason i smile.

the reason i listen.

the reason i offer a hand.

the reason i see beauty.

the reason i see both darkness,
and light....

the reason i take chances.

the reason i keep going.

the reason i get angry.

the reason i forgive.

the reason i touch.

the reason i question.

the reason i believe.

the reason i am tolerant.

the reason i understand.

the reason i fall.

the reason i fly.

the reason i write...

the reason i am what i am!

Eric Cockrell

I Need Not More!

i was born
of the wind and rain,
conceived by storm,
nursed by its path.
i hear the flute
that time ignores.
i dance in the smallness
of the tiny bud.
i pray like thunder
to a god that growls.
i wait in the silence
of the aftermath.
filled with the joy of survival,
and the weeping
of the mortal lost!
i am alive!
i celebrate the living.
i console the dead
with remembered moments.
i am nothing,
neither claim nor grasp.
born of the wind and rain,
i need not more!

Eric Cockrell

I Pray For Darkness...

i pray for darkness...
wrapping splintered lights
in perfected stillness...

stillness that heals
without questioning
why or who!

stillness that sings,
with every pulse of blood
through bodies worn...

stillness that redeems,
bringing the searcher
to his final destination...

stillness that removes,
the cross, , the crown of thorns,
lays down the shield of honor...

stillness that fills,
the empty cup, the box forgotten,
bringing the lover

to the lips of longing...
spilling his passion
on the fertile earth!

i pray for darkness,
removing all graven images,
the power of the formless

to form again and again...
i pray for darkness,
the moonlit touch forbidden,

the lover's cry, the wolfen howl,
the mystic taste of that which
cannot be seen... but felt!

Eric Cockrell

I Prayed For Rain...

i prayed for rain,
now i am wet with desire.
the tears that god wept for me,
washed away the dirt of my struggle.
and again the silence,
returns as a friend,
wrapped in the sounds
of the living!

Eric Cockrell

I Quit

i quit trying to save the world...
and just offered my hand,
and walked beside it.
i quit trying to find the truth,
for it was already within me.
i quit trying to tell anyone anything,
and just listened in perfect stillness.
i quit trying to be religious,
and found the sacred in the common.
i quit trying to stop the wars,
and let the wars within me end!
i quit trying to find god,
and just looked in the mirror.
i quit fighting for freedom,
and found a freedom they couldnt take.
i quit shouting out for justice,
and walked in a way that was just.
i quit wanting to own anything,
and so broke the final bonds.
i quit trying to be what they wanted,
and decided to be myself.
i quit blaming, condemning, and accusing,
and took the responsibility on myself.
i quit trying to make myself a name,
and walked in nobody's shoes.
i quit staring from behind the bars,
that were never really there.
i quit seeking to define and hold,
and just let go and lived.
i quit hiding from death, and opened the door,
and found the light from which darkness
is made!

Eric Cockrell

I Remember You (Every)

i remember you...
every time i breathe,
every step i take...

every job i tackle.
every fight i fight,
every tear no one sees

me cry...
every time i reach out to help,
every time i get knocked down...

every prayer i cant find words for,
every sleepless night....
every dream i cant quite touch...

i remember you!

Eric Cockrell

I Saw God

i saw god this morning...
and brushed her long grey hair,
as she sat in her favorite chair,
watching the sunrise through
an open window....
the stray cat lay in her lap,
perfectly still,
while birds with hidden faces
sang songs to the stillness...
and time itself began again!

Eric Cockrell

I Saw God

i saw god...
in the small child shunned,
playing alone.
in the pregnant girl scared,
still a baby herself.
in the young man going off to war,
chest stuck out, and knees gone weak.
in the angry young man,
who learns to read in prison.
in the old woman in the empty house,
every wrinkle a chapter of love.
in the stray cat curled
against my leg.
in two young men in love,
kissing on the steps of a church.
in the family living on food stamps,
day work, and faith.
in the addict with the guts
to go into rehab.
in the body in the funeral home
that no one came to see.
in the couple married for twenty five years,
survivors of struggle, passion, and despair.
in the jobless shuffle of the heads down line.
in the old man fishing with his grandson,
in the mother teaching her daughter to pray.
in the poet, the carpenter, the farmer,
the doctor, the garbage man, and the cashier.
in the bride and the groom,
even the murderer and the victim!
in the anger of the protesters,
in the sin, and forgiveness.
in the black, the white, and every color between.
in moonlight pouring through poverty's window....

yes, i saw god...
never entered a church, a temple, or a mosque...
i merely entered the heart
of the living... and touched!

Eric Cockrell

I Say Then The Wind...

i say then the wind,
to thee who preach temples and banks.
i say the stink of the homeless body,
to you who quote perfume.
i say the baby being born,
to you who shout invasion and conquer.
i say silence,
to you who preach success.
i say equality,
to you who strut religion.
i say justice,
to you who would win.
i say suffering,
to you who live indulgence.
i say family,
to thee who carry nations.
i say then the wind,
to you who doubt in anger.
i say dying,
to you who would live...
i say the moment lived,
to you who yearn for eternity.
i say compassion,
to you who would understand!
i say then the wind....

Eric Cockrell

I Stand By The Graves....

i stand by the graves
of those who came before,
those who walked beside me
on this lonesome path....
those i worked with, fought with,
loved with, exchanged poetry
and thoughts with...
sang the songs of freedom with,
prayed prodigal prayers with...
those who burned too bright,
and fell like renegade stars.
who fell by drugs, violence,
hard living, or by suicide...
those who lived too hard too fast!
who took me in when i was a fugitive,
who took me for what i was.
those who dared to bleed
in an angry world....
those who cared without reason!
i stand by the graves silently weeping,
but i am not alone!
for the wind that rustles leaves and grasses,
forever chants their names with hope!

Eric Cockrell

I Started A Revolution Today

i started a revolution today,
when i walked out the door.
ants lined up in full gear,
trees refused to shed their leaves.
smoke swallowed the chimney,
and cats laid down with squirrels.
and every ray of sunlight,
praised the coming night.
small children read to old people,
and bricks swayed to the beating heart.
tiny things became heroes,
and simple things became gods.
gentle words held road signs,
hobos shared their bowls of stew...
rain buried gifts in stillness,
for the awakened and those who long!

Eric Cockrell

I Still Believe

the scars on my face have names,
the ache in my soul has a face.
the hunger in my heart has a reason,
the light in my eyes is God's breath...
i still believe...

the prayer i cant pray i live,
the debt i cant pay still haunts me.
the love i leave on the doorstep
will stand the test of time.
i still believe...

the forgiveness i need i have given.
the mistakes i have made dont own me.
the anger i feel slowly transformed,
the peace i seek i will find...
i still believe...

Eric Cockrell

I Still Want!

i think forever is a lie!
perhaps the opium of the desolate!
i am drunk on the tiny moments of now,
that left scars that whisper in the darkness.
i spend too much time with the dead,
but, they know the value of life!
i follow the scent of feet long parted,
and pee at every point of journey!
damnit, i cant pretend!
i still want! i still want!
when the soul becomes a man,
and becomes a prisoner of the heart

Eric Cockrell

I Swear It Is!

it's the soul of God,
i swear it is!
hanging from the rafter,
just another kid.

abused for being different,
for daring to be!
the longing inside him,
the i inside me!

who are we to judge?
with our shadows and lies!
with every kid we lose,
our redemption dies!

the hate in the mirror
looks familiar as fear.
we dress false morality,
call the disease the cure!

Eric Cockrell

I Too Mourn The Dead!

i too mourn the dead...
the victims of bullets,
preordained by message.
the blown and splintered bodies,
strewn in nameless disarray.
the guilt pills of generals,
swallowed with patriotic vodka.
but too the carcass of the dog,
blindsided by the truck.
and the small bird beneath the tree,
whose wings froze and failed.
the stray cow that fell,
and couldnt get up.
the tree cut and felled,
to widen the road.
the mountain blown asunder,
to make way for progress.
the thousands of fishes,
choking to death on oil.
the river stopped and stagnant,
filled with raw sewage....
the young boy's body hanging,
at the edge of bullied taunts.
the girl on the corner,
selling her body for a rock
the businessman dying,
with every numb decision.
the body of the old woman,
barely breathing in a bare room.
the child sick and shaking,
dying of hunger...
the baby in the dumpster,
nothing else needs said...
and the apathetic faceless mouths,
devouring the poor....
i too mourn the dead, and the dying...
and see their faces,
in the palm of my hand!

I Vote For The Earth!

i vote for the earth....

her mountains tall and strong,
standing from time to time.

her trees the fathers of wisdom,
the image of change and the cycle...
her oceans dark and mysterious,

holding life from beginning to beginning!
her fields of grasses long and weeping
for the fallen and forgotten....

her breasts giving blood,
her arms wrapping around,
all that lives and dies and lives....

i vote for the earth,
and walk naked through her gardens!

Eric Cockrell

I Wait For You....

i wait for you...
inside the hollowed ache
of the empty space,
where the stump of the willow,
buried by grief, testifies!
where the old galvanized tub,
wanders from yard sale to neglect;
where the old Ford with mismatched tires,
sleeps in the indignity of crushed.
where the outhouse walls,
scorched by time's fires,
lies strewn, charred by random fate.
where the cry of wetness,
trapped by the urn,
awaits ash and stardust.
where the manger bleeds,
in the cobwebbed shed;
one set of footprints leads away!
where the cock curled
into the bark loses,
all trace of form or identity.
where gnarled fingers tremble
with every step,
and feet no longer answer.
where the tongue betrays
the secret heart,
where kings go to become fools.
where Hemingway's shotgun,
in stillness by the door,
waits for the final curtain.
where god returns all prayers,
rubbed raw by image;
and the face on every stone,
every broken branch, yes,
and every fallen leaf... is yours!
where want drives the clock
through the sleep purged night,
and the scent of dawn is you!

I Walk Alone...

i am the last rebellion,
the fire you cannot control.
i am the faces of lost bodies,
names written in blood.
i am the call to battle,
armed by the heart.
i am the silence that knows,
the darkness that takes.
i am poverty's shadow,
and the language of need.
i am the anger of the beaten,
i am the field forsaken.
i am the tint of skin,
and the color of the eyes....
the song of the shovel and whip.
i am the bones of the old ones,
shaking with rage.
the tears of the grandmothers,
the dirty hands of small children.
i am the soldier imprisoned,
on the streets of despair.
i am the conscience of the murderer,
that haunts the night.
i am the bodies of lovers,
glistening with passion.
i am the child born,
neath a sky with no star.
i am the crucifix and prayer beads,
the hymn known only by trees.
i am the dog abandoned,
rain falling without remorse.
i am the monk self-immolated,
the cry for freedom unheard.
i am human dignity,
and i walk alone!

Eric Cockrell

I Want The....

i want the part of you
that smells like want...
for else how can your spirit speak?
the body that holds your trembles,
is also my soul's last temple!
the hands that clutch at my need
with panting,
also unlock secret drawers in my heart...
the curve of your breast howling,
tears down veil after veil!

Eric Cockrell

I Want To Believe!

i want to believe
that change is possible.
i want to believe
that tomorrow will come.
i want to believe
that equality will be realized.
i want to believe
that parity will become fact.
i want to believe
that diversity will be celebrated.
i want to believe
that knowledge will replace ignorance.
i want to believe
that compassion will defeat apathy.
i want to believe
that humanity will become human!

do you?

Eric Cockrell

I Want To Feel Alive!

i dont want to be around people just like me,
that agree with me, look like me, smell like me,
and believe what i believe....
that make me feel safe.

i want to be around people,
with different color, different thoughts,
different beliefs....
people that question,
and make me question!

i want to be around passionate people,
people who dream, people who dance,
people who run naked in the night,
people who cry and feel,
who touch and hold...
people who let go!

i dont want to feel safe,
i want to feel alive!

Eric Cockrell

I Want To Know!

i want to know...
what the trees and mountains know,
what the rivers sing of,
the desire the wind groans with.
the passion of lightning,
and the echo of thunder.
the redemption written in rain,
the love in the dog's eyes.
the secret whisperings of bats,
the timeless wisdom of whales.
the peace of the turtle,
the mad gift of the butterfly.
the free spirit of darkness,
the salvation of dawn...
for i am all these things,
and they are me!

Eric Cockrell

I Want To Live!

is the bridge to the past
really the chain that holds us?
have we spent all of our lives,
running to or running from?
and what are we fighting,
if not ourselves?
sick of the sickness,
am i both disease and the cure?
when i pray,
who am i praying for,
and who am i praying to?
is this soul rebellion, revolution,
or time's evolution?
i talk to the night,
still waiting for answers.
so if i fall from the sky,
let me burn and explode!
i want to live,
to feel! to touch! to dance!
i want to live!
who will walk with me?

Eric Cockrell

I Was Ever Gone?

what makes you think i was ever gone?
i am the embrace of your lips just before sound!
leaves turn and fall like lovers separated,
but the tree stands firm and strong!
the robin's nest carried away by rats,
yet wings leave footprints in the sky.
clouds seem to know, and tread softly,
in respect for that which cannot be taken.
mountains undress in the darkest hour,
while all else sleep inside the shell.
the lantern searches the old woman's face,
for the coming and going of rabid mice.
the stink on your pillow tugs at your ears,
and your feet quiver in dreamless sleep.
i am the nothing you brush against,
that makes your soul stop and weep!
what makes you think i was ever gone?

Eric Cockrell

I Was Not Born To Follow # 2

i am the nail half-bent,
....tossed to the side,
.....rusted by the rain.

the body of the young man shot
...left in the streets,
.....the bullet, and the silence.

the trembling hand that lights the pipe,
....and the anger deep inside.
.....the young woman giving birth,

the light that screams for darkness.
...the door latch broken
.....on the vacant house,

and the roar of the empty.
...the waves that break the barricade,
.....leaving dead fish on the sand.

the telegram sent,
...the casket, the flag,
.....the mother's tears unspoken.

the ache, the crucifix, the reaching hand,
.....the family left 'neath the bridge;
.....the orphaned child, the jobless bum,

i was not born to follow!

Eric Cockrell

I Was Not Born To Follow!

i am the match
...for the fire not lit,
.....the cup that holds,

..no water!
...the wheel that turns
....while standing still,

the prayer lost in the mail.
..the leaf that clings
.....to the barelimbed tree,

the fallen tree where small things live.
....the one who digs
.....the unmarked graves,

who cleans the stalls by moonlight.
....the last cross
.....on that faraway hill,

the one who pulls
.....the blanket o'er the body....

i am the song,
.....and the gentle hand,

i was not born to follow!

Eric Cockrell

I Will Not Be Used!

you cannot tell me
that we are free!
when you would take away
my thoughts, my desires,
take away my chance
to speak out, to stand up....

when you would take away
the words i write,
the songs i sing....
the very dreams i dream!

you cannot tell me
that we are free....
when i cant afford your freedom.
when by my choice
to be who i am
i am judged,
and found unworthy!

you cannot tell me
that we are free,
and expect me to follow
without questioning,
without doubting,
turning blind eyes
and deaf ears
to what's around me....

not going to happen!
because i am free!
you dont own me!
i will not be used!

Eric Cockrell

I Will Not....

i will not be a part
of your wars!
keep your oil wet,
blood stained fingers
off of my throat!
i will not, by actions,
or inaction, be a part,
of that which furthers hunger
and suffering to pad
the pockets of greed.
i will not kill for profit,
will not march to the drum!
i will not believe in your lie,
nor wave your flag!
i will not cast judgements
with prejudicial blows,
i will not take from the poor,
nor dig the graves...
to bury the children
that you never named!

Eric Cockrell

I Will Remain

you can place
dead flowers
on my grave
when i'm gone...

bring in a preacher,
sing a couple old hymns...
if it makes you feel better....

but my testament,
and my only word,
lies in the things i've done,

the things i've given,
the people i've either
hurt or helped....

the things i've fought for,
win or lose....
everything else, just wrappings

on an old turtle's shell....
i wont live there anymore....
but in everything that moves

and groans, that shakes
and tremors, that breaks and falls...
in every breath of life....

i will remain!

Eric Cockrell

I Will Return

i will return...
when the wars have ended.
when the hungry have been fed,
and no one is left homeless.
when the tears of man,
are but tears of joy.
when every word spoken,
be a bridge, a lantern, a hand!
when the seeds i have planted
are ready for harvest.
and the smallest twig
becomes the tree that gives shade.
when the fire is restored
from an old man's ashes.
and time begins again
with a man and a woman...
when all that lives
is spoken into existence...
when you let down your hair,
and open the door...

i will return!

Eric Cockrell

I Wont Buy It!

if you're selling salvation
for a one time donation...

i wont buy it!

if you're selling comfort
at the expense of the poor...

i wont buy it!

if you're selling protection
at the cost of individual rights...

i wont buy it!

if you're selling love
bought with diamonds and drugs...

i wont buy it!

if you're selling truth,
but your version of truth...

i wont buy it!

if you're selling today
at the final cost of tomorrow...

i wont buy it!

if you're selling freedom
fed by guns and invasions,

i wont buy it!

get it through your head...

i wont buy it!

Eric Cockrell

I Write....

i write...

what is given me to write,
with all consuming fire,
burning every branch of self.

i doubt all...

and therefore believe,
touching the untouchables,
with reverence and awe.

i chant...

with dirty hands plowing,
urine drenched eyes searching,
living beneath all thought.

i mourn...

hearing the lament of dead bodies,
doubled over with hunger,
no place to lay my head.

i burn...

with uncontrolled passion,
for the leaf, for the river,
and the prayers of small children.

i run...

just a dog among dogs,
barking and baying,
with the scent of raw life.

i love...

with hot breath panting,
with both candle and phallus,
the whisper of tender touch.

i fly...

beyond body and bondage,
beyond concrete and ashes,
dark wings seeking light.

i howl...

with pen and paper,
with human words scratching,
at the walls of the tomb!

Eric Cockrell

I... Then!

i am... then,
the fallen sparrow,
the broken pane,
the house where no one lives!
the worn out shoes,
the guitar in the closet,
the child with cancer
staring from the window...
the book signed and forgotten
beneath the pillow,
the shotgun in the corner,
eyes painted that hide.
the telephone that doesnt ring,
love stains on the sheet.
the old man trying to bum a cup of coffee,
and the young girl behind the counter
who takes him a cup.
the political prisoner,
his blood on the floor.
the refugee... his blood
on his face!
the heretic who turned away
and found the face of god.
the lover left alone,
the darkness of night.

Eric Cockrell

Identify...

if nobody hates you
for who you are,
and what you represent...

then you probably
dont know who you are,
and thus dont represent
anything at all!

Eric Cockrell

Identity

the only identity i have
that will remain...
is in the eyes... of small
children, hungry and orphaned,
their families lost
to wars, earthquakes, floods,
disease, poverty...
children of different colors,
nationalities, faiths...
children without names.

i am their father, their mother,
their sister, their brother...
i am the answer to their hunger,
i am its cause.
i am their hunger!
i have no name.

Eric Cockrell

Identity....

our greatest confusion lies in identity...
we are not what we own, not what
we've accomplished, not even what
we've dreamed...
we are what we've lived in each other!
the moment shared, the small kindness,
the brush of affection, the hours worked for,
the hand extended, the tears and the laughter...
nothing more, and nothing less!

Eric Cockrell

Idols! (For Veeraiyah Subbalakshmi)

the only idols
are the ones made
out of our fears and
insecurities...

God has many faces,
many voices, many forms.
the only limits we impose.

holiness is diversity,
human beings clutch at shadows.
light becomes light
even on the darkest night.
and the darkness itself
holds secrets.

lay down your bodies,
and walk with the wind.
every moment a death,
and a beginning.

out of formless
the form becomes.
each wave is different,
all a part of the sea!

Eric Cockrell

If (A Buddhist Poem)

if all living beings are by nature Buddha,
then how can we designate worth to one,
and no worth to another?
what makes us think we have the right
to choose?
if all a baby understands are nipple, light,
darkness, and being loved... have we grown
wiser?
if a faithful dog follows us till the day he dies,
only asking to be fed and loved, giving
unconditional love in return...
who is the real master?
if we spend all of our lives in the pursuit
of money and possessions, ... do we own
them, or do they own us?
what happens to them when we die?
if we love someone so much that
we're afraid to let go.... do we really
love them?
if we have food to eat, and a place to sleep...
what else do we really need?
if we have food to eat, and a neighbor
is going hungry... how can we eat?
if prejudice is born of fear... what are we
afraid of? ... them, or our own selves?
if killing is wrong, and war is killing...
why do we keep marching to those infernal
drums, like sheep being led to slaughter?
if all living beings are by nature Buddha...
then how can we not care? ... how can we
use, abuse, and discard? ... how can we
turn our backs and walk away?

Eric Cockrell

If (It Takes)

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if it takes my heart to set you free,
then fly! reach for the sky.

if it takes my soul to end your night,
then awaken, and let in the day!

if it takes my prayers to give you peace,
then rest in the arms of stillness.

if it takes my tears to ease your pain,
then rise and walk with joy.

if it takes my life to give you life,
then bury me outside your window!

Eric Cockrell

If (The Cost Of Freedom...)

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if the cost of freedom
...is my body,

then

..may
....my
.....spirit
.....fly
.....away!

if the cost of freedom
....is my identity,

then

...may
.....you
.....see
.....yourself
.....in
.....me!

if the cost of freedom
....is my time,

then

...forever
.....is
.....my
.....gift!

Eric Cockrell

If All Of This (And More)

if the earth stopped turning,
and the wind was finally still.
the skies held no rain clouds,

the mountains crumbled, and fell.
all the rivers ran dry,
and the moon fell from the sky.

the wolf walked away hungry,
and the dawn didnt come...
if all of this, and more,

i'd still love you!

Eric Cockrell

If Every...

if every stranger
we meet today,
with hand outstretched,

could be God...
how would that change
the way we think and act?

if every word we spoke
were our last words...
what would we say differently?

and if this moment
that we're living now
were our last moment

on earth...
would we be doing
what we're doing?

Eric Cockrell

If God...

if god had wings
he'd be a sparrow,
and fly the vast expanse of sky.
if god were water,
he'd be a river,
and forge new paths
through stone and moss.
if god were fire,
he'd burn away all the hatreds,
and leave us to build again on ash.
if god were stillness,
he'd quiet all the fighting,
and the world would sing
the songs of peace.
if god were flesh and blood,
he'd be the man in the mirror,
doing the work
that brings life to the living!

Eric Cockrell

If I Cannot Be...

if i cannot be
the stars in your blackest sky;
let me be the darkness itself,
as cupped hands,
holding the broth of light
for you to lap!

if i cannot be
the fire that warms;
let me be the howling cold,
and walk away.

if i cannot be
the flesh that enters your flesh;
let me be the absence,
and the hollow,
that only longing can fill.

if i cannot be
the dreams that lullaby;
let me be the wanting,
the needing, that leaves you
sleepless and turning.

if i cannot be
the path you walk;
let me be the soles of your shoes,
and the ground beneath.

if i cannot be,
the storm and the rain;
let me be the faint hint of lightning,
you thought you almost saw!

Eric Cockrell

If I Die Tonight

If I die tonight,
And the willow bent
With grief is silent.
If fallen stars turn,
And walk into the distance.
If fire freezes,
And rain denies.

If I die tonight,
And the door left open,
Calls to the lonesome wind.
If the earth stumbles,
And memory shatters,
Into a thousand shards of glass.

If I die tonight,
And you wake up shivering.
Close your eyes and wrap
Your heart....
In the hymn of a thousand
Fireflies,
And the moan of polished stone

If I die tonight...
You are loved!

Eric Cockrell

If I Go To A Place....

if i go to a place
that you cannot go...
it is not because i didnt love you,
not because we failed.
if i follow the shadows
to the morning light,
you are not alone...
i left my heart by your pillow.
if i ride the wind,
to just beyond the sky...
i have not deserted you,
i live in your every breath.
and if they bury me,
just before the first snow...
i will return with the spring,
in the buds of your longing.
for with each dawn,
the night must pass...
leaving wetness and the scent of hunger.
and when the river turns to find its source,
even the mockingbird waits in stillness.
so if i go to a shore beyond your thoughts,
i will not be alone....
i too take our love with me!

Eric Cockrell

If I Kissed You Again...

if i kissed you again,
the rain would stop falling.
the great powers would lay down
their nuclear threats.
black and white men,
would work and walk together.
hungry mouths would be fed,
and the lost would be found.
churches would close,
and back doors would open.
the lines between nations,
would fade and dissolve.
old people would take in
children that have been orphaned.
the table would be endless,
the bowls would be filled.
every tear would be wiped,
hands would reach out with respect...
if i kissed you again...
the world would make sense!

Eric Cockrell

If I Kissed You There

If I Kissed you there,
Would it haunt your dreams?
If I crossed the distance,
And unlocked your door?
If I drank your moon,
And swallowed your fire?
If I fell from the ground,
To your farthest star?

If I knitted your soul,
And carved your heart?
If I fed your desire,
And swept your doubt?
If I spoke your name,
In a forgotten speak?
If I wiped your tears,
And wrote your thoughts?

If I kissed you there!

Eric Cockrell

If I Kneled Before You

if i knelt before you,
and opened my heart
like a gift without any strings...

would you listen?

if i sold all my dreams
to give you one moment
when you knew you were loved...

would you care?

if i gave up my life
to help you find wings,
and pushed you to the edge

of the nest... would you fly?

if i knelt before you,
a man loving a woman,
and nothing more...

would you take me?

Eric Cockrell

If I Laid With You

if i laid with you
would you talk with me?
that talking without words,
without pretension or

manipulation... that does
not grasp, or own...
would you hold me
without holding back?

if i laid with you
would we quit pretending
that one is right and
one is wrong... and

one and one make two...
when one in one
makes one! tell me,
if i laid with you...

Eric Cockrell

If I Lay Down...

if i lay down and close my eyes...
will the night linger,
will it touch my innermost longings,
and leave me breathless?
i mourned for closeness,
and now i am drunk,
staggering with the intimacy
of each and every tiny breath!

Eric Cockrell

If I Prayed For You... (I Just Did)

if i prayed for you,
with the eyes of a child,
beaten, bruised, and hungry...
would you see, would you know?

if i prayed for you,
with an old man's hands,
hard, calloused, and gentle...
would you feel, would you know?

if i prayed for you,
with a mother's tears,
her daughter raped by your soldiers...
would you change, would you know?

if i prayed for you,
with a homeless man's heart,
a human story untold...
would you care, would you know?

if i prayed for you,
with a farmer's faith,
plowing and planting unseen...
would you believe, would you know?

if i prayed for you,
from a soldier's conviction,
who laid down his guns and walked away...
would you be inspired, would you know?

if i prayed for you,
with a real doctor's conscience,
who made his life's work for the poor...
would you love, would you know?

if i prayed for you,
with the protester's courage,
beaten and arrested for the truth...
would you live, would you know?

if i prayed for you,
from the heart of god,
revealing holy desire....
hey, i just did!

Eric Cockrell

If I Prayed With You

if i prayed with you
meshed together by the naked night
molten images of human groaning
lit by the very breath of God...

if i prayed with you
turning slowly on the spit
beneath the shadows we wear in darkness
and wrap our light inside...

if i prayed with you
nothing hidden, nothing faked
and stroked your face with knowing hands
as if the Painter's brush....

if i prayed with you
and was lost inside your hungry mouth...
would you dance with me inside
the meaning beyond our words?

if i prayed with you...

Eric Cockrell

If I Told You!

what if i told you
that God doesnt look any different,
than the ones you're dropping bombs on!

than the homeless person walking the streets,
than the addict stealing for a fix....
than the hungry family without hope,

than the revolutionary standing up....
than the person next door who's lonely....
what if i told you?

Eric Cockrell

If I Was A Better Man

if i was a better man...
i'd have done more
to combat world hunger...

to bring about peace,
to help the sick and dying,
to listen to the lonely...

to stand up for equality,
and to stand against prejudice.
to take in the homeless....

to forgive, and ask for forgiveness.
to understand without judging,
to love without asking

to be loved...
if i was a better man....
but because i am

the man that i am...
i'll keep trying...
....to be better!

Eric Cockrell

If Just A Man!

there is a name on my tongue, be it yours?
a road beneath my feet, will you walk with me?
a heart in my hands, will you take it?
a candle by my bed, will you light it?
an emptiness in my soul, will you fill it?
a hunger in my spirit, will you feed me?
if i be the lover, be thou the love?
if just a man, will you love me?

Eric Cockrell

If Not All

mountain...
hawk,
tree,
newborn child,

dying old man,
fire in a clearing,
moonlight reflected through a window....

the prisoner,
a vagrant man,
the immigrant crossing the border....

the young woman giving birth,
starlight on wet grasses,
the prisoner walking
to his own execution....

an agnostic,
a heretic,
and a pilgrim....

a child of god,
a child of darkness....

which am i?
if not all!

Eric Cockrell

If Not Dignity

the family sleeping
under the bridge
doesn't care less about
whether NASA has funding,
or whether stocks are up or down,
or whether cars are selling,
or how much profit Walmart made,
or who's going to win the Super Bowl....

shelter from the cold and rain,
something warm to eat...
and if not dignity, then safety!

Eric Cockrell

If One.....

if one word
could change the world,
i'd say it,
and go home.

if one action
would stop the wars,
i'd do it,
whatever the cost.

if one intent
could change the way
we see each other,
i'd follow it
to my grave.

if one desire
could feed the hungry,
it would be,
my only desire!

if one life
would pay the cost,
that brings freedom,
and equality to all...
i'd pay the price today!

Eric Cockrell

If Only I Could Hear

if only i could hear...
not the cry of hunger,
but the cry of that which feeds.
not the pounding of the guns,
but the silence of peace.
not the tears of the homeless,
but the sound of hammers building shelter.
not the shuffling of money,
but the sound of needs being met.
not the cry of the sick,
but the sound of healing.
not the voices of anger,
but voices in dialogue.
not the bitterness of prejudice,
but the harmony of tolerance.
not the lies that bring division,
but understanding breaking down walls...
if only i could hear...

Eric Cockrell

If Poems Had...

if poems had hands,
they'd unload all the guns,
tear down the walls that divide us,
wipe tears from the face of sadness.

if poems had wings,
they'd fly over the barriers
and through the storms,
to nest on the cliffs of freedom.

if poems had hearts,
they'd feel all suffering as their own,
they'd forgive without hesitation,
and love without condition.

if poems had homes,
they'd unlock and open the door,
and let the stranger in,
giving shelter to the lost.

if poems had hope,
they'd believe in spite of,
validating the worth of,
each and every thing that breathes!

if poems had bodies,
hands, wings, hearts, homes, and hope...
turning into you and me,
written by an unseen hand!

Eric Cockrell

If The Cost Of Loving...

if the cost of loving
be my life....
then may death taste

of your lips...
wrap around me
like your arms;

cover me with your body,
ride with me the wind,
plunging into wetness...

with the last fire,
and the first dawning!

Eric Cockrell

If Then Love

If then love,
I will go unnoticed.
Let me but sleep,
Beneath thy breast.
Let me but hope,
To be remembered...
In the softness of
Your soul!

Eric Cockrell

If There Is A God

if there is a God,
then He/She has
to be pissed!

bearing all the blame
for decades/centuries
of wars, countless
genocides...
famines, earthquakes,
starvation, and disease...

all the atrocious acts
committed by mankind
in the name of God!

and now we live in a nuclear
world, with the threat of
total annihilation...
God?

there are no chosen people!
all people are just people.
all of life is sacred...

what we blame on God
is either the manifestations
of our self oriented egos...

or the results of our actions...

if there is a God,
and i believe there is...
you'll find Him/Her expressed
in the forms of all the living...

in the song of life hidden
in the person you like least...
in the hunger for compassion...
in your own heart!

Eric Cockrell

If There Were!

if there were no darkness,
we would never find the stars!
if there were no waves,
the moon would be powerless.

if there were no bullets,
dead bodies would rise.
if there were no dreams,
we could not face reality!

if there were no hunger,
we would not have a reason.
if there were no suffering,
we could not find freedom!

if there were no lovers,
we would not have children.
if there were no children,
we'd have no reason to be!

if there were no deaths,
life would not be as precious.
if there were no animal within,
we could not find passion!

if there were no fires,
we would be lost to darkness.
if there were no darkness,
we would never find the stars!

Eric Cockrell

If Tomorrow Never Came

</>

when you lie in your lover's arms,
do you remember
those frozen nights,

when the fire had died....
moonlight hanging like ice
in the window bare...

the wet pool of love steaming,
clouds of breath hanging
in the air with unspoken desire....

the baying of the old hound....
and two sets of footprints in the snow
leading down to the water.....

the buckets on the porch,
an axe, and the old truck....
not giving a damn

if tomorrow never came!

Eric Cockrell

If We

if we were conscious
of what we're doing,
and why we're doing,
what we're doing,
every moment of every day....

we wouldnt have to worry
so much about the
'end of the world'!

if we really lived
every moment of our lives,
we wouldnt fear death!

if we gave all we have
to give, we wouldnt be worried
about what we dont have!

if we listened instead of talking,
we'd find what we're looking for!

Eric Cockrell

If We Really Knew...

if we really knew what god 'is'...
there would be no wars, no poverty,
no inequalities, no discrimination...
if we knew that we are this 'is'...
i wouldnt have to write this!

Eric Cockrell

If We Worked Today...

if we worked today
with equal hands,
with equal hearts,
and with equal backs...

if we worked today
with equal souls,
we'd build a world
worth dying for!

if we worked today
with honest hands,
with honest hearts,
and with honest backs...

if we worked today
with honest souls,
we'd build a world
worth dying for.

if we worked today
with loving hands,
with loving hearts,
and with loving backs...

if we worked today
with loving souls,
we'd build a world
worth living for!

Eric Cockrell

If We'D Stop!

if we'd stop shouting at each other...
if we'd stop shaking angry fists.
if we'd stop lying to ourselves.
if we'd stop running from the mirror.
if we'd stop playing religion and politics.
if we'd stop declaring war.
if we'd stop living by our taking...
if we'd stop pointing fingers.
if we'd stop pretending to be men and women...
only if we'd stop!

Eric Cockrell

If You Need Scriptures....

if you need scriptures,
read the scriptures written
on the walls of your soul!
read the scriptures written
in trees, in rocks, in rivers.
read the scriptures written
in the broken alley.
in the homeless man's eyes,
in the addict's desperation,
in the shuffle of jobless feet.
in the cry of the newborn baby,
in the lovers moan of fulfillment,
the scriptures written
in the sweet darkness of night,
in the jail cell,
in the picket line,
in the monk who sets himself
on fire for freedom and justice,
in all the colors of equality...
in the hungry child's hand reaching out...
read them, know them, be them!
life testifies to the living!

Eric Cockrell

If... (Death Knocks!)

if indeed death knocks,
i cannot answer the door.
there are logs to split,
and bricks to lay....
a fire to tend,
and flowers to plant.
broken wings to heal,
centipedes to liberate....
small things to do,
small words to speak...
for i am not yet done with living,
and living's not done with me!

Eric Cockrell

If.... (Morning Prayer)

and if there were no more words...
and headstones smelled like feet.
if the shadow of god was just that,
and the ants declared independence.
if the moth died for the cause,
and the wolf roamed free again...
if children buried guns in sandpiles,
and women gave birth on the grass.
if the sound of leaves turning resonated,
and mountains walked at night...
if the smell of the fire was for all,
and every bowl was filled.
if the language of silence was eyes,
and our bodies became wings....
if....

Eric Cockrell

If.... (A Man)

if i shed a tear,
and wrapped it in brown paper...
and left it on your pillow,
would you hear the ocean?

if i laid my body down,
and became the wind....
that blew out your candle,
would you hear my heart?

if i chose to die,
for one moment of living...
and gave it to you without regret,
would you fly for a moment?

and if i loved you,
enough to turn deserts into rivers...
enough to turn brown leaves to green,
would you listen, would you listen?

and if i touched you,
with hands of fire and storm...
and my tongue undressed your eyes,
would you see me... a man!

Eric Cockrell

I'LI Be Around

i'll be around...

in the wind that rustles your curtains,
in the whisper of darkness that taunts the moonlight.
in the silence that roars, and is then still...
in the prayers that children do not understand,
in the dying old man's aloneness.
in the blood that testifies against the hands,
in the hands that cannot escape the heart.
in the feet walking by their own will,
in the soul scarred by mistakes.
in the hungry mouth and the desperate eyes
that have seen and known too much.
in the fear that comes in the middle of the night,
and the dawn that never seems to come.
in the need to worship and the faith to act,
in the doubt that destroys false idols.
in the pound of the guns, the cries for help,
and the fire that has no favorites.
in the defiant stand, feet set firm,
the mark of the chains on backs and wrists.
in the freedom that does not buy and sell,
that sees beneath the skin.
in the constant dialogue of 'i and thou',
in the me that disperses and dissolves.
in the hammer, the saw, and the shovel,
in the grasses beneath bare feet.
in the song of the whipporwill,
and the final hoot of the owl.
in the howling of wolves,
and the sleepy stillness of the cattle.
in the hidden depths of your heart,
and the quiet darkness that forms your thoughts.
in the grain of the tree just cut,
and the rhythm of the fire going dead.
in every voice that cries for justice,
in every hand that reaches for help!
in the working hum of common thread,
in the simple dignity of the family.
in the ghosts of soldiers lost in battle,

in the weeping of mothers over their graves.
and in the constant courage of the peacemakers,
the voice of reason and compassion.
in the truth that all men are equal...
in the bridge from here to there!

Eric Cockrell

I'LI Help You Dig!

i studied revolution in jail cells,
got my education on the streets.
sold my soul to the devil,
more than once...
prayed for rain with the best of them!
met god down on the corner,
gave him a cup of coffee and a light.
spent all night in lonesome graveyards,
listening to the voices of the dead.
worked your assembly lines,
did your farm work.
hauled trash and emptied bedpans.
crawled in and out of the window of love,
been a fool a thousand times.
all i know is all men are my brothers,
women are my sisters and my mothers.
if it hurts you, baby, it hurts me too,
pass the shovel, i'll help you dig!

Eric Cockrell

I'M Going Home (For Doc Watson)

this lonesome journey,
this river running.
this wind that never
had a home.
this lonesome prayer,
searching and hunting...
it's almost over,
i'm nearly gone.

this soul has wandered,
the hills and valleys.
this body going
from town to town.
just this old guitar,
the songs inside me.
now it's time,
i'm going home.

gonna find my heart,
somewhere out there.
as peaceful as
the moonlit night.
i gave it all,
you know that i cared.
lay my body down
on the shores of light.

this lonesome journey,
this river running.
this wind that never
had a home...
this lonesome prayer,
searching and hunting...
it's almost over,
i'm nearly gone.

this soul has wandered,
the hills and valleys.
this body going

from town to town.
just this old guitar,
the songs inside me.
now it's time,
i'm going home.

Eric Cockrell

I'M Human

my skin is black,
my skin is white;
my skin is brown,
my skin is red.

i speak my own language,
i have my own God,
whose name is different...
whose wisdom is similar!

i love my wife,
i love my children;
when they are hungry,
i do what it takes to feed them!

i want to work,
i dare to dream.
i care about what happens,
pray about what i cant change.

i want to love and be loved.
i want to live my dreams.
i believe in peace,
i protect my family.

i am human, just like you!
my blood is red.
i make mistakes, get knocked down....
but i get up!

i am human!
made in God's image.
i am the body
that God dreams through!

Eric Cockrell

I'M Not That Old Yet!

i'm not that old yet,
dont cast me aside...
like a shovel with a broken handle,
of no use anymore.

i'm not that old yet,
the embers still glow.
with a little tender care,
there's a fire beneath!

i'm not that old yet,
my hands still fit the plow.
my back is still strong,
my eyes still twinkle.

i'm not that old yet,
to be forgotten in a chair.
i still need a woman,
a lover, and a friend!

i'm not that old yet!

Eric Cockrell

Immigrant

i'm just an immigrant here,
with no ties, no homeland,
no direction,
and no tomorrow!

i'm walking an uncharted path
through thorn and thistle;
my lips are parched,
my soul is hungry

my hands are tied,
my back is burdened,
i cant pitch my tent
on this rocky ground

the caw of the crow,
the screech of the hawk,
the growl of the bear

and the reflection
of longing
in a murky pool
just an immigrant
searching for today!

Eric Cockrell

Immoral Scars...

i am the broken watch,
on the underpaid desk.
the eyes grown dim,
the hair turned grey.
the endless chapters,
each named, then forgotten.
the wings of the bird,
killed by the cat.
the shoebox of letters,
the paint peeled wall.
the taste of old whiskey,
the fireplace full of ghosts.
swallows in the chimney,
snake skins on the ground.
the song of autumn,
waiting beyond the moment.
the sprinkle of rain,
the silence of the trees.
the brush of the hand,
so intimate it startles.
the moral heart with immoral scars.

Eric Cockrell

Impossible!

it is impossible to believe in compassion,
and to just stand by watching injustice upon
injustice being heaped on the backs of the poor!

it is impossible to be spiritual without being
human enough to feel the hunger of the hungry!
impossible to believe in love without being angered

when you see countless people being thrown
away and cast to the side like human trash!
it is impossible to remain silent when you can

hear the thundering tears of the children!

Eric Cockrell

Impotent Men!

impotent men...
their hands on the reins,
choking on the flesh

of the poor and subjugated.
while birds of prey circle,
bodies strewn on the streets;

another martini, stocks rise and fall!
the pipeline pulses, liquid death,
the eyes of the children

gone to marbles in the dust.
the prophets of profit
tilt their hats and turn away,

leaving the stench of their greed
on unmarked shallow graves.
their god is dead, the world keeps turning,

while the weak and the fallen
kneel in unholy prayer!
impotent men, beating their chests!

Eric Cockrell

In A Can

sitting in my old chair
on the porch breaking
green beans... waiting
on the storm.

wind whips through the trees,
a streak of lightning, occasional
thunder... breaking beans.

thinking about my grandparents,
working down at the mill...
farming, grew four gardens...
cows, pigs, chickens, and
turkeys...

no one ever went hungry
there... no one around them
went hungry...

there was always food to eat,
and work to be done....
but that day has come and gone....

now we work on computers,
or dont work at all....
and most young people think
chickens come from the meat
section... and...

green beans come in a can....

no wonder we're hungry!

Eric Cockrell

In A Forbidden Tongue...

they set their dogs
on some poor creature...
sitting on hell's stoop,
drinking budweisers and smoking pall mall's.
dirt faced kids playing with broken glass...
god dreams of napalm,
while rats sing of glory!

and old men with erections
write journals of philosophy;
while old women knit graveclothes,
grounded in scriptures and wills.

still young men go to war,
without rhyme or reason....
lost in the musk of wonder,
in a cave with no lantern.

did god thus ordain the cruelty of men,
or did dysfunctional men so ordain god?
while that which breathes, suffers, and bleeds,
seeps into the grasses like forgotten dew.

i light a marlboro, pray for bourbon,
grieve for their dogs...
with arthritic fingers,
and webbed feet... in a forbidden tongue!

Eric Cockrell

In A Spider's Web

there is a voice
calling me from
that distant shore...

a voice familiar
as my own....
there is a place

where dreams are born...
and then given form;
where fire is discovered

anew every day!
there is a mountain
that no one has climbed...

a river no man has seen.
there is a cave that
goes on forever....

a path no foot has trod.
there is a flower
that only blooms once...

every million years or so.
a horn no lips have blown;
a song known only by the wind....

that distant shore,
so far, so near.....
a cosmos in a tiny shell....

a rainbow hidden in a feather,
the history of all life
woven in a spider's web!

Eric Cockrell

In All Living Beings...

god is not some faraway supreme being,
breathing fire, casting judgement, and
stroking his beard....

god is the experience of hands joining,
the miracle of birth and death,
which are brother and sister....

the gift of loss, the freedom birthed in suffering,
the simple caring, the raw beauty of the common,
and the echo of our own heartbeats
in all living beings!

Eric Cockrell

In All!

both that which we love,
and that which we hate...
that which we cherish,
and that which we despise...
reside within us...
to understand god,
we cannot limit his/her presence
to one or the other...
but must acknowledge the presence
in all!

Eric Cockrell

In Bloom

You are the sound
Of the lone bird's wings
Flapping

In a limitless sky.

The peel of thunder
Before it rains.

The sharp intake of breath,
That hurts....
Tin tearing at my lips.

The grunt of the rose,
In bloom!

Eric Cockrell

In Candles...

my life is written in candles,
some that have burned
through the darkest nights,
some that remain unlit.
some that wait for passion unreserved,
some that applaud holiness,
some that undress for sin.
some that have names, others faces....
some that sound faintly like rain.
some that smell strongly of love,
others as bright as the stars.
and the last one nearly burnt down,
waiting for the wind to come...
when silence strikes the final match,
and fills the void with music!

Eric Cockrell

In Closing

each person's life is a message,
every action a crucial page
in the book of time and again.
behind every action lies intent,
it is in the intent
that we are born anew.
decades of waiting for
the flower to bloom,
yet in a moment the petals fall.
will they hit the ground like thunder?
or kiss it like soft falling rain?

we identify only by touching,
are made eternal by compassionate involvement.
our bodies become dead branches
for the everlasting fire,
only our giving makes us eternal.

we have sung of equality and freedom,
tore the masks off prejudice and fear.
spat in the face of greed and wars.
under the flag of common people.

the chant resonates throughout time!
feed the hungry, give shelter to the homeless.
stop the wars, and live with respect,
make your walk your prayers!

believing always in the connection,
all living beings and the earth.
knowing that the face of god
lives in each and every person.

that doubt and questions are the key,
that unlocks the door of faith.
and faith itself be but this...
two hands joining on the journey!

In Decline!

to not believe
that America is in decline
is a stronger opiate
than i am familiar with!

but America is not a country,
not a political process,
not Wall Street, not big oil!

America lives within
the hearts of the working people.
and we are stronger
than you think!

we have arisen from the ashes
and we demand hope!

Eric Cockrell

In Dreams!

Juan asked:

'what good are dreams? '
but what if it's all a dream,
in a world that exists only
in the crevices of infinity's mind?
what if every touch,
every moment of passion,
every scent of love's passing...
nothing more than tiny particles of dust,
of universes not formed?
ah, but every moment staring,
lost in the eyes of the beloved...
even God could not imagine that...
in dreams!

Eric Cockrell

In Every Dawn

there is a moment just before darkness,
when every sound is amplified.
when the senses come alive,
and smell and taste take bodies.
when the eyes see, really see,
and there be no more need for words.
when memories like trees walk into stillness,
and the heart names every stone.
when the butterfly becomes the teacher,
and the dew is strong drink indeed.
when scars and bruises put on their jewelry,
and the soul becomes the earth.
when clouds come like ghostly chariots,
and the sun tips its hat in farewell.
when every battle is forgotten,
and every truth etched in time.
when nothing is left but love itself,
to wrap the night in eternity.
now timeless and without borders,
the simple man has but one request.
bury me beneath the willow,
and listen for my footsteps in every dawn!

Eric Cockrell

In Every Way!

how many people are blind?
how many people are deaf?
how many by choice?
perhaps you still have jobs,
homes, food to eat, medical care.
perhaps you have investments,
a way to retire....
perhaps your family is happy,
and well taken care of...
i hope so for you!

millions of people hurting,
millions in need...
millions of children hungry,
millions who cant get an education.
millions enslaved by poverty,
millions left alone....
people with faces and names.

all of these are normal people.
whatever their language, their religion,
their sexual orientation.
all of these are people just like you.
and many of these have families,
just like you!

is it their fault they're victims?
perhaps they've worked their whole lives.
male, female, young, old.....
all people,
with mothers and fathers....
all people....
and no, America is not free.

the news we watch is tainted.
the truth is hidden from us.
killing people around the world
does not make us free....
books are being banned and burned,

prejudice and discrimination are rampant.
we have forgotten we are responsible for each other,
we have forgotten we are all immigrants here.
there are no illegal people,
all people are just people.
freedom demands equality,
in every way!

Eric Cockrell

In Exile, , ,

must poets live in exile?
strangers limping to the dance.
streetlights dancing on the lampshade,
thrown into the trash.
in conversations with rats,
sleeping with ghosts in empty buildings.
immigrants without papers,
pawning blood for a drink.

by fires on the fringe,
stirring the stew made of hope.
eyes blackened by the smoke,
laughing with small children.
painting revolution on sterile walls,
sharing bread with mongrel dogs.
lovers without a country,
homeless, going home!

Eric Cockrell

'In God We Trust'

'in God we trust',
written on your money,
it's a wonder it doesn't

burn your hands!
but by your actions
you make the lie the truth....

in money you trust,
your money is your god!
in god you trust!

Eric Cockrell

In God's Heart

Your hand
On my tongue
On your breast
In your eyes
On my mind
In time's expanse
On faith's road
In taste's bud
In trust's window
On passion's table...

In God's heart!

Eric Cockrell

In Human Flesh!

you find it hard to believe
that God came to earth
in human flesh...
i state to you,
that God comes in human flesh
every time a child is born!
the sacred is as close
as your heart!
even the stars are made of dust...
is a newborn baby any less?

Eric Cockrell

In Memory Of An Old Man

he was an old man then...
6 foot 4, still strong
as an ox...
a carpenter...
and i was his helper;
building interstate bridges
in the south,
walking i-beams,
60 foot off the ground...
2.50 an hour!

we used to go
to his house
after work...
he'd scramble a dozen
eggs, or so...
and break out the sugarhead.
we'd spend hours
listening to him talk
about women, fighting,
loving, and just life!

carrying a sheet of plywood
on a windy day...
i wavered, one foot off the beam.
i felt his gnarled hand
grab my shoulder:
'you dont wanna go down there, boy! '

time has passed, and now i'm old...
and i see my daughters
wavering on the beam...
and i catch myself saying:
'you dont wanna go down there, girl! '

Eric Cockrell

In Reply To A Comment

by chance,
all coincidence,
no reason for anything,

no fate, no destiny.
no eternity, no need to change,
happy go lucky, get what you can...

i just dont buy it....
sounds too much like
no reason for life,

no value to the moment,
no need to evolve....
feels like empty!

but i stand by your right
to believe as you will,
and wish you happiness.

Eric Cockrell

In Response...

Jesus never had a church,
was not religious...
never wanted holy monuments
to be built in His honor.
was not interested in donations
that ease the load of sin...
never wanted to be fought over,
or for wars to be fought
in His name...

He was a complete human being,
His every breath spiritual.
He tossed the moneychangers
out of the temple,
and stood up to the religious
pride of the Pharisees.
the people He walked with,
and that He taught,
were His family...
He was as responsible to them,
as they were to Him.

His answer:
'follow me...'
pick up your own cross,
walk your own path.
salvation, a process, a path,
a journey, a lifetime...
not instant gratification.
'the kingdom of heaven
is within you...'
dont look for far off shores.
within this moment lies eternity,
if you dont find it now,
they'll be no tomorrow!

your sword is love,
your flag is understanding.
if you cant see God

in the stranger's face,
in your neighbor's face,
you'll never see God!
judge not... but keep walking,
and if you see someone
who's fallen, help him up!
if you want to see the God in Jesus,
you have to see the human in Him first!

written in response to a comment
on one of my other poems!

Eric Cockrell

In Search For The Beating Heart

words break on cobblestone paths,
as bare feet testify.
hearts spill from fugitive ashtrays,
while thumbs stand in line to pray.
damned souls with railroad faces,
shuffle by the barrel.
small babies paint their faces with ashes,
dogs crow, and fences stutter.
bodies cling to scattered dirt,
messages written on dirty windows.
if it is for this that god expressed,
then let the funeral begin!

how far we walk in search of near!
at each scent of identity we shudder.
even water burns in this wasteland,
and robins walk on broken eggshells.
there be no tongue that is not lit,
as frost scorches the pilgrim's eyes.
if love then breathes it sweats and growls,
while pencils claim their souls.
the very sky rent with passion,
this madness lifts the cup....
these lips melt with hunger unrestrained,
in search for the beating heart!

Eric Cockrell

In Spite Of

gunfire...
artillery shells,
tanks, soldiers on foot....

the assault continues,
wave upon wave,
the assault on free speech,

free thought, free interaction....
the draining of blood
from the face of humanity....

the theft of name and identity....
the bartering of souls....
for change, against change....

yet the fire remains lit,
.....in spite of!

Eric Cockrell

In The Ashes!

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break out the windows,
kick down the doors!
stack all the old furniture...
and set fire to it!

the windows....
...through which we stared at life
.....safe from its touch!

the doors....
....we closed in our fear
.....of who we are
.....and what we see
.....in each other.

the furniture....
....we sat on and laid on
.....while the cries of the struggling
.....and the hands of the hungry
.....reached out...

the fire....
...that burns apathy with pure compassion
.....burns the lie of self till we find
.....the faces of God in the ashes!

Eric Cockrell

In The End

Did not the sun, awkward
On that first morning,
Stumble into dawn,
As if some stranger?

How different, revealing sameness?
How far to be so close?
(As if wars demanded reason,
And dead bodies, but seeds!)

How can we hear the voices?
Pretending reason does not exist!
When all that's left to us is loving,
And time betrays us in the end?

Eric Cockrell

In The End!

madness, churning, burning,
turning on a spit....
they feed the fire with the bodies,

drink the blood of the expendables.
life bruised, pulsing, throbbing,
all stand naked in the end!

and only the flesh that stinks with being,
finds the path of true holiness!
the street vendors, and the charlatans....

laugh to hide from the sound,
of the tiny beat of a single heart,
a universe inside itself!

in the end the crows will eat the flesh,
of those that bought and sold;
who traded souls for power,

and were consumed by their own hunger!
and the guns will lay silent on the ground,
tombstones for empty graves....

the wind will moan with children's voices...
for man hath judged himself!

Eric Cockrell

In The End...

spraying the crops
with Agent Orange!
old people sitting in the cold...

babies born to babies,
with nowhere to turn...
young people living in cars.

one war over, another begins!
the price of oil goes up.
meth labs, break ins,

another business closing doors...
the lies and the promises
become even more hollow....

salvation, redemption, just plain survive!
the buildings on fire,
they just stand and watch!

black skin, brown skin, white skin, all....
indignant, and hungry,
turning against the wind!

in the end...
only the truth will stand!

Eric Cockrell

In The Gravel!

the trees all cut,
lay across the path.
all signs of life have vanished.

an empty hamper
where clothes once lived,
not even the scent of living remains.

lifetimes fall like words
in a vacant room....
swept to the side by indifference.

nothing remains of the fire,
even the ashes are cold....
the air itself gone stagnant!

from a whirlwind to an echo,
a kiss to a door lock turned,
the sound of a stranger walking away.

and all that we are,
and ever have been,
footprints left in the gravel!

Eric Cockrell

In The Image Of Man!

ancient Greek legends,
footprints carved in stone.
and yes the fires of Stonehenge,
and the medieval forests.
wooden ships sailing
on seas mapped by loss,
even Atlantis, but a memory.

Rome burned,
fed by the bodies of pride.
and men cut trees
until there were none.
a simple carpenter
reclaimed love by cost...
and bodhisattvas bore
the suffering of many.

men created god
in the image of man.
with war on his breath,
the color drained from his face.
destroyed the books and the temples
of the sacred feminine...
and so lost their hearts
in the shells of their egos...

feeding and gorging,
and bartering souls.
and the price of flesh
became the way.
they mined the earth,
pumped oil from the sands,
and defiled their oceans,
until there were none.

and Mother Earth wept,
the wind hid her face.
the womb closed,
the air stunk of death.

and the kingdoms of man,
crumbled and fell...
the gods of war,
turned away!

somewhere she waits,
her breasts on fire...
in the still darkness,
conceiving the dawn...
who will go?
and who will remain?
when the tides of time....
return?

Eric Cockrell

In The Middle... (Of The Darkest Night)

in the middle of the darkest night,
when all is lost...
when you feel the most alone...
the voice you hear whispering
is the voice of god...
you are the body of god's prayers

Eric Cockrell

In The Name Of Freedom...

we give a young man a gun,
and tell him to go kill in
the name of freedom...

we assure him that God is
on his side.

and he goes and kills and
commits atrocious acts of
violence...

and the defense contracts
grow, we secure more oil...
the war machine feeds itself!

this young man comes home to no job,
no real future, limited benefits,
and pretty much no help.
and he has to try to sleep at
night, hearing the cries and
the screams of the dying, of
women and children...

freedom? bullshit!
a license to kill?
who is the murderer here?
the young man put on the altar?
or the faceless ones who sent him?

Eric Cockrell

In The Name Of Humanity

we who have heard the roar of silence,
who have walked in chains,
who have been imprisoned.
who have been to the place
where hunger lives...
who have slept in cars,
and underneath bridges.
who have worn our failures
for the world to see...
who have tasted the fruit,
who have worked the fields.
who have died each day
for a small portion of living.
who have reached for the sky,
and fallen from the limb.
who have been the tears,
the sweat, and the anger.
who have slept alone,
who have crawled in passion's window...
who have carried the cross,
and yet drove the nails.
who have argued with god,
and took the blame.
who refused to bear arms,
who fought for survival.
who raised our children,
and buried our parents...
and all too often, our sons and daughters.
who refused to believe the lie,
who demanded our dignity.
who have asked forgiveness,
and given the same.
who have listened to the trees,
the rivers and mountains.
who grieved with the fishes,
and wept for the whales.
we who have lived,
bearing bruises and scars,
lay our beings on the altar

of justice and equality.
and becoming our beliefs,
we stand as we are....
with arms outstretched,
in the name of humanity!

Eric Cockrell

In The Name Of Oil!

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my tongue's on fire
with the blood of the
women and children

we've killed
...in the mad race

to conquer, and take
..with rape minded morality,

to liberate in the name of oil!

Eric Cockrell

In The Presence Of God...

dont try to sell me
your roadmap to heaven,
with your streets of gold,
and angelic harps...
i am not interested!

in the presence of God,
(i didnt name her that, you did!) ,
all your spiritual writings
become mere pornography,
your church bells tiny bells

on the legs of ants!
i walk with her through poverty
and despair, touching, reaching out,
and touching.
holding close the child that's dying...

sitting in the cell with the prisoner waiting.
feeding the hungry, building simple shelters
for those who have no home.
standing beside those deserted,
and thought to be worthless.

naming the nameless,
giving faces to the faceless.
finding red beating hearts
beneath all the colors of skin, ...
listening, caring, touching!

in the presence of God...
thunder, lightning, and rain.
i hear and embrace the wind,
wait in silence for the leaf to turn,
and so name the seasons.

in the presence of God...

In The Presence....

in the presence...
we cut and stack wood.
boil water for coffee,
wash dishes and fold clothes.
unwrap layers of new sunlight,
write letters and quietly think.
take long walks with dogs,
and speak to random strangers.
offer a hand, and say thank you,
listen for the sound of wings.
laugh at squirrels bickering,
watch as leaves begin to fall.
help old people load their cars,
share a smoke with a homeless man.
walk in awareness and deep peace,
ask what we can give...
in the presence!

Eric Cockrell

In The Shadows

who's invading whom?
shall we kill again in the name
of freedom?
does capitalism have its own
savior, complete with cross and grave?
in the name of security,
we take human rights...
now the truth becomes a threat.
bodies bought and sold, sacrificed to wars,
bodies without faces!
and freedom well armed and lusty,
kills justice and equality in the shadows!

Eric Cockrell

In The Small Things...

it is in the small things that we die,
in the breath of cardboard boxes,
and the silent scream of forgotten things.
in the scent of pine needles fresh fallen,
and the sound of the creek crossing rocks.
in bat droppings, and abandoned nests of straw....
in smoke curled into the candle.
in squirrels' prayers to fading light,
and the sound of tires on an endless road.
in clouds hanging just above the treetops,
in the single chime of the church bell.
in the broom sweeping the floor of the soup kitchen,
in old men telling lies and shuffling to keep warm.
in the baby curled against the breast,
in the letter never finished.
in the faces of god on milk cartons,
in the wino pissing in the alley.
in the 'i love you' that you choked on,
and the silence that replays.
in the coffee pot singing hymns,
and gravestones whispering to each other.
in the empty barracks and unloaded guns,
in the bare limb tree that still believes.
in the thunder of the butterfly's wings,
in the wrinkles on the old man's face.
in the forgotten nails of the abandoned house,
in the footfall of forever's ghosts

Eric Cockrell

In The Smallest Of Things

when chapters become books,
and passion becomes love...
written in hours and minutes,
in days and weeks...
and weeks become months,
and months become years...
footsteps woven into one.
days of work for nights of small things...
food, fire, children, good books
and good wine...
quiet words spoken, falling like leaves,
the candle lit by touching
in the darkest hours...
do we forget, do we lose memory,
do thoughts become echoes.
bricks laid by sweat and toil
are lost in the wall...
need becomes distance,
and curtains fall.....
you stare at the body,
as if some stranger...
and a lifetime given
like tiny shards of light,
nails covered with rust,
the spider's web empty.

only the trees know,
mountains, and lost caves.
raindrops falling,
and moonlight never named.
the dog barking in the night,
you think for no reason...
ah! but love testifies,
in the smallest of things!

Eric Cockrell

In The Wind....

darkness and light,
thunder and growl.
souls on the altar,
wings on the ground.
death and desire,
naked and hungry.
prayers spoken by eyes,
tears shed by hands.
Abraxas, broken windows,
both sun and the night.
murder and compassion,
theft and sacrifice.
clocks stopped by fire,
graves opened left bare.
snowfall in august,
bare trees mourn in wait.
and the voices, still the voices,
faces wearing names.
hands desperate grasping,
footprints left in the wind!

Eric Cockrell

In Their Veins

sleep with the weeping ones,
and walk in their shoes...
their faces always before me,
i feel the cuts on their fingers.
i hear the guttural voices of suffering,
too naked to speak words.
my blood runs in their veins,
and theirs in mine!

Eric Cockrell

In Those Rare Moments...

in those rare moments,
when the heart recognizes itself
in the self of another...
when the very waves of the ocean are stilled,
and the moon whimpers with excitement.
when great willow trees become erect with passion,
and the wind itself bows and smiles.
when insects pray to the grasses,
and the earth throbs with heat...
then time itself kneels in silence,
and fires consume themselves.
when a man sees his hunger
in the eyes of a woman,
and the universe in her tiny hands.

Eric Cockrell

In Truth

what if salvation,
and evolution,
were the same process...
which we in our weaknesses have labeled...
but in truth,
the process of becoming human!

Eric Cockrell

In Truth

we are not the clothes we wear,
but the body that fills the clothes.
we are not the body we have,
but the blood that enlivens the body.
we are not the blood coarsing through,
but the breath that feeds the blood.
we are not the breath we breathe in,
but the breath we breathe out,
and nothing more!

Eric Cockrell

In Your Actions!

if you leave your Jesus
on the cross...
then you're missing
the whole point.....
'follow me...', do as i do,
walking with the poor,
the sick, the beaten,
taking them in as your family....
doing the work of helping
to ease the suffering....

the kingdom of heaven within you....
it's called compassion!
take Him off the cross,
put Him back in the streets....
then He will be alive once again...
in your actions!

Eric Cockrell

In Your Touch!

i cannot judge
the distant star
by the light that reaches...

my eyes.

i cannot understand
the ocean's depths,
by pressing the shell to my ears...

and listening.

i cannot comprehend
the freedom of the wind,
as i walk 'neath the trees

in the moonlight.

but i can know love
that moved whole mountains,
and stopped eternity....

in your touch!

Eric Cockrell

Inbetween, We Live!

the human heart feeds...
we are born hungry, born searching,
born needing, born wanting....
left alone on an island...
we lift our beaks to the sky,
gulping for flesh, gulping for air,
gulping for fire....
still smelling of ocean,
and something dark we cant name,
we run into the open,
running, not knowing where.

i cannot live
without the taste of darkness,
the smell of flesh,
and the touch of that
which is hidden...
i shout into the ocean,
and hear only the roar...
i leap from the ledge,
forgetting my wings!

i need a small fire,
and the secrets that curtains tell windows.
my lips need the grain
of soul on soul.
my body burns,
i listen for the prayer of ashes,
ashes that tremble
on the hearth alone.

i need body and eyes,
most of all eyes...
the curve of the breast,
coming and going with the tides.
i need legs and dampness,
conversation without words...
i need to remember

that i am alive.

the quiet walks in the rain,
with god as our partner.
barking with the dogs,
stopping to touch a blade of grass.
the feel of nearness,
the breath of companion....
we are born and die alone,
inbetween, we live!

Eric Cockrell

Incandescent Moth (For Celeste)

the incandescent moth,
born flying with maddened joy
towards the light...
heart purified by weeping,
healed by childlike wonder.
mind searching every crevice
for every dram of truth.
soul bearing the marks of the whip,
childlike hands that dare to touch.
a river bent on giving,
the moth, closer and closer still,
till wings become the dust of angels,
spread at the feet of beginning and end!

Eric Cockrell

Incarcerate...

incarcerate,
poverty's grip.
human rights taken,
rape of soul.
colors,
human cries.
black and white,
Satan's grip.
patriot,
or citizen?
stolen land,
or the gift of earth?
burn your money,
burn your hate.
we live free...
hand in dirty hand!

Eric Cockrell

Independence Day Thoughts

if you've ever spent any time in jail,
you know how a caged animal feels...
now all of us here on the bottom end
of the economic system know this feeling again....
trapped, caged, angry, fearful....
it's not about color, religion, language, or whatever....
these are only the clothes we wear.
it's about human beings being disrespected,
about dignity and honor taken.
we went about our ways,
working, dreaming, just trying to live...
and turned a blind eye to what was going on...
now our indifference has bitten us!
but the courage of the individual,
the neighbor, and the family remain...
and it is in the grain of this tree
that the birds of freedom nest.
the human spirit defies the cage,
we will fly, or die...
it doesn't matter... these, our only choices!
we are destined to be human!
the open mind, the shared heart,
and joined hands, the sword we wave.
we will respect, and regain respect.
we will be free!

Eric Cockrell

Indifference

indifference
is a lazy man's
hatred...

it begins within,
and spreads out
to all that's around
him....

a cancer
inflicted by
the self on
the self....

for which the
world pays!

Eric Cockrell

Infinite Wisdom...

'end of times, end of days,
only the strong will survive.
call it justice, the American way,
call it the great lie! ...'

we have made an incredible
mess of this world...
wars, greed, pollution,
poverty, enslavement,
human rights abuses,
hunger, sickness, homelessness...
that's on us!

you want me to believe...
that God, in his infinite wisdom,
is going to come and bail us out...

what if God, in his infinite wisdom,
showed up with a shovel,
and a wheelbarrow...
and said:

'you made this mess,
you clean it up! '

teaching the children
to take responsibility
for their actions...

hmmn...
just a thought!

Eric Cockrell

Infinity Expressed!

i am the hammer smoking
on the abandoned shelf...
the taste of chocolate,
the residue of gunpowder.
i am the delicious sin,
and the goal achieved.
the dead sparrow's wings,
the goat chained to the house.
i am the drunken dance,
blowing off steam.
i am the baby buried
in the grandparents' yard.
i am the worker laid off,
after forty years.
i am potatoes spread
on the cellar floor.
i am the softest part
of your inner thigh,
i am age marks on your hands.
i am the sleeping moan
of the dog at the foot of the bed.
i am the glass broken,
the broom that sweeps.
i am the field waiting
for the coming snow,
the branches slowly
shedding their leaves.
i am deep laughter,
and the poor man's smile.
the child's wagon
filled with childhood dreams.
i am the apple rotted,
in the basket of straw.
i am infinity expressed
in a thousand forms!

Eric Cockrell

Ingrained

memory ingrained in the memory,
faces ingrained in the wood.
light ingrained in the darkness,
evil ingrained in the good.

poor man ingrained in the bricks
that built the rich man's home.
father ingrained in the child,
his destination, gone...

freedom ingrained in oppression,
moth ingrained in the flame.
tomorrow ingrained in today,
the nameless ingrained in the name.

courage ingrained in the fears
that determination overcomes.
God ingrained in the human,
left standing when all is done!

Eric Cockrell

Injustice In Iran

injustice in Iran...
eight years sentences
for two Americans held
wrongly... convicted

on trumped up charges...

and so by your choices
you continue to spread
hatred and prejudice
throughout the world....

Allah didnt ordain this!
this is the work of men...
men without vision,
without compassion...

men without dignity...
who would be God!

Eric Cockrell

Insatiable Greed

</>
mouths open,
...like tiny birds...

swallow every morsel
...without thought;

only to roll out
..of the nest and fall

prey to their own
....insatiable greed!

Eric Cockrell

Inside Of Yours....

the sound you hear,
not someone knocking at the door...
not a branch blown against the window,
not the barking of a distant dog.
tis not thunder, or gunfire,
nor the shout of an angry mob.
tis not God, or Satan, or destiny,
not even the growl of the hungry.
it's not tomorrow, yesterday,
or the drums of despair....
not the low voice of doubt,
or the cry of injustice!
listen closely, be still,
stop thinking and defining...
for the sound you hear is just my heart,
beating inside of yours!

Eric Cockrell

Inside Out!

</>

i turned my heart

.....inside out,

and found my neighbor's soul,

and

...my

....enemy's

...need!

Eric Cockrell

Insurrection

insurrection...

or just the pot boiling over,
the plant breaking through the gound,
the leaf bursting from the bud,
the wind breaking down the door.
light breaking through the darkness,
the body breaking free of bonds.
the spirit breaking from the body,
the truth breaking from the silence.
hope breaking from despair,
caring breaking from the calloused....
the individual breaking from the crowd.
the many breaking from the few,
the man breaking from enslavement.
the pot boiling over...
be careful!
you'll burn your hand!

Eric Cockrell

Intelligence, Or Wisdom?

intelligence measured...
test tubes, or degrees,
black robes, dialogue,

swords arrogant drawn...
wisdom though,
validated by experience,

cannot be measured,
but knows enough to
keep the sword in the sheath!

Eric Cockrell

Intelligent Discourse!

liberation...
intelligent discourse,
opposing sides presented

with respectful candor.
the willingness to listen,
and to hear!

the unified decision to change,
evolving, as fire and water
coexist!

the bridge between us
built by both sides!
the first steps in crossing....

intelligent discourse!

Eric Cockrell

Intelligent Response

the only intelligent response
to our current global situation
involves... taking on the mantle
of responsibility, removing the
blindfolds from our eyes, rolling
up our sleeves, and getting to
the work.

those who hesitate, lose! those
who believe, act! those who act,
do so out of love!

Eric Cockrell

Intended To Be!

will we answer the call
to finally be fully human?
to lay aside our religious
and political differences?

to treat each other with
conscious and willing respect....
to finally see and understand
the beauty of diversity?

to become aware of the dependence
that we have on each other?
to understand that God, under any name,
works through the minds and bodies of humans....

to wake up and see that our Mother Earth
is dying, by our own hands!
to finally realize that life is not ownership,
but a gift we have to give to receive....

to understand that economic disparity
has nothing to do with a human being's worth!
and just for a moment, to lay down
our guns, our hatreds, and our fears....

becoming the prayer we were intended to be!

Eric Cockrell

Interbeing Thoughts

interbeing...
the tear i cried
is as the same time
the raindropp that fell,
that fed the tree,
that burst into bloom!

the bloom is
at the same time
the smile that came after
the tear...

the tear and the smile
both parts of the same action...
and still, part of the inaction
of the mountain still,
where the tree reaches
and touches the sky...

the sky, the tree, the mountain,
the tear and the smile,
the same!

Eric Cockrell

Intertwined

there is a music in the still darkness
that no human hand could ever play...
that opens doors in the heart,
that the heart never knew were there!

and, if but for a holy moment,
i'd build a shelter from fallen branches.
i'd invite the darkness to be my guest,
and so sleep intertwined.

Eric Cockrell

Into The Moon!

tis a boat that must be rowed,
with every ounce of being...
tis a commitment to caring,
in which the self is lost.
tis a prayer that makes god shudder,
and a storm that cant be stilled....
the very thing that makes one human,
and turns an acorn into the moon!

Eric Cockrell

Invisible Ink!

the invisible man
writes with invisible ink,
the pages of the book,

seldom turned...
often writes with hammer and nails,
sometimes shovel and plow...

sometimes a cigarette bummed,
a cup of coffee and a sandwich!
a small child's eyes,

or an old man's eyes,
a patchwork heart,
and a spirit that soars...

the invisible man
who stands beside,
and never backs down...

never walks away!

Eric Cockrell

Iran-Contra

Iran-contra,
Reagon dealing arms
to forbidden Iran...

in hopes to free hostages,
fund Nicaraguan rebels....
Contras, torture, assassinations,

kidnapping, even women and children...
fighting without rules...human rights violated...
overthrow the regime...

and U.S. control expands....
Iran, birthing terror threats,
and nuclear possibilities....

fixed on Israel!
meanwhile, money free and flowing,
jobs up, easy credit...

the American people blindly
buy and sell and follow....
profit, possessions, and stupor!

Eric Cockrell

Is A Prism!

when 'We The People'
goes from concept to reality,
then, and only then,

can real change be created!
unity in diversity!
freedom is a prism,

shine your light on it,
and bask in all
its different colors!

Eric Cockrell

Is It Anarchy?

is it anarchy...
when we tear down
everything that says:
'I dont care,
I dont want to get involved,
I am not responsible....'
and burn it?

then, starting over,
hand in hand, side by side,
from the ditch to the mountaintop,
as if we were human!

Eric Cockrell

Is It Then Yours?

do you hear me?
or am i throwing rocks
in a bottomless well?
must we wait on the wave,
that's long past due?
will the candle then light itself?
do trees remember leaves?
does history have a face?
is it then yours?

Eric Cockrell

Is It Too Late?

what constitutes deliverance?
how do we define, and draw the line,
between the sickness, and the cure?
between written morality, and ingrained morality?
between doubt of god, and the presence of god?
between hope, and despair?

do we accept what we see as real?
or must we touch, and taste, and feel?
is not the part of our heart that we hide,
the part that needs to be revealed?

whose hand is on the wheel?
who named the stars, and discovered fire?
must we not lose what we're most afraid
to lose in order to find what we most need?

do we spend all of our lives
trying to regain what we lost as children?
why are we afraid of darkness,
being children of the womb?
and why do we find that which is most sacred,
held by the hands of our darkest sins?

we fear death, we worship death... which?
is it the prize of a life well lived?
the cost of our guilt?
or are we just afraid of letting go,
of something beyond our control?

we run madly through life possessing and owning,
or being possessed and owned.
we try to make a name...
yet life is far more than names!

we cower before our own nakedness...
afraid of our own wings!
yet trees and rivers and mountains,
already converse with the sky!

who are we? is it too late?
or can we redeem the time?
can we hear the song of the mockingbird?
the chanting prayers of the ants?

Eric Cockrell

Is Mine!

lover, dont lie...
the stench of silence overwhelms.
the stray cat sleeps in a cardboard box,
the old oak tree groans with morning.
table set for three,
you, me, and the guest...
too long on the road,
he's forgotten the turn,
and love's address is unlisted.
the feather drawn lines of arch and thrust,
define your eyes with headstones.
your hand slips between the bread,
tastes better without mayonnaise.
the cup of whispers grows cold,
deer stand at the edge of the clearing.
the rusted old truck sputters and starts,
crows fly in slow mournful lines.
the feet beneath the table are dirty,
the heart on the plate is mine!

Eric Cockrell

Is Paid!

somewhere inside the dead body of the squirrel,
in halting silence beneath the bare-limbed oak....
lies the secret to stopping the wars.
while cars race by in hungry blindness,
and peoples faces disappear into pockets.
now the sidewalk bar near deserted,
i stole a cigarette between drinks.
even the leaves in self absorbed dying,
never mention or realize.
as a priest trips over the curb,
in haste for the afternoon prayer.
while those who believe in god buy matches,
those who dont shovels and bricks.
and soldiers huddle around righteous fires,
as oil rigs pound behind vacant homes.
and mirrors tremble in the adjoining room,
where the cost of reckoning is paid!

Eric Cockrell

Is There (Anything More)

she said:

'is there anything more
than the diaper i just changed,
the baby i'm nursing at my breast...
my mother's old chair
in which we rock,
and the tear i shed for him,
the longing, and the hope,
while he's out looking for work...'

and opening the door,
she threw the preacher out!

Eric Cockrell

Is Up To You!

god didnt have hands...
so she gave you yours,
to do the work,
to extend to those in need.
god didnt have a heart...
so she gave you yours,
to feel their suffering,
their needs, their hurts.
god didnt have feet...
so she gave you yours.
to walk the path of truth
to the very end.
god didnt have a soul...
so she gave you yours,
tied to the souls
of all that live!

whether you are Christian,
Buddhist, Muslim, atheist,
or whatever...
the only effective salvation
for this world...
is up to you!

Eric Cockrell

Is You!

three people died today...
me, myself, and I!
now the only name i go by...
is you!

Eric Cockrell

Issues, And Thoughts

let's talk about gay marriage... they've
beat this issue to death... i'm tired of
all the 'moral' immoral judgements being
cast!

all human beings are born with the right
to love and be loved. i dont care who you
love, i'm just happy that you do.

let's treat people like people, and let them
live their lives! no one has the right to judge
anyone else for who they love!

Eric Cockrell

Issues, And Thoughts (Final)

it's not important to me
whether you're Christian,
Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim,
Hindu, atheist, or whatever...

what you say about what you
believe has little meaning to me...

what you show me through your
actions reveals what you are, and
how committed you are to what
you believe!

Eric Cockrell

It Begins Right Now!

we live in the most intense time
that the modern world has seen...
governments and economies are
caving from within... the very
air we breathe is polluted, the
water we drink has been defiled.
sea life is being destroyed, and
the world food situation worsens
at an alarming rate... millions
live and die in poverty, millions
are homeless, without medical care...
masses of workers are unemployed,
children grow up on the streets
without hope, and end up in prison.
human rights are being violated,
or just plain taken. and people
are absolutely afraid of each other!
we have closed our eyes, and numbed
our souls for too long. now we stand
on the brink of disaster, and we're
forced to wake up!
so what can one person do? one person
can live in a way that stands for truth...
one person can demand freedom, and equality.
one person can reach out a helping hand...
and when one person daring to live becomes
millions, we can move the stone from the
mouth of the cave!
but it all begins with one person... and
it begins right now, or its too damned late!

Eric Cockrell

It Dont Smell Like Freedom!

'hippies, nuts, and the like...'

i went from hippie
to blue collar Joe
to respected businessman...

from renegade,
to family man,
church, and community.

and it took
getting ran over
by the corporate train,
to bring me back to myself!

primordial, raw, honest,
knocked down, get up,
hand in hand...
heretic, sacred dance,
moment to moment...

and walking the hallowed streets
of America... let me tell you,
it dont smell like freedom!

call me hippie, far left, socialist,
whatever the hell you like...
i call it demanding dignity,
and i will not back down!

Eric Cockrell

It Is Finished!

i've been to the place
where dead men weep.
where spirits go
that cannot sleep.
where near is far
and far is deep...
and i kept the silence!

i've tasted the wine
of human blood.
known the flower
still in bud.
danced in the moonlight,
bathed in the mud...
and kissed the fertile wind!

i've cried the tears
of oppressed and broken.
tended the fires
well past smoking.
kept the faith
past point of hoping...
now words have failed!

i've born the cross
God dared not deem.
slept with the wolves,
heard unborn screams.
touched angel's wings
in human dreams...
washed the feet of the unwanted!

'it is finished'!

Eric Cockrell

It Is More Than Enough.... (For Greg Uhan)

sometimes when we forget
the reason that we are walking,
and what path we're on...
when one star looks like another,
in the darkest of skies.
when each board in the bridge,
seems just another cross to carry.
when we look behind us,
and there are no footprints
in the sand.
...when the prayer we prayed,
keeps haunting sleepless nights.
when after we've given our all,
we find we have something left to lose.
when we light the lantern,
and still it seems no one is near.
when we lay it all down in final sleep,
and birth calls yet again.
when our every ounce of being,
doesn't fill the bottom of the cup....
and the song in our heart,
doesn't fill the stillness.
then from somewhere beside us,
a familiar voice speaks...
'simply, thank you'.
and it is more than enough!

Eric Cockrell

It Is The Act!

it is not...

the house, the temple,
the city, or the country
that you built.

it is the act of building!

it is not...

the hours, the shifts,
the fields plowed,
or the steel forged.

it is the act of working.

it is not...

the sacrifices, the passion,
the forgiveness, or even
the life you shared.

it is the act of loving!

Eric Cockrell

It Is Wrong!

the fact that hate groups
still exist in the 21st century
is an abomination!
whether under the guise
of political extremists,
terrorists, moral hardliners,
or religious fanatics....

IT IS WRONG!

stop the hate!

Eric Cockrell

It Takes.... (To Be Human!)

it takes sweat,
callouses, bruises,
tears, passion and wetness...
it takes hugs, deep thinking,
the root of anger,
and the bridge of kindness...
dirty feet, dirty hands,
naked hearts,
the stink of bodies...
joining, touching, standing,
falling, getting back up...
cursing, praying, singing,
breathing, fucking, holding close...
smiling, giving, sharing, losing,
giving a damn....
listening, reading, searching,
questioning, believing....
daring, trusting, flying,
sitting in deep silence waiting...
forgiveness walking,
gut wrenching talking,
seeing the beauty living...
touching, tasting, smelling...
you and me...
to be human!

Eric Cockrell

It Will Find Its Way To Shore...

did love then crucify you?
or are you a victim of circumstance?
is then the ground you walk on shaken?
did the last star fall from the sky?
did everything you believed in crumble?
did your very heart walk out the door?
do the tears you're crying taste like blood?
does the very night sound like a hammer?
and now the wind comes as your only soulmate...
as water drips from the faucet of your being.
does the scar burn across your breast.
do your eyes hurt with longing?

you cant believe it now but you're not alone...
and dawn will finally rescue this night.
close your eyes and ride the wave,
it will find its way to shore!

Eric Cockrell

It'll Be Allright

i met God today....
the little boy with tears
in his eyes, lost
in the grocery store....

i took his hand and
walked him to the front...
he looked up, and said:
'it'll be allright! '

i met God today...
the old man across the
street trying to load
his old truck....
i stopped mowing and
went over to help him...
boxes and bags, everything
he owned...
'got anywhere to go? '
'it'll be allright! '

i met God today....
young crack whore
stopped by work....
'got anything i can do
to make a few bucks...
i mean, anything....'
i reached into my pocket
and pulled out a ten....
'you get to where you
want some help...
need someone to talk to...'
'it'll be allright! '

i met God today...
standing by an open grave....
He looked at me as if to
ask if i was ready.....
i looked over at the headstone...

and read... 'it'll be alright! '

Eric Cockrell

It's Just Me!

do you hear...
the stranger's voice,
singing softly,
as he sweeps the floor
of your room?
do you hear
the whirr of
the butterfly's wings,
flying just outside your window?
do you hear
the silence of the rain,
falling just outside your door?
do you hear
the beating of the heart,
rhyming yours,
filling the void with light?
it's just me...
let me in!

Eric Cockrell

It's Not What Jesus...

dont tell me:

'it's not what Jesus would do! '
you just bombed his country
back into the stone age.

dont tell me:

'it's not what Jesus would want.'
you just killed
the people that he fed.

dont tell me:

'it's not what Jesus would teach.'
you keep burying women and children
right next to the oil fields.

dont tell me:

'it's not what Jesus would die for...'
you've been nailing him
to that cross for 2000 years!

Eric Cockrell

It's Now, It's Time

albino skunks,
nuclear rain.
on the tracks again,
no whistle, no train.

sit down and stand,
occupy your rights.
you gotta be honest
to join the fight.

black man, white man,
your blood colored red.
throw down your anger,
forgive and forget.

the time of the end,
or the time of change.
freedom's never won
without forgiveness and pain...

the soul of the callouses
the hands of those that worked...
dignity defined
by the sweat and the dirt...

their blood in the land,
the cities, and the town.
written far too deep
for greed to take down...

now all that's left
is guts and heart.
you either lay down
or stand up and start.

the choice is ours,
it's all on the line.
the guns are drawn,
it's now, it's time!

Eric Cockrell

Its Own Way!

your heart, my tongue,
my eyes, your feet.
your hand, my soul...

my cold, your heat...
inside, decide,
naked cant hide!

your words, my thoughts,
this battle being fought....
my hopes, your need,

love's chains set free.
tomorrow, or today,
hunger makes its own way!

Eric Cockrell

It's Time (We Changed)

we spend enough money
in this country on our drug addictions,
to feed the world.
think about it!

we spend enough money on war,
to house the homeless.
what are we thinking?

we spend all of our lives
working for something
that does not last...
that is not real.

dont you think
it's time we changed?

Eric Cockrell

Jail Cells, And Poverty!

do jail cells demand certain colors?
do they smell like poverty?
are they the colleges of the hopeless?
or just a place to hide the fire
till the flame goes out?

does anybody want to be poor?
does anyone deserve to be poor?
who picks the judge?
who enforces the law...
the law passed by filthy rich politicians?

is God white?
how about Jesus or Buddha?
does He live in the suburbs?
what kind of car does He drive?
does He have servants of different colors?

and what is the final price of freedom?
not to mention equality,
and equal distribution of goods...
'red, yellow, black, and white...'
every color of poverty sucks!

whether man or woman,
young, old, or a child...
no human being was meant to be owned!
forced poverty and justice prejudiced
by color or economic stations...
are the last forms of slavery!

what will you do when
the oppressed rise as one,
and put you in the cells you built?
what will you learn,
what will you know?
and what will you smell like?

Jesus Wept

'Jesus wept.'

John 11: 35

Jesus wept...

But we know why!

If we look at the shape

This world is in.

At all the things that

We deny.

If we look at what we do

In the name of God.

How numbly we kill,

How quickly we hate.

How easily we turn our backs,

How deftly we judge.

How righteous we are,

How distorted our mirrors.

How deaf to the truth,

How blind in our souls.

How religious our hearts,

Behind make believe walls.

Jesus wept,

And we would to...

If we weren't already dead!

Eric Cockrell

Jesus, And The Sheriff's Dept

the sheriff's department finally
raided that old run down church
you know, the one over on
the bad end of town

hell, the whole neighborhood
was trouble... there'd been reports
of a meth lab nearby.
anyway, no one went there
but minorities, trailer trash
and a few illegals...

and that Hispanic looking dude
that ran it you know, 'Jesus',
passing out food and prophylactics,
taking them wired out kids to rehab...

helping those unwed teenage mothers
learn to take care of their babies,
and to take responsibility...

talking to them boys about the gangs,
teaching them to read, helping them
look for work...
you know he's wasting his time!

yea, that whole neighborhood is trouble...
who does that 'Jesus' think he is?

Eric Cockrell

Jesus's Job!

you took Jesus's job,
and sent it overseas...
always thinking of the bottom line.
and now his benefits
have run out!
you've got an angry
Jesus with a gun,
and a hungry family,
on the streets.

black Jesus, white Jesus,
brown Jesus, red Jesus...
it dont matter,
take your pick...
he's standing in your doorway!

Eric Cockrell

Joining Of Hands

we speak the word 'love' too easily...
love should speak itself!
in tiny doings of the heart,
and small kindnesses shared.
we touch without thought,
and think without feeling...
but the orgasm of the spirit,
is in the joining of hands!

Eric Cockrell

Journey

being on a spiritual journey
demands equal time and
commitment to a human journey.

you can't be aloof and
find 'God', enlightenment,
or the inner self.

the fire is found
in the deepest night;
but the hands of God
are human.

they are yours!

Eric Cockrell

Journey You Must Take...

i often wonder...

if i'm preaching to the choir,
skimming rocks across a lake,
building kingdoms in the sand.

do you hear what i'm hearing?
do you feel the shudder, and the shake?
do you lie sleepless in the night?
do you walk barefoot into the darkness?

are my words made of stone?
of feathers? of dust?
is my heart an open door,
with no knob, no lock, no key?

i cannot hold the wind
in my old hands...
i know, for i have tried!
nor capture moonlight in a bowl.

i am nothing but a shell,
holding the echoes to your ears.
the sound of the flute,
and the sound of your hearts...

a journey you must take!

Eric Cockrell

Joy

Not with angry tongues,
Nor with bitter thoughts.
But with broken hearts....

Kneeling,
At the feet of joy!

Eric Cockrell

Joy!

</>

joy!

fallen multicolored leaves,
turning, crumbling, dissolving...

rainbows of flesh,
returning to the source,
feeding new beginnings!

joy!

breathing, touching,
listening with the heart!

the chance and the gift,
another day, another moment!
joy!

someone to talk to,
someone who cares!
who sees you just like you are,

and still loves you!

joy!

the prayers of bare limbs,

reaching out and upward,
with gratitude for what has been,
and the promise of what comes!

joy!

deep, unfathomable, unchained,
and electric pulsing....

joy!

Eric Cockrell

Judas

</>
like Judas,
i too oft kissed compassion
on the cheek...

betraying my conscience
to feed my hungers...
too oft dug shallow graves

in my haste to keep going....
too oft took a sip of water,
and poured the rest on the ground....

too oft crossed myself,
gave a couple dollars to a begger,
but kept some back for myself....

too oft looked into the eyes of need,
and only saw a stranger....
too oft gave half a heart....

telling myself it was all i had....
too oft painted the picture
without seeing myself in it....

too oft failed to listen,
to hear, and to change...
just a kiss on the cheek...

and hands i cant wash clean!

Eric Cockrell

Judgement

judgement...
is most often
a failure to communicate
driven by fear,
and is always on sale!

Eric Cockrell

Judgement, And Holiness

you who would judge
from atop your virginal towers
of self assurance

who speak with the voice
of the god that your money bought,
your god of wars.

with swords of glass,
and the vengeance of
prejudicial morality

save your breath!
the lie exposes itself.
eternity doesnt stand trial

in small minded courts.

'no difference between the
sacred and the profane'
a holy man once spoke.

i proclaim every moment,
every slice of life, to be holy!
whether scriptures, a new born child,

or a mound of cow dung.
every thing that can be touched,
can be felt, can be given

is equal in holiness.
every breath of being
is a gift!

Eric Cockrell

Just A Little

just a little further
than nearness...
just a little nearer
than the farthest shore.

just a little deeper
than the surface....
just a little darker
than the dawn.

just a little hotter
than the flame...
just a little colder
than the stone.

just a little more
than all you have...
just a little less
than all you want.

just a little truer
than what you know.
just a little harder
than what you've tried.

just a little softer
than the loving....
just a little...
and then you die!

Eric Cockrell

Just A Note To The Elite

wagon wheel turning
in the dirt... the spokes
and the hub are what

makes it work! .

poor people are the spokes,
hard workin' is the hub!
if you take that away...

the wheel becomes useless...
(caves in on itself!)

never forget the debt you owe
to those around you!

Eric Cockrell

Just A Poem...

i am not a poet,
i am just a poem,
that the poet has not finished!
i am a block of wood
awaiting the master carver...
i am a river,
tugging at the dam!
i am straw strewn beneath the tree,
that once held the eggs of hope.
i am rice cooking on the stove,
the dirty face of the hungry child.
i am snow waiting in total silence,
the hymn of the turning leaves.
i am winter, by god,
on the stoop of spring,
i am was, is, and will be!

Eric Cockrell

Just Another Ant....

if sin then has a face,
has it stolen my mirror?
if then a body,
must it seem familiar?
and if a voice,
must it sound familiar?
who do i pretend to be?

that which i hate and despise,
that which i fight against...
be no further away,
than the door to my heart!
and ignorance itself taunts at me,
from the comfort of my chair!

for i am both the song and the noise,
the murderer and the man of peace.
i am both human guilt and eternity's virtue.
i am the wings of angels,
and the anger of the demons!
i am both lust and compassion...
ears that listen, the face turned away.

and i am both hunger,
and the bowl that fills.
i am the blade dripping with blood,
i am the arms protecting the orphan.
i am the storm that destroys the house,
just another ant bearing food to the queen.

and yet.... I AM!

Eric Cockrell

Just Around The Curve

another oil spill
hidden in small print
in the daily news....

somewhere behind
the Wall Street report,
the political hoopla...

and an ad for viagra.

maybe prostate cancer,
or the big truck hurtling
over the line just around

the curve....

smokestacks puffing,
cars backed up for miles...
cell phones ablaze...

going nowhere!

Eric Cockrell

Just Because....

just because...

your skin is dark,
and mine is light...

does that demand fear and hate?
are our dreams not the same color?
do both of our hearts not pump red?
just because...

you speak a different language,
and your god has a different name...
does that demand fear and wars?
are our needs not the same?
are our families not tired of the deaths?

just because...

you have money,
and i dont...
does that demand fear and oppression?
is our hunger not one and the same?
do we not both have faces and names?
just because...

i am human, you are human!
equal in value, dependent on each other!
and none are free, until all are free!

Eric Cockrell

Just Before Dawn....

i've been too long in the valley of death,
too long in the prisons, too long at the wheel.
too close to the blade, too far from the fire,
too long defined by loneliness and grief.

they say there's a wind,
that comes from a forbidden place.
that strips leaves from the trees,
and causes mountains to shudder.

they say there's a god,
whose name we cant say.
who walks naked in the instant,
just before dawn.

and they say there's a lover,
who smells like me.
who tastes like my hunger,
whose voice i know.

yes, and they say there's a time,
when the wars will cease.
when the hungry will be fed,
and someone will care.

and i pray there's a hand,
and eyes that shine...
that darkness will undress me,
and name the light!

that small kindnesses will turn,
the ancient potter's wheel.
and make me a cup,
held close by your heart.

if i dance tonight beneath trees that weep,
know that tomorrow i'll burn,
know that my lips wait still...
know that i am alive...

as words fall like leaves...
the cross i lay down,
is but a shovel, but a pen...
the page i write upon...

you, simply you!

Eric Cockrell

Just Before Storm (Walking With Rilke)

staring across the chasm of forever,
if my body be the bridge,
then yours,
the cup, the fire, and the lantern!

the wind wrote of love,
before there were humans!
scriptures written in trees,
mountains, and hollowed out caves.

your lips,
breath, and understanding...
your heart,
pure awe!

do we 'speak with the tongues
of men and angels'?
or stuttering fragile words,
repeat the wind?

mountains bow to breast and thigh,
sunset undressing those eyes...
the small place between
wing and body... pure heat!

the wrap of the rain on grasses chanting!
spirits with pens undulating,
the scent of god's perfume,
the moment just before storm!

Eric Cockrell

Just Behind The Clock

an old man sits alone in a chair,
with a revolver and a book.
thinking about children gone,
and branches that diverged.
thinking about women lost,
in the aisles of churches, and department stores.
thinking about hours burned,
under the hot lamp of striving.
scratching his name on the cover of the book,
he closed his eyes to dream.
yet somehow couldnt get rid of the taste
of children's pajamas,
the smell of the perfume
of kitchens...
and the light in those eyes
he never noticed before,
that he was always too busy to tend...
the clock struck three as he drifted off,
and the revolver fell to the floor.
war ribbons hung on his wedding picture,
just behind the clock!

Eric Cockrell

Just Beyond Touch!

your seminal lips,
swollen, quiver....
pajama bound,

light turning on the bottle,
cigarette ashe falling
to the floor....

you smell like me,
25 years ago...
or woodsmoke hanging

in the autumnal chill...
frost on the windows,
the door locked and bolted....

a pair of old boots
sit alone on the porch.
moonlight, and you....

just beyond touch!

Eric Cockrell

Just Business

you say the moral implications
dont matter anymore;
it's all about the money,
it's 'just business'...

blood for oil, and
it doesn't matter whose blood
- as long as it's not your own!

what happened to the sanctity
of human life...
if the skin color is different,
the language different,
the religion different...
do you sleep better at night?

'they're poor, they have nothing
to live for anyway...'

'just business'...
well, what goes around
eventually comes around...
what happens when you're
the one with the begging bowl?

Eric Cockrell

Just Folks (Common Faith)

tater fed, cornbread,
chicken rolled in flour.
backyard plowed up,
supper in an hour.
short week, belt tight,
make do with what you got.
invite your neighbors over,
coffee dark and hot.

say a prayer, thank you,
lucky to be alive.
grandkids going crazy,
look over at your wife.
'there's enough, pass the plates',
talk settles down.
glad to be together,
watch the sun go down.

after supper, pick a tune,
pass the bottle round.
name a song, join in,
dont you love that sound?
kids winding down, sleepy eyes,
all too soon it's time to go.
one more song, everybody,
before you hit the road.

turn out the lights, crawl in bed,
with a twinkle in the eye.
been too long, day is done,
tonight's your lucky night.
curtains blow, nice and slow,
thinking about the years.
dont know about tomorrow,
but tonight it's good to be here!

Eric Cockrell

Just For One Day...

just for one day...
let's forget about the struggle,
the battle to survive and be free.
the endless turmoil, suffering,
and all the problems we face,
forget about saving the world...

and go lay naked on a blanket
beneath an old tree,
making slow sweet love
while the sparrows watch...
and listen to the coming
and going of the tide,
the turning of the earth
in each other's heart.

tomorrow, back to the fray!
today, come with me,
just for one day!

Eric Cockrell

Just One Day!

if you spent a whole day
watching the way we treat each other,
the way we ignore and turn our backs
on each other...

the way we let children starve,
we drop bombs on families,
we throw people out of their houses
who have nowhere to go...

in the names of profit, patriotism,
greed, and lust for power...

the way we let our old people die alone,
we put our young in prisons,
we sell our daughters on street corners,
and we kill to convert!

just one day watching
would make it hard to believe
in God... and even harder
to believe in humanity!

Eric Cockrell

Just One More Time!

just one more time...
before i die,
dance of the herons,
waves kiss gravity's shore.
your body in mine,
dialogue of flesh...
when silence shouts,
and butterflies weep.
the flame held gently,
tugs at the boat.
bare feet walk,
the inner path.
intimate waiting,
for the groan and the flash...
just one more time,
say you love me,
let me die!

Eric Cockrell

Just Picked Up Your Trash!

the squirrel,
climbing the tree,
is buddha.
as is the cloud,
covering the sun.
the mountain is buddha,
as is the pebble...
and the river is buddha,
with the illusion of flowing.
you are buddha,
your enemy is buddha.
your lover is buddha,
as is the crap you just took!
do you see what you see?
do you taste what you taste?
do you smell what you smell?
do you feel what you feel?
or are you each of these?
enlightenment just picked up your trash!

Eric Cockrell

Just Poor Folks!

just poor folks,
living in an old house,
sleeping in a corner

'neath old handmade quilts.
scrubbing scarred floors
with pinesol pride mops....

while the smell of cornbread and
beans hangs in the air.....
stuffing cracks in the windows

against the cold...
kerosene heater,
2 five gallon cans....

a bare light bulb
hangs over the table....
they sit in silence....

reading and thinking...
the old car in the drive,
might crank, and might not....

but that's tomorrow....
and tonite,
they're almost warm!

Eric Cockrell

Just The Wind!

in my dreams...
quite often i am wolf,
running with the pack,
howling in the moonlight!

sometimes a hawk,
gliding spiraled unchained skies...
an old bluesman,
sittin' on a porch pickin'.

a half naked priest,
chanting o'er stormy seas.
a poet, prisoner, woman giving birth,
a man hanged for wrong reasons.

a lover killed by a jealous blade.
a bent over man picking crops,
in someone else's fields...
a drifter, and a searcher,

and on a good night....
just the wind!

Eric Cockrell

Just To See (If You'Re There)

hands of coal,
back bent with time...
eyes that play tricks,
and ears that need help.

pictures of memories hidden
behind lips terse and still.
stories wrapped in stories,
no one listens to anymore.

the ghosts of love walking
the floors of an empty house...
eat a little, stare out the window,
read the obituaries just to see

if you're there!

Eric Cockrell

Just Walking

when i was a kid,
thirteen or fourteen,
i used to go out
at night and walk

the streets...
not going anywhere
in particular...

just walking....

a restless soul
beginning a journey,
and didnt even know.

on the good nights
it rained... and the wind
blowing water in my face

helped prepare me.

today i feel like walking....
beginning a journey,
or ending one?

doesnt really matter...
just walking!

Eric Cockrell

Just... People!

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i am offended
by the different terms
we use to describe people

who love someone
of their own gender....
whether it be 'gay people',

'lesbians', 'homosexuals'...
or whatever!
why dont we just

call them people!
and treat them as such!
problem solved!

Eric Cockrell

Justice And Equality.....

justice and equality...
two very human dreams,
and the hope that allows us
to bring children into the world!
cannot be defined by color,
nationality, religion, or sex...
cannot be regulated by class,
cannot be different for those
who have and those who have not...

cannot allow poverty,
cannot allow hunger,
cannot allow oppression...
to continue!

must be worked for...
everyone has a part,
everyone has a responsibility.

respect,
dignity,
hard work,
sharing of needs...
we are destined to be family.

nations are egos,
we are citizens of the world.
the man fighting to feed his family
across the ocean is your brother.
the ones you're dropping bombs on
are your children.
the ones you kill crossing the border
looking for hope have the faces of god.

justice and equality...
think about it!

Eric Cockrell

Justice, Equality, Compassion, Human!

i spit hammers and nails,
can taste bullets and swords.
my eyes are the bodies
of the innocent that lay dying.
my fingers touch the ribs
of small children starving.
my tongue's made of coal dust,
oil, and death by profit!
my ears hear the cry of freedom
from the cells of the oppressor.
my heart sleeps neath the bridge
with the homeless family at night.
my fists smash the lie and the liar both,
my arms carry the weight
of the working class's lives.
covered with the stink of poverty,
i shed the clothes of pretensions,
apathy, and human greed.
and my desire grows hard
when i see a better day...
my back bears the stripes
of man's mistakes and failures...
i cry justice, i am equality,
i breathe compassion, i am human!

Eric Cockrell

Justice, My

a poor woman lied
on her application for
food stamps about prior
drug convictions,
which was wrong...
but she did it to
feed her two children...
and she has paid the money back!
she got federal jail time.

big banks lied, cheated,
and basically stole on
applications for loans,
made a big profit,
showed a big loss,
and got bailout money...
justice, my ass!

Eric Cockrell

Karmic Revolution!

Reagon babies lying dead
on the Middle East sands....
oil battles there, even to

South America!
American workers stand in line
to buy the goods they lost jobs to...

bailing out the banks
with more borrowed money!
more Chevy's sold in China,

than are sold here!
Japan's Hiroshima cars
flood the market...

their kids stay in school,
their workers have jobs!
yet still whaling, and nuclear disaster!

terrorists steal planes,
or get elected to office....
trading clean water for oil,

and the profit is high!
the houses built by
the Hollywood president...

now stand vacant,
owned by banks that are owned!
and we stand in the street,

with nothing left to lose....
following in the footsteps
of our brothers and sisters...

in Epypt, in China, in Libya....
wherever they fight...
for freedom, equality, and a chance!

Eric Cockrell

Keep Looking For You

i keep looking for you
somewhere behind your face,
where the signs of life

still flicker and tremble.
where ice flows melt
with your fleeting touch,

and the scent of you falls like rain...
i keep looking for you
somewhere just beyond the distance

that separates us from who we are.
the thin veil between light and dark,
the door for which you are the key.

i keep looking for you
somewhere behind the bars,
where anger shatters like glass

into tiny slivers colored by light.
where the match strikes,
and the fire burns and rages

with our passion against the night!

Eric Cockrell

Keep On Walking!

sometimes it just seems like
it's just raining so hard,
that you feel like you're drowning!
cant see where you're going,
all sense of light swallowed up
in a grey fog....

keep on walking!

sometimes it seems like
you lose everything you thought
that you had...
everything you've worked for...
everything that mattered....

keep on walking!

sometimes it seems like
everything you do, everything you think,
everything you say, and
everything you feel
is the wrong damned thing;
every action a mistake,
not acting an even worse mistake...

keep on walking!

and sometimes it seems like
everybody you know has
turned their backs on you....
your friends have deserted you,
your lover abandons you...
and you're not even sure you
want to be with you....

keep on walking!
(you'll never find your way
home if you stop!)

keep on walking!

Eric Cockrell

Key To The Door!

the key to the door
is the human mind...
educate the mind,
liberate the heart,
and the actions of
a free man will follow!

ignorance,
the last disease,
the tool of those
that would use!

unlock the door!

Eric Cockrell

Killing Of The Children!

the killing of the children continues,
their cries muffled by 'holy' hands.
you speak of bringing God back,
as if He were in retirement.

in the name of liberty you march,
the price of oil screams and soars.
build more prisons, dig more graves,
call on morality and justice.

still, the bodies of the children
testify on your back streets.
you spray the winds with chemical death!
and turning the pages of

your bloodstained Bible,
you call on the God whose
name you invented...
and He turns away in horror!

Eric Cockrell

Kind Words

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kind words....

fall

..like

....rain

on

..a

....tin

.....roof

too often lost in the shuffle.

an open heart

receives

...and

.....turns

.....the

.....bowl

.....over

spilling kindness onto

...the face of need!

Eric Cockrell

Kindness

kindness...

the fruit of the pain
of years of abuse,

neglect, loss, and hunger...
the mirror of past actions
planting human seeds

in common ground...
the expression of God's breath
on a world of empty houses!

the action of forgiveness...

Eric Cockrell

Kingdom Of Humanity...

there are no borders
to the kingdom of humanity...
no flags, no troops to protect...
no laws but the law of the heart.
no illegal immigrants.
and no religion...
other than kindness!

Eric Cockrell

Kingdom Of The Owl

curled into the trunk
of an old woman tree,
listening to the owl,
and sleeping in the shade.
arms outstretched,
as if touching the sky,
roots deep in the earth,
swaying with the wind.
bark to bark,
he and she intertwine...
till only one remains.
seasons put down and lost
in the steady and sure,
waiting on moonlight and darkness
in the kingdom of the owl!

Eric Cockrell

Kiss Me, Death!

kiss me, death...
i have followed the trail
of your perfume for too long.
my body aches from sleeping on rocks,
and my feet no longer have a vision!
the wind whips between these ancient trees,
that smile with the silent ache of longing.
and this small fire i've built is just that,
i leave no trace or thought.
and the stars that crumble to dust
in my hands already know,
only the crows wait for dawn.
i am the lover whose face you've forgotten,
the body of your desire!

Eric Cockrell

Kiss Of The Dead

old train hurtles by,
carrying the ghosts of...
the vacant,
...the dispossessed,
.....the evicted,
.....the forgotten,
.....the expendable.

rattling the tracks,
with the rhythm of yesterday,
on the way to tomorrow,

beyond
...the
.....far
.....horizon.

and the hawk that flies overhead,
can find no flesh, no blood....

the tombs of the living
silently testify....
the kiss of the dead

lingers on my lips!

Eric Cockrell

Knew The Smoke (To Be A Prayer)

he said:

'i went four years
without a lover,
trying to do the right thing...
then one day i stood up,
packed my few belongings,
and walked off...
in search of...'

i watched him as he rolled
a cigarette, his gnarled hands
sure and steady...
stared at the light in his eyes,
and the doors...
only he knew what
was behind them.

bought him a cup of coffee,
and shook his hand,
no need for words...
wondered if i'd met Jesus,
or the devil,
or if i was looking
into a mirror!

each path, each call,
is different... each heart,
pretty much the same.
i watched him light his cigarette,
and knew the smoke
to be a prayer!

Eric Cockrell

Knock On The Door!

a knock on the door,
be it demon or angel?
i cannot bear
the suspense any more.
the knob cold in my hand,
the door sticks,
then jerks open...
nobody there, only shadow and wind.

crossroads and forks,
and hurricane damage.
the scar on my heart
bears your image,
and your name.
loves beats against
the window of longing
that your body fits
like clothes well worn.

we die again and again,
both in triumphs and loss.
would that i could die
in the box that holds your dreams.
and rest in sweet silence
neath the tree you've forgotten.
amen, and goodbye...
wait on the rain!

Eric Cockrell

Knock Upon My Door...

as i sat quietly thinking,
i was startled by a knock
upon my door..
i got up and crossed the floor,
and opened the door.
a disheveled man stood there,
without speaking...
i felt uneasy...
there was something,
i just couldnt place.
his hair was long and grey,
his eyes were like fires.
his hands were beaten,
but there was a strength there,
and a sense of purpose.

i finally stammered,
'who are you? '...
he smiled, 'i am you! '
i let him in!

Eric Cockrell

Knock, Knock!

knock, knock!
who's there?
bad news again...

unemployment rising,
a new wave of foreclosures.
more killed overseas....

the budget wont balance,
politicians wont agree.
another pipeline to leak oil...

our bill of rights threatened...
terrorism abroad, terrorism at home.
nuclear meltdowns, tornadoes,

and earthquakes...
prejudices and abuse,
people living on the streets.

more children going hungry,
while the rich get richer....
and i think that Jesus

just crawled back up on that cross!

Eric Cockrell

Knowing That You Dont Know...

you cant change the wind,
you cant change the rain.
you can change the tracks,
but you cant change the train.
you can change your mind,
but you cant change your heart.
you can change the light,
but you cant change the dark.

you can hold the truth,
but you cant hold a lie.
you just keep holding on,
until the day you die.
you can hold your peace,
but you cant hold the clock.
you can only hold the fire
until it gets too hot!

you can touch the earth,
but you cant touch the sky.
you can touch the feeling,
you cant touch the reason why.
you can touch your lover,
you cant touch the love.
sometimes knowing that you dont know,
just has to be enough!

Eric Cockrell

Knows

that old hawk soaring
in circles in the cloud
laden sky.... knows!

the leaves on the tree,
getting ready to turn,
and fall... know!

that old chair rocking
in the soft summer breeze,
a mind of its own... knows!

that marker in the cemetery,
half covered by brush,
forgotten... knows!

the baby born
without asking, left
in a dumpster... knows!

the young man dying
in a land foreign and wasted,
alone, alone... knows!

do you?

Eric Cockrell

Labels!

they call us poor white folks
'white trash'....
they call poor black folks
'niggers'....
they call poor Hispanic folks
all kinds of names,
'illegal' being the worst!

labels...
people who have too much
at the expense of the rest of us...
well insulated ignorance...
hatreds, that begin with hatred
of the self!

we're not labels!
we're just folks....
breathing, working, dreaming,
trying, doing the best we can....
we deserve the dignity
of being treated as human beings....

labels... hell no!
i'm not your boy, not your slave,
not your inferior...
i am human!
treat me as such!

Eric Cockrell

Labor Day

Labor Day....
forty years of working
and cant pay the rent...
lost my benefits,
lost my house,
cant retire,
now or ever...
cotton mills, furniture factories,
truck driving, house building...
cant afford to fill up with gas.
run down trailer,
better grow your own food.
dont get sick,
cant go to the doctor.
they're bashing unions,
cutting unemployment off.
cant send your kid to school,
cant afford to be buried...
those people in Washington,
and those on the stoop,
cant see your face,
and damn sure,
dont know your name!

Eric Cockrell

Lantern

he lit his lantern and
walked out on the porch,
with his old dog
by his side....

he could see the wind
walking through the trees,
wrapped in the stillness
and comfort of darkness...

how long had it been?
25 cents a gallon gasoline,
Marlboros, 25 cents a pack!
working all week for 55 dollars....

sawmills, factories, milking cows,
a hoe and a gallon jar of water.
hanging the gears on his old truck...
cold beer, making love all night....

civil unrest and high ideals,
bulletproof, with a taste for danger.
then the children came... working
more for less... till he became invisible....

and the world careened into madness,
enough was never enough....
and all his dreams fell to dust.....
the wings of the eagle rusted.

standing alone, with his dog,
peering into the night....
listening to whispering ghosts....
listening... for the voice of love....

for the sound of his
own heart beating!

Last Breaking Of Dawn

ending, or beginning?
sometimes i still cant tell!
out of date postage stamps,
just dont deliver.

carbon and rust,
even cobwebs turn grey.
lips bent and crusted
never kiss the night!

holiness, old clothes,
the fit of the body fades.
time buries the fire,
again and again.

small things, kind words,
and the simplest touch.
the first cup of coffee,
the last breaking of dawn!

Eric Cockrell

Last Door To Be Opened!

horses burst through the gate,
gallop across the field,
heads held high and nostrils flared.
while owls whisper in dark gowned trees,
and the wind tugs at the mountains.
moonlight sifting through the clouds,
dogs bark from a distant door.
and the grass lies wet with desire,
waiting for the steps of the lover!

i built a small fire in the clearing,
took off my clothes and danced
to the hidden beat.
mumbling words that had no form,
while the sleeping swallow smiled.
reared back with primal instinct,
let forth the howl of want.
while ants played tiny drums,
and thunder clashed in perfect time.

down to the banks of the river,
where water courted stone....
and plunged into the icy depths...
a baptism of the senses.
back to the fire with eyes ablaze...
i too waited with longing.
for the scent, the sound, and the feel of flesh,
for the last door to be opened!

Eric Cockrell

Last Stop!

last stop...
last question.
last doubt,
last door.
last key,
last chance.
last hunger,
last want.
last prayer,
last anger.
last dream,
last touch.
last hand,
last equality.
last prejudice,
last scar.
last miracle,
last echo.
last image,
last thought....
last stop!

Eric Cockrell

Late At Night

what do you think about,
late at night...
when you're alone with yourself,
and the weight of your actions?

the older you get,
the harder it gets.
you see the mistakes,
wish you'd spent more time

in the moments of love...
honesty comes knocking
as your time runs short...
maybe, most of all,

you wish you'd said, 'thank you! '

Eric Cockrell

Late Night Thoughts...

one more thought tonite... if we cannot grow the balls
to stand up for human dignity, to treat each other with
respect, to protect our environment, to stop these damn
wars, and to learn to see people and accept them as they
are.... we dont deserve to be here!

we are not the holy grail... we are human beings... we,
whether we admit it or not, are connected to and responsible
for all living beings....

our concepts are not who we are... but our hearts in action
define us...

and most of all, we owe it to our children!

Eric Cockrell

Late Spring Frost

spreading straw over young plants,
to protect from a late spring frost.
counting nickels, dimes, and quarters,
to pay the rent.
turning down the pot to simmer slow,
listening to the news with a hollow ache.,
thoughts come and go, the air still chill.
nothing changes much, except the date.
a half a tank of gas, and a borrowed hoe...
hands moving in silence, back to the sun.

death waits patiently, like an old friend.
never asking for much, in a corner by the door.
the terror of living comes in gasps that tremble,
always afraid to leave something undone.
the book unsigned gathers dust on the table,
the old dog groans with knowing surety.
days marked on the calendar, invisible ink...
spreading straw over young plants,
to protect from the late spring frost!

Eric Cockrell

Laughing Quietly...

that old shutter,
banging against this old house.
the wind rises, making angry faces,
water surges past stopped up gutters.
trees bend and sway with magic,
the grasses moan in orgasmic delight.
the world threatens, its final statement.
death taunts as if by choice.
long dusty roads beneath the eyes,
flood, and are then reborn.
life teeters, lightning creates,
bones to dust to beginning seed.
standing in the doorway, drinking thunder,
laughing quietly at myself!
on the brink of infinity,
the moment fragile, filled with awe!

Eric Cockrell

Laughs In Silence!

sometimes we drink fire,
sometimes we drink the night.
and yet we seem surprised,
when the fire scorches our feet,
and the night drinks us.

it is but a journey,
from season to season.
from the eyes of the owl,
to cracked nutshells on brown grass...
and we call it life.

is the spoke the wheel?
is stillness ever stagnant?
clouds disappear,
then fall like rain...
who are we to judge?

is the shell the ocean?
the echo the truth?
leaves fall in October,
shouting for spring...
while the tree laughs in silence!

Eric Cockrell

Lay With Me

no more time for excuses,
to barter and trade,
for pretensions and etiquette,

to mend the bridge,
or paint the house....
no time for redemption,

no time for the past....
i just wanna know....
would you lay with me,

and wait for the dawn of the age?

Eric Cockrell

Learned...

from being homeless,
i learned the value of home!
from being hungry,
i learned the value of being fed.
from being sick,
i learned the value of health.
from being left alone,
i learned the value of love.
from being confined in a cell,
i learned the value of freedom.
from being persecuted,
i learned the value of human rights.
from being an infidel,
i learned to see the face of god...

Eric Cockrell

Leaving My Body

i want you
in my animal soul...

you, a solitary
lamb on the hill;
me, the wolf
watching, longing
to tear into
your sweet flesh...

but, as i approach,
you change shapes,
become a great bear,
and kill me
with one swipe
of your paw....

leaving my body
bleeding in the
tall damp grasses
that never see...

morning!

Eric Cockrell

Leaving The Past Behind!

just a two-bit guitar pickin' poet
walking barefoot in dew damp grass;
the fire still shining in eyes

that have seen it all,
and then some....
nothing in his pockets....

grey hair falling 'neath his hat,
bathed in the morning sun;
a half smile on his hardened jaw...

going out to meet the devil,
or the Lord, tomorrow or infinity,
with a song and a dream

still intact.... and a heart
whose door opens both ways...
leaving the past behind!

Eric Cockrell

Left After The Storm

love is the scar
left after the storm....
the light in the window

the falling branch broke,
the ashes drowned by rain
after the fire....

my hand on your breast,
the moment without words,
that hangs on the clock

like the hour never struck.
the sweet whiskey of your lips,
pressed tight, then yielding....

the leaves on the porch,
blown like a stranger to the door....
the box of pictures,

buried in the closet,

'neath old coats and goodwill
clothes, folded and wrinkled....

your legs wrapped around
a sudden strike of lightning....
the way you smell....

dressed in sleep!

Eric Cockrell

Left Foot, Right Foot

left foot, right foot,
left foot, right foot,
eyes fixed straight ahead....

drawn by the spectre
of our own greed;
use it up, throw it out,
use it up, throw it out....

hardened and lifeless,
eaten from within
by the maggots of ego...

deaf to the cries
of our own children,
blinded by the 'God'

of cyber technology...
strip the fields,
cut down the forests...

mine the mountains,
we pee in our own
drinking water, and

walk away....
leaving nuclear tracks
in the womb of time.

left foot, right foot,
left foot, right foot...
marching blindly to hell

with drool on our chins!

Eric Cockrell

Legislate Love....

it is sad...
when we feel the need
to legislate love.
sadder still,
when we seek to define love
by our own narrow perceptions,
and call it moral law.

diversity is not an evil word,
neither is equality...
the law of love is unwritten,
unbound by concepts or prejudice...
and can only be defined
by the individual human heart!

Eric Cockrell

Leonard Peltier

Wrongly held,
Without honor, or dignity.
The mark of his people,

In bondage.

His life, his freedom
Stolen by a system,
Intent on the destruction

Of the past.

His only crime,
Being unwilling to surrender,
Unwilling to betray his people.

While the bones of the Elders,
Rattle in the winds....
Of change!

And the ghosts of the buffalo,
Wait.

Eric Cockrell

Let Go, And Dance!

the burnt branch,
has a name and a prayer.
the small child understands
the language of sparrows.
tiny snowflakes shout,
even the snail leaves a trace.
the rough touch of the cat's tongue,
speaks of history and hope.

yet we go mourning,
unable to see or to hear.
we rinse our mouths,
to get rid of the taste.
we crucify flowers,
in the name of beauty.
but the blood on our hands,
has the scent of our souls!

let go, and dance!

Eric Cockrell

Let Me Be.....

if your earth is brown and dying,
then let me be the rain.
if your fire is small,
and your body is cold,
let me be logs and flame.
if your soul walks alone,
and your sky is dark...
let me be the wind rapping at your window,
and the candle flickering in your room.
if your heart stands before a chasm,
let me be the bridge, and the lantern.
if your spirit is heavy with oppression,
let my back take the whip.
if the words you speak haunt you in emptiness,
let me be ears, and the cup that's filled.
if death confronts you with the cost of living,
let my living pay the cost....
and if you just need a companion....
i'm already there...
in the dog barking in the night,
the birds singing at dawn....
and the smell of the flower
still waiting to bloom!

Eric Cockrell

Let Me Show You Mine....

a young doctor in a hospital
spent several minutes explaining
to the young aide taking care of
the dying old man, why there
could be no god....
when he finished, the young aide
looked up and said,
'let me show you mine! '
and with that he cleaned the
old man's ass, pulled the bedpan out,
and carried it from the room!

Eric Cockrell

Let Us Be Men! (For Kevin Patrick)

must we then be sheep,
led by goats over the cliff
into the abyss of their pockets?

let us be men!
their greed be damned!

Eric Cockrell

Let's Be Human!

a new day dawning...
we dont know how difficult,
or how long the labor...
dont know how bad
the birthing pains...

but the time of change
is upon us!
let us work together with
diligence and determination,
to insure the change

is for the good!
we are the human race...
let's be human!

Eric Cockrell

Let's Go Walking!

</>

lets go walking today!
you dont have to bring anything,
to do anything, to be anything....

other than who you are...
dont worry about where we're going,
or when we're going to return...

just grab a coat, and come on!
it's good to be alive!
we can talk about everything,

anything, ot nothing at all!
just walking side by side,
breathing the very breath of life!

let's go walking!
i'm waiting just outside
....your door!

Eric Cockrell

Let's Live For A Day

i want to go home this weekend,
and dig a pit in the backyard.....
gather wood, and build a fire!

get the coffee pot going,
find something to throw in the pot
and on the spit.....

and just sit outside and enjoy
the cool autumn stillness....
come on over! bring what you've got....

and bring your books, your guitars....
bring your dogs, bring your neighbors...
dont care who you are, what color

or religion you are, or what your
philosophy is... as long as you're
open-minded and compassionate....

come on... lets sit and talk;
let's live for a day....
and enjoy the stillness!

Eric Cockrell

Let's Trade!

let's trade bullets for nails,
and bombs for boards,
and build houses for those without shelter!
let's trade anger for listening,
and aggression for compassion,
and realize no one owns this earth!
let's trade religion for humanity,
and salvation for community,
and walk the path of redemption!
let's trade success for inner peace,
the need to have for the need to give,
and so fulfill our destinies!

Eric Cockrell

Letter From God

don't call my name anymore.
you don't even know who i am!
no more churches, temples, and mosques,
the wind has no need for a home.
no more battles or wars in my name,
no more judgements bound by your fears.
no more talk of heaven and hell,
till you walk the path before you.

for as long as you kill
to feed your greed.
as long as you allow
children to go hungry.
as long as you discriminate
out of your ignorance...
as long as you take
more than you give.

you do not know me!
you kill my messengers,
or twist their teachings
to use for profit and gain.
you choose religion over love,
believing in instant redemption.

you speak of my wrath,
but the anger is yours.
you try to define my being
with impotent minds.
you're so blinded by selfish desire,
that you do not see me all around you.

the man you kill,
the woman you rape,
the child you abandon,
the begger you ignore....

the young man you send to prison,
or even worse to battle.

the poor you leave in poverty,
the uneducated you fail to educate...

the homeless family,
black, white, red, and brown...
male, female, old, and young.
straight, gay, religious, or not...

the abandoned dog, the stray cat,
the addict, the whore,
the farmer, the factory worker,
the father, the mother...

me!

Eric Cockrell

Letter From God (Part Two)

dont call my name anymore.
you dont even know what i am!

for every tree you cut without thinking,
you're cutting into me.
every river you defile with your waste,
you're defiling me.
every ocean you poison with oil,
you're killing me!

you fear hell?
hell is your own creation,
the result of your actions!
quit blaming it on me,
you did it!

smokestacks polluting the air,
bombs falling on helpless people.
nuclear reactors melting down,
jobless men and women standing in line.
children abused by doped out parents,
human rights violated or taken.
oppressed peoples rising up...
you created these by your actions.

dont call my name anymore...
till you name the nameless ones,
and put faces on the faceless.
till you learn to respect,
till you're willing to listen.
till you're willing to get dirty.
till you can give without wanting back....

and then when you're alone
in the middle of the night...
take off your masks,
and look in the mirror...
the image you see is me!
my name is your name!

Eric Cockrell

Letting Go

letting go...
of the woman
i have loved...
of the woman
i think she is,
that i dream she is...
that i wanted
her to be...

loving her enough
to let her be
the woman that she is...

and accept her for
who she is...

Eric Cockrell

Liar!

you would spread peace
by the use of your guns,
end poverty with slavery,
execute justice with your prisons,
end prejudice by not looking...
protect freedom of speech with oppression,
teach the truth with closed minds,
and fill the plates of the hungry
with nuclear threats...

i say,
'Liar! '

Eric Cockrell

Liberal

if 'liberal' means....

i care about the working people,
the common everyday families,
the kids hungry, with little chance,
the single mothers,
the young boys sent off to war,
the ecology, global warming,
the prisoners wrongly convicted,
the victims of crime.
the elderly without heat,
those who cant afford medical care....

then call me 'liberal',
socialist, or whatever!
i call it being human!

Eric Cockrell

Liberty

liberty
does not come in classes,
genders, colors, or creeds...
cannot be bought,
 or sold,
bartered, or pawned.
cannot ever be for the few
at the expense of the many!
is not a political issue,
 or a budget cut,
or a 'war against terror'!

liberty begins within
 the human heart,
is joined from soul to soul
with both sameness and difference.
one person's liberty is dependant
upon the liberty of those
around him... liberty is responsible!

liberty, once realized,
can never be destroyed
- not even by death!

liberty is the gift born in giving,
the torch lit by compassion,
the actions of unity,
the working prayer of humanity,
the dignity of man!

Eric Cockrell

Liberty... (Dont Betray Me Now!)

Liberty...

dont betray me now.
i have paid your price,
in bodies burning,
and mouths that tremble.
in toil and struggle,
in sweat and faith.

take not thy hand from my heart,
for you have spoken to me with eyes.
eyes that see the beauty
of the common, and simple.
eyes that drink equality,
seeing hands joined in darkened rooms.
eyes that pray common prayers.

who am i to have a face?
who are these faces,
giving dignity to names?
history written in warm blood,
on the farmhouse walls,
on the factory floors,
in the carpenter's apron!

i am the voice of what should have been...
what could have been!
i am family handed down to family,
i am equity and justice.
i am the black hand taking down
the all white sign...
i am the horses of Crazy Horse,
Sitting Bull, and Cochise.
i am the mill worker's only son,
going to college.
i am the daughter of the minister,
marching for women's rights.
i am the young man in prison,
teaching himself to read!

i am the sound
of machines shut down,
of fields left unplowed,
of courtrooms empty.
i am the bodies of the young men,
killed in your napalm wars...
i am the mother and father,
burying their only son.
i am the rage of the poor,
with calloused hands torn.
i am the housing projects,
the trailer parks,
and the prisons full.
i am the cities gone mad,
with despair and grief.
i am the spirit of rebellion,
and the body of revolution!

i am the scientist, the doctor,
the preacher, and the drunkard.
i am the free thinker,
daring to question.
i am the man alone,
who dares to stand and defy.
i am the voices of the grandfathers,
and grandmothers,
crying out from their graves.
i am the migrant worker,
the bedpan emptier,
the garbage man,
and the small town sheriff...
the stink of injustice,
and the vote not counted.

Liberty, o Liberty,
turn not your face...
for i am the breath and the blood,
that moves your body!
i am the prayer too long unprayed...
one hand in a fist,
and the other left open!

Eric Cockrell

Lies Told To Children

religious incantations,
written with dead bodies,
buried in ditches
with face drawn shovels.
the tint of skin tastes
like things done in the night.
and lies told to children
to let them sleep!
redemption killed
on a desert highway,
left to stink in the sun
of another faceless day.
we are what we have done,
in the final end.
yet we close our eyes,
and wash the blood from our hands!
blame it on the cost of freedom,
a white god with special needs.
religious incantations,
and lies told to children!

written for the spirits of over
100 million Native Americans killed!

Eric Cockrell

Life Erupting...

i walk the hymn of life erupting,
the urine prayers, the sweat, the pus.
the guttural cry of need evolving,
the phlegm of god, the bodies rotting.
the snow wiped faces
and the naked earth.

in constant rhythm with hunger's howl,
the candle flame, the silenced tongue.
the whisper shake, of shadows wanting,
nails, blocks, and colored glass.
the crippled dance,
and the distant drums.

who am i? i am you!
the second son of an unknown father.
born in an alley neath a starless sky,
my feet stink of human,
my eyes lit with desire...
talk to me when words are done!

the wet birthed babe,
the hot blood of giving.
the life caved in,
the searh for nipple.
the whiskey breath,
the cigarette memory,
the love torn chest,
the beak plucked heart.

the identity of the unknown soldier
who died in the ashes, unheard, unseen.
the hands that built with determined faith,
with common trust and common hope...
the weeping beneath the silence,
the silence beyond the grave....

talk to me when words are done!

Life For The Living, Nothing More!

he lies awake,
the room cold and dark....
except for moonlight pouring

through the curtainless window....
she lies naked, wrapped into
every pore of him,

their breath hanging like small clouds.
the smell of love and woodsmoke,
the heartbeat of silence

resonates off bare walls....
no money, little food, tomorrow
to look for work.....always tomorrow!

the sound of gunfire, and children's voices
haunt the back of memory forgotten.....
they called it history, the great change....

maybe just looking to fill the pot!
but for now just now,
the moment stolen and precious....

life for the living, nothing more.
he turned and wiped the hair from her face....
prayed the minutes would be slow,

watching her sleep!

Eric Cockrell

Life Goes On!

behind the well lit window,
the coffee pot churns.
doors open and close,
and hair is combed.
in silent hurry,
the day laid out,
life goes on, life goes on.

things left unsaid,
perhaps a note.
the brush in passing
through the tangled hallway.
the tv news, grey anvil tongue.
eyes squinted, life goes on.

while on a vacant corner,
in an empty house
neath a burned out bulb,
nothing gathers in shadows...
prayers fall on deaf ears.
an empty bed, and the shelves are bare,
nothing rhymes nothing,
life goes on!

Eric Cockrell

Life Gone Crazy

shots ring out,
sirens wail.
street grinders turn,
the gates of hell.
we push and shout,
we take and drive,
aint nobody
gonna get out alive.

the price of life,
nickels and dimes.
faceless souls,
redeem the time.
the weight of skin,
and rusted chains.
take a pill
to numb the pain.

life gone crazy,
life gone mad.
what they have
is what you had.
who do you own,
who owns you?
what can you say,
what can you do?

fathers bury sons,
and daughters weep.
you cannot stop,
you cannot sleep.
political lies,
dont feed the need.
another casualty,
of the greed.

go to war,
march to the hate.
you wake up guilty,

and it's too late.
you pray to god,
only to hear the echo.
carrying the mark
of your own sorrow.

life gone crazy,
life gone mad.
what they have
is what you had.
who do you own,
who owns you?
what can you say,
what can you do?

Eric Cockrell

Life...

life...

water dripping
from a faucet...

each drop,
one lifetime,
falling forever slow...

then gone!

Eric Cockrell

Lifesong # 7

iron on iron,
brick to brick.
match to the fire,
stick to stick..

hand to hand,
heart to heart.
truth to desire,
time to start.....

skin to skin,
soul to soul.
birth to death,
coal to coal...

face to face,
day to day.
breath to breath,
pray to stay!

Eric Cockrell

Lift Your Voice To The Wind.... (For Frank)

i kneel...

on time worn knees,
facing the distant hue
of the Statue Of Liberty.
and touch the hallowed ground,
that Jefferson and Adams dreamed,
would give birth to a freedom....
never before seen.

and now even the shadows shiver
with the indignity of the lie.
the ghosts of the freedom fighters,
howl in mourning.
the truth suppressed
by the hands of greed,
the eyes plucked from their sockets,
tongues stapled to the pavement.

they're burning books in America,
they've chained freedom of speech.
beneath the stink of ignorance,
and a false morality.
they murder, and call it war.
they make their living from poverty.
they treat their women like cattle,
send their children to prison.

they would still every voice,
and put fetters on wings.
they would silence beauty,
and nail the casket shut...

yet somewhere i know,
you still carry the light.
burn the bridges behind you,
and reach for the stars.

lift your voice to the wind...
for it carries your name!

Eric Cockrell

Light And Darkness (Wholeness)

light and darkness
cannot survive without
each other....

they draw on each other,
feed on each other,
are formed by each other....

two parts of the same being,
wholeness, and expression....
light and darkness....

we look at life through prisms....
change the prism you're looking through....
from one of hatred to compassion....

all the colors of your world will change!
embrace the darkness, and
search for the light.....

creation, and the Creator,
are within you!
light and darkness....

Eric Cockrell

Light The Flame!

we light the flame,
and carry the torch;
protecting the fire

from wind and rain,
and anything that would
extinguish!

stumbling, bumbling,
falling down, and getting
back up....

often times our own
worst enemy....
believing we're alone

in the heat of the fray...
the sound of footsteps
behind us, tiny footsteps....

turning, we find
small children, all different
ages and colors;

male and female....
carrying small torches
waiting to be lit....

with the hope of
the future!

Eric Cockrell

Lighthouse

lighthouse...
tossed by the waves,
pitch black sky, no stars.

too rough to row,
holding on for dear life.
said a quick prayer...

my eyes fixed on
the beacon... my heart
fixed on you!

Eric Cockrell

Like A Man

the old man
pulled up in front of
the detox center...

the boy turned to him:
'pray for me...'
'son, i prayed for you

when i took you in,
when i sat and listened,
when i fed you,

and cleaned you up...
now pray for me,
and most of all for yourself,

when you walk through that door
like a man, and ask for help! '

Eric Cockrell

Like A Mask

ignorant people
wear prejudice like a mask,
hiding their own fears
and insecurities.

it's not the color of skin,
but the color of a man's heart.
it's not religious beliefs,
or sexual orientation,

but the basic humanity of all men!

Eric Cockrell

Like Him!

if you're convinced
the world needs Jesus
to come back...

then start acting like Him!

Eric Cockrell

Like Me....

i dont see black and white,
i dont see Muslim, and Christian.
i dont see right and left.
i dont see haves, and have nots...
i see hungry mouths,
and starving souls,
and they all look
and smell like me!

Eric Cockrell

Like You In The Mirror!

let me be...
the bridge, the cup,
the lifeboat, the beacon.
the open hand offered,
the shovel, the saw.
the house left open,
the fire built to share.
the cool rag on the forehead,
the silence that heals.
the field waiting to turn,
the plow, and the mule.
the coat, the hat,
the blanket and the bed.
the ear with a face,
the face with a heart.
the heart that looks
like you in the mirror!

Eric Cockrell

Limitless Thoughts, Continued

Buddha's own son became one of
the 'inner circle' of his followers...
all of us struggle with things that
are unnecessary...
i think you can reach enlightenment
just as easy in a prison cell, riding
on a bus, or picking up trash!
i think that we as humans overthink
our 'stabs at infinity'...
we try to contain an ocean in a thimble!
i also think that there's more holiness
in changing a bedpan for an elderly person
than in sitting in a church, a temple, or
whatever!
all of the answers are there, right in front
of us! sometimes, stillness shouts at us!
we're just too damn intellectually stubborn,
far too intent on being on the 'right path'!
the breakthrough comes when we're willing
to sit and talk, and listen.... to share
viewpoints, whether different or the same...
most of all, to listen!
the absolute beauty, and wonder of life,
exuded through the simplest things!

Eric Cockrell

Limitless Thoughts, For Hune

Buddha was married, had a child, was a prince
with all anyone could ever want in the material
world. when he got out in the world, he saw
suffering, he felt it, and change began.
he left behind what he had, and began his search...
but what he searched for for so long was already
there... it always is!
there is truly no inner and outer world, that is
an illusion put forth by our conceptual minds...
what is, is!
he learned to let go of conceptual understanding,
and to just live! a part of that which breathes,
and is beyond time and human understanding...
there are no words for this, words are limited,
and often misconstrued! and what we are talking
about is limitless...

Eric Cockrell

Line In The Sand

line in the sand...
broken plate in the sink.
the needle of debt
exacts its cost.
men are just men,
dreams are made for sipping.
the spirits of dead lovers
inhabit bodies at night.
and the light flickers,
grabs, taunts, is lost.
we write bibles,
coughing in the night!

Eric Cockrell

Lingers

shotgun shells,
and kentucky bourbon;
long howling nights,
bound by the moon/

teeth bared to the icy cold,
the taste of blood.
lingers.

the fiddle weeps,
while the mandolin prays.
old hat pulled down,
feet dance to the sound/

teeth bared to the icy cold,
the taste of blood...
lingers...

broke down and busted,
carried by the darkness.
fists pound the walls,
but there's no one home/

teeth bared to the icy cold,
the taste of blood.
lingers.
woman, smell and touch,
sucks the light from empty.
she rolls me over,
cries out like a cat/

teeth bared to the icy cold,
the taste of blood.
lingers.

Eric Cockrell

Lip Syncing!

your heart...
lip syncing prayers
that my heart cant hear...

my heart bleeding
by the grave...
unmarked, and unclaimed.

our tongues reaching through bars,
our cells drowning in stone...
only wings, and the sound

of the river remain!

Eric Cockrell

Lippies!

he said:

'you one of them
old hippies turned lippies? '

'huh? '

'you know,
do a lot of talking
about change,
but not much action! '

kinda makes you think
about the way you live
your life!

Eric Cockrell

Lips

lips...
written in darkness,
mouthing words
in unspoken language.
searching,
groping for reason...
trembling before
the soft underside
of the shell.

lips...
bruised,
and wanting,
saying much
with silent moves.

lips...
that pray,
and drench loving,
with the softest
and hidden,
bell of the hungry.

lips...
that cross bridges
and build stairways,
from empty rooms
to the warm beating heart!

Eric Cockrell

Lips To My Heart!

if you press
your lips to my heart,
you will taste the ocean...
the beginning of life,
and eons.

dont let the sound of the waves terrify!
curl into the rhythm and the pound!
forms ever evolving,
in the quest for light!

seaweed, and rolling darkness,
mounting as if some god.
thought opens the hand,
and names the fury,
that stillness best expresses!

drink deeply, my love...
so we are driven!
no limit to the vastness.
look up into my eyes,
and name your hunger...

let me wipe the salt from your lips!

Eric Cockrell

Listen To The Darkness

i dont want to write
anything soft and beautiful
anything moving tonite

i'm just damned tired
of oppression and fighting
to just barely get by

of watching good people lose it all
children going hungry, wars
and more wars

no work, no jobs, no chance
to get out from under
of being lied to, used and abused

i'm tired of people not being human
and i think i'll just go curl up
with my dog
and listen to the darkness!

Eric Cockrell

Listen, Just Listen!

years ago...

i worked in a hospital
as a male aide.
and i used to sit
with the elderly,
as they lay dying,
who often had no family
to be there.

and i learned one of
the great truths of life...
listen!

to the stories of living,
to both the pain,
and the joy,
in the voice...
to the hope that
can only be faith...
to the hum of love.
to the defiant heart beating,
to the sound
of the last door opening...
to the sound the hand makes,
when it lets go!
listen, just listen!

Eric Cockrell

Listening

listening... for the sound
your hand makes when it touches mine...
for the words your eyes whisper
when you laugh...
for the song your heart sings,
and the prayer your sleeping body
becomes, pressed against mine.
for the sound of the cicadas
chanting in drunken rhythm...
for the boiling of beans
in my grandmother's kitchen.
for the crush of the bat
driving the ball deep into the gap.
for the gurgle of creekwater
running o'er a melon wedged tight.
for the sharp crack of the gun
and the bullets whistling overhead.
for the cry of the hungry baby
and the slap against his mother's face.
for the clank of the leg irons
across a cold concrete floor.
and the wail of the widow.
for the song of the workers
bent neath the sun in the field.
for the speech of the visionary
who already smells like death.
for the pounding of the oil rigs
raping the earth without feeling.
for the lies of the politician
stealing the souls of the people.
for the sound of hate's fists
pounding the gay boy to death.
for the scream of raging empty
when they bring a mother's boy home.
for the sound of the door,
closing for the last time.
for the memory of an old hymn,
calling from beyond the river.
listening... for the moan of lovers,

bodies slapping in the night.
for the wild beating of a heart
dissolving nameless into mine...
for the echo of something more
than a drink and a feeling...
that needs to breathe, to run, to fly,
and to dance
listening

Eric Cockrell

Liturgy....

liturgy....
black coffee,
old hands opening boxes.
sweeping the floor
of the soul.
words shaped like photographs
made of wind and tears.
simple things...
simple doings!

the same shovel
digs the grave,
digs in the garden.
barefoot,
and half naked,
no need for words,
no fears to console.
live without regrets,
leave it all on the table.
do the work, and move on.

dont be the hollow religious image,
a body that has no love,
a love that has no body.
dont be so quick to wash your hands,
the dirt neath your nails
is your heritage!
liturgy...
black coffee,
and touching,
the shovel, and the axe!

Eric Cockrell

Live By The Lie

if you live by the lie,
no matter how well off you are,
then you cannot afford the luxury

of honesty at all costs.

that is why....
America has fallen!

Eric Cockrell

Live, By God, Live!

perhaps i've said what i wanted to say poorly...
the crux of the matter is this:
we are where we are because
we've put ourselves here,
we've allowed this to happen to us!
we blame the government,
we blame people who are 'different',
we blame the economy,
we blame god,
we blame each other.
bottom line, we are to blame.
we cannot evolve as human beings
without evolving as a society.
we cannot evolve as people,
without evolving as a nation.
we cannot evolve as citizens,
without evolving as citizens of the world.
we've stood by, and done nothing.
we have run from the truth,
we have betrayed ourselves!
we've existed in tiny cells,
denying our responsibilities.
this has to stop!
we are out of time.
we are surrounded by suffering,
and our indifference is the cause.
stand up! shout! demand dignity!
and Live, by god, Live!

Eric Cockrell

Live, Die... But Live!

Live, die....
Curse, sweat, pray.
Fight, work, give.
Risk, lose, forgive.
Taste, touch, haunt.
Feel, breathe, grieve.
Laugh, sing, shout.
Kiss, believe, rise.
Love...

Live, die... But live!

Eric Cockrell

Living In A Van

living in a van....
father, and children,
mother dead...

jobless, homeless....
bathing in service stations,
trying to keep the kids

in school....
asked the little girl
what she wanted most of all....

'to help underprivileged kids! '
dammit... wake up!

Eric Cockrell

Living Prayers

we who govern by living prayers,
not the kind spoken in constant dull repetition.
who find wealth in not owning, and being owned,
who see justice as governed by equality!
who believe in one race, the human race!
who remain hungry until all are fed!
who know wars to be both the sin
and the condemnation of man.
who walk in determined peace.
whose only religion be kindness...
who accept each other as we are,
without the need to convert or change!
who believe that all life is sacred,
and that the earth is hallowed ground!
who identify god in the stranger,
knowing that there be no strangers,
only brothers and sisters.
whose deepest self can be found
in the rain that falls without being asked!
we who dare to touch,
to get involved, to get dirty,
to get down in the ditch to help a neighbor.
who love without restraint,
and who give past the point of giving!
we who believe, and therefore live,
we who live and therefore believe.
dreaming to be just a part,
just a step on the path to truth!

Eric Cockrell

Lone Seagull

a lone seagull
...flying over
.....an empty beach,

the day after
...we paid
.....for our choices.

wondering and thinking
...what could i have done
.....to change the final outcome?

one day too late!

Eric Cockrell

Lonesome Farewell...

lonesome farewell...
wind blown dust,
cardboard boxes in the rain.
the doorknob broken,
the window nailed shut.

empty fields, briars and thorns.
a dead rabbit rotting
on the side of the road.
signs falling down,
tree limbs on the ground.

silence screams, waves of grief!
the smell of want, forgotten lips.
words cling like cobwebs
to the empty walls...
where are you now?

where are you now?

Eric Cockrell

Lonesome Refugee's Song

with purpled rage i strike the page,
with words i cant contain.
whether to justify or testify,
that lives be not lived in vain.
all that's strange, the cry for change,
the burned out buildings moan.
the tried and true, the old and new,
the lonesome refugee's song.

no need for preacher, or well paid teacher,
this blade against the wheel.
no vain illusions driven by confusion,
let us speak of what is real.
the blood stained hands of arrogant man,
that cannot be washed clean.
the hollow greed that takes from need,
the faces that haunt my dreams.

the cost of war, capitalism's whore,
driven by the oil that kills.
human rights, the common fight,
against those who take what they can steal.
the unborn child of meek and mild,
will never know the breast,
while pawns disguise the truth with lies,
hiding the sins they wont confess.

black and white, but day and night,
the blood of both runs red.
i hear the voices, the price of choices,
hear the lament of the dead.
religion's drugs, the fearful hugs,
can no longer fill the bowl.
the bodies frail, starvation's hell,
leave marks upon the soul.

Eric Cockrell

Lonesome Refugee's Song (Part Two)

tis not magic, nothing more tragic,
than the works of mankind.
with instant salvation by quick donations,
the blind follow the blind.
while the rich cast bread to the nearly dead,
and kick the dogs as they eat.
with boots of flesh that stink of success,
they grind the bones beneath their feet.

the time clock shouts, undresses doubt,
till the truth is revealed.
dignity cries with unbound eyes,
till the cup of cost is filled.
god removes her mask for those who ask,
who've nothing left to lose.
while pilgrims search the trash and the dirt
for the things that can be used.

the distant shore, beyond the door,
the key won by fire and trial.
the naked stand with battered hands
beneath the cross of man's denial.
to bear the blow because they know
that they have not a home.
and only by heart to light the dark...
hear the lonesome refugee's song!

Eric Cockrell

Long After We'Re Gone

absinthe, and rose,
your gypsy hips.
explodes from within,
your trembling lips.

batlles fought and lost,
bodies by the roadside.
we've come too far,
we have nothing to hide.

flame on the water
that never goes out.
every mile, every minute,
there can be no doubt.

falling stars wrapped,
lives in a thimble.
no deeper beauty,
than the pure and the simple.

given, no regrets,
and nothing left behind.
the ears of the deaf,
the eyes of the blind....

a kiss, and a sword,
cuts deep and long.
the echo of the storm...
long after we're gone!

Eric Cockrell

Long Conversation With God....

i had a long conversation with god...
and asked a lot of questions.
i looked up to see the setting sun,
embracing the mountains and the trees.
and somehow i knew...
there's a bowl for every hunger.
and night itself is a blanket,
even the moon kisses good night.
what i dont know is not important,
what i am wears no mask.
and the sound of the wind in the trees,
answers what i dont know to ask!

Eric Cockrell

Long Grown Cold

thunderstorm, and ashes...
wild horses running free.
wolves panting in the darkness,
owls shudder in the night.
bats hang upside down, and then die,
like falling stars disappear.
i lick the walls of your soul,
until my tongue bleeds.
water dripping from a rusted spicket,
the old tree split by lightning.
i kiss your eyes, and death stammers,
even word hesitates.
longing tastes like sap and old books,
sadness precious hangs and falls.
you dig your nails into my heart,
the waterfall frozen in time.
stone throbs, pines pray needle prayers.
there's no direction in the darkness,
only pulse, and animal souls.
then i awaken with a start,
gasping for breath in an empty room.
wind blown branches scratch the window,
embers whisper long grown cold!

Eric Cockrell

Long Haired Revolution

twas a long haired revolution,
when the world was still young!
crosslegged beads, and a pipe,
and peace was the chant.
rainbow skins half naked,
hearts full of trust.
back to the simple,
to the ways before ways.
songs of redemption,
wild eyed priests and prophets.
when love was a thunderstorm,
and hope was a moment!

Eric Cockrell

Long Live America!

you stole their lands
with whiskey and Bibles,
buried their desecrated women
in open graves.
shouted, 'long live Bush,
and weapons of mass destruction'.
grovelling in brick houses,
with chevrolet drives.
sent your sons to executions,
sold your daughters on the block.
and prayed at night for white redemption,
beneath the flag that bore your name.
long live America,
close the borders, patrol the skies.
eating day old bread in empty rooms,
shuddering at the sound of shadows!

Eric Cockrell

Longing For The 'Mother'!

humanity's problems with distance and separation, are to a large degree due to the shift in ancient times from a matriarchal society, to a patriarchal society...

in doing so we lost the intimate connection between the child and the mother... the senses of gentleness, tenderness, sensuality, and awe... we lost the sense of home....

as a patriarchal society, we react to feelings we can't control by declaring war, by invading, by conquering. our built-in insecurities cause us to take, to violently take, and yet to never be filled.

our god becomes as violent, and judgemental, as our own images....

we search for wisdom in building, acquiring, all the while pounding our chests... but our chests are empty!

the longing and the lostness we feel is for the 'mother'...

the god that has intimate conversations with trees is lost!

the god that is wind is feared...

and so we fear death!

Eric Cockrell

Lonliness (Feels)

lonliness...
feels like,
the train passing,
middle of the night,
long forgotten tracks.
the factory building empty,
set ablaze by anger.
the flight of the crows,
pawprints left by a stray cat.
the tears of a man
when he thinks that
no one can see.
the clouds that bury stars,
the trees that hold up the sky.
the black hand of death
wrenching light from the heart.
the prayer long unanswered.
the echo of your own voice,
the key that doesnt fit the lock.
unmarked stones in a graveyard.
the windowpane covered with dust.
the lone wolf staring,
the letter sent to the wrong address.

Eric Cockrell

Lonliness (Smells)

lonliness...
smells like,
my grandmother's kitchen,
after working outside all day.
rain, just before it falls,
a fresh plowed field.
my mother's old Bible,
a fireplace too long unused.
old nuts, your pillow,
the old pine tree that fell
and lay rotting in the yard.
a well oiled glove,
the tractor in the barn.
your hair, a rose just opened,
the box too long
in the back of the closet.

Eric Cockrell

Lonliness (Tastes)

lonliness...
tastes like,
blood crusted on the lips,
the hint of brandy that lingers.
the first smoke
when you walk free from jail.
the crust of the pie,
the tongue of first love.
the soft place
on the back of your neck.
smoke and soot and greyness
as you walk the city streets.
the meat cooked long and slow,
falling apart in your mouth.
the trace of garlic,
the bitter shock of gunpowder.
gravel dust, spring water, ...
the last kiss,
a black and white photograph.

Eric Cockrell

Looking (Meditation)

looking for awakening,
i gave up, and quit looking,
- the petals opened!

i do the wrong thing,
say the wrong thing,
think the wrong thing,
feel the wrong thing...
so many times every day
that it pisses me off!
seems like the harder i try
the worse i become!
maybe i need to quit trying!

looking for freedom,
i gave up, and quit looking,
- my chains fell to the ground!

i walk down this same road
again and again, and
nothing ever changes!
every time i get to the end
it begins again.
this really pisses me off!
seems like the further i walk
the further i have to go!
maybe i need to quit walking!

looking for redemption,
i gave up, and quit looking,
-and found the key within my heart!

Eric Cockrell

Looking For God

you speak of looking for God...
my child, God is not lost!
it is we who are lost....
before we can find God...

we have to first find ourselves!
then, and only then,
we will be able to know
the God within us....
and in every living being

around us....
it is not God who is blind...
it is us! my child,
open your eyes...

salvation is as near
as your own soul!

Eric Cockrell

Looking For Jesus

you got up early,
ate breakfast, showered,
put on your best clothes,
picked up your Bible,
got in your car and
drove to church...
looking for Jesus...

went to Sunday School,
said a coupla prayers,
listened to the preacher,
sang a coupla hymns,
made an offering...
looking for Jesus...

shook hands, patted backs,
jumped in your car
to hurry home...
passed an old blind man
in dirty clothes
standing on the corner...
pulled in the drive...
looking for Jesus...

you just passed Him!

Eric Cockrell

Looking For Sugar!

following the trail of the ants,
past empty factory buildings.
past fields not planted.
past vacant store fronts.
past cars up on blocks,
and signs yelling 'for rent'...
following the trail of the ants,
looking for sugar!
following the trail of the sun,
from day unto night.
from family to forsaken.
from home to the road.
from god to the faces
that ring like haunted church bells,
following the trail of the sun...
looking for sugar!

Eric Cockrell

Looking For The Promised Land

we march together....
the homeless, jobless,
the sick and the hungry.
the victims of poverty,
racism, discrimination, and abuse.
black skin, white skin, brown skin all...
people of all nationalities and languages,
male and female, straight and gay.
people of all religions, doubters and atheists.
those who've been imprisoned,
or who've been used up and spit out
by the system.
young and old, with families and alone,
angry, honest, forgiving, demanding...
the chosen people, looking for the promised land

Eric Cockrell

Looking For Tornadoes

some of us are born,
looking for tornadoes...
and spend our lives,
singed by lightning.
flying madly like moths
toward the flame that devours,
scarred by the beatings,
just living to feel...

loving the unspeakable,
touching the untouchable...
we smell like the disease,
while eating the cure.
driven by the need,
lost inside the wind.
but the flesh we eat
is none but our own!

set free by weeping,
we walk on the sea.
and roll away the stone,
knowing the tomb to be empty.
till with autumn eyes,
we bury the candle in a drawer.
have long conversations with spiders,
and sleep alone in the web.

Eric Cockrell

Looking For Tornadoes... (Part Two)

and redemption tastes,
like an old book or our scrotum.
with nothing left behind,
to barter or trade.
standing naked before god,
without a thought of excuse...
bastard trees defiant,
curse the saw and the fire!

and small children whisper
to the trees and the stone.
men with colorless faces,
shovel the dirt.
young girls drunk on cheap wine,
shed a tear and fix their faces.
young soldiers lay down their guns,
and grin with silent understanding...

a moment, a brandy....
and one last smoke!
let babies be born,
let new fathers pace.
let the poor build a fire,
that costs nothing and gives all.
life dances with madness,
and lays down with goats!

Eric Cockrell

Looking For You

looking for you...
in all the small things
i do to get by every day...
in the clouds in the sky
that turn at sunset...
in the song i hum
that has no name...

looking for you...
in the dishes i dry,
and stack on the shelf...
in the quiet time walking
with my old dog...
in the books i read
in the failing light....

looking for you...
in the aches and the pains
this old body feels...
in the softness that
momentarily overwhelms me...
in the crook in the road,
in the last candle of night...

looking for you...
in the words i cant speak,
in the thoughts i cant think,
in the feelings i cant name...
looking for you...
in the hollow of my arms,
in the empty place
that no one else knows....
in the kiss frozen in time.....

looking for you...

Eric Cockrell

Loose Shutter

i am nothing more
than the loose shutter,
banging against the window
of a foreclosed house...

but the shutter,
the wind that blows it,
the window, and even
the empty rooms...

all have faces,
all have names!

Eric Cockrell

Lost Children

we have become lost children,
stumbling in the dark.
numbed by the face of our own hunger,
we cannot recognize ourselves in others.
having laid down the torch,
we follow flashlights....
praying to a god too indifferent to hear.
a god created in our own image,
complete with holes and burnt tongues.
we blame the snake for our desire,
and wear the mark of Cain.
we build weapons made of fear,
and bury our parents in sterile graves.
we wear the chains and shackles,
with heads bowed as mindless servants.
we close our ears to the cry of suffering,
and our eyes to the ribs of need.

so who will come, and who will shout?
who will stand and face the storm?
who will bear the sins and take the lash?
who dares to speak the truth?
who will reach the hand to the enemy?
who will name the bodies?
who will give both eyes and ears?
who will dare to be?

if not you and i, then we're forever lost,
if not now, then they'll be no tomorrow!
if not now... then when my friend?

Eric Cockrell

Lost In Echo.....

you cut off my thumbs,
strung them on a necklace.
split my tongue with a razor,
and burned my shoes.
now i go howling,
in half darkened rooms.
drawn by the scent and the symphony,
of red pulsing blood!

you arched your back,
and the curtains trembled.
the vase full of water,
fell on your pillow.
i awoke from a dream,
my lips dry and aching.
moaned without thinking,
the willow bent, and sure!

who are we? the forgotten,
the silence lost in echo!
the tire worn thin,
the key left in the lock.
the bottle near empty,
on the edge of god's table...
the drum in the closet,
the nest blown by the wind!

Eric Cockrell

Lost In Eternity!

long shadows cast,
the corner now empty.
the bare branch scrapes
against the window
of the house left vacant.

the desk left cluttered,
as if in waiting.
the candle half burned,
naked without fire.
the woodstove cold as ice.

the gravel drive now virgin,
the mailbox rusted shut.
the yard oozes like an open wound,
in the womb of stillness.
nothing moves, nothing at all!

another world?
maybe it never was!
the rope tied in a noose,
the noose around empty.
the hoot of an owl...

lost in eternity!

Eric Cockrell

Lost In The Grain

like an old picture,
hanging on some dusty wall.
in a room where no one goes,
down at the end of the hall.

lives drawn in crayon,
by hands that have since grown old.
lost somewhere in memories,
by a fire that has grown cold.

we were the wind and rain,
the ones who wouldnt love in vain.
the river steady, the sudden change,
the mountain's silence, the midnite train...
we were the wood lost in the grain.

you gave up your heart,
i gave up my home.
we burned a trail
in the dark just before dawn.

we touched the raw wound,
learned to name the scars.
never thinking of going back,
of giving up or betraying hearts.

we were the wind and rain,
the ones who wouldnt love in vain.
the river steady, the sudden change,
the mountain's silence, the midnite train...
we were the wood lost in the grain.

Eric Cockrell

Lost In The Laughter

the shell of a snail
long since departed....
ghosts whisper, cannot touch!

layers of anger
devouring from within,
till nothing is left but dust.

flesh cries out for flesh,
old or young, doesnt matter.
water seeks itself, stone is stone.

a lover, a small fire
too far away to name....
and God's face is lost

in the laughter!

Eric Cockrell

Lost In The Sixties...

forever lost in the sixties...
in the passions, the ideals,
the cries for peace and equality,
for human dignity,
and no more wars.
the music, the poetry,
the communal lifestyle...

but the deaths were many.
assassinations, Hoover style.
and those lost to heroin,
who fell off the edge.
thousands killed in Vietnam,
you'd think we would have learned...
but life went on,
the wheel kept turning.

50 years later,
two more wars,
not to mention invasions.
things worse than ever before.
we who survived became
the very thing that we hated!
we closed our eyes,
fell victim to the greed.
again crying out,
for peace and equality,
for human dignity,
and for human rights.
the earth dying,
because of our decisions.
we who became islands
seeking to fulfill the self,
now must cling to each other,
and become family again.

standing against the lies,
the propaganda, and the money machine...
singing songs of peace

with bloody hands.
lost in the sixties,
but very much here in the 21st century...
the last stand of freedom,
in a world gone mad!

Eric Cockrell

Lost Inside Himself

take care, beware...

he can steal your dreams!

he can betray your heart!

he can ruin your world!

he can take away your time!

he can make you foolish!

he can destroy your family!

he can imprison your soul!

he can twist your truth with lies!

who is this beast? this monster?

the man in the mirror,

lost inside himself!

Eric Cockrell

Lost Inside Mine

riding bareback
in the moonlight
down across the pasture

to where the woods begins.
we tie the horses,
and make our way down

to the creek bank
you search for dead branches
while i clear a spot
you can hear the owl

the turtle, and the song
the water sings over the rocks

in the firelight i begin
again the long journey
of knowing you

rediscovering every niche
and crevice, naming
every star in your sky

nothing else exists
anywhere beyond
touch, taste, and feel

and the sound of
your heart beating
lost inside mine

Eric Cockrell

Love Changes Things

love changes things...
with dirty hands,
with the courage to risk,
with the commitment to give,
with the willingness to lose...
and the determination
to get back up!

Eric Cockrell

Love Defiled

spirits wail in the napalm night,
bodies without faces walk deserted streets.
dreams whisper from cardboard boxes,
ants walk with angel's feet.

the sound of mouth's stricken,
deeper than just need.
the soul of fire shudders,
while glass eyed leeches feed.

history written with grave cost,
we are what we have done.
while outside the door anger lurks,
and the bullet seeks the gun!

gods? i think not....
even demons fear to tread.
the hand takes from its own heart,
and leaves the hunger for dead.

bells ring with hollow haunt,
fear drives the nails in the cross.
even tears of blood cannot repair,
what love defiled leaves as loss!

Eric Cockrell

Love Doesn't Whisper

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two hundred gallons of fuel oil,
standing between november
and early march...

a couple a'loads of scrap wood,
blankets worn and frazzled....
coffee pot stained and ready,

potatoes covered with lime.
a few old books, and a rocking chair
that sits empty most of the time.

some old photographs,
and a box of clothes,
gathering dust by the bed.

a candle half burnt down....
a box of matches, and
an old twelve gauge.

love doesn't whisper,
.....it screams!

Eric Cockrell

Love Has Its Own Scars...

love does not sleep with clouds
and flowers...
nor wait patiently on dawn!
but with the barrel of the gun
cold on bruised lips,
with the torn flesh of moonlight,
at the height of the storm.
love never enters by doors,
but steals through windows...
speaks fluently in the language of hurt.
is the beginning of wars,
and their only end.
wine bittered with poison,
water still and pure!
rises in flight without warning,
tears the gutters from the roof.
shouts with silence,
and rhymes poverty's nails.
has its own prayers,
names its own gods...
becomes the value of a life,
on eternity's table.
the hurricane that strokes,
the hunger that weeps.
love has its own scars,
digs its own grave with a fork!

Eric Cockrell

Love Is A Death!

love is a death in itself...
drink deeply and long!
the hand on your heart,
frees your soul from your body.
the scent of passion,
burns in the temple of hope...
what you call hunger,
is life redeeming itself!

Eric Cockrell

Love Is Not A Game!

this world's on fire, baby....
even the train's smoking,
coming down the line.
and the bodies of children,
and lovers lay smoldering,
atop the bodies of soldiers,
of mothers, and of poets.
if you've got a voice,
better use it.
you know we're running
out of time.
if you've got a love,
better lay it down....
it's the time of the cross,
and the circus is in town.
better shout it from the rooftops,
dont matter if you have a name.
this battle's not for cowards,
and love is not a game!

Eric Cockrell

Love Is.... (Not The Rose)

love is not a room filled with pure light,
it is a dirty and grimy alley, that stinks of trash!
it is not the rose that blooms in the middle of summer,
but the manure the bush was planted in!

Eric Cockrell

Love Rusts

angry words..
bitterness hangs like rust,
sucks the air from the room....

dead flowers dont bloom.
fire wont burn in the absence.
water doesnt run uphill.

you cannot touch that which
you will not give!
the dead dont lie with the living.

not a second choice,
the last resort, or a safety barrier....
a man's just a man...

and flesh needs flesh!
stars wont fall from a blackened sky,
love rusts without friction!

Eric Cockrell

Love Screams

love screams!
our eyes meet,
are lost in the code
of warriors tired
deep into the fray....

you dont have to talk....
i hear the whisper
of your neck,
the humming of your hands,
feel the warmness
of your spirit passing...

we have loved and lost
each other a thousand times!
i know things about you
that you dont know...
and you about me!

the pagan fires bum,
the hypnotic beat of the drums
sucks the darkness
from my last vestige of light...
you dropp your keys,
i bend down and pick them up,
hands softly brush... worlds ignite!

Eric Cockrell

Love The Children!

when the money is gone,
and they've taken everything away...
they padlocked your house,
and repoed your car...
the years have passed,
have taken their toll.
even the fires of love,
burned down to embers...
at the end of the day,
at the end of the road...
all you have left are the children.
they carry your heart
to a new day and a new world...
love the children!

every child that is born
carries the holy seed.
whatever it takes,
love the children!
a Jesus, a Buddha, a JFK,
a Gandhi, an Einstein,
a Whitman, a Jefferson...
maybe a stronger, better,
reflection of you!
love the children!

Eric Cockrell

Love Transcends Law

there is no love
that is lawless....
love transcends law

and becomes.
any true god
does not limit
that for which we were born.

the only boundary
to love is honesty,
and the willingness

to give at all costs!

Eric Cockrell

Love Wears

love wears,
not always pretty,
deeper than the surface

that others see...
not always right,
often makes mistakes,

know when it has fallen,
pleads for forgiveness.
carries a price

that must be paid in full,
worth every penny, every dime,
every tear, every humiliation....

love never accepts
anything less than the truth,
never asks for as much as it gives....

bruised and battered,
bloodied and dirtied....
with a raw beauty....

that only love wears!

Eric Cockrell

Love Without Remorse!

lightning bugs in winter,
your kisses almost as rare!
a fallout shelter in the midst of a slum,

on the last day on earth!
a bowl of rice for the hungry,
and oil rigs shut down by conscience....

guns and swords to shovels and hoes,
salvation preachers to salvation workers!
political liars to human concern,

profit turned to compassion.
prejudice to acceptance,
loneliness to involvement....

the earth treated with reverence,
common people treated with fairness...
lightning bugs in winter....
love without remorse!

Eric Cockrell

Love, Salvation, And Goats!

she said...

'i still love you as a person,
but not as a man...'

he was silent for a long moment...

and then answered,

'when we go off to war,

do we cut the arms off our enemies,
and leave the legs?

do we cut the legs off,

and leave the arms?

do we pluck out one of their eyes,

and cut off one of their testicles?

do we rip out their tongues,

and demand that they speak? '

she shook her head, crying softly...

'then, declare war on me! '

he walked out, slamming the door,

to sleep with the goats.

while she knelt under a bare lightbulb...

praying for the salvation of his soul!

Eric Cockrell

Loved You!

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when your father
looked into your mother's eyes
in that special way....
i loved you!

before the stones were hauled
to build mighty Rome...
i loved you!

before the fire was first lit
in that long lost cave...
i loved you!

before our ancestors
crawled up on the shore...
i loved you!

before land and sea
were seperate entities....
i loved you!

before day and night,
when light and darkness were one...
i loved you!

and after all is done,
and this world falls down....
i will love you!

Eric Cockrell

Lover, Come To Me!

lover, come to me!
i am the wind,
the sound, and the fury.
the small patches of fur,
left in the ditch.
the stained sheet,
the crack in the window.
i am the barking of dogs,
the song of cicadas...
i am the broken plow,
the hammer laid aside.
the bucket full of rainwater,
the tree bent by the storm.
i am the bodies of the innocents,
the nightmares of the guilty...
the stink of blood
dried by the sun...
the wagonload of melons,
the tornado swept roof.
i am the small shop,
where things are built by hand.

lover, come to me!
the oceans rage...
mountains are shaken,
the night has no end.
the sweat of desire,
covers my nakedness.
i am invisible.
i am the ghost
whose body you feel!
i am the madness
that your stillness defines...
lover, come to me!

Eric Cockrell

Lover, Come Now...

lover, come now...
before the hands strike,
before the door finally closes,
and the latch is locked.

come now...
as sunlight breaks the window,
the hungry child seeks a nipple,
and shadows create forms.

come now...
the guns are silenced,
bodies left like token prayers.
even the trees bent with longing.

lover, come now...
the bridge rattles and creaks,
the waters suddenly calm,
and the ravens have flown!

Eric Cockrell

Lover, Come!

lover, come!
i cannot bear another moment.
i walk aimless through fields,
down wooded paths
to where the water sings
against the rocks!

i have forgotten you,
forgotten your name,
forgotten your face!
all that i have left are
the faint memories
of smells and tastes
and hunger

and timeless indentions
left by touch and feel
and need
lover, come!

lover, come!
through storms and battles,
years of hardship and loss...
through chains and bars and tears
never cried, words never formed...
i have travelled, i have endured,
alone, and cold, ... beaten, and proud,
tired, and sleepless...
till now i am old.

lover, come!
my body yearns and burns,
my hands tremble-
yet are strong!
i want to feel you again,
i want to know you again.
to conquer and surrender,
never knowing which is which,
not caring!

lover, come!
in the still of night,
in the heat of day,
come take my hand!

we'll walk off together
without a glance, without regrets,
daring to live these precious moments
lover, come!

Eric Cockrell

Lovers And Friends

talking, or not talking,
walking, side by side,
hand in hand...
small kind gestures,
a knowing wink,
thoughts shared,
quiet laughter...
dreams that fall like stars
through felt-like layers
of darkness...

dont have to be nobody else,
no need to impress, or flaunt....

a glass of wine,
a fresh cup of coffee...
moment by moment,
alive and aware...

friends make the best lovers!

Eric Cockrell

Love's Armor

i'm taking off this
suit of armor....
worn, bent, and rusted.

i'm laying down
my spear and my shield,
taking off my sandals.

let the flag fall
to the dirt....
fling the battle horn away....

i've given every ounce
to love's battle....
baby, i'm all in!

take what's left of this old man,
or let me wither away...
i've born your name

through hell and passion;
your heart held high,
your spirit written in rain.

be still, and know
that i've been, where i've been...
by your side.... always!

Eric Cockrell

Lovesong

from a tiny acorn the oak tree grows,
what a man cant find a child will know,
only the heart knows the secret
of where the wind blows
and that's enogh for me.

from drops of water the clouds are formed,
that grow together to make the storm.
from the thunder and the lightning
the rainbow is born
and that's enough for me.

the feeling that i have for you
is the simple song i sing.
your mind may not understand,
but your heart knows what i mean.

from old worn hands a life was made,
that fought and worked, touched and prayed.
that weathered the storms,
stood up and stayed
and that's enough for me.

the feeling that i have for you
is the simple song i sing.
your mind may not understand,
but your heart knows what i mean.

Eric Cockrell

Lovesong (Ghost)

if i reached up
and plucked the stars
from the darkest skies,
if i pulled the rain
from the clouds that hang.
if i seeped the stillness
from the mountains strong,
if i took the color
from the rose unopened.
if i took the taste
from the apple
before it ripened,
if i pulled the nails
from the coffin
and raised the body.
if i took the guns
from the soldiers,
and replaced them
with flowers...
if i took the heat
from the fire,
and returned it to your lips.
if i took the hunger
from the hungry,
and gave them faces.
if i healed the sick,
and returned
the child to its mother...
would you know then
that i loved you?
would you know then
that this is for you?

Eric Cockrell

Loving, Burnt...

loving, burnt...
touch of scent
left on the pillow

where you laid,
the turning whisper
of the kiss betrayed,

left by the doorstep
wrapped in brown paper.
the small hint of dampness,

be it passion, or tear...
the sudden longing intense,
as if the world stopped turning...

loving, burnt...

Eric Cockrell

Lullaby In B Minor

from a tiny acorn
the oak tree grows,
what a man cant find
a child will know.
only the heart knows the secret
of where the wind blows....
and that's enough for me.

from drops of water
the clouds are formed.
that go together to
make the storm.
from the thunder and the lightning
the rainbow is born....
and that's enough for me.

the feeling that i have for you,
is the simple song i sing.
your mind may not understand...
but your heart knows what i mean.

Eric Cockrell

Lying Naked

sunset to nightfall.
undressing slowly,
as years pass like shadows
that cant be grasped.

lying naked in the darkness.
the hypnotic hum of the fan,
the cool breeze lapping at my body.

listening for the sound
of footsteps from long ago.
but only the sound of a car passing,
and a neighbor's dog barking.

lying naked in the darkness
my spirit gets up and walks away,
my body calm as fallen leaves

nightfall to eternity.
a kiss, a dropp of blood.
you and i lived like thunder,
now it's time for the rain!

Eric Cockrell

Made By Hand

made by hand....
dreams woven
in a fine cloth....

steps made of stone,
laid one upon the other.
shelter made of oak,

cut and hauled,
nailed together in the sun,
able to stand the night.

this window made of glass,
allowing light and dark
to intertwine....

this old bed made of pine....
the path to the doorway
laid with pine needles....

this old door always open....
the light always on....
this heart made by hand,

waiting for you,
in this stillness...
made by hand!

Eric Cockrell

Made In America

went to the funeral
this morning...
men and women of all ages,

all backgrounds, all colors,
stood in line to pay respect.
workers, laid off workers,

workers without hope
of a job....
we viewed the body,

the preacher said kind words,
bringing back memories...
then to the graveyard.

buried beneath an old tree
in a corner soon forgotten...
the headstone read:

Made In America!

Eric Cockrell

Made In America...

that old drunk bastard,
with shoes made of flesh...
who bummed your last cigarette,
and stinks of a thousand deaths.
who discovered love in the back seat
of a 64 chevy...
who lost god in the jungles,
drinking napalm to hide the shakes.
who burned a flag in front of the mission,
built bridges, houses, and dreams...
ah, but the dreams were not to be his,
and the houses he never entered.
while love left him for a faster horse,
and a carriage made of gold.
who died a hundred times
neath an old Esso sign...
who buried his dog in an open field.
who sold his soul for a bottle of cheap wine,
and fell asleep on the railroad tracks.
who staggered back into the alley,
to the cheers of mongrel rats...
whose heart reads 'made in America'...
whose eyes the devil fears!

Eric Cockrell

Madness

light unto light,
death unto death,
you gave me your passion,
i gave you my breath...

and all that is,
all that ever could have been,
becomes ashes and dust,
the home of the wind!

Eric Cockrell

Madness #2

lover, no saint!
i cherish devils and nymphs;
the undressing of raindrops,
and original sin!

a thousand tiny deaths
in your kiss and your touch,
when more is less,
too little's too much!

Eric Cockrell

Madness #3

hardness and softness,
plunge, and hold back;
darkness without asking,
the sun comes without tracks.

hammer and tongue,
words too real to speak;
at the end of the world,
where time and timeless meet!

Eric Cockrell

Madness #4

death come knocking,
i celebrate, i dance!
nothing happened without meaning,
nothing happened by chance!

you became you,
and i became me;
in the burning of bridges,
in waves tossed by the sea!

Eric Cockrell

Madness #5

a poet, a seer...
a run of the mill hand;
my ship comes to rest
in that far away land.

bereft of all sanity,
i wade into indulgence;
till that distant day,
my final reemergence!

Eric Cockrell

Madonna

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Madonna eyes,
looking down
to the beating heart

held in hands so gentle....
loving, molding, preparing
him for the pathway

to his personal cross....

Madonna tears,
falling warm and wet,
down the face that maps

the destinies of those that suffer....
tears that have names,
known by no other....

nailed one by one till death relieves.

Madonna hope,
wrapped in flesh and longing,
head bowed down,

as if to pray!

Eric Cockrell

Mailbox!

frost on the hawk's wings,
small face against the glass;
or perhaps just a memory,

black coffee and cigarette smoke.
bare limbed trees walk beside me,
down the path to the road....

mailbox hanging open,
only cobwebs in the damp.
the porch light still on,

like a ghostly lighthouse,
calling back things you've forgotten,
that i go through every day!

Eric Cockrell

Make Every Breath Count!

emancipate...

by every action,
every word, every thought.

reconcilliate...

by every action,
every word, every thought.

facilitate...

by every action,
every word, every thought.

resuscitate...

by every action,
every word, every thought.

make every breath count!

Eric Cockrell

Make It Now!

freedom...

at whatever cost,

is much more affordable,

and a much better bargain,

than not being free!

make the choice! make it now!

whatever it takes, in 2012!

Eric Cockrell

Making Pessoa Wonder...

do you know what love is?
the bruise on my lips,
that still tastes like you!
the sound of thunder,
as snowflakes dance to the ground.
the wet stain on cardboard legs....
ah, yes, and more!
the words that only silence knew,
barefoot prayers, and clouds of breath.
forests lost in shadows,
in eyes both timeless and raw.
the scent of perfume in the book on the shelf.

tis fire that must be touched,
must be tasted and felt.
while the crows fly on a gray wrapped canvas...
the lies of distance grow fainter with need!

perhaps then a corner table,
a couple drinks without speaking,
fingers that almost touch.
the poem comes to life,
takes a body for it's own....
perhaps it's always been this way!

only in death, but just maybe in life!
a stray cat follows the footprints,
those left by angels and demons....
there are no names but something more,
fire leaves its scar on burned out temples....
while sparrows walk on snow,
making Pessoa wonder!

Eric Cockrell

Male/Female

i find it sad how men,
in their 'infinite wisdom',
throughout the centuries,
have created a male world,
driven by a male ego,
controlled by male wisdom,
under the banner of a male god,
created in the image of man!

and yet the power of creation
has always dwelled in the feminine...
wisdom, passion, eros, beauty,
and even childbirth...
men in their fear of what they
dont understand, and of what they
cant do in themselves...
have always sought to keep the female
down, regulating her to second class
status, keeping her subjugated.

look at how we've ended up! a total
disaster created by self oriented fear!
i think it's time we stepped back, and
looked at the truth!

we wouldnt be here without women...
would have very little understanding
of love and family!
that which moves and flows, creates,
and brings night after day, and day
after night, has always been the feminine...
i stand in awe of woman... can feel her
presence in both the wind and the rain...
the emancipated woman stands at the door,
both mystery and faith by her side!

Eric Cockrell

Man In The Mirror

sometimes i laugh
at the man in the mirror,
the miles written in lines
carved in the stone of experience.
save the world?
hard to do when
you spend all your time
picking yourself up!
years working with my hands,
my back bent and determined.
now i walk with the pain,
well deserved and well earned.
passionate to madness,
been there and back.
now i'm happy with stillness,
when i can steal a moment.
a lover, a fool, a warrior,
a loser... a spiritual walker,
a heretic, a demon...
i paint pictures on dollar store canvases,
with borrowed brushes and dumpster paint.
striving to bring into focus,
the beauty of that which is common!
the mothers, the fathers, the sisters,
the brothers... the 50 hour weeks,
the Saturday night blow...
the simple, and the pride,
of the honest and giving.
the mistakes that make or break a man.
the man in the mirror,
needs no name or title...
remember him for caring,
that will be enough!

Eric Cockrell

Man To Man

bossman, bossman
crying in your gravy;
call me worthless, useless,
just dont call me lazy.

hard to keep your houses,
hard to keep your cars.
turn your head, lift up your nose,
so you cant see my scars.

count your money, count it well,
is my picture on each bill?
come on down to this poor man's town,
and i'll show you what's really real!

truth is, i'm fed up,
not going to take it any more!
i'm not your boy, not your trash,
not your excuse, not your whore.

i dont want your riches,
all the things you're clinging to.
just a little respect, some dignity.....
man to man, me and you!

Eric Cockrell

Man, Woman, And Child

blackness....
ache, wound raw
with freedom's stripes.

hallowed ground,
...or hollow sound?
the ghosts of the dead,

mourn....
not just words,
a way of life,

a sense of being,
equal with dignity!
sold too cheaply,

by those without conscience....
but our fathers stand
with memory's sword!

right or wrong,
can only choose right...
human demands human,

every man, woman, and child!

Eric Cockrell

Mankind's Greatest Failure

human failures...

war, poverty, hunger,
inequality, injustice,
enslavement, loss.....

and war leads to all of these.

greed, power, abuse,
apathy, fear, lies....
all cause war!

inability to communicate,
prejudice, righteous fervor...
allow wars to continue...

war!
mankind's greatest failure!

Eric Cockrell

Mankind's Mantra

conquer and invade...
mankind's mantra;
which in truth should be...
afraid to love!

Eric Cockrell

Many Colors

i am a man of many colors,
many thoughts, many feelings;
raw and honest, you get what
you see... i'm not hiding
in a shell.

you'll know me by the parts
of you that you see reflected
in me... by the understanding
bridge between us....
for we are family.

i dont pretend to know
all the answers... but i am
searching, moving forward.
i make mistakes everyday,
and i know i own them!

i'm just a man... but that
in itself is a journey, a quest...
all i can offer is a hand,
and a drink of water
beneath the bridge.

Eric Cockrell

March Barefoot...

gonna march barefoot on Washington,
with what i got left on my back.
gonna stand on the steps,
take off my hat,
and tell them that common folks
are still about!
gonna sing them a song about working,
something they dont know much about!
show them a picture of my house and family,
a picture's all that's left.
gonna hand them a dollar bill,
make them read,
'in God we trust'...
ask them what this god looks like!
gonna, gonna, gonna!

Eric Cockrell

Marching Together

marching together
means living together
as one breathing organism....

seeing beneath the skin,
beyond the differences....
and into the heart.....

letting go of self....
water becomes an ocean....
marching together

for justice and equality.
no excuses... what we fight
is bigger than the fight

that we've fought out of fear.
one breathing organism,
walking in the body
of God's dreams!

Eric Cockrell

Mark Of Cain

the mark of Cain
on your forehead...
you killed Abel,
his blood crying out
from the earth,
from every shore,
from every land...
your own brother,
and nothing silences the cry!

Eric Cockrell

Martin Luther King

Martin Luther King...
you were a torch
that lit a darkened world,
a beacon,
for all those oppressed,
a song,
for the downtrodden and weary...
you looked beneath the skin,
and saw the soul!

life cut short,
far too soon by
the forces of hatred and fear...

Martin, we need you now!
your vision lives in the
hope of the oppressed...
your determination our anchor,
your heart beats strong
in each of us who believe!

Eric Cockrell

Martyrs!

martyrs...

silently trudging head down
to the promised land.

familiar?

a neighbor, a forgotten uncle,
the stranger you saw on the corner;
the faces...

bombing victims in the Middle East,
hungry children on foreign soils,
the kid picked up for looking suspicious.

the bullied kid that hung himself,
the family living in the backseat
of a car in Florida.

the tired eyed man standing
in the unemployment line.

the protesters, and the cops
with pepper spray and clubs...

the face of the young boy taken
from his drug addict parents...

bodies and faces,
souls wrapped in dirty flesh.

silently trudging,
martyrs!

Eric Cockrell

May Peace Sleep

sometimes it is best
for the night to take its own...
for the moon to pray,
and the trees to weep.
the heart once spoken need not say more,
and the wind needs not definition.
wise men came and left their gifts as such,
and the owl waits in stillness...
and the simple carpenter builds a house,
believing it will be some stranger's home.
a glowing dropp of rain that fell,
as if a star, or nothing...
i thank each of you for who you are,
may peace sleep beneath your pillows!

Eric Cockrell

Maybe

body fluids, and black coffee...
pawnshop of the heart,
the corner of third and fifth,
or maybe...

they're talking about invading Iran
and the stock market jumps.
gas prices inch upward,
and maybe, just maybe...

you still taste like cinnamon,
and ashes...
maybe....

Eric Cockrell

Melting Pot

many colored drops of rain,
as if the rainbow melted.
childrens' voices crying out,
different sounds, different languages.

all the same language.

millions of hands reaching for
a hand searching for a bridge.
hunger, need, and the emptiness
that drives, that prays, that bleeds.

all the same language.

kindred souls wrapped in fallen leaves,
that crumble, and return to dirt.
millions of eyes turned inward,
under the same sky, looking for tomorrow.

all the same language.

millions of eyes turned inward,
under the same sky, looking for today!
many colored drops of rain.
as if the rainbow melted.

all the same language.
all, speaking human!

Eric Cockrell

Memory

i dont like the feeling,
the touch, the smell, or
the taste of
'you dont love me, but'

i keep grasping shadows
that leave empty burns
on my fingertips
drinking from an empty cup

waiting on the light,
darkness, or a falling star.
memory is a vengeful lover!

Eric Cockrell

Memory Of The Cold!

stirring the ashes
with loving hands,
kneeling down, cupping,
and gently blowing.

i'll set out a rose bush
beneath your bedroom window,
and water it in the dead of night.

the shadow that latches your door,
pulls the cover up around you.
sits and rocks in the peace
of perfect silence...
watching you sleep!

i am the wolf that curls
at the foot of your bed,
the hands of the clock,
stopping in reverence...

the flame that bursts
from ashes almost cold,
catches, and burns away
the memory of the cold!

Eric Cockrell

Mercy # 2

black man, white man,
ground beneath their feet.
families carrying guns and Bibles,
living on the street.

rich man, well hid,
cocktails made of blood and oil.
tyranny, mass slavery,
bodies buried, American soil.

and the hands on the clock
crawl like justice spurned....
tick tock, tick tock,
mercy gives what mercy earns!

Eric Cockrell

Mercy # 3

houses burning, stolen earnings,
lifetimes sold to greed.
take their food, take their dreams,
just how much do you need?

equal rights, stand and fight,
you got nothing left to lose.
sell your children to the lie,
put your heads inside the noose!

and the hands on the clock
crawl like justice spurned...
tick tock, tick tock,
mercy gives what mercy earns!

Eric Cockrell

Mercy # 4

Jesus saves, rob the graves,
take the spirit from the souls.
desecrate, humiliate,
all that glitters can be sold.

freedom's voice, no longer a choice,
sell the truth for a dime.
nameless faces, numbered traces,
head down marching in a line!

and the hands on the clock
crawl like justice spurned...
tick tock, tick tock,
mercy gives what mercy earns!

Eric Cockrell

Mercy # 5

pray to God for a job,
work for milk, a loaf of bread.
trade your bodies for a tent,
leave your pride for the dead.

forget the things you were taught,
ball your fists and fight like hell.
just remember you were there,
when justice died and freedom fell!

and the hands on the clock
crawl like justice spurned.....
tick tock, tick tock,
mercy gives what mercy earns!

Eric Cockrell

Mercy!

gunfire, cash register,
needles falling to the floor;
smash and grab, run like hell,
push your way to the door.

small time clerks, underpaid,
fight to stay alive....
say a prayer, nobody cares,
replace them if they die!

and the hands on the clock
crawl like justice spurned...
tick tock, tick tock....
mercy gives what mercy earns!

Eric Cockrell

Messages From God

feed the hungry, damn it!
how many times do i have
to tell you?

God

Eric Cockrell

Messages From God (Part Five)

only kindergarten kids
argue over which color is best...

grow up!

they're all crayons,
and they all came out
of the same box!

God

Eric Cockrell

Messages From God (Part Four)

this whole religion thing
is starting to annoy me...
you can either look
in the mirror and see me,
or you dont know me!

God

Eric Cockrell

Messages From God (Part Six)

'thou shalt not kill'...
how many ways can
they screw that up?

all-inclusive,
no hidden clause
that says:

'at your own discretion...'

and never in my name!

God

Eric Cockrell

Messages From God (Part Three)

if you love me,
the way you love your neighbor...

i will disarm you!

God

Eric Cockrell

Messages From God (Part Two)

To The Human Race...

even dogs dont pee in their beds...
look what you've done to yours!

God

Eric Cockrell

Miles And Miles

years and years,
miles and miles...
of hands,
grasping mine, holding on
for a time and then letting go...
being grasped by mine,
being pulled up, pulling up,
held onto in spite of...

black, brown, white, and red...
male and female, old and young,
soft, gnarled, and scarred...

hands joining together,
backs against the wall,
hands that pray without letting go,
hands that let go
when the time demands...

hands that build and take down,
that deliver and stand by...
hands powered by hearts
that beat true and human!

Eric Cockrell

Military Corporate Rule!

the elite,
govern by profit,
illusions, propaganda....

are circling their wagons....
declaring war on the common,
average work-a-day people...

taking away rights,
free speech and dissent,
now passing laws

that allow police state tactics....
detain without charging
anyone deemed to differ

in the name of security...
to silence the voices,
and subjugate the masses, ...

under the weight of poverty
while they amass riches!
long planned, now here,

military corporate rule
knocking at the very door
of the free!

Eric Cockrell

Mine, Or Yours

just a pilgrim...
travelling
the pathways
of your body
in search of
a soul...

mine, or yours?...

dare i
pay the toll?
and jump the
trolley?

hurtling madly
to the destruction
of self...

mine, or yours?...

Eric Cockrell

Miracle!

the way your
small hand fits
in my gnarled and

battered old hand...
and feels like home!
your fleeting smile

a cup of water,
a tree giving shade
against the sun.

what you say
never speaking a word!
what you give...

without looking back!

Eric Cockrell

Miracle, And Dust

i cannot help but believe
in the human heart
in spite of all our

mistakes, misgivings, and failures...
in spite of all the wrong actions
we've taken for all the wrong reasons...

in spite of all the times
we've let humanity down...
i know and believe

even on the darkest of nights...
there's a fire that burns pure
as the light from the stars...

that holds infinity in every spark;
that warms the feet of the eternal
in every flesh drawn moment...

that there is in each of us,
both miracle, and dust!

Eric Cockrell

Miracle, And Fire!

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every dropp of water,
every breath of air.
every blade of grass....

every cloud drifting
across the blue sky.
every baby born....

every child growing to adult....
every hand put to the plow,
every face staring out the window.

every heart that opens the door.
every whisper and groan....
every kiss, every touch....

every friend that stands beside.
every moment given,
every moment lived....

miracle, and fire!

Eric Cockrell

Mirror Of Humanity

there is a line
in Jesus's face,
just below His eyes...

and on that line
are written the names
of all the children
in the world
dying of starvation...

there is a line
in Buddha's face,
just below his eyes....

and on that line
are written the names
of all the children
in the world
whose families have
been killed by the
bombs and bullets.

there is a line
in my own face,
just below my eyes...

and on that line
are written the names
of all the children
in the world
i let down when
i dont do my best,
to stand up strong
for equality and peace.

have you looked in a
mirror lately?

Mirrors!

</>
mirrors...
dont lie,
even cracked

with time.
dont make excuses,
nor try to please,

the truth's the truth.

deemed good or bad,
a human collage,
light and darkness,

right and wrong.
the hidden thoughts
deny the right to judge,

and bring us back....
to the mirrors!

Eric Cockrell

Modern Christian Thought...

it is both the absurdity and the convenience
of modern Christian thought that bewilders me...
the idea that one can place all his/her mistakes
and wrong doings on the shoulders of one man
crucified 2000 years ago, and be totally absolved
of any responsibility...
that with a few prayers and an offering, we are
absolved from the responsibility for feeding the hungry,
housing the homeless, healing the sick...
have we not missed the point of the teaching?
does 'Follow Me' not denote just that?
follow, do as he did, live as he lived.
feed the hungry, house the homeless, heal the sick!
get down in the ditches with the common and poor.
do we not each have our own cross to carry?
our own Golgotha... our own crucifixion?
for our sins, and for humanity's sins... the greatest of
which is indifference!
not condemnation, but compassion!
not being set apart, but part of!
is forgiveness not an action?
the action of being human!

Eric Cockrell

Modern Day Hobo

i've been walking this old road
for too damned long.
i know every turn,
and every sign.
i've fallen, got back up,
i know every puddle, every stone.
i've searched every alley,
i've paid the cost by time.

a modern day hobo,
a drifter, a singer, and a fool.
a friend to the end,
a crutch and a tool.
my wings are dirty,
and my heart paid the debt.
the feeling you remember,
i'm the face you forget...

i've climbed your mountains,
i've crossed your rivers.
fought your battles,
i've lost your wars.
i've been a user and a taker,
a healer and a giver.
the bandage on your wounds,
the key to your door.

a modern day hobo,
a drifter, a singer, and a fool.
a friend to the end,
a crutch and a tool.
my wings are dirty,
my heart paid the debt.
i'm the feeling you remember,
the face you forget...

Eric Cockrell

Modern Day Okies!

hard dust bowl depression days,
the banks came with tractors and guns
and papers to take away...

the old home places, the farms,
their way of life, their family way....
kicked them off like they were trash...

called them Okies...
white trash, despised by
all the 'good' people who still had....

drove them west, migrant camps or die...
faceless, homeless, expendable...
and now the tide has turned,

and more American people
kicked off, kicked out...
the bank comes 'round again....

taking no prisoners!
the weak and poorest will die....
the strong ones will fight!

call us what you want...
white, black, Hispanic, dont matter
what color or where from!

we're not your trash!
keep looking down from your towers,
one day they'll fall on you...

your banks will crash...
and they'll be no one there to help,
no one left to do your work!

Eric Cockrell

Money And Profit

what it comes down to
...in the end is...

the political machine,
...be it Democrat,
.....or Republican,

runs on the wheels
...of money and profit!

they'll throw a bone to the poor,
.....now and then,

wave issues like flags,
....quote the founding fathers
.....when it behooves them.

but in the end.....
....money and profit.

tell me....
what did the founding fathers
...do in a similar situation?

Eric Cockrell

Money Does Not

money does not
make ignorance
an intelligent option!

does not
make one man
better than another!

does not
excuse apathy, hypocrisy,
or greed!

cannot
buy love, salvation,
or dignity!

Eric Cockrell

Moonlight Swallowed

poets do their best work,
with shovels by light of moon.
burying the unspeakable,
owls mumble o'er the grave.
and moonlight taunts,
with a flip of her hair,
sending fireflies to worship
in the naked trees.

the lies old men tell,
over bourbon and wars.
old bellies straining,
and eyes long dead.
while their women grieve,
over irons and burnt pots.
and the children plot,
with matches and wills.
a Wal-Mart cross necklace,
blood pressure, and sugar.
while boys with hard passion,
stare at girls with big breasts.
crippled by fear,
unable to talk or listen...
life races by,
in spasms of ego.
and hymns sung in graveyards
seem little to pay...
for the fire and the embers,
now ashes cold.
somewhere a baby is born,
an abandoned dog killed by a car.
one seeks for milk...
the other eaten by crows!
flags stained by pus,
lowered in reluctant protest.
while a single flower blooms,
on a mountain of garbage...

and poets, lest we forget,

look for hammers and nails,
ah... to build an ark!
moonlight... swallowed by clouds.

Eric Cockrell

Moral Fiber!

true moral fiber...
is grounded in respect!
respect yourself!
respect the earth!
respect your neighbor!
(everyone is your neighbor)
respect the search for truth.
respect justice!
respect the rights of human beings
to be human beings!
respect the need of each and all!

living thus...
will not allow you to respect,
acts of injustice,
acts of ignorance,
acts of prejudice,
acts of greed!

be respect!

Eric Cockrell

More Affordable

which is more affordable,
more cost efficient?
to grow corn and potatoes,
or manufacture guns and ammo?
to make the medicine that heals,
or to invade other countries?
to build housing for the homeless,
or to prop up banks that fail?
to help addicts get clean,
or build more prisons?
to change the system,
or to watch it fall?

Eric Cockrell

More Intimate Prayers.... (Random)

are we alive?
or do we reside in death?
merely staring through an open window
at the reflection of our lives
in a mirror?

i saw Jesus's eyes
in the eyes of the stray dog...
and so didnt have to ask his name!

how many buddhas
did you kill cutting down trees
to widen the road?

when the path was already there!

a wilted rose petal
knows more about love than
we will ever know!

bottom line... we are all people searching,
walking the path, stumbling, cursing, and praying...
the best thing we have.... is each other!

Eric Cockrell

More Issues (Stop The Wars)

it is absolutely time
to stop pushing the lie!
stop the wars!
bring the boys home!

we are not liberating anybody!
we are not protecting freedom!
the powers that be are making
money, a lot of money....

defense contracts, etc....

the war machine is a bigger threat
to our security than outside terrorists
will ever be!

democracy is not a business!
stop the damn wars!

Eric Cockrell

More Issues, And Thoughts

the inherent greed of capitalism
causing it to implode, both here
and abroad...

we've reached a point in time
when any system set up for the
few at the expense of the many
is going to fail...

it has to...

our only hope for survival lies in
redistribution, equality, and a shared
goal for humanity...

it has to happen!

Eric Cockrell

More On Trayvon Martin

i am appalled
at the lack of justice
in the Trayvon Martin case!
cold blooded, racially motivated,
murder...
and not even an arrest.
where and when
did self defense
constitute shooting,
and killing,
a seventeen year old kid
eating a bag of skittles.
if we cant get some action
on this case...
then we dont have a justice system!

Eric Cockrell

More Sensual!

just an intelligent conversation,
about something that really matters.....

an
..honest
....expose
.....of
.....the
.....heart....

a
..dedicated
....response
.....to
.....need.....

a
..compassionate
.....desire
.....for
.....change....

nothing could ever be more sensual!

Eric Cockrell

More Snow.... (Will Fall)

this body has to die,
to decompose back into earth,
for this spirit to step free,
and remember who it 'is'...

we borrow urns for the journey,
but urns are not the journey.
and pots made of clay,
cannot hold oceans forever.

the dance of death,
smells of womb, and depth...
the hidden name,
sets paper walls ablaze.

the kiss of death's lips,
turns great trees toward winter.
leaving stains in the snow...
ah, but more snow will fall!

Eric Cockrell

More Than Anything!

more than anything....
i want people to be free!
everybody, everywhere....

joined together as one,
feeling the tide come and go,
on sands that do not grasp!

more than anything,
i want to be the rain
that falls after the drought....

the snow that wraps the beaten earth
in the blanket of newness, and hope.
more than anything...

i want to be the cup...
the hammer and the nails,
the bowl of rice, the tent,

the fire that those cold gather round....
more than anything,
i want to be the steps,

the bridge, and the lighthouse....
whatever you need on the path,
that leads you home to freedom!

Eric Cockrell

Morning Birds

i undress you in silence
with words that have fingers,
and need not sound,
or form....

embracing the light
hidden in your darkness,
i lick the years from your eyes.

and coming like rain,
i release your suffering,
drunk on the scent

of your being...
the song of morning birds,
a gift left by the wind...

on the step by your door!

Eric Cockrell

Morning Meditation

breathing in,
i take in the pains of hunger,
the ache of loss,
the despair of homelessness.

breathing out,
i exhale oneness, sameness,
and peace.

breathing in,
i take in prejudice, hatred,
fear, and anger,
and the blackness of greed.

breathing out,
i exhale forgiveness,
understanding, and compassion.

Eric Cockrell

Morning Meditation (Walking)

walking,
aware of each step,
i feel my feet touching,
the earth touching my feet...

i feel the bombs falling,
the families huddled in fear,
the bare apartments and empty tables,
the needles, the guns, and the dumpsters.

step by step,
i feel the old woman dying
in the stink of the nursing home.
i feel the child crying...

in the room of darkness.
i feel the mother's tears,
and the father's deep firm loss,
as they lower the casket...

i feel the dirt,
and the stone.
walking, i am walking,
i feel each step, i name each thought,

aware of each step,
step following step!

Eric Cockrell

Morning Petals Have Fallen!

perhaps then, morning petals have fallen.
now snowflakes give bodies to dreams.
and leaves that fell in glorious passion,
now drink the tint of afternoon grey.
only crows remain as the keepers,
while fingers clutch breasts beneath the dirt.
as holiness smells like pine logs burning,
and heaven's windows are covered with plastic.
death moves untouched among the shadows,
while carpenters stare at uncut trees.
and prayers themselves have faces,
as dreams walk barefooted among us.
do i dare then to breathe?
my lips taste of brandy and willow.
i lay down among the wild creatures,
waiting for the clouds to call...
i lay down among the wild creatures,
waiting for the darkness to fall!

Eric Cockrell

Morning Prayer

may my feet
follow my heart,
may the door to my heart
open both ways.
may my hands
always be open,
may my mouth
support my ears
by silence.
may my eyes
remain naked,
may my soul be connected.
may my thoughts,
words, and actions,
be the breath of compassion.

Eric Cockrell

Morning Refuge Prayer

i take refuge in the Buddha
who shows us the path.
i take refuge in the Dharma
that teaches us to walk in compassion.
i take refuge in the Sangha
the family of living beings working together for peace.

i take refuge in Jesus
in the way that He lived and died.
in the Kingdom of Heaven within us
that heals the sick and feeds the hungry.

i take refuge in the Tao
in the uncarved block.
in water flowing over rocks
finding its own way.

i take refuge in the Great Spirit
in the embrace of Mother Earth.
i take refuge in the wind and rain
in the thunder and lightning,
in the stillness of night.

i take refuge in the howl of the wolf,
in the eyes of small children.
in the truth that breaks down the wall
between living and existing, between sorrow and joy.

Eric Cockrell

Morning Thought

the heart that
insulates itself
against getting hurt...

insulates itself
against loving,
and being loved.

only by wading deep
into the pool of suffering
and pain...

are we set free
to dance the dance
of communion...

there is a healing
in giving without thought
of getting back...

and the freedom
to live.... redemption
in a touch!

Eric Cockrell

Morning Thoughts

a true education
reveals the sameness
in the human condition.
a free society
allows the individual
to be individual.
a real community
is as responsible
for the least as for
the most...
the concept of freedom
becomes a reality
when based in mutual respect.
equality demands
equal effort!

how hard is this
for us to understand?

Eric Cockrell

Mortal Minds

it is these things, the most simple,
honest, and raw... which we have the
most trouble with.

these are the treasures we seek for...
they hold the wisdom we cannot define!
for they contain the eternal, which we
strive for with mortal minds... the
secret of the wind, which we cannot
hold in our hands, or possess!

Eric Cockrell

Moth And Eagle...

i follow the scent
of old dogs and stray cats,
for they already know.
i walk the fine thread
of the spider's web,
awed by awareness.
i hear the howl of the moon,
speak the language of the wind.
i understand that stars care not for names.
i sleep inside the sleepless palm
of darkness becoming light.
who am i? i shout, 'nobody'...
overcome with relief!
one moment cup, the next moment water,
formless taking forms....
filling the need, both inhaled and exhaled,
as much a moth as an eagle!

Eric Cockrell

Moth To Flame, Or Flame To Moth?

two souls, one body,
two hearts, one breath.
the spirit made to fit the mouth....
the dream naked, hungers...

we are born inside
the faintest touch....
carried by a blade of hair,
the scent of a neck....

moth to flame,
or flame to moth?
one cannot exist
without the other!

cannot be complete
without mortar and brick...
laid perfectly seamless,
one lost inside the other!

Eric Cockrell

Mother's Grave

southern men just dont cry.

he stood by his mother's grave,
not a flinch, not a sound...
except cars passing by.

not a good son,
too many wild nights,
& run-ins with the law...

but he could still remember...
her dumplings, & the books
she read to him at night...
the way she taught him to think for himself,
told him never to follow anyone...
her old Bible, & her tired smiling eyes...

southern men just dont cry...
but weeping's a state of mind!

Eric Cockrell

Mourning

we who sit at the feet of angels
and drink alone, the bitter truth...
with no hand to hold against the night,
no kindred spirit, no flame of hunger.

we speak, there is no answer,
only the waiting that sweats & weeps.
the formless bound in a thousand faces
each yearning to be held, and named.

we who sit at the feet of angels...
and drink alone...

Eric Cockrell

Mouth And Heart!

thoughts unbound,
evolving, taking form,
becoming formless....

permeated by rust and fire.
yes, flesh rusts!
hangs like a doorknob,

waiting for the key!
identity becomes sameness,
diverse, and yet joined....

you and i are mouth and heart,
searching for the plate!
footprints, and returning,

we tug at the latch,
or merely the wind!

Eric Cockrell

Mouths To Feed...

the wind called...
and i went walking,
down hard edged streets,
past the abandoned and forsaken...

through dirt and filth,
grime, grease, and soot.
down past the edge of town...
i made camp by the tracks.

haunted by the sounds
of living now just echoes,
echoes and shadows,
shadows almost forgotten.

haunted by the faces,
the dreams, the fires now ash...
the smell of need and
the harsh stench of hunger.

i made a leanto from yesterday's boards,
built a small fire, hunched
against the cold and the howl.
into a small pot all that was left,

and waited for the Guest to arrive.
day became sunset, sunset night.
the darkness wrapped with murky doubt.
then, from behind the clouds,

one star shone through...
and i knew the time,
i knew the answer...
no time for sleep, no sleep for dreams,

i spent the night making ready.
and stood to face the dawn,
with nothing left to hide,
and nothing left to cling to!

a new day, perhaps my last,
one day to make a life.
i turned back towards the town,
and went in search of...

mouths to feed, tears to wipe away!

Eric Cockrell

Mr. Nobody

there's a dead man
in a box down at the
funeral home... nobody
came to see...

but hell, nobody came
when he was alive....
nobody called, nobody wrote...

and Mr. Nobody went about
his days, doing what you do
to get by... cooking small meals,
and drinking black coffee....

watering his plants, walking
his dog, sitting in his chair....
staring at old photographs
of children grown and moved....

and of the woman he loved
for forty years... buried beneath
a tree down by the church...
now he lies in the box, still,

cold, and lifeless... no voices,
no tears.... his dog wandered off....
there's nobody to bury nobody
in the world where nobody lived

and died...

Eric Cockrell

Mud

Mud, on my lips.
Nuts cracked, with a hammer!
Rain drenched, black hard night.
Petals, glass, and moss.

Small fire, nothing!

Eric Cockrell

Muddy Footprints

blue lights in the parking lot,
faceless cars speed by
on rain swept streets....

ghosts march in pedantic rhythm,
in the land of 'no touch, no feel'....
the gas pumps beeping,

always beeping.... shadows
feed shadows... a stray dog
dead on the side of the road....

'can you spare a coupla dollars? '....
heads turn, and walk away....
a young couple walking the tracks....

going nowhere, hand in hand.
you can smell the vacant buildings,
can hear the glass break

on the boarded up windows.....
has anyone a hand, an eye to eye,
muddy footprints where

life should have been!

Eric Cockrell

Murder And Blindness!

we have lived too long,
too well by murder and blindness!
what else can you call it?
when the hand chops off the foot,
and paints the face of an enemy...
when the fingers
allow the toes to starve...
and trees and mountains
stand in line weeping,
waiting to view the casket!

Eric Cockrell

Must She Be More?

god is the moment you stop to listen,
the hand you offer, the mistake you claim...
the time you spend walking beside,
the last bite, the last dollar, you share.
the day you take the time to care,
every small act of kindness.
the tears you weep with,
the loneliness you fill...
the cup of water, the gentle caress.
the hands on your neighbor's shovel,
the stand you take though ridiculed.
the honesty that wears your failures,
and embraces the failures of the stranger!
every breathing moment that you are you...
must she be more?

Eric Cockrell

Must We Always Be Strangers?

lover then, must we always be strangers?
two books that smell the same,
and feel the same...
lost on different shelves?
two oceans separated by a land mass,
two mountains with a valley between.
two wings made distant by a body,
worn hooves on different feet...
when god sees her reflection,
be it thou or me?
am i the darkness that kisses your light?
i hear the sound of distant bells,
you see the light from a far away lighthouse...
and yet both taste like charcoal and dampness,
the fire knows the secrets of both!
with every birth another is lost,
and bare limbs sing the sweetest refrain.
the ship lost on uncharted waters,
doesnt even know it's lost!
the last leaf clinging to the window,
reaches to touch the lines of your face.
the mystery of hands and eyes,
the sound of the train coming down the tracks....
you wear your nakedness well,
in an empty room filled with stillness.
and the sounds and colors of life itself,
are defined by the want lost inside your eyes...
strangers walk together leaving one set of tracks,
while crows whisper and the wolf lingers,
his breath waiting for god to shout!

Eric Cockrell

My Body, Or Yours?

is this my body,
or yours?
whose graven face,
whose broken fingers
numbly buttoning the shirt?
is this distance real?
this taste of ashes and pine...

whose sacrifice,
whose redemption?
what color the night?
the rusted creaking of dawn,
pulls nails from self-made coffins!
what we are,
or what we become...
even the monsters smell familiar!

if love is then a war,
who wins the final battle?
at what price?
and who names the refugees,
walking the dusty road of tribulation?
even darkness has its own chair,
so why am i
painting without a brush?

Eric Cockrell

My Bowl Be Shared!

if wealth causes indifference,
apathy, and insulated selfish behavior...
let me be poor until i die.
let me be rich in my poverty...
and feel every small wound,
share every small sorrow,
dance with every small joy...
let me struggle with my brothers
to find human simple dreams.
let me feel companionship,
both the good and the bad.
and let me sleep with caring....
let my hands get dirty,
let my bowl be shared!

Eric Cockrell

My Conceptions

my conceptions,
a small cardboard box
jammed with reality

till it bursts, and spills over...
open minded?
how could a grain of dust

blowing through infinity
be any other way?
how can a candle

pretend to be a star?
how can the sound
inside the shell call itself

a wave?
how can a blind man
paint the sunset?

my conceptions,
...just a nuisance!

Eric Cockrell

My Degree

someone asked me what my degree was in...
well, i've been a factory worker,
a mill worker, a carpenter, a trash collector...
milked cows and rode horses,
grown gardens and cut wood.
i've been a kick boxer, a fugitive,
a poet, and a mad lover.
a two bit picker, a prisoner,
an addict and a thief.
a street preacher, a hobo,
a father and a husband.
a monk and a heretic....
need i say more.
i've loaded trucks and worked sawmills,
been a salesman and a business manager.
i've climbed mountains and lived in caves,
bathed naked in waterfalls.
i've been a winner, and a loser,
i've been a friend to the end.
i've been a fighter and a believer,
a socialist, and a renegade.
i've read books and gave poetry readings,
sat up all night typing naked thoughts.
met Jesus in a drunk tank,
walked with Buddha through lifetimes.
been a human being, been an asshole,
and reaped my own mistakes.
have stopped in the rain to change tires,
and rescued turtles from the highway.
walked thirty miles to kiss a woman,
and jumped out several windows.
drove too fast, fought too hard,
have fallen from great heights...
other than that...
i guess you're out of luck!

Eric Cockrell

My Family

i dont have any more time
for the 'pretend to be',
the 'wanna be', ...

the jewelled hand,
the insulated mask,
the prideful, the apathetic....

the 'walk away joes'...

only the living, the bruised,
the wounded, the naked....
fighting, struggling, knocking....

standing up even when
they're too weak to go on....
my family!

Eric Cockrell

My Father (Haiku)

my father, good man,
worked, became invisible,
i've followed his path!

Eric Cockrell

My Four-Legged Soul

my four-legged soul,
running wild through the night,
gnashing, gnawing, tearing,

and howling...
baying at the moon.
my four legged soul

can taste the feel,
can feel the raw....
inside the blood,

inside the flesh.
soul devours darkness,
darkness devours light.....

running wild, and free,
drenched in the moment!
my four-legged soul....

Eric Cockrell

My Funeral

i want Townes Van Zandt
and Hank Williams Sr to sing
a couple songs at my funeral...
one by Woody Guthrie,
and maybe one by Billie Holiday...
just stepping through the veil.

a poem read aloud by Walt Whitman,
and one by Ranier Rilke...
then light the pyre,
and step back...
let the flames rise
to meet the wind.
do what you want with the ashes,
my heart will finally be free!

Eric Cockrell

My God In You

clothes piled in an old van,
just enough gas to go
to another mission....

a slow rain falling
on the bent heads
in the nameless soup line....

homeless men leaving
abandoned factory buildings...
just a place to sleep....

amid the ghosts and lives
forgotten... foreclosed houses,
broken homes, and cheap wine.

young girls selling their souls
on foggy street corners
for a fix.... for forgetting...

the lullabies their daddy's sang,
when life was green, and
love was a prince's dream...

small babies lying at the
sagging breasts of dying mothers,
never having lived....

and the young man hanging
from the rafters of isolation,
and judgement wrought by fear.

some search for God
in temples and holy books...
i found my God in you!

Eric Cockrell

My God Walks

my god walks naked in the stillness...
her long hair falling in the moonlight.
her bare feet touching the earth,
her lips wet with the dew.
her breasts heave with the coming
and going of the waves...
her eyes shine like lanterns,
her breath bathes the trees...
and in her softness small animals take refuge...
in her growl change is born...
in her desire time is renewed.
and she sings the hymn of dialogue,
and touching, always touching....
she bends down to me and whispers
her hidden name...
while spiders and turtles begin
the work of redemption...
wolves howl, and mountains breathe...
my god takes the hand of the hungry child,
and walks past the point of distance!
while i follow the sound of my own heart,
to the point of nearness!

Eric Cockrell

My God!

</></></></>
why would you believe
in a God that you're afraid of?
that judges harshly, prefers
one group of people over another?

that you have to pretend for?
that you have to deny your humanity for?
that you have to hide from?
tell me why!

my God smells like rain,
thunders, with flashes of lightning.
whispers like the wind
blowing through the leaves.

runs like the river over the cliff.
caws with the crows, howls with the wolves,
mates with the deer, falls like darkness
on the tired and weary...

wipes dirt and excrement from the body
of the malnourished child....
takes the gun from the hand
of the man bent with rage....

holds the broken and dying
in arms always open...
gives a hand to the fallen,
loves beyond reason,

without condition, without stop!

Eric Cockrell

My God, Your God!

my God and your God
may not have the same first name!
but if they be true,
they have the same last name!
Compassion!

until we understand this abiding truth,
we cannot go further on our individual
paths to eternity!

Eric Cockrell

My Grandfather

my grandfather drowned
while fishing...
i was only fourteen,
i took the call.

in the whirl of
funeral arrangements,
preachers, headstones,
and old hymns...
too much was forgotten.

he gave me my first
pocket knife, showed me
how to sharpen it....

when i grew up
i sharpened knives
for all the women
in the neighborhood.

i can still remember
him taking me to the depot
to watch the train pass by....

when i see a train now
i sometimes wonder...
if he's on it, and coming
for me.....

a way of life gone...
maybe better in some ways....

my grandfather died while fishing....
the fish won the battle
that night!

Eric Cockrell

My Hand Remains...

i have walked with you..
this lonesome road.
over the hills and
through the valleys deep.
across the plains,
from night unto day.
through storms, harsh winds,
and unforgiving rain....
my hand remains in yours!

we have sought shelter
by the way, underneath the trees.
built small fires, and huddled,
exchanging the words of the soul.
from season unto season,
as the bark grew grey...
my hand remains in yours!

and if there be God,
was this so ordained?
the rise and fall of empires,
the rise and fall of your breasts.
though casualties many,
loss drawn in chalk...
my hand remains in yours!

call it love, or war,
fertility, or desire.
the burning of the cross,
the jeers of the crowd.
or the lonesome caw
of the crows undead...
my hand remains in yours!

and soon we come
to the final fork...
time burned down longing,
to ashe and soot.
and bodies worn,

seek the bed of earth.
but if yours continues,
my soul will follow,
destiny, and pledge...
my hand remains in yours!

Eric Cockrell

My Life

my life...
played on an old
Gibson guitar...

played in B minor...

with an occasional shot
of thunderstorm and rainbow,
and black coffee sunrises....

and moments of passion
burnt down like
the candle by the bed....

my life...
my gift to you!

Eric Cockrell

My Other Hand...

the black man's hand,
the poor man's hand.
the Muslim hand, the Jewish hand...
the gay man's hand,
the working man's hand,
the ex-convict's hand,
the farmer's hand, the garbage man's hand...
the Christian's hand, the atheist's hand,
the father's hand, the soldier's hand,
the peacemaker's hand,
the healer's hand, the teacher's hand,
the prodigal's hand, even the murderer's hand...
the victim's hand, the broken hand,
the praying hand, the touching hand...
all, when extended,
feel like my other hand!

Eric Cockrell

My Scent And My Song.....

revolution?
the bridges beyond repair?
while the waters below churn
in oily filth...
dare we speak of madness?
be the door locked?
which side are we on?
reflection, or touch?

pavement, alleys, empty churches...
heroin, religion, and naked bodies smoking.
nothing defined by the abstract,
hands reaching from books.
while old people stink of age and loss,
as small children dance in our shadows.
the ground hard frozen,
the plow silently weeps.
while scarred lips read poetry
to the wind and the cold....

perhaps i died, and there's nothing left;
alas, nothing but the hollow where words expired!
and gasoline engines that cough with need;
who feeds the fire, who stands by the door?

love burns on crosses while crows feed on flesh.
bombs born on mondays, salvation on thursdays...
money shouts and freedom growls,
whose face in the dark?
as young lovers kiss, and old men dig graves.
Jesus crossed the border while coyotes wept.

the old woman boils photographs and cats' feet.
while prophets drive convertibles,
and children starve with a whimper!
the song on the radio echoes and burns,
and hate, well, the next best thing to love!

black men stand, hats off and hands bowed.

while immigrants bury children yet unborn.
and the poor working man stands in line
for a second hand soul.....
yet only women know what slavery means!

i follow the scent, the stain, and the ache.
with none beside me, save an old blind dog.
i speak no more, for words cannot hold,
the fury of life, in a raindrop, in a pine cone!
and the woman i love,
well, moonlight, ashes, and vinegar...
i howl, erect, and panting with need....
while branches crack under unseen steps,
and small birds shiver on miles of wire.

justice defined by anything less than truth,
the cost of dignity be dignity given.
if all men be brothers, then soldiers come home!
pray that your sisters forgive and hear.
to the young life is given, perhaps so unfair....
to the old dirt prayers, caskets, and memories....

i will return, my work is not done.
there are wings to touch, and trees to sing.
there are lovers to hold, and children to protect.
there are oceans to sail, and mountains to climb....

and the dirt 'neath my nails,
testifies to the years...
my pillow lights candles,
my boots crusted with mud.
wherever you turn, my scent and my song...

Eric Cockrell

My Self!

when i finally...
slept with my self,
my self called me a whore!

and i spent weeks
on the porch,
fumbling in my pockets...

for my identity.

i stopped a passing stranger
and asked him my name...
he pointed to the ground,

and muttered, 'other'!

i gave a wino my last dollar,
pulled down my hat.
and walked off alone...

but i could hear the footsteps,
could feel the heavy breathing...
and turning to demand...

saw my self!

Eric Cockrell

My Soul Confesses...

my soul confesses
to the vast night swallowing
the last remnants of day,
to the unborn child,
unwanted, unnamed!
to the empty grave,
and the dirt praying
for the casket.
to the lover betrayed
by the fear to touch.
to the soul wrapped in cobwebs,
and the heart's body
afraid to be naked.
to the unfulfilled,
the unspoken, and unclaimed.
to the bastard son
of the demon and the mortal.
to the holy infidel,
who tore off his collar.
to the unspoken prayer
of the farmer looking for rain.
to the cell and the gallows,
and the righteous fire.
to the truth written
in the hidden parts of the soul,
to the pilgrim who turned
from salvation to compassion.
and again to the night,
the long night of redemption.
without a trace of regret,
without holding back!

Eric Cockrell

My Temple

do not speak of god,
of the father, or the mother...
nor the creator...
i do not dwell in temples,
creeds, or written scriptures.
i am formless, taking forms,
i am infinite, becoming particle.
i am clay and grass,
stone and wood...
i am flesh and semen,
and intimate eyes!
i am hungry, will you share?
i have no home or bed,
may i sleep with you?
i am lonely, will you speak with me?
i listen, will you listen too?
i am star and cosmos,
a simple dropp of rain.
i am the growl of thunder,
the sudden flash of lightning.
i am the bridge, will you walk me?
i am the lantern, waiting for the match.
i am the woman giving birth,
i am awe and wonder.
i am the language of silence,
the dirty hand extended.

i am truth, never settling...
i am the ache of the soul,
the tremble of the heart.
i am the sparrow's wings,
leaving the nest you cling to.
yet i am the straw that made the nest!
i am life unrestrained, i am death quite naked!
i am the sound you make,
when words will not do.
i am nameless, giving names,
i am thought set free.

i am compassion evolving,
my temple is you!

Eric Cockrell

My Voice!

i can hear the Mother's voice
whispering in my ear....
come dance with Me!

let go of your inhibitions,
let go of the things
you think you must have....

let go of yesterday, today,
and tomorrow....
let go of your pain and suffering....

come dance with Me...
we'll change darkness into dawn,
and name all the small creatures

whose souls are My voice!

Eric Cockrell

Mystic Anchor

human beings race around
like mad rats praising a God
that they barely know,
and wouldnt recognize
if they met Him on the street...

hoping for a quick fix,
a lucky talisman, a mystic anchor
against storms of our own design.
a nod of the head to eternity,
as life pours from a boot

onto bloody streets...

Eric Cockrell

Mystical!

that which we call mystical
is no more than the simple,
and the common unwrapped

by caring hands,
and seen through the eyes
of compassion...

the secret sacredness
of the universe,
contained in the mundane!

Eric Cockrell

Nails In The Coffin

there's an American flag burning
in a barrel down in a broken alley.
three homeless vets warming their hands,
passing smokes, and a bottle of 'mad dog'.

paint peeling from the haunted porch
of a vacant house; trash blows
across the yard and down the street,
an old dog waits furtively at the door.

and the girl with the needle, and
painted eyes, sprawled naked in the tub...
watching roaches crawl across the floor,
fear struck dreams and the mother rush.

little boy playing in hand-me-down clothes
left out on the sidewalk in the cold.
hungry, and he just dont know to care,
wonders when his mom is coming home.

the devil and the preacher both selling soap,
the far right patriots just selling hate.
the deaf-eared mongers in Washington,
turn their heads and pour another drink!

but 'all is well! all is well! ' resounds,
the caw birds lie on the hypnotic screen.
nails in the coffin, gun in the mouth,
an American flag burning in a barrel!

Eric Cockrell

Naked And True!

i am the sound
of your heart breaking.
i am the key,
the hand on the knob.
i am the whisper
of your soul aching.
the light in your eyes,
your tears as you sob.

you are the last page,
in this book unfinished.
you are the candle,
no one else can light.
you are the flood,
that cant be diminished.
you are the dawn,
in my darkest night.

we are the sound and the echo,
yesterday and tomorrow.
the path that cant be followed,
joy born from deep sorrow.

you live in me,
as i live in you.
captive yet free,
naked and true!

Eric Cockrell

Namaste

it is that which makes us human,
the scuffs, bruises, and scars, ...
that makes us eternal.

it is only through suffering,
that we come to understand joy,
a joy that is not limited by
circumstance!

when we learn to let go of the things
that our selfish egos proclaim that
we need... then these things quit
owning us.... it is only then that
we experience freedom!

we build temples, mosques, and churches,
make shrines, write holy books full of rules...
all of these things out of our own fears,
out of our own ignorance.

what is holy is before us, is within us...
the truth is so simple it confounds us!
Jesus and Buddha never asked for religions
in their name... they merely pointed the way
by living example!

Lao-Tsu's temple was nature... our Native Americans
understood this very well...

we dont need to explore space, looking for other
universes.... each of us contains a universe...
each of us contains history, past, present, and
future....

creation is the action of compassion... and forgiveness,
the natural way.... the only thing we carry forth
is that which we give.... in our giving we understand
the presence of god!

do you wish to see god? look carefully at the next
person you meet.... look intently when you look in
the mirror... reach out and touch the rose coming
into bloom!

Name It Love

if the wind calls to me tonight,
then i will follow.
if the rain should begin to fall,
i will bow in gratitude.
if the moon whispers through the trees,
then i will listen.
if my heart demands an answer,
i will name it love!

Eric Cockrell

Name Or Memory

the scar on the doorknob shouts,
everytime i reach for the door.
never asking which way i'm going,
as if i knew the direction home.
the vase falls from the table and shatters,
ants race about, avoiding fire.
the mad generals, refrigerator and stove,
fight to the death over who's feeding who.
the cat in the window stretches,
and the iron gathers dust.
only the pulse of the coffeepot steady,
and the scent of love that stains the walls.
what is life? more than this?
or something less, and forbidden?
i pray to the razor over a sink stained,
that asks not for name or memory!

Eric Cockrell

Named By Memory!

they laugh at me
for talking to turtles...
ah, but they tell me
secrets i cannot reveal!
i discovered infinity
as i was sweeping,
between the cracks in the pavement,
just out of the reach of my broom.
the spider came every night
for a week, weaving it's gigantic web.
now all that's left in it's absence...
a hole in my thoughts,
named by memory!

Eric Cockrell

Nameless Selves

it is only I,
nameless selves,
dissolving, evolving...
appearing, taking form,
only to disappear back
into formless fermentation.

leaving only the stink of living...
the green scent of plants unfolding,
the grey soot linger of poverty,
of countless stones laid,
and trod upon.
blood and sweat and shit and prayers,
the pine walls of eternal casket.

the soured milk of nipple bitter,
the stench of rope,
too close to the flame.
rich red clay worn by infidel boots,
whose fathers were unknown.
the forever clutching odor of death,
cabinets built and never filled.
grease ground into a cast iron skillet...
and they call this time!

dissolving, evolving,
seminal sheets on fallen angels' beds.
cosmos held in a human hand,
taking wing, flying like bats.
a thousand names?
not even god has a name.
only light born within darkness,
reveals identity, staking claim!

Eric Cockrell

Nameless!

if the wind took a body,
would it wear your face?
if it inhabited stone,
would you use it to build temples,
to worship in?
or simple walkways
for your soul to walk?
if it became anger,
would it sweep away
the violent guns of war?
if it became compassion,
would it turn rivers
to find those that thirst?
if it became a bowl,
would you fill it with rice?
if it became rice,
would you be the bowl?
if it became kindness,
would it sing to those alone?
would it blow away the tears
of the helpless and hopeless?
would it fill the empty
with that which cannot be held?
if it revealed itself as god,
would you try to capture it with form?

that which is free cannot be contained.
that which is spirit cannot be defined.
that which is limitless cannot be limited....
that which is nameless cannot be named!

Eric Cockrell

Names Written In Blood

hard nosed old half drunk men,
missing fingers, teeth, and hope.
50 years of working for somebody else,
somebody else's money, somebody else's dreams.
a warm fire, a cook pot half full,
a woman bent on loving,
patient enough to stay.
and the snail trails of children,
grown and gone....
echoes in the living room,
echoes on the porch.
old woman buried,
echoes in the bed....
hard lined old faces,
eyes vacant as distance...
lips bruised with silence,
names written in blood!

Eric Cockrell

Napalm Dreams

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napalm dreams,
burning flesh amid cries,
student protestors shot down....

flags smolder, stink like freedom
whored out for change....
and now again,

the great planes fly,
dropping death and liberation
o'er ghostlike oil fields...

too many questions....
lined up like cattle,
and shot.....

in the name of homeland security,
in the name of profit and loss...
their profit, ... our loss!

Eric Cockrell

Native Lands

We who walk
On the bones of
The Elders...
On the muted cries
Of the children.

On the screams of the women,
Raped, and butchered.
On the hides of the buffalo,
The wings of the crows...

Cannot speak, but for grieving.
Cannot pray, but for blood.
Cannot breathe, but for the wind...

Calling, for redemption!

Eric Cockrell

'Neath The Tree (Where The Hoot Owl Waits)

packing my bags,
my flute and guitar...
the laces of my boots tied.

an old shotgun,
a couple of books,
my hat pulled down low.

leaving a candle,
a couple of prayers,
and the memory of song....

nothing left to say,
nothing left to give,
nothing left undone.....

by the moonlight
in the cold, down
this long winding road....

going back to where
it all began....
in the deep dark of night

by the river bank....
listening to the water
till i lose all memory of myself....

and the wind comes calling,
an old friend, a lover...
'neath the tree where the hoot owl waits!

Eric Cockrell

Necessity...

silence is not quiet,
it shouts...
justice is not dormant,
it moves.
freedom is not a concept,
it must be lived.
equality is not hoped for,
it is realized.
love is not barter,
it is given....
the choice is not a choice,
it is necessity!

Eric Cockrell

Need

i dont need
anyone else
to be happy...
i need to make peace
with myself...

i need everyone else
to be fulfilled...
i cant breathe
unless you're breathing...

i dont need
accolades, pats on the back,
or bribes...

but i do need
to be treated with respect...
and allowed my dignity...

i'll do the same
for you!

Eric Cockrell

Need I Say More?

the simple turn of the acorn,
holds the secrets of infinity;
a thousand Romes burnt and fell,
in each leaf exploding with ecstasy.
the Holy One came in the form
of a stray cat,
waiting to be fed.
while somewhere small children,
walk with angels in search of rice.
and carpenters hammer nails
as pumpkins wait to be carved.
tired old women wash dishes,
while childrens pictures shout.
and stars themselves are only acorns....
need i say more?

Eric Cockrell

Neither Beginning, Nor End!

birth and death are the same experience,
seen from different vantage points!
neither is finite...
neither beginning, nor end!

Eric Cockrell

Nest

in your heart
there's a nest,
where those with

broken wings go,
to rest and to heal
in the arms of love...

may i abide there forever!
in your soul a cliff,
where the daring go

to test their wings
against freedom's skies...
may i leap from that cliff,

without looking back!

Eric Cockrell

Nest Of Straw

if i make you a nest of straw,
and a firepit of mud...
and we make love in the moonlight,
in perfect rhythm with the wind,
will the silence know your name?

and when you arise with the dawn,
and step to the edge
to try your wings...
will you look back
just for an instant?
will you leave a tear
on a budding leaf?

and if by faith i believe,
in spite of, despite of....
and give you the body of my soul...
will you leave a marker by my grave?

Eric Cockrell

Never Dies!

why does thy name sound like weeping?
do stars disappear after they fall?
your face goes quickly from autumn,
you stagger beneath imagined snow!
wings never write letters or drink toasts,
nails have no will of their own.
leaving the faucet to drip in memory,
of a thousand could have beens.
what we call love knows not the grave,
what we call desire never dies!

Eric Cockrell

Never Forgive Myself

you smell like...

a road i should have taken,
a picture i should have painted.
a cross i should have carried.
a candle i should have lit.
a prayer i should have prayed.
a box i should have opened.
a door i should have walked through,
a moment i should have lived.
a tear i should have taken,
a heart i should have nurtured.
a seed i should have planted.
a winter i should have prepared for.
a heart i should have listened to,
yes, a life i should have lived better...
and for that,
i will never forgive myself.

Eric Cockrell

Never Judge A Person

never judge a person's soul,
for the judgement returns.
judge only actions
whether give or take.
whether an act of compassion,
or the act of ignorance...
yet beneath every action
there lies a reason,
that more often than not
you will never see.
actions have a cost,
inaction, even more.
even choice exacts a toll,
be careful of your path.
never judge a person,
leave that to infinity,
and when you look at actions,
see both source and result!

Eric Cockrell

Never Lit!

we are but
small burnt memories,
unnamed ashes that smolder.
blades of grass never speaking,
small stones half buried.

dust on the windowpane,
raindrops that fall
and then rise...
straw gathered for the nest,
the silence of the eggs.

the tongue, and the ear,
the moment that does not pass.
the lid on the box,
the nails shaped like prayers.,
nothing, everything...

candles never lit!

Eric Cockrell

Never Named, Never Cried

she carries the stink of fear,
barely covered by her perfume;
...dark eye shadow,
.....high heels,
.....and breasts a'bulge....

falls in love once a month,
....almost without miss...

never speaks of the dreams
....she carries of him;
never once looks at his picture...

never named tears never cried!

Eric Cockrell

Never Slept!

lovers...

that never met,

yet were never apart.

that never kissed,

whose lips never parted.

that never spoke,

yet discovered language.

that never woke,

yet never slept!

Eric Cockrell

Never Stop Praying!

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i do not stop to pray anymore!

i just never stop praying....

every thought, every action,
every desire, every mistake,
every footstep taken...

whether forward or backward,
a human prayer,
.....conscious,
.....or unconscious,

to the God of both light and shadow!

Eric Cockrell

Never To Be Heard From Again!

gonna lay down my pen,
and pick up a hammer.
gonna build a house big enough
to house all the homeless.
gonna build a bridge
over the chasm of need.
then i'm gonna lay down my hammer,
and pick up the cookpot.
gonna fill it with enough food
to feed all the hungry.
gonna build a fire
that both lights the way
and warms...
gonna talk, and listen,
and really hear!
gonna show them how to plant,
and how to work the fields.
gonna work side by side,
and know every man's name.
gonna take everything
that i've seen and felt,
and lay it like an offering
on the path to tomorrow.
then i'm gonna put on my hat,
and walk out the door...
never to be heard from again!

Eric Cockrell

New Day (Prayer)

let your dreams be breath,
let your breath be shared!
let your heart be a river,
that fills chasms and bends.
let your feet be wind,
that follows your heart.
let your words be tears,
let your actions be gifts!

Eric Cockrell

New Spring!

hammer on nail,
tongue on groove.
match to the candle,
axe to the block.
time fades to ashes,
ashes back to dust.
body returns to seed,
heart blossoms,
new spring!

Eric Cockrell

Next Great War

the next great war
this country will face
will be a war within
it's own boundaries...

the stench of poverty and
injustice has become too foul...
the old, the homeless, the
forgotten ones have been pushed
too far, left with too little...
and the sound of righteous anger
rips through the air...

now the largest minority
is the common man and woman...
the faceless ones bought and sold,
and left to die on black and white tv's...

and the time has come
when there's no more taking
to be done.... unless, it's the
taking back, of our lives,
our country, and our freedom!

Eric Cockrell

Nigerian Waters

Nigerian waters defiled
by the oiled tongue
of human greed....

WHEN WILL WE LEARN?

earth is our home!

Eric Cockrell

Night

a very small candle by the bedside,
a stack of books that whisper and moan.
a radio i forget to turn on,
and an alarm clock that i hate...

dirty clothes sorted and stacked
like dreams that didnt go well.
a pack of Marlboro's, a couple old hats...
a window that leaks an icy breeze...

my old guitar and a rifle in the corner,
a few prayers that never got said.
your pillow haunted and cold...
i dont want to sleep alone.

Eric Cockrell

Night Coming!

hand on the brush,
grease on the wheel.
turning, and groaning,
the voices of men.

lone fire beneath the bridge,
stir the pot slowly.
shadows whisper with hunger,
stars answer with silence.

life laps out with flame,
hearts scorched seek each other.
the warmth of the body
that clings to the soul.

dreams of glass shatter,
tiny shreds of light.
tongues, and bare feet,
the moan of night coming!

Eric Cockrell

Night Hymn...

there is a wind
that has no name...
there is a river,
without beginning or end.
there is a night,
that fills the heart.
there is a stillness,
that smells like home.
there is a light,
in a window bare.
there is a cross,
worn round the neck.
there is a touch,
in the empty hand.
there is a song,
that fills the cup.
there is a prayer,
that tastes like dew.
there is a heartbeat,
a glimmer in the eyes.
there are stars,
that wait for me.
there are waves,
that bear my name.
there is a poem,
i could not write.
so i laid down my pen...
and lived it!

Eric Cockrell

Night Prayer

we forget how great a gift every moment is...
we all have problems, have worries, and walk the fine
line between joy and despair....
but tonight, let's lay it all down, and walk in the moment.
they tell you prayer is a lot of things,
but i think prayer is the gratitude that feels,
that absorbs the good and the bad,
that drinks sorrow, and dances.
i have never been more alive than i am right now.
i am fire, i am darkness, i am sin, i am redemption.
without grasping, i am free...
no matter what comes, no matter the battle...
this body does not hold who i am.
who am i? I am you!

Eric Cockrell

Night Prayer!

very pleased with the pen today...
almost afraid to close my eyes....
visions of a world violently erupting,
and small things as real
as the tears on a child's face.
the night, my friend, my lover....
the dawn born from suffering!
i listen for the sound of the flute,
long for flesh and fire!

we breathe, just once,
this fleeting storm.....
yet the sound of the waves promises,
another set of wings, shoes and will,
another mountain, another coming!

Eric Cockrell

No Difference

i stared out the window
at the bare frozen limbs
of my favorite old tree...
i closed my eyes...
saw leaves bud forth
and turn green...
i opened my eyes...
knowing there was no difference.

i stared at the young girl
reading at a corner table
i closed my eyes...
and saw an old grandmother
washing dishes with her grandbabies
playing in the floor at her feet...
i opened my eyes...
knowing there was no difference.

i saw the young man
carrying his son on his shoulders
i closed my eyes...
and saw an old man standing
by his son's casket
draped by a flag...
i opened my eyes...
knowing there was no difference.

i saw an old man
standing on the corner begging
i closed my eyes...
i saw a young boy
playing ball in the street
laughing and dodging cars
i opened my eyes...
knowing there was no difference.

i saw a crack head shivering
by an electric heater in a bare apartment
i closed my eyes...

and saw a young a/g student
helping some kid with his math
i opened my eyes...
knowing there was no difference.

i saw a desperate girl
walking the streets
looking for a john
i closed my eyes...
and saw a young girl's room
stuffed animals on the bed
pictures of her and her daddy on the wall
i opened my eyes...
knowing there was no difference.

i saw a young man
wild-eyed with fear
in a prison cell
i closed my eyes...
i saw a young boy gone hunting
with his grandpa on thanksgiving morn
with his dog by his side
i opened my eyes...
knowing there was no difference.

i pulled back the veil of time...
knowing, there is no difference!

Eric Cockrell

No Difference (For Hune)

it is in the dissolution of self
that the self is revealed...
in various and innumerable forms,
constant birth and dying,
constant evolving...
yet never constant!
wave after wave,
individual in nature,
yet plural in nature.
ocean, wave, ocean!
the half burnt candle,
and the star exploding,
no difference!
the child playing with sticks and stones,
and the pyramids...
no difference!
the lone man standing on the mountaintop,
and a million starving children...
no difference!

Eric Cockrell

No Excuses!

Jesus, Buddha, and
all the great teachers
from the past merely
pointed the way.

it's our own feet
that have to do
the walking...

no excuses...
let's go!

Eric Cockrell

No Fear, No Loss

lover,
smells like.
what i want,
so bad it hurts.
hurts,
so i can touch.
no fear,
no loss!

Eric Cockrell

No Freedom

There is no freedom in hatred,
No dignity in fear.
No safety in violence.
No hope in division.

This is not the time
To build walls...
But to build bridges.
Not the time to close
Borders,
But the time to open
Hearts.

For the path we lay
Will be trod by our
Children, and their
Children.

The world we leave,
Our legacy, our gift!

Eric Cockrell

No Longer Afraid!

the day you
wake up and realize...
you no longer have
any reason to pretend,
that you have nothing
of value left to lose,
that you cant change the past...

that the people that love you,
love you in spite of yourself.
that the people you hate
are just reflections of you.
that life cant be possessed,
and is not about possessing.
that what you leave behind
is your heart... nothing more!

that death is not the enemy,
not the end, but comes to all...
then you become...
no longer afraid!

Eric Cockrell

No Longer Free

angry people standing up,
marching, joining hands....
the taste of the lie,

gone bitter.
unholy wars,
corporate greed....

slavery rears its ugly head,
taking different forms.
greed takes the future,

and barter for oil.
the hands of the masses,
empty and hungry!

those who stood silent
and took it all without a whimper,
now have had enough!

while the barkers yell,
it's un-American, it's wrong!
counting back change

into the beggars cups.
the threat of the new wave
of McCarthyism fear

beats protestors with billy clubs,
and gasses young girls!
and the anger grows,

the anger grows....
the calloused hands of
working men and women,

clenched tight, preparing
for the fight... the last stand
of liberty in this land....

no longer free!

Eric Cockrell

No One

you treat the world
like you're burning trash!
drinking oil from
styrofoam cups...

the blood on your floors
cries out from stagnant pools.
you see no one,
you smell no one...

you cannot hear or feel
the cry of no one dying
in your fields, in your shops,
in your sterile offices...

your form of hatred
begins within your selves...
you trade freedom and dignity
in small shares over drinks....

your world, your kingdom,
is a house of cards
falling from within...
and no one will be there

to watch you die!

Eric Cockrell

No One Else Sees

telegraph...
silence speaks,
gravel voice...

trees fall,
no one hears...
you cannot lie...

in the moment
of you and me.
i know your smell,

your feel and your taste.
time writes with blood,
feet within feet!

love, the scar,
that no one else sees...
the color of water

tinged with gasoline!

Eric Cockrell

No Path Inbetween

if you choose never
to love me again,
then may God strike me dead now!

i dont know who i'm more angry with...
you, me, or God!

to give me back my voice
this late in the game...
and leave me with only the memory
of your touch, of your scent...
my body wants to kill my soul!

baby, i was living the blues
before you were born;
you were the paint on the stoop,
the last string broken on my guitar...
tears of blood cant touch this pain!

inside you, or lost forever?
there is no path inbetween!

Eric Cockrell

No Reason To Believe

black and white print, rain wet papers.
the liturgy of the movers and shakers.
the angry rant of the homeless on the streets,
while the elite still sleep on satin sheets.

sell your mothers and daughters on the corner.
sell your sons to the wars in foreign lands.
learn to hate, to use, and to destroy...
bow down to your gods made in the image of man.

there's no reason to believe when you're hungry.
when you're down on the bottom, nowhere to go.
the law of liberty becomes the law of survival.
you gotta pay for all the seeds that you sow.

the cash register rings, another soul disappears,
and the soldiers of oil have already won
while the children down in the project,
become users armed with hatred's guns...

chase away the migrants, your fields are empty.
leaving your fruits to rot on the ground.
put your thinkers in jail and burn the books,
but the walls of your kingdom are burning down.

there's no reason to believe when you're hungry.
when you're down on the bottom, nowhere to go.
the law of liberty becomes the law of survival.
you gotta pay for all of the seeds that you sow.

Eric Cockrell

No Reason To Speak!

one who does not dare
to ask the hard questions,
will never find the truth.
one who does not pull the mask
off of the human condition,
will never find freedom.
one who does not respect diversity,
will never find respect.
one who blindly follows is not faithful,
but a slave.
one who ignores prejudice,
becomes the food of all prejudice.
one who supports war,
becomes a murderer.
one who would judge others,
in the end judges himself.
one who turns his back on injustice,
is the greatest criminal of all.
one who has too much,
takes from those who have too little.
one who does not listen,
has no reason to speak

Eric Cockrell

No Sight Of Tracks...

how many times,
must i die today?
my arms are weary,
my eyes are blurred.
how many soul trinkets,
must i bury in the sand...
only to walk away,
leaving no footprints?

i know nothing,
but what i hear and i taste.
i have no baggage,
and no epitaph.
this body but seed,
this spirit but rain...
i long for the wind,
the web, and the hill!

when bones become wings,
and forever tiny buds.
then night and day,
can no longer be strangers.
and i then become love,
as miracle becomes birth.
i hear the sound of the train,
yet no sight of tracks!

Eric Cockrell

No Tears... He Lives!

another picker played
his last tune last night,
laid down his instrument,
and went home.....

and yet his music lives
in the hearts of those he moved,
in the memories of those he
helped mold by human touch....

in the prayers of those whose lives
were changed simply by
coming into contact with him....
in the spirit of freedom

giving hope to those he left behind...
no tears... he lives!

Eric Cockrell

No Train

brackish water dripping
from a rusted spicket
a broken wagon wheel
spinning in the sand
smoke rising from
a fire already dead
bells tinkling in the wind
on the porch of an
abandoned house
train tracks, no train!

words i have written
with a pen dipped in blood.

Eric Cockrell

No Words (For Hune)

i could write volumes about:

the barking of dogs,

the stampeding marching song of ants.

the screeching grate of the snail crossing pavement,

the sound of the fire flickering on the candle wick.

the hymn of the rain before it hits the ground,

the jubilant sound of the rose petal opening...

the scream of the autumn leaf

just as it begins to fall.

the sharp intake of breath,

when the tree sees the saw.

the heavy breathing of silence,

that brings darkness to night....

real language, without pretension,

or forethought...

without the need to grasp as 'i or me'!

the infinite language of a silent god!

Eric Cockrell

Nobody Cares

another baby
unwanted, unholy death...
and nobody cares!

Eric Cockrell

Nobody Has A Name!

down in the poverty south,
dead body by the tracks.
another football hero,
bathtub meth and anger.
dark shadowed mother weeping,
waiting on the preacher.
while the unemployed old man,
scratches up pennies for smokes.
baptism remembered,
before erections and gunpowder.
neath the picture of his cousin,
who died in Iraq...
the old factory building collapses,
empty on empty...
Jesus died for your sins,
even He cant get a job!
sister hot and pregnant,
turns the fan on high.
the last beans have been canned,
and the rent's past due...
everything tastes like ashes,
the sky filled with angry clouds.
the old dog barks at nothing,
and lays back down to sleep.
rain mixed with hail,
pelts the tin roof with fury.
and nobody has a name,
a past, or a future!

Eric Cockrell

Nobody Home!

newspaper clippings,
angels, and dust.
an old chair roaring silence,

rusted spoon, empty plate.
great piles of leaves,
blown by the wind....

hoarfrost on the windows,
a bulb without a shade.
water boiling on the stove...
nobody home!

Eric Cockrell

Nobody Lives Here Anymore

scarecrow in the yard,
eviction notice on the door.
the walls stripped bare
smell of ham and beans,
the sounds of laughter

and crying trapped
in the cobwebbed corners.
across the street a homosexual
man peeks through the curtains,
his breath of amaretto and nuts...

watching the old man and woman
pack the remnants of a life
into a car, nowhere to go.
setting down his cup he walks
out the door, across the street....

starts carrying boxes without a word.
till all is loaded that can be loaded,
and the rest left in a pile down
at the street, to be carried off....
then hugs, a tear, a few kind words....

almost family, just neighbors, friends...
the old couple drives away without
looking back... the neighbor staring
at the empty boxes on the porch...
nobody lives here anymore!

Eric Cockrell

Nobody Will Own You!

throw up your hands
and walk away....
you'll always be
somebody's bitch.

or stand...
and even if you
get knocked down...
nobody will own you!

Eric Cockrell

Non-Violence

non-violence...
the sacred actions
of flesh covered desire,
the only true path
on the quest for freedom...
the human being,
becoming fully human,
in the search for dignity,
and equality...
the message of the prophets,
the hope for a new day.
the battle cry of love!

Eric Cockrell

Not As Different!

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as long as you keep
the poor working class
of men and women divided....

afraid of each other,
hating each other,
fighting each other....

divided by race and religion,
by language and other imposed barriers....

as long as you keep them divided,
then you can keep them poor.

take all they have,
take all they build,
take all their dreams....

divided.... but oh,
if they ever unite...
they'll change the world.

we're not as different
as they would like us
.....to believe!

Eric Cockrell

Not Even A Number

tiny small hands
curled up in death
that reached for the breasts
of the mother....

lips swollen and parted,
face bruised and distorted,
left to rot.... in a dumpster.

spit out by the system,
trash begets trash...
no one knows the name
of mother or child....

in the land of Jesus,
SUV's and credit cards,
not a prayer....
not even a number!

Eric Cockrell

Not Even With Love

people are not possessions...
you cant buy them with money,
with power, with idealology...
not even with love,
- especially not with love...
hell, we dont even own ourselves!

Eric Cockrell

Not For Sale!

black coffee...
a blood pressure pill,
one aspirin, two ibuprofen,
and up to face the day!

what doesnt hurt
often fumbles or stumbles.
set your chin,
and tear down a wall!

truth barks,
and often growls.
what stinks just stinks,
no need to cover!

the work we do
with mechanical souls,
merely feeds the body,
what about the mind?

years sharpen doubt...
cold water is cold.
and poverty and loss...
you know the rest!

black coffee...
dont try to sell me.
i can still feel the heat,
and my soul is not for sale!

Eric Cockrell

Not Qualified To Judge...

not qualified to judge
another man's heart...
we have enough work to do

on our own...
but actions can be judged,
actions based in fear,

actions based in ignorance....
prejudices, hatreds, greed, apathy...
the battles we face

on the path to liberate ourselves!
compassion judges,
loves the person, hates the action,

lights the way, frees the soul.
minds controlled by hearts,
one step at a time....

Eric Cockrell

Not Saying Much!

an old man once said to me:
'if what you're saying
doesn't offend anyone,
you're probably not saying much! '

truth cuts like a knife!
speak the truth!

Eric Cockrell

Note To The United States Of America!

we cannot be a nation proclaiming human rights,
without closing Guantanamo!
we cannot proclaim justice,
as long as money controls out courts.
we cannot proclaim freedom,
while invading other countries.
we cannot proclaim democracy,
as long as corporations have more
rights than individuals.
we cannot proclaim dignity,
while letting our children starve.
we cannot proclaim progress,
till all stand side by side with opportunity.
we cannot proclaim respect,
till all are equally respected.
we cannot proclaim spirituality,
until we live the words we speak.
we cannot proclaim peace,
until we come to peace with ourselves!

Eric Cockrell

Note To Washington

what would make you think
that you can legislate morality
when you, by your very actions,
are immoral?

Eric Cockrell

Note To Washington

A group of children
In a kindergarten class
Would probably do
A better job of
Coming to agreement

Then you've done
On the debt ceiling/budget issue.

And their arguments
Would probably be less laden
With self interest!

Eric Cockrell

Note To Washington # 3

you can only feed the people
lies for so long!
it only irritates our hunger,
and inevitably leads
to a great cleansing!

Eric Cockrell

Notes For A Tomorrow

i feel very fortunate to be able
to write, and to share my thoughts
and feelings
i also feel a responsibility to write
the truth, not only my truth, but the
truth of all those around me
and so i paint these pictures of life,
some quite beautiful, some harsh and
distressing
we, as a people, and as individuals
are the human race. and what makes
it work is the word we
we are a part of each other, our happiness
and our hopes are dependent on each other
there is no i that is not a part of we!
we have reached a point in time when things
are extremely hard when it's almost impossible
to survive when it would be easy to lose hope
too many wars, too much poverty, too much disease,
too much homelessness, too much despair
if i'm not able to communicate anything else
let it be this each of you, each of us, and all
of life are precious it's time to join hands, and
work together for peace, and for a tomorrow
if we dont, there wont be a tomorrow
every moment we have is a gift a gift that
begs to be shared
in the wake of 9/11, and of the wars let's stand up
stand up and be counted as believers in life, and
in each other
i care about each of you and thank you for your time

Eric Cockrell

Notes From Freedom's Heart

i spend a lot of my time writing
about freedom, dignity, and equality....
using a lot of different forms, just
trying to be heard....
but i've come to the understanding
that whether i write it, sing it, play it
on guitar, paint it, dance it, or write
it on signs and march it.....
doesn't matter!
what matters is whether i live it!

when i can look into another human being's
eyes and not see color, gender, religious
or political ideologies, or sexual preference...
when i know that their mistakes and failures
are my own... that there is no difference
between us... that we have the same needs
and desires... and that we need each other.....

when i'm willing to listen, to offer a hand up, willing
to work and walk beside of (not in front of!)

when my thoughts, words, and actions reflect a deep
reverence and respect for all that lives....
when my choices validate humanity.....

when i can see without judging... when i'm
willing to speak the truth at all costs....
to give all that i have, and all that i am,
regardless of the risk....
when my own life matters less to me than
the lives of those i come in contact with....
when i'm willing to stand up for what's right,
for compassion, and for hope... even if it
costs me my own life....

then, and only then, i will have become
the poem i've tried all of my life to write...
then and only then, i will have become

fully human.... and will have answered the call
that we all have....

will i continue to write? yes!
but day by day, moment by moment....
i'll keep working!
will you join me?

Eric Cockrell

Notes From The Night

Rilke once said
if he spent all of his life
studying and working
he hoped to
be able to write
four good lines of poetry

think i'll quit writing
grow a big garden,
cut and stack wood
for all who are cold
save as many stray dogs
as i can
spend a lot of time
playing with and listening to
small children
and sit with as many
old people left alone
to die as i can

read Rilke daily,
and drink a lot of
black coffee
and hope like hell
that just before i die
i can write one good line
of poetry
i'd be happy with that!

Eric Cockrell

Notes On Respect

when i meet you, and stand up
to look you in the eyes and shake your hand...
i dont see a white man, a black man, Hispanic,
Asian, or Native American...
i dont see male or female,
learned or unlearned, rich or poor...
i dont see Baptist or atheist, Muslim or Buddhist,
Catholic, straight or gay...
i see a human being.
i choose to respect you.
and expect the same from you!

Eric Cockrell

Notes On Respect.... (Number Two)

i will not allow a woman or a child
to be abused or disrespected in my presence...
i do not think racial slurs are humorous.
i'm not interested in being converted
to your religion.
i am not interested in your sexual preference,
not interested in playing games.
i dont care what you own.
i will do anything i can to help you,
but i wont be owned by you.
i will respect your right to opinions,
you will respect mine.
i'm not always a good man,
but i'm a hard enough man to stand my ground.

Eric Cockrell

Nothing

i am nothing, then!
not more than what
i believe in;
not less than
what i do!

nothing...
not stars and infinite planets,
not dung or mounds of trash.

not song and dance,
not holy, i'm quite sure!
not the axe, the blade,
the bomb that falls...

not dead bodies in the ditch!

nothing...
not spew, not delirious tongues
searching forbidden lands.
not cobwebs, not hunger,
not you, not yours....

nothing, everything,
and nothing!

Eric Cockrell

Nothing At All!

woodsmoke,
frozen breath hangs,
time suspended...

the old neighborhood store
closed, building abandoned
to the rats...

a broke down Chevy,
a tent blown by the wind.
children hunched shiver,

the fire crackles and spits,
trucks race by going nowhere...
snow flurries, cracked lips.

a can of tomatoes, corn,
and green beans...
a couple potatoes,

the pot boiling slow..
'we the people' lost,
out of sync with time...

the six o'clock news
says nothing at all!

Eric Cockrell

Nothing Exists

nothing exists then
more than this,
and nothing exists
which is less.

the birth of a universe
is not more than
the opening of the
last rose of summer.

and the secret of infinity
is not more than
the smell and the taste
my hand remembers of yours.

a falling star merely the echo
of your footsteps, walking
out my door the last time...
the morning dew just your love juices

left on the long grasses of my longing.

Eric Cockrell

Nothing Owned, Nothing Lost

i dont feel the need
to ever own again.
houses, cars, credit cards
mean nothing to me!
we ate well tonite,
the house is quiet
and the man in the mirror
is fading day by day.

we never own each other,
never even own our children.
all that is will pass
into memory.
and that is enough.

all that will remain
is the kind word,
the soft touch,
the moments spent listening,
the hand-up given without thinking...
and the pictures painted
and left behind... without taking,
without grasping, without naming!

Eric Cockrell

Nothing... Or Perhaps, Everything

nothing is real,
or perhaps,
everything!

we are empty rooms,
kissing shadows with names.
we shout, then are shaken...
and small things weep.

while eternity burns
in fires left untended.
the face in the mirror...

be it god, or death?

Eric Cockrell

Novacaine

the taste of your fingers
digging in the dirt
the touch of your hair
falling down your shirt
the smell of your skin
blowing across the bed
the gasping of your breath
the silence never said
the silence never said

you are my chocolate
you are my Magdelene
you are my Everest
jumping on your trampoline
you are my daybreak
falling down like summer rain
you are my flash of life
you are my novacaine
you are my novacaine

the hunger of your silent
staring in the night
the hurt in your breaking
like a string drawn too tight
the beauty in your years
wrapped inside my lifeline
the softness of your lips
lost inside of mine
lost inside of mine

you are my chocolate
you are my Magdelene
you are my Everest
jumping on your trampoline
you are my daybreak
falling down like summer rain
you are my flash of life
you are my novacaine
you are my novacaine...

Eric Cockrell

Now And Forever

turning leaves,
dusk skies; moonlight
weaving through shadows

and the dew...
the earth gasps,
turns, and tremors...

the trees bow and pray
one final prayer...
and all that is...

all that we've come to know...
moondust in a thimble,
dust on a cat's whisker....

turning leaves...
amid the whispers
of now and forever...

Eric Cockrell

Nowhere Lane

we are...
the ink barely dried
on the page,
the cup chipped
on the windowsill.
wood stacked against
the porch,
the shadows on the
empty swing.
the kiss lost,
and the ring.
red dirt dried
on the shovel,
the old boots left
by the door.
the creaking of the
screen door opening,
the box tied and
packed away.
hunger sap dried
on novel sheets,
the half smoked cigarette
lying in the ashtray.
the sound of the empty room,
in that old house on nowhere lane!

Eric Cockrell

Nowhere Left To Stand!

angels made of dust,
stray dogs, homeless children.
righteousness invades,
who forgives the forgiven?
the hands on the clock prophesy,
and the darkness demands.
god stares back from the mirror,
moves with human hands.

empty houses on fire,
empty hearts strike with fear.
and all that remains,
words spoken, unseen tears.
pay the cost of the choice,
pay the price of a life.
but you cannot learn to live,
till you learn how to die!

faces without names,
names written in the sand.
praying for deliverance,
with nowhere left to stand.

when hatred takes form,
the identity revealed.
what we cannot bear to touch,
and wont admit we feel.
the candle burns on the table,
the self walks before.
we have to free ourselves,
before we unlock the door!

faces without names,
names written in the sand.
praying for deliverance,
with nowhere left to stand!

praying for deliverance,
with nowhere left to stand!

Eric Cockrell

Nuclear Garden

a world full of
Chernobyls...
one big nuclear garden...

is it worth it?
is this the best choice
for our children,
and their children?

is life worth so little?
and progress so much?
to whom?

24,000 years is a
long time to pay
for bad decisions....

Eric Cockrell

O My Soul...

where have you gone,
o my soul...
where have you gone?

are you lost in the tears
of a thousand faces
blackened by hunger?
in the cries of the dying?
of the homeless?

in the defiant feet
of those standing in line?
the unemployment line?
the soup line?
the line just outside
the prison walls?

in the lover left desperate,
who takes his own life?
in the students beaten,
who stood up for freedom?
in the young man hated,
for the color of his skin?
in the young woman sold
on the lonesome street corner?

in the windowless offices
where lives and deaths are decided?
in the hole behind the gun,
eyes hard as steel?
in the bare apartment,
where the children are cold and hungry?
on the corner, 'neath the bridge,
in the back of the car?

where have you gone,
o my soul...
where have you gone?

Oblivion

thunder and lightning, gunfire,
the stench of death...
we race towards oblivion,
cant feel, cant get our breath!
drum beat and shadows,
lost in the blinding heat.
dead poets and childrens' bodies,
rubble beneath our feet.

smoke fills the air-
trees fall, rivers run dry.
fighting over a loaf of bread,
and the last bowl of rice.

ghoulish gasoline prophets
ring the bell, count the cost...
old people put out on the streets,
now all is over, all is lost.
forgotten faces lost in the roar,
demons dance on unmarked graves.
the bell of freedom rains down fire,
while we hide like fugitives in caves.

and the sound of the wheels,
louder and louder till we're deaf!
we take and burn and use
till nothing good is left

and the face of our hell
is just the face of our desires.
we turn away from those around us,
while our hunger feeds the fire.
thunder and lightning, gunfire,
the stench of death.
we race towards oblivion,
cant feel, cant even get our breath!

smoke fills the air,
trees fall, rivers run dry.

fighting over a loaf of bread,
and the last bowl of rice.

and the sound of the wheels,
louder and louder till we're deaf.
we take and burn and use
till nothing good is left.

we race towards oblivion,
cant feel, cant even get our breath!

Eric Cockrell

Occupy!

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occupy!

Wall Street...

...Main Street

....the banks

.....the government buildings

...the courts!

...the whole damned country!

and re-occupy

...our own bodies,

demand the rights

..of human beings

.....being human!

Eric Cockrell

Occupy, The Body Of Freedom

'no more Kent States,
...no more Kent States...'

President Obama,
dont turn a deaf ear!
dont sell out to the machine.....
dont betray us like Nixon did!

silence is betrayel!
inaction is betrayel!

you cannot turn your head,
and hope we go away!
this isnt about helping you
get re-elected!

it's about the truth!
corporate America wont stand for it.
Wall street wont take it!

how many will be beaten?
how many pepper sprayed?
the fear you seek to instill
only validates freedom's song!

you cant sell us the lie anymore!
we're not buying it!

Occupy.....
occupy the body
.....of freedom!

Eric Cockrell

Occupy... (Citizen Of The World)

occupy...

Wall Street, banks, financial institutions.
the Congress, the White House, the Pentagon.
the court system, the prisons...
empty factory buildings, small businesses,
the coal mines, the oil fields,
the docks....

vacant foreclosed houses,
homeless shelters, soup lines...
the lines of the unemployed.
the fields ready to be picked.
the illegal immigrants bent backs...
the big trucks shut down...
minimum wage slave jobs...
cheap imports made by child labor,
the oil industry, the automobile industry...

occupy...

big farms, those who would spray harmful
chemicals on the crops...
family farms, threatened foreclosure by the banks.
the education system,
the medical profession...
hospitals, clinics, and insurance.
nursing homes, social security, Medicare
and Medicaid...

occupy...

welfare housing, tenements and trailers...
section eight housing...
law enforcement, emergency services...

occupy....

the military, all national acts of aggression,
the war industry!
voting rights, voter registration, the political process....

occupy...

human rights, equality, dignity and respect.
freedom of speech, freedom of information,
the truth!

occupy...

your neighbors' needs, the suffering of others...

hunger, despair, the human family.

occupy...

your own body, your sense of social consciousness,
your words, actions, and intents...

occupy...

a shared freedom as a citizen of the world!

Eric Cockrell

October Sundown

October sundown
spilt o'er rainswept
mountains undressed,

lit by the Painter's brush;
momentarily...
sucks the oxygen

from the air,
leaving me gasping
for words....

.....2.....

the hands on the great clock
bent under the weight,
waves pounding hard against
the breakers.

the fire flickers, almost dies,
bursts into flame.
the ghost of longing
walks out of the grave!

.....3.....

the earth tremors,
tall buildings fall!
the wail of the dying
fills the air...

the stench of blood and
burning flesh chokes the mind...
dark wings thunder
on the distant horizon.

the bells of emptiness
ring like razors....
still beating hearts

held in children's hands!

.....4.....

October sundown....

....and the night

.....is coming!

leaving me....

...gasping for words!

Eric Cockrell

Of Dust!

and so, this morning,
we talk of dust...
tiny particles
that contain universes,
cosmos, and non-thought.
formed from nothing,
to nothing we return.
infinite nothing...
and love be but the light,
shimmering,
on tiny particles
of dust!

Eric Cockrell

Of The Blood

it is of the blood,
that we carry, that we turn,
that we walk...
the blood that feels,
and touches,
the raw and the forbidden.
it is of the blood,
that we breathe, that we sweat,
that we join,
in moments of passion,
great and small,
in the simple and mundane.
it is of the blood,
that we drink, that we pray,
that we wear...
on lips parched and blistered,
smeared over the doorway...
the blood that takes back,
that seizes the moment
in the undressing of the heart!

Eric Cockrell

Off Of My Feet!

shaking the dust
off of my feet...
marching onwards to Jericho,
a trumpet by my side.
living on manna,
and the almost forgotten dream
of the promised land.

knowing what a man does
is washed away by the rain,
and what a man believes
is lost in the night.
but what a man gives
stands like a mountain,
season after season,
till all becomes still!

shaking the dust
off of my feet....
tipping my hat,
following the crow!

Eric Cockrell

Often Stinks!

the term 'invade',
can most often
be replaced
with 'enslave'!
the truth...
often stinks!

Eric Cockrell

Old Coot

'he's a strong-willed,
stubborn old coot,
who'd plow in the face
of a tornado! '

'blow, baby... blow! '

Eric Cockrell

Old Dog, For Jackson

old dog, old dog,
we've walked too far
on this journey

for either of us
to go home alone...
you know my secrets,

and i know yours...
and we've both pissed
on the boundaries

of lives well lived.
strong and faithful,
now old and blind...

through the darkness
past the light...
to beginning and end!

Eric Cockrell

Old Girl, A Backwards Dream

he was just sitting there listening, you know...
sitting on the stoop, listening to the old black man
play guitar...
listening to the children playing across the way...
listening to the occasional car, and the way the sunset
clapped against the trees, keeping rhythm.
the old man started singing, low, almost a growl:
'old girl, old girl, where you been so long?
old girl, old girl, where you been so long?
done took the night out of my daytime,
and the darkness out of dawn.
old girl, old girl, why you be that way?
old girl, old girl, why you be that way?
you pack your clothes to travel on,
you dont unpack your clothes to stay...'
he grinned at the old man, 'yeah...'
the smell of streaked meat frying, and coffee
boiling over came from the house...
'how many eggs y'all want? '
the old man started singing again:
'old girl, old girl, why you wanna shake that thing?
old girl, old girl, why you wanna shake that thing?
you lock me out of your house,
why you wanna be so mean? '...

'y'all gonna see mean in a minute, if you dont
get your butts in here and eat..'
'we coming, baby', the old man grinned, slowly sliding
the guitar back in its case.
shaking his head and looking up, he saw an owl,
perched silently on the eaves. pulling down his hat,
he followed the old man in.... the sound of the screen
door slamming echoed in the dusk.

Eric Cockrell

Old Hands And Old Eyes....

old hands unbutton
the blouse of the day.
old hands make coffee,
open the dusty blinds.
old hands wash a few dishes,
make breakfast for the dogs...
old hands feed the stray cat,
make toast and wait.
old eyes caress the sunlight
as if an old friend.
old eyes see the work,
yet stop, to touch the morning.
old eyes kiss the trees,
the squirrels, and distant mountains.
old eyes ache with longing,
and amazement.

old hands and old eyes
begin the journey anew.
listening intently for the footfall,
for another candle, a hoe.
for the scent of nearness,
perhaps only remembered.
old hands and old eyes,
take the plow, the hammer,
and the nails....
old hands and old eyes,
waiting for love!

Eric Cockrell

Old Heretic!

</>

just an old heretic,

with

...a

.....shovel,

.....an axe,

....a pot of coffee,

and a smile!

tell me what

....you need, brother!

Eric Cockrell

Old Man (Faraway)

old man, old man,
sitting in your chair;
tell me the story
behind your faraway stare.

i can see by your wrinkles,
and the scars on your hands.
it's been a long journey
from that faraway land.

tell me who and why you fought,
tell me what you won and lost.
tell me who that you loved,
and who paid the cost.

tell me what you learned,
would you do it all again?
have you made peace with yourself,
are you ready to go 'round the bend?

old man, old man....
sitting in your chair;
tell me the story
behind your faraway stare....

Eric Cockrell

Old Man Dying

there's an old man dying
in a small bedroom filled
with books and worn out clothes
and old socks with holes

there's an ashtray that always
needs to be emptied;
blinds that are as twisted
as his fingers and his toes

there's an old man dying
in the shadow of his
father's dreams, his father's world,
choking on the bad taste

of his own prayers forgotten
and mountaintops bartered;
in the mist of cannot touch,
can't lay with again

and love sweat grown cold,
gone stale as the lines,
the wrinkles on his face,
and hands that tremble

there's an old man dying
and somewhere, there's
a young man being born!

Eric Cockrell

Old Man!

old man!
paint peeling
...from the walls
.....of the barn....

from a distance,
...strong in color,
.....but up close
.....easy to see,

that time has spent
...its last quarter here!

Eric Cockrell

Old Man, Empty House

old man, empty house...
it struck me when he
left the hospital
that he didnt want
to go home to
an empty house
full of ghosts and
memories...

to die alone!

Eric Cockrell

Old Man's Poems

old man's poems
written from a distance,
time and experience demand...

aged like good whiskey,
taken in sips, not gulps!
hang like clouds at sunset,

can burst into violent storms!
make love to the soul long and slow,
simmering o'er the fire.

weep with sadness like slow rain
in the night where no one can see....
written in stone like an epitaph,

an unmarked grave on a forgotten hill.
howl in the darkness like a lone wolf,
whisper like a child's simple prayer....

all too often smell like an old man,
rocking in his chair in an empty room!

Eric Cockrell

Old Men (No One Knows)

old men rust and creak,
in their bodies, in their souls;
wrinkle into their chairs
till neither is one....

having paid every penny
of the price of life,
rung up, and forgotten.....

shadows without purpose,
untouched in the cold.

every brick laid seamless,
without distinction,
or identity....

old men wrinkle into their chairs,
and no one knows.

Eric Cockrell

Old Men Remember!

</>

old men remember
things young men never
even see, running headlong

in their quest for battle....
so busy trying to change the world,
trying to mold the world,

trying to make a name,
trying to make a difference....
that they forget to swallow!

and yet when time comes and goes,
it's not the big battles,
not the victories and defeats....

but the small things...
rare moments stolen, and lived...
simple breaths, taken and shared,

when just for an instant,
you could see, you could feel,
both how tiny and how big....

and the taste of awe lingered,
written in the heart of your tongue...
hidden away for the time

when only memory remains!

Eric Cockrell

Old Men Walk Barefoot!

they would cut the wings from sparrows,
and deny the face of the wind.
take the laughter from the small child,
and bury the old man's shoes.
fill the cup with oil,
and burn the pages....
erase the names and the memory
of having been...

but the sparrow flies beyond their reach,
and they cant touch the wind.
the child gives his laughter freely,
and the cup has been turned over.
the pages feed the fire with desire,
and names and memory are written on god...
we who have lived have something
they cant take away...

that we give without looking back!

Eric Cockrell

Old Men.... (Doesnt Change)

old men find stars
in the blackest sky,
that young men never see.
see years in every moment,
and know to be silent.
they know the futility of wars,
and the bitterness of loss.
they know how to be lovers,
lost in every movement, every scent.
they know about tears and touching,
are familiar with the empty place
deep in your soul.
they know about freedom and failure,
hardness, softness, and death.
old men say thank you without speaking,
give more than they take.
old men listen,
even when you're not talking,
and hear what you dont know
that you're saying!
old men tell the truth,
forgive and are forgiven...
leave their footprints
in the sand.
laugh in the face of mortality,
are companions to small children,
and old dogs...
and when they love you
it doesnt change,
it just turns colors
with time and seasons!

Eric Cockrell

Old Plow!

i dreamed...
an old plow,
rusted, still sharp...

waiting, waiting
for the hands that till;
at peace in the knowing,

my destiny, my path!
a simple tool
in the garden of life!

Eric Cockrell

Old Stray Cat....

what if i took my rusted axe,
and chopped up the cross
of my self-denial,
would you come and stand by the fire?

what if i opened my eyes
and you could see through them,
as if my heart were a window,
would you shake for just a moment?

what if i laid down this body,
and took up wings of flight...
would you hear and know the sound of the sky
moaning against my freedom.

and what if i stood on your porch,
with my painter's brush and my broom,
would you recognize the scratching
of this old stray cat....

and open the door to your secret room?

Eric Cockrell

Old Woman (Standing At The Sink)

old woman,
standing at the sink,
flannel shirt and panties....

washing dishes with knowing hands,
sunlight through the window dancing
on the strands of grey in her hair....

an old cat rubbing against her ankles....
bombs exploding, new world's emerging...
even the nails in the walls

whisper the coming change!
blackbirds carry the message of snow,
the old woodstove crackles and smokes....

somewhere they're painting banners
and buildings with freedom's song....
he sits motionless, brush in hand,

watching an old woman...
...standing at the sink!

Eric Cockrell

Older...

they call it getting older,
i call it rust!
or maybe autumn leaves,
and the promise of snow.
an avalanche in slow motion,
a door that creaks when closed.
a latch on the bedroom window,
ashes that smolder with hope.
a tree fallen across the path,
the old car that turns over,
but wont start.
the plow crusted with dried earth,
the hammer on the shelf.
you and i...
nothing forgotten!

Eric Cockrell

On A Distant Hill!

lover...
broken heart,
you undress painfully,
evolving from soul to self.
turn away from the window,
the moonlight will follow...
to find your breasts weeping,
and the shadows in your void.
tender eyes almost afraid,
to give the only gift
you have left...
you cross the bridge trembling,
your scent hangs in the air.
redeeming the given in given,
the tiny box on the dresser.
i will wrap you forever
in the light hidden in darkness.
your heart the bell,
mine the shell holding echo.
i kiss your feet with desire
while the wolves howl
on a distant hill!

Eric Cockrell

On A Moonlit Night....

even trees undress,
on a moonlit night...
and the grasses moan,
mountains shudder with joy.
the darkness weeps,
overcome with sheer beauty.
and the sky bends to touch,
as if a cloud!

Eric Cockrell

On Abortion

on abortion...
those who rage against abortion
most often do not put themselves
in the position of the mother.
while all of life is sacred,
there are times when abortion
becomes necessary.
when the mother's life is in danger,
in cases of rape,
in cases where the mother
cannot be the mother...
and only the mother-to-be
has the right to make this decision.
it is the woman's choice, bottom line.
we must educate ourselves
so that we know that all choices
have their costs...
again, it is the woman's choice.
abortion was never meant to be birth control,
but sometimes, it is the best option.
again, it is the woman's choice!

Eric Cockrell

On Betrayal

we often feel as if we've been betrayed...
and we're hurt, angry, scarred, and vindictive...
but the truth is we lead lives of betrayal.
times we fail others, times we fail ourselves.
times when we mean to do the right thing,
and dont follow through.
times we excuse ourselves by
saying we're following our heart.
times we turn away,
and blame it on circumstance.
times we dont dare to do what life demands.
times we choose indifference,
times we think we've already given enough.
times we choose the easy way out.
times we are not grateful...
times we dont forgive but expect forgiveness.
times we dont speak what our heart feels,
until it's too late....

Eric Cockrell

On Crime And Punishment

the angry young man,
who grew up in poverty,
whose mother worked two minimum wage jobs,
just to give him food and shelter...
who lost her jobs
when the economy fell,
and became sick with no insurance...
the angry young man,
who robbed the convenience store,
and while trying to avoid capture,
killed a young police officer...
who left behind a young pregnant wife,
and a three year old little boy,
left without a daddy....
the angry young man,
in jail awaiting trial...
awaiting justice....
where do we begin?

Eric Cockrell

On Deporting Illegal Immigrants

deporting illegal immigrants?
for the first thing,
no human beings are illegal!
they're just human beings.

for the second thing,
we're all immigrants here!
or the sons and daughters
of the sons and daughters
of immigrants.

if a man is willing to come here
and work to support his family,
putting cash back into the economy,
let him work! let him stay!
let those that would contribute do so.

if you have to deport someone,
go down in the trailer park
and find the 3 20 yr old white boys
making meth in a shed out back!

who wont work, and wouldnt work
if it was judgement day,
and Jesus was standing at the door.

or go down in the projects and
get the pimp daddy who's working
girls on the corner to support
his habit....

or go get the millionare politician
who just voted to cut social security
and medical care for disadvantaged women....

deport them!

Eric Cockrell

On Human Sexuality...

we understand very little about sexuality...
buying and selling cheap versions of the
fire on a day to day basis...
sex is not a phone call, a text message,
or the culmination of a night on the town...
we confuse masturbation with communication...
intimacy demands honest heart to heart
conversation... companionship... and a shared
journey....
to touch in the deepest manner we have to
know who we are.... we touch with both
our darkness and our light....
this touch is the gift of giving... unrestrained,
sensual, gentle, and borne of peace.
the act of joining... a thousand tiny deaths,
bringing forth new life!

Eric Cockrell

On Rape

rape is a horrid act of violence
against the human soul....
a terrorist act against the victim!

anyone found guilty
should be dismembered!

whether the victim be female,
or male... they should be treated
with the respect due a wounded soldier....

the human heart knows
that when one of us is disrespected,
we have all been disrespected....

in this knowledge lies the key
to healing!

Eric Cockrell

On Reading, 'A Few Reflections On Imitatio-Dei'

reply to Hune....

i lean probably more towards the buddhist interpretation... we are all buddha, waiting to evolve.... in the same sense we are all god, taking form, evolving.... we are the hands and feet of eternal creation, continually dying and being born.... god is no more distant than the self... and we choose that... the bridge does not lead outward, but inward....

the problem lies in the 'need' to imitate... how do we imitate what we already are?

do we live? or are we imitating life? the social consciousness, the compassion, and the actions we ascribe to the divine are there within us, hidden beneath layers of ego...

we long for a distant sea when the waves are already lapping at the feet of our heart!

our heart speaks to us of this, yet all we hear are distant echoes, garbled by concepts. the fire of dialogue is lit.... we sit across from ourselves!

as always, your writings inspire both deep thought and introspection... i read them in paragraphs, gulping for air....

and i'm quite sure tonight when i'm trying to sleep, these thoughts will return. thank you for lighting the fire!

Eric Cockrell

On The Banks Of The Shore

have i wandered too far this time
to feel the presence of Your hand
i cant say that i've been blind
building castles in the sand

seems kinda funny for me to say
words i've said before
feeling's too heavy for me to pray
on the banks of the shore

on the banks of the shore
at the foot of the cross
my heart's aching and sore
and my soul's feeling lost...

could You spare an angel or two
put a rainbow in the sky
just to let me know that You
care if i live or die

maybe i'll get it right this time
find the key to the door
just need some peace of mind
on the banks of the shore

on the banks of the shore
at the foot of the cross
my heart's aching and sore
and my soul's feeling lost

on the banks of the shore
at the foot of the cross
my heart's aching and sore
and my soul's feeling lost....

Eric Cockrell

On The Cliffs Of Eternity...

i am a man,
but i was once a leaf.
i was once a river,
once a mountain,
once a cloud.
i have been wolf,
turtle, hawk, and snail...
i have been a storm, i have been the wind.

do you dare love me?
i have waited for hundreds of years!
the fire inside of me,
consumes and feeds!

i dont know your name,
but i know the part too deep,
and too wild and untamed
to be spoken as name...

i wait on the cliffs of eternity!

Eric Cockrell

On The 'I Am' Series....

the 'I Am' series for me has been
a journey, a constant and continual
sense of evolving, finding the self by
'losing the self in the selves of all others',
the identity that has not a name, but many names...
many faces, many colors, many smells...
the raw sense of the connection,
the sacredness of the common,
the ecstatic weeping of souls joined by need.
the dance of the spirit, the sensuality...
and the pounding beat of hearts within hearts.
if i ever put together another book, this
will be it! this is what i have to say!
this series contains the wholeness, and all
the broken pieces of my life.... these poems smell
like me, and like you!
thank each of you for bearing with me....
we are the journey!

Eric Cockrell

On The Road To Gethsemane

on the road to Gethsemane...
i pass burned out buildings,
farm lands scorched by the bombing.
i pass the skeleton bodies
of young children who starved.
i pass the unmarked graves,
of young boys sent to war.
i pass the flag of the liars,
and the tents of mourning.
i pass vacant factories,
and houses left empty.
i pass through cocaine streets,
where all flesh is for sale.
i pass the unemployed masses,
and their desperate eyes.
i pass the baby born unwanted,
and the prison's stink.
i pass empty churches,
and hollow ringing bells.
i pass families broken,
and peoples enslaved.
i pass the moral guns of prejudice,
rank with immorality!
i pass the crippled, the sick,
and those desperately alone...
these tears of blood
are human tears,
this cross we all bear!

Eric Cockrell

On The Sacredness Of Life

i watched and listened as the young
woman confronted the older woman
for her pro-life stance...

'i understand that you're pro-life,
and while i admire you for the intent
of your stance, i have a few questions...'

'go ahead, it's pretty cut and dried.
life is sacred from inception.'

'what life, or better, which lives? '

'all life! '

' well, let me ask you this...

did you vote for the man who sent
your son off to war?

a war in which he dropped the bombs
that killed hundreds of people,
many of who were women and children....

a war in which later his plane was shot down,
and he was killed?

did you vote for the man who voted to
cut off unemployment benefits,
to cut off medical care to the sick,
and the elderly?

do you change the channel any time
a commercial comes on showing starving
children in Africa?

are you in favor of capital punishment?

well, where do you draw the line? '

no answer!

Eric Cockrell

On The Trail Of Pessoa

i've walked this road for so long,
that i know what silence tastes like.
i hear only the simple sounds,
or the simplicity of sound...
i no longer confuse shadows,
and i sleep with dogs.

owning nothing,
there's nothing i would kill
to purchase!
there are no footprints
in front of me,
i follow no one.

intimate encounters with strangers,
for we are all strangers,
even to ourselves.
perhaps a word or two,
or not...
we share the cup, and the fire.

i have long conversations with trees,
read intimate stories
written in branches and leaves...
sing lovesongs to small pools of water,
pick up the broken shell of the hatchling
with awe....

my eyes bow in reverence
in the presence of women...
small children come to me,
tell me stories about dreams.
we build kingdoms of sticks,
discarded by birds....

stray cats sit on my lap,
i learn the language of paw.
i listen to the wind

humming in the spider's web.
and dead things rest
by the side of my chair...
waiting for dawn, just waiting!

Eric Cockrell

On Whom

what you gonna do?
and what you gonna say?
when the poor, the homeless,

and the hungry....
kick down your door,
and take back the wealth

you got on their backs?
and on whom
will this crime be laid?

Eric Cockrell

On Your Darkest Night

nothing more for me to say
than a silent 'i love you',
standing beside you,

whatever comes!
your life, your journey,
but a part of the sweetness,

-most likely the middle,
both mine and yours...
burned by choice

on the altar of sacrifice...
feeding the fire
that whispered

our hidden names....
so deep inside that
it permeates breath...

and stinks like damp earth
just plowed in the spring....
your life, your journey, ...

i am but the bridge,
the walking stick, the pack....
the shelter made of

fresh cut branches stacked....
the light of the moon
on your darkest night!

Eric Cockrell

Once More To Live...

we have been a dead people
worshipping dead gods for too long.
our living no more than simple arithmetic,
collecting trinkets we name,
that somehow define us...
to be spread across our graves...
as if, to testify... but to what?
we've built moral cages that drain all color...
have become black and white photographs,
wearing suits, carrying bibles..
and now it seems the world's gone crazy,
violence, sex, rampant poverty...
war after war, hatred after hatred.
we've defiled our beds,
even our shadows have fled.

who are we? who are these faces
that haunt our sleepless nights?
who are the bodies we sleep with?
what is real?

we have become the disease in search of the cure?
but is there a cure?
are we then the living, or just strange shadows,
watching life through smoke yellowed windows?

have we killed the wolf,
and stripped the wings of the hawk?
what ocean lives inside this shell?

do we still hear the voice of the Lover?
would we recognize it if we did?
if we cut our fingers, do we bleed?
are we more than nothing,
but less than something?

have we killed the messenger?
turned the silence to noise?
whose hand on the plow?

is the field then barron?

and this night, if we stop to pray...
will we recognize the mumblings of our spirits?
repentance, the body in the alley,
set ablaze to warm the rats!

do you love me? do i love you?
is there any evidence to prove we're here?
whose hand takes mine?
whose eyes meet mine?
do we dare once more to live?

Eric Cockrell

One (Every)

one man,
one woman...
every star in the night sky.....

every grain of sand,
every wave lost in the ocean.
every leaf falling to the ground...

every hungry mouth,
every tear unnoticed.
every life beaten,

and left by the wayside.
every baby born without direction,
every prayer lost in the

din of hopelessness...
one man,
one woman....

the same!

Eric Cockrell

One Breath Of God!

all that lives, breathes!
every human being,
all animals, even the plants....

and the earth breathes!
the mountains sigh inward
and outward deeper than perception.....

the oceans come and go,
their tides merely breaths,
in rhythm with the moon!

the moon breathing with pull
and light reflected....
in tandam with the sun....

the universe, one breath of God!

Eric Cockrell

One Breath, One Hunger!

if you've not heard
anything else that i've said...

look in the mirror,
and see yourself.
look at all others,
and see yourself.
look for God,
and see yourself.

look at yourself,
and see all of life.
look at yourself,
and see all those suffering.
look at yourself,
and see all others.

look at yourself,
and see God!

every thing you feel,
is being felt.
every thing you need,
needed by all.
every tear you cry,
on every face.
every prayer you pray,
a part of all prayer.

look to the earth,
and see yourself.
look into yourself,
and see the earth!
listen to the heartbeat,
of which you are part...
part of the whole,
of all that is life.

we are constantly being born,

and constantly dying...
death and birth, the same journey...
no beginning, no end...

the dream, the reality,
dead branches feed the fire...
darkness, and dawn,
one breath, one hunger!

Eric Cockrell

One Candle, Tonite!

if we all took one candle,
and lit it tonite....

one candle...
symbolizing peace,
within and without;
celebrating understanding,
and the willingness to understand.

symbolizing compassion,
and the desire to accept
all men and women just as they are...
the dedication to feed the hungry,
house the homeless,
and heal the sick....

one candle...
one humanity, diverse and individual,
praying, working, sweating, loving together....
the dignity of one
defining the dignity of all...

lit one candle,
and put it in the window tonite...
we'd both light the darkness,
and free the slaves....
as hand to hand joins heart!

Eric Cockrell

One Eye Blackened

dont speak to me of
what love is, and love isnt...
when the price of loving you
is scorched into my bones,
leaving my flesh smoldering
neath the tree where the owl waits...
maybe these are the sins Jesus didnt die for!
wars break out, clouds are shattered,
asleep in the hollow that was your body.
one eye blackened,
the other left to stare madly,
at the moon contained in a dropp of rain,
caught in the spider's web!

Eric Cockrell

One Heart, Two Souls

on the stand
by the bed....
a tiny locket

that you dont
wear anymore...
it holds the picture

of one candle burning...

this road has been long,
with ups and downs,
winding, almost coming back...

now diverges, into two
seperate roads unknown,
with no way to turn back.

by the necklace on the stand,
two bands of gold.....
an ashtray full of ashes....

waiting on a map,
choice, or chance....
one heart, two souls!

Eric Cockrell

One Hundred Lit Candles

sitting alone in an empty room,
surrounded by one hundred lit candles...
slowly, one by one,
naming them,
blowing them out!

hunger, apathy, pride,
poverty, prejudice,
sorrow, despair, greed...
self image, self fulfillment,
ownership, anger, judgement,
righteous indignation...

the stranger on the street corner,
the soldiers standing across the line.
the protestors carrying signs,
the pale faces behind
the covered window...

the preacher and the addict,
the whore, and the convict.
the young unwed mother,
the child crying in the night.
the young gay boy who hung himself,
those who stood and jeered...

the out of work factory worker,
face down in a corner bar.
my neighbor, my enemy, my brother,
and the ghosts that haunt my night.
empty graves and unmarked stones...
and more...

blowing them out!

Eric Cockrell

One 'I'...

there is only one 'i' in river,
one 'i' in wind.
one 'i' in give.
one 'i' in live.
one 'i' in desire,
one 'i' in fire...
two 'i's' in spirit,
and both are on you!

time and eternity,
both have one 'i'.
so does bridge!
union, communicate
and ecstatic the same.
one 'i' in friend,
and one 'i' in twin...
there is one 'i' in choice,
and two in decision...

both are on you!

Eric Cockrell

One Last Cigarette

i took off my carpenter's apron,
laid my hammer on the nightstand.
unloaded my old shotgun,
and stood it against the corner.
i lowered the flag, put out the fire,
put sheets across the windows....
turned off the lights, pulled off my boots,
and walked out barefooted into the night!

sometimes you just get tired of
trying to save a world
that doesnt want saving...
when you cant even manage
to save yourself from yourself!

and sometimes it's just about the night,
and the way the darkness feels
wrapped 'round you in perfect stillness...
standing barefoot in the grass,
smoking one last cigarette.

Eric Cockrell

One Last Letter

writing one last letter...
not sure who it's to
- dont think it matters!

the words are composed of
the things i've done... both
good and bad.

the commas are for my mistakes,
-Lord, we're gonna have a lot of commas!
mistakes both of omission,
and commission...

the periods are for the times
i gave up, quit trying,
lost my way...

but the body of the letter
is filled with hope....
hope that sees things as
they are, and still believes...

i dont have to sign this letter,
it looks, smells, and tastes
like me...

i'll put this letter in the mailbox,
addressed to occupant,
to whomever gets it...

address unknown!

Eric Cockrell

One Of Them Be Mine!

nothing but a camel,
carrying gifts from afar.....
nothing but the night,
the longing and the star.
nothing but a hundred faces,
and all of them divine...
nothing but the voices of love,
and one of them be mine!

Eric Cockrell

One Of Them!

student protesters
close down Wall Street....
peaceful waves lapping

at the shore....
but the storm is coming;
students give way to workers,

workers without food,
without housing or medical care,
workers without hope....

angry workers,
and they damn sure
ought to be...

i know, i'm one of them!

Eric Cockrell

One Small Voice!

just one small voice
in a sea of voices,
all different languages,

male and female...
crying out against the roar:
WE WANT TO BE FREE!

one small voice,
a face soon forgotten,
but a body and a soul...

one small voice,
but now every voice counts,
we are together the voice

of humanity and hope...
WE WANT TO BE FREE!

Eric Cockrell

One!

when political idealology
causes human degradation,
then the political system

needs to be changed.
when you have to be rich
to be 'voted' into office,

so that you can control
how poor people live,
then the system needs

to be taken down!
when one man's vote
doesn't override one corporation,

then the system needs
to be abolished!
one vote, one revolution,

one goal, one people....
each with the power
and dignity of one!

Eric Cockrell

One, Two, One... For You

the dust in the empty pockets
of the poor man,
walking home from work.
the plowed field just planted,
at the feet of sun and rain.
the simple house built by hand,
lifetimes written into the walls.
the last touch, the last kiss,
the moment never forgotten....

hearts wrapped in hearts,
live and die as one...
one set of footprints,
one name on the stone.
one set of wings,
one fire, one clap of thunder.
two words spoken, two empty vases.
one heart, one hawk flying,
two hands times two,
one dream!
two sparrows part,
one nest, and one tree!
two sides, two faces...
one memory!

Eric Cockrell

Only If...

only if your lips bleed
when you speak,
and your hand trembles
just a bit.
if your eyes become
wet with longing...
and your heart pounds,
like waves against the shore.
if the wind in your hair
builds a nest,
for the mockingbird
to hatch her young...
and if the truth falls
like a single bead of sweat...
only then,
will we speak of love!

Eric Cockrell

Only One Race!

again and again,
the race issue is
thrown into the spotlight...

i dont know which is worse:
sticking your head in the sand
and pretending it's not there...

or using it as the excuse
for whatever agenda...

folks, bottom line...
there is only one race,
the human race!

you would think
we'd be intelligent enough
to know this by now,

and to act like it!

Eric Cockrell

Only The Bowl!

i am only the bowl!
i am not the rice.
i am not the fire.
i am not the rain,
nor the sun that gave.
i am not the fertile earth.

i am not the human hands
that gathered, that prepared...
i am not even the hand that offers.
i am not the table, not the chair,
i am not the spoon.
when day is done,
and my place is known...

i am only the bowl!

Eric Cockrell

Only The Crippled

only the crippled go to war...
the bird afraid of the sky
tears flesh with his beak.
the moral ones wearing
clothes of black and white,
whose religion is their ego,
whose god made of stone.
hands made of me and mine,
feet whose eyes gone blind...
to the drumbeat of take and destroy,
terrified of what lies within.
but freedom never fired a gun,
and justice never waived a flag.
peace never won by blood and bodies,
and the spirit has no religion!

Eric Cockrell

Only The Darkness (Can See)

kick down the door,
rattle the panes and the shutters.
break the glass urn,
blow the dust from the wings.
touch the untouchable.
feel the forbidden.
what you taste in your sleep,
is only you!
strike a match to the walls,
sweep your belongings to the fire.
what is burned cant own you,
the unbridled horse runs free!
bite the neck of the lover,
give way to the howl.
the moonlight writes verses
only the darkness can see!

Eric Cockrell

Only To All!

it is by the blood we share
in our suffering,
that we remember we're brothers.
it is this same blood,
that we must drink and be set free.
there is no victory nor salvation
that is personal...
redemption comes only to all!

Eric Cockrell

Only We That Are Confused....

the mountain has no sense of duality,
and the leaf knows it is a tree.
the river doesn't worry about
where it came from,
and where it's going....
and the wind finds home in journey.
the butterfly finds eternity in a moment,
the wolf speaks for all with a single howl.
the night knows that it is day,
and the day knows that it is night....
the turtle paints with Van Gogh,
on the inside of its shell.
the dead drink brandy with thunder,
the rooster crows and infinity hath spoken.
the bear greets the salmon with repentance,
and the salmon bows with humble gratitude.
winter kisses autumn one last time,
while spring dances in the womb.
and god abounds in each and all...
it is only we that are confused!

Eric Cockrell

Only You Can Decide...

perhaps then we were lovers
in ancient Greece...
perhaps you were the one who danced
in the cave when i discovered fire!
were we born just outside the garden,
in a land long forgotten?
were we primitive wolves,
mating in the moonlight?
perhaps you were the dry land
that split from my ocean.
perhaps your cry of passion,
exploded stars into dust!
perhaps i was gravity lost,
and you were the moon....
perhaps you were the spoken word,
and i took the form.
perhaps you were war,
and i came running in madness.
perhaps i am death,
and you are the grave...

we come panting across lifetimes,
tongues hung down dripping blood.
we tear down the sky,
we become the wind.
the body of the howling,
and the aching voice of need...
searching for each other,
again, and again....

do you love me? if not slay me!
my destiny demands fulfillment.
i am the tongue and the nail,
you the wetness and the fire.
be our language forgotten,
then wear my stillness.
be it crown or cross,
only you can decide!

Eric Cockrell

Opened The Door

the hand that
balled into a fist,
and struck another

man down...
the hand that stole
the money to feed

his family that was hungry....
the hand that wrote angry words,
threw a stone through the window.

the hand that shut the door,
leaving the stranger outside...
the hand that tore

down all that it had built,
feeling the rage of alone....
the hand that pulled the trigger,

pushed the button,
rang the register.....
the hand that touched

forbidden places,
brought rain from a cloudless sky....
the hand that clasped the other,

kneeling to pray for forgiveness....
just wiped tears from the
face of God... found the key,

and opened the door!

Eric Cockrell

Opens Both Ways

walking into death...
hands that grasped for so long,
learning to let go!
we spend our lives
in front of the easel...
and now the paint begins to dry.

at best, our dying
is the culmination of,
the fulfillment of destiny,
perhaps...
it finalizes the giving,
leaving the perfume of identity
hanging in the air.

we make love on a bed of pine needles,
small impressions on the ground.
the earth turns, the tides return,
the fires gone dim with stillness.
nothing to fear that we can change,
we've already laid the plank.
the door opens both ways...

the key on the windowsill!

Eric Cockrell

Or Just The Wind!

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the hand of eros
wipes the sweat
from my forehead...

or perhaps it's only the wind
that i have come to know...
the mountains i climbed

now look like foothills....
the tips of my wings charred
and dredged through oil.

the dreams i held,
dreams of flesh and spirit,
now blow like dust

into the darkness of night.
and the taste of blood
now need be nothing more....

the river i felt inside me
poured into your deepest valley,
and lit the blackness

with tiny liquid fireflies.
inside of you, inside of hunger,
pulsing, pulsing... till

the light went out....
by a small fire too wet to burn,
i peed in the sand....

and stood waiting for the waves
to come and wash it away!
the hand of eros... or just the wind!

Eric Cockrell

Or, Is It?

it's easy...

to say a lot of nothing
with a lot of words!
easy to preach by day
and whore by night.
easy to have a lot of answers,
when you dont even
know the questions...
easy to say:
'i'd never do that...'

it's a lot harder
to speak the truth
in a few simple words.
harder to admit your mistakes,
and be honest about yourself.
harder to listen for the questions,
knowing that often listening
is the best answer.
harder to admit:
'i've been there before...'

or, is it?

Eric Cockrell

Oral Poetry

my tongue searches
through the layers of petals,
each curve on the way down;

knowing each cosmos,
and the depth of forever,
coming back to the mouth

of the river again...
lighting the fire,
rubbing sticks together....

till it bursts in flame,
and consumes the darkness...
then slowly bathing

the child, and the old woman...
the poetry of my hunger
screams through your veins!

Eric Cockrell

Original Dust (For Nick)

some people, a very few,
are born in a way,
allowing them to
continually be born...
bearing the seeds of revolution,
far before they know the sound.
becoming ever more conscious,
light revealed before thought dark.
to find that age and time,
bring forth the child again.
and the more time passes,
the more the need to be simple.
returning to the land,
made of original dust!

Eric Cockrell

Ornery Old Man...

i have been accused of being an ornery old man, perhaps
rightfully so... i am rather blunt, and have little patience
or tolerance for ignorance.

however, when i come in contact with another human
being i always try to see them through their own eyes...
my abiding thought and intent is respect, grounded in
dignity...

i will go out of my way to listen, and to help.
but both of us have to pull the oars!

Eric Cockrell

Otherwise Bare!

a bicycle with a flat tire,
propped against a brick wall.
the old hose with a hole,
thrown to the side.
the old man in front of the tv,
from morning to night.
a dog collar by the ashtray,
a coffee pot grown cold.
a flashlight that doesnt work,
a pair of shoes that never fit.
books packed in a box,
at a three dollar yard sale.
the suit bought at goodwill,
waiting on the funeral.
the last pack of cigarettes,
an empty pack of matches.
love sleeping on couches,
a screwdriver with a broken bit.
a heart that smells of mothballs...
a block of cheese and a knife on a plate,
on a table otherwise bare!

Eric Cockrell

Our Children!

those brown skinned babies...
starving in Haiti, Africa,
and around the world.
laying dead victims
of bombing and gunfire...
are our children.
those white skinned,
black skinned babies,
born into the housing developments
and trailer parks,
into crackhead pill popping
poverty... those,
are our children too!
those blood stained babies,
found in desperate dumpsters,
our children, again.
those unborn babies,
born into hopeless situations,
or never to be born
into a world cold and hard...
our children too!

Eric Cockrell

Our Hearts Remain

a torrent of light
poured from your lips,
tastes like shadow

and something more,
undefined...
step by step,

we approach mortality,
with the finality of crossings,
made under duress...

what's left is dust,
turned amber in sunlight...
that bleaches the walls

with infinity's brush.
this, and no more,
certainly no less....

we have lived with passion,
our hearts remain!

Eric Cockrell

Our Level Of Responsibility!

our level of responsibility
far deeper than our occasional
stabs at compassion, and truth...
when we sit down to eat, and eat
far more than we need, and throw
the leftovers out... we are
responsible for the hungry!
when we go to sleep at night, in
houses too big and too plush, we
are responsible for the homeless...
when we drive our SUV's around for
no reason at all, burning excess
gas, we are responsible for the
oil spills...
when we vote people in office,
whose agenda is profit at all costs,
we are responsible for countries
invaded...
when we turn our backs and walk away,
or stick our heads in the sand, we are
responsible for the loss of human rights...
when we allow the banning of books, and
legislation against free speech, we are
responsible for ignorance, and allow
ourselves to be enslaved!
responsible, every thought, every intent,
every action!

Eric Cockrell

Our Mouth, Or Our Heart!

what if our thoughts
were hammers, and
our words were nails...
would we be more careful
of the world we build?
and what if every action
were the action that
our entire lives were
judged on...
would we be more careful?

and what if we finally understood
that everything we think, do, or say,
feeds either our mouth or our heart...
what would we change?

and what if we really knew
that the person needing help
that we turned away...
was God in human form?

our mouth, or our heart,
which will we feed?

Eric Cockrell

Our Only Chance (For Redemption)

our only chance
.....for redemption
.....as a people....

lies in our willingness
.....to listen,
.....to give a damn,

and to get involved
....at all costs.
understanding begins

within, and reaches out
.....to the same vein
.....of humanity

that we all share!

redemption!
...listening
.....caring

involvement!

Eric Cockrell

Our Own

i heard you crying...
i dont know your name;
but i can feel your hunger,
your pain, can smell
your fear...
just like it was my own.

there are no walls
between the living,
no self imposed barricades,
no structured classes...

there is only breath!
and blood! and need!
tongues groping for souls
that taste like our own!

Eric Cockrell

Our Own Greatest Enemy

We, who pray for peace,
While arming ourselves for war.
Who profess equality,
While building walls.
Who speak of freedom,
But only in hushed tones.
Who fight over religion,
And judge by skin color.
Who bury our heads,
Turn and walk away.
Who drink our children's blood,
And borrow against their dreams.
Who stand for justice,
But only for the few.
Who rewrite our past,
And whitewash our sins.
Who steal from the poor,
And call it fair profit.
Who hate most of all,
The image in the mirror.

We...
Our own greatest enemy!

Eric Cockrell

Our Self

why is it
that the person
we are with the most,
and are closest to...
is the person we know least about...
our self!

Eric Cockrell

Our Sins!

Jesus died for our sins
in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan....
Judas ran for office,

got re-elected....
and they cut down whole forests
to make more crosses!

Christian got a purple heart,
came home jobless and homeless.
but no fear, no tears,

the next front will be here!
salvation wrapped in oppression!

Eric Cockrell

Our Youth!

our youth...

far stronger than we thought!
laying down their techno-crap,

and picking up the dirty work
of restoring freedom.....
with firm resolve, though stripped

of the rights of free speech,
making a statement
by their committed presence!

showing the intelligence to question,
and the sight to see beyond
the moral indignity offered...

almost as if it were their future!

Eric Cockrell

Outhouse Walls

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real poetry...
begins with
a hammer and a saw,

16 penny nails,
the sun at your back,
and a willing tree!

wiping the dirt
and the fear from
a small child's face,

with bare hands,
calloused and rough,
tender as the petals

of the long rose opening
in front of an empty house....
picking up the stray dog

hit by a passing car,
going too fast to stop,
or to care....

load him in your truck,
and off to the vet....
who trades you his time

for a bushel of beans,
and help building his porch....
real poetry written

on outhouse walls!

Eric Cockrell

Outlaw Poetry?

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outlaw poetry?

poets walkin' outside the law,
spewing bloodstained words,

painting the picture they see,
they feel, they live...

talkin' truth in the age

of propaganda...

holding the raw, beating hearts
of those in need...

with trembling hands,

and jaws set firm....

standing in the face of the roar,

fighting against all odds.

outlaw poetry?

hell no! outlaw ignorance!

Eric Cockrell

Outrage!

let me see if i understand this...
you go to 'liberate' Vietnam,
at the cost of thousands of lives...
you invade Iraq, and their fake WMD's.
you go to battle in Afghanistan,
using terrorism for an excuse...

but you cant and wont
lift a damn finger to help
the people of Tibet...
a nonviolent people,
being abused, ravaged, raped,
and killed by The Chinese government...
who's sleeping with who?

and who do you think you're fooling?

Eric Cockrell

Overthrow (The Working Poor)

overthrow...
the weight of the world
on the bent shoulders
of the working poor.
empty pots, and
nowhere to lay your head...
pulling bent nails
with a borrowed hammer
from a tumbling down shack!

overthrow...
if you cant change it,
break it! take it back!
break free of the cage!
though the guns are pointed,
stand up and dare!
nothing left to lose,
and everything to gain...
overthrow..

Eric Cockrell

Overthrow The Status Quo

the greatest terror threat
on American soil lies
in the daily workings

of Wall Street and 'corporate America'
against the common people!
the greatest threat to freedom,
our own government!

the worst drug on the streets
is the lie they perpetuate,
backed by mainstream media.

the worst sin disguised
under 'organized religion'...
the worst slap in the face
to the American worker...
NAFTA!

the best thing that can happen...
workers, men and women,
taking back our dignity!

Eric Cockrell

Pack My Bags

why cant i write
just a few lines,
understood in all languages;
that would open the hearts
of all mankind, one human
being to another...
and make us all know
and realize that we are family?

you dont even have
to put my name on it.
just let it be...
i'd pack my bags and go home,
happy as hell!

Eric Cockrell

Pages In The Book

in the midnite hour 'neath the street lamp shadows,
where lifetimes come and go, and salvation follows.
and the heart stripped bare has no need to lie...
the taste of your lips, the tears that i cant cry.

with beaten hands and swords into plows;
giving all that i am, more than i can do without.
i'd trade eternity for one moment by your side...
with your hand in mine and nothing left to hide.

making love in the dirt by the cementary stones,
the yip of the dogs while the wind howls and moans.
your fingers dig into my back, i dive into your soul...
where fire was discovered, spinning out of control.

you close the book, turn the page, walk out the door,
call it all a lie, say you dont love me anymore.
the scars of passion in the shadows 'neath your eyes...
hymns of hope and redemption where the sparrow flies.

pour me a drink, light a smoke, my hat and my heart,
looking for your image in the hunger of the dark.
truth and freedom and justice dissolve into dust...
struck blind and deaf, my soul turned to rust.

down the road past the house where nobody lives.
where love looks in a mirror, repents and forgives.
every moment wasted, every word unspoken turns...
the heart beats faster, but the fire slowly burns.

kiss my lips and bury me down by the willow tree.
take this weight from my heart, set my spirit free.
in the eyes of God and time you are my destiny...
i'm nothing but a river that flows into your sea.

say no prayers, now the time of praying is past.
what's last is now first, what's first is now last...
the song of the poet dies with a fatal look...
all that we are now... pages in the book.

Eric Cockrell

Painting The Walls

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painting the walls,
rolling over handprints,
cobwebs, and smoke stains....

over splashes of color,
over peels of time.
painting over the sounds

of voices whispering, laughing....
painting over tears hidden
from the world, from each other.

painting over running, and working,
working all day and half the night.
painting over children, and dreams,

folded like old clothes, and put away.
painting over notes from God,
that were often barely noticed...

painting over the nail that held
up the clock, hands moving slowly,
turning the seasons of living....

painting over the final words,
the last breath held in the hands,
of lives written in the grain....

the testimony of each feeling....
painting the walls,
and brushing the corners,

as if we never lived!

Eric Cockrell

Passion Dream # 1

your tongue
groping for
my soul
in the darkness.

my fingers
play the strings
of your longing.

i awaken
from a dream.
hot, and hungry.

lost, and searching!

Eric Cockrell

Passion Dream # 2

your body;
wetness,
and trembling

your moan,
a higher octave
and a deeper plane.

i take you
in a moonlit room;
where shadows whisper,

and stillness answers!

Eric Cockrell

Passion Dream-3

swinging the axe,
over and over,
cutting the notch...

till that moment
when time is suspended;
creaking and cracking,

the great tree falls!
and the earth
shudders and shakes!

Eric Cockrell

Past Due

bird droppings on the windshield
of an old car that wont start
radio blaring the news
an execution, a robbery, another

meth lab, shovel ready jobs.
people without faces speed by,
cell phones stuck in their ears.
behind closed doors, the clock ticks

where to go from here?
the groan of survival,
cardboard boxes and trunks
renting life, three months past due!

Eric Cockrell

Patches Of

patches of sunlight,
patches of clouds.
patches of Jesus,
patches of doubt.

patches of joy,
patches of pain.
patches of hope,
patches of strain.

patches of tomorrow,
patches of today.
patches of forever,
patches of 'cant stay'!

patches of loving,
patches of cold.
patches of youth,
patches of old.

patches of bravery.
patches of fear.
patches of happiness,
patches of tears.

patches of life,
patches of death.
patches of trying
with your last breath!

Eric Cockrell

Pathway Of Pure Stone!

the only man
who leaves footprints
on a pathway of
pure stone,
is a man of peace.

his feet bleeding,
with the pulsing blood
of all those oppressed!

Eric Cockrell

Pays The Cost

fifty years married...
a half century as one.
he sat by her bed,

holding her limp hand....
alzheimer's, and a bad heart,
eyes that didnt know him,

anymore!

he pulled the tubes from
her nose, from her mouth,
from her arms....

and whispered into her ear...
'go, be free...
i wont be long...'

true love pays the cost!

Eric Cockrell

Peace

peace is not
a dream.
not a vision,
not delusion.

not what comes after war!
now an act of cowardice
not a spiritual emotion
not the gift of death
after an angry life

peace
is
the
last
breath
of air
in
this darkness

the only road
that leads
out of hell!

peace is the
heart of God
manifested
in the actions
of compassionate
men with dirty hands!

Eric Cockrell

Peace Beyond Time

wolves run
in packs drinking moonlight,
flesh and blood,

hunger and desire!
i am the wolf,
i am the moonlight,

flesh and blood,
hunger and desire.
the hawk glides,

on the wind with eyes,
peeling layer upon layer
for pulsing treasure...

i am the hawk,
i am the wind,
peeling layer upon layer,

for pulsing treasure.
the river winds
through rocks and trees,

making it's own path,
on the way home.
i am the river,

rocks and trees,
making my own path
on the way home....

darkness falls,
wraps around the light,
brings healing stillness,

and peace beyond time.
i am the darkness,
wrapping around light,

i bring healing stillness,
and peace beyond time!

Eric Cockrell

Peaceful Revolution (Human Kindness)

human kindness,
peacefully expressed,
well thought out actions,

grounded in belief!
belief in equality,
compassionate unity,

brings about change...
real change, real thinking,
real solutions, real problems,

facing real issues,
without making excuses....
breaking down barriers

constructed by fears,
finding sameness in difference,
and holiness in the mundane.

stronger than bullets,
armed guards and riot squads.
the truth of human kindness

breaks the grip of the lie!

Eric Cockrell

Pecan Shells, And Moss...

i love each of you...
in dark and mysterious ways,
that are only being and breath,
pecan shells, and moss.
the tongue of the heart,
speaks only the language of silence,
and tastes the raw dirt
beneath your fingernails!
the stray cat whispered tonight,
and infinity undressed.
a simple touch, both real and shared

Eric Cockrell

Pen And Brush!

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you are the poetry
that i cannot write,
the raw and simple beauty

my words cannot define....
the fire too hot, too close,
singeing the corners

of my heart.
the pulsing of life itself,
that began before,

and will last beyond....
you are the touch of life,
that i follow madly,

pen and brush in hand!

Eric Cockrell

Pepper Spray

would you pepper spray your children?
you've fouled the air they will breathe
for the rest of their lives.....
you've fouled their drinking water,
or sold away the rights.
you've cut down their forests,
driven their animal friends to extinction....
carbon, smoke filled, oil spilled,
coal dust, radiation leaked.....

you've taken away their chances for education....
taken back the aid... left them on the streets,
or worse, sent them off to fight your greed wars...
let them get strung out on dope,
sent them to prison... let them fall
between the cracks....

you taught them your morality....
but your actions have taught them hatred,
fear, prejudice, take what you can get....
you've piled up debt that you're leaving for them....
you sold their chances for employment....
you've fed them lies until...

their eyes open, they just say no,
they've had enough.....
sitting quietly in a firm and well thought
act of protest.... you pepper spray them!
why did you have children to start with?

Eric Cockrell

Perhaps A Brandy

perhaps a brandy....
the shovel still caked with dirt,
the body restless, turns and groans.
the shade o'er the window
yellowed by mold,
the frail hands of the clock
do not move or whisper.
the scent of love,
lingers and stutters.
the fireplace empty,
the books weep on the shelf.
the old tree fallen
just outside your window,
the barking of dogs,
the prayers of rust.

children without faces
carry the box into the night...
the hoot of the owl,
another mockingbird dead!
moonlight, perhaps a lie,
even the stars remain distant.
nothing dressed in wrinkled clothes,
squats by the fire,
humming an ancient tune.
the spider's web reflected
on the oil tinged dew,
tastes like love remembered!
perhaps a brandy?

Eric Cockrell

Perhaps Only Rainfall....

evolution,
or perhaps only rainfall.
kind words given,
dripping from autumnal leaves.
rose petals weep at the funeral,
then drink till dawn.
and old men draw highways,
that lead to the eyes.
destiny, dirty socks
and old coffee cups.
while shadows taste like the dirt,
on the bank of the creek.
the cry of freedom seems bitter,
somewhat hot to the touch.
as the face of the stranger,
dissolves in the mirror.
the sky still as if waiting,
drawn by the memory of wings.
the book on the shelf,
smells faintly of love.
time itself an illusion,
the spirit runs barefooted....
back to the wind,
the tongue behind your ear!

Eric Cockrell

Perhaps The Cat!

he rose from the coffin,
shook himself, and walked,
out the door, out of sight.
the body he left behind,
nothing but an empty shell!
the mourners wept for the body.
who sings the song of
the spirit set free?
who sees with his eyes?
who knows his heart?
perhaps the blind man
at the piano...
perhaps the cat that followed
his steps, in search of food!
perhaps the wind that
closed the door behind...
perhaps the ones who really loved,
or the child waving at the window!

Eric Cockrell

Perhaps Then... (Not A Man)

perhaps then, i am not a man....
i am the creek hidden
deep in the woods,
singing the hymn of rocks,
and stillness.
i am the gun laid down,
for the last time,
by the conscience of discontent.
i am the cry of the child,
born into a hungry world,
the eyes of the mother,
defying hope!
i am the snail that dances,
the deep growl of the dog,
i am firewood, cut and stacked,
in waiting.
i am the kiss of the chapter,
you read again and again...
i am the crossroads,
devoid of signs.
i am the headstone faded
by a hundred years,
the old chair rocking by itself.
i am the lamp left on,
the door that creaks,
the breeze that knows your hidden name.
i am the tongue unlocking
passions not yet defined,
that you didnt even know you had.
i am boots in the corner,
that dance to the beat,
awaiting feet, as if a lover.
i am a new set of strings,
on the old guitar,
the sound hidden inside of music.
i am the language of birds,
the sign on the forehead.
i am sin undressed and intimate.
i am smoke from the chimney,

of the abandoned house,
the tin roof electric with rain.
i am nothing a hundred times made over,
the crease in the blanket,
the indentation on the pillow....
i am the grunt of god revealed,
and the shovel of eternity!

Eric Cockrell

Perhaps We Are Then....

perhaps we are then elephants,
tiptoeing in forbidden flower beds,
drinking tea from cracked cups,
in a kitchen that needs to be swept!
or small burning things,
that no longer have form.
the cat in the window
of the abandoned house!
clothes waiting to be ironed,
potatoes waiting to be peeled.
hymnals in jail cells,
the book under the bed.
feet that need washed,
the knife grown dull.
the grave unmarked,
neath the tree that weeps!

Eric Cockrell

Perhaps We Are Then.... (Part Two)

or...

perhaps we are then,
old green glass marbles,
in a metal bucket.
the old worn bra,
drawing disability on the shelf.
imaginary cowboys,
and cardboard saviours.
moondust sold at a county fair!
oil dripping from a broke down car.
spiders living in boxes
full of old photographs.
the guitar that needs strings,
and the half written letter.
the coffee turned cold,
and the spicket turned grey!
words never quite born,
the face wrinkled with age.
black things hidden in shadows,
that have both names and memories!

Eric Cockrell

Personal Path To Liberation!

my own personal path
...to liberation began with
.....me admitting my own

personal failures and mistakes,
and taking ownership of them!

i would think
...it would be the same
.....for each of us....

by admitting we're human,
we begin to see as a human,
to accept the human....

in each and all!
only then can we begin
...to approach infinity...

and to see forever in a moment!

Eric Cockrell

Piano Bench

sun setting,
...azure tint.
the piano bench empty,
dust gathers on the keys.

the grass damp with dew,
the wind still, and quiet.
the bookshelf sags
with books long ignored.

people walk by without talking,
darkness opens its mouth... swallows.
the lamp forlorn and chilled
waits without hope for a bulb.

nothing to say that can say,
words fall like leaves to the ground.
the room empty haunted by form,
curls up inside it's own hollow.
no fingers to touch the keys!

Eric Cockrell

Pick Up The Plow!

put down your sword,
pick up the plow!
a new day has come,
a new world before us!

in the beginning again,
we are the first hope.
pick up the plow,
till the earth...

our home and our hope!
a new day, a new way,
we work side by side..
beneath the sun, in the rain...

and we make love all night!
time is for the taker,
and now is the time...
put down your sword,

pick up the plow!

Eric Cockrell

Picture On The Mantle....

i am not the picture
on the mantle,
not the old song,
not a fleeting memory.
i am not the name
that parks behind yours,
i am not the rent, the lights,
or the groceries.
i am not the excuse,
the curse, or the lie....
not the name of your fear,
not your morals, or your chains.
i am not the old man
sitting in the chair,
staring blankly out the window.
i am not the grey in your hair,
not the heart grown cold.
i am not the bull in the pasture,
not the magazine by the toilet.
i am not your second choice,
your last resort,
or even your final resting place...

but i am the mountain unmoved,
the tree changing with seasons,
but still rooted to the ground.
i am the fury of storm,
and the beauty of sunset....
the taste of still darkness,
the fire never quenched.
i am the fall, the struggle
that gets back up,
i am the fight against all odds.
i am the heart of angels,
the hands of demons,
i am hunger shouted and chanted.

i am a man,
made of flesh and blood.

i demand the respect
that is truth and passion.
i'll get down in the ditch,
but you have to come too!
i am the hand reaching for yours.

so love me, hate me, or close the door.
i am this moment,
trickling through the hands of time.
for if i am but wave,
you must be ocean....
if you are thunder,
i am the lightning!

Eric Cockrell

Pillars Of Truth

walking across the semi-frozen grass with my old dog....
listening to the crunch, the sound of morning birds singing...
watching the sun come up over the horizon, and thinking.
Carlin, like so many others, was right! we are owned.
this quit being a democracy a long time ago.

the rich, the elite, the corporate gods, call all the shots.
they buy both the laws and the lawmakers. they pick the
president...
they use wars, mis-information and fears, to manipulate
the common people. they whip us into patriotic fevers, and
lead us like sheep to the slaughter.

they tie the economy to these wars, and keep us down.
driven by the greed of the oil barons, they use poverty and
ignorance as a whip.

they use racial prejudice to divide us... they fan this prejudice...
they also use religion... encouraging people to believe that everyone
whose beliefs' are different are dangerous.

Eric Cockrell

Pillars Of Truth-2

divide and conquer.
they've worked this old adage well.
white against black, both against hispanic,
jew against christian, christian against muslim,
straight against gay, republican against democrat...
they play it to the hilt...

destroy the unions, limit free speech,
ban books that make you think...
ignorance is bliss!

just dont let the common people unite,
dont let them think, or question...
keep them busy struggling to survive...
hope is dangerous!

middle east problems, raise the gas prices...
wait a little while, food prices follow.
give 'em fox news, keep 'em hooked on xanax,
give them tiger, charlie sheen, and lindsay lohan.

divide and conquer!

Eric Cockrell

Pillars Of Truth-3

it's hard, so damned hard!
go to work everyday (if you're lucky)
and pound your head against the wall...
knowing there's no way in hell
you can make enough to survive!

house gone! car gone! savings gone!
no insurance, not enough food to eat!

husbands leave wives, cant do it anymore!
wives leave husbands, want a better life.
and it only gets worse!

the only thing that we have
that they cant take away
are the people that love us...

why in the hell would we throw that away?

Eric Cockrell

Pillars Of Truth-4

the middle class is gone!
vanquished! extinct!
the american dream distorted,
dissolving into nightmarish need!

milk and honey are now
black market items only.

shut down the schools,
lay off the teachers.
close libraries, ban books...

firemen stand and watch
a house, a life burn down...
because the fee was not paid.

emergency rooms full of people
who have no insurance, ...
others wait in long lines
at the clinics...

people who used to own
their own homes... dumpster diving
for food...

roach motels and tent cities...
the only meals some kids get
are free meals at school...

people walking everywhere...
and more coming... \$5 a gallon gasoline
shuts it all down... while

5% get fatter, gather more,
get richer... and the rest....
are disposable.

Eric Cockrell

Pine Sap And Nuts

pine sap and nuts,
in unspoken corners.
tongues pierced with emotion,
and pent up clouds.
yesterlonging brushes your neck,
your long hair falling like rain...
or tears without names,
words without sound.
you taste like coffee and cigarettes,
on a dead poet Sunday.
morning falls with aching drench,
pine sap and nuts!

Eric Cockrell

Pledge Of Allegiance

if i stand
with my hand on my heart
and recite anything...
it will be me
naming the names:
of the homeless,
of the jobless,
of the hungry,
of those abused
by the justice system,
of those 'forgotten'
by our political system,
of the underpaid,
the under valued,
the stressed out,
of the common people
of this country.

therein lies my allegiance!

Eric Cockrell

Pledge Of Freedom

if the cost of freedom
be my hand or my foot...
cut them off, take them,
let it be so.
if to see equality,
you must take my eyes,
pluck them out,
they are yours!
if the price of compassion
be the scars on my back,
then so be it.
if my body be the bridge
you must cross to find the truth,
then i lay it down!
if my heart in your hands
be the cost of responsibility,
then i give it!
for i cannot go there...
without you!

Eric Cockrell

Plowed, Planted, And Weeded

the human mind
is but a field...
it has to be plowed,

planted and weeded..
it needs sunlight and rain.
if the gardener is attentive,

the crop will be good.
if we let it lay untended,
it becomes a field of death!

the crop that we raise
is the food of the future...
plowed, planted, and weeded!

Eric Cockrell

Poe Was Right...

perhaps Poe was right....
the heart that clamors in these walls,
defies death with every verse.
we are more than death,
and less than the snail's journey.
it be not the lie clothed in many words,
but the scar revealed on the naked breast!
and genius itself some small miracle,
like walking on water,
or painting the moon.
the beauty lies in that which
we cannot perfect....
in that which already 'is'!

Eric Cockrell

Poem For Sam

'always going, never arriving.'
i've thought about this one
for a while.
and i think there's another step!

the bare limbed tree in winter,
frozen branches, no sign
of life.

and yet beneath the surface,
life is forming, having been lost,
begins again!

perfect stillness.
no need for going,
or arriving ... you're
already there!

all that is life
is present.
what you seek for
you already are!

take off your shoes,
lay down your pack,
and embrace each breath.

the tides come in
and go out.
but the ocean remains!

Eric Cockrell

Poetry (The Real Deal!)

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poetry....

16 penny nails

...hammered in the

.....outhouse wall,

the rope,

...still tied in a knot...

.....the still warm bodies

.....quivering, in shallow graves.

the children of the man

....who pushed the button,

.....who made the choice....

the Mexican immigrant

....who washes the car

.....of the oil field supervisor,

....whose family lives

.....in a broke down bus...

the ground up pills

...the boy snorts up his nose,

....while his momma prays;

and his daddy beats a young girl

...in a whorehouse across town.

the old man's vomit stained shirt

...as he lies in the floor,

.....wondering if anyone

.....will ever find him.

the young protester's bloody face,

....standing for the mug shot;

.....his father's company

.....just closed another plant!

Eric Cockrell

Poetry Writes Us!

we dont write poetry...
poetry writes us,
the very fibre of our beings,

the flesh of our actions.
falling, broken, and vulnerable,
human mistakes and failings,

colored by love's passion;
the needing, wanting, striving
to touch and be touched,

to hold and be held,
to dance free of our bonds....
brothers and sisters to the wind.

woven together by suffering,
crying out for the light,
alive, and naked....

the song, and the pulse!

Eric Cockrell

Poetry.... (Bare Open Hand)

poetry does not pay the rent...
does not buy cars or houses,
does not sell stocks.
does not wear suits and ties,
does not barter, is not profitable,
cannot be bought or sold.

but poetry opens forbidden doors,
builds bridges in the darkness...
embraces the soul left alone.
pours balm on open wounds,
brings a mirror and the cost.

poetry asks questions that the soul whispers,
knows well the language of trees and rivers.
dances naked in the moonlight.
prays prayers we're afraid of...

poetry disarms the violent.
kisses, touches, makes love.
burns, burns, and burns....
feeds the hungry and heals the sick.

poetry sees beneath the skin,
takes off the cloak of religion,
and unleashes the spiritual.
breaks the glass, and unlocks chains.

poetry plows new ground,
and names each sacred moment.
listens, listens, and listens,
and extends a bare open hand!

Eric Cockrell

Poet's Dream

i dreamed last night i was walking,
in the company of Robert Bly, and Diane di Prima...
down a stony path in the pitch black darkness.
we walked in silence... listening, just listening.
the wind rustled the tree limbs, sighing...
almost blowing out our lantern.
the spirits of animals, trees, and even the stones
beneath our feet.... testified!
a great haunting wave of peace blanketed us...
and i knew the path we were on to be the right one!

Eric Cockrell

Poet's Epitaph

i see the lights of a far distant shore.
i hear the moan of thundered skies.
i smell the perfume of rain not fallen.
i taste the lips of earth, and of trees.
i see the fire in cold arctic winters.
i hear the words the wind desires.
i smell the scent of passion held back.
i taste the blood of coming death.
i see the dawn of the blackened cave.
i hear the weeping of mountains still.
i smell the coffin, and shovelled dirt.
i taste the spirit set free in flight!

Eric Cockrell

Poet's Farewell

i have labored for a thousand years
to build the ark that rides out
the storm...
to bring peace to a war torn earth,
to bring healing and understanding.
i have bowed in prayer with all faiths,
in temples, in mosques, in huts.
i have come in many forms,
red, brown, black, and white,
male and female both.
i have listened without judgement,
i have felt what you have felt.
i have known your poverty,
and your anguish,
and the insides of your prisons.
i have felt your passions, your hatreds,
your fears, and your hopes...
i have forgiven, and been forgiven.
i have taken lovers,
and stood with friends;
i have fallen again and again.
i have believed past the point of faith.
i have known both light and darkness.
i have tended the fire all through the night,
i have ran naked in the rain.
i am each of you, and nothing else,
and more than we understand.
i have spoken the last word spoken,
and now my time has come...

no longer the man
who feeds the branches to the fire,
i become the branches,
the flame, and the warmth...
and taking the form of light,
i kiss the darkness one last time...
with hope!

Poets For Change

poets for change...
from all walks of life,
all nationalities,

different educational levels,
diverse viewpoints respected,
male and female, young and old....

shedding light on the human condition.
daring to question, to defy
all weight of gravity to silence...

bringing a cup of water to the thirsty,
compassionate ears and hands involved.
from heart to heart, soul to soul,

with honest eyes speaking....
and passionate belief in all that lives!

Eric Cockrell

Pole Shift

pole shift?
evolutionary change?
or just the sound

of the screen door banging,
when you walked out of my heart?

my finger feels naked
when i wake up in
the middle of the night....

and the wind blowing the curtains
tells me it's true!

Eric Cockrell

Politician....

the stink of money,
rising from the words he hurls,
like torn pieces of bread,
to the flock of starving crows.
mind numbing phrases,
that drain all feeling from the souls.
light the pipe of apathy,
poverty dreams and illusions.
careful not to touch,
not to mingle with the crowd.
not to taint his holiness
with the common dirt.
his time is over!
his world has come to its end!
truth has risen from the ruins,
and demands payment!
the revolution is upon us!

Eric Cockrell

Poor Dog Poetry # 2

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cant pay the rent, live in a tent,
pitch it where it's dark.
dumpster diving for your food,
thrown out by the rich and rude,
who have artificial hearts.

doing day work, dont shirk,
sell your soul for nickels and dimes.
gotta be Goodwill or cheap thrills,
hopped up on stolen pills,
gonna end up doing time....

the horns blow, patriots rise.
somewhere another innocent dies.
stars and stripes in the land of lies....
freedom bows her head and cries!

Eric Cockrell

Poor Dog Poetry!

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poor dog poetry, outcasts of society,
staying down by the tracks.

do what you have to do,
forget what you thought you knew...
and you better watch your back.

raised up right, followed the light,
stood for what you believed.
off to war and back again,
medals made of lies and tin,
gave much more than you received.

the horns blow, patriots rise.
somewhere another innocent dies.
stars and stripes in the land of lies....
freedom bows her head and cries!

Eric Cockrell

Posting Pictures

i'm going to quit writing poetry,
and start taking pictures...
pictures of the homeless,
the jobless, the hungry,
the war victims, drug victims,
crime victims, victims of oppressive
regimes, beaten, imprisoned, threatened...
starting right here!

the elderly left to die in want,
those left to live on the street,
families sleeping in cars,
parents burying their children...
smoke stacks smoking,
nuclear disasters, oil spills,
mountains being mined,
timber being cut...

lonely people walking alone!
small children crying...
lovers left in the cold...
empty churches full of people.

i'm going to post these pictures in color
for all the world to see,
post them in dead silence...
maybe then someone will hear,
hear, and offer a hand!

Eric Cockrell

Potent Men

we walk the fertile ground,
with eyes undressed by longing.
senses raw and yielding,

hungry for the night,
and the last promise of light
just before the dawn....

with naked hearts pounding strong
as waves against the shore....
running on belief, an ounce of wonder,

and the scent of a woman's touch!

Eric Cockrell

Pounding

pounding, pounding nails,
pounding heartbeats, pounding feet.
pounding voices, pounding anger,
pounding need, pounding greed.

hungry, hungry eyes,
hungry souls, hungry holes.
hungry children, hungry countries,
hungry hands, hungry man.

throbbing, throbbing blood,
throbbing dreams, throbbing schemes.
throbbing ideas, throbbing hatred,
throbbing inside, throbbing cant hide.

touching, touching hearts,
touching true, touching you.
touching forbidden, touching daring,
touching color, touching wonder.

pounding, pounding nails...

Eric Cockrell

Poverty (Colors Of Rage)

poverty wears all
the colors of rage....
vibrant, raw, aching,

souls ripped from the flesh
by forces unseen....
worn like scars....

on the face of God!

Eric Cockrell

Poverty (Debt-Free Haiku)

'momma, i'm hungry! '
'i cant find you. where are you? '
'momma! please! momma! '

old car packed up high,
mattress tied down on the roof...
windows bare, empty.

the stink of whiskey,
tired-eyed, angry, hard despair,
paint peels off the dream

potatoes, old bread,
last pot of coffee, brewed strong,
nothing on the shelf!

hand on the pistol,
too damn tired to be afraid...
no other option!

Eric Cockrell

Poverty, And Honesty!

dont talk to me about salvation,
your phallic lips pierced
with the trinkets of desire!
let's talk about equality
in a room where
light and darkness
both weigh the same,
sitting naked around a table,
bare but for time...
time purchased, and lost,
in the gamble to feed.
time, not for sale,
time taken and given!
dont talk about redemption,
with judgement clouded eyes.
let's talk about sameness,
same hearts, same souls.
poverty brings an honesty,
names each and every face!
and if we must pray,
let it be to each other.
let each wave be the ocean,
let the ocean free each wave!

Eric Cockrell

Poverty, And Ignorance!

one of the most infuriating
things i've ever read inferred
that people live in poverty
because they are ignorant!

the majority of people living
in poverty are there because
they are the victims of human greed.
call it what you want....

when too few have too much,
the many do without.
we are not so ignorant as to
accept your blatant assumptions!

Eric Cockrell

Prayer Eyes

i learned to pray
almost as soon
as i learned to breathe...

i'm not sure there's
much difference.
sometimes i think

if you get beaten down
so much in life....
it allows you to let go

of everything you thought
you had to have, of everything
that you thought you had to be....

and you learn to feel,
and to see with new eyes,
with prayer eyes....

eyes that know the connected,
eyes that feel whether near
or distant... eyes that touch,

the unholy, the unforgiven,
the outcast, the worthless...
and find the sacredness of each.

and know every breath to be
a simple prayer... an unnamed star
on the blackest of nights!

Eric Cockrell

Prayer For Amy

sometimes the pain
of living is so much,
the waves of feeling
so strong, so dangerous...
the hurt so deep it
penetrates and shakes
your very being...

suffocates your thinking,
till words are too painful
to be spoken...

and the darkness is so cold
that you burn down the house
trying to get warm...

leaving only the flapping
of shadowy wings
in a ghost grey sky....

may your spirit be at peace,
may your heart be healed....
may you rest quietly far from
the mouths of the soul starved!

Eric Cockrell

Prayer For Forgiveness

i knelt down and prayed
this morning for forgiveness
for everything this country is doing
around the world...

for the oil wars,
for the partnerships
with countries that abuse
human rights...
for the dictators we
both prop up and remove...

for the gluttony and the greed
here at home.... for the apathy,
for the self centered path
of destruction we march on...

for those left hungry, homeless,
without medical care, without hope...

and i know i am a part of this...
i take responsibility for my actions,
my inaction, my complacency...
and vow to stand for truth,
and to walk in involved
human compassion!

join me!

Eric Cockrell

Prayer Is Not!

prayer is not what you say
when you're in trouble...
it's what you do when faced
with someone else's need!

Eric Cockrell

Prayer Of Our Bodies

if you lay down with me,
will we rise up as one?
will the passionate fluid

of our souls wash
against the shores,
our spirits melting

into one blade,
so sharp it glitters
in the new morning sun?

will my life be the bridge,
yours the stepping stones?
will the prayer of our bodies

reach the ears of ecstatic hope?

Eric Cockrell

Prayer Wheel

prayer wheel turning...
naming the nameless,
the forgotten, the
left behinds...

the throwaways.

counting every grain
of sand,
every dropp of water.

sweeping the inner rooms
of the self.
undressing the mind
and its passions.

holding the thorn
in an open hand.

diving naked and deeply
into life...
without holding back!

Eric Cockrell

Praying For Emptiness!

walking barefoot down the streets
of the holy city...
listening to the sounds,
the whimper, the cry, and the roar...
praying for emptiness....

the clock beats in rhythm
with the sidewalks and the walls.
the smell of burnt flesh
hangs in the air....
'Jesus Saves' painted on a fence....

oil rigs and chemical sprays,
fields filled with unmarked graves.
windows broken, doors sway, rusted hinges,
cars abandoned, vacant buildings,
dead bodies, eyes lost stare!

the spirits of the children
sing haunting and low...
words pierce like nails,
the birds hear and weep....
a hand gun, a needle, half pack of smokes....

nobody saves the night from the dawn!
praying for emptiness...

Eric Cockrell

Praying For Help

she felt the baby move,
unconsciously dropped
her hand to her belly....

staring out the window
at the empty parking lot,
listening to the rain

a chair, a mattress,
an old table pushed back
against the paint peeling wall...

nothing to eat, no money,
he'd been gone for two weeks,
no phone calls, no one to call!

seventeen years old, and the
whole world crashing in....
two church ladies came by,

left her a New Testament,
and a couple of tracts...
and the law keeps circling

the parking lot each night;
roaches gather in the corner
praying for help!

Eric Cockrell

Praying For Rain

the farmer poet
walking barefoot
in the dust,
looking upwards
towards heaven,
praying for rain.

the blue collar poet
walks between the rows
of machines gone silent
in the deserted building,
looking upwards,
praying for work.

the nurse poet
stares at the line
of people wanting help,
no insurance, no money
looking upwards,
praying for hope.

the politician poet
surrounded by the din
of deals being made
without conscience
or integrity,
looking upwards,
praying for dignity.

the mother poet,
pushed into a corner,
no food, no money,
cant pay the rent or
buy clothes.
looking down
into her children's eyes,
praying for God!

the human poet,

looking inwards,
praying for all
that lives

praying for rain!

Eric Cockrell

Prejudice!

prejudice...
applied ignorance,
often worn under the mask

of religious fanaticism...
spurred on by fear,
often disguised as patriotism...

the sickness, the disease,
that elevates the self
to a higher plane....

the blindness that refuses
to see the likeness in the mirror...
prejudice....

no excuse!

Eric Cockrell

Prepared

dried beans, salt pork,
flour, lard, coffee,
and whiskey...

matches, sharp knife,
a coat, boots, dried dog food.
candles and books...

pull the blanket close,
hold those that you love.
storm clouds, hard lightning,

eyes squinted, lips tight!

Eric Cockrell

Priorities And Profit

how many soup kitchens closed down...

...lack

.....of

.....funding!

how many homeless shelters.....

...lack

.....of

.....funding.

how many clinics shut down....

...they're

.....not

.....profitable.....

how many banks and lending institutions

did

...we

.....bail

.....out?

what about Chrysler and Gm?

how many oil companies pay

little

....or

.....no

.....taxes?

who sets these priorities?

...and even more important,

.....why

.....do

.....we

.....allow

.....it?

there's more to being human

than

.....profit!

Eric Cockrell

Prisoner Of Myself!

for too long
i was a prisoner...
a prisoner of myself!
held captive by desires
that numbed my longing..
settling for second hand shoes,
and paths already forged..
convinced i was sacrificing
my spirit for my heart.

that wont fly anymore.
i'm too damned old to pretend,
even to myself.
though the man in the mirror
often disappoints me,
he is what he is!

this body beat down and worn,
this spirit demands its freedom.
love was never a light
you plugged in at night,
but a torch that burned
beyond all control...
a flame that makes its own way!

Eric Cockrell

Prodigal!

if your loving be
...the face of God,

then i am the prodigal,
...without name,
.....or country.

your silence drowns
...the small child in me,
.....and leaves the body

for the birds of prey!
my destination,
...lost in the sands,

i leave no footprints behind.
...nothing more,
.....than a wisp of smoke,

planting icicles in time's garden!

Eric Cockrell

Prom Queen In America

living in a tent
in the rain
in the woods

down by the river...

no tv, no computer,
no cell phone,
no microwave.

eating fish caught
in the murky water,
and whatever she could

scavenge from dumpsters...
a forgotten queen of a
forgotten kingdom....

her baby's sick,
her man sits in the
old car that wont start...

playing with a revolver...
praying that God, if there
is one... will strike them dead...

Prom Queen in America!

Eric Cockrell

Prophets Of Profit

in the shadows
beneath the trees,
the men with the long

knives wait;
call them unholy, call them
prophets, men of vision,

men of change...
soldiers of the grey kingdom,
where nothing is revealed.

every starving child,
every bomb dropped
on indiscriminate huts...

every girl baby aborted,
every young boy sent to prison
for his education...

every young girl bought
for an hour, used like a rag,
and tossed aside....

for miles and miles of oceans
poisoned by oil....
for the homeless man

beaten to death by the deputy....
the migrant family terrorized,
the young gay boy found hanging....

the men with the long knives wait...
choosing who will live and die,
who is useful, and who is not...

the judges chosen by
the oil drenched hand....
the prophets of profit!

Eric Cockrell

Propped Against The Wall

beneath the thunderous clap
of coming storm,
shadows scurry from limb to limb.
sunlight weeps through pregnant clouds,
and the spider builds his web.
with the feathered taste of sparrow's wings,
in the rhythm of marching ants.
logs cut and split, stacked against the house,
the spicket drips, and no one cares.

poverty tugs at the walls,
while voices tense with hunger's beat,
are lost in empty rooms.
children run between the cars,
with dirty faces, without shoes.
dogs bark from rib cages exposed,
as water boils on the stove.
the smell of time and elderly feet,
fans turn in paint peeled windows.

the old man tunes his guitar,
perched on the stoop like an owl.
with fingers gnarled he plays the blues,
his lips groan with pages burnt.
as love and whiskey intertwine,
and small children stare in awe.
the revolver waits beside the Bible,
and the picture yellowed with time.

while angels ride their demonic steeds,
with swords drawn and fiery eyes.
the court brought to order,
with the gavel's brassy thud.
as life stands before itself,
both executioner and savior.
small moments stolen by random kindnesses,
burn like candles in the darkened gloom.
and forever then is nothing more,
than fingers, chords, and pick.

when eternity tastes like whiskey's lips,
and curls in cigarette smoke.

who am i to suggest
this wisdom known by ants and snails.
that the voice of god is but the bark,
that the owl hears and understands.
and the clap of distant thunder,
perhaps not as far as it seems.
the anarchy of naked poverty,
in the tears that fall like rain.
and still the spicket drips in silent prayer,
the axe propped against the wall!

Eric Cockrell

Protest, The Art Of Change

in order for peaceful protests
to wield the power to change...
we cant just protest against,
we must also protest for!

if we're protesting against
the financial inequalities
in this country or abroad....
we have to have specific changes,

and a specific plan in mind.
and we have to be united on this!
tax the rich, stop the oil wars,
reopen our factories....

put our people back to work....
make 'made in America' mean
something again!

stop the use of illicit drugs.
prosecute doctors who randomly
prescribe pills!

prosecute anyone who buys an
underage hooker for the evening.

teach our children respect...
begins at home, with mother
and father respecting each other.

respect for other races, other faiths,
different sexual orientation...
R-E-S-P-E-C-T!

absolutely run the gangs
out of our communities!
you do this by giving these
kids hope... for a better way of life!

redo the justice system
from top to bottom....
equal rights means equal justice...
not judges for hire!

any country that can wage illicit
wars around the world
can more reasonably afford
to feed and house its children!

we need to sit down together,
white, black, Asian, Native American,
and Hispanic...
and formulate a plan, a goal,
and a way to get there.

leave your petty grievances at home...
our congress has done enough of that!

united, and focused,
we can make a difference!
and it begins now....

peaceful, and committed
to freedom... for each and all!

Eric Cockrell

Pure Egg.... (Break The Shell)

even the light we see
is merely the echo of light....
we always want to 'go there'...
never realizing we 'are there'...
we long for heaven,
heaven is within us.
we say, 'i found god'...
but god was not lost!
we search for wisdom,
while plodding barefoot
through the wisdom of ages.
we fight to be free,
not realizing,
we are inherently free...
we long to love another,
yet we are love.
what we are,
and what we know we are...
therein lies the problem!
if the leaf is the tree,
and the tree is the earth,
and the earth is sun and rain...
then are we not all of these?
break the eggshell,
what pours forth is egg,
pure egg!
break the shell!

Eric Cockrell

Question The War...

when they bring you the body
of your son draped in a flag for burial...
and you read his last letter, again and again.
when he talked about fear, and doubt...
not knowing why anymore,
not knowing if he was doing the right thing,
not knowing if anything was right...
and the faces of women and children
that left him sleepless...
will it be only then,
that you question the war?

Eric Cockrell

Question.....(Answer)

am i writing...
to you, to me, or to god?
is there any difference?

Eric Cockrell

Questioning My Own Silence!

there are times when i question
my own silence....
when it starts to smell like
'i dont care'...
when it reeks of
'i dont have time to get involved'.
when it stares back at me from
an angry mirror.
when it turns and walks away
like some stranger....
when it hurts with every step i take!

Eric Cockrell

Questions

what do you really believe in?
do your actions,
does your way of living,
prove it?

is the next step
you're gonna take
a step towards life,
or a step towards death?

questions that met me
at the door this morning!

Eric Cockrell

Questions I Ask Myself...

whose voice do you hear?
whose blood by the door?
whose body before you,
lifeless in the night?

are you then prayer,
the reason for prayer,
or the answer?

whose tremble in your hands?
whose guilt etched in your face?
whose give did you take?
whose mouth left hungry?

are you then forgiveness,
the reason for forgiveness,
or the need?

whose god did yours kill?
whose sons did your war murder?
whose plate did you steal from?
whose blanket do you wear?

are you then salvation,
the reason for salvation,
or past the point of being saved?

questions i ask myself,
late at night!

Eric Cockrell

Quick Flash Of Lightning

a quick flash of lightning,
a sky devoid of rain.
your words leave words unsaid,
your silence speaks volumes.

ah! but the haunted memory
of drunken passion careening,
eating up reason and correctness,
till it ate our very souls.

i still love you...
but we dont talk of such.
yet somewhere in the shadows,
the wolf still howls within you!

Eric Cockrell

Quit

quit...
telling me that
i'm going to hell

when your daily actions,
and mostly inaction,
validates the concept

of hell for less fortunate
peoples around the world!
salvation's not a...

social club!

Eric Cockrell

Quit Acting Like Strangers

i work at a job where i am in constant
contact with everyday common working
people.... and i've noticed over the last
several years that they come in one by one,
wanting to talk about personal problems...
why?

because no one listens anymore!
people are dying for the need of a listener,
for ears that dont judge,
that accept them for being human,
that wont tell them what to do,
that wont make them feel guilty...
just for someone to care enough to
take the time to listen...
not a whole lot to ask...
sounds like being part of a family....

maybe it's time we quit acting like strangers!

Eric Cockrell

Racism,2011

racism is the rich man's lash
on the poor man's back!

yea, it's hard down in the projects.
it's hard down on factory row too.
and it's hard out in them
fruit and vegetable picking fields!

it's hard in the unemployment line!
cant nobody pay the rent...

and the rich man keeps laughing,
selling us out for profit,
selling our souls and our dreams!

IT HAS TO STOP!

Eric Cockrell

Rage.....

rage....

against the stench,
injustice on rampage,
by the hands
of a would be god!
morality bartered,
righteousness tainted.
the system swallows,
souls disappear!

those that enforce,
and those that send...
above the law,
without question or cost.
justice defined by color,
by possessions, by privilege.
while poverty rapes,
and despair sings in chorus.

the backs bent neath the blow,
the brows marked by the whip.
the spirits marked by prisons
that count dollars and change.
while the dark shadows dress
in gold trinkets and silk,
raise their voices at mass,
and deficate on the altar!

rage...

the broken fingers
of the beaten and broken,
fumble with the latch
of the door!

Eric Cockrell

Rain

seems like the hardest thing
a man can do
after a lifetime of battles,
triumphs and losses,
loving and losing...

is to dropp everything he has,
everything he knows, and
believes in
at the door...

and walk out into the rain...

alone and naked, with his
eyes, heart, and hands open,
and no expectations!

Eric Cockrell

Rain (That Never Comes)

revolution,
sexual desire,
holy anger,
the sparrow carved
from a dead tree.
tongue burnt,
the fist and the open hand...
touching the sky
with fingers in the dirt.
kissing, brown leaves,
smoke, an open window.
death, and hunger,
the glass broken,
trembling hands....
raw need, lips bleeding,
hearts wrapped in wheels.
thunder, the taste of lightning,
and rain that never comes!

Eric Cockrell

Random Freedom Thoughts

a man is no more
than the smallest act
of giving he leaves behind.

a true patriot
embodies the ideal
of freedom and equality.

we live all of our lives
searching for what we knew
when we were born.

our concepts of God,
like a microwave dinner,
the real thing much better...

and totally different!
religion the drug
that keeps us from expressing,

the veil with which
we cover the truth...
and racial prejudice,

the saddest form of ignorance...
like loving your right hand,
and hating your left.

that which we own,
we are most often owned by.
that which really matters,

cannot be owned!

Eric Cockrell

Rape

rape...
hair tongued monster
devouring,
all sense of light
swallowed, and banished.
angry impotent ego
driving nails in a hollow coffin..
desecrates
the ground
no angel dares tread.
the sickness
that stinks of death.
the demon
no god could forgive!

Eric Cockrell

Rape Of The Poor

working 32 hours a week,
minimum wage, no benefits...
to buy third world clothes
from minimum wage Walmart cashiers,
made by Asian children
in sweat shop conditions...
spend the change on
war raped, terror raped,
bomb raped, third world oil...
3.69 a gallon gasoline.

crinkled dollar bills...
'In God We Trust'!

Eric Cockrell

Razor Sharp Plow

i follow the map
...of your body to
.....the place beyond

our limitations.
...deep in the closet,
.....pulling out the jar,

that holds the liquid
...of our being...
having paid the price,

made the sacrifice,
...crossing bridges,
.....closing doors never

to be opened again!
for the depth and the edge
...that touched the stars,

and pulled light gasping
..from the darkness....
too close to the fire,

we turned away,
but left something there
we couldnt live without....

unnamed, forbidden,
...our foreheads marked,
.....we walk on... strangers

.in a world gone deaf....
dancing and weeping,
...to the sounds ecstatic and raw....

and now the fire gone dim,
...we stand in silent awe
...of ashes without feeling!

Eric Cockrell

Reach Out My Hand!

there are more stars
in the sky than we can name.
more drops of water in the ocean
than we can count...

the wind comes and goes
as it will beyond our control.
and so few understand
the language of clouds...

so why do we think
that we can define,
and confine God!
the fire warms, but you cannot hold!

so i kneel in the Mosques,
in reverent stillness praying.
i sing the old hymns
in the old Baptist churches.

baptized in the lake
by the gospel plow...
sit crosslegged with the Buddhas,
breathing in and out....

flow with the Tao
to the Uncarved Block....
stand naked in the dawn,
as the Great Mother unveils....

walk side by side
with the atheist, and the agnostic...
conjure magic in the night,
and pray to the wind...

most of all believe in the eyes,
of children, of the suffering...
in the tears that fall,
giving birth to the sacred....

the sacredness sitting
across the bare table....
if i need to feel God,
i just reach out my hand!

Eric Cockrell

Reaches An Age

a man reaches an age,
and a time in his life...
when having worked, and fought,
having loved, and lost,
having gotten knocked down,
and gotten back up,
over and over, time and again...

a man reaches an age,
and a time in his life...
when he knows he's given more
than he had to give.
when suddenly he's just tired,
and worn to the bone...

a man reaches an age,
and a time in his life...
when he just wants to stop,
to look back, to just feel,
and see if somehow
he's still there!

but now the times have changed,
and there is no stopping,
no point of refuge,
no time to rest...
the battle looms, the lines are drawn,
and all a man can do....

is to keep walking!

Eric Cockrell

Reading

reading...

Robert Bly and Maya Angelou,
in a room put together
like second hand clothes,
or a mad thrift store.
the shade on the lamp gone,
lost to the years...
the bare bulb flickers
from time to time,
as if to catch its breath.

and the worlds still on
a runaway train to hell.
people pass each other
like unaffiliated ghosts,
sucking on plastic nipples.
the plate in the sink,
chipped on the edges.
the cabinets empty,
martyred by time.

a well meaning preacher asked me today
if i was saved... if i'd found
peace with God...
i quoted Thoreau, 'i didnt know
we were quarreling...'
he said people that said
these things were going to hell.
i wished him a good day!
i should have given him a photograph
of the line in front of the homeless shelter,
or the unemployment line,
or the soup line...
maybe then he'd of known
what hell looked like!

Eric Cockrell

Ready For Autumn

i am ready for autumn,
my heart's been there for some time.
and there are nights when i wake
to the taste of snowflakes on my tongue.
i've turned in color, burned with passion,
now i await the fall.
the lips of my creek yearn for ice,
i watch the birds prepare to fly!

Eric Cockrell

Real Conversation!

only when two souls converge,
bringing to the table naked honesty,
and selfless abandon...
and a determined willingness
to listen...
can real conversation begin!

Eric Cockrell

Real Men...

real men...
dont threaten.
real men dont lie.
real men dont take
at the expense of others.
real men dont quit.
real men dont make excuses.
real men dont follow blindly.
real men dont abuse women.
real men are good fathers.
real men live by respect.
real men dont seek violence,
but dont back down.
real men get involved.
real men face their fears,
and their failures.
real men own their mistakes.
real men dont judge.
real men pray with the same hands
they wipe their butts with,
and know it!
real men forgive.
real men love at all costs.
real men stand for what they believe...

what the world needs now
is real men... (and women) !

Eric Cockrell

Reckless Abandon

loving another person
takes an intimate knowledge
of oneself....

and the reckless abandon
to walk naked in the light!

Eric Cockrell

Red, Pulsing Blood!

dont talk to me of skin color,
my god is not white!
in fact, she runs with the wolves,
clothed in fur and claws and teeth!

sometimes she is the moonlight,
lighting their path,
other times the wind,
carrying their howls back to herself!

dont talk to me of skin color,
talk of blood! red, pulsing blood...
flesh and sweat and desire
wrapped in human spirit!

Eric Cockrell

Red, White, And Blue

brown and black,
red, and white...
old and young,
male and female.

tired and poor,
pushed too far!
too honest for
our own good...

small towns, big cities,
farms and factories...
hands that work
joined together...

we are a people
that believe in people...
the faces of freedom,
and we have names!

red, white, and blue!

Eric Cockrell

Redeem The Time # 2

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Tibetan immolations, African starvations,
you dont care cause you dont feel.
blackened faces, disappear without traces,
while you take what you can steal.

fallen dictators, well armed haters,
you propped up and took down.
call it democracy, i call it hypocrisy!
you've lost what cant be found!

why's the truth so hard to find?
feels like the blind leading the blind.
just give us shelter, and peace of mind,
give us tomorrow, redeem the time!

Eric Cockrell

Redeem The Time!

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angry voices, hard line choices,
standing on the edge.
cant feed family, drug war society,
push you off the ledge.

Jesus in an SUV, religion without dignity,
while the hungry fall like sheep.
the working poor, just class whores,
bodies piled in a heap!

why's the truth so hard to find?
feels like the blind leading the blind.
just give us shelter and peace of mind....
give us today, redeem the time!

Eric Cockrell

Redeem The Time....

redeem the time...
tear down the lie!
build it back, board by board,
nail by nail, stone by stone,
with honest human hands.

seize the moment...
all that we have,
no tomorrow without today,
no today without
living and giving!

redeem the time...
put a human face on your god...
put a godly heart in your humanity!

Eric Cockrell

Redeem, Or Condemn?

the young man
whose face you beat in
for standing up to protest
against your oppression...
just spat blood on the floors
of your halls of justice...

His name is Jesus...
will His blood redeem you,
or condemn you?

Eric Cockrell

Redemption, And Such!

black coffee and sweet silence,
echoed by the sounds of the living.
walking, air sharp and cutting,
kicking piles of leaves.

what we've forgotten is the moment,
the tiny flame that flickers just once.
the taste of a kiss without thinking,
stopping to tie a child's shoelaces.

the old dog on the porch knows....
the wind knows, the trees confirm!
nothing need be said or spoken,
just breathe deeply, and be aware!

Eric Cockrell

Redemption, Revival, Or Epitaphs

rain swept morning...
and all the sins of yesterday
roll down the face of humanity.
redemption, or revival?
the hand finds the heart,
the eyes see the soul,
fear washes away unnamed.
cities built of shadows,
great smokestacks, vacant shrines.
and it's always the voices,
and the faces, struggling,
to be heard and seen!
man imprisoned himself by nations,
sold too cheaply on the block.
murders his mother beneath the wheels,
never hearing her cry.
sacrificing the children
to feed the inner beast.
now we stand naked in the rain...
redemption, revival, or epitaphs,
left by the children's graves!

Eric Cockrell

Reflections Of Fire

and so the leaf
already beginning to turn
deep inside its own cosmos

leaves me waiting, time frozen,
to watch the fall, to fall with,
and into arms outstretched,

grey hair blown by the wind
to kiss the earth, and crumble
back into sweet nothingness

and dirt waiting for the coming,
of the snow!

Eric Cockrell

Reflections Of Fire # 2

waiting for the snow
the cleansing frozen stillness
where spirits inhabit fossils

and the earth spins
naked and complete
in each turn.

this old body's worn out!
the turtle leaves its shell,
grows wings, flies into darkness.

lying again at the Mother's breasts,
watching her touch the wind
and create forms!

snow, tiny flakes
falling, defying gravity,
clinging to the windowpane

each a tiny lifetime
melting without a whimper,
melting into the light!

Eric Cockrell

Refuse!

</>

i refuse
to accept the lie
anymore!

i know, beyond a doubt,
that all people are equal,
regardless of color, gender,

religion, financial status, or
political beliefs!
i refuse to believe

that i am all right,
when someone else
is hungry, homeless, or hurting.

i refuse to believe
that i am not responsible,
for i am most responsible

when i turn away!
i refuse to believe
that one person's success

can come at the expense of another!
i refuse to settle!
i choose life, and life means living...

involved!

Eric Cockrell

Religion.... (Condom)

religion is like a condom,
never allowing the heart
of man to touch the actual
presence of god...
never allowing the seed
of man's inmost desires
to germinate, and conceive!

Eric Cockrell

Respect

respect the finger
that points the way.
the hand that takes yours,
the feet walking by your side.
the breath shared,
and the sweat mingled.
respect the scars that
remind you of yourself....
respect the love
that gives all without regret!

Eric Cockrell

Respect (An Awareness Poem)

respect!
for all that lives,
for all that breathes...
for life itself in all
its constantly evolving forms....

for every moment,
for every casual brush
of a caring hand...
for the individuality and
the differences...
for in the differences
we find sameness!

not to change
a rainbow to
a mountain...
a hawk into
a turtle....
but to take each
as it is... realizing
its beauty and its worth....

respect!
knowing that what you feel,
i feel... what you need,
i need...

one breath of life,
many forms,
molded by the spirit
of compassionate energy!

respect!

Eric Cockrell

Respect The Earth!

why do we always mistreat
the people who do our farm work?
why would we starve the people
who pick our crops?
why would we deport the only people
who are willing to do the work?
and you wonder why your kids
think that all food comes
from an aisle in the grocery store!

gas prices keep rising,
food prices keep rising...
what happens when the trucking
industry goes down?
what are you going to eat then?

we need to as much as possible
go back to raising our food.
at the very least support
your local farmers...
no GM seeds!
do it the old way, the right way.

pay your farm workers,
pay them well!
get out and do the work yourself!
stop the dependency on a failing system!
let the people who want to work, work!
respect the earth, and it will respect us!

Eric Cockrell

Respect Yourself

respect yourself!
dont sell your time
too cheaply.
dont live for possessions.
dont give yourself
to anyone you dont love.
dont try to be
like everyone else.
dont settle!

dont always follow...
ask questions!
feel free to doubt!
dont blame your life
on anyone else.
take responsibility
for yourself.

respect yourself!

Eric Cockrell

Respect!

respect...

for all sacred traditions,
for every political viewpoint,
for every color of skin...

for every walk of life,
for sexual orientation...
respect equal for male and female....
respect for respect given!

Eric Cockrell

Responsibility (For What Is Right)

i cannot get past the image
of a small boy kneeling
between the dead bodies

of his mother and father,
tears running down his face,
praying....

if we do not take responsibility
for what is wrong in this world...
we cannot claim responsibility

for what is right!

Eric Cockrell

Restoring Dignity

hands stacked on hands,
wound tightly together...

common people...
....common purpose...
.....common goals...

restoring dignity
to the human condition...

hearts stacked on hearts,
honest desire,
.....and
.....determination!

Eric Cockrell

Resurrection

speaking metaphysically...
if you've never carried a cross,
or wore a self-imposed crown of thorns,
you cannot experience resurrection!
the life we're trained from birth to live,
on a see-me, feed-me premise,
is a form of death,
aka, a type of hell!

in order to redeem ourselves,
to validate the experience of the human condition,
all that is body, the outer body,
the body that sucks and grinds,
has to die.

we have to let go of the concept
of freedom in order to be free.
the image has to be shattered,
in order to find the truth...

in the cold dark night of time,
we can either have fire,
or a picture of fire.
the picture is useless!

the cross - the picture!
the crown of thorns - our attachment.
.....death,
.....rebirth!

Eric Cockrell

Resurrection Of A Sparrow

Magdelene's hot tears,
-human desire unleashed-
fell like agony rain
onto the bound corpse
of flesh made holy.

the stone rolled away...
a sparrow flew
towards light beyond conception.

and all of mankind,
-mouths agape-
stood silent by love's fire,
shuffling their feet,
counting victories by bodies!

while history itself,
-began anew-
yet no one heard
the shout of silence...
except for the tears

of male benediction's common whore,
and a bird without a name!

Eric Cockrell

Returned.... (Primitive)

my soul hath returned
to the beginnings of faith,
before written history,
before there were words.
when god walked naked in the darkness,
her long hair birthing leaves
on branches that wept.
the stones whispered praise,
the trees bowed in prayer!

the guttural moan of the wind
haunts the walls of the cave.
i dream of fire,
both shaking and sweating with cold.
while god talks with the wolves,
the turtles, and the owls.
and sounds mimic night
making love with herself!

dawn calls from a faraway shore;
the waterfall hesitates,
as if in waiting!
unseen hands rub stick against stick,
till the spark of dreams ignites!
moan, groan, and the flap of wings...
and the only name be heartbeat!

i am stone, i am tree,
i am river, i am wind...
i am the sound of nothing,
and the face of the formless!

primitive, and naked,
i walk with god...
and nurse at the breasts of infinity!

Eric Cockrell

Returning!

through thorn and thistle,
through storms at sea,
across miles of desert....

from day unto night...
through sun through rain,
through hail, through snow...

i am returning!

empty chains and shackles
left by the door....
the only burden be desire....

the only truth that remains
wrapped in flesh and sweat....
step by step, moment by moment,

redemption, and breath...
i am returning... wave upon wave..
to lap at your feet!

Eric Cockrell

Revelation...

i am...
something more
than my regrets,
something less,
than my dreams.
more of a carpenter
than a sculptor,
more of a farmer
than a savior.
dented, bruised, dusty,
and often busted.
i know the darkness
as well as the light,
sometimes better!
peaceful, but not a pushover,
will fight when cornered.
know about your jails,
and the prison of self.
been a drunkard, been a healer,
a mad lover, an unholy priest.
i've plowed the earth,
plowed the body,
built fires in the rain.
i am...
forgiveness, redemption,
passion, and spirit.
i am what i am,
and that is enough!

Eric Cockrell

Revelation... (Must Be God)

i have come to believe
that this loneliness must be god...

Eric Cockrell

Revolution Now

they're calling for revolution!
things must change!
the only sword we carry is truth...
as we march with justice
and equality...

what's past is past!
we cannot change
what's already been done.
the only way to heal the wounds
of the past is to create a future...
a future that begins with today!

no longer divided by color or creed,
we march hand to heart as one.
knowing that no man is free
until every man is free!
(and woman, and child...)

no longer owned by the things
we possess, and owning no man.
no longer bound by self-oriented
idealologies... the barrier between us
is no more...

today is the day,
now is the moment....
history waits for no one!

Eric Cockrell

Revolution Now, Freedom

revolution now...
it's no longer
a matter of choice....

too much hurt and need,
too much despair;
and you're not doing

anything real to fix it.
we've been fed the lie,
but it doesnt fill the bellies

of the hungry, the jobless,
and the poor...
while you keep trading,

exacting profit from oppression,
and insulating yourselves
from the beating of hearts.

no taxation without representation;
we threw tea in the harbor
and tyranny in the ditch.

freedom doesnt last forever...
sometimes you have to
take it back again!

Eric Cockrell

Revolution, And Snow

beginning to know...
how Pasternak felt,
long Russian revolution...

gunfire, exploding...
neighbor fighting neighbor,
the poor battling the elite...

for cause, for ideal...
people disappearing,
work camps, Siberia...

unmarked graves...
long harsh winters,
snow like death wrapped

around windows and doors.
wolves howl, primordial call....
in the name of freedom,

betrayed, and forgotten...
poems stolen from the heart,
by the candle's last flicker....

the cry of humanity
lost in the gunfire and the snow...

Eric Cockrell

Revolution, Or Revelation? For Rachel

revolution, or
revelation?
maybe it takes one

to have the other!
how much injustice
does it take

before we demand justice?
how is it ever fair
for a few to live in luxury

while children are going hungry?
class warfare? or just
the right of every human being

to have his/her needs met!
how long will we wait?
how long will we let this go on?

revolution begins
with revelation in the heart,
and wears the scars of freedom!

Eric Cockrell

Revolution.... (Can Be Defined)

revolution can simply be defined
as the truth taking the form of bodies,
demanding both faces and names!

Eric Cockrell

Revolutionary

a brown skinned leftist rebel,
marching through the slums,
picking up the beaten.
freedom for all,
and freedom for the one.
each and every one equal,
and responsible,
to and for each other.
take down the money machine,
beat the curse of privilege.
shelter for all,
and all are fed...
no more propaganda,
the truth is freedom.
a modern day Jesus,
healing the sick,
taking in the poor...
you know they'll kill him,
he's not white and rich!

Eric Cockrell

Ribbons Of Soul...

if i could find
the address of your heart...
i'd send you all the things
i've seen, i've felt, and i've known...
all the tiny wonders,
all the precious moments,
all the touching, crying, kissing,
holding and believing...
all the joy, sadness, struggle,
miracles, and weeping...
all the raw beauty,
all the truth and dignity,
all the hopes of freedom...

wrapped in a cardboard box
covered with many colored paper,
tied up with ribbons of soul...

postage paid in advance!

Eric Cockrell

Riding The Thermals

riding the thermals....
down between the mountains
through the gorge...

in and out of clouds,
shadow and light....
then up to the very

arms of infinity.
i lost myself, and
found my being!

letting go!
breathing out...
riding the thermals!

Eric Cockrell

Right

silently watching our
full-grown daughters
move about the house,

and their day... doing
and performing simple tasks;
occasional glimpses of

gentleness and random kindness...
i see you... and know, whatever else,
we did this thing right!

Eric Cockrell

Right Here, Right Now!

when we buy clothes made in sweatshop conditions
in Asian countries, or elsewhere, because they're
cheaper, we are in fact supporting human rights abuse.

when we buy oil from Arab countries that oppress and
abuse their own people, and regulate women to 'second-
class slavery', we are a part of that oppression.

when we throw away or waste food while children
around the world are starving, we become the cause
of that hunger.

when we drive big SUV's and trucks that get less than 15
miles to the gallon, we are the driving force behind the oil
spills!

when we sell away our own people's jobs for a bigger profit
overseas, we become the victims of our own greed.

you say we can't fix everything, how can we be responsible?
our country gives more aid than anyone....

we give aid to the countries we profit from.

if we took the money we spent bombing other countries
into submission, and then rebuilding them... and spent it
instead on food and medicine and training for the impoverished...
would we not get a better return? would the rest of the world
hate us as much as it does now?

we are individually responsible for every choice we make, and it's
result! what we eat, what we wear, what we drive, who we vote
for, and whether we vote! ... what we watch on tv, what we read,
whether we take the time to help our neighbors when they need it
(cause believe me your turn will come, it does for all of us) ...

whether we do what we say, whether we give without asking
for anything back...

whether we stand up for education and equality and moral fairness...
and it all begins with being aware, being aware of our responsibility.

we all make mistakes, i've made more than my share... but i'm willing
to get up and try again and again... and to get involved.
it begins right here, right now!

Rigpa

rigpa...

universe unfolding,
each breath released....

not clinging,
nor grasping, no tiny deaths!
letting go of...

creating by returning,
life seamless,
not confined to flesh and bone!

Eric Cockrell

Rings Of The Tree

the wrinkled skin of the old woman,
carries 70 years of loving and passion,
giving, touching, listening, and caring,
flowers planted and children birthed,
all night love making and all day working,
thankless simple acts of living...
bow down, and worship!
the blind old man's bruised hands,
built houses, furniture, fires...
fought for the right, prayed for forgiveness,
stroked the body of passion....
grew food, poured drinks,
taught the boy to whittle,
turned the pages of countless books...
kneel in respect!
and dammit... take care of them!
love them!

Eric Cockrell

Rise Up, And Walk!

standing over my coffin,
i looked down at my body.
and in a voice low and thundering,

i spoke to my soul!
'rise up, and walk!
finish the work...'

reincarnation, no time!
too much to be done!

Eric Cockrell

Rises Above!

the well read soul
rises above his poverty,
and takes his brother with him.
only the ignorant take without giving...
their poverty, well disguised by possessions,
never goes away!

faith has nothing to do
with ignorance, with blind following.
faith is built on knowledge,
and honed through experience.

the person that stands up
in the middle of the storm,
and asks why...
has already spoken
the hidden name of god!

Eric Cockrell

Road Song, For Smoky

it is not the destination,
it is the journey.
it is not the knowing,
it is the questioning.
it is not the finding,
it is the seeking.
it is not knowing God,
it is knowing oneself.
it is not the attainment,
it is the giving...
it is not the holy,
it is a child's dirty face.
it is not the living,
it is the dying....

for in each tiny death
a new universe is born.

Eric Cockrell

Road To Infinity

the biggest step we take
on the long road to infinity...

is

...the

.....day

.....we

.....choose

to be honest

....with ourselves.

a matter of choice....

....a day of beginning!

Eric Cockrell

Robert Kennedy

Robert Kennedy killed...
Sirhan acting, (alone?)
hypnotic mind control trance...

stood up to the Mafia!
told LBJ he knew the truth...
stood up to J Edgar Hoover,

and you couldnt do that...
race riots, war protests,
Vietnam machine rolled on...

how many dead?
who pulled the trigger?

Eric Cockrell

Rogue Stars

we pass too often unaware,
rogue stars hurtling
through the vast blackness
of inner space...

a bump, a bruise,
a scratch, a scar...
and almost the smell
of a closeness.

we bring the cup to our lips,
too hot to taste...
it is only in the silence after,
that memory reaches out to touch!

Eric Cockrell

Roll Away The Stone!

do we roll away the stone
again this morning?
if so, what do we find?
the body of Jesus?
our own body?
the bodies of those
we have killed out of greed?
of those we've let die
out of apathy?
or empty grave clothes?
the choice is ours!
resurrection is the choice
that the human heart awaits!
the gospel is compassion,
and compassion,
that which makes us human!

Eric Cockrell

Roots Of Democracy

true democracy
never conquers
by force... never

walks on the rights
of any human being
in the name of profit...

never excludes anyone
because they are different.
never panders to the big
at the expense of the small!

true democracy liberates
the human inside the human...
preserves dignity by equality,
allows questioning, and doubt...

true democracy cant be bought,
and cant be sold...
maybe now's the time to
get back to our roots!

Eric Cockrell

Rough Carpenter...

i am only the rough carpenter
building a hapless shelter...
for strays, dogs and cats,
old people and young anarchists.
addicts, whores, ex-cons, and thieves.
street bums, farmers left homeless,
angry young students...
spiders, snails, ants, and moths.
out of work elephants,
turtles who have lost their shell.
small birds fallen from the nest,
both prodigals and dreamers.
third world refugees,
the blind, and the deaf.
sons and daughters,
mothers and fathers...
people bound by tears,
fears, and their own failures.
small people living small lives,
and renegade priests...
all those who doubt, question, and seek...
hearts that need hearts, hands that need hands.
those that need ears,
and human closeness.
pine trees fallen, and moonlight forgotten.
and that stranger the wind,
when she happens by!
a rough carpenter working and waiting,
for love to finish the job!

Eric Cockrell

Run Your Tongue

run your tongue
in the crevice
where my heart
used to be....

does it taste like you?
smell faintly of your perfume?
does it remind you
of someone you used to know?

we are what we bleed
in the end.... my face is ashen,
my thoughts burn like acid!

i left my soul inside you,
dried fluids clinging to your lips....
the arch of your back,

my destiny, and redemption!

Eric Cockrell

Run, Rabbit, Run!

chained face down,
spread-eagled,
to the floor of the van...

a radical, flight risk,
armed transport,
in the land of the free...

perfectly still,
listening with every pore,
eyes closed, waiting

for the faint crack of light.
get him up, stand him up,
dont turn your back...

he's loose, he's invisible,
run, rabbit, run!

Eric Cockrell

Running Towards The Fire!

we run towards the fire,
falling stars, sucking up the darkness.
what we want, what we need,
what we believe, who we are!

standing on the stage,
waiting on the curtain to rise.
i put my hands in my pockets,
and stare down at my feet.

the lights turned down,
waiting on the roar...
i realize without thinking,
'i just dont care! '

take destiny's stone statues,
and close forever's book.
there are no faces in the darkness
imposed by the self.

take my name from the page,
leave only blood and sweat!
take my face from the mirror,
and replace it with those....

who hunger and suffer,
who stink with need.
who are dying and homeless,
without freedom, or land.

stop the bombing, stop the killing,
stop the drilling, stop the hate.
let my voice be but a nail
in the walls that give shelter.

let my living be a bridge,
my passion a fire...
that warms and cooks,
and lights the weary night.

let my identity be this,
and nothing more...
the cry of the orphaned child,
the nipple that brings him home!

Eric Cockrell

Rust And Burnt Coffee

robin's nest,
woven tight,
from scraps
of living.
rainswept,
the earth,
a lover satisfied!
shadows of the wheel,
turn slow as the sun.
tiny deaths,
the spider's web,
glints in the light.
the last bark
of the mongrel dog,
cups and plates stacked
in the drainer to dry.
forever, the book falls
to the floor.
love tastes like rust,
rust and burnt coffee!

Eric Cockrell

Sacred Common Things

i wake to the sound of weeping,
only to find it's me,
weeping for the world.
i wake to the feel of my hands,
reaching out for other hands...
only to find it's god,
both reaching and taking.
i wake to the smell of fear,
in skies ridden by gunfire,
in alleys reeking with despair,
in children that stink of hunger.
i wake to the taste of longing,
to love and be loved...
and arise once again,
to do sacred common things!

Eric Cockrell

Sacred Listening....

the human heart is the
rarest of gems, and the
most misunderstood mystery
we're faced with....
what we seek for in the stars
is already there within us.
what we long for we already have!
what we long to hold in our hands
is that which we must give.

the human heart is more than emotions.
emotions are the feet of the ego.
beneath our egos the real 'us' resides.
we are more rivers than bones!

the silence we fear is the language of the heart.
the god we seek for tugs at our souls.
our conscience whispers what our spirit knows.
we are both individual, and a part of the whole.

sacred listening...

Eric Cockrell

Sacrifice

We who sacrifice,
By hunger bled.
By struggle carved.
By seasons bent.

Who love as breath,
Beyond all choice.
Who follow no one,
Yet walk beside all.

Who born of grief,
By joy purged.
Take of the cup,
And swallow deeply.

Who formed from dirt,
To dirt return.
Then turn the wheel,
By silent song!

Eric Cockrell

Sacrilege

mercury, and bullets,
the dead dont lie!
the used bear the marks,
on their backs, in their eyes.

and the price of the present,
the childrens' lives.
we bury our dreams
with guns and knives.

the earth weeps for us,
as the sky falls down.
cant see beyond our mouths,
cant hear the sound...

and the tears of the fallen,
stand like puddles of rain.
you can wash your hands,
cant wash off the stain.

we trade pictures of God
for money and dope.
push the helpless to the limit,
and furnish the rope.

never thinking we'll pay
the cost of our sins....
the voices of the children
lost to the ravenous wind!

Eric Cockrell

Safe And Sound

Jesus, and the third world poets
carrying their dying children
across the starvation desert...

the stench of disease,
poverty, and dead eyed
hopelessness, ... hangs

in the indifferent air.

if you dont know their names
they're not real, just pictures
on the news you turn off...

finish your supper,
throw out the scraps;
get in your cars, and

go for a drive...

turn up the radio!
speed up! roll up your
windows... safe, and sound....

honk if you love Jesus!

Eric Cockrell

Salvation

how many Jesus's does it take?

rock n roll Jesus, civil rights Jesus,
sexual Jesus, Baptist Jesus,
Pentecostal snake Jesus...

heroin Jesus, small town family Jesus,
necklace Jesus, tattoo Jesus,
illegal immigrant Jesus...

Jesus on the cross in a drunk tank Jesus,
Marlboro Jesus, county fair Jesus,
pray for Armagadden Jesus...

or just a man,
living one day, one moment,
one bare naked dirty human need
at a time...

with open hands, open heart,

and open mind!

Eric Cockrell

Salvation On A Street Corner

</>

the woman stopped me
coming out of the store:
'do you know Jesus? '

i thought for a moment,
looking at her clothes,
and her Bible....

'yea, i spent the night with Him,
passing out coats and blankets
down at the shelter....

we were gonna do the soup kitchen
today... but they arrested Him this
morning for being an illegal alien....

that just leaves me,
unless you want to go with me! ...'

she just shook her head and walked away....
and i wondered if she heard a word i said...

Eric Cockrell

Salvation.... Comes To This

full moon dripping
down through the trees,
the last train to nowhere

rumbles down the old tracks...
your eyes, staring softly
through the half lit window,

seem to speak, but leave
empty spaces where
naked words should be....

salvation then, comes to this,
the imprints your fingers leave
on the doorknob you just locked!

Eric Cockrell

Sameness

red. brown,
black, white...
sameness...

same thoughts,
same desires,
same needs,
same wants,
same fears,
same goodness,
same badness,
same trying,
same mistakes,
same rights,
same loneliness,
same freedom,
same hopes...

sameness!

Eric Cockrell

Satan's Deals

Casey Anthony walked!
Elisa Baker's gonna walk!
the factories and the mills
of the South shut down....
our jobs sold overseas.
you're passing the debt ceiling bill,
taking from the poor, the elderly,
and the sick,
while the rich still pay... nothing!
Satan's deals!

Eric Cockrell

Say That I Have Passed...

we came together,
two rogue stars,
colliding in the darkness...
as if pine and oak intertwined,
and moon and darkness bayed.
wolves prowled the distant clearing,
the axe glimmered in half light.
the fog of breath moaned rising,
and years began,
as if a miracle!
small hands and rough hewn hands,
lit candles in poverty's excess.
and lovers that were strangers
found the tie that binds.
summers turned to autumn,
autumn drank the glass of winter.
and horse drawn spring forgot the spicket...
breasts left their mark in dirt.
ah, but love demands,
a war, a fire...
and letters written in flesh.
so be it!
say that i have passed,
and singed the curtains on your window!

Eric Cockrell

Scar

love is a scar...
a quiver of the lip
that no one sees...
a moment of lostness
you cant regain...

is an avalanche,
a hurricane, an
unnamed tear...
a moment of softness...
the rage of anger.

love is a swagger,
a limp, a dance, a curse.
the taste of lips washed
away by the rain...

love is a reason,
is madness, a hunger
that cant be fed...
love is a scar...

with your name...
written on it for
the world to see!

Eric Cockrell

Scar Tissue, And Rust!

scar tissue, and rust...
dust long standing
in the corner by the bed.
fingerprints on the pane
of the window unopened.
soot on the hands
that tended the last fire.
the lone bullet in the chamber,
the tongue swollen, and parched.
scriptures written on
the bandages of the wounded
and dying....

will the preacher say a few words
as the people bow their heads?
the skies promise rain,
and the last wind is still!

Eric Cockrell

Scars (On The Face)

ecstasy...
the window broken
by moonlight.
the bastard star,
that licks the wound.
the fire that burns flesh,
and opens the casket.
the hammer
that breaks the shell.
love sap spilled
on a forbidden book.
the history of mankind,
written in charcoal.
the tears of the prisoner,
set free, drunk on freedom.
the garlic lips,
that tempt the hunger.
the hunger's howl,
and the silence of the wolf.
the lover's tongue
on the beating heart.
smoke rising from the fire...
scars on the face of the wind!

Eric Cockrell

Scent Of The Lover....

i am still water, moonlit and waiting.
i am the crucifix made of fingers,
the letter written in blood.
the fool tripping over windmills,
the beacon from a distant shore.
dust in the corner, dew on the grass,
the eyes of the racoon,
the bat hanging upside down.
the whisper of moss,
the depths of the cave.
the pine tree fallen across the path.
i am the kiss long silent,
the iron skillet, the tin cup.
i am the body of the wind,
without beginning or end.
i am the child alone,
and the woman abused.
the angry man, and the broken glass.
i am the farmhouse deserted,
the voices of ghosts.
i am the spirits of slaves,
who call in the night.
i am the cock and the dawn,
the howl of the dog.
the pilgrim beaten and robbed,
and left for dead.
i am the cry of childbirth,
and the shout of death....
i am the scent of the lover,
that stains your soul!

Eric Cockrell

Scriptures

the only scriptures
i want to read,
are the life stories
of the oppressed and downtrodden.

the only prayers
i know to be real,
are their unspoken needs,
their desire to be free.

the only church
that i belong to,
their homes, their shelters,
their grimy neighborhoods.

the only image of god
that i want to see,
the humanity in their faces,
the injustices falling in their tears.

and equality,
the only walk...
the path, the destiny,
of the human heart!

Eric Cockrell

Scriptures I Hallow

the scriptures i hallow...
the newborn baby's cry,
the chant of fresh turned earth.
the grey echo of emptiness
in abandoned farmhouses.
the beat of darkness,
of the homeless streets.
the scent of freedom,
caught behind prison bars.
the cat's claw, the robin's egg,
hardened desire, and fertile wetness.
the needle broken, the spicket rusted,
the candle half burned down.
the hunger bowl filled,
the silence when all gunfire stops,
the sound of dirt on the casket!

Eric Cockrell

Scuffing!

blue collar people,
scuffing for work,
in their forties and fifties,
no one wants to hire....

eight dollar an hour,
ten dollar an hour,
whatever you can find...
no benefits, no health insurance...

pray you dont get sick....
emergency room visits,
broken arm, day surgery...
a bill for \$15,000....

you cant pay, you cant pay...
just a few groceries,
pay a little on the rent,
scuffing for work, scuffing,

just trying to survive!

Eric Cockrell

Search For God

you search for God
in holy books & spoken codeine
kneeling before tofu altars
of your own convenience

but what you search for
has never been lost!
cant be defined by rhetoric's shape,
cant be contained by names, sects, or creeds...
& cant be bought with plastic card faith...

what you search for
is the space
inside the shell

the place where the sound
of the ocean
abides in stillness

you are that shell!
what you search for
is already within you!

Eric Cockrell

Searching For America

give me an old Rambler Classic,
6 cyl., three-on-the-tree....
a double-bitted axe, and
a twelve gauge pump...

a coupla sleeping bags,
and a pretty good tent.
a half dozen books, a coffee pot,
and an old cook stove...

an old Gibson acoustic,
and an old Case knife.
my old dog, and a woman
with a little color in her soul...

and, by God, i'll find America!

Eric Cockrell

Seasons In Hell

i'm quite sure we all have our seasons in hell...
through which the metal is forged by a very hot fire.
we often think we're the only ones,
but all people at some point suffer despair.
it is not whether we are going through hell,
but what we do with it that matters.
we can become hardened and calloused,
and lose all hope...
believe me, it's easy.
or we can stand firm at the chance of all loss,
and be willing to evolve, whatever the cost.
i've heard it said that suicide is the unpardonable sin....
wrong!
the unpardonable sin is betraying ones self....
i would never choose to be where i am right now,
but i know there are people in even worse situations.
my consciousness tonight is with those who are hurting...
i condemn no one, i make no judgements.
i claim no name, or no position....
other than that i am human....
i feel, i breathe, i care!
while i do not have all the answers,
i am quite familiar with the questions.
and i choose to love people...
for what they are, not what i would want them to be!
i choose respect, equality, and the will for peace....
your choice is your own...
good night, be at peace!

Eric Cockrell

Second Hand Life

second hand smoke,
Salvation Army shoes.
a crack in the mirror....

empty chamber in the gun.
flat tire on the car...
and the mailbox is empty....

wrong number again,
picking up socks off the floor.
molded crust on the bread,

a bag of coffee, and potatoes....
burnt out burner on the stove,
cobwebs on the ceiling.

too much, too little...
but never enough!

Eric Cockrell

See God!

every time you look
and see a stranger in need...
see God!

any time you're faced
by anger, by your enemy...
see God!

any time someone hurts you,
and walks away...
see God!

any time someone humiliates you,
doesn't respect you...
see God!

every time you're face with turmoil,
and turmoil has a face, , ,
see God!

and maybe, just maybe,
when they're faced with you,
they'll see God!

Eric Cockrell

Seeking Heat!

there is a heat
inside the fire,
friction inside the match.
there are clouds
inside each raindrop,
winter snows inside each bud.
there is a joy
hidden deep in sorrow,
there is touch
inside of the lonely.
there is a need
inside each prayer,
there is a hunger
inside those who take.
there is forgiveness
inside of anger.
there is a freedom
inside each cell.
there is a sameness
inside of difference.
there is a mother
inside each man.
there is a man
inside each body,
a hint of god
inside each soul.
there is a heart
inside of each man...

a heart seeking heat!

Eric Cockrell

Seeking Touch....

hands seem to grow
smaller with age.
the maps neath the eyes
go from destiny to love.
love that had no horse,
but worked a mule.
and kingdoms only thus,
manure, and sweat.
your body perfume,
rust of a moth's wings...
hymnals made of dust,
simple words, bent nails.
love's sap dried
on your thighs and lips.
no names, no images,
just small hands seeking touch!

Eric Cockrell

Self Immolation

self immolation...

Tibetan Buddhist monks
silent screams to a world

gone deaf!

freedom and dignity
written on charred remains....

and no one sees!

too far away? no oil to gain?
'see no evil, hear no evil'....

as we rock to indifference!

Eric Cockrell

Self, No Self

self, no self...

does the leaf know the bark?

the bark know the limb?

the limb know the tree?

are they seperate, or one?

do the roots need a name?

the sun and rain ask for thanks?

where does one begin,

and the other end?

is the womb not a grave?

does the soul leave the body?

does the fire ever go out?

or do the embers wait,

warm and steady?

winter to spring, spring to summer,

summer to autumn, autumn to winter.

the tides go out,

and then return...

who stands on the shore,

lamp in hand?

Eric Cockrell

Sent By Sparrows...

if i undress your eyes very gently,
will i find the last vestiges of fire?
did the great wings of hunger
scar the skies of your soulless darkness?
is the screech of the owl
hidden in your tight numbed lips?
does the snail trail of my body,
still cling to your need in the moonlight?
must my fingers fumble with the latch,
and my footprints haunt your sleeplessness?
or am i just the tree that fell
in the fury of the storm?
am i the leaf floating on the still pond?

the things i buried in the small wooden box,
that night beneath the willow.
perhaps among them were you and i....
will the spiders resurrect us?

if i am dead then let it be,
for what's given is what remains.
and the small imprint on your pillow
that smells faintly of me,
is just a bad dream sent by sparrows!

Eric Cockrell

Series Of Deaths

the day he finally
got out of jail...
after months, and years,

he stepped out on the street,
and fought back the urge
to run.... to run, and run

to where nobody
knew his name, or
his face... to where he

couldnt even smell
the time he'd lost...

and he walked slowly,
and with dignity, never
looking back, to the car...

a series of deaths...
and a match lit
in a distant window...

a small gust of wind
that no one else can know!

Eric Cockrell

Set The Fire!

tear down the house!
throw all of your possessions
on the pile...
the possessions that owned you!

all of your memories,
your prejudices, your acts of
vengeance and greed...
all the things you think you needed...

your rights, your wrongs,
your halo, your guns...
your patriotism, your pride,
and the doors you locked...

all on the pile,
without looking back...
set the fire!

Eric Cockrell

Set The Table!

i follow the path
of brown bare feet,
listening to the prayers
of the dust on the window.
the house empty of all that breathes,
and ghosts just dont eat much.
while missiles born of hate,
throb, seeking direction.
and religious poverty moans
in the gutters of man's denial.
hands balled in fists
cannot open doors.
and nuclear light
is just a damned lie!
rivers vomit, great trees are cut,
empty plates rattle pointing fingers.
and turtles weep in forgotten ditches
for the time before man became god.
women dressed in ashes in slow procession
mourn the loss of womb and nipple.
and the bruises on the begger's face
testify to degradation.
yet brown bare feet still beckon,
the dust reaches out in condolence...
the door on the house flung open,
and ghosts have set the table!

Eric Cockrell

Seven Lies

1. they're not like us!
2. if they didnt want to be poor,
....they wouldnt be!
3. God wants us to be successful.
4. wars have always been, and always will.
5. they're all going to hell!
6. them boys are paying the price of freedom.
7. we're only responsible for the people here!

Eric Cockrell

Sexual Whispers!

sexual whispers
'neath the shadows mingling,
the dirt and the failures,

and the phone not answered.
the fireplace gone cold,
the trees stripped bare....

the blare of the news,
cutting deep to the quick.
the anger, and the lostness,

without direction or virtue.
dust on the Bible,
a box of shells by the bed.

sexual whispers,
or just memories, and need!

Eric Cockrell

Sexuality

real sexuality
lies in the
art of giving

with total abandon
without remorse
without motive

giving unconditionally!

Eric Cockrell

Sexuality # 2

total awareness....
i taste your lips
in every dropp of rain

that falls....
i can feel your eyes
searching the darkness...

i hear your
cum cries in the
scree of the hawk....

i feel your clutching
in the wind against
my face....

i reach your depths
digging in the
rain damp earth...

i fill your cup
of longing with
the brandied sweat

of the soul...

i feel your nearness,
can taste you in
every breath i take....

there is no light
beyond your candle!

Eric Cockrell

Shackles

an old Esso sign,
broken down,
standing in the corner.

empty block building,
windows broke out,
wind whistles through the dust.

an old set of shackles,
hanging on a peg.
two broken chairs,

and an empty coke bottle.

lost on the road
that no one travels anymore.
an old rotary phone...

a tattered flag on the floor.
an old Chevy up on blocks,
black crows flying overhead...

i sit down and light a smoke,
staring at the shackles....
and letting go!

Eric Cockrell

Shadows (Forgotten Day)

the scrape of the razor
against his shadow dreams;
voices on the tip
of the tongue of his thoughts....

the smell of ashes and sulphur...
the imprint of a rose petal
in his palm.... bare limbed trees,
and it's not even winter.

in the shadow of the mountain
that he couldnt quite climb....
great black birds swoop the skies
that almost touch forever.

scriptures written with sticks
in the soft clay of the creek bank....
spider's webs, dead frogs, and
the whimper water makes

when no one hears....
just a shadow in the shadows,
a dead branch tinged with moss....
a mistake God made on

a forgotten day!

Eric Cockrell

Shadows Pale!

teardropp tattoos by the eyes,
the whisper of souls sacrificed.
step by step, brick by brick,
the final clock, tick by tick.

you and i, kingdoms fall.
unspoken desires, unanswered calls.
standing hard against tyranny,
pages turned, lost history.

and the hammer strikes the bell.
fallen angels walk through hell.
already taken, not for sale...
turning blood, shadows pale!

spirit finds flesh, flesh finds fire.
eyes glazed over, drunk with desire.
gasping for breath as if prayer.
nobody knows, nobody cares.

cant save the world, cant save you.
cant save myself, you know it's true!
what we are at last revealed.
hearts we wasted, love we killed.

and the hammer strikes the bell.
fallen angels walk through hell.
already taken, not for sale...
turning blood, shadows pale!

Eric Cockrell

Shake And Shimmy!

shake and shimmy,
rattle and roll.
cant nobody
steal my soul.
you cant sell
what you dont own.
you cant make
right out of wrong.
you cant take
what's already given.
aint nothing more
than the living!
shake and shimmy,
sing and dance.
i gave it all,
i took the chance.
plant dead flowers
on my grave...
love done come
and freed the slave!

Eric Cockrell

Sharpening My Axe

back to the grind wheel....
sharpening my axe for another week;
and listening, for the sound

of my own heartbeat
within the heartbeat of the universe,
in the heartbeat of the stranger,
in the heartbeat of my enemy....

i have slept with despair,
with suffering and need....
have wallowed in my own mistakes.
have been lied to, used, and abused....

but at times, to be honest with myself,
i have lied to and abused others
let me move forward with honest hope,
with firm dedication to compassion....

let my every word be a tool,
my thoughts and prayers a helping hand...
let me find my life in others,
and others find solace in me!

Eric Cockrell

Shavings Of Light

inside the spider's web,
held against their will
tiny lights held by longing,
pressed close to the

heart of need

reflected from the smoky eyes
of an old blind man
a lifetime of things seen,
and then forgotten lost

in the forever dark.

lamplight on the wet lips
of young lovers swept to sea,
lost in the eternal moment
of passion that breaks

against the shore.

the flame of a candle
burned down and left
on the table by the desk
where he wrote his life's poetry

with a pen dipped in blood.

the first hint of morning
breaking through the tops
of the trees cold and silent
causing the grasses to rise

and sing the song of a new day

shavings of light that
paint the world with naked
human eyes and open
the grave setting the spirit

free free to believe!

Eric Cockrell

She Walked Barefoot...

she walked barefoot,
across them factory floors,
down that gravel road,
across the yard,
and into that old house.

she walked barefoot,
across them kitchen floors,
down that long hallway,
across the floor to the bed.

she walked barefoot,
between them garden rows,
out in the fields,
down through the pines
to the creek.

she walked barefoot,
down them hospital halls,
down the aisles of the church,
out in the cementary
to the grave...

she walked barefoot,
into the arms of eternity,
and i'd give all i am
to wash her feet
with my tears!

Eric Cockrell

She Wept

she curled up naked
on the bed... sunlight
coming in soft waves

through the open window.
the urn of ashes sat
on the bedside table.

a lone wedding band
lay in the ashtray....
25 years, a long journey.

there comes a time
when bitterness rusts
and crumbles...

as the veil of silence
that time had woven
between them came apart...

she wept!

Eric Cockrell

She Will Tell Me Mine

i walked a thousand miles
before this journey began...
i carried a hundred crosses,
said prayers you cant imagine.
i died death after death,
behind bars and in windows...
before i burned my shoes,
and took off my clothes.
i've seen beauty i cant express,
felt sorrow so deep i drowned.
been both hungry and desperate,
gave away my heart to perfect strangers....
i've named tears and set stars free,
to follow their own desire...
i've held universes in my hands,
and broke the cup countless times.
i looked the devil face to face,
and recognized myself.
i've been to Gethsemene,
Golgatha, and hell....
i've grown flowers on pavement,
wiped the asses of those that groaned.
i've fought windmills and shadows,
and lit the torch a million times.
i've fathered children and given birth,
i've made love in empty churches.
i've been buried in countless libraries,
and beneath infinite trees.
i've been both semen and holy water,
not as much difference as you think!
i've seen the face of god,
and heard her secret name...
and perhaps if i die just one more time,
she will tell me mine!

Eric Cockrell

Shouting...

i cannot sleep for this constant shouting...
the shouting of trees, the shouting of alleyways,
the shouting of rats crawling through trash.
the shouting of needles and Family Bibles,
the shouting of flags folded and given.
the shouting of machines, abandoned and morose,
the shouting of fields gone barren.
the shouting of poverty ripping color from being,
the shouting of hunger in faces silent.
the shouting of guns loaded and unloaded,
the shouting of clinics, filled without names.
the shouting of prayers written in pavement,
the shouting of rivers filled with sewage.
the shouting of birth, and the shouting of death...
the shouting of love, distant and forgotten.
the shouting of god, in doubt's innumerable forms.

Eric Cockrell

Shovels, And Whores!

shovels and whores!
cant get nothing done,
for digging people out

in way too deep,
and loaning money to whores
for their crack rock pillows,

their babies crying
with hunger cursed lips.
addicts and losers,

prisoners put out,
to work the streets, or die.
and the unemployed breed

with despair driven need,
old people eating dogfood
with plastic spoons....

fight and give, eyes in the back
of your head, back to the wall...
shovels and whores,

all God's children gotta live!

Eric Cockrell

Shut Up, And Listen

i argue with myself
when i'm praying...
or maybe it's with God-
either way, i seem to be losing.

when right + right + right = wrong...
what the hell do you do?
so i just keep digging,
dirt walls falling in on me,
water up to my knees!

and i keep hearing laughter...
or maybe it's just the sound
of my heart telling my soul
to move on!

or maybe it's just the footsteps
of my memories
walking into tomorrow...

or maybe it's God telling me...

to shut up,
and listen!

Eric Cockrell

Sickness Of America

the sickness of America
began within each of us....
when we chose

profit over compassion,
self fulfillment over community,
success over family....

possessions over our neighbors,
indulgence over ecology,
lifestyle over spirituality....

oil addiction over fair treatment,
invasion over liberation,
special interests over equality....

for real change to be possible,
real healing must take place....
it too, begins within!

Eric Cockrell

Silence

silence...
wall whispering silence.
streets that dont speak,
faces mechanically moving.
hammers hung from belts,
books closed, coffee brewing.
the voices of need and passion,
silent statements in flesh.
god, or something more,
understanding beyond conception.
the hand extended,
and boots laced tight.
the flame of truth,
flickers, stays strong.
nothing more needs be said,
than to live...
unto!

Eric Cockrell

Silence Is Not (For Hune)

silence is not...
the absence of sound,
but sound stripped naked and pure!

the thunderous crash of the acorn,
to the ground that startles the squirrel,
and freezes him with fear!

the squeak of the old spicket,
wailing for the water to rise,
from the dead bones of time.

the moan of dead bones,
returning back to dust,
as if sexual release.

and the prayers of the trees,
who see our foolishness,
and weep!

Eric Cockrell

Silence Of The Grieving

i weep...

for i cannot help but feel,
the etched lines in the starving child's face,
the fear of the soldier's conscience.
the desperate blade of the homeless,
the anger of the addict...
the hatred that is poverty,
the hopelessness of the unemployed.
the slap against the face of color,
the rage of prisons, and trailer parks.
the half naked children playing with broken glass,
the kid who cant take it anymore.
the blow against those who dare to be different,
against those who dare to be what they are.
the hardened path of the single parent,
the lostness of the child who doesnt understand.
the sound the dying make when they're alone,
the labored breath of the sleepless night.
the touch of the rain on the fallen leaf,
the silence of the grieving.

i weep...

Eric Cockrell

Silence Too Sick For Stillness

small tiny hands limp,
the molded crust of your bread
falls to the floor....

never reaching the lips
the buddha-man on fire
never cried out....

they beat out the flames
with rifle butts....
pills ground and snorted,

the furnace goes out,
lights flicker and fade,
life seeps down the drain.

the young girl pounded
like a piece of leather,
cries without tears,

choking on the air....
the gun held in the hand
falls to the ground,

no one hears the sound,
no one says a prayer.
eyes that dont see,

ears that dont hear....
silence too sick for stillness,
graves unmarked and forgotten!

Eric Cockrell

Silence Wept

and I and I,
desire and death...
the garden of you,
and spider webbed dreams.
pine sap running, hot and molten,
my tongue rests...
inside your soul.

love me dammit,
or write me letters.
send them to
'destination unknown'!
buy a dress for my funeral,
a hat, and new shoes...
any color but black!

inside and inside,
peeling layer after layer.
conversation of sparrows,
struck mute by flesh.
you taste sweat of summer,
i am past late autumn.
the gods of time lied!

what if i wrote you a poem,
and silence wept?
would you hear the train,
and point to the sky?
would you pray for rain?
and listen for the sound...
of the knock on your innermost door!

Eric Cockrell

Silences The Candle

break the glass and come to the altar,
naked, as you are...
for this is the kingdom of the dove and the wolf,
and this bed holds the secret trove.
one cannot bind wings,
wings are bound by air!
there be no sacrifice
in dying for love....
the gift is the giver,
the giver the gift....
leaving night to define these shadows.
to love and madness,
and the glory of loss!
when mortality becomes two stars...
two stars exploding in the darkest night,
raining light that silences the candle!

Eric Cockrell

Silent Grave

the silent grave
swept clean by time,
knowing only the wind

that undresses the night.
the eyes of an owl,
dead branches walking...

moonlight and darkness
thrust and parry, and dance.
the smell of damp earth,

the kingdom of spider and snail...
moss and vines wrapped
around the throat of time...

no footprints, no memories,
no flapping of wings....
the unnamed hand covers

all trace, all thought....
all that which was urgent,
eternal... of universal need...

becomes small and insignificant...
in the silent grave!

Eric Cockrell

Simple Buddhist Prayer

</>

breathing in, breathing out,
i am thankful for every step,
for every thing i've felt,
everything i've touched,
every taste, every smell,
every living being i've walked with,
for every bowl of food,
for the blanket i sleep under,
for the chance to live
for one eternal moment....
for the chance to give,
without asking back, or why!

Eric Cockrell

Simple Message

random acts of kindness...
when words become gifts, and
the shake of a hand is respect!
when the gift given hurts enough
to be real...
and eternity becomes the most
simple of things!

Eric Cockrell

Simple Shells

simple shells,
formed by time,
and experience....

once carried by life,
now left behind,
a gift? or just memory...

echoing the sound
of waves pounding
some far off shore....

waiting for the hands
of a child!

Eric Cockrell

Simple Words, And Quietness!

i used to write
with exploding images,
and intricate rhymes.
mapping the grand design
of passion unfolding.
but now i've reached a place
of quietness, and simple words,
raw honesty, and tiny flames...
and i'm at peace with myself.

i know that all war is wrong,
that hunger and homelessness
are a scourge, the result
of our own actions.
and i feel deeply the responsibility
to share in the suffering
of one and all.

i dont blame anything on God,
we havent even touched
what God is with our concepts.
dont blame anything on politicians,
we put them there
out of our own apathetic greed.
i dont blame loneliness on lovers,
you cant know love
without having been lonely.

age brings with it a deep sense
of mortality, and of the value
of each fleeting moment.
it's all too easy to spend
your life fighting and working
for things that have no lasting value...
i know, i've been there.

i learned to look in the mirror,
and really see myself.
learned to look at myself,

and see all others.
i've taken responsibility for
my thoughts and desires,
as well as my actions...
so i have no right to judge.

compassion, and giving...
celebrate the moment.
what i dont know
i dont have to know...
i have enough faith
to keep walking.

simple words, and quietness!

Eric Cockrell

Simply Be....

less words,
more truth.
undressed,
no images.
raw,
do not carve.
be,
simply be!

Eric Cockrell

Simply, For You

why is it so hard to talk
to the one you love most...
when time and years and chapters,
testify in tired feet?
the wars have ended,
the guns are now still.
even the storm left,
a candle lit by the bed.
do i know you?
do you know me?
or are we the sound...
of doors opening and closing?
i cant say your name
without something in me dying...
i cant see the sky,
without seeing your face.
are we so old,
has time written our epitaph?
just old polaroids,
in an album boxed up....
i brush against you,
and wolves howl in the moonlight.
the soft look in your eyes,
tastes like rain.
you open your mouth,
and swallows fly...
have i set the nest on fire,
laying brick in the sun?
yet i am not dead,
and neither are you....
you smell like thunder,
i burn in the night!

Eric Cockrell

Single Moms

the greatest heroes
in America today...
are the single moms,
out there, fighting and
scraping, working and
believing...
against all odds,
in spite of...
raising their kids,
loving their kids,
living for their kids!

Eric Cockrell

Sins Of Capitalism

the scar
on my face
is the last cry
of all those killed
in the name of capitalism.
the tear
in my eyes,
the hunger of those
we've forced to
live in poverty.
the bruise
on my lips,
the swelling groan
of those we've oppressed!

Eric Cockrell

Sir, What Is Revolution?

a child,
having overheard our conversation,
came to me, and asked,

'sir, what is revolution? '

i thought about it for a moment,
and sitting him on my knee, replied,
'you know when you're outside,
running and playing in the sun,
and you get too hot...
and you go down to the creek
and get a drink of water?
and you stand there enjoying
the shade of the trees,
and the coolness of the wind? '

he nodded his head.

'well, revolution is making sure
that the sunlight, the grasses,
the creek and it's water,
the trees that give shade,
and the wind a blowing...
will always be there,
for you and for your children! '

'and that children everywhere
will be born into a world that's safe,
that they have a home to go to,
and food to eat.
and that your momma and daddy
can sleep at night without worrying! '

the little boys shook his head up and down...
'that's cool... does god do that,
or do we? '

'out of the mouth of babes! ...'

Eric Cockrell

Sister...

sister...

do you love me?

do you know me?

do you hear my voice?

will you touch me?

will you hold me?

will you make the choice?

do you want me?

do you need me?

open the door and let me in!

more than night and day.

more than hurt and pain....

sister, i need a friend!

Eric Cockrell

Six O'Clock News

he sat in the parking lot,
a Vietnam vet, breathing hard,
fog rising in the cold....

across the way two kids
were getting ready to raise
the flag... just another day....

they'd been married for 30 years.
he met her when he was thirty,
and she was just sixteen....

now he was over sixty,
and his health was bad....
and she'd been fooling around

with a man her own age.
he just couldnt see, just couldnt
believe... nowhere to go.

he watched her walk from the
building to her car, fumbling with keys.
walking up behind her, he called

her name... she turned, a look of horror,
just a deer caught in the headlights.
he pulled the pistol and shot her....

before her body even fell
he put the barrel in his mouth,
and fired again....

the two kids stopped, flag
at about half mast.... sunlight
barely piercing the fog....

America dead, two bodies strewn
in a parking lot... another feed
for the six o'clock news!

Eric Cockrell

Six-Gun Poets

old washed up six-gun poets,
legs bent from riding horses,
backs bent from laying track.
faces lined with wrinkles bearing chapters,
calloused hands and worn out feet...
whose revolution was it anyway?

at night we prayed for the trees
that we'd cut that day...
spoke words of gratitude
for the deer that fed us.
sitting round small fires,
we sang songs of tribute....
while the moths gathered,
and wolves stood at the clearing's edge.

we laid with women on beds of moss.
and wrote scriptures only the night would know.
never dreaming that time could or would betray...
or that the dawn would ever find us.

there are wars and then there are visions.
a time when boys lay down guns and become men.
a time when walls crumble, and souls are revealed.
a time when all men know they're equal!

when the cost of freedom is paid with life,
when the cost of life is paid with love.
when the cost of love is all and nothing less...
when the price is paid by the willing.

when men see beyond violence to something more.
when women bear children both fed and loved.
when there are no strangers, no enemies...
when god is as real as human need!

when understanding lights the final fire....

old washed up six-gun poets/

Eric Cockrell

Skin Cannot Hide!

black skin,
...white skin,
.....red skin,
.....brown skin....

human beating hearts!
...red blood, needs and wants,
.....all breathing,

.....the same air!

diverse souls,
...unified spirit!

coming from darkness
.....into the light,

wrapped in different packages,
...all by the same hand,

small pieces of the universe,
...crying out to be joined!

skin cannot hide God's reflection!

Eric Cockrell

Skull And Bones

Skull And Bones,
hands on the heart,
finger on the button...

chosen, and groomed,
covered by the veil,
world by design.

economics held,
population control,
Aids and starvation,

and war after war.
oil rigs, nuclear nights,
done step by step;

all part of the plan....
Skull And Bones!

Eric Cockrell

Slaves Demand Freedom!

poverty and ignorance,
the two greatest weapons
of those that would enslave.
but when the poor
educate themselves,
and become aware,
the slaves demand freedom!

Eric Cockrell

Sleeping Alone

sleeping alone...
tastes like burnt wood chips,
three days after the fire.
yesterday's cold cup of coffee,
spider webs, and bones.
metal shavings,
and empty boxes.
bullets on the shelf.
the broken edge of the cup,
blood on the tip of the tongue.
dust, and brown leaves,
the first winter freeze.
sleeping alone...
tastes like death!

Eric Cockrell

Sleepless At Night!

i feel the heat,
the hurt and the suffering.
sleepless at night,

i see faces, i hear voices.
the eyes of the stranger,
write stories in my soul...

my lips stay parched,
my spirit panting, erect.
the sound of the waves,

deafen, and terrify.
my religion lies in the bodies
walking without home...

redemption the bedpan,
the nurse loving takes away.
the old man sweeping the steps,

waiting on the child to return!

Eric Cockrell

Small Glimpses Of Holiness

i can remember being a kid,
and going to church on Sunday....
can remember the way the sunlight
danced through the stained glass
windows, the smell of the old
hymnals, the way the hard bench
hurt my back....
can remember singing the old hymns...
(sometimes they come to me
in my sleep....)

but i cant remember any particular sermon!

it's funny what we equate with God,
and holiness... and what we dont!

just as easy i can remember being alone
in the woods, watching sunlight pour
through the pines, listening to the gurgling
of the creek... and the way the earth felt
beneath my bare feet.....

or the first time i ever made love
to a girl... in the front seat of an
old Rambler.... moonlight sifting through
the trees... and the barking of a dog.

or sleeping in a cave, on the run, and the
damp darkness like a womb enveloping
me... with only the sound of a nearby
waterfall piercing the stillness....

or standing by my mother's grave...
watching a part of myself go back
to the dust...

or the sound of my children's voices
when they just needed assurance....

small glimpses of holiness drifting
through an old man's mind... on the way
back home.

Eric Cockrell

Small Minds!

small minds
create small gods,
limited thought,
limited expression.

lack of commitment,
limited responsibility,
passes the blame
to untouchable judgement.

a small bird
thought he was an eagle,
till the eagle came,
and killed him in flight!

we worship our fears
out of convenience,
drunkenly beat our chest
with talons of repentance.

small minds,
see only black and white...
never tasting, never knowing,
the color and the sound!

Eric Cockrell

Small Points Of Victory

those are not scars and wrinkles
on my face...
they are mile markers,
paragraphs,
and small points of victory
grounded in nameless defeats!

Eric Cockrell

Small Things

it's so easy to miss
the things that really matter.
the small child looking up
at you, wanting to be
picked up.
the way sunlight dances
on rain wet leaves.
the person you bump into,
that smiles with that look
of something they want to say,
and you're in too big of a hurry
to listen.
the old man in his rocking chair,
waiting on you to call.
the dog that rolls over,
waiting on a belly rub.
the woman staring out the window
while you rattle on about work.
the ants going to and from their hill,
doing life's work.
the rose that opens and closes
without you taking the time
to smell, and to touch.
the hawk flying overhead
in the limitless sky.
the hand that brushes yours,
and you dont notice.
the voice on the phone
that wants to say 'come home'.
but doesnt because you're busy.
small things that come and go.
tiny universes, tiny miracles.
lost in the rush to.

Eric Cockrell

Small To Big!

small hands, trust...
big hands, afraid,
clenched to fists...

small eyes, see...
big eyes, blinded,
confined to conceptions...

small hearts, love...
big hearts, possess,
clipping the wings

of their own dreams!
small to big, return to small
finding our way home!

Eric Cockrell

Small Town America

just an old southern
mill village.... cotton mills
on one side of the road,
furniture factories on the other.

momma worked there,
my sister worked there,
my brother worked there,
and i worked there....

\$1.90 an hour, loading trucks
by hand, stacking rolls of cloth
eight feet high without a lift...
putting brackets on beds, or

running bandsaws....
hard hand work, paid every week.

all those buildings empty now....
windows boarded over, signs
falling.... rats run across haunted floors.
even the old gas station

down at the end of the road....
is closed.... no more gas,
no cigarettes, no cold beer.....
and the Sons Of Jesus,

and the Elk's Club quit sharing
the old dance building on the corner....
no one lives here anymore.....

no one lives, no one dies....
and the bum on the corner
that looks like your brother
has no name.... in

small town America!

Small Victories!

small minds, small dreams,
small prayers, small God.
small thoughts, small answers,
to questions not small!

playing the race game,
the salvation game,
the mine and yours game,
the right and wrong game.

like cattle herded
unknowingly to slaughter.
every body a ticket,
to pay the fare.

bigger picture, bigger concepts,
bigger than i and me!
bigger risk, bigger world,
bigger choices, small victories.

Eric Cockrell

Smell Like!

you said:

old men smell like nuts,
and greying tree limbs...
wet ashes after the rain...

you smell like

the book on the shelf,
that goes unnoticed,
and needs to be read!

and we probably smell like
the broken glass, the limbs
on the car, the rain drenched seat...
and love stains aged

from under the wheel,
in the gravel drive
of an old abandoned house!

Eric Cockrell

Smell The Stink!

sticks and stones,
Smith and Jones...
pedantic thoughts,
and mechanical arms.
broken shell, dipped in hell,
buy or sell, price foretells...
hearts dont beat,
safe from harm!

tried and true,
old and new...
bruises worn,
scars are touched.
me and you, dare to do,
only the few, coming to...
so take little,
give back much!

feel too much, too hard to think,
light a smoke, take a drink.
choice before us, swim or sink...
taste the hurt, smell the stink!

feed the hunger,
simple wonder.
mouths and feet,
in the street.
real and hope, grab the rope,
better than dope, dipped and soaked.
break the glass,
feel the heat!

feel too much, too hard to think,
light a smoke, take a drink.
choice before us, swim or sink...
taste the hurt, smell the stink!

Eric Cockrell

Smelled Like Death

i used to think
old people smelled like death...
but now i think maybe
they smell like life;
life lived, life experienced,
life given, life worn...
or maybe like a bridge
that hundreds have walked on,
or the worn out shoes
of the walkers...
or maybe like the oak tree,
just cut down,
then left to age and dry out
for the fire...
or maybe like memories
of touch and taste...
or maybe like a riverbed now dry,
waiting on the rain!

it's a smell
i cant wash off!

Eric Cockrell

Smells Like

if your heart
smells like my feet,
then the time
is not in vain.
we lose years
in moments of burden...
painting stars
on a ceiling
sure to fall!
if my feet
smell like prayers,
then god should know
the way, and have the key.
if the door
smells like you...
then we'll both wait
outside in the rain!

Eric Cockrell

Smells Like Flesh

kill me with your love,
or just kill me!
i'm sick of existence
and struggle....
the flame of the candle,
does not burn my fingers.
and the roar of stillness deafens!
angels and demons cannot satisfy,
even the trees ask forgiveness.
these lips are blue with frost,
yet the grave smells like flesh!

Eric Cockrell

Smells Like Home!

windows wet,
fog over.
pale light,
seeps through.
spirit takes flesh,
flesh stays hungry.
fingertip prayers,
small moments eternal.
hand on the plow,
your earth smells
like home!

Eric Cockrell

Smoke And Mirrors

smoke and mirrors,
lies and propaganda.
whatever drug you need,
to swallow and obey.
the ghostly terror
of fear multiplied,
in the name of national security,
while the bottom line grows!
follow the plan,
step by unholy step,
destiny determined
in back rooms by demons.
a black tie affair,
and the suffering continues...
who pays the price?
who pays the price?

Eric Cockrell

Snail Crossing...

it's not what you own, what you have, or what you've accomplished... that defines you as a man, or a woman... it's what you've given.... therein, lies your legacy! the question we have to ask ourselves is this... if we died tonight, would there be any evidence that we have lived? if we were gone, would we have loved enough to be remembered?

Eric Cockrell

Snail Crossing... (Part Five)

i could very easily walk away... if i could find a cabin in the hills. grow my own food, and live simply.... read poetry to the trees, and the creeks.... there is nothing, and no one, that i wish to own.... i have no desire to be known, or well thought of.... and yet, i must continue... i must breathe!
the more honest i become with myself...
the more i love other people!

Eric Cockrell

Snail Crossing.... (Part Fourteen)

and so we are but this...
the match struck ablaze,
for a moment and gone...
the flower that blooms for a day.
the rain dropp dissolving into the earth,
the small stone washed away,
when the river surges.
the memory of dawn
forgotten in the night...
the lonesome farewell of the snail
crossing just before light...
leaving only a small wet trail
as evidence of passing! , , ,
and the shout of joy,
that sounds like silence!

Eric Cockrell

Snail Crossing.... (Part Eight)

how many unwanted,
hungry, no family,
nowhere to live,
no hope children
does it take?

how many strung out,
hanging out,
wont work,
dont care,
no direction,
give them to your parents,
let DSS take them,
cant feed them,
parents?

do we remember
what family means?

Eric Cockrell

Snail Crossing.... (Part Eleven)

the non-believer who acts selflessly
out of compassion and reverence
for all living beings,
is closer to god...
than the believer
who acts out of his own selfish desires,
and bows his head with arrogant pride!

Eric Cockrell

Snail Crossing.... (Part Four)

the mind that reads, is open... the mind that is open, dares to touch... the mind that touches, feels.... the mind that feels, dissolves....

Eric Cockrell

Snail Crossing.... (Part Nine)

the lives of every child,
of every color, every nationality,
and every language,
whether male or female,
born in or out of wedlock,
born in wealth or poverty...
are sacred.

and therein lies
the greatest responsibility
of the human race...
and at this moment,
the greatest failure!

Eric Cockrell

Snail Crossing.... (Part Seven)

ignorance demands,
that the person you meet...
looks like you,
smells like you,
talks like you,
agrees with you...
believes in your god,
believes in your political line,
wants what you want,
and admires you...

Eric Cockrell

Snail Crossing.... (Part Six)

the life well lived is composed
of small things, small happenings,
and small touches...
for it is in these most simple and
real of moments that we evolve...
a word spoken in kindness....
a meal shared, an hour or two
of listening...
a choice made from selfless compassion...
these are the moments of eternity,
the trace of our living that remains...
and the steps to the temple,
of understanding, and freedom.

Eric Cockrell

Snail Crossing.... (Part Ten)

when you wrap god up
in a colorless box,
filled with fear, judgement,
and prejudice...
a box that can only be held
by people just like you,
on special occasions,
and with ulterior motives...
you make god the weapon
of your own ignorance!
you dont own god!

Eric Cockrell

Snail Crossing.... (Part Twelve)

human sexuality...
the bridge from one soul to another,
the holiest of fires,
both darkness and light,
creation and death,
the tenderness the wind mourns for,
the storm that changes the face
of the earth...

holding nothing back,
touch the one you love,
aware of each tiny eternity,
in rhythm with the tides...
only your heart knows...
the lost part of you...
the echo of your spirit,
the hand into which you dissolve...

you are the breath of each other...
and no one else has the right to judge!
love madly and urgently...
but most of all.... love!

Eric Cockrell

Snail Crossing.... (Part Three)

if you've never been a fool for love, if you've never jumped off a cliff and tried to fly, if you've never given your last dollar to someone you didnt know.... if you've never wept, and not known why.... if you've never fought windmills, and found them to be dragons... if you've never questioned god... if you've never risked it all, and lost it all.... then you havent lived!

Eric Cockrell

Snail Crossing.... (Part Two)

if you cant forgive someone... look in the mirror, ... i mean, really look! it gets easier. i'm not interested in your religion... just in your heart! i dont care if you like me, if you agree with me.... only if you'll work with me to help restore dignity to humanity.

what we do every day, every step we take, every move we make, every word we say, either brings life, or takes life!

Eric Cockrell

Snail Crossing..... (Part Thirteen)

i've never had any desire to be rich....
like millions of people...
all i've asked is the right to work,
to have food and shelter for my family,
to have just a little time
to do what matters to me...
to be honest and giving,
to celebrate tiny moments,
to love and be loved,
and to go deep inside, and search.

determined to help anyone i can,
in whatever small way...
always willing to listen,
always ready to learn.
working every moment to be open minded,
taking responsibility for my mistakes,
and my failures...
drunk on the act of living,
at peace,
both with life, and with death.
honored to be a friend,
to have companions...
and to fight every day,
to make this dream become real.

angered by hunger,
prejudice and indifference.
moment by moment becoming aware,
chanting equality and dignity....
and most of all, human!

Eric Cockrell

Snapshot Of Freedom

rainwater standing
in stagnant puddles
'neath old cars....

tainted with oil!

a snapshot of freedom
in today's America...
silently shouting,

falling on deaf ears!

Eric Cockrell

Snow Thunder

snow thunder...

the earth

...groans

.....for itself,

the mountains weep

in

.....perfect

.....stillness,

ashes to ashes,

...God demands form!

Eric Cockrell

So Be It!

If for this moment
I was born.
If for this plaintive howl.
If for the space between
Sound and echo,
Between long night
And the break of dawn.

If for this purpose,
Be it great or small.
If for this name
None else can bear.
If for this turn, this tilt,
This fall.
If for the time of shedding.

If for this call, this haunt,
This storm...
If for the taste of blood,
On lips a' quiver.
If for this page,
Unwritten, unread.
If for the final break.

Then, so be it!

Eric Cockrell

So Confused?

does not a mountain know
that it is a river?
and the tree knows
that it is the sky!
the butterfly is sure that
it is the leaf turning color
in autumn's passion,
and the cloud is happy
to be a cave....

then why are we so damn confused?

Eric Cockrell

Social Consciousness.... (Face Of The Begger)

social consciousness...
baby, it's just breathing!
awareness of suffering,
the key to unlock the door.
compassion constant,
the universe revolves.
from birth unto death,
from death unto birth.
the face of the begger,
the face of god.
the hand you offer,
god's only hands.
the action of giving,
the heartbeat of freedom.
social consciousness,
the flesh of eternity!

Eric Cockrell

Socrates

sometimes the hemlock
comes in a 9 to 5 cup,
and empty beds coughing
in the marlboro night.
when the dog is fed,
and everyone has eaten...
and only the dog stopped
to say 'thank you'...
and the life insurance policy
glows in the drawer,
waiting for a shovelful of dirt.
and it's either the gun or the window,
so you toss a shoe and break the glass!

Eric Cockrell

Soldiers

soldiers, soldiers,
marching in dead time.
ghouls without faces,
in mechanical rhyme.

paid for, paid off,
eyes open and blind.
hearts severed from the soul,
soul severed from the mind.

gunfire, racism,
treat women like a toy.
grown men without mothers,
fathers, just boys.

gang bangers, pimp daddies,
kings of purgatory.
bad drugs, bad days,
and nights without joy.

cant pay the rent, get a job,
and prison becomes their school.
no hope for nothing more than nothing,
trapped by the have not rules....

soldiers, soldiers.
pawns in the rich man's game.
victims of unholy anger,
and gods that have no name!

Eric Cockrell

Some Distant Day

stillness wrapped in stillness,
memory ingrained in time.
an ancient holy book written
on a leaf, that falls freely,
turns bright with passion,
and crumbles into death!

who are we?
and what remains?
more than the inflection of voice?
less than scriptures etched in stone?
a star? a caterpillar? a gust of wind?
does the soul retain identity?
the spirit have a familiar face?
does the name change...
from Henry to pebble,
from William to speck of dust?

angel's wings, i think not!
neither pitchforks, nor hideous horns!
does the stone i read this poem to...
hear me? know what i've said?
recognize and feel comfort?
or is it all worms and time
and black and white photographs?
or a dropp of rain that feels
like a lover come back?

or are we just nails
rusted on the bridge of time?
do you know? do you care?
will your lips quiver
on some distant day...
trying to remember how
to speak my name?

Eric Cockrell

Some Peace Of Mind

so tired and weary,
i cant go on.
tired of facing
the night alone.
climbing the mountain,
only to fall.
pounding my fists,
against the wall.

there is a wind,
that has no name.
that stills the heart,
and eases the pain.
there must be a home,
on down the line.
i just want...
some peace of mind.

how many battles
can you fight and lose?
how many roads
for a man to choose?
how many days
in the heat of the sun?
how many trials
before you're done?

there is a wind,
that has no name.
that stills the heart,
and eases the pain.
there must be a home,
on down the line.
i just want...
some peace of mind.

i gave my heart,
i gave my soul.
all the things,

that i could hold.
i stared the devil
in the eye,
spoke the truth,
i couldnt deny.

there is a wind,
that has no name.
that stills the heart,
and eases the pain.
there must be a home,
on down the line.
i just want...
some peace of mind.

Eric Cockrell

Somedays!

somedays i still feel
like i can fly!
like plowing the earth,
and planting the seeds...
painting my face and dancing
for rain...

like running half-naked
down through the woods
with a spear in hand...
searching for meat.

like building a fire,
and watching the meat
turn on the spit...

like playing music
in a dim-lit bar,
amid the smoke and
the sweat and the booze...

like climbing a mountain
to face the dawn,
the only man alive
in the whole damned world!

like making love all night long,
long and slow and tender,
touching and feeling,
giving and taking...

like praying in an empty church!

Eric Cockrell

Someone Cares....

soft cold early autumn rain....
kept looking for ghosts on the way home.
there is a stillness now, and a waiting,
though i know not for what.
i've always been different,
heard voices in the shadows.
and often i dont know,
whether i'm dreaming, or a dream.
i've seen things that should have been nightmares....
i've seen the hungry child dying in the rose that blooms!
i look at people and feel their sorrow.
i hear what they're saying when they cant speak.
i go with old people into their graves,
and weep with addicts in broken alleys.
i have no color, or nationality....
those with religion spurn my company.
i'm not a patriot for any man,
i follow only the law of my heart.
i feel the guilt of injustice and indifference...
and carry responsibility like a cross.
i have no illusions about my virtue,
and understand that truth has a cost.
and most of all i've found a sameness,
in the very difference....
so let it rain, let the darkness speak,
we have been friends for hundreds of years.
and to you who listen,
whose hearts are open....
you are never alone,
someone cares!

Eric Cockrell

Something More

there is a part of me in you,
in every move you make,
every thought you think,
in every sleepless night...

there is a part of you in me,
in every time i do the right thing,
every gentle and good thought,
in everything i believe...

there is a part of us in God,
and a part of God in us;
that cannot be seperated
and still feed the flame of living.

there is a part of love, and the whole,
written by our destinies.
you and i, and something more,
that words cannot define.

Eric Cockrell

Sometimes Love Has...

sometimes love...

has to be hard,
has to stand up,

when no one's got your back.
has to speak out,
when no one wants to hear...

has to be human,
when they want something else.
has to ball the fists,

and then open the hand....
has to cry, has to give,
when it seems like no one cares.

has to try and fail,
then try again....
has to put faces

on God's dreams!

Eric Cockrell

Somewhere

somewhere, i dont know,
we're having lunch
in some sidewalk cafe...
fresh, crisp salads,
and black coffee
with a shot of brandy...
and somewhere, i dont know,
they're playing music
on an outdoor stage...
we're sitting side by side,
with no need to be anywhere.

somewhere, i dont know,
we're walking hand in hand
thru the evening streets,
just listening to the sounds...
somewhere, i dont know,
in a rented room down by the tracks,
you come to me wearing nothing
but a necklace... and the rocking
of the coming train takes us
to our final destination...

somewhere, i dont know...

Eric Cockrell

Somewhere Between....

somewhere between....
a small fire and a rainy night,
an open book, a candle in the window.
the words of Jesus, revolution without restraint...
an agnostic, and a dreamer.
a murderer and a healer,
a poet and a farmer.
a pair of worn out shoes,
and a stone statue of Buddha.
a mad lover crawling in windows,
and a monk staring at the stars.
the last wolf in the night,
and the first rays of dawn.
somewhere between...
hope and despair,
understanding and anger.
a child and a dying old man.
a prayer and an erection.
a train coming in the distance,
and a lighthouse in the harbor.
the bark of the gun,
and the prayer of shovels.
somewhere between....
loving you and suicide.
standing to fight and running.
spreading my wings, and digging a ditch.
your breast and your lips,
a tear and a poem....
somewhere between!

Eric Cockrell

Song Of Autumn

we have become old...
and have earned this time
of turning... turning wind,

turning leaves.... day turning
to night with a suddenness.
every stroke of color,

every shade of black and white...
and this sudden chill brings
a warmth that our lives define!

our passion is falling
like leaves to carpet the earth....
our bare limbs reach heavenward...

to God, or the next page...
we wait on the snow,
and the small fires the living

build to light the way....
we are the song of autumn...
the wind that fills the empty

pages of forever with human hands....
old warriors, and lovers,
whose touching defines the night!

Eric Cockrell

Song That Never Ends!

tired of body,
tired of soul,
so much to do,
so much left undone...

the cup of life spilling over,
the latch on the door locked.
the taste of moonlight,
and long green grass....

paper stacked on paper,
the candle nearly burnt down.
the smell of love, the feel of the cliff,
and the song that never ends!

Eric Cockrell

Sons Of God!

and the sons of god walked among us,
their hands dirtied with the work.
with eyes that saw the naked,

and ears that heard the cry.
speaking the languages of need,
without need for veil or crucifix.

unknown, unheralded, soft spoken,
taking little for they had no need...
other than the works of healing,

bathed in the light of forgiveness.
believing, caring, touching...
without title or even name....

perhaps they've walked beside you,
and you thought but the wind!
the sons of god dressed as humans,

wiping away the tears of the children!

Eric Cockrell

Sooner Or Later!

you cant go on
feeding the poor
on a steady diet of

Jesus, pills, and
patriotic pride...
sooner or later,

hunger will demand,
the meat on your plate,
the meat they put there!

Eric Cockrell

Souls

the infantile belief
that only human beings
have souls...
comes from the fear
driven ego...

wake up!

dogs and cats, birds and horses...
trees, stones, and rivers
all have souls....

mice and ants lead us
on this journey!

Eric Cockrell

Soul's Rebellion (Part Two)

you shake me...
'you ok? ,
you must have been dreaming...'
am i dreaming,
or have i always been,
just a shadow, a form,
walking through heated dreams?

too long bound by guilt,
mine, yours, anybody's,
and everybody's....
what am i afraid of?
the image in the mirror,
unarmed and toothless!
even the thief has a god,
the murderer salvation.
the redemption of a poet...
to die and dissolve.

marching, marching,
into the angry streets.
i hear my voice shouting,
tremble with the power.
call the lie a lie,
demand justice and dignity.
wearing the scars of equality,
and nothing else...

breaking through doors,
and smashing windows...
maddened, the wolf
searches for his mate.
knees on stone floors,
bleeding with hunger...
the stink of your jail,
hangs in my breath.

my tongue trails
the last bead of sweat

down your neck to your breasts,
to your nether below.
i am the stolen promise,
the stranger who waited
under your bed,
for your heart to whisper,
'all clear, we are free! '
then like an army of ants,
i stampede through cracks and crevice,
to taste of your honey,
at the cost of my life!

Eric Cockrell

Soul's Rebellion

tired, so tired...
i throw myself into sleep,
falling from the edge of the building,
i cannot see the street below.
a suicide against the hollow body
of everyday repetition,
and the cold stink,
of hands unwashed!

falling, cursing death,
and all it's religious demands.
i ooze from the skin of 'myself',
the dog breaks from its pen.
desire, beating and real,
i drink the juices of lovers...
forbidden to show their faces.
i am penis and rhythm,
the taste of the oak split
by lightning or axe,
who knows? i dont care!

i am blood on the lips,
forever rich in its color.
i am freedom screaming
from the stoop of poverty.
i make love in the alleys,
tossing cans and breaking bottles.
i rip buttons from the blouse,
whisper oceans and darkness.
i am brandy and semen,
words written on the stone,
glowing in the forever night
of your soul's rebellion!
i am free!

Eric Cockrell

Sound Like!

what if Jesus came in a dark cloud,
and fell like tender mercy rain
on the mouths of the hungry...
no hint of thunder,
no flash of lightning!

and what if the prayers
of those same hungry
were the wind that brought the cloud....
what would the rain sound like?

would you walk in this rain...
or run for shelter?

Eric Cockrell

Sound Of The Beating Heart!

we spend lifetimes searching
for the sound the leaf makes
turning from green to orange to red...
we spend our loving burning branches
in the shadow of the tree.
we spend our faith trying to capture,
and hold the wind for a moment...
never knowing that what we search for
is only our own being!

we are the leaf, the branches, the fire,
the tree, and the wind...
the sound, the loving, and the faith.
and yet we are nothing.

we are but a moment,
familiar taste and scent.
we are eternity,
the breath of an unknown god.

the sun has set,
stillness comes walking
across the mountains.
i listen for the voices
that have no face.
dead poets sit by a vagrant fire,
immigrants, refugees...
spinning old tales.

my friends smell like trees,
and leaves turned brown.
we cross bridges unseen,
with no destination.
and the only sound
that even god can hear...
the sound of the beating heart!

Eric Cockrell

Sounds (For Hune)

heard,
without definition,
without concepts,
by ears stripped of fear.
in sacred nakedness,
rhyming,
the rhythm of breath...
footsteps to stillness,
and a silence,
that has no identity,
that is not owned,
that cannot be captured,
or held...
that just 'is'!

Eric Cockrell

Sounds Of The Earth

i feel the sounds of the earth,
cant say how or why!
the hurtling swagger of rivers,
the deep bass stillness of mountains.
the whispered longing of the trees,
dancing naked in moonlight.
the hymn of the grasses,
calling forth life.
the groan of the earth,
just turned by the plow!

i hear the reggae beat of the cities,
the hum of movement and work.
the chords of factories and mills,
the horns blown by the shops.
even the hollow beat
of business, of buy and sell.
and the low guttural moan,
of the homeless, jobless, and lost.

feet without names,
marching without direction.
the cries of young children
afraid and hungry in the night.
the bang of the idol chasers,
the wranglers, and the pimps...
some working the market,
some working the parish.

i hear the sounds of the demons,
that cry war in the night.
that bang the bloody drums
of patriotism and fear.
i hear the sounds of the guns,
the thunder of the bombs.
the last prayers of young men,
dying alone in their fear.
i hear the shuffle of the money,
the boots beneath the table.

i hear the sound of the shovels,
digging grave after grave.
i hear the pen on the page,
as history is written,
in a book that not even
hell could contain!

i hear the churning of stomachs,
the grating of bones.
the tremble beneath
paper thin flesh.
i hear bare feet on the road,
the poor seeking refuge.
i hear the women weeping
as child after child dies.
and i hear the clank of glasses,
food shoveled on plates.
the shallow laughter,
the hypnotic hum of excess.
the condemning guilt,
food thrown in the trash.
the restless panting of the dogs,
just outside the door.

Eric Cockrell

Sounds Of The Earth (Part Two)

i hear the sounds of young lovers,
moaning, groaning, and whimpering.
the rush of wind,
that startles the curtains.
the slap of wet bodies,
the sigh of the candle.
low words cooed,
without need for definition.

i feel the tears of the sinner,
hear them hit the floor.
the prayers, and confessions,
the guilt, and the need.
the heavy breathing of redemption,
and the silence that heals...
yes, even the silence
has its own sound!

i hear the bones of the nameless,
rising from their hidden graves.
to dance in the holiness,
of identity regained!
i hear the crackle of the fire,
as life becomes vapor.
i hear the stranger at the door,
and know well his voice!

i feel these sounds,
swelling up within me.
erupting from my conscience,
till song becomes song.

and i hear the heartbeats,
of newborn babies and small children.
of the old woman dying
in a forgotten room.
the heartbeats of wolves,
of birds, and silent cattle.
the heartbeats of things

lost to memory and time....
and each sound alike,
alike in their difference...
sounding like mine,
like yours...
and like god's!

Eric Cockrell

Southern Tribes Of Youth

southern tribes of youth...
high and tight fastball,
louisville slugger cocked,
bases loaded, two outs!
freckled faced girdle wrapped
momma sworn girls laughing...
old chevy trucks, three on the tree,
careful not to jam the gears.
rock n'roll blaring, pedal to the floor,
Richard Farina rebellion,
'beware the monkey demon'!

and Vietnam lied and vomited
on the tv screens...
gunshots, dead Kennedy's,
and Martin Luther King defiled
by angry riots...
marching for peace,
cuffed and stuffed in a van...
staring through the bars,
'run, rabbit, run! '

ah, but watermelon creek,
flag football and fist fights.
pine sap running,
she let me touch...

heroes died, the textbooks lied.
the old mills ran like prisons
that paid on Thursday afternoons.
six packs of beer, roll your own,
skinny dipping nights,
and moonlight rides.

southern baptist 'i do's',
and babies grew babies...
the old glove dressed in oil,
on the silent basement shelf.
the high and tight fastball,

should have been a curve!

Eric Cockrell

Speak Not Of God!

we dreamed of god,
and created war!
pointing,
with dismembered fingers...
prophesying,
with bellies gorged!

we kill that which
we do not understand,
that which we fear...
that which most reminds us
of something hidden deep within.

is god made of stone?
be there no remorse,
no compassion, no conviction?
even stone gods weep,
who are we trying to fool?

how many women and children sacrificed?
a blood atonement...
to whom?
we wear the robes of judges,
hiding the fact
that we're naked underneath!

even our prayers sound like
drunk ravens chattering in back alleys!
and the end we worship
is but retribution,
when time redeems our actions.
speak not of god...

Eric Cockrell

Speak Not To Me Of Hell....

there is no need to speak to me of hell.....
i hear the cries of women and children
dying in the bombing...
i feel the tears of mothers burying
their only sons.
i reel with the hunger,
of refugees and homeless families.
i hurt with the anger,
of the poor and desperate.
i can smell the failure,
that drives people over the edge.
i am imprisoned,
with those behind your bars...
speak not to me of hell,
but rather redemption and action...

Eric Cockrell

Speak The Truth!

<
speak the truth,
...act the truth,
stand up, and shout!

make your life a real life!
do something that really lasts.

small things, big things,
in all things be true...
to your heart, to your mind....

to what you know
...you're supposed to do!

never settle, and never mettle
in things that have no value.
validate your time by living,

your living by giving,
do what you're given to do!

speak the truth!

Eric Cockrell

Speak With Kindness (Or Do Not Speak At All)

Speak with kindness,
or do not speak at all.
Speak not of judgement,
you are not the judge.
Speak not of salvation,
let your living be your scriptures.
Speak not of scriptures,
let your actions be your holy book.
Speak not as apostle or teacher,
speak as a human being.
Speak not of god,
then god will speak through you!
Speak not as a man,
for you are woman too.
Speak not with hateful malice,
for love does not work that way.
Speak not as a prophet or seer,
speak as compassion made flesh.
Speak not of morality,
speak of connection.
Speak not of authority,
the tree and the leaf have just as much.
Speak not of holiness,
for all that lives be holy.
Speak with kindness...
or do not speak at all!

Eric Cockrell

Speak... Or Else Be Silent!

if you must speak,
speak not of distance or separation!
speak without claiming identity,
without shouting, 'self'!
speak without grasping,
clawing, and holding.

keep your judgements to yourself!
i don't need to know the color of your god,
or what war you say he was born during.
i am more refugee than disciple,
i will not follow!

speak not of streets of gold
where angels play harps!
let us speak of these streets...
hard and raw, struggling and fighting,
dimly lit, stinking of urine.
littered with the trash of human lives.
speak of the exploding flash we call moment,
and the kingdom of heaven
that sweats and bleeds!
speak of the cries of the children!

speak of hunger and poverty,
injustices, and the cry for equality!
speak of the god that inhabits
the bodies of the lost and oppressed,
their faces etched by human cruelty...
scarred by apathy and indifference.
speak the truth!

bark like a dog,
meow like a cat,
chirp like a sparrow,
beat rhythm with your wings!

speak living words....
or else be silent!

Eric Cockrell

Speaks!

</>

clouds speak...
with ancient cathedral voices,
but only to those who listen!

babies speak...
with first cry at light,
only mothers' ears hear!

bombs speak...
but never of freedom,
oppression's lies, loud and brash!

hunger speaks...
distinct human faces,
lost to the indifferent roar!

loneliness speaks...
lost in self losing color,
black and white emptiness!

God speaks...
but no one listens;
lost in those clouds,

slowly drifting away!

Eric Cockrell

Spinning Towards Enlightenment

i ran into Buddha,
down at the laundromat.
gave him change for a dollar,
he bought me a cup of coffee.
and we sat and watched,
the dirty clothes of the world...
go spinning towards enlightenment!

Eric Cockrell

Spinning Wheel....

spinning wheel...
turning in the sand.
God didnt die...
you did!
the body taken down
from the cross silently weeps...
the tears sound like rivers,
and buds on the limb!

the bottle on the table,
containing the self...
falls to the floor,
and shatters!
the floor wet
with desire and breath.
angels dance barefoot,
the glass shimmers with light!

the wolf cub curled,
so close to the fur.
the shouts of the leaves,
unborn, unseen.
the dirty hand, and the eyes just opened.
read the sriptures in the dirt,
written in flesh!
spinning wheel....

turning in the sand!

Eric Cockrell

Spirit Revealed (Number Two)

in every touch almost in passing,
every word spoken without thought.
in every thought that no one can see,
in every darkened corner.
in every sign held up in protest.
in every picket line that
shuts down traffic.
in every stolen car,
every empty house broke into.
in the bag of groceries that will not last.
in the gun put down,
in honest revelations.
in the prayer prayed beneath the bridge,
in the pair of boots worn and wise.

in the job walked away from,
in every stranger helped.
in the fugitive hidden,
and in the hiding place!
in every family on the road,
lifetimes piled inside old cars.
in graveyards swept by silence,
in every piece of wood cut and stacked.

in the rising swell,
and in the dying moan.
in the murmur of freedom,
spilling over the edges.
in the earth tainted by blood,
and in the orphan rose.
in the song of the mockingbird,
in the sunset,
and the untended fire.

spirit revealed...
tongues on hearts.
broken fingers, broken feet,
eyes walking as if the wind!

Spirit Revealed!

beneath every pebble on the path...
inside of each blade of grass.
contained in every raindrop,
set free in moonlight searching darkness.
in every tick of every moment,
in the hand that has a face
that has a name.
in the whisper of silence
that words cannot express,
in the hollow of the shell
that rhymes with echo....

every brown skinned face,
every white and black.
every song of the soul,
of backs bent with work.
every dream often unspoken,
every candle that churches cannot light.
every lover, every moan,
every bite and every thrust.
every angry hope, every desperate need...

every bridge, every alley,
every road, every tavern.
every city, every farmhouse,
every plant, every mill.
every library, every courtroom,
and yes every prison!
every door, and every key!

Eric Cockrell

Spiritual Rape

cultural genocide....
white people, white God,
stripping Native Americans

of the basic rights to be....
who they were, who they are!
with violent force stripping

culture, language, faith, and
way of life.... baptizing,
into colorless sameness....

call it being civilized!
call it salvation!
call it progress!

call it spiritual rape!

Eric Cockrell

Spontaneous Electricity (A Man)

a man cannot, and should not,
be judged by what he owns or
possesses. the only true judge-
ment comes in what he does with
his time, to redeem his time...
by the actions he becomes in the
battle to restore dignity and
humanity to the human race.
we are then what we give...our
words must follow the flesh around
our hearts, must be defined by
compassion...
true deliverance is deliverance
from the apathetic, , , true freedom,
freedom from the concept of self...
every grain of sand, individual and
important... but we all together
make the desert!

Eric Cockrell

Spontaneous Electricity (A Part Of)

autumn leaves...
fallen, crumbling,
dissolving into the earth,

leaving no sign,
no name, no identity,
not a mark, not a trace,

for the passage of time...
and yet...
a part of....

of such is my life.
and i find peace in this!
a part of...

all that has been,
all that will be,
a part of...

Eric Cockrell

Spontaneous Electricity (The Journey)

every time i reach what i think
is the end of my road... something
happens...
storms come, destroying everything
behind me. the moon comes out, and
i find another fork in the path.
voices whisper, and tell me it's
going to be all right... just keep
walking...
i find i own nothing, not even the
clothes on my back... my memories,
merely twigs for the fire.
and what i thought i knew, no more
than tiny sparks in the darkness...
so letting go, i move on...
tired, and weary, too often alone...
i want to pray, but keep looking inward.
i stop to rest, and look up... that same
star from long ago... my spirit humming,
i rise up and go...
tonite, tomorrow, perhaps the end is near,
perhaps far... and i've come to know...
that life is but the journey!

Eric Cockrell

Spontaneous Electricity (The Wetness)

walking through the wetness,
rain falling softly.
the rhythm of the wipers,
the trees bow to the wind.

you and i, the sweat and the tears,
one hollow, the other echoes,
one fire, the other darkness kneeling,
identities merged, then torn apart...

ghostlike faces at the window,
children turn, and walk away.
the long silence deepens,
death waits just beyond and before.

mountains carved in forever skies,
crumble, ground to dust by time.
and no less we, dust to dust,
the great sweeper sweeps away our memory.

love was the answer, and sometimes not.
the cross and the thorns, the stolen moment.
now there's nothing left to talk about,
and nothing more to do or feel...

walking through the wetness,
i called the rain by your name!

Eric Cockrell

Stand Beneath It

the truth...
-not oil,
seeping down

into dips and lows.
cannot be bought
and sold with the lives

of the innocents....
or traded on world markets
for human values and dignity...

but a great oak,
strong, firm, unyielding
in the face of storms

and heavy winds....
giving a home to the wings
of freedom... and shade

to those who stand beneath it!

Eric Cockrell

Stand Naked Before God!

i am more...
than 40 years of working,
50 hours a week.
more than a paycheck,
a bag of groceries,
the rent and the lights.
more than the hope
of a social security check!
i am more than a father,
a grandfather, and a last name.
more than an opinion, and a cup of coffee.
my name is not nobody,
i have a face.
i am not a statistic,
nor a grave waiting to be filled.

i am a man,
i have desires, wants, and needs.
like an oak tree i've stood,
and weathered the storms of seasons.
my branches are home
to all kinds of life...
now i'm ready to shed my leaves,
and stand naked before god!

Eric Cockrell

Standing In The Cold

and so it comes to this.
standing beneath the archway
of passion, and unbridled emotion.
my old worn hands tremble
a little as i pass the cup.

and your eyes have a faraway
glint; not conscious, not here anymore.
lips that once knew the language
of mine, are terse, and set.

where did the living go?
the laughter, the touching,
that lay awake at night and
watched me sleep, as if drunken.

and all the words whispered
as if magic and secret, hidden
in the place that no one else knew,
that no darkness could touch...

gone. now winter is over.
the earth begins to swell and burst.
somewhere small birds are singing,
and raindrops hang from budding branches.

only the memory remains.
time marches on; and God, or destiny,
without thinking, or hesitation,
has ordained this death!

love swallows the first glint
of morning sun on the horizon;
and leaves me standing in the cold,
too damned tired to shiver...

Eric Cockrell

Stardust

sleeping with Rilke,
wrapped in the rain.
attaining the heights
and depths of smallness...

unfolding, unwrapping,
of such is living;
layer upon layer
we discover ourselves

in everything that breathes,
in clouds, trees bent with rain.
in the hollow of the wind
where all is stillness.....

in the ordinary, the common,
we find stardust in a bird's
abandoned nest, in a nail
on the side of the barn...

rusted with time

Eric Cockrell

Stars That Waited To Fall

whose heart lies broken,
in tiny pieces reflecting even
the faintest hint of light?
whose soul is bruised,
whose lips are scarred?
whose tears fall,
like thunder in a cementary?
whose silence burns,
in the bitter cold?
whose breath hanging,
like clouds in the sunset?
whose hunger sharpens,
the web and the cave?
whose longing, whose storms,
whose desire that howls?
whose life hanging,
and who carried the cross?

who are we if not lovers,
if not dreamers who dream.
if not the gentleness of the hand,
and the fire of the tongue?
who are we if not history,
if not tomorrow and yesterday?
who are we if not the given,
stars that waited to fall?

Eric Cockrell

State Of The Union

President Obama,
your firm resolve
very admirable...
you preach your dream
for America with
light in your eyes...
you drew your line
in the sand...

but we your people
are still hurting...
we cannot feed our children
on dreams alone..
we need the body
to follow the heart.

bringing the soldiers home,
finally, keep them home!
should have been done
long ago!

jobs, jobs, jobs,
we need jobs...
fair pay with benefits.
fair taxation...
and yes, tax the rich!

all Americans, all colors
and creeds, must walk together,
hand in hand, for the future,
ours, and our childrens'.

the hand of the oil companies,
and the big banks,
needs to be removed!
justice the same for all,
both rich and poor

State Of The Union (In Closing)

we, the working people
of America, demand our dignity!
we demand equality, and fairness!

we are all immigrants here!
yet no human being is illegal.
we demand the right to work,
and to educate our children.
we demand shelter, and healthcare!

we are a hard working, hard fighting
people... we demand a
hard working, hard fighting President!

we know that you are limited
by the hand of the controlling elite,
at the mercy of the corporate machine.
dont be just a figurehead.
your choice!

freedom is a work in progress.
the real revolution is in
the human heart, in the mind.
we are ready for change,
and willing to act.
be ready, and willing!

there are no small people,
we are all people.
we will not be owned!

we cannot go back to the
bigoted, ignorant ways of the past.
you are our best option,
be the man!

most of all, we demand the action
that follows words well spoken.
be the action!

Eric Cockrell

Statement Of Freedom!

i'm just not going to support your wars anymore,
i will not believe your propaganda.
i will not swallow your political lies.
i will not adhere to your moral and legal codes.
i will not follow your religious leaders.
i will not be enslaved by your way of life.
i will not be your patriot.
i will not sell my soul
to buy your American Dream...
i will not be twisted by your hates and fears.
i just wont!

because i have to live with myself,
and i'm the one i have to sleep with...
i will be true to my own heart,
follow my own mind,
and i choose to believe
both in dignity and equality.
i will be free.
you do not own me!

anyone that cannot accept this...
can kiss my ass!
i am free!

Eric Cockrell

Statue Of Liberty

now the great lady
is weeping...
and the tired, the poor,
and the huddled masses
that came from the ends
of the earth...

to stand, to live, and
to be free...
are losing the ground
on which they stood...

the cracked bell sits in silence...

swords into plowshares
back to swords...
hands that once planted,
built, fixed, and loved...
are now fists!

the wounded lion pushed
into a corner,
throws back its head
and roars!

the fight for freedom
begins anew...

the eagle has fallen
from the sky!

Eric Cockrell

Stays Lit!

the candle
on this table
stays lit...

burning down slowly
to the end...
burning bright,

chasing shadows back
into darkness...
warming the tired spirit

with hope....
stays lit,
almost as if

an open hand!

Eric Cockrell

Stench Of Greed

God died yesterday,
without a whimper,
without a word or a thought.
nary a mention
on the six o'clock news.
and the only faith that remains
lies in mouth and stomach...
for those well fed,
and the many who starve.
the temple of the dollar
fell in on the crowd...
the prophets of dignity
burned in the flame.

yes, all that remains,
mouth and stomach...
and the earth regurgitates
at the foul stench of greed!

Eric Cockrell

Step Follows Step!

what is,
...has been,
.....will be again!

winter follows autumn,
...spring will return.

page upon page,
...step follows step,
..and still we dont know,

not to touch the fire!

Eric Cockrell

Steps

steps taken in stillness
resonate off the walls
of the universe...
creating waves,
waves upon waves,
that pound the shores
of indifference
till change arises,
and a new day begins!

steps taken in naked honesty,
peel back the layers of the wound.
find the tiny speck of the human,
beneath the rubble and the ruins.

steps taken in shared compassion
have the rhythm of human hearts,
beating out the sacred dance
in honor of what we're called to be...

steps taken together,
the very best of all!
from darkness into the light,
from captivity into freedom!

Eric Cockrell

Steps On The Road!

capitalism...
has ridden the backs
of the working poor,
both here, and
around the world...
till these backs are broken!

now these backs have faces,
and the faces have names.
we can no longer allow
the few to own the many...
the time of economic slavery
is over! it is finished!

dignity, respect,
and equality....
these are the steps
on the road to tomorrow,
a tomorrow based and
founded on freedom!

Eric Cockrell

Steps Toward Freedom

on the first step towards freedom
i found i had to name my chains...
and looking closely, found they were
all of my making... they carried
my name... they even smelled
like me...

on the second step towards freedom
i took ownership of the prison
that i'd created for myself....

on the third step, i took out my knife,
and killed the man in the mirror.

on the fourth step i let go
of everything i thought i had to have,
took a deep breath, spread my wings,
and flew naked into the night!

Eric Cockrell

Still Drunk With Sleep

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i woke up
with your hand
...on my longing...

from some distant sphere.
pulsing, throbbing, hoping,
till
...my
....heart
.....broke,

and fell
....like
.....morning
.....dew,

on your eyelids,
..still drunk with sleep!

Eric Cockrell

Still Tugs (At The Leash)

i rose from the grave,
and brushed the dirt from my eyes.
i shook the chill silence
from my bones,
and walked through the last door.
i stood on your porch
for the longest time not speaking,
watching the wind blow the curtains,
listening to the creaking of the boards.
we are no more than the last step,
no less than every mile.
your reports of my death
fall on deaf ears...
i can still taste the sweat of god,
can still feel the murmur and the quake.
and when i lie down,
i dont want to be alone!
you can fill the empty grave
with memories and cold tears,
this dog still tugs at the leash!

Eric Cockrell

Stillness Wrapped, Unwrapped!

stillness wrapped...

layers and layers of sound,
sound defined by color, sweat,
stink, breath, and desire...

i walk the great plains of night,
the hunter, and the hunted.
i kneel in the shadow of a star,
giving praise to the Great Mother!

i am wings of bat,
the eyes of the great owl.
i am wolf urine on the grasses.
i am bark and bay and howl.

i am the flute of the whipporwill,
the shallow breathing of the mountain aroused.
the small black boy in Mississippi past,
staring hard at the walls of angry cant.

i am the political prisoner,
the religious heretic.
i am the murderer repentent,
the one who kills him.

i am the quiet drunk
alone at the corner table.
the book hidden in in coat
that cant stop the bullet.

i am the old woman hungry
for a lovers touch...
i am the touch, the memory,
the coming and breaking.

i am the prodigal, the refugee,
the starving girl who gives
her last piece of bread

to her younger brother.

i am the stray dog, the abandoned house,
the fire, and the homeless man who died.
i am the grave, the gravedigger,
the preacher, and the epitaph....

i am nothing now....
but stillness unwarpped by time...
sound, color, sweat, stink,
breath, and desire....

ashes, and unplowed earth!

Eric Cockrell

Stirred By The Wind!

that five and dime perfume,
somewhere between...
a flower garden after the rain,
and the front seat of an old car
on a moonlit night!
making love in the dirt,
between rows of green beans,
hot July sun,
bodies glistening with sweat.
slow dancing in a laundromat,
carrying buckets of water for a bath.
crawling out your bedroom window,
just before dawn!
long greying hair glistening
in a sun shadowed room,
the silence, and the twinkle,
the ashes stirred by the wind!

Eric Cockrell

Stolen By The Lie

chained down, spread-eagled,
to the floor of a van....
being taken back to the lie...

that, waving flags, kills babies
not yet born to mothers
without faces or names...

subdue and enslave
in the name of holy freedom...
only held by those

not of color....
marching to the M16 beat
of tyranny driven by oil....

no flags burning?
perhaps they should...
wrapped on the bodies

of souls stolen by the lie!

Eric Cockrell

Stolen Wrapping Paper

stolen wrapping paper,
covering boxes reused,
worn and tattered....

on lonesome street corners,
cigarettes crushed beneath
well known strangers feet....

lights flash, windows empty,
horns blow, motors running....
no direction home!

Eric Cockrell

Stone Riddles (Buddha)

buddha,
stone beneath
the moss.

compassion,
eyes knowing
the self.

self,
illusion, force,
nut's taste!

bodhissatva,
man finally
becoming human.

bodhissatva,
man finally
becoming god.

god,
box cant
hold fire!

god,
fire, match,
twigs, ashes.

peacemaker,
family found
first inside.

buddha,
wind's beginning,
beginning's end!

suffering,
soul's cry
for search.

path,
no map,
no destination.

race,
color cant
change blood!

reaching,
for you,
breaking windows!

Eric Cockrell

Stone Riddles (Carnivore)

carnivore...
the heart
consumes itself!

revenge...
suicide of
the soul.

bridge...
my body,
your body.

edge...
hard line
we walk!

smoke...
burning leaves,
body time.

need...
i feel
to touch!

picture...
i just
cant taste!

coming...
body waves,
lapping shore.

poetry...
fingers undoing
forbidden buttons.

anguish...
words burning,
your doorstep.

shout...
my heart,
yours deaf!

break...
distance down
by truth.

lover...
shells broken,
eggs running.

Eric Cockrell

Stone Riddles (Continued)

tears,
words nailed,
forbidden walls.

prayer,
the hand
that dares.

forgiveness,
the act,
being God!

nuclear,
mankinds defiance
of infinity!

evolution,
spring, summer,
autumn, winter...

old,
feet worn,
still walking!

apocalypse,
redemption from,
redemption to...

tomorrow,
bullet fired,
too late!

blood,
the kiss
you've forgotten!

truth,
deeper than,
words spoken.

farewell,
this life
burnt down!

Eric Cockrell

Stone Riddles (For Ahmed Khaled)

question...
fire consumes,
but gives...

money...
buys possessions,
owns you...

love...
heart broken,
living pieces.

war...
impotent men
waving swords!

death,
body given,
spirit taken.

passion,
rain falling,
drops whisper!

anger,
fear frustrated,
turning inwards.

hunger,
empty bowl,
empty soul!

lover,
hears, feels,
respects, touches.

God,
human faces,
dawn's body!

Eric Cockrell

Stop Banging The Drums Of War

stop banging the drums
of war!

war
is
murder,
disguised
under
the shield
of self-agrandizing
political agendas...

war defies morality!

war
never
brings
peace!

stop banging the drums
of war!

Eric Cockrell

Stop Funding (The Greed)

stop funding the greed!
failure to produce tax returns,
failure to pay taxes,
mistresses, deals done
behind closed doors,
votes bought and sold...

lies upon lies upon lies.
you have to be wealthy to lead?
you cant stand on your own works,
you have to stab someone else
in the back?
none of you have a clue...

what real life is like!
when a system becomes this corrupt,
you have to take it down to the core!
what you cant fix you destroy,
and start again!
stop trying to sell us freedom,
we choose to be free!

stop funding the greed!

Eric Cockrell

Stop Sign

stop sign...
right in front of your heart.
blood red,
letters in black.
scars heal slowly,
sometimes it takes lifetimes.
even the morning sun
takes a while to melt the frost.
we are what we risk,
or nothing at all.
wrapped up inside the shell,
only echoes can touch.
pilgrim waiting,
for the traffic to clear.
stop sign,
that only you can remove!

Eric Cockrell

Stop The Bombing

stop the bombing...
just stop the bombing!
murder is murder!
violence never brings peace.

there is no 'God'
who ever justified
one group of people
killing everyone
that is different.

no one people are superior...
hell, no one is superior
to anyone else...
nobody ever has the right
to own anybody!

quit stacking bodies
in the ditches...
stop digging the ditches!

stop the bombing!

Eric Cockrell

Stop The Killing!

he killed Trayvon
with a bullet to the chest.
stone cold murder!
much as we've killed...
Vietnamese children,
South American children,
the children of Iraq,
and Afghanistan...
Japanese children,
Native American children,
and probably next
the children of Iran!
as Dylan mocks:
'with god on our side'...
whose god?
what type of morality
justifies killing children?
we might just as well
be killing our own children!
and in a sense we are!
Trayvon demands justice...
so do the ghosts of all the children...
their faces ingrained in the curse
on our souls, on our land!
stop the killing!

Eric Cockrell

Stop The Madness!

Iran...

the next step
down a path ordained
by our own failures..

stop the madness!
while we stii can.

Eric Cockrell

Stop!

stop!
look! and listen!
just for one moment....

turn and look at the faces
of all those around you.
can you see the need?

the desire? the hurt?
can you feel the loneliness?
hearts beating... just like yours!

listen to the earth cry out!
to the dirge of the rivers.
to the sad farewell of the trees,

the mountains... the birds,
the wolves, the fishes.
a part of you dying!

and that low lonesome sound....
can it be the voice of God
singing that song which

has your name?

Eric Cockrell

Stories Never Written

he leaves behind
..a stack of

young
...pregnant
.....girls
.....having
.....babies....

mere echoes of
his unconscious self,
crying out his name....

against the rage
that lingers where
his heart should be....

feeding the hunger
that
..devours
.....him
.....from
.....within!

books unopened,
stories never written!

Eric Cockrell

Storm

the old man stirs the fire,
finding eternity in the ashes...
an unknown breeze ruffles the curtains,
as fire enters through the window.

love is a storm, and the aftermath.
stillness, and life in disarray.
so seldom we touch the lightning,
and seldom we kiss the thunder.

and only if we're very lucky,
can we reach and touch a falling star...
feel the intimate warmth of its passing,
knowing that nothing will ever be the same!

Eric Cockrell

Storm Without Name!

morals and convictions
battered by need and despair,
turn to hard hungry action,
feeding mouths with faces!

the man whipped hard
by profit's demands,
turns on the oppressor,
with nothing to lose!

the word justice ne'er spoken,
the anger of the poor,
turns men into wolves,
that will be fed!

the price of survival narrowed,
to the sudden swift move,
so long in coming...
the storm without name!

Eric Cockrell

Stranger

Who is this stranger...
Sleeping in my bed?
Wearing my dirty jeans?
Tying my shoes?

Whose face in my mirror?
Who's eating my toast?
Who's reading my book?
Who's sweeping my floors?

Whose lips on my prayers?
Who's talking? Who hears?
Whose eyes and whose thoughts?
Whose footsteps? Whose fears?

Whose hands and whose back?
Whose growl and whose scent?
Whose heart in the ashtray?
Whose name on the stone?

Eric Cockrell

Stranger Between Us

the stranger between us
is neither you, nor me;
but some part of each

left undiscovered, after
this journey of a thousand miles.
a world hidden by shadow,

that turns on its own axis,
and cries out for deliverance
in an empty room.

the stranger between us,
a wall made of wings
that never found flight,

that never breathed air.
the stranger between us
is the pathway to tomorrow

in a world that ended today!

Eric Cockrell

Stranger In The Mirror

is it so easy
to practice hate?
so easy to turn
your face and walk away?
so easy to close your eyes
when someone is hurting?
so easy to take what you can
irregardless of anyone else?

so easy to kill?
to destroy?
to steal?
to lash out?
to run when you could stand?

what are you afraid of?
and why?
what are you running from?

the stranger in the mirror!

Eric Cockrell

Strangers

suddenly brushing against you,
after years and lifetimes...
i realized we are strangers,
drawn by an intimate flame.
your soul smells like my socks,
and yet my voice falls empty...
unnamed raindrops,
clinging to unspoken grass!

Eric Cockrell

Straw, Or Sky?

is a sparrow's nest
made of straw,
or made of sky?

do we come from the womb?
or return to it?

do we plow the earth?
or does it plow us?
where will we be at harvest?

do we spend all of our lives
trying to go back
to what we knew as a child?

are we then mouth,
nipple,
or the lonely phallus

of a forgotten god?
the empty hand,
or the sound of wings...

testify!

Eric Cockrell

Stray Dogs Lapping

stray dogs lapping
at the bloody tracks
the homeless leave in the snow.

burnt out Marlboro fingers
shaking with the cold...
small children's big eyes screaming
with silent stinking fear!

and the halls and the walls
of the traders vibrate with smoke...
nothing gained, nothing lost,
in the land of nothing....

my grandmother's Bible lays by
the stove that was never empty...
my father sits and stares at the walls,
listening for the echo of....

my mother's voice....

and all the things we believed in
are lost,
forgotten....

stray dogs lapping
at the bloody tracks
the homeless leave in the snow...

Eric Cockrell

Strike Me (And Be Done)

if i am a bridge,
i need to feel your feet
on my back...
if i am a walking stick,
keep me with you
on your journey.
if i am a blanket,
cover yourself against
the cold night...
if i am a bowl, a spoon,
the soup, and the taste...
fill your empty stomach!
if i am dead branches,
gather me for the fire.
if i am a match,
strike me, and be done.

Eric Cockrell

Strip Me Bare

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strip me bare
of all the things
that stand between

me and myself!
of all the fears
that stand between

me and you!
of the weight of all
that i have done,

replace it with the freedom
of all that i've given....
take away the wants

that have impeded my desire...
give me back the purity
that doesnt have to be defined....

allow me questions
that need not be answered....
allow me to walk

following my own footsteps....
strip me bare...
so i can find my way home!

Eric Cockrell

Strong Women!

strong women...
hips that move oceans,
eyes that drink darkness.
hands that weave stars
from thoughts fine as silk.
lips swollen with storm,
tongues that crack icecaps.
the lioness roars,
and monkeys shudder.
volcanoes erupting,
storms tear off the roof.
soul emanates
from fresh cut trees.
hair sweeping the pillows,
nails digging into infinity.
and the soft gentle touch,
that restores sight,
and walks on water...
the scent of creation,
the hunger that rocks!

Eric Cockrell

Sudden Glimpse!

what if you woke up,
and realized,
that the old, foul smelling,
dirty clothes, unshaven
wino in the parking lot,
trying to bum a couple bucks...

was God?

how would that change
the way you look at things?

well... He is!

Eric Cockrell

Sudden Sureness!

the bullets
in your hands
are the jobs,

houses, and families,
lost to the mouth
that devours....

the dreams burning
like trash on the side
of the road....

the fields empty, turning brown.
cities of ghosts,
empty buildings to streets,

streets that kill with sudden sureness,
leaving no trace,
and no memories!

Eric Cockrell

Suicide

'i cant do this anymore.'
he shakes his head to clear
the cobwebs.
staring blindly around the kitchen,
nothing seemed real,
nothing made sense.

late notices, disconnection notices,
eviction notice walls of paper
falling in.

children fighting over nothing,
or something, what the hell!
woman staring blankly at the tv.
she hadnt seen him in years.

invisible, untouchable, alone.
alone till it stank,
like dried vomit in the heat.

he couldnt remember, couldnt even
remember what or why or when.
and the hands on the clock
thundered and crawled.

he walked out the door
into the yard, staring at
the night sky, and winced.

putting the gun to his head
with one move he pulled
the trigger.

and a lone tree fell
in the darkness.

Eric Cockrell

Suicide (Distance)

the long slow breath
of your indifferent stare...
miles away, across the room.
your words ring hollow,
and your face disappears
in the gloved hand
that dares not touch...
i planted flowers by your grave,
but i fear the birds
have eaten the last seeds...

i die on your cross
in a land you dare not go to...
behind a door
you choose not to open!

Eric Cockrell

Sunday Morning Redemption

Sunday morning redemption...
black coffee and cigarettes,
the silence that only Sunday brings.
the week behind, jumbled and lost.

sifting through the news,
what needs attention?
what cant be helped?
where do we turn the wheel

and place the blade?
whose faces, whose names?
an invitation to think,
and ghosts that walk beside.

the righteous shave and shower,
putting on their best.
somewhere a street bum asks
for a coupla dollars,

trying to panhandle breakfast.
cleaning the marker by the grave,
and talking to no one seen...
an empty feeling in my bones,

that i just cant seem to shake.
sunlight and chill, deep silence;
i can almost trace your features
with hands that tremble, and cough.

Eric Cockrell

Survival By Instinct!

police sirens wail,
echoing off empty buildings,
down empty streets...
streets marked by angry blood.
from mouth to fist,
feet never stop moving...
going nowhere,
determined and furious.
the crush of bones
beneath pipe on pavement...
the taste of flesh,
charred and stale.
cities become graveyards,
marker by marker.
no time for names,
only the strong!
and hunger becomes anger
of the darkest kind.
do it for a couple dollars,
and a gallon of gas.
faces contorted,
demons or worse!
survival by instinct,
so close you can smell it!

Eric Cockrell

Swallows

she holds her baby close,
against the cold wind,
their breath together,

one fog.

shaken and driven
by the demons that had her,
she clings to her love,

alone.

a child with a child,
wrong address, wrong number,
the dark night sighs,

and swallows!

Eric Cockrell

Swallows Up The Night

the lying tongue
betrays the hunger,
and walks into darkness
as the fire grows dim.
the tree cut in its prime,
and left to rot through the seasons...
the small boat unmanned,
is lost on the seas.
the knife that cut granite
lies on the mantle in shadow,
the fingerprints on the handle
too long unnamed...
the door swung open,
but no one enters...
the sound of the gnawing
swallows up the night!

Eric Cockrell

Swallows...

the poet sets ablaze,
every secret portent of living,
to warm strangers lost in the night
of snowbound search...
and so opens a door,
that heretofore had been locked.
allowing swallows to enter,
the kingdom of the soul!

Eric Cockrell

Swollen (Chapter Two)

she drove across town,
past the empty warehouses,
to a quiet neighborhood down
on the poor side.
she helped him into the house,
past the foreclosure notice
on the door. there were no
lights, and it was cold.
in the little room at the back
of the house she lit a candle.
she helped him to a chair.
he heard a rustling in the corner.
she walked over and picked the baby
up and held him close.
he could see the blood crusting
on her lips in the half light,
the bruises under her eyes.
'mister, i have to feed the baby,
i dont have anything to offer you...'

they made small talk as she fed the
baby. she'd lost her job, and they'd
been evicted from her apartment. she
had no family, and nowhere to go for help.
the baby's daddy was in prison.
she was an ex-addict. had been straight
since before she was pregnant. lately,
she'd turned a couple tricks for food money.
she hoped no one knew they were staying here.
but it was just a matter of time...

Eric Cockrell

Swollen (Final Chapter)

they talked through the night
as the candle burned down, exchanging
the stories of their lives.
then finally, they just sat in the stillness,
listening to the walls of the old house
breathe.
he thought about his life, the work, the
family, the love... all gone.

she whispered, 'be still, they're coming...'
the lights of the cruiser inched up the
street. stopping, they shone a light into
the old house, like fingers probing.
they sat motionless, afraid to move..
finally, they moved on.
'they'll be back, someone's called...' she
began to cry.

he sat up and dug in his pocket. pulling
out a wadded up old black and white photo,
he straightened it out, taking out a fifty
dollar bill.
'i want you to have it... when they go to chasing
me, take the baby, and run...'
before she could say anything, he was up and
out the door.

he crouched in the bushes at the end of the drive.
when he saw the cruiser coming, he stood up and
let out a whoop. he took off running as fast as he
could go, trying to put distance between them and
the old house
when they finally cornered him, one street over, he
put up a struggle. as they beat him to the ground
with their batons, he imagined he could see the lights
of a car going down the street. it was the last thing
he ever remembered!

Swollen....

he staggered a little
as he walked against the cold.
he was an old man, his hair long,
his beard unkept.
his clothes were ragged, his coat torn.

at the head of the alley,
they had the young girl's car
blocked in. she was out of the
car and trying to fight them
off.
one of the thugs slapped her.
the old man heard her cry for
help as she fell.
picking up an empty bottle,
he lunged into the fray, swinging
wildly and making animal sounds.
he caught one of the boys on the
side of the head as the bottle
shattered.
pulling his knife from his pocket,
he stabbed the second one just as he
caught a blow to the face.
he turned in a bloody rage as the third
boy ran.

wobbled, he heard the girl. 'c'mon, get
in with me... we've got to go! '
he heard the sound of the sirens as he
fell into the seat...

Eric Cockrell

Tainted Water!

snowfall...

words spoken without talking.
history written on drawn faces.
eyes that speak the language
of hunger, ears that feel,
feet that find their way!

we have long been
a people lost in search,
buying religious tokens,
spreading political balm.
we've lost the gift
of understanding silence...
we rattle like bones
in need of flesh!

snowfall...

stillness bridges the moment.
face to face with
light and shadow...
and the forever taste of blood,
blood floating on tainted water!

Eric Cockrell

Take Responsibility

it's time for the
evangelical preachers
to stop shouting:

'God's casting His judgement
upon the earth! '

God's not doing this!
we are!

take responsibility for
your own actions!

Eric Cockrell

Take This Cup

'take this cup from me,
if it be thy will...'
all of human history vomited
with the pounding of the nails.
sheer agony, heart exposed,
the final will and testament.
the gospel of unbridled compassion,
that the ignorant would wave like swords.
every footprint on the dusty path
that led to the holy city...
contained the face of every child
that time would sacrifice to greed.
Jesus, and mortal hunger,
are but bridge, and markings on the way.
the road that leads to god,
begins and ends in the heart,
and the body given!

Eric Cockrell

Take, Take, Take!

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vomit, crying,
gut wrenching,
slap in the face....

America's indifferent hunger
swallows it's own poor,
drowning in their jobless stupor....

take, take, take!
now nothing left
but the crumbs of greed,

falling from the chins
of the unsuspecting;
who blindly followed,

in the name of God,
wearing patriotic boots....
souls made of the flesh

colored by forgotten need!

(inspired by Terence Craddock)

Eric Cockrell

Taking The Time To Care!

that old man
that i spent an hour with
the other day...

just talking, and listening
to his problems...
came back and thanked me,

a second time, for just
taking the time to care...
sometimes the best prayer

we can ever pray
is just that... taking the time
to care!

Eric Cockrell

Talking.... (Who Listens?)

even the silence of the night talks,
small children talk in their dreams;
old people talk staring out windows...
trees talk shedding leaves,
empty buildings talk to ghosts;
dead bones talk to the wind...
the wind talks those who mourn.
the hungry talk to their oppressors,
the prisoner talks to the walls.
the desperate talk to the noose,
lovers talk with simple touch.
soldiers talk to their fears,
the unborn talk to our decisions.
the moon talks to the night,
and the night talks to the dawn.
the soul of man talks,
and calls it god.
the conscience talks to the heart.
death talks to the living....
who listens?
who really hears?

Eric Cockrell

Tao (Human Heart)

the Tao of the human heart
never tried to buy anything,
to own anything, or anyone,
or to change anyone!

the Tao of the human heart,
is understanding, and acceptance.
you could call it love!

Eric Cockrell

Tao (Social Activism)

the Tao of social activism,
found in the newborn baby's cry.
in the hands that plow the earth,
that build, shape, and mold.
in the colors of the prism,
dividing light stream by stream.
in the raw and beating heart,
and the red blood pulsing.
in the day that follows darkness
without thought or plan.
in the breath inhaled and exhaled,
in the hand that fits in mine!

Eric Cockrell

Tarnished Blade!

the tarnished blade,
lifted by the hand bruised
and bloodied by the night...

eyes that have seen,
the hard and the real,
no excuses, no regrets!

the man that stands,
naked to the world,
crying out in defiance...

carries the weighted path
of the choices he's made...
walking, ever forward...

to meet the fray!

Eric Cockrell

Taste The Wonder....

she stands down in front of the mission,
smoking borrowed cigarettes,
grey thin soul you can see through.
chapters written in faded jeans,
and shoes too worn for footprints.
a mother, a daughter, a sister, a lover,
somebody's somebody, nobody's home.
bloomed out of season to a different beat,
in a garden of stone in the alley.

they say beauty walks these homeless streets,
perfumed by soup kitchen longing.
while babies bear babies and numbers are given,
she writes her name on dust covered windows.
as you and i pass with hurried thought,
never feeling what she already knows.
and graves take bodies as if by chance,
as rats gather to sing her praises.
how dare we speak or even dream?
for only she can taste the wonder!

Eric Cockrell

Tastes

i love the way
your memory tastes
on the tired lips

of my doing, saying,
thinking, and living.

leaving parts of
our loving
like tiny grains
of sand

on the beach
of destiny!

Eric Cockrell

Tastes (Dreaming)

i went for years without dreaming,
or at least so i thought.
i wake up with tastes,
so simple that i'd forgotten.
the whisper of the rain,
weaves a web around my soul.
and there are voices in the shadows,
shadows that build small fires.
perhaps prayer is a form of memory,
a language we no longer understand.
and the body, a cage, or just a shell,
for a bird with broken wings!
then love, the body plowed,
the spirit bursts in bloom.
i taste like grapes,
too long fermented...
you taste like ashes,
and me!

Eric Cockrell

Tea Party

the Tea Party,
modern day Pharisees,
waving flags, and

driving SUV's....
draining the color
from the face of humanity....

in the name of a
lilly white God,
with a bank account...

and every step mortgaged
on the path to success!
crucify the poor...

draw a crowd, charge admission!

Eric Cockrell

Tearing Down The Wall!

</>

tearing down the wall,
with hammers ablaze,
the wall that stood between

today and tomorrow....
crumbling down to dust,
hatreds and prejudices,

greed and apathy,
pride and ego.....
the wall that divided

humanity from the human,
the hungry from a meal,
the slave from his freedom....

the homeless from shelter,
the sick from the cure...
the child from his family,

and hope from despair....
tearing down the wall,
with hammers ablaze....

eyes set on the goal!

Eric Cockrell

Tears That Jesus Shed

get your degree in prison,
judgemental Christians,
convict you of the crime.

because your color's different,
you came from the tenements,
you're just not their kind.

or hang you from the rafters,
happy ever after,
you dont fit the mold.

sexual confusion,
forbidden communions,
love that you cant hold.

stamp the numbers on your head.
you're just one of the living dead....
one of the tears that Jesus shed....
one of the tears that Jesus shed!

Eric Cockrell

Tears That Jesus Shed # 2

roaches run across the floors,
bars on windows, locked doors,
walls trembling with hungry fear.

tv's in a bare room,
gotta come down soon,
or go find the cure.

baby's crying hungry,
you aint got the money,
there's bruises on your face.

steal a car, rob a store,
got nothing left to live for,
disappear without a trace.

stamp the numbers on your head.
you're just one of the living dead.
one of the tears that Jesus shed....
one of the tears that Jesus shed!

Eric Cockrell

Tears That Jesus Shed # 3

living in broke down cars,
your face as hard as your scars,
waiting for tomorrow that wont come.

wash your clothes in dirty sinks,
your hands bruised, your hunger stinks,
when they come you wont run.

or sleeping in the alleyways,
too damn tired to care or pray,
waiting to stand in line.

bad dope and broken glass,
forget you ever had a past,
trade forever for a dime.

stamp the numbers on your head.
you're just one of the living dead.
one of the tears that Jesus shed....
one of the tears that Jesus shed!

Eric Cockrell

Tears You Dont Have Time For

the bruised face
with chaptered eyes,
you change the baby....

coffee, no breakfast.
pick up the bottles,
empty the ashtrays....

brush your hair,
try to hide
the telling color....

and off to work.
9.50 an hour,
amid the whispers....

to you, love is a battlefield,
a baby's cry, ... and tears
you dont have time for.

Eric Cockrell

Tell Me You'Re Near!

i close my eyes,
waiting for the hand inside mine...
for the smell that is faith,
in the breath i breathe.
for the kiss that gives,
with a sparrow's intentions.
for the heartbeat in chorus,
for soft fingers to close my eyes....
waiting.... as the clock grows dim...
can you feel me now?
tell me you're near!

Eric Cockrell

Temple Of The Self

dead people, broken people,
everywhere you look.
mouths moving, cant talk,
empty pages in a book.

eyes glazed, half dazed,
afraid of their shadows.
bought the lie, never questioned why,
cant move unless they follow.

and the sound of the heart
shakes the ground.
hunger burns, the sea churns,
and babies drown.

you pray to God,
but your prayers fall amid the furor.
in the temple of the self
bowing down to the mirror.

Eric Cockrell

Temple Of The Self # 2

oil wars, earthquakes,
famines rock the earth.
wore down, beat down,
give it all you're worth.

nuclear, eternity,
history ends with a blink.
steal your soul, steal your thoughts,
controlling what you think.

and the sound of the heart
shakes the ground.
hunger burns, the sea churns,
and babies drown.

you pray to God,
but your prayers fall amid the furor.
in the temple of the self,
bowing down to the mirror.

Eric Cockrell

Temple Of The Self # 3

computer technology,
living like machines.
skyscrapers, housing projects
swallow up the green.

spray your food, get a pill,
walking in a dream.
safe sex, forced abortions,
and nothing is obscene.

and the sound of the heart
shakes the ground.
hunger burns, the sea churns,
and babies drown.

you pray to God,
but your prayers fall amid the furor.
in the temple of the self,
bowing down to the mirror!

Eric Cockrell

Temple Of The Self # 4

manipulate, masturbate,
you need another hand.
man wants another woman,
woman needs a better man.

never happy, not content,
you steal your neighbor's wife.
trade your morals for desire,
at the cost of another's life.

and the sound of the heart
shakes the ground.
hunger burns, the sea churns,
and babies drown.

you pray to God,
but your prayers fall amid the furor.
in the temple of the self
bowing down to the mirror!

Eric Cockrell

Temple Of The Self # 5

guilty fingers pointing back
till they pierce our heart.
i could say i'm not like you,
but you'd shine a light into my dark!

we take without thinking
about the scars we leave behind.
make judgements without blinking,
the walking deaf and blind.

and the sound of the heart
shakes the ground.
hunger burns, the sea churns,
and babies drown.

you pray to God,
but your prayers fall amid the furor.
in the temple of the self,
bowing down to the mirror!

Eric Cockrell

Thanked The Buffalo

Native Americans thanked the buffalo,
thankless beings we never think;
of the souls that lay down
to become our sustenance...
of the lives that fulfill our need.
all that 'is' has a soul.
animals, plants, water, trees, and stones.
each has their own crucifixion,
their dreams, their destiny, and their gifts.

Eric Cockrell

Thankful

thankful....

for the breath i'm breathing,
for the sunlight pouring through
the window....

for the rain wet tossed earth.
for those who are protesting
corporate greed....
for poets everywhere,

in all walks of life,
hammers blazing, plows turning,
lovers wrapped into each other...
small children waking up loved....

for trees and mountains,
rivers and fields....
for all those working to
feed the hungry, house the homeless...

for all of my brothers and sisters,
needing, wanting, giving, struggling....
for free thought and free speech,
in spite of....

for all those i love...

Eric Cockrell

Thankful For....

softly...

words fall like rain

on a fresh dug grave...

and the mouth of the soul

prays in unknown tongues,

that the body inhabits.

stars, but the reflection,

of love dressed in hunger.

i wait beneath the willow,

thankful for the rain!

Eric Cockrell

That Bears Our Name

i can only taste scars tonight,
ashes, and blood turned to wine.
that old tree, cut and fallen,
the sound of wings long absent.
the web is empty,
and even the wind doesnt reply.
the garden mourns its time of passing,
and the plow is left alone.
sometimes we wake up homeless,
hungry without needing to eat.
to find that we are orphaned,
by the very heart that bears our name!

Eric Cockrell

That Beast

that beast within,
locked in the cage
of our unspoken desires;

that swallows darkness
with sexual intensity,
that drools in our dreams.

the face of all the hatreds
and prejudices we abhor....
that hungers for blood....

that stalks the hollow man,
who wears our bodies....
and sleeps with our women....

that beast, whose very existence
we deny, whose name we dare
not speak... diseased and stinking....

yet when we take his withered hand,
a change occurs, in him or us....
the leper's hand becomes eagles' wings...

the face of God fills the hollow man!

Eric Cockrell

That Came Too Close

a falling star
that
came
too
close....

and scorched
...the ground of
.....my being...

scarring my heart....

leaving a name
...written into
.....the darkness....

that
i
cannot
speak!

that drives me
to evolve
...and burst

into the womb
that named time,
and touched me...

naked!

Eric Cockrell

That Cant Speak!

racial melting pot,
night falls into day.
the faces of the poor,

the soles of a rich man's shoes.
detainees caught and tortured,
for freedom, or terror?

the man with the gun,
the baby in his mother's arms.
the house empty set ablaze,

photographic ashes on the floor.
soldiers sweep the building,
mother and child hide in a corner....

no letters from home,
no home for the innocents.
the river stopped with sewage,

dead fish in the water....
the hurt that cant speak,
my hand on your breast!

Eric Cockrell

That Feel Nothing

how many small children,
in this country and abroad,
will go to bed hungry tonite?

how many eyes
staring in the darkness...
never making a sound?

how much money wasted
on extravagance and greed...
how much more importance

placed on oil than food?
how many bombs dropped?
how many shares traded?

how many children
that no one sees?
and how many hearts

that feel nothing?

Eric Cockrell

That First Taste Of Wildness

</>

oh, that first taste of wildness,
danger electric, intoxicating,
walking on the edge,

flapping your arms
...as if you could fly!

the first kiss, the first warm bodied
lover naked in your arms,
the first taste of flesh....

the first whisper of secrets exchanged,
the first tear of parting.

the first battle fought, the first time
knocked down, struggling to your feet,
the first taste of blood,

the first questions why,
the first resolve to endure!

the first bareback ride,
the first motorcycle too fast,
the first spinning out of control....

the first laugh to hide your fear,
the first brush with mortality!

oh, that first taste of wildness,
that never leaves your mouth!

(inspired by a poem written by Shadow Girl)

Eric Cockrell

That Gnarled Old Tree

that gnarled old tree,
you thought was dead,
withstood the winter storms.
bare bent limbs reaching,
against odds to bud,
holding the sky
in a lovers embrace.
home to the sparrow,
the worm, and the squirrel...
shade to the weary,
a constant guide to the lost.
without name, without need,
rooted deep in the earth...

that gnarled old tree...
is me!

Eric Cockrell

That I Was Free!

you lied to me,
when you told me
that i was free...

i told you the truth
when i told you
that i was free!

you never held the key!

Eric Cockrell

That Jesus' Baby

'you know...
they buried that
Jesus' baby,
you know...
the one they found
in the dumpster,
down in the church cemetery
neath an unmarked stone...

the only ones
who came to mourn,
were three crows,
and two mongrel dogs...

the last prayer,
the falling rain! '

Eric Cockrell

That Knows

the face in the mirror,
grows darker with time...
deep and grainy,
weathered and beaten.
the trunk of an old tree,
where birds hide their nests,
and squirrels meet to plot
the downfall of man.
hollowed and sketched,
with dignity unspoken,
the scars of love and wars,
where insects breed and whisper.
and time itself,
bows in awe and respect,
for the tree that knows
itself to be a tree!

Eric Cockrell

That Knows Me Well

when leaves turn with the colors of passion,
and fall to the ground in timeless silence...
i both shout with joy, and fall to my knees weeping,
a brother to the tree.
when moonlight sifts through my window,
and the darkness undresses with need.
i smile becoming the prayer,
the journey and the destination!
in small things i find universes,
in the common what you call god.
for this infidel has a heart,
a heart that knows me well!

Eric Cockrell

That Lives Beyond

shotguns, and ice,
no panties, no ring.
burnt edge of a rose,
barefoot in jeans.

wrinkled, but fire
dancing in your eyes.
the smell of morning
before darkness dies.

the cling and the hold,
mouth, heart, and soul.
the river unleashed,
raging out of control.

the taste of the unnamed,
unseen, and untold.
stardust in my hands
too elusive to hold.

hymn of the night.
song of the day.
what fills empty,
and then goes away.

how precious the moment,
the gift, fleeting breath.
that lives beyond
my life and my death!

Eric Cockrell

That Look

a young man
walking down the street...
stopped to talk.

out of work roofer
for a coupla years...
doing odd jobs

when he can...
trying to raise
three small children

on about \$300 a month,
and food stamps...
he had that look,

you know, that look,
that gonna get shot
crawling in somebody's window...

trying to steal something
to keep them kids a going...
look...

you know that look!

Eric Cockrell

That Much More

your
....September
.....eyes,

turned
.....to
.....October
.....hurt,

fell on my
..... November
.....heart,

breaking the wall of self,
into a thousand egg shell pieces....

making me love you
.....that much more!

Eric Cockrell

That No One Walks...

we sleep in the place between chapters,
where even silence waits, as if in awe.
my body tingles, be it flesh or spirit,
i am not ready for the grave!

tis the knee of the lover,
the breath of god on my neck!
the candle burns down, and bows...
even the clock trembles with the smallest breeze,

and the pillow weeps perhaps knowing.
i am not the man i thought i knew,
but the fingers tracing the nipple...
when death tastes like passion spilled...

onto the floor that no one walks!

Eric Cockrell

That Old Man...

that old man...
wakes up every morning,
greeted death with a scowl.
shuffles barefoot to the bathroom,
pees in defiance of the day.

writes a letter to the President,
or one to the editor.
drinks a pot of black coffee,
puts on his hat and his coat.

tipping his hat to god,
takes his dog for a walk.
speaks little, never asks,
for nothing from no one.

sweeps the floor, washes his dishes,
then sits in his chair.
sometimes eats, often not,
and tries not to remember.

watching the hands on the clock,
and a sparrow out the window.
waits for night to come again,
he waits for the knock!

Eric Cockrell

That Old Man....

that old man who lives down the street,
who just shared a can of Alpo with his blind dog.
who owned the corner grocery when i was a kid,
who helped me out when i was short.
whose father passed it down to him,
whose son was killed in a car wreck.
whose daughter lives somewhere in California,
whose wife died ten years ago.
who was a deacon in the church for years,
who quit going when his wife died.
who put his life savings with 'trusted investors',
who lost it all when everything fell.
who the county's hounding for back taxes,
whose porch is falling down.
who prays that if there is a god...
he'll die and take the dog with him!

Eric Cockrell

That Old Woman.... (Sunset)

that old woman who walks naked
in the garden at night...
stepping barefoot on fallen petals,
leaving her footprints in the dew damp earth.
who feeds all the cats in the neighborhood,
and pours a little bourbon in her coffee.
who uses the same cup and plate everyday,
and likes to read just before dawn.
who smokes unfiltered Pall Mall's,
and keeps all her pictures turned down.
whose phone is always off the hook,
whose lips are always moving...
that old woman no one really knows,
and most just try to ignore.

but that old woman ran with the wind,
made love with intimate strangers.
smoked dope and marched in protest,
spent several nights in jail.
wrote poetry and read Jung,
lived in communes and on the road.
found god when she found herself,
and raised three children well.
made pottery and raised her own food,
and fed anyone that was hungry.
back in the day she brought the dawn,
and now her name is sunset!

Eric Cockrell

That Smoke!

you smell like skin,
rain damp fresh plowed earth.
the ball in the glove,
the hammer strikes the nail.

and i know about fire,
love cries and hot wetness.
the frenzied clutch of fingers,
the gasp and the tremor.

the old wood stove,
in the corner radiates,
you feed it logs,
split by time's axe.

till drunk with sleep,
both dreamless and forgotten.
you turn your back
to a final wisp of smoke...

i am that smoke!

Eric Cockrell

That Stands And Weeps...

i am the heart of stone,
the body of great mountains.
my feet speak their silent prayers,
my silence clothes their waiting.
i feel the passion, the beat of stone,
i am their embrace of both earth and sky.
you are the fire both hot and cool,
that defines the breath of their being.
i am the time only mountains know,
you the tick of the flesh born clock.
as eternity bows with humble need,
to know the intimacy that stands and weeps!

Eric Cockrell

That We Worship!

sometimes we return to the inner chapters,
behind doors too long closed.
and stand naked before our needs and emotions,
in the place that comes before words.
with honest lips tasting, with raw nostrils smelling,
with ears laid down to listen...
and the heart to believe.
it is in these rare moments that we worship!

Eric Cockrell

That Which We Grieve For

we killed a man
who proclaimed
his innocence
to the end

to pay for another
man's life taken
justice?
or murder?

yet that which
we grieve for
cannot restore
a life

did not the God
that we profess
speak forgiveness?

and who will pay
for the life taken
today?

Eric Cockrell

That Which We Judge

that which we judge
in others are usually
the reflections

of our own desires,
of the darkness within
that we deny!

be it murder...
have you never lashed
out in anger?

be it theft...
if you were hungry
without choice... would you?

be it lust....
dont tell me you've
never looked and wanted!

be it prejudice...
are you afraid of
anyone who's different?

be it lying....
are you denying
all of this?

be it greed...
who do you think
of first?

in the end...
we're only judging
ourselves!

Eric Cockrell

That's Enough For Me!

from a tiny acorn,
the oak tree grows.
what a man cant find,
a child will know.
only the heart
knows the secret
of where the wind blows...
and that's enough for me.

from drops of water,
the clouds are formed.
that go together,
to make the storm.
from the thunder
and the lightning,
the rainbow is born....
and that's enough for me.

the feeling that i have for you
is the simple song i sing.
your mind may not understand,
but your heart knows what i mean.

Eric Cockrell

That's Enough!

a small child,
sitting on the stoop,
cracking walnuts with a hammer.
i often feel this way
when i try to comprehend
god, infinity, and the meaning of life.
scientific thrusts
only leave more questions.
and philosophy turns
wine into water!
i can still taste the walnuts,
perhaps that's enough!

Eric Cockrell

The Scent Of Freedom....

i caught the scent of freedom,
in a simple gust of wind.
could taste both feathers and wings,
in the glint of the faraway sky.
could feel the bridge beneath my feet,
swaying with every step.
and i pledged my heart and mind
to walk and talk as one...
and facing my fears,
determined refused to stop.
for in each life there lies a reason,
in each night a lantern shines.
and oh nothing be so sweet,
as to be the hand that holds the light!
then to turn and find you're not alone,
with shouts and hands raised high.
both brothers and sisters join in,
and pledge the heart that wont be caged!

Eric Cockrell

The Action Of Pumping!

pumping the handle
of the old spicket,
bucket in hand...

i am the handle,
the water, and the spicket...
and two feet who,
without a name or regret,
silently do their job,
walking back up the hill!

all generated by the
action of pumping!

Eric Cockrell

The Address

we are but
a thousand
tiny deaths
poured into
the vase
that stands
on the table
by the window....

by the bed
in the room
that only
our most
powerful longings
can enter....

the address
known only
by love.

Eric Cockrell

The Anger Of Old Men...

who am i then?
is there nothing left?
the splintered leg
of the coffee table,
the doorknob broken,
the place on the edge of the yard
where the dog likes to piss?
do old men's bodies
crumble into the shadows
of all the things they've died for?
how many plates filled?
how many cups poured?
how many fires tended
against the night?
how many hands held?
how many dreams buried
beneath the tree that stands?
how many conversations
with pictures on the walls?

lonliness breathes,
with a stink familiar...
the tv drones like gnats
flung against the bulb...
the world's gone mad,
and everything i thought i knew,
is buried on the hill!
even the name on my shirt has faded,
coffee cups stacked in the sink.
the hands fumbling with buttons,
are both cold, and alone...
and the body on the bed,
is no body at all.
the vine grown into the gutters,
rain water falling on pavement cracked!

The Antichrist Lives...

the AntiChrist lives...
in the harsh decisions
made by your callous leaders.
in your turning of the head,
and closing of the eyes,
as injustice is piled upon injustice.
in the countries you invade,
in those you imprison without cause...
in those you let go hungry,
in the sick you do not care for.
in your prejudices and righteous judgements,
in the closed minds of your fundamentalist fervor.
in your closed doors, closed borders,
in your profit at all costs.
in your churches, in your courtrooms,
in your fear to touch the untouchables!
the AntiChrist lives...
in the well dressed faces of apathy
that haunt your mirrors!

Eric Cockrell

The Arrest

Jesus got arrested
down on fourth street
for taking in, and

associating with
whores, addicts, thieves,
and losers....

i didnt have the money
to go His bail...
so i sent Him a file,

a pack of Marlboro's,
and a tract from the
local Baptist Church....

complete with the address
for donations...

Eric Cockrell

The Basic Rights (Of All People)

can we not learn
from our brothers and sisters
in Egypt....

how hard it is to take
freedom back once they take hold?
can we not see the value,

the right to vote and be counted,
the right to speak and be heard,
even at the cost of lives?

can we not see
that this battle is worldwide?
to restore freedom and dignity

to the human race!
the basic rights of all people
to work, to eat, and have shelter....

to breathe, and be human,
are at stake!

Eric Cockrell

The Battle.... (We Have Fought)

the battle we have fought for so long,
as a 'free' society...
in the name of justice, equality, diversity,
responsibility, and freedom...
has reached the point of decision.
we either move forward no matter
what the cost...
believing the dream is worth the price...
or we crawl back into the cave
of self-fulfillment at the cost of all others.
prejudice and discrimination have gone from color
to religion to sex and sexual orientation,
and now to those enslaved by poverty.
we cannot turn our backs on each other...
we cannot allow the few to destroy the world.
we are responsible, we are a part of each other.
when one is hungry, we are all hungry.
when one family is homeless, we are all homeless.
when one person is a victim
of prejudice, hatred, and injustice...
we all are!
when one eats, all should eat.
when one has a chance to work,
all should have that chance...
when one child gets an education,
all should have that right.
this is the time, and this is the place...
it is now that we must choose!

Eric Cockrell

The Beat, The Heart

lover, soldier,
companion, fit.
fire, branches,
ocean, shell.
breast, thigh,
feet, dreams.
the key, the hand,
the wind, and the echo.
fury, stillness,
wound, medicine.
the tongue, the soul,
the beat, the heart.

Eric Cockrell

The Bells Of Freedom

do the bells of freedom ring
every time someone dies of starvation?
every time a child is abused,
every time a woman's left alone
to raise the kids...

every time a young boy hangs himself,
every time an addict steals his fix...
every time a boy is shot dead in the street,
every time a mother weeps....

every time a boy goes off to war,
comes home in a bodybag....
and no one knows why.....
every time a family is evicted,
with nowhere to go....

every time a factory gets shut down,
and the workers walk away with empty
lunchboxes and shattered dreams.....
every time a minister gets up to pray,
and the silent, grieving, walk out...

every time a young girl gets beaten
by a pimp in a back room....
every time a family farm is taken,
every time a tanker leaks oil...

every time a prisoner is executed
for something he didnt do....
every time a protestor gets arrested
for standing up to be counted...

do they ring? and are they
the chimes of freedom....
or the bells of passing....

saying their final farewell!

The Best Gospel

if you want
to be liberated,
get down in the ditch
and start digging
with your neighbor!

sometimes a shovel,
and a willing set of hands,
are the best gospel!

Eric Cockrell

The Best Poem

when you plant a seed
in the ground, and
water it, work it, weed it
till it grows... you've written

the best poem you'll ever write.

when you make a baby,
waiting and planning for birth;
and you raise this child to adulthood
with respect... you've written

the best poem you'll ever write.

when you live your life
working honestly, giving
all that you are and can be,
never holding back... you've written

the best poem you'll ever write.

when you go to death openly
with no regrets, not clinging
to dreams that were not real,
owning no one... you've written

the best poem you'll ever write.

Eric Cockrell

The Blame Game,2011

it's time for us
to quit blaming
acts of violence,
greed, and hatred...

on God!

we are what
we are doing,
what we are allowing....
and what we ignore.

the responsibility
lies 100 per cent
on humanity!

Eric Cockrell

The Boat Waits

the wolf runs night's paths
with hungry eyes...
magnificent in the moonlight,
panting with desire.
following the scent
from which he came...
he stops in the clearing,
and howls!

the hawk soars the skies,
as if a path.
over mountains and valleys,
in and out of clouds.
eyes intent, with furious purpose...
with wings that taste and touch,
intimate, yet scorched!

the wind blows, the waves come in,
and go out... the boat is empty!
leaves fall from the trees,
only god hears and knows.
and i walk the darkness,
part wolf, part hawk...
both wind and wave...
following the scent,
with desire and purpose!

the boat waits, the lantern is lit!

Eric Cockrell

The Body Of Struggle

we earn the body of struggle.
time beaten well worn pages
of a book no one cares to read...
anymore.
having learned to trust what we feel,
what we know that no one can take,
and to question everything else!
what we've lost merely feeds the fire,
what we've given at all costs remains.
and the truth we know is the pathway
of the heart... our feet bruised
by stones and hard travel... keep walking.
this body of struggle laid down... and the box
opens, letting the bird fly free.
we are the bird, the wings, and the
spirit... we leave the body for our
children!

from a song i wrote 43 years ago:
'travellin' on,
aint nobody gonna miss me when i'm gone.
my body is weary, but my will is strong...
reckon i'll be, travellin' on.'

Eric Cockrell

The Boots...

the boots of modern America,
are made of black skin, Native American skin,
poor white trash skin, migrant worker skin,
unemployed skin, homeless skin,
prisoner poverty street skin....
who will they walk on next?

Eric Cockrell

The Bowl And The Spoon

i hear the sound of humanity's voices,
the sound of suffering and need.
i smell the fear, and i feel the anger,
of those left alone, the victims of greed.
i feel the hate of the guns and the bombing,
the terror of women and children.
i cry the tears and shed blood with them,
i hear the prayers of the dead for the living.
i feel the hunger of children left starving,
i am the anger of the unemployed in line.
i breathe the despair of those left homeless,
i am the hope of those looking for a sign.
i am the body that somehow god needed,
i am the ears the lonely pray for.
i am the eyes that see through the heart,
the prisoner walking through the last door.
i hear the sound of the baby crying,
i feel the mother walking across the room.
i am the father praying for work,
i am the bowl and i am the spoon.

Eric Cockrell

The Box!

a slap in the face of ignorance,
a small fire on a cold, cold night.
the brush in the artist's hand,
the hand that empties the litter box.
the gun that jams,
the coffee that boils.
the prayer of a small child,
answered in his mother's arms.

all i ask, and ever want to be...
forgotten form, formless remembered,
the box that holds the gift!

Eric Cockrell

The Breath Of God....

the breath of god is not selective,
it blows on all in sacred gift.
all that lives a part of each and all,
one being cannot suffer without another hurting.
man's inhumanity to man,
the legacy of our guilt.
until we all take up the plow,
the field will not bring forth peace.
god didnt make religion, man did...
and out of his own fears and pride,
the rules of holiness.
but man, woman, animal, and plant
were created to live in equal and sacred manner!
the fear of man lashes out,
and kills to convert....
the love of man joins hands,
feeds the hungry, and houses the homeless.
from religion we created war,
and god wept in silence.
our egos grew, and we took, we always took...
now the very earth grieves for us.
until we become the breath of god,
blowing on all, responsible for all...
we are the hand of our own destruction,
and the caretakers of our personal hells!

Eric Cockrell

The Bridge

i stared across the bridge,
lantern held high...
searching the trees and
the shadows for a sign.

the surging river below
made my heart stamp its feet;
the wind blew, almost moaned,
the bridge groaned as it swayed.

taking off my boots,
i crossed barefooted and sure.
looking down, i could not see rocks,
but i knew they were there...

on the other side the damp dirt
felt good to my feet...
i followed the path down,
ever down... a wolf howled!

i came to a clearing,
made out the form of your hut...
dark and still, almost a womb.
i made my way to the door,

my trembling hand on the knob...
unlocked, the door opened.
staring around the darkened room,
nothing moved, only a lone candle

on the table beside the bed.
i could feel the stare
of your hungry eyes...
heard you whisper, 'come here! '

a thousand battles,
and journeys untold,
forgotten in the warmth
of your flesh...

new stars formed
in a limitless sky,
fell and shattered
as we loved!

the groan of the earth,
the moan of the wind,
the fury of storms unleashed.
holding back, holding back,

till there was no return...
dissolving into the fire
of your pulsing depths...
and all of life, finished!

with the morning light,
i found myself alone...
got up and dressed
with the ache and the taste...

as i left the hut,
i turned to see the owl...
set my chin, braced my mind,
and walked to face the coming snow!

Eric Cockrell

The Broom In My Hands

we walk the edge of suicidal silence,
sweeping shadows beneath curtains
with brooms made of straw.
while somewhere soupbones
boil in the pot,
and the sound of coffee making
startles children's trains on tiny tracks..
the heroin news grates against the mind,
and dogs wait in silent anticipation.
Jesus dies again, a matinee,
the Bill Of Rights stutters
neath a thin layer of dirt.
travelling shoe salesmen grope lady's legs,
and old men on park benches
peer over bifocals.
the woman ironing, in her bra and panties,
quietly curses, with trembling hands!
bare chested men split wood in the sun,
while boys tinker on cars with oily hearts.
the soldier returned home to no home,
hangs himself from the rafters.
a picture of his baby boy,
falls from his pockets.
crows gather on a wooden fence rail,
the young woman lights a crack pipe,
staring at naked walls.
while dead bodies march in lines that rhyme,
with buildings left empty,
and mailboxes spilling over.
the soft silk of the thigh,
and the lip turned up...
names whispered and lost,
small rooms speak of distance.
be it love, be it madness,
the clock falls from the wall.
and nothing feels real....
except the broom in my hands!

The Button We Fear

the nuclear threat,
most often unspoken,
looming in the shadows,
the smell and the stink.
the aggressive thrust
of men long impotent,
of men whose gods
cant be touched or seen.
the hand that snatches the bowl
from the starving child,
that signs the foreclosure notice
on a family of five...
flexes and balls up,
one finger extended,
the finger that rests
on the button we fear!

Eric Cockrell

The Children Of Cain

it has always been
inherently taught,
said without saying,
in this country,
(and i'm sure in others)
that killing someone
of a different nationality,
a different race, a different faith,
as an act of war,
is not murder...
but it is!

i'm probably not as passive
as i should be...
if someone breaks in your house,
and threatens you family,
i say fight back.
if someone tries to rob you,
fight back.
if someone rapes your wife,
or your daughters,
fight back!
but know every action
has a consequence!

if going to war is economically
profitable, if it allows you
to spread your form of government
by force, if you're doing it
in the name of your god....
it's murder!
and you dont have much of a god!

ask the Native Americans!
we've killed more of them
than Hitler killed Jews...
yet he was a demon,
and we are the land of the free?
c'mon now!

all people are people.
all that live are sacred!
and we, the children of Cain,
cannot lie to ourselves anymore!

Eric Cockrell

The Children Of Love...

sometimes it seems we travel
on long journeys as far away from
ourselves as we can....
before we can find the way
and the means to come home.
often, somewhere in the seasons
of our living, love is like that.
we become so numbed by the struggle
to merely exist, that we lose our
intimate connection....
we lose our sense of taste, of smell,
our very sense of touch...
and it is this loss, if we are lucky,
that redeems us, that strips us
and brings us back to the basic
instincts of our heart...
the storm comes, destroying
all the false images we've worshipped....
yet the rain washes our bodies,
the very bodies of our souls clean....
and only then, naked and vulnerable,
without any props... are we able again
to know love... to feel, to touch, to taste....
and again, through suffering, the candle is lit.

at our best, and our worst, naked...
we are the children of love!

Eric Cockrell

The Choice Is Yours

i cant take the gun
from your hand...
cant take your finger

from the trigger...
i cant cut down the rope
you've tied to the rafter....

i cant remove the darkness
you're clinging to with
all of your might....

the 'self' that's lying to you
stands in the way....
it seems easier to stay

in your cell... than
to break free and live....
but life is not what it seems!

you only have that which
you let go of.... only know
that which you reveal....

the choice is yours!
i stand here with a broom
waiting to sweep clean your cell....

with a prayer to take the empty nest
from the branches of your soul.
the choice is yours...

i can only walk beside you!

Eric Cockrell

The Circular Path

how many times have
civilizations risen,
only to fall?
pounding their chests,
'we are the only ones,
no one came before! '

how ignorant and arrogant
to actually believe...
and how sad,
the same mistakes,
over and over again.
when will we learn?

the first buds of spring
remember the snows of winter,
the leaves of autumn decayed,
the passionate harvest of summer...
why not we?
the path long, wraps in circles,

the ashes on which we step
smell faintly of us!

Eric Cockrell

The Code Of Rainfall

i live my life by the code of rainfall,
and sounds without faces in the night.
i believe in that which i can taste,
and listen to what i feel.
i walk in time with the wind,
without past or future destination.
i know well the language of silence,
and see with eyes accustomed to darkness.
things i know cant be defined by thought,
and my heart does not need words.
i have spent my time in waiting,
and now i face the storm.
what i stand before i've always been....
to some the grave,
to others a star!

Eric Cockrell

The Colors Of Human!

</></>
hands black as soot,
my feet are red....
my eyes are green,

my hair turned grey.
my soul is Asian,
my spirit Native American....

my hard working dedication,
.....Hispanic.....
my people come from Ireland,

and some from Africa....
anywhere where the persecuted,
.... cut and fled!

working in the fields,
the factories, and even the mines....
cutting wood, milking cows,

working for the man.
i am human!
and i'm damn tired

of being used!

Eric Cockrell

The Coming Election...

on the coming election...
i will say this once!
i voted for President Obama
the last time,
and will vote for him again.

for the simple reason...
no one of any conscience,
with any kind of humane platform,
is running against him!

for the working poor...
(and there is no middle class)
to vote Republican,
is like standing on the tracks
waiting for the train!

enough said!

Eric Cockrell

The Common Skins

the common skins
of history's want...
in pages forgotten,
on shelves forbidden.

beauty disrobes,
her long hair sketches,
the contours of longing,
as the tongue pants.

but tis only rain,
they deny with religious furor.
her breasts mere mountains,
her lips dormant volcanoes.

hell, even the stones know,
and tremble!
trees dance the mating dance,
and wild geese fly...

following the scent of the storm!

Eric Cockrell

The Cooking Pot!

tastes like....
rainwater on my tongue,
blood drawn from unclaimed bodies....

the wind lapping at my curtain,
the candle flickering in the dark.
gunpowder, and bourbon!

the baby's bloom opening,
rose petals 'neath my tongue.
pepper spray, and human rights....

the damp chill of the small cell.
the burning bush, the last refrain,
yesterday's nails long driven....

food scavanged from dumpsters,
the back seat on the bus....
the old woman dying on the floor!

life thrown together in the cooking pot,
left to simmer unattended....
shared in bowls made of flesh,

and dreams now long forgotten!

Eric Cockrell

The Cost Of Freedom

Syria...
violence in the streets...
peaceful protesters
marching for human rights,
equality, and change
being slaughtered
by their own government...

now here...
shadows of Kent State...
common people
pushed to the edge
in the battle for
survival, human dignity,
and hope for a future...

already abandoned
by our own government...

will it take being
killed to get their attention?
will it take dying
to give our children
a chance?

you say it cant happen here!
open your eyes, your ears,
your hearts...
it's already begun!

what is the cost of freedom?

Eric Cockrell

The Cost Will Be Great (For Dave)

riots,
city streets vomit;
angry, the earth erupts,
sick of it's sickness.
bodies flung against bodies
with a blinding rage...
the faceless demanding faces,
the nameless demanding names.

not knowing, not understanding,
peace, fullness, equality, freedom...
all begin within...
pushed in bloody blackened corners,
lashing out with survival teeth...
change will come,
but the cost will be great!

Eric Cockrell

The Courtroom Is Empty

the courtroom is empty,
the gavel untouched.
no hands on the book,
no jury of twelve.
(and the hands of the clock
have stopped!)

small children killed, tossed in the trash,
women abused, old people hungry, alone.
young girls sold into slavery
young boys sold into war
homeless ghosts walk the halls,
without hope in man or God.

and there's no sound, no feeling,
not even a breath of air
(and the hands of the clock
have stopped!)

an American tragedy,
or just human tragedy.
justice bought and sold,
afforded by just the few.
the wheels of Wall Street turn,
politicians barter with lives.
drinking the blood of the babies
that will never be born!

the takers keep taking,
and the honest man falls
to die nameless in the ditch,
covered by ashes and dust.

and there's no sound, no feeling,
not even a breath of air.
(the hands of the clock
have stopped!)

the courtroom is empty

Eric Cockrell

The Crash

what are you going to do
when you have to leave behind
your air conditioned offices
and your three martini lunches?

and you lose your mercedes,
and your mansion on the hill,
your escorts and your servants,
your cocaine, and american express?

are you going to scrub for bolgna
with the rest of us?
are you going to sleep
under the bridge, or in the alley?

gonna sell blood for a loaf of bread,
and a pint of wine?
gonna rob convenience stores?
beg for quarters?

are you going to sell your wives
and daughters?
gonna stand in the soup line
with your heads down and hands open?

or are you going to
jump out your windows...
kissing the pavement
of eternal greed?

Eric Cockrell

The Critic

with an impotent hand
and a limp pen
he scratches at the scabs
of the exposed soul...

having no soul
of his own...
to draw from.

no fire in the night
he sits 'neath a neon light
and vomits commands
to the frigid and lifeless...

without shadow, slowly
eaten from within...
ego, and dust!

Eric Cockrell

The Cross Of Jesus....

I carried the cross of Jesus,
stood inside the Nazi camps.
i fled with many at Hiroshima,
died again and again in the jungles
of napalm Vietnam...
i buried the scattered bones
of Native Americans,
slain by the Bible's swords.
i rotted in a Chinese prison,
where they tortured me with cattle prods.
i marched the famines of Africa,
weeping over the bodies of children.
marching the sands of Iraq,
the mountains of Afghanistan...
but there is more!

the broken down projects,
the trailer park cementaries.
the unemployed lines,
the soup lines,
the picket lines.
i was shot crossing the border,
no one ever knew my name.
i died in your underpaid fields,
buried nameless in your mines...
i lost my soul a thousand times,
on your heroin flesh bartered corners....

i carried the cross of Jesus...
and laid it down on your Senate floor!

Eric Cockrell

The Cross On Your Hill

tis the beat of sorrow
that undresses the body of god.
the wind driven by need
that blows out the candle.
and the darkness that holds suffering
that wraps around the desire...
tis my tongue nailed
to the cross on your hill.

i run with the wolves,
and swim with the whales.
i know the sound of the bullet striking,
and the echo of the fall.
i taste the empty of the cup
held by the grimy hand...
i've stood by the fires,
where lost souls shuffle and stomp.

i am heart and hand,
penis, and spirit.
i am the madness,
and the ear sliced off.
i want, i need,
i breathe with the earth.
i'll stand by your window
when the moonlight fails.

clouds, wind, and whispering spirits,
your lips, your eyes...
i cant escape!
and all the dreams
and the journeys,
are nothing more...
the wars have ended,
my love just begun!

Eric Cockrell

The Cry

the cry for justice,
for human rights,
for equality, for
human dignity...

has never been louder!

Somalia!

Tibet!

Syria!

Israel!

Libya!

Haiti!

Russia!

China!

the United States

the right to work,
to eat, to housing,
to medical care,
to freedom of speech,
to religious freedom.....

the cry for the truth!
for positive change!
this world's in turmoil....

a new day is coming
no matter the cost!

Eric Cockrell

The Cry...

i know what...
poverty smells like,
oppression feels like,
having my freedom taken
tastes like...

if what i write offends you,
open your eyes...
and walk down the street.
the sound you hear
is the cry...

of your brothers and sisters in need!

Eric Cockrell

The Cup Of Communion

that which we long for most...
the cup of communion!
naked souls sharing thoughts
on the bridge to eternity.
with all baggage left behind,
nothing left but feet and desire.
underneath the banner of doubt,
we find long awaited faith.
compadres walking side by side,
if just for a forever moment.
evolving and dissolving
into the grain of another.
lost children sharing lostness,
find home in a holy instant.
and leaving particles
of dust and self,
are strengthened for the journey.
candle wax, and human blood!

Eric Cockrell

The Damned Truth

i am absolutely enraged at the current political state of this country.
shutdown, no shutdown, last minute hysterics, cant pay our soldiers,
but the politicians damn sure gonna get paid!
this isnt a game, it's not a joke, it's not one hand trumps the other!
what we are dealing with here are the lives and well-being of the
American people... and they're playing chess, and using us as pawns!
we're involved in wars we have no business being involved in, that we
financed because we cant pay for them! we have allowed corporate
America to sell out our jobs for a higher profit margin.
we have raped our environment. we've sold our children into sexual
slavery. we've traded freedom for manipulation. we've allowed our
educational system to deteriorate.
we've sold out to sex and drugs and the 'big deal'. the American dream is now a
nightmare for most of us.
we've become a dishonest, greedy, bigoted, self-righteous, apathetic mess!
everybody wants to point fingers, nobody wants to take responsibility.
it begins at home, with the man or woman in the mirror. and then it comes down
to what we will allow to be done to us!
it is time to quit playing republicans and democrats. it's time to be the
American people again! time to be human! and anybody of whatever party that
tries to get in the way needs to be kicked out! ! !
i told someone this morning that i know Jefferson's rolling over in his grave.

we dont need more politicians, preachers, or wall street tycoons... we need the
people to rise up and be 'people' again... and now's the time!

Eric Cockrell

The Darkest Secrecy Of Night...

one who never thinks of suicide
has never been in love...
one who never dreams he's in prison,
has never been poor!
for me, i spend my time
with spiders and bats...
and i never close my eyes
when i'm sleeping!
god never painted the wheels,
on the wagon that hauls away souls.
perhaps those who are good,
never knew the value of sin.
if then i come again,
in whatever face, whatever shoes...
remember the scent of what you wanted,
in the darkest secrecy of night!

Eric Cockrell

The Darkness That Defines...

it is not the light
from the candle that
stirs your soul...
but the darkness
that defines the light!

Eric Cockrell

The Day After Greed

walking the greying streets,
between the broken down
and vacant buildings....
through the alleyways..

concrete graveyards...
the hint of smoke hangs
in the air.... the stain of soot,
the taste of death... lingers....

i closed my eyes and saw
the bodies... strewn in the street
like trash blown against a fence...
eyes wild, faces contorted, ...
death, and it's brothers and sisters...

storefronts dark and ominous,
gas pumps stand alone like angry
sores, oozing into the emptiness.
great black birds fly, casting shadows
that search for tiny particles of light....

stray dogs roam in packs,
hungry for flesh!
only the sound of the great
oil rigs pumping in the distance....
an old tattered flag blown
by a cold infidel wind!

Eric Cockrell

The Day After Tomorrow

his clothes smell like Tuesday
on a Friday afternoon;
he bums a smoke, a light,

and looks away.
the lines in his face, jaw set,
like a map to where

he cant quite remember.
he watches the smoke
curl up like infidel prayers

lost on a street corner,
to the lights and the noise.
dont look too close!

you might find your self
staring back at you
from the day after tomorrow!

Eric Cockrell

The Day America Died

i am the old farm house,
the iron skillet, and the well.
the mule and the plow,
and momma's family Bible.
i am the single shot.22,
squirrel dumplings,
and strawberry pie.
i am collard greens,
pintos, and cornbread.
i am the field plowed,
wood cut and stacked.
jars of green beans
stacked on the shelf.
i am the work hardened hand,
and the gentle touch.
i am the simple things,
that cant be bought.
i am generation after generation,
footstep after footstep.
the prayer of scrubbed faces,
and saturday night pickin'.
i am the day it all ended,
the day the bank came around...
the day America died!

Eric Cockrell

The Day, And The Coming Day!

we are the day,
and the coming day.
the cities painted with despair,
the houses built left abandoned.
the seeds we altered,
the trees we cut down.
the mountains we mined,
and the seas we defiled.
the peoples we left homeless,
left to die in poverty and hunger.
the ships we sent to the moon,
the smoke from the great factories.
the daughters we sold into slavery,
the sons we executed on profit's battlefields.
the lie, the drug, and the drug of the lie!
the temples we built
to gods that taught us to kill.
the prophets we killed with righteous indignation.
the bodies we left in our prisons of justice,
the flags we wore to defile our hearts.
we are the day,
and the coming day.
now skies have turned grey,
the air filled with our empty!

Eric Cockrell

The Dead Dont Cry

the dead dont cry,
they weep...
for the undone deeds
of the living...
for the work not finished,
the cup left half-empty,
the song that no one heard.

for the deaf ears,
and the blinded eyes.
for the callous heart,
the spirit left in chains.

for the house half finished,
and the home abandoned.
for the love left holding
the purse, and the scar!

for the holy child
born out of wedlock...
for the table left empty,
the chairs that long and pine.

for the touch that failed,
the quivering lip unseen.
for the pot left empty,
and the fire untended.

for the bodies walking
who have no face...
for the latched door,
and the candle unlit...

the dead dont cry,
they weep...
and the sound of their weeping
shakes the earth!

The Dead Silence Of The Heart

i dreamt of strawberry-rhubarb pie,
and fresh brewed black coffee...
long slow tender sensual sex,
lips hungry for mine.

the sound of rain in the night,
wrapping the earth in stillness.
walking in the frozen sunrise
with my old dog by my side.

climbing Hawksbill on a spring day,
looking down over the gorge in awe.
barefoot, planting a garden,
believing in the sun and the rain.

playing an old Gibson on the porch,
deep rich tones lost in the breeze.
the taste of good bourbon, and a smoke,
paying tribute to the sunset.

standing by the stone in a cementary,
talking without words, still heard.
writing poetry with a shovel,
and a borrowed pen...

flying with the hawk to eternity,
sprouting green leaves
on frozen branches... listening
for the sound of your voice...

in the dead silence of the heart.

Eric Cockrell

The Death Papers... (Part Four)

i name the bullet, the noose,
the needle, and the disease.
the failing heart,
the body bent and broken,
the moment that breath is taken...
for you have not killed me!

i name the war, the planes,
the bombs, and the guns.
the lying flags,
and oil tainted chants.
the strike, the stab,
the tearing of flesh...
for you have not killed me!

i name the empty plate,
the orphaned bed
by the endless road.
the goon squads of indifference.
the prison cell, the alleys burning...
for you have not killed me!

i name the love that ends,
the heart that's broken.
the tidal wave of loss,
and darkness without feeling.
the empty hand and the empty heart...
for you have not killed me!

i watch the body burnt
on despair's self engraved altar...
wondering...
'could that be me? '
and with laughing wings
reach for the sky...
that has no end, or name!

Eric Cockrell

The Death Papers.... (Part One)

perhaps, we then
are but a series of deaths,
tiny deaths, unclaimed sparks...
or one long death
in illiterate stages,
flesh scarred memories failing,
deeper and deeper in the grain,
the stink of rot, and becoming!
broken wings and stolen kisses,
lips scorched and fingers broken,
beyond names and naming,
beyond words and thinking...
till nothing is left,
but raw sound,
and the veins of the decayed leaf,
shouting silence, and redemption!

Eric Cockrell

The Death Papers.... (Part Three)

one single unidentified
dropp of water in a unnamed ocean...
reflecting both light and darkness,
driven by the tides to lap
at the shore of the unknown.
singular, but not seperate,
sustaining life without thought...
the slave of gravity's intensity.

do i dare stop to shout:
'i am the ocean, i am the tide! '
or is my voice the echo of voices,
merely primordial passion,
and infinite part?

weep not for me!
the casket is not my home.
it merely holds the tears
of your grasping!

Eric Cockrell

The Death Papers.... (Part Two)

i, the body
of earth and wind,
cry for the mountains,
the valleys, and rivers.
i am man,
the warrior naked,
muscled dark and lean.
with eyes borrowed from the hawk,
and hands that turn the ground.
i bear the feet of time determined,
the marks of the whip scar my back.
with hardened phallus,
and panting breath,
i follow the trail of the wolves.
i am woman,
the warrior naked,
long hair swept by the wind.
with eyes borrowed from the owl,
and hands skilled in healing.
i bear the feet of time determined,
the scar of the chains on my wrists.
breasts born with fire,
garden wet with hungry birth,
i am the trail the wolves follow!

and now,
i, the body
lay down my cross,
seed in the furrow,
sunlight waiting
for darkness's goodbye kiss.
for i, the body,
am earth and wind....
mountains, valleys,
and rivers cry for me!

Eric Cockrell

The Difference Between

the difference between
telling someone:
'i love you...'

and really loving them
lies in the willingness
to risk everything

you think you have
in order to give them
what they really need

whether it includes you,
or not!

Eric Cockrell

The Disciples Of Silence

the disciples of silence,
speak not with their mouths...
for their hands speak the language
of the heart,
and their feet that of the soul.
whose prayers are written by ears,
whose breath is always shared.
whose eyes are open windows,
whose god smells of human need.
whose actions be but forgiveness,
whose thoughts are not restrained.
the disciples of silence keep walking...
living in constant dialogue,
they have no need for words!

Eric Cockrell

The Disease

if we do not evolve as a society,
then our society dies...
we have become a plastic world.
addicted to the buying and the selling.
we feed the 'i' till we're sick...
we have become callous, indifferent,
victims of our own egos.
we use sex to sell, we follow the lie,
we turn our backs on those in need...
and the only time we feel anything
is when it happens to us.
we treat our environment with total disrespect,
we abuse animals, we treat other people
like numbers without names...
we play at religion, we hide from our selves...
and we wonder what happened!
we exist in total numbness,
forgetting what living feels like.
we have become the disease!

Eric Cockrell

The Disease....

homelessness, joblessness, and hunger are not statistics.
they are people, with real faces, real hearts, and
real bodies... made in the image of god.
has nothing to do with race, religion, language,
sexual orientation, or citizenship...
it has to do with basic need....
a dollar in the cup, a prayer, and a shaking of the
head will not do!
these people are part of your family.
bottom line, we are responsible... for each other,
for the state of the world, for need, for poverty...
and we are responsible for our own indifference!
we cannot begin to say we believe in god, any god...
that we are a moral and ethical people, that we believe
in justice and equality, and that we are human...
without addressing and eradicating these atrocities!
if we do not become the cure, then we are the disease!

Eric Cockrell

The Distance Between

the distance between
you and me...
is the distance between
our hearts and our souls.
the choice that we make
when we dont choose,
the most dangerous of all.
the difference between,
merely the wrapping
round the package.
the hands that open,
conscious and aware.
the distance between,
the pathway to hope...
only those who dare,
survive the fall!

Eric Cockrell

The Distance Between!

the distance between man and God
is in direct proportion to the distance
between heart and mind....
each leaf on a tree distinct and different,
but all belong to the tree!
the wind has many forms, but is always
the wind...
you speak to me of your God that lives
in holy writings and temples...
i met a stranger today, stopped to listen
as he talked... and knew there was God!

Eric Cockrell

The Door...

the door to communication
depends on honesty,
going both ways.
honesty depends on
knowing who you are,
accepting who you are,
and seeing yourself in others.
open the door!

Eric Cockrell

The Earth Weeps

the earth weeps
for its children,
lost in the darkness

of passion and greed.
turned away from the limitless skies
of their father.....

turned away from the breasts
of she who succored them....
burning the home they live in

for the sudden rush of fire!
breaking out the windows of hope,
eating food they cannot swallow.

wild hogs,
blindly, stupidly,
destroying everything

in their paths.....
the crumbs of their insatiable lust
hanging on their chins,

their eyes glazed, and empty....
no one home anymore!
the trees kneel with sorrow,

and the rivers cry for deliverance....
the earth weeps,
...and so do I!

Eric Cockrell

The Earth, Our Home

dissolving...
we lay down our bodies
etched in stone,

the night sky lit up
by shells exploding,
and falling stars...

time spent,
final payment in
sweat and blood...

packages wrapped in flesh,
without a name or a bow...
struck against the flint,

spark to spark,
dissolving in each other's mouths,
leaving the taste of smoke.

your heart, my heart,
no distance, no separation...
we crumble like fallen leaves

into the earth, our home!

Eric Cockrell

The Edge Of Beauty...

wherein lies the edge of beauty?
of true expression?
be there more truth
in a picture of fruit....
or a picture of the eyes
of a starving child?
be there more love
in an ancient picture of Jesus,
or the picture of an addict,
shaking on a stoop?
be there more reality
in numbed words carefully written,
or in the story of the evicted family,
penned in raw blood?
be there more beauty
in a picture of supposed angels,
or in a tasteful nude?
be there more freedom
in a picture of the revolution,
or in a photo of freedom's protesters,
being beaten by cops?
be there more justice
in the books you burned,
or in the ones you actually read?
be there more spirituality
in the religious head turned,
or in the sensual bathed in awe?
be there more god in the silent follower,
or in the one who dares to speak?

Eric Cockrell

The Evening Fire

what i value most
is the time given...
the touch, the pain,
the edge of the wheel.

the color of the wind,
the name of the rain.
the groan of mountains,
the call of the winding river.

the hands, the eyes,
the words beneath words.
the work, the sweat,
and the evening fire!

Eric Cockrell

The Evolution Of Revolution

i can still taste,
frozen moonlit blood night
dripping from my fangs,
can feel the earth writing pawstruck,
the cool damp loving grasses.
still shudder with the howl,
that opens and spills my soul,
my eyes alive and searching
for the hint of passion.

pour a glass of wine,
we'll speak softly
like civilized men and women...
talk of books, ideals,
the evolution of revolution,
and paint a portrait of god.

still the drums beat,
the wind calls with a lover's need.
the trees mumble with magnetic sweeps,
and the night boils like blood!

pour a glass of wine,
we'll speak softly
like civilized shells
lying empty on the beach.
longing for that old longing,
the evolution of revolution...
but we would be gods!

Eric Cockrell

The Face (Of Our Anger)

we rage...
lashing out in anger
at what we cant control,
what we cant seem to change,
at the loss we suffer,
at the helplessness we feel...

in bitterness looking
for a place to lay the blame.
fighting the shadows of our fears,
with the vengeance of our lostness...

afraid to open the door,
much less to walk through...
to find...
the face on the other side
of our anger,
is the same as...
the face in the mirror!

Eric Cockrell

The Faces (Are Real)

lower the flag,
and raise the bloody shirts
of the protestors

you beat with your
billy clubs....
the faces of freedom

and equality
.....are real!

Eric Cockrell

The Falcon

the falcon encased in stone,
on the steps of the temple...
silent too long, boils with rage.
and with one final surge,
of unrestrained passion,
breaks free from the pedestal,
with the fury of need!

long wings covered with dust,
unfurling with beauty.
take to the air,
almost gulping with flight.
eyes too long dim,
blaze with raw hunger.
the falcon loosed,
driven for the taste of flesh!

Eric Cockrell

The Fallen....

whose voice?
whose shadow?
whose footprints blown...

lost to the sands of indifference?
whose cry?
whose hurt?

whose human need raw?
whose face without feature?
whose hands stick out of the grave?

whose blood?
whose sweat?
whose love given and gone....

bitter in the mouths
of the living?

Eric Cockrell

The Family Of People

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i took the multi-colored hand
that pulled me up out of the ditch,
reaching back to grab another's hand,

and do the same for him.
i walked the streets with those
who came from other places....

i took the time to listen
to their stories and their needs.
i stood with them in lines,

in the face of the furor....
i looked into the eyes
of their children, felt their heartbeats....

and i knew in my own heart
there's no real difference there....
people and their families

just trying to survive....
the family of people,
all desiring to be human!

Eric Cockrell

The Fear Of

the
fear
of
losing
myself,

kept
me
from
the
liberation
of
finding
myself.....

for far too long!

Eric Cockrell

The Feel Of Teeth...

tired of sweeping the floor
of an empty house...
he flew with the swallows,
from chimney to god!
and laid down with wolves,
just to feel, to know...
the nearness of flesh,
and the feel of teeth!

Eric Cockrell

The Few

so few have
the courage
to stand up
and speak
the truth

and we make
martyrs of them

so few have
the courage
to be human.
so few know
the freedom
that lets them
give all

without asking back

so few have
the inner strength
to walk naked
before the world,
baring their bruises
and scars

so few have
the guts to
lead, not follow
so few dare
to live

but it is
these few
that give hope
to the many

and make love
the art of living

Eric Cockrell

The Final End

in the final end,
when day is done,
and all the battles are over.
when we stand back and look
at what we've built,
and what we've destroyed...

is God our reason?
or is God our excuse?

Eric Cockrell

The Final Question!

what's it going to take
for you to see me?
for the world to hear my voice?
to put a name to my face?
for time, and redemption,
and a reason for being?
what's it going to take
for me to die like a man?
what's it going to take
for my life to have value,
for my body to be a bridge?
for my soul to give shelter,
my spirit to cut through chains?
what's it going to take?
baby, what's it going to take?

what's it going to take
for me to bring forgiveness?
for the words that i sing
to bring healing and hope?
for my name to be everyman?
and everyman my reason to be?
for this bridge to be walked on,
this shelter to stand the storm?
what's it going to take
for this spirit to be your wings,
for my life to be worth dying?
and my death to bring life?
what's it going to take?
baby, what's it going to take?

Eric Cockrell

The Fire Of Redemption

i am a dissident,
a fugitive, a renegade,
condemned by apathy as subversive.
i am an individual,
a burning bush,
a fire in the night.
i am a homeless star
in a sky gone black,
the mouth and face of hunger.
i am passion's anger,
and compassion's hands,
i am a man and not a body.
i am a spiritual heretic,
a relic from a time
when the spirit was the cause.
i am a bridge, a pair of shoes,
a jug that holds water.
i am the seeds, the sower,
the rain and the sun.
i am the common dance,
the holy sweat,
i am hard work and erection.
i am the prayer prayed
by the side of the road,
the father's firmness,
and the mother's breasts.
i am sickness and death,
the price of years,
i am simple resurrection.
i am the lover unchained,
the wind that breaks the door,
the rain that falls in the naked night.
i am the voice behind silence,
the shout of the snow.
i am birth and beginning,
i am the fire of redemption!

Eric Cockrell

The First Step....

perhaps rather than
bombing a country's
nuclear sites,
or their troops deployed,
or their airstrips...

maybe, just maybe,
we should try removing
the gun from their hearts...

and the first step
is removing it from ours!

Eric Cockrell

The First Time

what if in time
every moment came back,
and lived for us again?
would we change?
would we stop?
would we cling?
would we touch?
would we shed a tear?
would we dance?
would we give? ...

so, why didnt we
the first time?

Eric Cockrell

The Flesh Of Hunger

listen...

the sound you hear
is the sound of

your own heart,
crying out for the
embrace of all others...

a child, nursing
at the breast of humanity,
knowing only mother,

womb, and breast...

the smell on your breath,
the stink of human need;
the taste on your lips,

the flesh of hunger!

Eric Cockrell

The Flute... (Let Me In)

i am the flute,
fashioned of skin and bone.
waiting for the soft feel of your lips,
and the hot breath of your desire.
i am the cup,
made of memory and ache.
that only the waters of your being,
can fill!
i am the lantern,
left covered in the shed.
that only the hunger of your soul,
can light!
i am the raindrop,
clinging to the windowpane
of your secret need...
open the window, let me in!

Eric Cockrell

The Footprint You Left...

the footprint you left
in the damp earth of my soul,
testifies in the room of inner silence.
i've named falling stars after you for years...
perhaps i should have named them after me!
now it is not the bridge or the lantern,
not even the bottomless chasm.
it is the choice, and of that,
destiny is formed!

Eric Cockrell

The Force That Heals

following their footprints
of Shantideva,
i found the cross of Jesus,
the uncarved block of Tao.
heard the dedicated prayers
from the mosques,
and the temples alike.
and felt the Great Spirit,
coming and going...
and i knew it all to be but this...
that every step be to relieve
the suffering of the many,
that every hand to share the cup,
that ears given to listen,
and hearts to understand,
become the force that heals!

Eric Cockrell

The Forgiven Ones

the forgiven ones
share their plates & their fires
wear hand-me-down clothes
& old worn out shoes...

the forgiven ones
plant their seeds in the earth
plow thru the darkness
waiting for the sun & the rain

the forgiven ones
stand by the woman giving birth
take the orphans to their breasts
& call now home

the forgiven ones
share the same language
let go of their anger
& carry each other's loads

the forgiven ones
pray with their hands
sing with their tears
& fight with their hearts...

the forgiven ones...

Eric Cockrell

The Frozen Snow

heroin and homelessness,
broken relationships and guns.
cold nights, broken glass windows,
even Jesus got baptized
in a muddy river!

blood on the kitchen floor,
roaches crawl up the walls.
Agent Orange, and picket signs,
flags burning in the alleys.

babies never seen their daddy,
mothers working, minimum wage.
breaking into churches,
and sleeping at the altar,
dont turn back time, or stop the wind!

empty graves, orphaned parents.
the nursing home smells like death
seeds planted in summers past...
wait beneath the frozen snow!

Eric Cockrell

The Funeral...

i went to the funeral,
and listened for the bells.
the church was empty,
no cars in the parking lot.
the hand on the door,
seemed familiar, but not.
the voice in the casket,
both grey, and cold.
the mind packed boxes,
fingers buttoned and unbuttoned.
the candle fell from the table,
unlit and unnoticed.
even god was distant,
and the tide failed to come in....
the man stood up and walked out,
never to return!

Eric Cockrell

The Ghosts.... (Nursing Homes)

when the hand that pushed the plow,
cut the wood, built the house,
loved the woman, and painted stars
in simple acorns....
trembles with age...
be his name forgotten?

the ghosts that scream from nursing homes,
are the pigments of your souls!

Eric Cockrell

The Giver

the burnt fringe of the cloth
that covers his face;
a lion roars in the dark,
the child kneels and prays.

he laid stone upon stone
till it touched the sky;
the history of a man
who lived but to die!

when all becomes nothing,
nothing left behind;
but the gift of the giver,
and a satisfied mind.

Eric Cockrell

The God Of Gasoline!

for every gallon of gasoline...
how many children killed?
how many families destroyed
by the bombs?
how many countries ravaged,
how many peoples left
to live in abject poverty?
how many of your own sons
sent to battle,
killed or maimed?
how much pollution in the air?
how many oceans defiled?
how much sea life squandered?
how many political lies told?
how much hatred spread?
how many fat cats getting fatter?
how many hours of work?

gasoline...
the god of food supplies,
transportation and jobs,
even the farm machinery...
the big trucks...
and how much of your check?

there has to be a better way!

Eric Cockrell

The Gods We Become?

we kill...
'holy' hands forming gods
out of our paper bag hungers,
in the image of our fears.
we sacrifice blood,
in the name of redemption.
and the ghosts of the innocents
burn our thoughts and our eyes.

what kind of father
teaches his children
to kill each other?
are we bastards, or liars,
afraid of our sins?

even the earth we defile,
cries against us in anguish.
the morality we buy and sell,
is bitter to the taste.

the voice of the eternal,
lost in the din and the madness.
leaving only the tug of the wind,
the cries of small children
the whimper of stray dogs.

words written in charcoal,
on forever grey skies...
'i have come to you,
again and again,
in countless forms,
speaking your own languages,
wearing your own skin...

why have you forgotten me?
and who do you follow? '
the voice behind gods,
or the gods we become?

The Gospel, The Dharma, And The Breath

the darkened streets
haunt and whisper,
lights come and go,
eternity breaks the glass.

and right and wrong,
frozen on the ground...
smokestacks, abandoned cars,
vacant buildings ran by rats.

the hungry hand,
the mouth of poverty.
the addict's needle,
the body in the alley.

the woman beaten,
her face blackened and bloody.
the click of the hammer
on an empty chamber.

and the houses beckon,
with lighted rooms
where shadows move in
a most familiar way.

the smell of food,
and the warmth contained...
never quite reaching
the children sleeping

in the back of the car.
the churches gone dark,
no sound, no action.
down the street the bars

light up the night.
at a corner table,
he sits alone with a drink...
and a book he just opened...

he writes with a pen,
sure that no one can see:
we are the gospel,
we are the dharma...

we died on the cross,
we gave up our kingdoms.
we are the healers,
but the killers...

we are the medicine,
and yet the guns.
we are the hand dipped
in the infected wound...

and yet we are the giver
of that very wound...
both the breath of Satan,
and the breath of God!

from our knees we learn
the gift of flight!

Eric Cockrell

The Gospel, The Dharma, Black And White!

we are the gospel,
and we are the dharma.
we are the breath of awareness,
the truth that walks on water.
we are the light shining
from a distant harbor...
we are the prayer,
and salvation's hands!

and yet we are the murderer,
who kills for the rush.
the packet of powder
that controls and drives.
we are the gluttons,
who throw our crumbs to the hungry.
we are the eviction notice,
and the declaration of war!

we are the baby
nursing at the mother's breast.
we are the dream
that breaks free of poverty.
we are the same blood,
that does not pick colors.
we are the word of god,
that says 'i care! '

and yet we are the machines
that strip mine the earth.
we are the saws
that cut down the trees.
we are the oil rigs
spilling oil like vomit.
we are the nuclear reactor,
waiting to claim its own!

we are the gospel,
and we are pure hatred.
we are the dharma,

and the stink of apathy.
we are the hand that pulls up,
and the hand that pushes down.
we are the hope of God,
and the mistake He just made.

we are... we are...
and we can be...
the choice is ours,
each step of the way!

Eric Cockrell

The Grave Was Empty!

we took down the body of God,
and stripped the flesh
from the bones with razor sharp knives.
out of this flesh we made hunger.
we carefully cut the heart out,
and out of this heart we made weapons.
we plucked out the eyeballs,
and out of them we made greed.
from the bones we built houses
in which no one could live.
we scattered the remains
over the sands... and from them
we made oil, the force that drives!
there was nothing left,
not even for the crows...
and they wonder why
the grave was empty!

Eric Cockrell

The Great Empty

closed!

out of business!

building for rent,
or sale!

22 vacant buildings on one street!
small-town America.

even the sidewalks are deserted...
except for paper cups,
and cigarette butts blowing
in the breeze...

empty windows,
boarded up doors....
the echo of voices

from the past,
from another day...

lost to the great empty!

Eric Cockrell

The Great Lie

urine stained sheets
tobacco broken teeth
gnarled old hands
and kerosene feet
check comes once a month
only lasts for a few days
a bony old cat
and cracked windowpanes

end of time, end of days
only the strong will survive
call it justice, the American way
call it the great lie
cast off, used up, and spent
thrown to the side
excess baggage, human garbage
already dead, waiting to die...

baby crying and cold
roaches run across the floor
dirty dishes in the sink
eviction notice on the door
washes up as best she can
puts on her dirty clothes
prays the old car will start
dont know where they'll go

end of time, end of days
only the strong will survive
call it justice, the American way
call it the Great Lie
cast off, used up, and spent
thrown to the side
excess baggage, human garbage
already dead, waiting to die...
excess baggage, human garbage
already dead, waiting to die.

The Great Wars (Freedom)

all the great wars
we have fought throughout time,
are just mere shells
of the battle within...
what we lash out at
is what we dont understand
in our own hearts.
what we have to understand is
that burning the house
doesnt cleanse the home!
what we must liberate
is merely our own self...
then, and only then,
freedom will reign!

Eric Cockrell

The Greatest Poverty...

the greatest poverty a man ever faces
is in the part of him that clings to, and
will not let go... the part of him that is
owned by fear....

we have much difficulty understanding
that we are not what we possess.... but
what we give...

and so we run from freedom!

Eric Cockrell

The Guest

black coffee, and
cigarettes... clearing
the cobwebs from my head....

spent all night talking
to dead poets, and
standing by my mother's grave...

mortality hangs from my
neck like an anvil... waiting...
for the train to come....

sunlight pouring through
my fingers like dust....
falling to my feet with finality...

it comes down to this...
who have i loved by my living?
small children, women, companions...

or the wolf in the darkest
recesses within my being...
that longs to run with the wind?

have i been true for a moment,
for a moment is all this is...
a moment on the pathway

of eternity... have i left my mark?
have i breathed raw air?
have i burned down the house

to let the guest in?

Eric Cockrell

The Guilt

The guilt we wear
Is silence.

While the world grieves,
Shedding tears of blood.

While the body of the child,
Is buried with the mother.
And hunger haunts
Our sleepless dreams.

While the caskets are counted,
And prayers come too late.
Yet the bus is on time,
And the time clock waits.

While nothing done,
Becomes action by cost.
As images drown
Both memory and names.

The guilt we wear...
Stinks!

Eric Cockrell

The Guilty And The Innocents

the guilty and the innocents
trudge through life side by side...
never knowing names,
sometimes reading faces,
often not!

and that which is done
in the name of glory,
by the light of greed,
is justified in the 'holy courts'
where lives are bought and sold
by the takers...

is there a God?
in Whose name the murdering
hand moves swiftly...
the price of blood, the wailing beat
of hearts without identity.

the march of those that conquer
and devour without conscience...
the thud of the guns, the rhythm of boots
stepping to the beat of victory...

victory never tasted so bitter!

the guilty and the innocents...
of which are you and i?

Eric Cockrell

The Gun You'Re Pointing

the gun you're pointing
is not your manhood,
it's your fear....

of the risk of
giving more than the
ground that you stand on....

fear of the angry storms
of your need facing
the limits of your desire...

of the smallness of your soul
in the unexplored night...
your hunger shrinking

into the shell of a snail...
the loss of your identity,
your shaking hand....

the gun you're pointing,
the suicide of your being,
drugged by the rage

you cant sleep with alone!

Eric Cockrell

The Hand

only the human hand,
the caring hand,
the hand covered in blood
and filth, the hand swollen

bruised, and beaten...
the open hand,
not a fist anymore hand,
not afraid to let go hand,
never letting go hand...

feed the baby, plow the field hand,
stroke the face of
the old woman dying hand...
light the fires, sweep the floors hand...

the praying hand, the picking hand,
the paint the soul hand...
only the human hand
can touch with the heart of God!

Eric Cockrell

The Hand

the hand on my heart
feels a lot like you,
the shadow of the stranger,
feels like clothes i have worn.
the cup on the table
is waiting to be filled.
on the plate a slice of burnt bread,
and the clock's stuck at six.
sounds i didnt hear before
resonate in the stillness.
the taste clings to my lips,
the old worn curtain blows.
and i cant for the life of me
remember what i was thinking.
my heart feels frozen
by the hand on the door!

Eric Cockrell

The Hand On The Door...

we burn our polaroid loves,
licking sulphur matches to remember.
every shadow, every line,
on the face borne by a name.
in paint peeled chairs by dirty windows,
clutching our knees,
and wringing our hearts.
in the still moment,
time's collector hesitates!
and the longing of the hips,
weeps down curtains stained.
when god and death take second place,
to the remembered scent of intimate touch.
are we ever anything more?
then the kiss in the moonlight,
and the hand on the door?

Eric Cockrell

The Hand Rising From The Grave!

are we then love's refugees?
cursed, without a land...
are we the only ones still bleeding,
infidels by choice!
whose house and whose light,
whose name on the box?
will the soldiers then come,
and bury what we've been?
when feeling departs,
another intimacy begins...
too often lost in the waves,
and insects that sing of night.
have we lived our life,
to be flashlights and rubber boots?
doth not this ache strip silence,
to that which is raw and beneath?
and nothing i say,
nothing that i choose to leave behind...
can touch the edge of this blade,
can name the hand rising from the grave!

Eric Cockrell

The Hand That Loves

the hand that loves,
is weathered and calloused.
long gifted, now trembles,
but just a little.
wipes tears and fights injustice,
buttons the collar of respect.
takes down your hair,
like rain falling on leaves.
bandages the dog's paw,
lights the fire late at night.
turns the pages of the book,
strokes the inside of your neck.
unleashes volcanoes,
opens the door of the cage.
and sprinkles dirt on the graves,
of those that came before...
softly puts down the pen,
and puts out the candle.
for it belongs to the wind,
to the stars, and your heart!

Eric Cockrell

The Hands Of Time!

the hands of a small child,
shaping sand on the beach.
the flutter of wings,
a sparrow's first flight.
seeds planted by hand
in the fresh plowed ground.
the light teasing shadows,
late afternoon to night.
the war hero's silence,
his eyes grown hard.
the family burying the child,
the mother cannot weep.
the hungry stare
of poverty's stink.
the addict's hard edge,
bare rooms, bare walls.
the hanging tree,
and the lovers oak.
the bullet in the chamber,
and the open mission.
the church locked empty,
boxes to beds in the alley.
the old man who cant forgive
what the young boy did.
the hands of a small child...
the hands of time!

Eric Cockrell

The Hands.... (That Dared To Speak!)

the hands....

that cleaned the old man
lying on urine stained sheets,
that planted the bulbs
in the old woman's flower bed.
that washed the dishes
for forty years....

the hands...

that built the old barn,
that plowed the fields,
that harvested the crops....

the hands...

that stroked desire's body,
that found each secret treasure,
that closed the window.
that held the baby,
that taught the child to write,
that buttoned his suit
on the day he was married.

the hands....

that buried the body,
that brushed leaves from the grave,
that packed away pictures.

the hands....

that picked up the pen,
that turned bloodstained pages,
that dared to speak!

the hands...

now old and withered,
painfully bruised,
often clasped in prayer,
that open to take the small child's hand;
that unlock the door,
and beckon to those in need...

the hands...

Eric Cockrell

The Hanging Tree!

</p>

beneath the hanging tree,
gnarled and bent old limbs,
cursed with fears inbred....

where black folks hung for being black,
and later, white folks for standing beside...
'holy' hatreds spat, crackling in the fires;

acts too horrid for the light of day,
and the lonesome cry of the night,
testifying against....

now the hanging tree takes different forms...
poverty, crack cocaine, trailer tub meth...
young girls put out on the street,

by pistol carrying punks
in big wheeled cars....
schooled by the prisons,

and left to die;
no hope, no jobs, no chance,
driven by those fears

while the ghosts of hatred dance!

Eric Cockrell

The Hanging Tree....

i took an axe
and cut down the hanging tree...
every blow a blow for
human decency, equality, and freedom.
and i sawed it up into logs,
and built a fire with them.
into the fire i threw
prejudice, hatred, greed, and apathy.
i watched it burn till
nothing was left but the
crackling of the embers...
even the wind grew still in prayer!

Eric Cockrell

The Hanging Tree.... (What Do We Call It...)

down through the woods
to the clearing where
the hanging tree stood...
sometimes you can still see
the shadows of ghosts,
swinging in the hot summer sun...
now the tree has been cut,
and time has passed,
yet the air's still heavy with guilt.

do we know more?
are we more civilized?
or have we just changed trees,
and gotten better rope?
what do we call the young men
sent to die in the oil wars...
the young people stuck
in the gang ridden slums?
the bullied ones who lose hope?
the illegal immigrants who die for work?
the young couple stuck on unemployment
and food stamps?
the elderly couple evicted
cause they cant afford the rent?
the Muslim family afraid to go out at night?
the gay couple in love who cant get married?
the young children without a father?
the millions strung out on pills?

what do we call it,
if we dont call it hanging?

Eric Cockrell

The Headlong Pursuit

we
let
the
headlong
pursuit
of
the
American
dream...

destroy
the
American
ideal....

forgetting that neighbors
need neighbors
to make a life!

Eric Cockrell

The Hem Of The Holy Garment...

we who speak as if we knew,
still jump at shadows in the night.
stopping for prayer and crossing ourselves,
reciting scriptures with trembling hearts.
or sit crosslegged on our debit cards,
for a dose of enlightenment.
or walk behind teachers as if we were sheep,
praying to be delivered from the battle.

god is not god,
god is more than that.
cannot be bought by ritual or repetition.
enlightenment hath no debit card,
and sheep are led to slaughter.

the path must be walked,
the battle must be fought.
the soul's questions cannot be answered
by anyone else.
the truth is much broader than our concepts,
and we are more than our egos.

the cost of life is living,
no one else can pay the bill.
the meaning of life is then love,
and love demands all without reservation.

each moment is eternity.
redemption must be had together.
the truth that sets us free,
begins in the heart and moves through the hands.

we are not seperate...
all that lives is a part of the whole.
when the hand hurts the feet must suffer,
when the eyes are taken, the ears must lead.

god is not a noun, but a verb....

always there, in every face, in every leaf,
in every river, in every tree.
when we see with our hearts we know this,
and now our feet must follow our hearts!

we are the prayers of holiness,
the flesh and bones of compassion,
and miracle....
we touch the hem of the holy garment,
when we reach out to those in need!

Eric Cockrell

The Heretic Prays

the heretic kneels
by the old willow tree
alone in the darkness

with life....

and prays....
with no need for salvation,
redemption, or change....

no thought of self,
of need and want,
he just lets go...

and prays....

nameless, part of all....
formless, evolving forms.....
from soul to spirit....

becoming....

the scripture of small creatures,
the hymns of the wind.....
eternity unleashed in each moment.....

the heretic prays!

Eric Cockrell

The History Book

cities built
on dried bones scattered,
faceless dedications
on lie frosted grounds.
mechanical profit,
metal on metal wailing...
smokestacks belch,
and churches shudder
freedom sleeps,
where lost spirits walk.
stained glass windows,
hide the glare of truth.
soldiers march through
the bleached pages of
the history book!
the dried bones scattered,
murmur in the night!

Eric Cockrell

The Hollow Ones

the hollow ones
live in a hollow world,
walk a hollow path
with hollow hearts.

speaking often, never talking.
listening, but never hearing.
touching, but never feeling.
inhaling, but never exhaling.

with nothing behind their
hollow eyes.... insulated,
burning nuclear fuel
in a carbon world...

an ingrown toenail
on the foot...
of an angry God!
the hollow ones...

Eric Cockrell

The House That Faith Abandoned!

you put a gun
in the hand of the man
you force to live in poverty.
you pull the trigger
when you give him despair
in place of hope...
you stand over the body
that once was home to freedom,
and now is nothing more
than an empty room
in the house that faith abandoned!

Eric Cockrell

The Human Race!

to overthrow the yoke
of oppression, we have to
first come to an honest
assessment of where we are!
not only where we are,
but how we got here...

we cannot put off the blame
on other people, governments,
or even corporations! where
we are is where we've allowed
ourselves to be!

when we sit silently by and
watch our human rights be taken;
when we allow profit at the expense
of people to become the norm....
when we allow the rape of the
environment to pad the pockets
of convenience... when we go to
war, blindly following, with our
heads stuck in the sand... we are
responsible.

apathy is the unpardonable sin!
to be free, to fully realize freedom,
we have to work at it... both as
individuals, and in community!
we are one family, often dysfunctional,
but always one family... one family,
one race, THE HUMAN RACE!

Eric Cockrell

The Hymn Of Desire

A wooden rocking chair,
On a paint cracked porch.
A small sparrow,
Resting, perched

On the rail.
Rain seeping from the gutters,
An old dog sleeping

Under the steps.

As the Stranger sweeps,
Eyes half closed,
Humming the hymn

Of desire.

Eric Cockrell

The Illusion Of Seperation...

the illusion of seperation
is a powerful weapon
used by the few
to control the many.

Eric Cockrell

The Infidel!

i am the one
who walked with the Nazarene...
who stood in silence,
listening and watching.
i distributed the food
that fed the crowds,
i helped the sick
make their way to Him...
i stood defiant as He
cleaned out the temple.
i helped move the stone
from the grave of Lazarus...
i shuddered among the lepers,
put down my stone
as He let the whore go...
bailed water in the boat
till He calmed the seas...
i heard His last prayer
at Gethsemene...
saw and felt the tears of blood...
more than anything i wanted Him
to be more, to do more,
maybe i just wanted to be Him!
i am Judas, the infidel...
i am you, you are me!

Eric Cockrell

The Inner Thigh Of Desire

the tongue stuck...
on the inner thigh
of desire,

throbbing for the candle
lit by inspiration.

a dropp of sweat
falls from the knitted brow
of god speaking forth...

existence.

when nothing remains
but embers and ashes,
the heart cries for the plow

in the field of silence!

a hunger within,
much deeper, much sharper,
bellows one word...

beginning!

and darkness becomes light!

Eric Cockrell

The Intent Of The Heart

i've made mistakes
in my life that have
hurt a lot of people....

i want to make sure
that what i'm doing now,
helps a lot of people.

it begins with admitting
and taking ownership
of my mistakes...

walking in forgiveness,
forgiving others, and myself,
as i go....

making every step count....
fully aware of the motives
behind each action....

fully aware of the weight
of every thought and word.....
of the responsibility we share

for and to each other.....
and to the earth.
freedom sweats,

compassion bleeds....
the truth is no further
than the intent of the heart!

Eric Cockrell

The Journey

when you can look
in the mirror,
and see your self naked
without running like hell...

the journey begins!

when you can look
at your every action,
judging your self honestly
by motive and intent...

the journey begins!

when you can give away
all that you cling to
without asking for anything
in return...

the journey begins!

when you can do the right thing
irregardless of the cost,
not caring what anyone says
or thinks...

the journey begins!

when you can see the faces
of God in the people you
despise the most, the ones
who've hurt you the most...

the journey begins!

Eric Cockrell

The Key

i hold in my hand
the key to the door
to the room where

pretending no longer works
where half way trying
doesn't get it done

where just getting by
is no longer enough
where the truth doesn't allow

anything less, and doesn't
accept anything more!
where the image in the mirror

is real, and has to be dealt with!

and time is the reason,
and the driving force
that won't allow me

to be anything or
anybody else
than me!

Eric Cockrell

The Key To Time!

the dawn of creation,
again and again...
with every step

on the path to liberation!
our bodies shells,
holding undiscovered universes....

our spirits roam,
orphaned travellers,
in search of....

and light is only touch
put to darkness with passion,
the voices of God

pulse through our veins!
hunger, and magic,
a simple dropp of rain,

holding the secrets of infinity,
and the key to time!

Eric Cockrell

The Kiss I Left

i love you.....
words seem hollow
after so much time...

time lived together,
two souls wrapped in one spirit...
two hearts that cannot beat

without the other...
train wrecks, stars collide,
and yet the light remains...

and the dust of worlds destroyed
forms the beginning again and again...
who are you without me?

who am i without you?
night cannot be without day....
this fire returns from ashes....

the simple brush of hands,
eyes meeting whisper
the secrets of cosmos.....

wind softly blowing the shutter closed,
yet the window is always open!
the kiss i left on your eyelids

as you slept.... the smile
your dreaming left on my longing....
small indentions in the pillow....

the first fire in the ancient cave
that remains after time has gone!

Eric Cockrell

The Language Of Silence

we cannot often hear...
the whisperings of the grasses,
the chant of trees swaying,
those intimate voices in the wind...
we have no names for these sounds,
these doings outside the cage.

does the body call from the grave?
do bird's wings exchange secrets with the sky?
is the moment just before, and just after,
the last breath... the only eternity we know?
why do we call god, god?
is the atheist closer to the presence?

we go to wars with righteous fever...
we kill as if a gift.... to whom?
we draw our morals with black crayons
on the sheets of our indiscretions..
wearing our holiness like halloween masks...
who are we fooling?

if you must call her god,
i'm sure she weeps...
the lover mourns who walks alone!
the wind has no name,
and that is enough!
the language of silence
smells like nails and tastes like rain!

Eric Cockrell

The Language Of The Wind

i took a hammer
to the altar and destroyed
every image i'd made of god...
threw my holy books
out into the trash,
my beads, and my necklace.
stopped praying, stopped thinking,
got up off my knees...

walked out into the yard,
and built a fire!
i took off my clothes,
and crawled on all fours.
bayed at the moon,
growled at a rabbit,
and burst into tears
when i tried to howl.

took a lit branch from the fire,
and threw it at the house...
all i could feel was anger,
hunger, and the beat...
wild eyed, i collapsed,
and hugged the earth...
darkness, sweet darkness,
wrapped her arms around...
stars reappeared in the blackest sky...

i rose up and shook
your spirit from me!
softly began to pray
in the language of the wind.

Eric Cockrell

The Light In The Window

The light in the window
Hath not a name,
But a thousand faces!

Eric Cockrell

The Light Of Day

there is a place,
there is a time.
there is a heart,
there is a prayer.
there is a tear,
and arms that rhyme.
there is a day
when somebody cares.

there is something deeper,
we dont understand.
that dares to touch,
and breaks the shell.
there is something more,
than castles built of sand.
that you cant take,
cant buy or sell.

the strangers touch,
in the rose that blooms.
in the child that's crying,
the man near death.
tis the face of god,
in the empty room.
in the sweat and dirt,
and in every breath.

what we dont know,
but our hearts abide.
what we cant see,
but our souls can taste.
you cant live life
if you're afraid to die.
in the darkness of night,
the light of day!

Eric Cockrell

The List!

i came to age
in the land of Nixon,
and J Edgar Hoover....

when if you even breathed
the truth you made the lists,
the lists that no one saw!

from the America of LBJ,
the slaughter of the Kennedys',
and Martin Luther King....

and open war on the students
at Kent State who dared to stand....
against an unholy war....

civil rights, flag burnings,
draft card burnings....
women's rights, and change....

that we didnt finish....
now our own children stand
up in protest against a way

of life that isnt living....
and again the police
and the riot squads....

will there be lists this time?

unholy.....unholy.....unholy
wars.....lifestyles.....'justice'!

put me on the list!

Eric Cockrell

The Love Inside Of You!

there lives....

flight within the feathers,
leaves, in bare limbs.

centuries inside mountains,
flow within rivers....
corn in the deadened earth.

fire within the match,
rain within the clouds.
a baby in a lover's touch....

a roar within the lion.
a world inside a turtle's shell,
a story in the old man's smile.

families in the cementary...
oppression inside of oil.
freedom, in a prison cell,

hope, in the addict's shaking hands.
healing, in the moment shared....
passion, in the naked glance.

God, in the small child's eyes,
salvation, in what is given....
the truth beneath the lie....

all waiting....
on the light inside the darkness,
and the love inside of you!

Eric Cockrell

The Love You Shared Endures...

tis the knock on the door you've dreaded...
yet you know it all comes to this.
the weary lay down to sleep,
snow falls on rust colored leaves.
are you then left with old photographs,
the sound of a voice you dimly remember...
and memories that unfurl like chapters,
every time you turn off the light.
the tears you cried, for him, or for you?
he does not need your tears anymore.
he is not dead, but simply at peace...
the love he was he is,
the love you shared endures!

Eric Cockrell

The Lover, And The Loved

if the wind could cry
with human tears,
and sing with a human voice...
if rain was the medicine
that healed the wounds,
the balm that freed the scars.
and if fire be the soul,
and wings be the spirit,
would you come with me?

if my body was the meat,
and your heart was the knife,
would we feed a lonely world?
if my tongue was the brush,
and your eyes were the picture,
whose hand would guide the way?
if this day was eternity,
and i was the bridge,
would you walk across the chasm?

and if i died for you,
would you live for me?
as the lover, and the loved!

Eric Cockrell

The Lover's Chronicles

what we look for is something deeper
than what we call love... if love is
the taste, we long for the substance.
we run afraid of the dark towards the
neon lights... but we long for chocolate,
for broth, for fruit, for just baked
bread. we hear the rumor of ecstasy,
but we settle for the numbness of not
being alone... for we fear ourselves,
and what is behind the door! we jump
into bed and pant against the cold,
never even getting close to the fire.
we settle for sex, we barter for sex,
using sex like a drug, mere children
sailing on a plastic globe. we are
afraid to touch, we take off our clothes,
but are afraid of being naked. afraid
of the stillness, we talk, we chatter...
like bones rattled by the wind, or the
window we latch. but the darkness calls,
the candle is lit. in the depths of
human, we long to be lovers!

Eric Cockrell

The Lover's Chronicles (Part Four)

your hair falls in layers as if
a gown, or a veil, behind which
all mystery abides... your eyes
moan, a deep and guttural spiritual
longing, the history of mankind
abiding there...
your lips, silent, motionless...
yet those eyes the painter's brush!
nightfall itself bows in gratitude.
beginning and end, again and again,
as if the earth breathed somewhere
deep in the softness.
i see the first fire, the shadows on
the walls of the cave. and i hear
drumbeats in the distance... feel
the howling of the wolf on the back
of my neck... and death is there, so
it must be, for there to be life. i
wait in the timeless, lost in your
glance!

Eric Cockrell

The Lover's Chronicles (Part Three)

holding autumn's leaf in your hands,
early December... all passion's colors
have melted, into brown in time grown
brittle...
and so i hold your hand, without grasping
so hard as if to lose, yet knowing your
hand... every nuance, every mile, every
destiny come and gone... feeling every
trace of living as if a prayer...
listening to your hand as if to a hymn...
your hand and mine, we rock... the wind blows
in perfect rhythm, we wait... for a time,
and a time, with no need to hurry!

Eric Cockrell

The Lover's Chronicles (Part Two)

no, not yet! take my hand, let us
walk towards the setting sun. the
mountains seem closer, the trees
whisper and wait. for the night
brings its own sounds, a new and
deeper closeness, breaking down
the barriers of the need for concepts.
open your hands, close your eyes, listen,
then let go! of every image you have
of self, of want, of need... the bird
leaves the nest and never looks back,
no longer clinging to a world made of
straw...

i will love you, first with stillness,
then with sounds heard for the first time.
i will bring you taste, richness and raw.
i will bring you healing, that searches
your unnamed sorrows for joy. i will listen
to your heart, and hear. i want to know
you before we touch... i want to touch
you, and know you more!

Eric Cockrell

The Magdelene Poems

magdelene

be it so...
they would name
the holy one's lover
a whore...
and so give her a cross
to be borne for generations!

magdelene, # 2

what secrets we shared,
in the breathless moments
just before dawn...
while creation and destruction waited,
and the stars themselves wept,
as if knowing!

magdelene, # 3

perhaps then,
the final price of the gospel,
be not nails...
but love!

magdelene, # 4

twas the book of kisses,
rare intimacies unspoken,
that lingered like very breath...
on graveclothes left empty.

upon the stone rolled away,
the lovers' cross etched,
by hands unseen,
and somehow more than human!

magdelene, # 5

those tiny footprints
on the sands of eternity...
are those of a child,
who never met her father

Eric Cockrell

The Man Standing...

the man standing
in the shadows,
held the earth
in his hands...
until time and storm
finally had their way.

the man standing
in the shadows,
plowed and planted,
season after season,
till winter grey
closed the last door.

the man standing
in the shadows,
built a house
and a bridge...
and swept room and porch
till it was finished.

the man standing
in the shadows,
picked up nests of straw,
and opened tiny cages,
blowing light from cupped hands
till the darkness swallowed.

the man standing
in he shadows,
played a wooden flute,
caught stardust in each note...
till the great stillness came,
and the wind stopped blowing...

the man standing
in the shadows,
still smells like you!

The Mark (Of Cain)

when we kill,
for whatever reason,
we bear the mark
of Cain...
and wear the results
of our actions!

whether we kill
with guns and bombs,
or by the greed
of our actions,
and our very lifestyles.
we are guilty!

if it leaves a bad taste,
we shouldnt have eaten it!

Eric Cockrell

The Meaning Of Life

doth molten steel have a memory,
a sense of past and future?
does the tree shout for joy or weep,
when it's cut down and into firewood?
does the river have a destination?
does the moth call the flame god?
does the dirt thrown on the grave
whisper kind words of farewell?
does the unconceived baby remember dying?
doth not god shutter at the name god?
do the funeral and the wedding dance arm in arm?
does the tear sound like laughter before it's cried?
is anger gentle when no one is looking?
did darkness weep when man 'discovered' fire?
is not war just a contraceptive?
is not the question the answer?
be not death the meaning of life?

Eric Cockrell

The Meeting Place...

shall we go to the meeting place,
down the path by the willow?
where the last birds go to rest,
and prepare for their journey.
where the sound of the creek
is all that's heard,
except for crickets and chattering squirrels.
the occasional cry of the butterfly expiring,
and the pines weeping for lost lovers.
following the trail of the ants,
and the pawprints of the wolves,
we lie beneath nests left empty.
naked and close, not speaking a word...
we wait on moonlight,
and poems written by the darkness!

Eric Cockrell

The Moment Of Need...

for too long the religion
of America's masses was the
'American dream'...
fueled by token visits to
sterile churches, where for
guilt donations and moments
of penance, fueled by terror
feared images of a capitalistic
god... one achieved the dream
of heaven.

success burnt in opium pipes
while the man in the gutter
remained both faceless, and
wretched.

now the gutters are full of
raw and real bleeding hearts,
and children burn on the altars
of a vengeful god...
the dreams have shattered...

and the cry for god comes back
to the color of the heart within...
if god is love, why doesnt he feed us?
ah, but if you are god's body...
if you are god's ears...
if you are god's heart...
then who is to blame?

the hand that takes, or the hand
that feeds... same hand!
success... or interaction?
fear... or compassion?
when eternity becomes the
moment of need!

Eric Cockrell

The Moon To Weep

be it the petal of the flower...
or the edge of the blade.
love demands all,
and takes no prisoners.
be it the tongue,
or the pounding heart...
we leave no trace,
when the wave is gone!

whose history etched in silence?
choirs mourn without sound.
be it shadows or angels,
or demons set free...
they call it the last war,
will there be survivors?
who hears the oak tree fall,
in the deserted woods?

letters written by breasts,
whose milk gone bitter.
the soft light of the lamp,
shudders and caws.
small things bury strangers,
but thunder buries mountains.
and the scar on the sky,
causes the moon to weep!

Eric Cockrell

The Most Beautiful Box (Response Number Two)

you can build
the most beautiful box
the world has ever seen.
you can line the walls
with fine jewels,
and carpet the floors.
you can adorn it
with beautiful pictures,
and have windows that face
the morning sun.
you can have doors
that open both ways.
still...
this box cannot hold
the sky, the wind, or the rain!

so it is with political systems.
no system can define freedom.
no system can define justice.
no system can define equality.
only the human heart,
grounded in love,
can do this!

Eric Cockrell

The Most Powerful Tool!

forgiveness...

...the

.....most

.....powerful

...tool

in the human world!

simply because...

...you have to

.....do it

..to get it!

Eric Cockrell

The Mouth Devours!

the earth is the body.
humanity, the mouth.
the infinite breathes in the wind.
redemption falls in the rain.
the mountains speak of standing,
standing strong and resolved.
the sky teaches freedom,
the oceans, the womb.
trees wrap their branches in unity,
the grasses sing of equality.
the seasons are the clock,
in the dirt we find the mind.

so why is it then
that the mouth devours,
body, soul, and spirit...
gnawing its own flesh?
words spoken without thought,
hunger that swallows the sky.
lips stained by the grasses,
smeared with the dirt.

the mouth has no eyes,
and little understanding.
yet seeks to control,
and lives to devour!

Eric Cockrell

The Mystery Written

it is the mystery written
in the bed of pine needles,
in the broken branch,
in the bad place in the road.
in the hours between 3 and 4 in the morning,
when the spirit grieves itself with prayer.
in the cool of the darkness,
in the window cracked.
in the homeless dog's eyes,
as he stands in the road.
in the box unopened for twenty years,
in the eviction notice,
and the lights cut off.
in the kerosene heater,
and potatoes strewn in the cellar.
in the tear in the sheet,
in worn out shoes.
in love lost in waiting,
adrift, searching for a light.
in the answer that smells like dawn,
and the smell of strong coffee!

Eric Cockrell

The Naked Human Body

the naked human body
is as wondrous as the night sky...
complete with stars, maps, and journeys!

Eric Cockrell

The Naked Infidel

i am the naked infidel,
strolling naked through your churches.
singing in your libraries,
chanting 'justice' in your courtrooms.
scrawling liberty on the walls
and floors of your Senate,
unlocking prison doors,
bringing seed to your fields.
hauling bodies from your mines,
bringing doubt to your classrooms.
taking your girls from the corners,
sending them back to their homes.
disarming your soldiers,
and feeding your hungry!
i extend the holy hand,
that is common and covered with dirt!

Eric Cockrell

The Naked Man!

only the naked man,
who's left all baggage behind,
can stand in the heat of the fire,

and slay the corporate beast!
only the naked man,
who wears his scars with pride,

can forgive the unforgivable,
and so heal this land.
only the naked man,

without pretense or game,
can stand up to the truth,
and set the captives free!

only the naked man,
with nothing left to lose,
can find the light

in a sky darkened by greed.
only the naked man,
beaten and cursed,

will stand and give a hand
without seeing your face...
only the naked man...

no longer praying to an unknown god,
will beat the sacred drum,
that wipes away your tears...

only the naked man!

Eric Cockrell

The Name Of God

that which you throw away,
carried off to your dumps.
to be burned in petroleum fires....

just missing the mouths
of your shadowy conscience,
the faces staring back

from your mirror,
the hands that reach out
from the graveyards of your soul....

mouths whispering
the name of God!

Eric Cockrell

The Nameless Naming!

i am nothing more
than a thousand slivers
of broken glass
in a deserted alley
on the bad side of town

reflecting the lights
of a thousand lives passing
that dont even know i'm here
the nameless naming!

Eric Cockrell

The Need To Be Named...

how do i know to speak of love?
she has taken my body,
and made it a chair.
she broke my legs,
and threw them into the fire,
started by sparks from my own eyes.
she took my soul and named it a wind,
that frightens the timid,
and fills the roar of the lion.
she took my feet,
and made them chapters...
she formed my hands into valleys,
and flooded them with my heart's desires...
she took my breath,
and stirred darkness with the magic
of the simple and the touched....
she took my identity,
and made me nameless,
and beyond the need to be named!

Eric Cockrell

The New American Way

quit banging the drums of war!
war was never meant to be
a means of economic survival...
much less profitable....
human lives mean nothing!
freedom and democracy
are a hoax... a drug
administered through the
late night tv news....
we're not trying to liberate anyone,
it's all profit and loss....
profit to the War Machine...
loss... of lives, any sense of morality
and/or human decency.

it's easy to sell....
just tell the people they're
our enemies... that they're
out to get us.
you dont have to prove
anything...
no weapons of mass destruction
needed... just the fear
created by implanting the thought!

profit justifies anything...
the new American Way!

Eric Cockrell

The New American Way # 2

in the long run
we're gonna end up
spending between 3.2
and 4 trillion dollars
in our wars in Iraq,
Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

not to mention the 100 million
a day we were spending in Libya.

the elite ghouls of the War machine
pad their pockets ... while our soldiers
fight and die.

we've maxed out the debt ceiling,
they're gonna cut social security,
medicare, and other programs
for the poor, the sick, and the
elderly.

we have children going hungry,
families homeless no way
to get medical care.
no jobs schools laying off
teachers.

we're out of time!
we have to take back the reins
from the elite now...
or we become their garbage...

no more wars!

Eric Cockrell

The New American Way # 3

lets see.

you finance your multi-trillion dollar wars 100% with China ... and leave the burden of the debt for the American taxpayer to pay.

meanwhile, you take the billions (maybe trillions) of dollars profit that you make on defense contracts, etc ... and put it in your pockets.

i've only been in the business world for about 25 years but i know.

(forgetting the moral and ethical implications) as we say here in the south:
'that dog dont hunt! '

Eric Cockrell

The Next Great War....

the next great war we'll face
will be on our own soil...
when the poor of America stand up,
and take back what's been stolen from them!

Eric Cockrell

The Next Great World War!

the next great world war
is already being fought...
within... within the hearts
of the poor of all nations,
struggling to survive,
for food and shelter.
in the hearts of the jobless,
the homeless, the sick.
in the hearts of prisoners,
of victims...
in the hearts of the takers,
the movers, the ones that make
the decisions, that hold
the key and the whip.
in the hearts of soldiers,
of politicians, of the innocents
killed by the bombing.
in the hearts of seekers,
of the lonely, the desperate.
in the hearts of the angry,
of the haters...
of priests, preachers, and moral guides.
in the hearts of the common,
in the hearts of the gifted,
in the hearts of the protesters,
and the cops that beat them.
in the hearts of all people everywhere,
crying out for change in spite of...
the war rages...
and who will stand
when the day is done?

Eric Cockrell

The Next Step

will my next step
help feed the hungry?
heal the sick?
give solace to the lonely?
find housing for the homeless?
help save the rain forests?
help save mountains and rivers
for my children's children?
stop the killing of whales?
the killing of women and children?
help eradicate prejudice?
stand for freedom and dignity?
bring hope to the hopeless?

well... will it?

Eric Cockrell

The Night I Walk!

it is the night i walk,
in search of the day...
perhaps the wind i feel,
and the brotherhood of trees.
the worship of the feminine,
the gateway and the path.
made drunk by beauty,
maddened with desire.
yet still as the mountains,
sipping time by the moment.
the bare foot in the mud,
the feather by the door.
the birth of the child,
the death of the father.
it is the night i walk...
because that's who i am!

inspired by one of Patti's poems!

Eric Cockrell

The Occupy Process...

just thinking, perhaps we should start
the whole occupy process by re-occupying
our own dignity... by rediscovering respect,
for ourselves, and for others!

and yes, let us re-occupy the truth, for we
have lived under the lie, and by the lie, for
far too long.

occupy, our bodies and souls, our dreams and hopes,
our convictions and actions... occupy our lives!

Eric Cockrell

The Old Man's Hands

the old man's hands
know the feel of the petal,
his bruised lips the taste.
his soul rising with bloom,
and laying down with finality.
his heart the earth,
that opens and devours...
his spirit the waiting,
that becomes creation...
the old man left staring,
through a window with no name!

Eric Cockrell

The One, The Key

I am the one...
Whose name you never knew.
Whose face you forgot.
Whose battle you took for fiction.
Whose mind you banned.
Whose path you condemned.
Whose voice you turned away from.
Whose tongue you severed.

Who built your country,
And plowed your fields.
Who kicked down your doors,
Who rattled your cage.
Who put out your fires,
Only to build bigger ones.
Who crossed your borders,
Set your hostages free.

Who answered your prayers,
Gave your questions a body.
Who stood by your need,
In the face of the storm.
Who sang your song,
Buried your lost ones.
Who wiped your brow,
And gave you the key!

Eric Cockrell

The Only Light

the soft touch
of your hands
brushing mine...

almost like strangers,
it's been so long...
and the wrinkles of

gentleness 'neath your eyes,
eyes that have seen me
at my best and my worst.

some things were just
meant to be.... autumn
follows summer, then winter.

your soul lies in the empty
shell of my being....
the only light my darkness

will ever know!

Eric Cockrell

The Only Moral

</>
the only moral
i live by is compassion!

if
..we
....live
.....under
.....compassion

and
...walk
.....by
.....compassion

everything else takes care of itself!

Eric Cockrell

The Only Name Unspoken!

lovers share the same breath,
even from distant shores.
while poets of the revolution,
linger by fires long dead.
the human heart changes,
slowly, with agonizing feet.
the hint of truth merely,
the perfume of fallen trees.
no I and you, only the bridge,
that comes from and leads to
the unmapped flame!
the soul has hands,
well skilled and driven by need...
when the only need is we,
the only name unspoken!

Eric Cockrell

The Only Words That Remain

blast furnace...
molded by turmoil
and endless struggle,

faces scorched by the trials,
endured and survived....
stripped naked, no baggage,

no need for guile.
the all of all on the altar,
the heart beaten honest....

and the only words that remain.....
.....are soul!

Eric Cockrell

The Other Way Around?

you smell like war,
like gunpowder,
flesh searing screams.
i smell like grieving,
like ashes, and
dirt on the shovel.
you sound like hunger,
and homelessness,
and vomit stained lips.
i sound like the soup
that simmers, like the
blanket wrapped...
you taste like bitterness,
the loneliness of alone.
i taste like the hand that fits,
the shadow of the body near...

or am i wrong?
could it be the other way around?

Eric Cockrell

The Painter's Wheel

the painter's wheel turns,
its bearings rusted, groan.
all too oft mistaken for thunder.

the human heart has
hidden chambers, and
passageways not discovered...

the smell of hope? or
burning limbs... clearing
the way for autumn.

the heart is at autumn too;
one last flash of color,
and then a time of rest...

what we seek for
is never further than
the tip of trembling tongues,

and the button undone....
the cadence of earth evolving,
both within and without!

Eric Cockrell

The Passion, The Fire!

where lies the passion,
and where lies the fire?
i walk the path of your body
from a distant shore!
the trembling scent
of an old book long unopened,
my hands covered with ashe
as i stir the embers.

a gust of wind?
a broken glass...
the key turns in the lock
with protesting moan.
wax figures half melted,
a locket in the ashtray.
morning whimpers and comes,
as if it never left!

Eric Cockrell

The Past...

as long as we
pretend the past didnt happen,
and hide it from ourselves,
and our children...
we learn nothing!

one form of slavery and prejudice
to another... one wrong war
to another... the cycle continues.

the mistakes we've made
are rungs on the ladder,
the ladder we use to
climb up out of the mire!

dont hide the scars,
each tells a story!
the story of a people
striving to be human!

Eric Cockrell

The Path

walking the path...
uphill, downhill,
winding amid the rocks,
leaving behind

footprints in the sand
that the wind erases...

sometimes side by side,
often alone... with no map,
no compass to point the way.

it's different for each of us;
no one else can do it for us.
this journey of the spirit
discovering itself...

and that which we call 'God'.

often lonely... we fight our way
forward for those moments
of epiphany.... when all of life
appears in a dropp of rain...

or a child's tears.

walking the path,
sun shining on my back...
a few clouds float unchained
in the limitless sky....

they, too, pilgrims going
to the feast....
walk with me?

Eric Cockrell

The Phone (Like Him)

the sick old man
in the apartment cold and bare,
raises the gun to his head:
'God forgive me for what i do...'

a cut off notice from the electric company,
unopened on the table,
an eviction notice hanging
on the door...

his son's phone number by the phone,
but the phone, like him,
is dead!

Eric Cockrell

The Poet

who is the poet then?
the master of words,
phrases, rhymes, and symbols...

or the one who wipes the ass
of the old man in the nursing home,
whose family does not come anymore.

or the young gay teacher
in the projects, walking the thin line
between the hatred of gangs, and hope.

or the small time farmer
who planted one last crop,
knowing that the bank was coming
to take it all away.

or the soldier in Iraq,
who stops to help a child up,
and sees his own children miles away;
cant speak, and cant breathe.

or the young man in prison
for something that he did;
just trying to survive, day to day,
and to find a new way.

or the young woman who was raped,
being humiliated on the witness stand,
and they call it justice!

or the man left standing
on the brink of losing it all...
the eyes of his family haunting him;
with nowhere to turn,
and no one to ask for help,
and a gun in his hand!

if poetry then is written

by the hand of God....
the hands are human!

Eric Cockrell

The Poet Endureth!

i stare at my face in the mirror,
and count with the heavy rhythm
of the clock... moment by moment...
every feeling, born and unborn,
every taste, intoxicating, burning the lips...
every smell, faint and overpowering...
every touch... real and imagined...
and who am i? and what have i to give?
i am the sound that you cant define,
cant put to words, cant control.
i am the fire that warms you, and destroys you...
the water you drink that drowns you;
the wind at your back, the infidel wind
that whispers to you in the middle of the night.
i am the small child, lost and crying,
i am the murderer, still someone's son.
i am the woman you'd die for,
that leaves you broken and bleeding.
i am the priest, the prophet, the thief,
the addict, the whore...
i am everything you believe in,
everything you're scared to admit you feel.
i am the tear no one sees you cry,
i am the fear you keep hidden.
i am the hungry man standing in line,
whose family is long gone.
i am the casket they buried your mother in...
i am the words written in stone,
that no one ever reads.
i am the stranger who steps in front of the car,
pushes you away, and is killed.
i am the path grown over,
... that you'd forgotten!
i am the kiss, the touch of flesh,
the cry of passion in the night.
i am the soul damned to hell,
burned at the stake by the righteous!
i am the hand that touches forbidden places,
that holds yours when you're alone.

i am every mistake you've ever made,
and some you want to make!
i am a lost soul with a glimpse of eternity,
nothing more, nothing less...
i am the poet endureth! i am nothing
but the dust beneath your feet...
i am merely the echo of what makes you human,
i have no name... i am everybody!

Eric Cockrell

The Poet Is....

the poet is a vase,
collecting tears like rainwater,
with a tiny hole in the bottom,
connecting to the ground.
the poet is a prism,
seperating colors from black and white,
then drawing black and white from colors,
dissolving and evolving.
the poet is an illusion,
that looks and smells like home,
redefining distance by closeness,
finding the familiar in a stranger.
the poet is an orphan,
a messenger, and a thief.
bringing you a lit candle,
and stealing your heart for a stand.
the poet is a carpenter,
building from scraps of wood.
using time rusted nails,
and an eye for dreams.
the poet is a healer,
and the moment you forgot,
on the way to remembering,
who you really are.
the poet is a bridge,
borrowed wings, and a cross.
a simple fire tended by no one,
and ears left behind by god.
the poet is a body,
grown tired in it's dying.
and the small winged creature without name,
waiting to follow the wind!

Eric Cockrell

The Poet..... (Which)

the gristled old man,
fishing from a handmade boat,
late afternoon sun,
the water still.

his old dog,
sleeping on the bank,
in the shade
of an older tree.

which?

Eric Cockrell

The Poetic Experience

writing for me is like hammering
a nail... you keep pounding till
it's driven. what i have tried
to do, in collusion with others,
is to amass a body of work that
celebrates the human in human
beings... with all its pain,
suffering, turmoil, and all the
trials, the human experience is
still the eternal experience...
the only hope for humanity to
survive lies in turning inward.
until we know ourselves, we can
never have the god experience,
and can never truly interact with
others, can never even see others,
much less know them! we are mere
reflections of each other, mere
reflections of god... the sameness
that lies below our differences
is both deep, and wide!

Eric Cockrell

The Poetic Experience (Number Four)

poetry lost itself,
lost it's connection,
and its ability to be
effective when it became
a secluded form, wrapped
in the academic world,
shaped by form and vague
images and intricate patterns.
but there have always been
those who walked a different
path, who dared!
for poetry to again reach
the hearts of the masses, we
have to speak their language!
we have to use images and
experiences that the common
man and woman both understand,
and have felt. we have to be real!
poetry is not a large volume
that sits on a shelf unopened...
poetry is the heartbeat of the people.
it has to taste like people, feel
like people, and stink like people!
at this late and urgent time,
it has nothing to do with praise,
with awards, or with fame...
it has to do with reaching out
into the sweat and the excrement,
the longing and the hurting, the
anger and the lostness... reaching
out and touching... i dont care if
anyone remembers my name 20 years
from now... what i care about is
whether what i write brings redemption
and healing to the human spirit!

Eric Cockrell

The Poetic Experience (Part Three)

we cry out for peace,
but there can be no peace
until we find peace within...
men who are not at peace
within... start wars, fight wars,
and kill innocent people.
the whole journey begins and
ends within... when we stray
from the path we become the tool
of suffering... we become fear!
the poetic experience seeks
to free us from our fears...
and it begins by being a mirror!

Eric Cockrell

The Poetic Experience (Part Two)

poetry is merely the human hymn,
and so the divine hymn. what
we see and feel... touch, taste,
and smell, and what we dont know,
and cant understand. each living
being is a universe in itself, and
each is just a splotch of a patchwork
quilt. when one being exhales, another
inhales... the earth turns, night comes
to relieve the day, morning comes to
fulfill night... such is the rhythm of
life, the beat of the hymn. poetry is
meant to be the bridge that connects,
it need be nothing more! if we truly
live we are the poem made flesh...
enough, and enough!

Eric Cockrell

The Poets

an old woman poet,
stood behind the table,
doling out plate after plate,
to the line of faces...
taking the time...
to ask each their name.

a young student poet,
jerked from the picket line,
beaten, and arrested...
now sits in jail.

the young man poet,
just home after a 12 hour shift,
went next door and mowed
his elderly neighbor's grass.

a young girl poet,
took in the stray cat,
fed it, and held it...
and rocked it to sleep.

the poor poet,
makes a pallot on the floor
of his empty room,
for the homeless to sleep on.

the old man poet,
goes to work again,
minimum wage with a smile,
to feed his sick wife...

the common poet,
build houses, works on machines,
tills gardens, works on cars...
treats everyone the same...
and no one knows his name!

The Poet's Job

the poet's job
is to question
that which cannot

be questioned!
to defy that which
cannot be defied!

to tear down the veil
that covers the stench
of the raw and the real!

to break down the walls
that separate human beings.
to refuse to follow....

for the sake of following.
to name the names
of the nameless aloud!

to stand naked, and pray
with an honest heart.
to stoke the fires of resistance

with a passion that illumines
the darkest of nights....
the poet's job... to be human!

Eric Cockrell

The Poet's Poem

the poet's poem,
the part of his body,
most precious of all....
he cant live without.

boxed up and wrapped,
presented as a gift
to the passing stranger
whose lips a 'quiver!

in word, in paint,
in carpenter fashion....
built as if a home
for the orphaned soul...

or potatoes and milk,
laid out on the table,
for the guests of both
this world and that!

or a blanket given
on some lonesome corner,
to the cold and shivering
face you cannot remember....

or a man on a cross,
misunderstood, maligned....
showing by action,
calling for action....

the poet's poem,
no charge other than
the price demanded by mirror,
the echo of your heart!

Eric Cockrell

The Poor Have Souls Too!

the poor have souls too...
dreams, hopes, and desires.
their hands have worked the hoe,
pushed the plow, swung the axe...
have held their children,
and touched with love.
their needs are real,
and the same as all others.
their hunger raw and real,
their minds needing answers.
they dont need anyone else
to live their lives,
they want to live their own.
peace, warmth, food, and shelter...
and medical care!
doesnt seem like too much to ask.
the poor are still people,
and people need people!

Eric Cockrell

The Power!

the highest form of art,
the highest form of philosophy,
the highest form of spirituality,
comes in the applied interaction
of peoples with each other...

taking the time to listen, to care,
to understand, to feel, to forgive,
to work together, and to see each
other in ourselves...

you cant write it any better, you
cant paint it any better, you cant
play it any better, you cant pray
it any better!

this is the power that created
the cosmos... and does so again
and again... the power that turns
the seasons, and brings the dawn...

this is the light that darkness
cannot swallow...

Eric Cockrell

The Price

we should have learned
in Vietnam... but no,
we keep aggressively
opening the doors...
keep our finger on the pulse
of those we would control...

wherever there's a dollar to be made!
we liberate for profit!
while in smoke filled rooms the
plans are made, ... to dominate,
to shape, and to destroy....

and somehow freedom becomes
enslavement... it's all good!
the bodies of women and children
killed without thought,
rot and stink in the ditches.

oil, power, turn the dollar wheel!
with 'God' on our side,
fear and lies as our tool....
do we dare sleep at night?

body bags and flags a waving....
but in the end,
who will pay...
the price?

Eric Cockrell

The Price Of Redemption

do the leaves of peace
fall from trees grown silent with rage?
boiled by the storms of subjugation...

does the moral man kill without remorse?
in the name of god,
in the name of justice both swift and brutal.....

does love have a face?
does the heart have a soul?
bent down with heavy load...

is the skin the value of the corpse?
do the bones lie from the ditch?
while freedom taunts the burning shore...

and who am i if not you?
whose unborn child beneath the bed?
betrayed by the price of redemption!

Eric Cockrell

The Prison Door (Clangs Open)

the prison door clangs open,
the man in me set free.
with nothing left
but the clothes on my back,
and feet that know
the way home...

rain begins to fall
with the coming of night.
i seek shelter beneath a bridge.
staring into the blackness
i see, i think i see...
one solitary star.

a star that tastes like bread,
and meat scorched by the flame.
that feels like warm blankets,
clean sheets, the bare skin of a woman.
a light that pours, invades a room,
and fills the room with living.

water drips down my face,
mixes with tears...
my fists open and close,
my mind the same.
and all the sounds of the night
become the sounds of breathing.

the prison door clangs open,
the body carried on a stretcher.
the lights flashing turn off,
no more need to hurry.
the driver stares blankly,
tires whisper prayers on wet roads!

Eric Cockrell

The Progress Of Man?

you cut the howl from your dogs,
blunt the claws of your cats...
then leave them for Buicks to devour
on hungry homeless roads.
cut the balls off your boys,
give them guns, make them soldiers.
then send them to die
under the flag of the lie.
sell your daughters like meat,
burn your grandchildrens dreams...
in the pipes of your excess
in smoke filled rooms.

the progress of man?

Eric Cockrell

The Racial Gun!

the racial gun
has always been pointed
at the masses....

by those who control us
for their own benefit.

'keep them afraid of each other,
make them hate each other,
tell them they're different!

anything to keep them
from realizing they're all human,
and joining together! '

anything to keep us from rising up,
and throwing off the chains
of oppression!

folks, there's only two kinds of people....
the masses, struggling, working, needing,
living, loving... just trying to get by....
all different colors, male and female....

and the ones who keep their finger on us,
well hidden, well insulated....
who take from us to feed their greed!

Eric Cockrell

The Real Revolution

</>
for too long
our bodies have been empty shells
driven by fossil fuels!

occupy Wall Street!
occupy New York!
occupy San Francisco....

occupy the whole damned country!
occupy our bodies!

fill
...the
.....emptiness

with
...human
.....desire,

compassion
....understanding
.....and determination!

the real revolution
lies in the human condition!

Eric Cockrell

The Revolution Began....

the revolution began this morning...
the trains and buses stopped running,
long haul truckers shut down their rigs.
miners came up out of the mines,
gulping air free and clear.
migrant workers left the fields,
farmers got off their tractors,
and walked for the house.
teachers put down their papers,
and locked the doors.
nurses and aides left the hospitals.
minimum wage slaves left stores,
restaurants, and trash trucks.
while bankers bolted the doors,
and sat in suicidal silence...
and Wall Street went deadly black.
armed troops deployed to guard assets,
laid down their weapons and walked away.
the wealthy shuddered in sudden panic,
as the tables were finally turned over!
the revolution began this morning,
and the morning news sounded the panic.
while somewhere atop empty buildings,
bells rang with the cadence of liberty!

Eric Cockrell

The Right To Love!

she's in love
with another woman...
they've been in love

for years.... life companions,
they complete each other.....
they have the right to love!

a hard working young man,
he loves another young man.
he makes him feel alive!

working together for a dream,
they find home in each other...
they have the right to love!

the young white student,
works a job while studying
for his degree...

he loves a dark skinned girl,
the most beautiful girl in the world.
they can talk, they can touch....

they have the right to love!

Eric Cockrell

The Room Is Bare

blackbird fallen;
candle wax on the table.
lie to me, love me
one more time...
the arching of your soul,
wrapped in legs around me...
the cry of the ocean
just outside the shell...
i kiss you, you taste
like my wanting,
words mean nothing;
black and white photographs
in a world of color...
i can feel the rumble
of the train on the tracks,
you bite my shoulder....
i open my eyes...
and the room is bare!

Eric Cockrell

The Same As I

i get so tired
of writing poems
about suffering....

but everywhere i look,
all around me,
people are hurting....

and try as i might,
i cant close my eyes,
cant shut my ears up

to the sounds of need and want.
and i cannot be silent
as long as there's one person

who is not free,
one person whose rights
have been violated....

one person who is hungry,
one person who is homeless,
one person sick who cannot

get medical care....
one person abused, enslaved,
or treated like property...

i cannot, and i will not stop,
for they are the same
as i... i see their faces

every time i look in the mirror!

Eric Cockrell

The Scar...

the scar on god's face,
looks a lot like
my mistakes and my failures...
yet she never speaks
a harsh word!

the limp as god goes walking,
smells like the times
that i have fallen,
turned away, or just ran...
yet she never says
what i already know!

the tear that god cries,
tastes like my selfish desires,
the times i've taken
when i should have given...
yet she never
opens that door!

the light in god's eyes,
sounds like the truth
that i cannot find a way to say...
yet she kisses my forehead goodnight,
and sows my dreams with hope!

Eric Cockrell

The Scriptures

i read the scriptures written in human faces,
in calloused hands, in bruises and scars.
in the spider's web, in the trail of the snail.
in the pot stained with use,
in the axe and the plow.
in the old woman's silence,
in the broken window.
in worn out boots, and the broken lock.
in the gravel drive,
in the eyes of the hungry....
in the fear of those oppressed by war.
in the dead squirrel's body,
in the nest left empty.
in the prisoner staring
through a window barred.
in the old man's chair,
a dog's turd and a hill of ants.
in the fallen leaf,
in the empty room.
in solitude and stillness,
in the prayer of loneliness.
in trash strewn in the alley,
in the grave unmarked.
in the truth of doubt,
in a puddle of rainwater.
in fresh cut grass,
in the cow fresh milked.
in the lover's touch,
in the dialogue of silence.
in the shovel, the hammer, and the flute.
in the grain of the old tree,
and the woman giving birth...
let us speak of nothing less!

Eric Cockrell

The Sculptor

the sculptor
works with slow
precision
in the late afternoon
light....

the room is bare;
and he is naked.

the old cat sits
curled in the windowsill...
life unto life.

his aged hands impart
the magic of life
having been lived....

his eyes see the depths
of every nook and cranny,
having travelled the distance

to nearness!

everything known,
everything felt,
everything touched...

given!

Eric Cockrell

The Seventh Plague

and there came a time
when darkness covered the land,
and sucked at the souls
of the living.

and the darkness had faces
insulated in plastic tombs,
waving flags and rhetoric,
thriving on despair.

and the lips of the dying
were parched with thirst;
bodies thrown in the great fires,
melted into vapor.

and the promise of apathy
came to be with violence.
the carcass of the eagle lay rotting,
feathers lost to the infidel wind...

Eric Cockrell

The Shadow Inside My Shadow

poverty is not my cousin,
is not my lover,
is not my preacher,
poverty is not my brother.

poverty is not my prayer,
or the song that i sing
is not my answer
poverty is not my dream.

poverty is not my teacher,
not the hand that i hold.
poverty is not my anger,
not my spirit, not my soul.

ah! but this poverty is real
it races thru my mind
crashes into my heart,
& leaves me deaf and blind.

poverty is my companion.
the aching cold inside my hollow.
the blow behind my eyes,
poverty is the shadow
inside my shadow.

Eric Cockrell

The Shadow... (My Heart)

the shadow lying on the bed,
staring, almost breathless waiting...
for the sound of my footsteps,
and the scent of my returning...
was, in fact, my heart!

Eric Cockrell

The Sharing Of Breath!

death will be...
the best poem i ever write.
quiet, simple,
full of intimate dissolving...
as if reason identified
in the sharing of breath!

Eric Cockrell

The Shore I Seek...

the mistakes i've made
be but the oars,
and my failures,
the small boat.
the ocean i travel
storms with forgiveness...
the shore i seek,
the human heart!

Eric Cockrell

The Sickness!

if you cant buy it,
sell it, trade it,
wield it like a weapon,

or use it as a tool
to manipulate or abuse people
for your own profit...

you dont want it!
and therein lies the sickness
that destroys the human condition.

Eric Cockrell

The Side Of Truth

i dont lie well,
never have...
and wont say things
you want to hear.
the truth is the truth,
i paint the picture naked.
but i do so with the knowledge
that we are all human,
very much so.
i dont judge other people.
i dont sell out.
i dont care about convenience.
and i wont blindly follow.
and at this age,
i wont shut up till i'm ready,
and i wont back down.
i'll admit to my own mistakes,
you deal with your own.
i try to always be compassionate,
and i fiercely demand freedom.
what i know i've learned the hard way,
and what i have i freely give.
i stand on the side of truth,
learning with every step!

Eric Cockrell

The Signature Of Angels...

he said:

'you are a wretched man,
and bound for hell.

for you are not a disciple
of our creed...

i cannot pray for you,
you wear the mark of Cain! '

i smiled, and replied:

'ah, but i read the scriptures
of the human heart,
written by the indelible hands
of passion and time.

i lift in prayer the sweat and the tears
of hungry souls struggling to survive.

i sing the hymns of the naked body,
my offering, myself, without restraint.

if i be wretched,

then stoke the fires!

the mark on my forehead,

tis the signature of angels! '

Eric Cockrell

The Simple Prayer Of A Child

'missing in action'...
they didnt know...
dont get your hopes up,
we're doing all we can...

she lay on the bed
and wept uncontrollably...
the little boy sat in the darkness,
thinking...

he got down off his bed,
and down on his knees:
'God, if you're out there,
if you're real...

help my mommy, help me,
bring my daddy home! '
the room was still,
he could hear his own breathing...

suddenly light poured through
the window, and flooded his room.
the little boy got up
and ran to his mother's side.

'mommy, mommy, daddy's ok,
he's not lost...'
'what do you mean, honey?
what are you saying? '

'he's not lost, mommy...
remember what he said
before he left...
he's in our hearts! '

she took the little boy
in her arms and hugged him...
they fell asleep in the stillness.
the next morning the phone rang.

she answered, and listened,
her mouth agape...
'what is it mommy, what is it? '
she put down the phone...

'they found him, he's ok,
they said it was dumb luck...'
they hugged each other crying.
dumb luck, i think not...

the simple prayer of a child!

Eric Cockrell

The Simple Price

the sky has fallen,
and that on which we walk,
the crumbled streets of heaven,

destroyed by our hell!
in the end the end
is that which we bought,

for the simple price
of the human soul!

Eric Cockrell

The Simple...

follow that star...
to forlorn manger bare
'neath skies of poverty's making...

the simple, the common,
the calloused hands,
the baby's cry in cold night's grasp....

the light so few could see...
no temple, no righteous robes,
only a carpenter and wife...

no kings, no prophets,
no blaze of fury....
a child born in stillness,

that stillness formed....
abused, misunderstood,
his memory used and twisted

into something else and less....
never knowing, never seeing,
the simple truth....

the hands, fully human,
that dared to touch...
changing the darkness

with compassion's forms...
as if a leaf turning,
and no one heard!

therein lies the beauty,
and the stillness!

Eric Cockrell

The Simplest Of Things...

there is a rare beauty
in the simplest of things...
the door knob tarnished,
the book with the worn cover.
the hallelujah shout of the snail,
rain water standing in an old tire.
the lampshade covered with dust,
the iron sitting unattended.
the child's toy left on the floor,
the hand that always somehow fits.
the old woman's heavy breathing,
the coffee cup stained half empty.
the cry of young lovers from a distant window.
the dog's low growl at something unseen.
the tattered remnants of the robin's nest,
the broken eggshell clinging to grass.
the old hymn sung by the man working his garden...
the swing of the axe, the stacking of wood.
the spider clinging to the outhouse wall,
potatoes laid out in the cellar for winter.
the grave solitary three days after the funeral.
the cat cradled on the step while it rains.
the laughter of a love long in journey.
the cup of coffee shared with the transient stranger.
the prayer of the child, and the room gone dark....
words spoken from the heart with hands and feet.

Eric Cockrell

The Sinner, Or The Sin

are we the judge,
or the judged?
the sinner, or the sin?
holiness, or brokenness,
the fire,
or burning branches?
do we hate
the wrong in others?
or the wrong in ourselves
we cannot see?
do we point
like bare branches
to the moon?
or lie on the ground,
and rot?
who do we change?
where do we begin?
are we then,
the sinner, or the sin?

Eric Cockrell

The Sky (Belongs To All)

i saw Jesus
in a drunk tank
in Oklahoma,
after i watched
a man die...
found Buddha
in the stillness
on a cool basement floor...
felt the Tao,
on a mountainside,
listening to water
running over rocks.
i found myself,
again this morning,
in the line outside
the homeless shelter.
all of this, and more,
in families torn apart by war,
in the addict who does what he has to,
in the poor, and hungry,
the sick, and the dispossessed.
in the broken, and the angry...
in the hopeless with trembling mouths.
in the child born without a future,
in the man who closed the door!

each way has its own wings,
but the sky belongs to all!

Eric Cockrell

The Small Lamp

the small lamp
beside the bed in the empty room,
burns strong with silence,
and waits without reason.
the pawprint of the dog
beneath the window,
identifying emptiness.
and the broom in the corner,
stands ever on guard.
the book of passage unread,
urine stained sheets.
even god almighty
cant control the wind,
that blows through the window,
and fills the room.
while babies are born,
and wars are stopped.
yet the earth waits without breath,
for the coming of love!

Eric Cockrell

The Small People!

it is then...

the small people,
common men and women,
who by their hands built this dream,
who plowed the fields,
paved the roadways...
who picked your fruit,
who built your small businesses.
who worked your factories and mills.
who built your homes and churches.
who drove your trucks, who fixed your cars,
who made your clothes and your furniture.
who worked for too little
to make you too rich....
who hauled your trash,
who wiped your asses.
who worked as cashiers, clerks, and salesmen.
who covered for you when you were sick,
yet worked when they were sick.
who laid your bricks, who cut your logs,
who stocked your grocery stores.
who dug your graves and fought your damn wars,
the small people, that you throw away!

no jobs, no work, no benefits, no insurance...
no medical care, no cars...
no lights, no rent, no food, no shelter...
no name, no reason to be!

the small people...
too old, too tired, too angry, too used up.
self taught, no degree, experience doesnt count.

the small people....
pushed into a corner,
stacked in the alleyways.
broken wheels turning on broken glass.

the small people....

staring back from your mirror,
from the darkness outside your window.

the small people...
who are not going
to take it anymore!

Eric Cockrell

The Smallest Things

the small print
of a cat's paw on
your trembling lips,
stopped the tears,
and the roar of hunger
in the tiny bud opening.
the tongue that gropes
for a dropp of rain...
seed wrapped in dirt,
that sunlight,
and turning set free.
the smallest things,
bring form to shadow.
it is in the smallest things
that we find the immortal!

Eric Cockrell

The Smell Of Death

do wild animals run from us
because they can smell death,
emanating from our pores?
is the rage they see in our eyes
named, spoken or unspoken,
or directed inward?
and the fear itself thunders,
as if in warning!
is that why we run from each other?
from ourselves?
what are we running to?

Eric Cockrell

The Song Of Blood

the call of the ages,
the song of blood...
the prayer deep and silent,
the cross chosen and carried.

the hand that is miracle,
the eyes that search,
the spirit that is wind...
the prophecy of experience!

crying out for a distant God,
we found our own selves.
returning to the cave,
dancing shadows by the fire.

from darkness conceived,
molded by flesh into light.
the answer and the promise,
held captive by the heart...

the call of the ages,
the song of blood...

Eric Cockrell

The Song Of Longing

i am the tiller of unplowed fields,
i am the owl waiting for night.
i am the male wolf,
panting in the starlight,
following the scent that maddens.
i am the hunter with sharp edged spear,
i am the storm that pillages the night.
i am the woodsman whose axe be ready,
i am the tom cat patrolling the slums.
i am the wind that blows out the candle,
i am the fire that consumes...
the smell of blood, the taste of wetness,
i am gunpowder stains on the trembling hand.
i am the web, and i am the lair.
i am the waves tugging at boundaries.
i am the window left open,
the fire untended.
i am snow covering the grave.
i am the night, erect and hungry.
i am the dawn, waiting on the unmade bed.
i am the whistle of the faraway train....
wild horses roaming the prairies.
i am hard whiskey, and i am warm milk.
the nipple hardened by desire.
i am footprints in the forbidden garden,
i am the song of longing!

Eric Cockrell

The Soul Calls!

white twin, black twin,
concepts and lies.
images on images,
truth revealed dies.
prayers, simple touch,
falling prey to fate.
fires consume fires,
love is born of hate.

light fails, shadows talk,
the stranger stinks like god.
swords being sharpened,
horses being shod.
bombs fall, bodies cry,
the battle for the self.
the dead sing, the lost dream,
the book still on the shelf.

the hammer strikes the anvil,
the wind cuts you to the bone.
put on your boots, pick up your saddle.
the soul calls the body home!
the soul calls the body home...

hellbound streets, love stained sheets,
the lover is betrayed.
sold on the blocks, down by the docks,
hearts for pawn and trade.
poverty strikes, humility burns,
dignity lost in the crowd,
survival edge, walks the ledge,
only honesty allowed!

the hammer strikes the anvil,
the wind cuts you to the bone.
put on your boots, pick up your saddle.
the soul calls the body home!
the soul calls the body home....

The Sound Of Silence Praying....

tis the sound of thunder,
perhaps brings rain.
the sound of crying,
that drives the pain.
the footfall of a thousand angels weeping.
tis the sound of faces,
without form or name.
the sound of feet,
with nothing to gain.
the star above a thousand children sleeping.

tis the heart unbound,
the shattered soul.
tis the hand extended,
that cannot hold.
the waiting at the edge of endless night.
tis the broken vase,
the candle spent.
the holy message,
that was never sent.
the battered spirit too tired to fight.

tis the kiss of god,
the scent of sin.
the source of light,
the bastard wind.
the bodies strewn in the ditch.
redemption's song,
the healing torch.
the stranger standing,
on your porch.
the poor reaching to help the rich.

with endless gratitude,
we touch, we feel.
crosses laid down,
till empty be filled.
tis the sound of silence praying.

tis the sound of you,
inside of me.
tis wings unfurled,
the captive free.
the darkness screaming birthing light.
tis the fiber of dreams,
the flesh made cloth.
the call of fire,
that drinks the moth.
the words spoken restoring sight.

with endless sadness,
we touch, we feel.
crosses laid down,
till empty be filled.
tis the sound of silence praying.

Eric Cockrell

The Sound Of Wings.....

from the bars of the cell,
i learned freedom from the body.
from the underside of the bridge,
i learned home has not a house.
from forty years of working,
i learned the bitterness of the slave.
from the political lies,
i learned that truth cant be bought.
from the books i read,
i learned to reason and question.
from the heroin needle,
i learned the value of life.
from love lost,
i learned how to love.
from doubt i learned seeking,
in seeking i found god to be more.
from the scars on my heart,
i learned to be a man.
from battles fought and lost,
i learned the need for peace.
from discrimination i learned equality,
from anger i learned forgiveness.
from the mirror i learned responsibility...
from the bars of the cell,
i learned the sound of wings!

Eric Cockrell

The Sound... (Of Wings Departing)

if i pick the petals of your lips,
and bathe inside your hair.
if my tongue travels the map
of your lost desire,
and my soul whispers to your shadow.
if i cling to you till two become one,
and then open my hands, will you fly?
if i drink your wetness both deep and long,
and clothe your stillness with passion....
if i kiss your anger with burning pulse,
and name each empty chamber.
will you remember that the sparrow came?
or at least the sound of wings departing?

Eric Cockrell

The Sounds Of Living And Dying

listening to the sounds,
earth turning seasons,
waves pounding against

distant shores... fishing boats
setting out to sea....oil rigs
pulsing in demonic rhythm...

big trucks barreling down
faceless interstates... tractors
getting ready to rip the earth....

babies being born, lovers
groaning with passion...
gunfire, bombs exploding!

the silent whispers of the homeless...
gravediggers digging graves.
carpenters pounding nails...

elephants trumpeting, lions roaring,
the hawk's wings beating against
the sky.... and the old woman

dying... the empty room echoes
the prayers of a forgotten life.....
the sounds of living and dying,

anguish and ecstasy... amen!

Eric Cockrell

The Sounds, Within And Without

have you ever listened
to the sounds of
a young boy praying
after his father and mother
have split up

have you heard the sound
a small animal makes when
it's hit by a car?
kinda like the sound a child makes
when it's split open by friendly fire!

have you felt the deep down
sound the young boy makes
when the judge sentences him
to hard time
the sound you cant see on his face

have you heard the sound
of the old man's heart
fighting to hold on
in an empty room
with the curtains pulled

have you ever heard the sound
of the wolf's howl, and
the hawk's scree
buried deep beneath
the layers that cover
your own wildness
are you listening

Eric Cockrell

The Sparrow That Flew!

kiss me!
like you remember,
the taste of my flesh...
with lips that quiver,
sucking light from shadow.
undressing slowly
in sync with the earth,
the softest flutter
of touch ignites!

take me!
like tides hug the shore,
mountains tremble,
and winter trees shout!
the pulse of my passion
surging deep, long, and strong.
till you break the storm
like a twig neath your feet.

swallow me!
till i am no more,
my body a sacrifice
left at eternity's door.
burn me till nothing
is left to withhold.
the prayer on the cross,
the sparrow that flew!

Eric Cockrell

The Spirit Hunts...

sensual,
words spoken truth.
taste like rain.
sexual,
the spirit hunts,
for thoughts that undress,
and feeling's true touch!

Eric Cockrell

The Spirit!

that which you can touch,
but not hold,
you can feel,
but not define!

closing your eyes,
you can see!
breathing in deeply,
you can know!

Eric Cockrell

The Split Moment Between..

the split moment between, when the tide comes in, and the tide goes out... that is god! the split moment between, the tears of a child, and the body of the old man being buried, that is god! the split moment between, the firing of the big guns, and the laying down of weapons, that is god! the split moment between, the firing of the revolver, and the prison door clanging shut, that is god! the split moment between, ejaculation and childbirth, that is god! the split moment between, the rise of a civilization, and its downfall, that is god! the split moment between, remorse, repentance, responsibility, and prayer, that is god! the split moment between, falling in love, and saying goodbye, that is god! the split moment between, nakedness and truth, that is god! the split moment between, loss and giving, that is god! the split moment between, darkness and dawn.... well you know!

Eric Cockrell

The Spoon... (In Our Hands)

the spoon in our hands
digs the graves of starving children.
our choice to turn away,
buries those afflicted by war.
when we take first,
without a thought to giving...
we bury the body of god,
among the poor and the homeless.

Eric Cockrell

The Stain

they bury the bodies
in shallow graves....
never forgetting the faces

of hunger and need.
great planes flying overhead,
covered trucks on dusty roads.

soldiers with guns, blank stares,
cold as the oil in their veins....
the reporter speaks, eyes half lowered...

you turn off the tv,
and go to wash your hands...
but you cant wash away the stain!

Eric Cockrell

The Stargazer

the stargazer
wrapped up his eyes
in a small box

tied neatly
with a ribbon
and a bow....

and gave it
to the little boy,
lying afraid, and

sleepless....alone,
and crying in
an empty apartment....

the little boy stopped crying,
closed his eyes, went to sleep...
and dreamed....

of a world where mothers
and fathers wanted their children...
and loved them....

the stargazer took his cane,
and made his way down the alley
to a stoop, and sat down...

to listen... for the song
of the living.... feeling around
for another box!

Eric Cockrell

The Statement We Make!

the statement we make,
be not written on paper...
it is written,
in the tired eyes of the workers,
underpaid, and struggling.
in the hunger of the unemployed,
in the rage of the homeless.
in the walking of the broken,
in the families of dead soldiers.
in the anger of the young,
with no place to turn.
in the seething of the prisons,
and the tomb infested colleges.
in the smoke filled air,
and the rivers full of waste.
in the haunted mines,
behind the wheel of the big trucks.
in the pot standing empty,
in the fury of the poets.

black and white,
male and female,
old and young,
Christian, Muslim, and atheist...
straight and gay,
all standing equal,
feet set with respect.
an army of one becoming many...
demanding freedom!

the statement we make,
with our bodies and souls,
with our very lives...
written in human blood!

Eric Cockrell

The Stench (Rising)

the stench... rising,
from your halls of justice,
from your plate glass
Wall Street windows,
from the steps of your churches,
from your brick home suburbs...

is the dried, crusted blood
of your Native American
brothers and sisters...
rising from their reservation
kerosene huts written in poverty,
culture raped whiskey tainted
white god judgements...

rising... till it fills
your nostrils, gags your mouth,
and breaks the shroud of your freedom
with the ghosts of what has been...
redemption demands justice!
the pale horse has come!

Eric Cockrell

The Stink

the stink...
human excrement,
starving mouths,
skeleton bodies...
breath short and aching.
blood on the hands,
violent scars that tremble,
in the darkest night,
burning out of control.
hatred fear,
that drives and shatters.
the grip on the cup,
broken, and shaking.
hot love molten,
howl, and moan...
the stars in the sky,
falling like hot knives!
silent prayers,
tongues ripped from mouths,
that move like fish,
praying to the water.
feet walking through mud,
hands covered in ashes.
human hearts beating,
souls rotting with desire!

Eric Cockrell

The Storm

I am the storm,
And the stillness
That follows.
The branch torn
From the tree.
The trill of the birds,
The nest abandoned.
Tiny prints in the dirt.

I am the shout,
The distance and
The echo.
The damp spot on
The borrowed thought.
I am the horn,
The axe handle,
And the wagon.
I am the tongue
That climbs the trellis.

I am the shadow
Beneath your eyes.
The broken things
That form your lips.
The taste of your dreams,
And your common expanse.
The scent of your longing,
Drowning the night.

I am the storm,
You are the body!
And fire trembles
At your gates!

Eric Cockrell

The Stranger!

everything into the pot...
hearts, souls, dreams, prayers,
old and young, flavors and colors
diverse... simmering, simmering...
keep the fire steady.

seasoned with experience,
with turmoil, and trials..
we wait in dead silence
for the feast to come.
great birds circle, clouds heavy...

with rain... all must come,
or none, it just happens that way!
in the distance faint music,
there's a knock on the door...
the Stranger has arrived,

and time has expired!

Eric Cockrell

The Struggle

and so, the struggle continues... we beat our heads up against
imaginary walls constructed by our fears and desperation.
pay something on the light bill, something on the car... damn,
the rent's due again, ... what do you do?
work 50 hours a week for the same money you made in 1980...
but it wont foot the bill in 2011.
everybody's tense, angry, lashing out... desperate people do
stupid things... families disintegrate, or are lost altogether to
the storm... people living in beat up old cars, people hungry,
lost without direction... and nobody seems to care, or to be
able to do anything about it...
our young people fighting in mindless wars overseas come home
to... no jobs!
we have become expendable commodities... numbers, excess
numbers without names...
sometimes i feel like i'm alone in a savage wilderness, with a
pocket knife and a map i cant read. i think we all do
we have got to find a way, to find our way... and i think the
only way we can do it is together!

thought for the day... love hard... fight harder!

Eric Cockrell

The Table Shared (For Fela!)

let the door close quietly, friend.
the candle burns all the way down.
the books all closed, the letters packed,
the footprints of loving lost in sand.
the storm is over, the world begins anew,
the song of the grasses fills the stillness.
the trees still bowed in deep respect,
for one who came, raged, and breathed...
we are no more than small things done,
but certainly no less!
the laughter, the tears, the napkin folded,
the cup of companions, the table shared!

Eric Cockrell

The Thin Veil (Fear)

the thin veil that
seperates us from each other
is only fear disguised,

fear
....of
.....ourselves....

fear of the reflection
of ourselves in each other....

fear
....of
.....our
.....own
.....failures...

fear
....of
.....our
.....own
.....mortality!

Eric Cockrell

The Things I've Lost

in the things i've lost i found god....
not in the things themselves,
but in the empty spaces left behind!
in moments given and forgotten,
in laughter that never took a name.
in the sound of breathing that is peaceful sleep,
in the tiny light of a single flame.
in random snowflakes that need not redemption,
in callouses that become the hand.
in stories shared with small children,
in the sky seen through a prison window.
in the dog curled against my feet,
in a meal shared with strangers.
in the beautiful eyes of the dying child,
in the touch of the old woman's hand.
in the sound of wings saying farewell to autumn,
in the crunch of frost covered grass.
in the anger of my enemy,
when we both sat down to talk.
in the stories old boots could tell,
and the dreams that eyes reveal.
in the hand in mine and the feet beside,
in the 'thank you' whispered over the grave.
in the silent conversation of old friends,
in the rose that bloomed out of season.
in the sacredness that stinks,
of human endeavor and holy compassion!

Eric Cockrell

The Thinking Man...

the thinking man...
always walks somewhere between,
the cross of Jesus,
an elephant's tusk,
and Hemingway's shotgun!
always exposing the ragged edge
to both sun and rain....
as if daring,
the soul to breathe,
and the hungered heart to beat!

Eric Cockrell

The Thirteenth Street Bus

god died...
nothing else unusual about the day.
the Thirteenth Street bus was late again,
people passed each other walking heads down.
when the bus finally arrived,
no one was there.
old Mr. Peterson and his crippled wife,
were nowhere to be seen.

three hours earlier...
an angry young man sat alone,
hugging his knees and shaking,
in an empty room neath a bare light bulb.
unable to focus or think,
peeling back the layers of hell...
consumed by the rage of need.

old Mr. Peterson made the coffee,
and boiled water for oatmeal.
two creams and a sugar,
and he took a cup,
to his wife still lying in bed.
he felt the faint smile of the wrinkled face,
birds just outside the window were singing..
45 years, or maybe yesterday,
he didnt know or care anymore.

the enraged young man
caught Mr. Peterson in the kitchen,
and cracked his skull with a lead pipe.
he rifled his pockets for what he could get,
and started slamming through drawers.
Mrs. Peterson hobbled in on her walker,
he stabbed her with a kitchen knife...
and left her dying on the floor,
as he pillaged the house....
the birds were silent as he ran.

when the police burst through the door,

it was already too late.
his body hung in an empty closet,
while the radio blared in stark despair.
crumpled clothes in the corner,
a mattress unmade in the center of the room.
a food stamp card and a dirty needle,
an unopened letter from the unemployment office.
a lone picture on a stack of boxes,
taken three years earlier...
the young man in his military uniform,
the day he came home from Iraq.

three funerals on the same day,
no one attended either.
a borrowed preacher in a coffee stained suit,
a few words and a worn out prayer.
it began to rain, and it was over,
three lives that never were.
three short paragraphs in the newspaper,
the county picked up the tab.

god died...
or maybe we died,
passing behind blacked out windows.
standing behind indifferent curtains,
lips moving but never speaking.
the Thirteenth Street bus was on time that day,
but it didnt even bother to stop!

Eric Cockrell

The Time That God Walks

why does deliverance feel like
the old woman's jagged fingernails
digging in the dirt?
while poetry screams from
weeping willows and dead spiders...
light finds its way through crack and crevice,
dancing in the little boy's palm!
there is a song that dwells
in things that seem most still.
graveyards come alive in the dead of night.
and streetlights write history
on streets deserted and quiet.
while lamps shine in closed windows
as a testament to memory.
this is the time that god walks,
her long hair grey with suffering.
and stopping on the corner she lights a smoke,
while stray cats rub against her bony legs.
'if only they had drunk the cup of suffering,
they would have known! '
she puts out her smoke,
and starts sweeping away bodies!

Eric Cockrell

The Tongue

I am the tongue,
The wick, and the shoe.
The fallen nest, the unnamed star.
Conceived from dust,
And forged from steel.
I carry the name
Of bodies without faces.
I bury the bone,
And tend the fire.
I wash, i bandage,
I thrust, i stink.
No more than stone,
No less than wind.
I am your heart,
Calling your soul!

Eric Cockrell

The Torch Of Freedom

we light the torch of freedom
when we put a name
to every face
a hand in every hand,
a cup and a bowl
before every hungry soul

we light the torch of freedom
when we restore dignity
in our every action
when we take responsibility
for every thought,
every word,
every deed.

we light the torch of freedom
when we give more than
we can afford to.
give unconditionally,
give without remorse!
we light the torch of freedom

Eric Cockrell

The True Democracy!

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the howl of the wolf,
the caw of the crow,
the growl of the bear,

the scree of the hawk....
the stamp of the deer,
the language of whales,

the whisper of the trees,
the silent affirming mountains....
the song of the rivers,

the chant of the grasses....
all raised in the court of living...
voices crying out against injustice,

against the works of the humans
that would destroy their home!
the true democracy has voted...

and we're out!

Eric Cockrell

The True Disciple (For Hune)

the true disciple,
wearing the robes of doubt...
dividing the atoms of the soul,
searching for fibers that connect.
exploring universes of question,
whetted by the blade of truth;
to immerse in 'i and thou'...
crossing the final desert
to the promised land!
the true disciple,
follows his own footsteps!

Eric Cockrell

The True Revolution

The weapons of the true
Revolution are neither guns,
Nor planes, nor bombs...

But free thought, and conscience!

Eric Cockrell

The Truth About Jesus

what made Jesus
the force that changed
history forever?

was it His death on
the cross? or was it
His life, the way He lived?

He dared to live compassion
with human hands... knowing
the risk, He took it....

He knew that all lives
are connected... and lived
what He knew to be true....

'the kingdom of heaven
within you...'

His death merely an extension
of His life... the final step
of a long journey....

'the way, the truth, and the life...'
compassion, compassion, compassion...
God's hands are human!

Eric Cockrell

The Truth About War

all wars are wrong!
war is killing masked in ideals.
most of the people killed
in wars are not soldiers,
- often women and children.

we dont have the right to invade,
to conquer, or to mold other countries.
we dont own them!
we dont even own the earth
we're living on.

killing is wrong.
all of life is sacred.
we dont have the right
to take another's life.
we dont have the right
to play God...
we're not even very good
at being human.

fear, insecurity, greed...
no matter what the propaganda,
it's all lies!
the act of war is
the act of murder....

democracy doesnt take by force...
it allows human choice to prevail.
war is the machine of the soulless,
peace is a conscious decision!

Eric Cockrell

The Truth And The Lie

the truth is
that the lie has worn thin
and tastes like vomit
in the mouths of the hungry,

the homeless, and the hopeless.

'make them hate each other,
because of color or creed,
make them afraid of each other,
tell them they're different
and that anyone different is dangerous'

keep them fighting each other
while you steal them blind
so easy, so easy

wake up, dammit!

we are all human beings
more alike than different
maybe if we tried fighting
and standing together

for world peace, for equal opportunity
for the right of all to eat and work
to raise our families, and to live
to think and speak our thoughts
freely with respect for all

and maybe if we stood up to the elite
and demanded a more equal distribution
of all things needed

and learned to work together
with the forces of nature and spirit

then, and only then
will we find the truth

together as one
and be set free!

Eric Cockrell

The Truth That Sets You Free!

the worth of truth lies not
in whether Buddha said it,
Jesus said it, or even one of
the great thinkers or poets
said it...

the worth of truth lies in
whether you've experienced it,
felt it, lived it, whether it
is exuded through the pores of
your very being...

this is the truth that sets
you free... the truth that changes,
breathes, and lives!

Eric Cockrell

The Universe...

i thought i was the universe,
but i was only a leaf.
when i fell in the forest,
there was no one to hear my cry.
when i turned brittle and brown,
no one mourned my decay.
when i became lost in the earth,
i found i was the universe!

Eric Cockrell

The Urn

ashes spilling
from the urn...
a thousand hollow goodbyes
and hellos dissolve.
it's been said:
death makes all men equal,
so what of life?
and why the tears
o'er an unmarked grave?

Eric Cockrell

The Urn....

He finally pulled in the drive.
Another endless night at work.
Exhausted, he turned off the car,
and stumbled for the back door.
The neighborhood cat rubbed
against his legs as he fumbled
for the key.
As he opened the door, he noticed
that the light over the sink was on.
Shaking his head, he shrugged, and set
down his lunchbox.
He reached in the cupboard for the
bottle and a glass. He poured a small
shot, and hesitated for a moment.
He could hear the night just outside
the window. Something inside of
him let down. He kicked back the shot,
and headed for the bathroom.
A quick shower, and he found his way
to the bedroom. Lying naked on the
bed, he lit a smoke, trying not to think.
He could hear the ticking of the clock in
the hallway. He put out the cigarette, and
dozed.

He awakened to the scent of her perfume.
He heard her voice, whispering, 'be still'.
He felt the presence of her body in the bed.
Her long hair draped across his face. He
felt her on top of him, her heat and her desire.
He raised his face to kiss her....
And then she was gone! Startled, he groped
at the bed, clutching air. He sat up and flipped
on the lamp.
The room was empty. A few crumpled dirty
clothes in the floor. The book he'd been reading
on the nightstand. But no sign of her!
His hands shaking, he lit a smoke, and blinked.
He looked around the room again.

Every nook, every cranny, every crack in the paint.
Finally, his eyes fixed on her dresser.
A picture of her on their wedding day. A half empty
bottle of her favorite perfume. And the urn.... the
urn, with her wedding ring lying on the base.
He flipped off the lamp, and wept.

Eric Cockrell

The Voice

We are the voice
They most want stilled.
The ear they most
Want silenced.
We, the hearts, they
Most fear, bound.
We, the souls, they
Cant stop, fettered.
We, the bodies, that
Bring their fall.
We, the question, that
Turns the page.
We, the words, of
Conscious change.
We, the breath, of
Human endeavor.

We, the voice,
They cannot still.

Eric Cockrell

The Walking Poor

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the walking poor,
from the housing projects,
and the trailer parks...

month to month,
till the checks run out...
food stamp cards,

small items stolen and pawned,
trading pills, or meth for
day to day...

the walking poor,
a multi-colored sea,
lapping at the shore of prosperity

like a bastard dog....
salvation army dressed,
often mission fed,

preyed on by the holy
bent on their salvation!
unemployment lines,

struggling for GED's....
going to school just long enough,
to use the grants to survive!

joined by the elderly,
foreclosed, and beaten.
in chairs, on canes....

not enough for their med's,
not enough money to eat...
and now the factory ghosts,

their lives sold out;
their calloused hands idle,

dangerous with anger....

walking the streets,
staring in the windows
still open.....

with bricks in their minds,
small caliber handguns in their thoughts...
the walking poor....

beating a path
...to the capital!

Eric Cockrell

The War Machines... (If)

the war machines
of the world,
spend enough money
every eight days,
to feed the hungry
of the world for a year!

what the hell are we thinking?
if we fed the hungry,
housed the homeless,
took care of the sick,
and gave everyone the chance
to work for a fair wage...
what would be left to fight for?

if we taxed the rich,
and brought down the concept
of different classes...
if we learned to consume
only what we really need,
and to put back more
than we take...

if we abolished the strongholds
of religions and nations...
and saw and treated each other
as equals...
if we quit worrying about
outer space, and explored
our inner spaces...
if...

Eric Cockrell

The Way They Are!

love people the way they are, not the way
you want them to be.... only then can you
become what you need to be.... human!

Eric Cockrell

The Way To Success

how many bodies
lie beneath your skyscraper world?
how many broken hands

and broken feet,
every time your stocks go up?
how many faces lost

with every gallon of gas you pump?
how many children are buried
in the vaults of your banks?

how many cries of hunger?
and how many tears?
how many of the silent dead
do you pass on the way to success?

Eric Cockrell

The We In I, The I In We!

thermal meltdown, final countdown,
democracy defines itself!
our own soldiers, we grow bolder,
chased by the ghosts of hell!

1st amendment, 6th commandment,
freedom exacts a price.
national boundaries, personal boundaries,
mice become men, men become mice!

all men equal, all men free..
all men want their dignity.
freedom of choice, freedom to be....
the we in i, the i in we!

faceless jobless, hopeless homeless,
living hard on the streets.
selling pills, shotgun thrills,
gotta be quick on your feet.

hospitals turn away, old men dont pray,
got nothing left to lose.
gunshots, speed off, tag number, all's lost,
somebody pays the dues....

all men equal, all men free....
all men want their dignity.
freedom of choice, freedom to be...
the we in i, the i in we!

Eric Cockrell

The Wetness....

when the shells are spent,
and the bodies lay quiet.
when the ravens full,
lumber in stillness.
when the spider's web is full,
the felled tree rotted.
when ants stagger in drunken delirium.
when the cat's claw is broken,
the window painted over.
and the name of the logs
forgotten by fire...
all that's left, all that remains,
the trail and the scent of the wetness

Eric Cockrell

The Window Forever, Nailed Shut!

wetness,
fallen leaves,
decaying....

the blood of
women and children
dripping to the
naked earth....

the tears of
the forgotten,
falling
like burning knives
on hollowed faces...

the distorted dreams
of the dreamless,
damp, and heady,
steaming the hungry
shameless void...

the electric singing juices
of my sweet madness,
filling your mouth,
your devouring wetness....

dripping,
falling,
steaming,

like slow peels of thunder
to the bare floor....

the window forever,
nailed shut!

Eric Cockrell

The Womb, And The Passion!

stillness...

the voice of God,
calling us back

to our true selves...

the healing touch
of the Lover's hand;

that drink of water

that quenches parched lips,
and restores life

to the living...

the music of the eternal,
the womb, and the passion!

Eric Cockrell

The Woodcarver

the Woodcarver works
in the morning stillness,
with chisel and blade
and an eye for intimate detail...

sunlight sifts through the windows,
time caught, a butterfly in the hand
that's careful not to close...
no extravagant movements...

nothing left undone...
life, a bare bulb, almost
too hot to touch...
the hands of the spirit tell all...

with a gentle blade,
sharp as death, yet allowing...
He unveils your heart
in the stillness of an empty room.

the Woodcarver works...

Eric Cockrell

The Working Class

hard calloused old hands,
back bent with time and work.
feet beaten and worn,
old tired eyes that still twinkle.

i love the working class.
am more at home
with truckers, farmers,
and factory workers,
than politicians and priests.

the lives built brick by brick,
silent years of sacrifice.
hard lines of faith and worry,
and moments of gentle caring.

the hand extended,
the heart that's honest.
the love of passion,
and blowing off steam.

the cook pot, and the table,
set for whoever walks through the door.
neighbor standing behind neighbor,
the saturday night fire,
and the sunday prayer.

i love the working class...
the people that built your cities,
paved your roads,
that have grown your food,
and made your goods...

so what the hell are you doing to us?

Eric Cockrell

The Working Poor!

the working poor
are like seeds planted
in a field....

if you plant enough,
you can cull the weaker ones,
and have a good crop

to do the job...
this is the mentality
that we have to change!

and it begins
with putting names
to each and every face!

Eric Cockrell

Their Flight South

the tree bent by summer's storms,
prepares to shed her leaves.
and all signs of life,
leave branch and nook,
as beauty is revealed.
the weathered branch
stirred by the wind,
scratches against my chest.
sunlight weeps while shadows play,
and the sap drips with want.
the tongue of desire
wrapped around the balls of longing,
the dialogue of touching begins!
and winter's snows wait in perfect awe,
as the birds begin their flight south!

Eric Cockrell

Then I Will Abide...

when justice no longer has a color,
and is not defined by economic status,
religious or sexual preference,
then i will abide by your laws!

when freedom is as real in the alleys,
the dumpsters, and on the streets
as it is in your brick houses,
then i will believe in your freedom.

when all men and women,
of all colors and ages,
are treated with equal dignity
and with respect,
then i will stand for your equality.

when each of you can look
into the eyes of your neighbor,
and see God...
then i will abide in your humanity!

Eric Cockrell

Then Silence!

your body,
the hearth,
mine but
the logs.
your thoughts,
the fire,
that mine fan
with hunger!
your face,
the nail driven
deep in the board.
my life,
the hammer,
that strikes...
then silence!

Eric Cockrell

Then There Was You!

clouds hanging, frozen still,
banging the tool shed door.
sunlight colors the morning

with a hundred things to do.
cars speed by going nowhere,
the railroad tracks are empty.

the old store building creaks,
the windows boarded over.
the ghosts of small town heroes

going to and fro unseen.
a different world, a different me,
and then there was you!

Eric Cockrell

Then They Shovel Dirt!

when you quit being
awed by living...
then you are already dead.
when you have no more to give,
then you've closed,
and bolted the door.
when your eyes no longer see beauty,
then you are forever blind!
when you are not touched
by the need of all living beings...
then they shovel dirt,
and mumble prayers!

Eric Cockrell

Then Why Not I?

if the sparrow builds a nest
without the use of hands...
then why not I?

if the whale answers calls
from across the ocean...
then why not I?

if the tree stands through
storm after storm, season after season...
then why not I

if the butterfly lives eternity
in one precious moment...
then why not! ?

if the wind comes and goes
without home or destination...
then why not I?

if the mountain waits in stillness,
never asking what it's waiting for....
the why not I?

if the bridge knows only feet,
and the boat waits for oars...
then why not I

Eric Cockrell

Then, So Be It!

if my living be
just a plank
on the bridge to eternity...
just the match
that lights the lantern,
just the wind carrying
the dust of truth...
just the soft rain falling
in the darkness before the dawn,
just the echo of the sound
of your soul saying, 'hello'...
just the touch of a human hand,
when you need it the most,
just a passing smile,
and the glint of the eyes...
then, so be it!

Eric Cockrell

Then, You Finally Know!

when you look in the mirror,
and see your neighbor...
when you look at your neighbor,
and see god...
when you look at god,
and see yourself...
then, you finally know!

Eric Cockrell

Then?

when all of the world's supply
of oil is gone, done for...
what are we going
to fight over then?

Eric Cockrell

There Can Be No Freedom

there can be no freedom
when your own children are
going to bed hungry.....

when your workers stand
in jobless lines called by numbers,
not by names....

when your farms are taken
by the banks, and your tractors
sold at auction....

when your homes are foreclosed,
your small businesses shut down,
and they bail out the banks

with your retirement!
when your President stands by,
and does nothing,

as they beat, and terrorize your children....
when war after war the hole gets bigger,
and your thoughts and words are stolen!

there can be no freedom without change....
...no change unless we dare!

Eric Cockrell

There Is A Poison....

perhaps there is a poison,
in that which we love most.
be it the hands grasping,
or the memories that cling...
while stardust falls silently,
like dandruff from burnt eyelids.
and the god of our childhood,
packs up and leaves.
is it easier to burn the body,
or stick your fist through the glass?
while the child that you love,
rides away on a donkey....
as we're playing cards with the devil,
betting photographs and hearts.
people stand in line for this,
those with money and unconscious.
and lovers lose their voices,
somewhere in the shout of silence.
i pray for all the children,
who lie hungry in my thoughts.
sometimes poetry sucks you say,
well so do wars and homeless people.
and most of all anything,
that lets us lie to ourselves!

Eric Cockrell

There Is No Other!

it is by the blood we share
in our suffering,
that we remember we're brothers.
it is this same blood,
that we must drink and be set free.
there is no victory nor salvation
that is personal...
redemption comes only to all!

Eric Cockrell

There Will Come A Time!

there will come a time,
when you eat your own flesh,
and drink your own blood...
when the air you breathe
will be filled with smoke and ashes.
when a man will kill a man
for a gallon of gas,
or a jug of water...
there will come a time!

there will come a time,
when you'll sell
your sisters and daughters.
when you'll bury
your mothers and fathers
for their houses.
when you'll burn your faith,
and deny the truth...
there will come a time.

there will come a time,
when you have to choose,
when everything is
all you have to lose.
when you sacrifice yourself,
or sacrifice your children.
when justice demands an answer,
and the world waits at the door...
there will come a time!

and the time is now!

Eric Cockrell

Therefore I Am!

i pray, therefore i am.
i work, therefore i am.
i give, therefore i am.
i get knocked down,
and get back up,
therefore i am.

i love, therefore i am.
i respect, therefore i am.
i stand up, therefore i am.
i speak my mind, therefore i am.
i believe in mankind, therefore i am.
i believe in peace, therefore i am.

not a corporation,
not one of the elite.
not a political power.
not property to be bought and sold.
i am a human being,
therefore i am.

and i will keep standing here
till the gates of hell fall...
because... i am!

Eric Cockrell

These Are (My Children)

standing in line at the mission,
they're ladeling bowls of steaming soup.
the winter wind whips down
between the buildings like a knife...
pulling tattered coats tight hunching.
and i can hear Shantideva whisper,
his hand on the ladel...
his body the meat of the soup,
his blood the broth...
'these are my children! '....

they walk in long staggered lines,
refugees from the bombing...
hungry scared children clinging,
afarid to lose sight of...
what's left of their families.
nothing behind, and nowhere to go,
not on any side...
and i can hear Jesus whisper,
His life the torch that lights the way,
His body the shelter against the night,
His blood the water, His hands stir the rice...
'these are My children! '....

the addict shivers, strung out and desperate...
the homeless family huddles in the car.
the young prisoner sleepless with the fear,
the old man going hungry feeds his bedridden wife...
the jobless young father begs to pick up trash...
and i know beyond all doubt,
my body, my soul, my spirit...
the wind that hears their cry.
'for these are my children! '...

Eric Cockrell

These Poems

these poems be but the heart born hand,
the oak undressed, the pine that grieves.
the wings of bodies strewn by time,
the scent of flesh, and of blood.
the fire built for the faceless ones,
the sky heavy with storm.
the dreams of the child in red clay dirt,
the sound of the horn just outside sound!
the body wrapped in shadow's grasp.
the vibration deep inside stone.
the window latch broken by the wind,
the light beyond both death and prayer!

Eric Cockrell

They Are Our Future!

when a child is born
in a slum area, whether
it be assisted apartments,
trailer parks, low income
housing, or homelessness...
and he grows up amid hunger,
poverty, need, gunfire, drugs,
and street crime...
and the world he becomes an
adult in offers him little
chance for employment, or
education...
what do we expect?
what we often get is an angry
young man just looking for a way
to survive!

our young people most often become
the opportunity we leave for them.
we are responsible for their future.
for they are our future!

there are those who make their way
out of these abject conditions, and
go on to make the world a better place.
these should be our heroes!

but every child should have food,
shelter, a loving environment, an
equal opportunity for education, and
hope for employment! every child
should have an equal opportunity
to live his/or her, dream!

again, these children, are our future!
we are responsible!

Eric Cockrell

They Call This America, Dont They?

the cum stained prayers
written on tenement walls,
where brown eyed girls, head held high...
wear poverty's drench,
backs strong and straight,
amid the pale cries of babies birthing.
roaches scatter, bare feet skim the floors,
empty cupboards whispering moan.
food stamp dreams, two days away,
they call this America, dont they?

the trailer wrecked, paper thin walls,
duct taped tile by molded tubs.
the broke down truck, the mailbox spills,
unemployed and out of time.
box fans on stolen power,
dirt faced children, starving dogs.
an American flag, a worn out Bible...
they call this America, dont they?

the old couple melting, tiny apartment,
before a black and white tv.
half filled pills, empty Alpo cans,
yellow tinged pictures on the table.
a phone that didnt ring,
before it couldnt ring...
the sound of bones grinding to dust!
dont make much noise,
who gives a damn?
they call this America, dont they?

Eric Cockrell

They Call This Revolution...

they call this revolution...
bare knuckled, bruised lip,
fist fighting, scuffing,
for food to eat...
the garbage of the elite,
stinking of excess.
struggling,
for some kind of shelter,
for a fire and a bed...

equal rights? human rights?
just trying to live!
the anger of the oppressed
stains the sheets of the rich!
the faceless ones march
in the face of the big guns.
what's a life to lose,
when you have no way to live!
and they call this revolution...

Eric Cockrell

They Cant Afford!

no prayer in schools,
no moment of silence...
might cause disrespect

of other faiths....
ban the books
that dont march to the beat,

that dont follow the lie...
no discipline, no values,
let them learn at home....

give them a crack pipe,
teach them to abuse
anyone that's different...

teach them to make money....
for you!
send the ones that fall out

overseas to fight....
or to prison to learn,
to master their craft....

dont let them exercise faith
with a deep respect for all faiths.
dont let them read,

brings about too many questions.
dont teach them respect,
they'll respect each other...

cant let them join together...
they'll stand up and protest...
pepper spray and batons,

the police state lives...
freedom's an illusion,
a drug to the poor....

a drug they cant afford!

Eric Cockrell

They Killed Them!

my hero when i was a kid
was Crazy Horse.... they killed him!
my mother wanted me to be
a preacher, so i read about Jesus,
and His life... they killed Him!
when i was nine years old,
and in the fourth grade,
they killed JFK in Dallas....
just before he pulled us
out of the Vietnam lie.....

by this time i had questions,
i knew something was wrong....
they went on to kill Martin Luther King,
Robert Kennedy, Malcolm X.....
anybody that stood up for
what they believed.....
they killed them!

the fear of ignorant apathy,
the murderer that betrays humanity!

Eric Cockrell

They Lied...

they lied to you...
lied to you about Vietnam.
lied about JFK,
about Bobby Kennedy,
about Martin Luther King.
they lied about trade agreements,
about global warming,
about oil spills,
about mining disasters,
about nuclear power.
they lied about 9/11,
about Iraq, and weapons
of mass destruction.
they lied about Afghanistan,
they're lying about Iran.
they lied about Wall Street,
about the national debt.
they lied yesterday,
and they're lying today.
when are we going to quit
believing in the lie?

Eric Cockrell

They Listen!

bodhissatva...
old blind dog
walking with me,
side by side,
good day, bad day,
irregardless...
by my side.

dogs talk to you,
soul talking,
unconditional love talking...
and best of all,
they listen!

Eric Cockrell

They Say I Am Mad, But....

i spend a lot of time
talking and listening to...
dogs and cats,
trees, abandoned buildings,
gardens plowed...
old outhouses,
worn out shoes,
candles burned down,
and wet matches!

i follow spirits in the night,
bathe naked in the moonlight.
whisper to old tire swings,
pray with tin roofs....
listen to the agonies of slugs and snails,
and rescue turtles from homicidal men.

i write names in tire tracks,
and sweep footsteps into dust.
i burn old coveralls
in sacrificial offering.
i search the endless night
for the howl of the wolves...
and mourn for the buffalo,
and all animals kept in pens.

i found van gogh's ear,
buried it beneath the willow.
they say i am mad...
but i know myself!

Eric Cockrell

They Spoke To Me Of God....

they spoke to me of god,
and small things burning on piles of leaves.
while cast aside nests lay weeping,
in silent tribute to forgotten paths.
empty cages with doors flung open,
cigarette butts on temple floors.
footprints from nowhere to nothing,
canned thoughts on dusty shelves.

it's easy to say peace will come,
not so easy to take the arms.
while crippled poets walk past burning huts,
and aircraft carriers meditate on troubled waters.
children's faces drift through dreamless sleep,
bodies gathered by passing squirrels.
yes, they spoke to me of god...
as if they really knew!

Eric Cockrell

They'LI Debate!

small town, vacant store fronts,
set ablaze, and burning,
early morning February sun!

people stand and gawk,
by the old tracks, train forgotten...
childhood memories, up in smoke.

they call it America,
the land of opportunity;
freedom weeps, no one hears!

cars built overseas
powered by Middle East oil,
race by, headed for Walmart...

and tonight they'll debate
over family values and taxes.
somewhere, a church bell ringing,

and someone goes to bed hungry!

Eric Cockrell

Things I Can Change

a lot of things i can change...
the coffee filter,
the trash bag, the razor
on the sink.
the sheets on the bed,
my pants, the book i'm reading.
the things i watch,
the things i say,
sometimes the things i feel.
the things i eat,
what i drink, what i smoke.
a lot of things i can change...
but not the hands on the clock,
or the knock on the door!

Eric Cockrell

Things I Forgot To Say

things i forgot to say...
smell like your hair on my fingers,
like the last glint of sunlight
trapped in evening trees.
taste like the charred flesh
of the family killed by war;
like the baby's mouth,
and the mother's nipple.
feel like poverty's prodigal children...
the heavy breathing of the old man
who works too much for too little.
hurt like the addicts eyes
staring through the empty window;
like the still a child
turned street whore,
who cannot turn away.
die like the noose around
the bullied boy's neck;
the harsh words of fear,
the trembling hand that holds the gun...
things i forgot to say...
like, 'i love you! '

Eric Cockrell

Things That Own Us!

things that we feel are wrong,
and yet we turn the other way.
acts of oppression committed
by those in power,
and yet we close our eyes.
people around us in need,
yet all we worry about is ourselves.
inhumane actions that we allow,
by not standing, not speaking,
and not acting.
injustices fed by our indifference.
human rights violated to the tune
of our apathy, and our blindness.
hatred, prejudice, and violence
that we choose to do nothing about.
despair that we leave for others...
fears that we do not face...

these are the things that own us!

Eric Cockrell

Think!

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think!

...validate your life!

you are the only thing

that cannot be bought and sold

....against your will!

dont settle for someone else's thoughts.

dont allow yourself to be owned!

dont allow your self to be controlled.

your mind is the door to infinity.

your heart holds the key.

think!

Eric Cockrell

Thinking Man's Blues

i was thinking about Jesus
i was thinking about robbing a bank
thinking about the band a playin'
while the Titanic sank
thinking 'bout salvation
thinking about getting free
thinking and a wondering
do you ever think about me?

i was thinking about generations
i was thinking about saving grace
i was thinking about truth and lies
thinking about flesh and lace
thinking about redemption
and rivers running to the sea
thinking and a wondering
do you ever think about me?

i was thinking about the Dharma
'bout Martin Luther King
thinking about Merle Haggard
thinking about James Dean
thinking about the costs of war
about moral depravity
thinking and a wondering
do you ever think about me?
thinking and a wondering
do you ever think about me?

Eric Cockrell

Thirteen Cats

the old woman
who lived in the
food stamp trailer
on the corner...
with
thirteen
cats...
died two weeks
ago.

they found her today;
and animal control
came
for
the
cats.

the county came
for her...
there was
no
one
to
call.

a few lines
in the paper...
no
picture.

cremation,
for all involved!

Eric Cockrell

This Boat.....

this boat,
too long in waiting,
now leaves the shelter
of the shore.
this heart,
too long silent,
now speaks without regret.
these fingers,
too long numb,
cry for the feel of flesh.
this life,
too long dormant,
now begs to be lived!

Eric Cockrell

This Body

this body's not my home...
just a nest, frayed and tattered.
a tumbledown shack,
weathered by the years.
a cup stained by use.

a fire gone to embers,
a prayer lost in the din.
the sound of the hawk's wings
in a sky no one can touch.

bury it, or not! i dont care!
you can burn it on a pyre,
or leave it for the wolves.
i cannot take it with me,
have no use for name or identity.

the bird upon leaving the cage
doesnt come back for the cage!
the ego dies and dissolves
back into the matter of timelessness.

no stone, no preacher, no sadness,
when you've given it all it is finished.
a soft rain begins to fall...
this body is not my home!

Eric Cockrell

This Body (Always Will Be)

this body,
merely the cleft of the rock,
where the wind stops to sleep
on the long journey back to god.

returning,
what we do at our best,
in spite of and because of...
the footfalls of angels,

the beat of our hearts.
the grinding of our souls,
the stranger builds a fire.
and starts a soup,

with the wings of bats and owls,
whistling up clouds that bathe in moonlight.
the dew soft falls as childrens' prayers,
on the webbed ears of god,

hanging from that same rock!
and the wind embraces
that which cannot remain,
which never was...

and always will be,
the scar and the bruise!

Eric Cockrell

This Body The Glass!

your fingers the match,
to light this candle...
they tremble as if
memory unsure.
your lips the wine,
this body the glass.
drink long and deep,
before the moment is gone!
this storm will break,
the earth ravaged with passion.
the grain deep in the wood
brings forth leaves from the void!
and love itself,
needs no reason or answer.
the candle chooses fire,
this body the glass!

Eric Cockrell

This Book!

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small, tiny wondrous things,
all too easy to overlook.
moments of laughter shared,
soft conversations about nothing,

that were about everything!
meals cooked together and shared,
long walks on autumn evenings....
watching old movies and in the hero

finding the same path, the same journey,
the same mistakes, the same triumphs.
cutting wood and building a fire;
making love, and the moments after shared.

harsh words, and then forgiveness,
as easy as turning the page....
this book we've written together,
another chapter, another day!

Eric Cockrell

This Bridge

i've been working on this bridge
for half a century, maybe more
till i've become a part of it!

will it withstand the storms?
the battles? the trials and tribulations?
the weight of feet coming from,

and going to? will it stand?
i can only pray and my prayer
is a lifetime of work!

Eric Cockrell

This Hallowed Path

we, who've walked this hallowed path
to where rivers meet and mountains kneel.
who discovered fire in long ago caves,
and found treasures in books long sealed.

who took the hands of the orphaned child,
and held the old woman as she passed.
who laid down weapons and took up love,
and sought a future not bound to past.

who toppled kingdoms with peaceful truths,
who loved much at the cost of dying.
who valued a kiss over the world,
who gave beyond the cost of trying.

who stand at the gates of eternity,
having left nothing more than the living.
having lived nothing less than the loving,
left behind as gifts for the giving.

Eric Cockrell

This Old Body

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another log
...on the fire,

every
...tree
.....has
.....a
.....story,

ingrained deeply
...into the wood!

wonder whose fire
..this
...old
.....body

...will feed?

Eric Cockrell

This Old Guitar (For Juan)

break a string...
you string, and re-tune.
play when you want,
play all night.
the older the better,
the sweeter the sound...
even the wind
pauses to listen!

lifetimes and loves,
heartaches and passion.
the very breath of God.
then with loving care,
back in the case.
sleeping together in silence!

Eric Cockrell

This Old Spicket

this old spicket
always drips...

having stood the test
of time and weather,
heat and cold....

surrounded by weeds,
occasionally covered
by a lone spider's web...

rusted and tarnished.....
just waiting....
for someone to

turn the knob!

Eric Cockrell

This Road

i took a long walk with Jesus
down a moonlit dusty road...
listening, just listening, to every word.
when we came to the place
where the road forked,
He smiled... and gave me
a match, a candle, and a rusted nail.

this road often empty,
i have come to know...
the voices of stillness,
and the sound of the water
breaking over the rocks.
when the darkness swallows me,
i stop, and light the candle,
rolling the nail in my hand.

and i wait quietly for the moon!

Eric Cockrell

This Temple!

the walls of this temple,
so soft and plush,
made from the skin stripped

from the bodies
of the dead and conquered.
gold plated offering plates

made of the tiny hands
of the ones we let starve.
prayers hang, like the broken necks

of those we executed for color.
scriptures lost, like the children,
to a place no one reads...

the organ pumps, oil rigs regurgitating,
the Wall Street priests perform
like circus monkeys in hell....

the god of the dollar waits for no one,
the register rings, redemption,
food crumbs falling from the faces

of blackened souls without identity!

Eric Cockrell

This Unholy Road...

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this unholy road....
we walk, strangers,
even to ourselves...

battling demons,
most of our own conceptions,
grasping, groping, hungrily

taking what we can,
more than we need,
or could ever want.

falling down, pushing aside,
we stagger, drool on our chins....
say a quick prayer,

hope for the best....
close our eyes to those around us.
raising the banner of self,

suddenly we look up,
to find time and age at the door.
afraid of the dark,

of the long unending night....
we try to pray, and
cant remember how....

this unholy road
takes many as victims....
will we fall with the darkness,

or do we dare,
to step into the light,
and let go of the lie!

Eric Cockrell

This, And Only This!

stolen moments...
an afternoon with family,
from my father to my son

and his wife....
and my granddaughter,
who at nine months

finds great joy
in the smallest of things....
this is what we have

that we cant afford to lose,
this, and only this....
family, and the wonder

of the world through
....a child's eyes!

Eric Cockrell

Those We Encounter!

there is only one race
of people, the human race!
the leaf that's green
in the springtime,
that turns to red and gold,
then to brown, and falls...
is always a leaf!
the human heart,
regardless of skin color,
language, or faith,
is the same in each of us.

when we fight and kill each other,
we are killing ourselves.
what we take from those less fortunate,
we take from ourselves.
what we hate, and fear,
and don't understand,
is the darkness inside of us all.

all life holy, all life of equal value.
any system that judges
and separates by color or beliefs,
by economic conditions,
is corrupt!

the emptiness inside
is the suffering shared.
the final responsibility,
to each and to all!
the search for the self
begins and ends,
in the eyes of those we encounter!

Eric Cockrell

Thoughts

which is more threatening? the cost of war? or the cost of feeding the hungry, healing the sick, and housing the homeless?

Eric Cockrell

Thoughts And Keys

we spend all of our lives
trying to get in touch with
the truth that's within us...
so why are we always calling
long distance?

are we more afraid of death,
or afraid of living?
is there really any difference?
do any of us really listen?
do we hear?
do we see?
if so, why are we so afraid?

the real battle is always within...
what happens without is the result!

Eric Cockrell

Thoughts And Keys (Continued)

bottom line...

life is a gift.

what authenticates the gift

is the giving!

love is a trail of tiny sacrifices

made over small fires at night

to an unseen god.

the word 'god' is a failure,

much less the concept.

we try to define the ocean,

and cant contain the wave!

prejudice, our greatest weakness,

comes from the fear of seeing

the sameness in all the colors

of the rainbow.

the Freedom Riders took on

the segregated south in the sixties...

we need freedom riders now,

unafraid of beatings,

unafraid of prison,

committed at all costs.

for we face a deeper segregation now,

nationwide... the elite

segregated from the rest of us...

the many segregated from the few.

the gulf of hatred and abuse is wide...

this is what makes the Occupy Movement

so important!

Eric Cockrell

Thoughts On Love....

the hardest thing we will ever do
is to love. for love undresses the
parts of us with which we're not
so familiar...

there is no grasping in love, no
real or implied ownership. that
which we give in time returns, but
who holds a clock to the tides?
love is itself a journey that often
takes many lifetimes... it is not
an end in itself, love is the journey.
time and experience and often tragedy
ignite the flame... but the fire burns
long and slow.

love is a way of seeing, a depth of seeing,
when the eyes touch and realize. love is
the gift of moments, and only moments are
eternal.

love hears from the heart, spoken and unspoken.
love gives, without thought or guilt.
love is the straw in the nest, the open
mouth fed, and the moment of fear when wings
first stretch in flight.

love is the gift, and the gift is journey...
for it is in the journey that we find our selves!

Eric Cockrell

Thoughts On Revolution... (Number Three)

revolutionary questions:

1. what are we willing to give up in order to insure that all peoples have the same, and equal rights to live?
2. what are we willing to change, in our ways of life, and in our thinking?
3. are we willing?

if the answer is not yes to the last question, there's no reason for us to go on!

revolution means risk...
come to think of it... it
sounds a lot like love!

Eric Cockrell

Thoughts On Revolution....

you speak angrily of revolution,
yet you're in such a hurry, that
you havent sat down and thought
about what it is you want...
so many issues you're mad about,
but you dont have answers to the
problems... you're not even sure
about what you think caused the
problems.
it's easy to want change, it's hard
to do the work of change... it begins
with knowing who you are as a human being,
seeing your strengths and weaknesses,
and acknowledging, accepting...
in order to change the world we have
to first be willing to change ourselves...
what we have to change in ourselves
begins with our excuses... we have to
turn from our old selfish images of
ourselves, to a real and honest knowing...
the things we want to change in our world
have been inflicted by man... to change the
works of man.... we have to be the man and
woman that we are called to be.
honest, real, caring, involved... willing
to educate ourselves to the truth....

Eric Cockrell

Thoughts On Revolution.... (Number Two)

when we speak of revolution
we often speak of justice...
do we understand the concept?
justice has nothing to do with
class, religious beliefs, skin
color, or economic station...
it has nothing to do with revenge!
it cannot be used for political
purposes...
justice looks, smells, tastes, and
feels the same for all people!
justice is marked by a true sense
of equality.
doesn't sound like what we have now?
therein lies the reason for revolution...
if we dare to risk all for change,
we must do so to restore human dignity!
all people must have a chance... to live,
to love, to have shelter and work.
there can be no prejudice allowed!
it goes back to the beginning motion
of changing ourselves... that's where
the real revolution begins!

Eric Cockrell

Thoughts Revealed

revolution demands evolution,
for it is only by evolving
that we can make positive change.

open mind, open heart.
closed mind, closed heart.
the door to life remains open.
the door of death remains closed!

religious people kill each other
over their differences...
spiritual people accept each other
for what and who they are,
and learn to work together for common goals.
god has as many faces as there
are living beings!

dont quote me scriptures, or holy sayings.
help me plow my garden!
there are scriptures in the fresh
turned earth we have yet to discover!

if you are a bigot, if you discriminate
because of skin color, religious beliefs,
sexual orientation, or political agenda...
you cannot know the presence of god...
it is within the diversity of life
that we find the common bond of unity...
and this bond is the presence of god!

if you must hate anything, hate ignorance!
manifest this hate by searching for
the truth!
unconditional compassion is the key...
but your own feet must walk through
the door!

Eric Cockrell

Thoughts-2

'a man's supposed to provide for his family...'
i see them standing in line at the unemployment office...
or working whatever job they can get,
for half of what they're worth.
half-drunk, and pounding their fists
against the wall...
(praying for a gun)

i know how it feels to be trapped...
dont tell me we're not supposed to be angry!

Eric Cockrell

Thoughts-6

dignity begins with taking responsibility...

freedom begins with respect!

equality is the recognition of sameness.

truth is what's left in the mirror

after everyone else leaves...

and poverty is the lash of corporate America!

Eric Cockrell

Three Crows

three crows
sitting on a fence...
named,
compassion, action,
and forgiveness.
one flew away,
and the other two
turned to stone...
even the wind
could not revive them!

Eric Cockrell

Three Quarter Time

the smell of woodsmoke
lingers in the air;
darkness falls,

like silent thunder.
the earth tremors and turns,
you walk from room to room....

or perhaps only,
a curtain blown by passion,
a broken cup, cobwebs

on pulsing walls.
a cry of passion,
water bursts the pipes...

one of my shirts
that you wore to bed.
a single shot

on a November morn....
the deer falls in
three quarter time.

sheets that still
carry your scent...
the ground naked,

and hungry for rain!

Eric Cockrell

Three, Maybe Four

a shot of bourbon,
swirled and enjoyed
in the mouth,
chased with a beer,
and two ibuprofen...
the arthritis eases
until three, maybe four,
in the morning.

age silently aches,
as if the heart and the body
play together on an empty corner,
no change in the cup!
but the mind still remembers...
smells, feelings, bulletproof
and hungry, always hungry.

dawns alone on a mountaintop,
making love in the snow.
fires, good fires,
poets exchanging madness,
and later, children being born...
making things by hand,
the sweat and the promise.
and clouds that wept
over things we thought we knew.

now the clock on the wall
ticks with the footfalls of ghosts.
haunted, always haunted,
and dammit, still hungry!
till three, maybe four,
in the morning...

Eric Cockrell

Through The Veil For Dave Walker

there's a light
in the window
of the house

forgotten by time;
a book on the table,
unopened.

footprints on the floor
covered with dust.
a cup in the sink

half-empty.
the wind blows
curtains grey with time....

whispering, whispering....
names that cannot
be heard.

voices, echoes,
creaking the floor.
a book of photographs

on the closet floor.
walking through the mist,
the fog and the shadows,

touching small particles
of being left like gifts....
lives unwrapped into mine!

Eric Cockrell

Thump!

old bodies...
become small at night,
shaken with solitude,
swallowed up by the womb.

hands that built fires,
gnarled, clench and unclench.
the old clay pot
filled with silent dirt.

coats hung on the hook,
boots that dont travel.
telephone lines cut,
the ink fades on the page.

thump! thump! thump!
old hearts still pound.
and the darkness is sticky
with the memory of fire!

Eric Cockrell

Thunderous Snow!

thunderous snow,
born o'er dark silent mountains;
the final prayer,

the last turn of the plow.
air frozen and heavy,
the wind shakes the bones,

the bare trees wait,
naked, and obedient.
time come and gone,

the memory of a kiss fades
into the deep stillness,
and the sleep of the soul.

cries of passion lost,
in the darkness so deep,
that ending and beginning are one!

the hunter stares,
his shadow twisted by moonlight,
the faint taste of flesh,

dried blood on his lips.
a few flurries, a drumbeat,
the wolf howls, no sound!

stillness wraps around fire,
the fields pray empty prayers.
thunderous snow,

love, and cosmos!

Eric Cockrell

Thunderstruck

thunder struck...
the last bell ringing,
the last tick of the clock...
last turn of the engine,
the last song, the last dance.
the last prayer, the last goodbye.
the last leaf falling
from the last tree standing...
thunder struck,

and hungry for more!

Eric Cockrell

Tibetan Prayer

'om mani padme hung,
om mani padme hung...'

may all beings be freed from suffering.
may all beings breathe as one.
may all beings live in peace.
may all beings learn to give.
may all beings walk in unity.
may all beings walk in forgiveness.
may all beings lay down their weapons.
may all beings be fed and have shelter.
may all beings know they are loved.
may all beings join hands.
may all beings live in awareness.
may all beings be freed from suffering.

'om mani padme hung,
om mani padme hung...'

Eric Cockrell

Till The Land

till the land, till the land,
plant the seeds, pray for rain.
feed your cows and your pigs,
always stop to give thanks.

close to the earth, the seasons,
to your family, to your heart....
to your neighbors, to your friends, .
do your best, do your part.

till the land, till the land,
plant the seeds, pray for rain.
feed your cows and your chickens,
always stop to give thanks.

from generation to generation,
the traditions handed down.
take care of the land you work,
keep the wheel going 'round.

till the land, till the land,
plant the seeds, pray for rain.
feed your cows and your horses,
always stop to give thanks.

now the times have changed,
you're not needed anymore.
the bank's come to take away
all the things you've stood for.

till the land, till the land,
plant the seeds, pray for rain.
feed your cattle and your family,
always stop to give thanks.

Eric Cockrell

Time Decides

an acorn contains the universe,
a moth contains the night.
the flicker and flame
of small twigs burning

returns light to the stars.
the rumble of distant thunder
in every leaf that falls.
a prayer held in every

dropp of rain... a baby
born in the face of
every mountain's movement...
the depth of love raging

beneath the snows of winter....

death, or spring..... time decides....
each has it's own cup!
each has it's own flame!

Eric Cockrell

Time Of Need

last prayer tendered,
long veil pulled back;
i take you, without asking,

without caring, where
we've been, or whose dust
i brush from your lips.

my own hands are bruised,
and bloodied... my own demons
locked in their cage...

i am only a man,
you, a woman...
and this love, the only war

worth fighting in a world
of darkness, in this
time of need!

Eric Cockrell

Time To Make A Choice! (Today)

breakdown, shakedown,
turn it on its ear!
smackdown, crackdown,
in the face of fear.

tear down, rebuild,
grounded in the roots.
freedom, 'we'-dom,
take down the suits!

stand up, be counted,
put faces to the voice.
your life, your future,
time to make a choice!

Eric Cockrell

Time Walks Away

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houses are made of
.....brick and stone...

hearts
...are
.....not
supposed to be!

eyes are made to
...see what's there...

not
...what
.....they're
.....told
.....to
.....see!

the soul is a window
.....to eternity...

but
...if
....you
.....keep
the curtains pulled...

the water dripping from
...the faucet never
.....reaches the ground....

and time walks away
.....with the gift!

Eric Cockrell

Time, As Fragile... For Tsira

time, as fragile...
as dust on the pane,
the broken limb still hanging,
the pebble washed by rain.
the word almost, but not spoken,
the cat's paw on your face.
the last bulb that flickers
in the room no one enters.
the page torn, and taped back,
the baby's cough in the night.
the first kiss, and the last,
the hand trembles, and lets go!
clouds on moonlit nights,
footsteps without a trace...
the broken glass in the sink,
and the water slowly drips!

Eric Cockrell

Time, For Jim Troy

grains of sand
falling through
our grasping fingers...

a dandelion held
up in the wind,
blown away in a moment.

a collection of photographs,
black and white, some
in color... put away in a box.

the strike of a match,
a quick blaze in the darkness,
lost in the black womb...

of eternity!

Eric Cockrell

Time, Baby... Just Time!

jail time, heroin time,
back alley shuffle time,
standing in the soup line time....
sleeping in old cars time,
day work, selling blood time,
lost your job, no work time,
lost your house, nowhere time....
get your school in prison time,
radical free thought time,
fighting against the man time...
bum a smoke, a cup of coffee time.
woman done gone, aint coming back time.
food stamps and unemployment time...
kick off your damn chains time.
forgive, and forgiven time...
stand up and fight time,
hands joining hands time...

time, baby... just time!

Eric Cockrell

Timeless....

timeless...

the smell of fresh cut grass,
the taste of sweat on a lovers neck.
the sound the shovels make
filling the grave,
and the moment just before
when life fled into the sunset.
the burnt fringe of the letter
you saved from the fire.
the echoes of passion...
in a box in the closet.
the silence just after
the guns stopped firing,
just before the world found its way!
the spoon in the bowl,
and the peace in the stomach.
the blanket, the fire,
shelter for the night.
the whisper you hear
when only god could be talking,
the prayer of the wind,
the lantern, the bridge!

Eric Cockrell

Tinged With Oil

sunlight dancing
on a puddle of rainwater
tinged with oil....

empty cars locked,
rusting in the warmth.
empty bottles, cigarette butts,

and ghosts walking quickly,
going nowhere, leaving a trail
of nothing behind.

stray dogs, beat down stop signs,
people afraid to touch,
much less to feel...

sunlight dancing
on a puddle of rainwater
tinged with oil....

Eric Cockrell

Tiny Deaths

you rip the clouds
from the sky itself....
head swaying side to side,
eyes lost in the museum

of feelings too long denied.
babbling odes to the gods,
breathing breath stolen
from a primeval forest....

naming the color
beneath shadows,
your fingers buried
in my hair!

tiny deaths....
postcards written in flesh!

Eric Cockrell

Tiny Kingdoms Fall

tis the broken cup,
water boiling for the tea.
the curtain stained,
seven dollars in change.
the gas can empty,
the kerosene heater waits its call.
one last cigarette,
the hawk lost against the sky.
potatoes and ashes,
of such revolution.
things done out of season,
prayers spoken with shadows.
black and white photographs,
never eat or make love.
the world is shaken,
and tiny kingdoms fall!

Eric Cockrell

Tiny Roses

a tub of tiny roses,
a couple in full bloom,
the rest in varying stages
of undress...

and a smile i havent seen
for some time...

Eric Cockrell

Tired (Soon)

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tired.....

of fighting tooth and nail
just trying to survive.

of standing up
and getting knocked down,
again and again....

of feeding one of the hungry
and turning to an empty pot.
of doing the right thing,

and being accused of the wrong.
of staying true to convictions,
and losing it all....

of helping someone up,
finding i dont have enough hands.
of taking the time to care,

finding it's not enough.....
giving all that i've got,
and it's still not enough.....

of sleeping alone,
or not sleeping at all;
something's gonna change.....

soon!

Eric Cockrell

Tis America.... (You Vote)

the long haired tongues
of your poet kings,
burnt tenement stoops,
crack dusted windows.
bare breasted brown skinned girls,
popping gum on skates.
the ghosts of lost fathers,
who swallowed heroin spoons,
or bodies of the movement,
long dead of hunger and want.
no job, get a gun,
locks are made to be broken...
higher education,
behind white tainted bars.
when equality means,
an equal chance to die,
and living tastes like daylight,
sucked through a straw!
tis America, you vote,
sell blood, pop a car.
heroes die in Afghanistan,
schools smell like waiting.
and the name on the mailbox...
is vacant!

Eric Cockrell

Tis Breath, Then...

tis breath, then...
wrought with infinite longing,
that called light from darkness,
and being from non-being.
that, spent as wind,
calling forth waves from oceans,
calling forth land from water,
blowing dry and forming.

tis breath, then...
calling male and female to join.
calling trees and mountains to tangle.
defining hill and valley,
both far and near.
calling forth fire from imagination,
calling thought from inertness.
calling music from stillness.

tis breath, then...
calling tribe unto tribe.
creating gods from reflection.
calling souls from dead bones,
naming names, defining eternity,
calling forth desire, hunger, and wonder.
calling forth construction and ambition...
calling forth ego!

Eric Cockrell

Tis Breath, Then.... (Part Three)

tis breath, then...
that frees both image and form.
that taking hands touches.
that shaping lips kisses.
that barks, howls, groans, and chirps...
that is the lift beneath wings.
that is both scent and journey.
that is the language between us.
defining one inside the other...
tis breath, then....

(that being fire, becomes fire.
that being human, becomes human.
that leaving body, becomes spirit.
that being lonely, takes a body.
that naming god, does not know.
that does not know, but understands.
that being filled, opens and gives.
that giving, somehow remains.
that having left a mark,
leaves no footprints...)

tis breath, then...
breaking down walls imagined.
cracking egos' fragile shells.
breaking down tribe becoming family.
breaking down difference becoming sameness.
breaking the image of god, finding presence.
that walking the smoking ruins of civilization,
births flowers from ashes!
that screaming in childbirth,
puts eyes in the darkness.
tis breath, then...
yawning with creation's dawning,
as if it 'is'!

tis breath, then....

Tis Breath, Then.... (Part Two)

tis breath, then...

(and still spirits dormant in the night,
leaf, stone, branch, river...
forgotten ants, snails, and crickets,
spiders with infinite webs.
the wolf's howl in waiting,
the owl perfectly still.
worms working silence,
the wings of small birds...
waiting, waiting, waiting...)

tis breath, then...

carrying the plague of war,
deep into the ignorance.
walls built of fear,
and the hunger that devours.
draining color, caged, and panting...
breath crying out for breath,
sorrow unto sorrow...

but tis breath, then...

that forming tongues of soul and spirit,
that falling like passion scented rain,
binds darkness unto darkness,
holding sound in echo's palm.
that rises to the fall,
and falls to the rising.
swallows distance with intimate longing...
calling forth stars and moonlight!

Eric Cockrell

Tis But Death

the stranger arrives,
his voice almost remembered,
his smell like rain,

and something else.
his soft insistent knock
rings like a bell,

his hand on the knob...
can you hear?
the sound of his footfall....

tis but death come knocking...
he brings no baggage.
will you open the door?

Eric Cockrell

Tis Sweet Sadness

sweet sadness rings the bells of joy,
the plumber and the carpenter bring gifts of hands.
the homeless man brings a star and a feeling,
that no one else could have.
the prisoner brings the wings of the wasp,
the blind man the eyes of darkness.
the cripple dances, the unforgiven bears forgiveness.
and the hungry child shares a morsel of bread.
the weary ones bring the promise of dawn.
the tiny ones...carry the universe.
the dying man brings the value of life,
the addict the hope of a freedom.
and the condemned man brings the hope of justice...
tis sweet sadness that rings the bells!

Eric Cockrell

Tis That Scent

Tis that scent....
That drives one mad.
That swallows the web,
And burns on empty.

That turns the page,
And rolls in the dirt.
That sounds like rain,
And falls like thunder.

That strips the soul,
And plunders the mind.
That buries the candle,
To rise as flame.

Tis that scent...
When you enter my solitude!

Eric Cockrell

To Be Fully Human!

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hand to hand, brother,
our backs against the wall.
with nothing left to cling to...

but each other!

mind to mind, sister,
your thoughts free my thoughts,
my thoughts affirm yours....

understanding is the bridge....

heart to heart, my friend,
we are joined by the destiny
for which we were born....

love is the motion.

soul to soul, my family,
if you hurt i hurt,
if i need you need...

one hope, one desire....

to be fully human!

Eric Cockrell

To Be Passed Along!

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longing...
driven by the wind,
to where, i dont care...

believing,
with no reason to believe,
against the turning odds...

getting back up,
slower each time,
in spite of time and the aches

of a long weary road....
going....
just keep on going,

with eyes that see,
and ears that hear....
giving.....

at the risk of losing,
more than i can bear to lose,
all that i can do....

longing....
for rebirth and bloom,
and the small joys lived

in the eyes behind the hands
of those i've helped up....
living...

as if it were a gift,
bestowed on me,
to be passed along!

Eric Cockrell

To Be Reborn

how many deaths must i die
to be reborn....
how many crosses carried,
how many deserts crossed?
how many tears must i cry
(tho they be at night when no one can see) ,
how many bruises, scars...
how many times must i bleed?
if I am not I,
then whose breath this stranger?
whose feet in my shoes?
whose hat on my head?
i stand in the moonlight,
and look at the rafters,
measuring rope inch by inch!

i am quite sure even the snail laughs
at this quarrel between me and me...
i look at the lines beneath my eyes,
and see a small boy,
running naked in the woods.
my tongue betrays me garbling words,
my soul leaps from rooftops,
dreaming i can fly!
am i mad? am i furious? no!
just damn determined,
to walk inside rust,
to taste the starlight in dew!
redemption, the old hand
on the breast of god...
and the song inside
the guttural moan of time!

Eric Cockrell

To Be Remembered As...

i want to be remembered as...
the cup of coffee
in the street bum's hands,
the vacant building
where he slept...
the plow, the harness,
and the old mule.
the needle laid down
for the final time.
the church left open
both day and night.
the unknown person
who paid the rent.
the old man who stopped
in the pouring rain,
and changed your tire
without a word.
the old woman who ran the mission,
the stray dog that never left.
the family farm, the old homeplace.
the tree neath which your mother lies.
the family's tears, the preacher's words,
the blanket and the broom...
the constant rhythm of the hammer,
the constant stillness of the rain!

as...
the old man facing death
who took his few belongings,
set them ablaze,
and danced naked
in the falling darkness!

Eric Cockrell

To Be Restored!

to think that this is the only time we've lived,
is small minded, and absurd!
we are leaves born by the same tree,
season after season, year after year.
with each summer the branches are fuller,
with each autumn the color deeper....
with each winter the time of stillness cuts deeper...
with each spring the hope of the spirit is reborn!
we are many lives in one,
many forms in one...
the journey is long, the ache is great,
for the eyes of the heart to be restored!

Eric Cockrell

To Change...

i've had half a dozen
or more sets of people
come in today talking
about going back to a
more self-sufficient
lifestyle...
people paying off their
accounts, not making purchases.
people buying pigs, chickens,
goats... going to plant
big gardens.
this has been going on for
the last month or two.

people watching the gas situation,
the rise of food prices.. sky
high electric bills...

young people moving back in
with their families... old
people going back to old ways.

we are not as blind as our
government would like to believe.
lies and illusions wont cut
it anymore.

too much debt, too much corruption,
too much greed... and they try
to silence anyone who raises a
voice in opposition.

things have to change. it cannot
go on the way it is. the only
hope we have is to become less
dependent on government, on the
choices of the elite, on society...

let our dependence be in our families,

in ourselves, and in each other.
forget about wants, and meet needs.

to change...

Eric Cockrell

To Destiny!

i cannot decide,
whether i be...
the spider,
the web,
the fly just caught,
or the moment before...
all of these, or none!

when a poet becomes
a simple carpenter,
trudging through life
with a hammer,
a few nails,
and a rusted saw...
looking for broken branches
to build an ark from!

one huge dark cloud
in a sky grown icy still...
writing thoughts on a notebook
stolen from a dumpster.

curiously drawn
to the strange and real...
a fly on the way
to destiny!

Eric Cockrell

To Each Of You!

Merry Christmas
to each of you....

whatever your faith,
whatever your skin color,
whatever your politics...
whether you're rich or poor,

whatever your sexual choices,
whomever you love...

i wish each of you peace,
may your needs be met,
and your heart be filled...
you are not alone,

and you are loved.
be all that you are
throughout the New Year....
and again, be at peace!

Eric Cockrell

To Face The Storm

i am he who plowed and who swept,
that held your tears in trembling hands.
that carved your voice into the willow,
that whispered to stars in your name.
i am she whose back twas arched,
who brought you from the land unknown.
who suckled your hunger and filled you with awe,
who held your hand on walks of amazement.
and i am the tint and the hue of change,
the anvil and the forge....
that brought you from the shores of webbed feet,
to the ache inside the howl of the moon.
i am the lover that took your longing,
and entered your secret garden...
i am the wind that blew the curtains,
the sweat that glistened on your body.
now i am the urn, the casket, and the flowers,
words spoken in silent mourning...
but whose soul lies in perfect rest,
and whose is left to face the storm?

Eric Cockrell

To Find The Home!

i drink the cup
that is your flesh...
i revere your scars,
your bruises,
the stink of your heart.
the scent of your eyes,
the silence of your ears...
my tongue writes your body
on infinity's glass!

i listen for your voice
beneath the trees.
i feel your nearness
in the hoot of the owl.
i share your anguish
by the silent small fire....
the horse i ride,
bears your name.

i am the ghost of city streets,
the body left for the wolves
on the mountainside.
i am the air frozen with fear,
as the great bear stands
in magnificent fury.

you are the bridge,
the lantern, and the hound.
the purple struck sky
of sunset eternal.
the body that feels,
smells, and tastes like love...
the moan that stills the wind!

this distance but a paper veil,
a wisp of smoke,
the moment before and after.
the call of death,
the threshold of storm...

set the fire...
and walk away!

(sometimes you have to burn
the building down...
to find the home!)

Eric Cockrell

To Fully Live!

freedom is not white,
it is not Christian,
it is neither liberal nor conservative....
not bound by capitalistic values,
it is not served at gunpoint
to those with differing views...

it is all colors, all faiths,
openminded and intelligent,
beyond all political views;
places human need in front of profit,
and celebrates diversity!

it is the basic right
of the living to fully live!

Eric Cockrell

To Know God

all living things
are God expressing
Himself/Herself through
infinite forms.

how dare we differentiate
between the sacred and the mundane!

if you want to see God,
look around you!
if you want to feel God,
touch the earth...
touch the hand of a stranger.
if you want to know God,
live!

Eric Cockrell

To Know Them, And To Care!

we who walk
with the stink
of humanity...

who know the tears,
and name the sorrows
that only darkness holds...

who nurse at the breasts
of the woman branded...
who wash her hands and feet

as she lays dying....
who hold the orphaned children
close... taking their sickness....

who pray with the murderers,
who share with the thieves.
who walk with the crippled,

and hold the shaking addict....
we are by them blessed....
to know them, and to care!

Eric Cockrell

To Live Or To Rot!

we have crawled back
into our shells,
made primitive by technology,
still drunk with past successes,
we would deny the pain of loss.

conditioned to become nonpeople,
we build divisions and walls...
that in the end become our prison,
and finally our graves.
what are we so afraid of?

does it take being slapped
in the face by devastation?
does it take being hungry
to bring back taste?
the god we've wrapped in moth balls,
deserts us, and well should!

we are flesh and blood,
sweat and excrement...
and dammit, family,
who've become dysfunctional!
we swallowed the lie,
and it consumed us!

we either choose
to live or to rot!
time has betrayed us,
the hammer is raised.
are we only shadows and mists?

or are we hands,
hands made of hearts?
hearts made of flesh,
that smells like god!
a god as real as the human condition!

To Live, By God!

to be swept away by the storm,
every room in the house akilter.
hair thrown across your face,
lips swollen with longing.

to pluck stars from the night sky,
and drink the dew like wild beasts.
to howl and moo, to hoot and caw,
to be the ant that led the others astray!

to build small fires by forbidden roads,
to sleep inside the cave.
to drink moonlight, and spit revolution,
to walk naked in the cool evening.

to live, by God....
to shout and curse and sweat.
to break windows and kick down doors...
to speak of things long hidden...

to live, and yes to love...
with a force that defies the wind,
and brings rain from the dust...
with the faith of a child!

Eric Cockrell

To Live, Damn it, To Live!

God died yesterday...
i asked if He had a will.
He sent me His last breath,
smelling of bourbon and good cigars.

i went into the holy of holies,
and found a dirty little boy playing...
he told me he saw angels in the clouds,
i told him they were bringing rain.

and off we walked together,
stopping to marvel at the trail of the ants...
needing nothing more, and nothing less,
than to live, damn it, to live!

Eric Cockrell

To Make A Difference!

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take your finger from the trigger,
lay down your gun...
you have a chance to make a difference....
make the right choice!

lower your hand, soften your voice,
let go of your anger...
you have a chance to make a difference...
make the right choice!

put down your checkbook, close the register,
do something you really feel....
you have a chance to make a difference....
make the right choice!

throw out your pill bottle and your pipe,
stand up and face life....
you have a chance to make a difference...
make the right choice!

turn off your tv and your computer,
get involved with someone in need....
you have a chance to make a difference....
make the right choice!

lay down your judgements and your pride,
see people as just people....
you have a chance to make a difference....
make the right choice!

Eric Cockrell

To My Children...

be true to your own paths.
each of you has a destiny
that is your own.
each of you is on a journey,
that only you can take.
there will be storms, tragedies,
and fleeting moments of triumph.
above all, keep on walking.

be respectful!
respect the people you meet...
their thoughts, their feelings,
their religious views,
their sexual orientation,
their way of life...
but be true to yourself.

doubt all things!
question all things!
even what i've told you.
prove all things to yourself.
keep what works for you.

work hard, love even harder.
give more than you take.
care past the point of caring.
live each moment as if
it were your whole lifetime.
be not afraid to touch
to get involved, to get dirty.
help as many people as you can.
forgive quickly,
for you will need forgiveness..
take in stray dogs and cats.

remember that i love you...
when you feel alone, depressed,
or just plain weary...
that still small voice patting

you on the back is me...
i am proud of you,
and i believe in you!

keep walking!

Eric Cockrell

To Occupy

to occupy...
means simply to fill
the hollowed out body
with a living, breathing soul!

and to give the soul a face...
yours!

Eric Cockrell

To Paint The Moment!

the silent ones come walking,
wearing faces that turned with autumn...
barefoot, and drunk with grace,
their hands tremble, but their eyes are sure.
almost as if unexpected snow,
gigantic flakes clinging to the porch rail.
swallowing all trace of living,
in a vast sea of stillness that hints of hope.
the candle by the window flickers,
shadows stop to give an ear.
the strong scent of the heart lingers,
in things unspoken and undefined.
we shout from corners hidden,
while the tiny carcasses of ants simmer.
and the broom waits with hat pulled low,
for infinity to paint the moment!

Eric Cockrell

To Pay The Cost

shall thy heart then remain infusable?

while spiders count bodies

in spun glistening webs,
on nuclear mornings in astral glory...
as the rogue butterfly fellates,
the flower bloomed out of season...
without need for recitation!
nebulous vultures march in severed cadence,
wearing boots sewn of human flesh...
leaving tiny fractures in the soul of god,
be it history or destiny!

you cry for wars in dread of silence,
justice hangs from sterile trees.
the hungry child's eyes blacken the moon,
gravity devours temporary sanity.
the hammered flute burns tainted lips,
leaving crows to take the spoils.
the lost blown by mongrel winds,
the faceless fill the dark....
the faceless fill the dark!

oh god, let this not be!
take this cup from the table.
blow not your brassy trumpets,
roll back the furious cannons.
i curse this night that never ends...
take these bones strewn by shackled mouths,
build nests for disembodied spirits...
and bury the tears of orris and mold,
in the blackened moss womb of desire.

touch me! i do not quiver!
i wear neither mask nor cloak of guile.
i plow deep and with abandon,
i drink till the cup is spillt!
i dare defy, i dare proclaim,

and identify the heart...
if you must sacrifice to liberate,
what is shall not be lost...
i dare to pay the cost...

do you dare to pay the cost?

Eric Cockrell

To Search The Night

the lie hidden inside the stone,
buried in the field;
slept waiting for nuclear rain,
and the lamp that portayed the sun...
then with a burst of reptile genius,
grew and blossomed into a city,
heavy with the musk of empty bodies...
and they prayed beneath neon lights,
dancing to synthetic music.
as she devoured her young,
on the day after progress!
while gods wore masks and demons shuddered,
to the sound of wheels biting pavement.
the gravemakers wore plastic gloves,
their eyes red with smoke.
and judges stood in bank lines,
while convicts gave blood.
Jesus stopped, and vomited,
on the highway to Gethsemene!
and crosses wept for meaning,
leaving the dogs to search the night...

Eric Cockrell

To Search The Stars

let this house
burn down...
no one lives here...

anymore!

if there's anything left,
sell it... use the money
to help feed the poor.

use my letters to start
the fire with.....
give my books to

passing strangers.
have a drink to the memories...
light up, and move along.

what's done is done.
this shell worn out,
this spirit free...

to search the stars
for you!

Eric Cockrell

To Show Me...

i dont want you to tell me,
'i love you'....
i want the sound of your bare feet
walking across the room
to my heart...
to show me!

Eric Cockrell

To Still My Voice...

you want to still my voice...
so you put me in prison.
yet birds will circle where i'm held,
singing the songs of freedom!
you want to silence me forever,
so you kill this body.
yet the flowers on my grave,
and the very dirt,
will sing of justice and equality!

Eric Cockrell

To The American People

common sense solutions:

tax the wealthy.
tax corporations and financial institutions.
put a tariff on imports.
go back to building things here.
get behind the American farmers.
grow as much of your own food as you can.
raise the minimum wage.
change from oil addiction to alternative fuels.
stop the damn wars.
feed every child!
give every child equal education opportunities.
stop prescribing narcotic pills like m & m's.
take money out of the courtrooms.
let anyone live here that works and contributes.
teach your children respect.
teach them to read.
teach them to work.
make health insurance a part of your taxes,
on a percentage basis where it's fair to all.
give everyone equal health care.
take care of the aged and the disabled.
but people that can work need to work!
fight for the environment for our children's sakes.
quit fighting over religion, politics, and sexual orientation.
restore human dignity by equal rights, equal justice.
stop judging, and start affirming.
pay politicians minimum wage!
clean up the street gangs and the prisons...
put prisoners to work, and educate them!
stop building bombs and armies,
and rebuild this country...
the roads, the cities, the factories...
put people back to work!
stop spraying crops with harmful chemicals
and feeding animals antibiotics
that are dangerous...
and pay teachers like they have the most

impotent job in the world...
they do!
teaching your children!

Eric Cockrell

To The Limits

to the limits...
of understanding,
and knowledge.

of power, and pride.
of caring, and involvement;
of hope and desire...

to the limits...
of skies and stars
and worlds unexplored.

of body, and soul,
of reach and touch;
of truth and comprehension....

to the limits...
of right and wrong,
of shadow and form....

of life and death,
of tears and laughter;
to the limits....

and one step beyond!

Eric Cockrell

To The Republicans (Blocking The Jobs Bill)

blocking the jobs bill...
that's right!
dont let them go back to work!

dont give them back their dignity,
their self respect, their ability
to feed their families...

dont let them feel like human beings again....
why, if they get all of that,
they may want the rest of their rights....

they may want to act like they're free!
gotta keep them under your thumbs,
keep them beaten down....

gotta think about the next election!
blocking the jobs bill?
may you be unemployed soon!

tell me how that feels!

Eric Cockrell

To The Young Poets!

there comes a time
when the fire we have tended,
calls for new hands.
when the wind we have rode,
beckons for new friends.
and when the path that
leads to discovery,
needs a new body, a new soul.
when the battle for justice,
calls for new voices.
leaves turn brown and fall,
and winter snows come.
but spring always returns,
with new leaves and new song.
take what we have given,
and build an even bigger fire.
spread your wings, taste the sky,
past the limits of our endurance.
and when you get to the top
of the highest mountain...
the applause you hear
will be the ghosts of old poets.

shine on!

Eric Cockrell

To Wipe Your Brow!

i whispered in her ear as she was sleeping...
save these poems, open them when you are weary.
when every sky be full of rain,
when every door be locked....
when loss knocks upon your window,
when you cant remember your name.
when the sound of your heart saddens,
and you cant think of a reason why.
when your prayers come back unopened,
and the river reverses its course.
when all gathered together becomes nothing...
use these to wipe your brow!

Eric Cockrell

Together

God, it's a pretty day!
late summer sunshine,
with just enough of a breeze
to keep it from being unbearably hot...

in the distance the mountains
sit cross-legged like old monks,
practicing breathing...
in and out, embracing life.

so many people with problems,
yet still stopping to say 'hello'...
kind words, and a little laughter,
clouds hanging in a blue sky...

people are just people...
and that's what makes it all
worthwhile... fix what you can,
keep your head up, keep going...

we're in this thing together!
it's a beautiful day.... somewhere
fish are biting.... and people
sit down together to share a meal!

Eric Cockrell

Tombstones!

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rows and rows of tombstones,
glaring white in the morning sun...
with open graves before them,

and the smell of fresh turned earth.
cars speed by going nowhere;
people walking, as if lost....

the phone rings, no one answers,
the book, unread, stares from the shelf.
trees almost bare softly whisper,

dollar bills blown by the wind...
the old man sits by the station,
counting by number,

and not by name....
rows and rows of tombstones,
waiting for gifts unwrapped

by time!

Eric Cockrell

Too Beaten To Cry...

you watch them loading
all their belongings
in their battered old car...
half a tank of gas,
and nowhere to go...
and something inside you shudders,
can you feel your hands on the wheel...
do you then cry the tears
they're too beaten to cry?

Eric Cockrell

Too Close

lit a match,
watched it burn
in the darkness...

the story of life?
a momentary glow
in the infinite night!

the smell of sulfur,
and fingers burnt...
holding the flame

too close!

Eric Cockrell

Too Familiar!

when the hand of God
expresses itself in strong fashion
in the life of a human being,
we make them into a martyr.
or we assassinate their character...

the ghosts of JFK, Robert Kennedy,
Martin Luther King, and John Lennon
blow strong inside the winds of freedom!
do we hear their voices?
do we feel their message?

and who's next?
and who will pull the trigger?
another puppet, another pawn,
or the body of apathy...
who looks too familiar!

Eric Cockrell

Too Late To Believe

rain, fire, and smoldering ashes...
truth demands the air it breathes.
every step a choice,
nothing to go back to...
we stand on the brink,
a people without a land.

you and i no different,
even the taste much the same.
the leaves on the tree have fallen.
paying the cost of the lash,
the wheels mired in mud.
even our prayers cant lie anymore...

America, America,
do you recognize your face?
your children weep,
your father's graves long lost.
only the back, the hands,
and the hearts remain...
is it really too late to believe?

Eric Cockrell

Too Many Lies

too many lies,
desecrate the ground.
the footprints of fallen angels,
covered by the dust of hate.
spoon fed history turned bitter,
the sound of children's voices lost.
even the old juke joints,
deserted and vacant.

handmade guitars,
strings made of human flesh.
the howl of an angry wind,
pierces cardboard shelters.
cars abandoned on the side of the road,
fresh turned earth, no hands to plant.

passion's legs wrapped around,
the bodies now hollow.
young girls fall like rain,
forgotten by time.
to be madly in love,
and pant with desire...
all echoes and rust!

when bibles become weapons,
and the cost is too high.
dead poets whisper,
neath the old hanging tree.
flags flown at half mast,
and the factories are closed.

and you just cant remember
your grandfather's face!

Eric Cockrell

Too Much

i guess i did everything too much...
i ate too much, i drank too much
i fought too much, and too much sex!

i worked too much, i dreamed too much,
played music too much...
walked in the rain too much.

listened to the wind too much,
fell on my face too much,
ran wild too much, too much madness...

left her alone too much,
demanded too much,
wanted too much, talked too much.

loved her too much.....
well let me think....if it's
too much or too little?

Eric Cockrell

Too Much Like Alone....

holy infidels laying stone
for the pathway to the intimate...
stopping to smoke, a cup of coffee,
maybe a shot to break the chill...
books are only people
waiting to be set free from the shelf...
people are only spider's webs,
catching tiny fragments of light.
and this body a tired prayer,
spoken by lips both bruised and shaken.
my hand smells too much like alone,
but my feet know the way home!

Eric Cockrell

Too Much, Too Little

too many angels,
not enough devils.
too much sunshine,
not enough rain.
too many guests,
not enough servers.
too much joy,
not enough pain!

too many votes,
not enough justice.
too many hungry,
not enough giving.
too many angry,
not enough involvement.
too much taking,
not enough living!

too many shovels,
not enough hands.
too many lovers,
not enough love.
too many liars,
not enough truth.
too many too little,
still not enough!

Eric Cockrell

Too Precious!

the only thing
i dont know how to do...
is to pretend it doesnt matter!

to pretend that i dont care!
life is too precious to pretend,
too valuable to waste...

every moment is a gift,
every second eternal!
live! be drunk with living!

Eric Cockrell

Tornado In January!

major tornado damage here
in the western North Carolina
foothills last night!
up to fifty homes, and/or mobile
homes, damaged, or destroyed.
forty degree temps, and a tornado,
in January!
people left homeless, injured, and
lost everything they had... they
need our prayers, and our help!
we take so much for granted... we
complain about how hard things are...
and then you watch your neighbors
lose it all in an instant...
we need to be family, right here
and now... and to learn to be
thankful for the small things!

Eric Cockrell

Total Anarchy...

total anarchy...
the dollar died.
the mourners wept,
lips numb and bleeding.
plastic prayers,
to no avail...
'in god we trust...'
and god just died!

Eric Cockrell

Touching You Again

touching you again
would be like
making love in a church

on a weekday.

sunlight sifting through
the stained glass windows

throwing colored shadows
on the empty pews,
the smell of burnt candlewax,
closed hymnals.

and stone silence.
a cold brass offering plate
waiting for your heart!

Eric Cockrell

Touching You....

i am touching you,
tis not the wind...
tis not the rain,
but the tears i cried.
tis not a dream, nor shadow,
but thought revealed.
the arms you rest in,
are both dark and still.
we are not distant,
there are no miles between eyes.
the smell of your hurt,
caused the earth to shudder.
i am not god nor angel,
not the cure or the end....
i am the gentle old hand
brushing the hair from your eyes....
i am the lovmaker,
you, the cross, and the dance.
you breathe fire,
i burn and burn, and burn!

Eric Cockrell

Trailer Park Child

trailer park child;
his brothers and sisters,
stray dogs and cats...

his momma a crack pipe,
his daddy an old truck
up on blocks...

eating old cereal
from the box with the rats...
but he can read....

eviction notices, Bible verses,
and the warning labels
on cigarette packs...

the dirty prodigal son,
no name, just 'boy! '
empty gasoline cans...

a dead skunk in the road!

Eric Cockrell

Train Whistle (Haiku)

making love, dew damp
grass, by the light of the moon,
lonesome train whistle!

Eric Cockrell

Trainwrecks

i think sometimes it takes trainwrecks,
before we'll sit down and look at, really look at,
who we are, what we are, and what we've become.
and i've had more than my share of trainwrecks....
often we bring them on ourselves, but sometimes
we have help...

it is the nature of life now that we get used, abused,
betrayed, and tormented....it makes one wonder how
much of that goes on inside us...

for the real battle is always within.

all the good and evil, all the hatreds, all the love,
all the wars, all injustices, human consciousness,
peace, and equality... all begin and end within us.

read a quote the other day... forgot who said it, that
went something like, '...there are people so good they
could never harm or kill anyone. i'm not one of them.

i wish i was... but i have to work at it.' and i understood!
i did a lot of things, especially when i was younger, that
i regret. and i paid the price.

i've made a lot of bad decisions, worked for a lot of
unscrupulous people, that used you for what they wanted,
and dumped you.

i've lost everything i had more than once, and stand to again.
when you think you dont have anything left to lose, life has
a way of showing you different.

we too often forget the value of the small things. we forget
what really matters.

and so you get pushed in a hard corner, and you stand up
angry, ready to fight. but what you're fighting is so big
you dont know where to start.... and you're fighting a
battle you cannot win!

and part of it is that the times are hard now. we've run
out of options, we have become expendable! the sad thing
is that we let this happen. we turned our heads, and walked
in indifference.

i am not a good man, nor a bad man. i am a man!
58 years old, with health issues, still wanting to work,
still fighting for what i believe is right. i have seen and
known a depth in life that i try to live, that i try to share,

with my actions, words, and intentions.
but i've reached the point where i'm not willing to
take any more shit! if i've done the wrong thing, then i
own my mistakes. but i wont apologize for what i think
is right!
running out of time, and having a hard time finding a
bridge. but that's my problem.
again and again telling my clenched fist to open.....
waiting for a break, some ray of sun....
human,100% human!

Eric Cockrell

Trapped Anger

with your meth lab soul,
and your rusted down
single wide trailer feet,
prodigal, where will you go now?

your mother's tears,
her cigarette burnt quilt...
your daddy's hand tools pawned
for pills and diapers.

pictures piled in a box,
wrapped in American nightmare...
you hold your baby close,
staring at a blank screen.

high school hero, college dropout,
deserter, small time criminal...
you can still smell the sunlight,
cant see past the rain.

the song of America
played on tin roofs, in hollows...
haunted by trapped anger
that has no name!

Eric Cockrell

Trees!

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i speak for the trees this morning,
majestic in watching silent yearning...
decades and lifetimes wrapped

into every grain and knot....
leafy blanket for the burning
embryos of wing and child.....

the last statement of an angry god
whose voice diffused into forgetfulness,
whose open hands were ignored!

cut, and fallen!
the legacy of man!

Eric Cockrell

Trembles Your Thoughts

i am the brown skinned lover,
sweat wrapped in shadow.
the window left open,
the latch broken by desire.
i am the turpentine taste
of the dangerous and forbidden.
i am the graveclothes left
by the door to your room.
i am the rabid dog,
howling against the wind.
i am the moment before
the storm tears down the house.
i am hunger sharpened
by the loss and the fury.
i am legs uncrossed,
quivering and damp!
i am love dares the bullet,
and taunts the noose.
i am the shackles broken,
the sinews of deep want!
i am the heart, the tongue,
the fingers, and the plow...
waiting for the moon to light
the field too long untouched!
i am the beard of eros,
and the pipe of beauty.
i hum the song
that trembles your thoughts!

Eric Cockrell

Trinkets

trinkets....

throw a bone,
a pitch, words opaque...

the results of a poll,
pipe dream smoke curling,
sleight of hand....

magic balm....
keep the lid shut,
cover your tracks,

always dodge issues,
manipulate the press.
rebates and stimulus,

soap box actors,
throw in a commercial,
the American way....
trinkets!

Eric Cockrell

Troubadour, For Clyde, Dwight, And Tim

the troubadour...
sleeps neath the willow that weeps,
wipes stone dust from his lips,
passes out pieces of heart.
for a glass of wine,
a quiet corner table...
he unfolds his souls,
and the tales of his lives.
catch a D chord,
on a blue night B minor.
loves gained, loves lost,
like stardust on his hat.
his worn boots a prayer,
that common people know.
the light in his eyes,
unlocks doors and heals wounds.
his voice left hanging,
smoke from factories long gone.
his footprints fade,
but not the scars on his heart.
a song, a twinkle,
and back on the road...
leaving photographs of memories
to kiss you goodnight!

Eric Cockrell

True Charity

it is very difficult,
if not impossible,
to help someone
who will not help
themselves.

true charity lies
in teaching people
how to better their conditions,
and standing by them
while they do it!

Eric Cockrell

True Companions!

take off your hat!

come on in....

black coffee, good books,

good wine, moments of stillness,
and conversations of the soul
that last all night....

you came from where?

that's good! tell me,

where are you going?

are you tired of walking alone?

do you need an echo?

questions for your answers?

or answers for your questions?

or do you just need to feel

someone breathing beside you?

we are what we dare to search for!

fear limits us to what we know.

i'll push you out of the nest

if you push me....

we'll either fly together,

or share the fall!

even as the seasons change around us,

they change within us as well.

and all we can ever hope for

are true companions on this road!

Eric Cockrell

True Love

do you know what love is?
reading Rilke to each other
naked in bed....

sipping good brandy.....

old dog asleep at the foot
of the bed....
phone unplugged!

dont give a damn
what day it is!

Eric Cockrell

True Love (Crucifixion)

must true love
always come to crucifixion?
who drives the nails?
who stands at the foot
of the cross and weeps?
who carried the cross?
who conducted the trial?
and who are the faceless ones
who stand and jeer?

who judges life worth giving,
and how much does love demand?
will love forgive?
does love have a name?
who'll bury the body?
who'll guard the tomb?
and on the third day,
who'll roll away the stone?

our journeys together,
wrapped into oneness.
the price of flesh become spirit,
the scars and the moments.
who hangs on this cross,
and who put them there?
do we do it to each other,
or do we do it to ourselves?

and resurrection,
the mere brush of a hand!

Eric Cockrell

True Passion

people of color, sisters and brothers,
wash your hands cant lose the stain.
dont understand, another land,
their heart beats just the same!

we cannot live, 'less we forgive,
see our dreams in each others eyes.
let go of greed, fill the need,
let your prejudices die!

my religion is compassion.
swords to plowshares slowly fashioned.
we can be what we imagine...
unconditional, true passion!

Eric Cockrell

True Passion

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miracle and dust, who do you trust,
there's more than we allow.

beneath the grain, born in the pain,
the reality of now.

Jesus saves, yet we dig the graves,
for the poor and downtrodden.

not much loss, they pay the cost,
the beaten and forgotten!

my religion is compassion.

swords to plowshares slowly fashioned.

you can be what you imagine....

unconditional, true passion!

Eric Cockrell

True Poverty!

true poverty
has nothing to do with money!
it is defined by a lack

in the heart,
that doesnt allow one
to treat all others

with respect and dignity!

Eric Cockrell

True Religion

true religion
gets the hands
dirty with
the heart's true
convictions....

and doesnt keep
running... to wash
them!

Eric Cockrell

Truth And Justice...

we do not go to war to protect freedom,
we go to war to buy and sell the free
for the profit of the machine...
do you want a just war?
keep kicking people out of their houses,
taking their jobs, destroying their families,
and leaving their children hungry...
keep banning books, taking away individual
rights.... keep putting you hand on the common....
and they will rise, and overthrow you!
violence is the wrong answer...
but if you push a peaceful man in a corner,
and abuse his family, he will come out fighting!
you cannot continue to enslave by skin color, religion,
sexual orientation, political views, or economic
status....
too many people see the lie...
too many people are sick of the lie....
and the people you've fooled into fighting
each other, into hating each other...
will join together, and take back their dignity...
hunger cuts through illusion, and demands an answer.

Eric Cockrell

Truth And Justice... (Part Five)

the facts that we've allowed
people around the world in
famine struck countries to
starve to death...
that the countries we do
business with imprison their
own people for speaking out
for justice...
that we send our young men
off to fight unholy wars, and
then bring them home to no
jobs and no homes...
that we dont teach our own children
respect....
that our system of justice is
bought and sold...
that we still judge human beings
by skin color and sex...
that we condemn our young people
to poverty and drugs...
are unforgivable!

Eric Cockrell

Truth And Justice.... (Part Four)

we do not have the right as
a 'free country' to mold and
shape the world by military
force for our own economic
gain...

... WE JUST DO NOT!

Eric Cockrell

Truth And Justice.... (Part Two)

do i advocate violent overthrow of
the government? no!
but i do not advocate the abuse of
the individual either.
we need to arm ourselves with the
weapons of peace, reason, and understanding...
we need to see things as they are!
and we need to reach down deep inside,
and pull out the fortitude to stand...
for a freedom that is equal in all ways.
we need to take our anger at hunger,
homelessness and joblessness...
and turn it into a plow...
we need to plow the fields of parity!
whether we do it the right way,
or the wrong way....
something will be done!
the load has become too much,
and the stink too foul!
we will change!
be a part of it...
or be overcome by it!

Eric Cockrell

Truth And Justice.... (Part Six)

i'm not trying to make people angry
this morning... an intelligent person
know anger is but a symptom of the
disease...

i do state this firmly:
you are a human being.
i dont care about your skin color,
your religious views, whether
you're male or female...
whether you're gay or straight...
you deserve the right to be who
you are, to your own dignity,
to work, to be fed and sheltered,
to raise your families,
to believe in your dreams.
and all of the people around
this old world deserve the same...
you deserve to be free...
inequality, greed, and apathy
wont cut it.
the truth is, we're all human!
and this is the truth that sets us free!

Eric Cockrell

Truth And Justice.... (Part Three)

if our founding fathers were alive
today they would be labeled as terrorists!
think about it!
our standing government, and economic
capitalistic system are a greater threat
to the American people and their families,
than England was to them!
we are so far away from what they intended,
that they would not recognize us!

Eric Cockrell

Truth, The New Terrorist Threat!

they're macing unarmed
female protesters in new york city....

whose freedom did they threaten?
whose do you threaten?

in the land of the free
and the home of the brave,
truth has become the new
terrorist threat!

we stand on the cliff
overlooking now and tomorrow...
will we dare to leap?
will we dare to get involved?
there wont be a tomorrow
if we dont!

the true cost of freedom
is living in a way that
demands freedom,
by your words and
by your actions!

Eric Cockrell

Truth... Demands An Audience

i keep watching
old people dying...
with unspoken living,
trembling on their lips.

truth...
demands an audience!
the silent screams
of mountains and rivers defiled.

even the trees whisper,
the sad hurt of poverty.
the wind cries of justice,
in the empty rooms of god.

do you tire of this flame?
wish i'd go away?
give it time,
even my footprints will disappear.

trees will fall,
mountains will crumble.
and the oil raped rivers
will stink of death.

hungry mouths will go unnoticed.
without faces or names.
cities full of empty buildings
will murmur in the night.

and nothing will return
to claim it's just reward.
the unmarked stone stays silent...
even the silence tastes bitter!

Eric Cockrell

Turn The Key

turn the key...
put your hand
on the knob and

open the door!
there is more
to life than the boxes,

the bows, and the ribbon.
open the package!
you are who you undress for!

undress yourself
for yourself....
open your mouth
and let your song out!

Eric Cockrell

Turn To Rust

turn down the wick!
there's a time for fighting,
a time for prayer, and
a time for just being...
in stillness.

you and i have felt things,
known things, seen things,
that most people never notice
in their mad rush to the grave!

feel the wind blowing through
the alleys, tugging at the doors
of vacant buildings... you know
its name... it has been
your lover, and your companion!

watch the sunlight dancing through
the shadows, lapping up darkness
like a thirsty dog... i am that dog!

the whispering moan of the grass
turning brown in the heat....
as our lives, and our loving
turn to rust!

Eric Cockrell

Turn, And Walk Away

i gave you all the dreams i had
i gave you all i am
now the times are hard and bad
dreams have crumbled in the sand
you turn and walk away
you turn and walk away
you turn and walk away...

hungry eyes are distant now
you're lost inside yourself
you only feel what you allow
you've put me on the shelf
you turn and walk away
you turn and walk away
you turn and walk away...

autumn slowly turns to winter
as leaves fall from the trees
you're staring through the window
as your tears begin to freeze
you turn and walk away
you turn and walk away
you turn and walk away...

Eric Cockrell

Turned Back The Clock!

ethanol in his blood,
clear creek water eyes.
the air atop a mountain,
his spirit flies...

a child of the earth,
he names each tree.
fills the empty nest,
sets wild animals free.

dances naked in the firelight,
with shadows in the cave.
makes love on the ground,
no longer afraid.

gone back to himself,
primitive and unbound.
at one with the turning,
the scent, and the sound!

the howl and the moan
of wind searching rock.
he laid down his grasping,
and turned back the clock!

Eric Cockrell

Turning Wheel....

turning wheel....
newspaper clipping epitaphs,
dead bodies whisper

in the grasses turned brown...
water stagnant, stinking
with blackened greed....

children's hands severed,
lined up beneath the altar,
sacrificed to the gods

of an angry age...
even the trees weep,
and the mountains shudder!

Eric Cockrell

Two Choices

two choices:
we either put guns
in the hands of our children,

or,

we give them
a bowl, a fork, and a book!

Eric Cockrell

Two Kinds Of People

i was thinking about
Martin Luther King...
and the tobacco road south...

old men in overalls chewing
toothpicks down at the depot.
furniture factory ghosts,

cheap gasoline, old trucks...
fried squash and okra,
and the smell of cornbread cooking.

and the right of every child
to have an equal education...
the right of every man, and woman,

to be free.... free, and proud...

they cut down them old trees...
hell, we always thought there
was only two kinds of people...

people who had the money,
and the rest of us!

Eric Cockrell

Two Lovers

two lovers
one rope
dangling o'er
the cliff...

infinity stretched
beneath them...

just out of reach.

two lovers,
or maybe one
soul unwrapping

into all its forms!

Eric Cockrell

Unabashed Want

</>

i wipe a tiny cosmos
..from the corner
.....of your mouth,

and watch you sleeping...

'neath a blanket

....of
.....crumbling
.....leaves

...and
.....fresh fallen
.....snow;

the scent of your rich dark earth,
...and the pulsing warmth
.....of you evolving

..at my fingertips...

nothing more than
..the owl that has your name,

and the hidden space
..between your fingers

curled in unabashed want....

the dream that kisses your eyelids,
...the first and last small fire
.....in an unnamed cave!

Eric Cockrell

Unattended!

you speak of love with an absent voice,
stumbling numbly down the stairway
to the basement where desire rumored lurks.
the man on the screen trills of wars,
and crimes committed beneath white shirts.
and the sweet Jesus prayers of the unemployed,
cut crack rocks on bare tables.
even the dog mourns the heated silence,
while turnips boil in a touch-me-not pot.
death taunts the branch against your window,
the broom stands unattended!

Eric Cockrell

Unborn!

</>

the last crow flying
o'er this desolate land,
his call of distress

falls on deafened ears...
pools of oil, coal dust clouds,
poisons sprayed over the fields....

faceless bodies walk desperate streets,
in search of bread, water, hope....
the profiteers laugh in druglike trance...

and the children die, unborn!

Eric Cockrell

Uncharted Seas

the storm rages...
the sky dark and angry.
tossed by the waves,
water and salt in my face...

no sign of moon or stars.

following, following,
the song of the sirens...
i've let go of the rudder!

i reach over to
touch your face...
this ship sailing
on uncharted seas.

Eric Cockrell

Unconditionally Open

these hands,
that took yours
and walked away from all
we knew.

these hands,
that laid brick,
cut wood,
plowed gardens,
picked up trash

built fences for the dogs,
held the children
when they were small,
held your hands
at the hospital

stroked your body,
touching forbidden places
with gentleness and
passion

wrote the poetry
hidden in your eyes

these hands,
now old and calloused,
sometimes tremble,
sometimes hard as stone

these hands are open,
without fear or trepidation,
unconditionally open
waiting for yours.

Eric Cockrell

Unconscious

every thing i've ever written
in an unconscious love song
to life.
a celebration, a dance,
a prayer.
making love to the wind and rain.
listening to the unspoken tears
of a child.
believing, that even through
the darkest night
a new dawn is coming.

no matter how hard i've tried,
(and i have)
i just havent been able to
form the wordless into words.

maybe that's why i'm still here!

Eric Cockrell

Under Whose Moon?

whose lips do you kiss in your sleep?
whose hands upon your breast?
whose voice do you hear
in the shudder of dreams...
whose hot breath upon your neck?
whose wetness feeds your hunger?
whose fire? and who stirs the embers?
whose howl? whose mount?
whose furred claw digging into your flesh?
whose darkness... under whose moon!

Eric Cockrell

Undiscovered

no one to drink with -
no one to talk to...
if a man is an island,
i lie undiscovered.
do old men make good lovers?
do you burn old books?
or use them for your pillow?
and the old pair of jeans
you just wont throw away
still feels good on your ass!

tired of reading old newspapers,
i changed the candle by the bed.
swept the floor, took out the trash,
carried the broken branches
to the woods

is that my hand knocking?
or merely a breath of wind
rustling your curtains?

Eric Cockrell

Unemployed

'unemployed
... need not
..... apply'

that's like saying:

hungry, need not eat.
homeless, need not a home.
people, need not be
treated as people!

or...

Americans, need not freedom!

Eric Cockrell

Unfolding!

listen!

in every voice
something familiar!

in every face
something that
reminds you...

in every flower
that blooms.

in every cloud,
in every leaf
blowing in the wind.

in every child
that's born...

in every old person
that you bury.

in every man
working with his hands.

in every woman
raising her children.

in every mountain
standing silent...

in every river
flowing free...

the song of living,
the dance of darkness
and light....

the universe unfolding
in your hands!

Eric Cockrell

Unless We Take Today!

they are killing, beating, torturing,
and imprisoning our brothers and
sisters around the world who dare
to stand up, and speak out with
freedom's voice!
and it has already begun here with
the brutalities committed against the
Occupy movement...
and the recent passage of the 'detainee'
bill, which contrary to what our Republican
'friends' are trying to sell us, can and will
be used against American citizens...
this is a time for prayer, commitment, and
a firm resolve not to back down... they can
take anything they want, but they cannot
take our freedom as long as we are joined,
connected, and one in purpose....
the futures of our children depend on the
choices we make now! we can make this
a better world, but it's going to take hard
work, faith, listening, and understanding...
we cant wait for tomorrow... tomorrow wont
come unless we take today!

Eric Cockrell

Unlock The Door!

my heart grieves...
my ship tossed by the storms...
the anger of those forgotten,
cast aside, thrown away.
those bound by the curse,
of oppression, of slavery.
those denied their basic rights,
because they are different,
because they have not.
those misunderstood,
those misled and ill informed.
those with no chance
for anything more than
where they are now.
those who hurt, who destroy,
who take, who use and abuse,
believing they, (and only they) ,
are right...
those who cannot feel,
who are afraid of themselves...
who dare not give without holding back...
i feel the anger...
just outside the door.
breathing in, i take the fury.
breathing out, i unlock the door!

Eric Cockrell

Unnatural Acts

any action
whereby one human being
treats any other human being

with
...disrespect!

abusing their dignity,
.....their freedom,
.....using them

like possessions,
....or judging them
.....without cause!

Eric Cockrell

Until

fallow ground...
lips tremor, speaking nothing
in the language of false gods.

there can be no healing
until you see the disease,
smell the rotting flesh....

until the souls of the invisible
gather around you, and
you take your self back in.

until the words you speak
are built on action wrapped
in the forms of compassion....

until you ask forgiveness
of the mountains, the rivers,
and the sky.... until...

you nurse the baby at
your own breasts... until
you wash your hands in

the blood of the innocents.

Eric Cockrell

Until Then....

for you who speak knowingly of eternity,
though your lips tremble when you speak.
and you keep turning and looking behind you,
as if afraid something is catching up.
those who would sell salvation by barker or vendor,
yet hurry inside when darkness falls.
who bear the cross of condemnation,
proudly for the world to see....
i wish you well may peace find you.

i look not to yonder shore,
nor speak with words that ply.
i will not wear the suit and tie,
nor follow the path prescribed.
yet i long to feel the presence,
in every moment, in every step taken.
i dare not reach for the star in the dead of night,
for i know the star will come to me.
and it is in the silence that i hear,
the very heartbeat of god....
perhaps we'll meet somewhere down the road,

until then, peace, and joy!

Eric Cockrell

Until You Forgive...

you cant feed the fire
with human limbs.
you cant touch the sky
when you're afraid of the dark.
you cant go to the manger,
and pay the tax collector too.
you cant ride the river,
after you build the dam.
you cant bring about peace,
with the guns of war.
you cant stop prejudice
with fear and ignorance.
you cant eat the poor,
cant sell their worn out shoes.
you cant pray to god
with hatred in your heart.
you cant find wisdom
in the marketplace.
you cant set people free,
until you are free!
you cant feed the hungry,
and feed the lust of your greed.
you cant buy justice,
and you cant sell truth!
you cant be forgiven,
until you forgive...

Eric Cockrell

Upon Your Shoulder

whose voice? whose image?
whose hand on the plow?
whose silent pillow we share?
whose rain? whose desire?
whose moon holding tides?
whose dark lips against our breast?
whose hammer? whose apron?
whose tick of the clock?
whose hand wiping away tears?
whose black? whose white?
whose cough in the night?
whose branch against the window?
whose pockets? whose empty?
whose wetness that clings?
whose moth upon your shoulder?
whose death? whose life?
whose kiss to your hunger?
whose wind do you follow?

Eric Cockrell

Utopia? (As One)

utopia?

non-sterile,
sweaty, cumstained,
bloody, grimy, bruised...

human bodies
hugging each other,
digging together,

as one, as many...
diverse, unique, tied
to the one...

with their gods
holding lanterns,
and carrying water!

Eric Cockrell

Vacancy, For Rent

walking the streets
of a small southern town...
empty buildings, empty houses,
'vacancy, for rent'

no one moving much,
even the church parking lots
are empty.... seems like
Jesus and His disciples

packed up, and moved on...
probably looking for work!
only a sense of quiet despair,
the sound of old cars rusting,

and the howling of a dog.
just read the news:
an elderly couple, married
67 years, murder suicide...

he'd been sick, she had
alzheimer's.... afraid there'd
be no one to take care of her...
another unmarked grave,

forgotten people, abandoned
by their own government.....
another empty house that
used to be a home...

'vacancy, for rent.'
just walking the streets
of a small southern town...
church bells are ringing...

and the smell of death
hangs in the air!

Vacant And Cold!

are we then human?
what does that entail?
we light our cigarettes
off the heads of starving children,
drink wine made from
the blood of dead soldiers.

even our gods see through colored lenses!
afraid of the truth,
we chip away at the stone.
turning off our lights to undress.
perfumed by the scent of dead animals,
shamed by the stink of human need!

'Jesus died for our sins...'
we hold our sins close
as the price of oil!
eating multi-lingual tacos and rice,
we chase His brother across the border
on a migrant worker's pay!

may our food rot in our mouths!
our cars up on race divided blocks.
our daughters run with the wolves,
chasing the shadow of the refugee!
the kingdom of heaven uninhabited,
the house of prejudice, vacant and cold!

Eric Cockrell

Vacant Eyes

standing in line
for a cup of soup,
second hand coats,
and worn out shoes.

the hands that
built your houses,
paved your roads,
worked your steel mills...

harvested your crops,
worked on your cars,
built your cities and towns,
your stores and your churches.

tremble with the cold,
hold the steaming cup
like a prayer...
wipe the corners of vacant eyes!

Eric Cockrell

Validity

i will accept the validity
of your religious view when...
you lay down your guns,
and start feeding the hungry!

i will accept the validity
of your political view when...
by your actions you show your primary
concerns to be poverty and homelessness.

i will accept the validity
of your freedom when...
it applies equally to all,
regardless of skin color.

i will accept the validity
of your humanitarian view when...
you take all men as brothers,
and walk with compassion.

Eric Cockrell

Value Of A Man... (And A Woman!)

if i were a woman,
what i would value in a man:

one who listens, is kind,
one who is honest...
one who is sensual, spiritual,
one who questions...
one who is as good at changing a diaper
as plowing a garden...
one who reads extensively...
one who enjoys long walks in the rain,
quiet conversations in a corner booth,
would rather make love by candlelight
than go out on the town...
one who stands firm in his convictions,
but respects all points of view.
one who can cook,
and has no qualms about
letting the dog curl up in the bed...
one who is strong, and weak,
and knows the sameness...
one who is forever passionate!

come to think of it...
being a man,
that's pretty much what i
value in a woman!

Eric Cockrell

Van Gogh's Ear

madness, van gogh's ear...
i keep chopping up
pieces of my soul,

spreading them thin,
to still the tiny voices
that haunt our lives.

who are you?
what do you want?
where do you want

to go with your life?
you cant sleep in the hollow
of the cliff forever...

choose your sword, and live!
or step off, free falling,
and try to find your wings!

yes, love is torment...
the halls of the museum
echo with the sounds...

of babies changed, and
beds made... and the smells
of soup on the stove...

and love stains on the sheets!

Eric Cockrell

Vantage Point

the leaf speaks to the tree,
'i am tree', pounding its chest!
the tree whispers with a smile,
'but my son i am leaf! '...
the ground beneath trembles with laughter,
'yes, and i am sky! '
then the wind comes,
and with a mighty rush,
blows them all away!

three voices rhyming in distant echoes...
'we are wind! '

Eric Cockrell

Verb Of The Spirit

peace is not
the absence of war...
it is the presence
of life in all
of it's fullness!

never won by
guns and bombs...
achieved by letting go
of fear and ignorance.

peace begins within,
and then spreads,
when actions meet
the true heart's intent.

peace is a verb
of the spirit...
the answer to
the question not asked!

Eric Cockrell

Victorious (Death)

the small bird
banged against its cage
for years;
flapping its wings,
trying to get out.

then finally one morning,
the door was left open!
the bird emerged,
battered and bruised,
but victorious....

and flew away
into the limitless sky.

Eric Cockrell

Violin

you play like
an old violin...
scratched and marred

on the surface....
but for one who knows
how to fret you,

your cadence, and
your key....

oh,
how sweet
the
sound!

Eric Cockrell

Voices

our love is spillt
onto winter's dead earth.
amid the rubble of
decaying leaves, and
unnamed frost...

only an echo
of living remains;
and the promise
born in memory
is not enough.

the arms and legs
of our passion
cut up as firewood
and left to dry.

our cries of hunger
diminished, fade
into the sounds of the wind
freezing the panes
of windows locked in death.

epitaphs scratched in stone
and children that took wing...
now voices no longer familier
speak of nothing, or
dont speak at all.

Eric Cockrell

Voices Of Infinity

i dance with animals in the night,
run naked with trees,
and drink strong moonlight.
i sing with the rocks,
and crow with the dawn....
i beat the drum primeval!

i rush with the waves
to strip the shores,
of all vestiges of passing.
i howl with the wind,
i dance with shadows and sounds,
and lay naked on the cool earth.

i am the ache inside the shell,
the hand that sprinkles dust...
come walk with me,
let us taste the very darkness,
let us call for the light
with the voices of infinity!

Eric Cockrell

Voices Of The Children

how many times will we turn to the wind
and hear the voices of the children?
how many bodies, how many graves,
before we forgive and are forgiven?

who makes the choice?
and who has the voice?
whose hand can stop the killing?
who defines liberty?
brings back community?
brings back the touch and the feeling?

and when will we know
they'll never be tomorrow
unless we live today?
will we find God in each other,
in our sisters and brothers,
in what we do and what we say?

how many times will we turn to the wind
and hear the voices of the children?
how many voices, how many graves?
before we forgive, and are forgiven!

Eric Cockrell

Voting In Egypt

they're voting in Egypt
this morning....
they had all the oppression

they could take...
and they rose up
at the risk of their lives,

and took their country back!
will we have to follow
in their footsteps?

how many will have to die
before we can restore our dignity?
when you have nothing left

to live for....
then the price of your life isnt much!
freedom calls, will we answer?

Eric Cockrell

Vowing, To Be Better!

i am both the bullet,
and the victim.
the finger on the trigger,
the hand on the heart.
the hatred and the forgiveness,
the compassion that dares.
the sacred, and the demon,
the prayer and the scream.
both justice and injustice,
prejudice and understanding.
both ignorance and wisdom,
fearful, and a man.
i see both the light and darkness,
feel, touch, and taste them.
knowing that every breath i breathe,
is a choice!
every night i take off my image,
and examine my heart.
taking responsibility for my life,
and vowing, to be better!

Eric Cockrell

Wail Of Poverty

i hear the wail of poverty,
feel the constant pressure
in my chest...
staring with eyes,
hardened and hungry,
looking for a break.
working past the point
of numbness,
sleepless under the weight...
i hear the cries of small children,
with every step i take.
i smell the anger,
and it smells like me,
the cold sweat of desperation.
the bullet phone,
or papers served,
one step from the edge.
i taste the tears
that men dont cry,
and the cold silence
of the women.
the car that wont crank,
the lights shut off,
the eviction notice on the door.
i hear the prayers of poverty,
prayed to a god that doesnt hear.
see the faces, and know the names,
and recognize the footsteps at the door!

Eric Cockrell

Wait For The Bus!

you can read the grain
of timeworn faces,
much as the grain of the ancient oak.
and rivers exist somewhere,
behind tired eyes, universes beneath dirty nails.
no one gives much of a damn for old men,
that's why there are benches, stoops,
and worn out old chairs.
perhaps god is knitting, or discovering
another Einstein....
and just doesnt have time to collect the lost!
while women bury their dreams in flower pots,
and the young burn clocks to the moon.
dogs piss on blades of unmarked grass,
giving names to faces unseen.
as old men with erections and scars,
translate the forbidden tongues.
seeing the naked light inside shadows,
they fart scriptures, and wait for the bus!

Eric Cockrell

Waiting (For The Fire)

the burnt edge
...of the paper
..kingdom of the

.....raw
.....beating
.....heart,

crumbling in the hands
.....of time,

.....waiting
.....for
.....the
.....fire!

Eric Cockrell

Waiting For Lightning...

what if i loved you,
and you didnt know my name.
is the distance between us real?
what if the barriers were just concepts,
and the concepts fear?
what if my lips moved,
and you only felt thunder?

what if i wanted you,
would the shadows freeze?
the snow on your lips tastes of death!
what if the wind moaned,
and the whole house shook?
what if you stood on the ledge,
with no way to return!

what if i needed you,
would i turn to find you there?
not merely waiting for death!
do i have to set the fire,
and burn down the house?
are you waiting for lightning...
or can you hear my voice?

Eric Cockrell

Waiting For The Spider

how many small deaths?
nickels and dimes in dust filled pockets...
are we drifting off to sleep?
out to sea?
or further from the core?
we die in circles,
circles within circles.
with small short breaths hurled
on the hairy plate of eternity.
a thousand tiny fires,
built by unseen hands
on darkened roads...
a thousand tiny deaths!
or a thousand stop the world kisses,
when names and identities are forgotten,
if but for an eternal moment.
how many times must i be the butterfly?
the snail? the hummingbird flying backwards?
or just stagnant water in a cast aside tire...
waiting for the spider?

Eric Cockrell

Waiting For The Storm

snow birds screeching in the trees,
bare limbs bent with time and promise..
desolate, hungry clouds from the south,
and the quiet before the storm.

and those i love are sleeping, or far away.
there's nothing that can be done just now.
all the fires and smoke are as distant
as hours and days will allow.

stillness, and waiting... for something
that hasnt taken form or spirit yet.
walking through the museum of my heart,
searching for answers, and finality.

i cant find God in the garden,
or in the pounding of the big guns.
or in the broken bodies strewn by greed,
or in the voices wailing with hurt and hunger.

every direction leads to lostness.
prayers fall like ash in the wind.
and i'm left with the sound of the
snow birds calling, waiting for the storm.

Eric Cockrell

Waiting For The Strength

i often walk in the quiet of the evening
with Mary Magdelene....
listening to the sound of her voice,
as she speaks of things
that men do not understand!
and after she leaves,
i stand by the stone,
waiting for the strength
to push it away!

Eric Cockrell

Waiting, Still Waiting

i have been to the place where dignity calls,
heard the sounds of families running for cover.
felt the pounding of guns, smelled the stench of bodies,
watched men who hated themselves in another.
saw ghouls counting money stained by blood,
saw priests counting bodies buried in mud.
felt the sting of the lie, the cold inside empty.
heard the groan of towns and burning cities.
both broke outside and broken inside.
where good men pray for the courage to die....

still the shout and the fury of freedom shakes...
tis the hand that gives and the hand that takes.
we are no more than the doubt and the ache...
waiting, still waiting, for the storm to break!

now who will lead and who will follow,
the path of yesterday dont lead to tomorrow.
the end of the world, the beginning of time.
while the sheep are lost and the goats are blind.
now the voices of children unborn crying,
for the mother slain and the father dying.
the howl of abandonment tears the sky,
the stink of poverty perfumed by the lie.
now the gods of men turn in disgust,
while the souls of men crumble to dust....

still the shout and the fury of freedom shakes....
tis the hand that gives and the hand that takes.
we are no more than the doubt and the ache...
waiting, still waiting, for the storm to break!

Eric Cockrell

Waiting... Waiting... Waiting!

i have travelled a thousand miles,
and crossed endless seas....
leaped chasms across rooms,
and named endless falling stars.
burned every candle down,
and crucified every desire...
waiting... waiting... waiting!

Eric Cockrell

Wake Up! (Is It Too Late?)

from Selma to Stonewall...
from socialists to McCarthy.
from Hoover to King,
and bullets with faces.
from Jamestown to Vietnam,
from the Black Hills to the reservation...
from Kent State to the Gulf,
from the coal mines to the oil rigs.
from the farms to the factories,
from Africans and rogue Irish...
from migrant workers to the prisoners,
from the unemployment line to the soup kitchen.
from Harlem to Montgomery to Pittsburgh,
from Charlotte to L.A. to Washington.
from the slaves to the unions,
from Prohibition to the War On Drugs.
from the cotton mills to the cellphones,
from the Bill Of Rights to Big Brother....
this is America.

do our fathers' fathers mourn through the night?
do not our mothers' mothers weep by the grave?
in the name of god our gods have fallen,
with napalm smeared faces lost in the darkness.

whose hand on the wheel?
another runaway train?
the trinkets of freedom sold for change?
numbed by the faceless,
they stand in line for a plate...
filled with the flesh of their own children!

take away their books,
in the name of graven images.
take away their thoughts,
for the thump and the sound.
take away their hearts,
for the pill and the blade.
take away their souls,

in the name of religion.

ah, but this is America!
the alley and the field.
both the fire and the streets,
the family and the lost.
church bells are ringing,
the air full of smoke.
another baby born,
another found in a dumpster.

the farmhouses left empty,
the schoolrooms filled with noise.
the politician speaks, the preacher farts.
pimps lick their lips, gangs swallow hope.
while hatred sickens both the crow and the rat!

yes, America, land of the free!
built on the bones of Indians martyred.
put your thinkers behind bars,
or better yet in institutions...
bury your poets in gasoline graves!

America, America, your masses groan.
hard callouses and harder penises...
and wombs hidden behind doors.
in anger your workers,
swell and pound the shores...
while thieves carry guns,
and demons sell souls!

your young have forgotten,
or perhaps never knew...
and your old are forgotten,
as if they never were.
your flag is on fire,
while bats hang from the rafters.
and dogs run the night,
looking for shelter!

America, America!
Chavez and the Kennedys...

Whitman moans, and Crazy Horse howls.
while the ghost of Jefferson,
haunts the sleepless night...
and FDR shudders,
in the last empty room.

Malcolm stands angry by the door,
as Steinbeck's grave is defiled.
as Woody's voice shatters windows,
as the hammer strikes the nail.
America! America!

wake up!
is it too late?
listen to the mockingbird,
listen to the wind!
listen to the cries,
of bodies carrying burdens.
listen to the sound,
of your own hearts beating!

America!

Eric Cockrell

Waking Up!

the smell of coffee brewing,
dark, and strong and heady....
sunlight working its way through blinds,

and the nip of autumn air.
the song in my head no one
else can hear, coming from nowhere....

the sharpness of things seen,
and things not easily seen....
thoughts pulling like undefined gravity,

driving me to get up, and go again.
time passes, leaves fall,
but the tree remains, strong and steady,

ready for the coming storms.
something deep inside my darkest hour,
affirms that spring will come again....

tired and weary, but hat still cocked,
hungry for flesh and breath and being.
plow in hand, eyes still twinkle!

damn, it's good to be alive!

Eric Cockrell

Walk Inside The Wind...

of war and peace,
Tolstoy wrote,
and Dylan rhymed with angst.
while Woody fought the fascists,
and hopped the midnight train.
Martin spoke for equality,
unafraid of bullets and chains...
and the Kent State students,
stood against unholy war.
mowed down by their own people,
yet nobody's keeping score.

now time immemorial,
calls both the child and man.
for dignity and humanity,
to rise and take a stand.
to hold the truth of open hands,
to see beneath the skin.
to preach the gospel of give a damn,
to walk inside the wind...

and if there be tomorrow,
we must redeem today.
to act from the heart,
to light the dark,
to be the prayers we pray.
for salvation is nothing more,
than the redemption of the soul.
building shelter for the dispossessed,
to fill the hungry bowl.

now time immemorial,
calls both the child and man.
for dignity and equality,
to rise and take a stand.
to hold the truth of open hands,
to see beneath the skin.
to live the gospel of give a damn,
to walk inside the wind...

Eric Cockrell

Walk The Path In Stillness

walking barefoot...
down alleys dark,
while children play
with garbage and broken glass.
past unlocked doors,
through buildings spent,
left for ghosts and tribal memories.
past walls charred by sweat and time,
left to smolder with empty ache....
to the time before the time before,
when living had a name.

under war torn skies,
over bodies strewn,
and left for birds of prey.
down dusty roads,
holding a child's dark hands,
in shadows anguished pain.
the skies aflame,
as if stars died, and every veil is rent.
to the sound of freedom's hungered drums,
and shadowed wings beating fury.

to the barren room,
the mattress on the floor,
frost upon the pane.
where lovers turned upon the spit,
with bodies made of water.
eyes wide open, living thrust,
tongues tracing maps to destiny.
the hardened cock,
buried in soul's wet lips,
while angels silently prayed.
and the candle burned
till the break of dawn,
and moonlight's final kiss...
the barren room of the empty house,
where eternity revealed!

the field once plowed
has now turned brown...
sparrows pick at the dust.
and scriptures written
in hickory rust,
whispers lost to sound!
battles fought, and flags laid down,
cover caskets that wait for dirt.
the little girl's shoe, the old washtub,
the broken pot beneath the window.

while dogs bark, and ants converse,
and hearts are covered with snow.
the faces of god fade into wood,
stacked and thrown into the fire.
be it dream, be it madness,
or the simple turning of the wheel...
the wind turns with a final kiss,
bare feet walk the path in stillness!

Eric Cockrell

Walk Through Hell

she's a needle,
and a spoon....
a loaded.45!

a tornado ripping
through a trailer park.
arsenic and bourbon,

cancer and skydiving....
she's a dark jungle,
fire, and quake!

she's a black pony
on the blackest of nights;
the sword, and the flesh....

the ditch, and the bones.
she's a burning cross,
and the last door knock....

and he'd walk through hell,
just to stand by her side!

Eric Cockrell

Walked Away

what if i just walked away?
laid my burden down
at your door
pulled my hat down low,
turned, and walked away

without a word

somewhere wolves run in packs,
and whales swim together
and birds fly south, wings
beating in unison

babies are born to young couples
who hold each other in awe
and the homeless man under
the bridge watches the sun rise.

and an old man plays his guitar
on the porch his grandchildren
play in the yard and the coming
night brings the promise

of rain.

they're singing hymns as they
lay him to rest friends holding hands
and the first signs of fall
leaves beginning to turn

a hint of sharpness in the air
somewhere life calls
the painter lays down his brush,
the carpenter his hammer
the farmer his hoe

and the stranger we've ran from
returns with a key nothing left
to say

what if i just walked away?

Eric Cockrell

Walked Away... Walked To!

i walked away from...
the pursuit of things,
of houses, of cars.
from the need to be recognized,
the need for titles,
the need for success.
from organized religion,
from 'holier than thou' preaching...
from the need to be right,
from the need to win,
from the need to be in charge.
from passion without love,
and from love without passion.
from my own concepts,
and my selfish desires.

and i walked to...
life at the risk of losing,
caring at the cost of getting dirty.
the simple laughter and tears
of small children,
the companionship of dogs.
the raw beauty in the everyday moment.
the shared suffering of all that breathes.
the freedom that allows me
to be myself, and others who they are...
the sacredness of life itself,
and unconditional love.

Eric Cockrell

Walking (Haiku)

Jesus walked, water!
Buddha walked in the moment...
i just keep walking!

Eric Cockrell

Walking Forever

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it seemed to him
that he'd been walking forever...
the night was brisk and cool....

a half moon, and a few stars.
every step he took he let go
of something else....

all the things he'd thought he needed....
all the things that got in the way!
pride, hurt, anger, need, and

all the images he had of what should be.....
he walked up to the door, and knocked....
she opened the door just a crack...

'what do you want? '
'i just want to hold you,
to feel you close...

to smell your smell,
to taste your taste....
to listen to you breathe

in the darkness...
to hold you while you sleep....
that's all i want,

and the world can go to hell! '

she opened the door,
...and let him in!

Eric Cockrell

Walking Home Alone

hurricane, screaming pain,
bodies truth, sold out youth;
earth burning, a new page turning,
wont shut their eyes, wont buy the lies.

midnite to dawn, something's going on.
men with guns decide who's right or wrong.
the weak are just the victims of the strong.
too many strangers walking home alone....

despair wearing faces, human traces,
houses empty, homeless cities.
suicides, loneliness hides,
no connection, no direction.

midnite to dawn, something's going on.
men with guns decide who's right or wrong.
the weak are just the victims of the strong....
too many strangers walking home alone....

Eric Cockrell

Walking Instructions

i live by the law of the human heart,
and beg no pardon of written creeds!

Eric Cockrell

Walking The Path

i used to meditate
early in the morning
down on the basement
of the old house
on Bethel Rd
that we rented years ago...
there was a rabbit
that sometimes hopped
through the open basement door
to sit close to me...
and listened as i chanted.
i almost found it then!

years have passed,
times of struggle and loss...
(i almost lost my way)
now i sit here at night
thinking about the precepts,
reading poetry, just thinking....
or not thinking at all!
with an old blind dog...
walking the path...
to the temple again!

Eric Cockrell

Walking With The Lover...

walking with the Lover...
i see empty fields plowed,
come alive with crops abundant.
empty factory buildings filled
with the ghosts of hard working lives.
empty houses lit up,
and the sounds of families.
empty hands given cups and bowls,
empty hearts held close!
empty words given meaning,
empty promises fulfilled.
walking with the Lover...
touching the plenty of empty!

Eric Cockrell

Wanna Be!

he called me:

'a renegade socialist,
...a wanna-be problem...'

i said: 'Sir, i am
...what i wanna be,
...it's you that has

....the problem! '

Eric Cockrell

Wants And Needs

everytime your hands close
on something you want, someone
else's hands are empty of
what they need.

the difference between needs
and wants, is the difference
between freedom and slavery.

be careful of what you want!
every transaction has a cost.
who pays the cost... and in the
end who pays for that?

dont let what you want own you!
dont take your wants at the expense
of someone else's needs.

we came into this world naked,
we will leave the same way.
what we cling to is only a hindrance.

Eric Cockrell

Wants To Pray

the part of us
that wants to pray
in the heated hour
of our darkest night...

is our heart calling
out to our soul!

if our ego be the disease,
then it is in our naked self
that we find the cure!

we cry out to a god,
so close, hidden in plain sight!
beneath our sweat,
and within our very breath!

Eric Cockrell

War

A small child
With one arm,
Hugging

A dog with three legs

As both weep
O'er the lifeless body

Of the child's mother.

In the name of God?

Eric Cockrell

War (Haiku)

old men flogging their
meat, young men dying worthless,
nameless, feed the greed!

too many hungry
mouths, too little, spread too thin,
expendable ghosts.

patriotism,
cutting down trees, bloody saws,
children stacked, firewood!

bombs falling, women
and children, fill up the ditch,
covered by hatred...

Eric Cockrell

War Crimes

The most terrible of all
War crimes....
Leading a nation to war
To fuel profits,

By misinformation,
By manipulation,
And fear.

The next most terrible...
Following!

Eric Cockrell

War!

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war!

mankind's fear

lashing out at

the heart of mankind....

small minded thoughts

governing universal infinity....

the failure to feed

a hungry man's hunger,

bringing about the need

to kill him!

the blindness that keeps

us from seeing ourselves

in each other.....

the arrogant greed of the few,

the inhumane answer....

war.....

never brings the intended result....

war.....

the profit machine,

trading lives for control!

war!

the wrong choice,

failure, and loss!

war!

Eric Cockrell

Warm Body

the jaded sky
burnt purple to raging red
painted by an orphan brush....

heroin ghost nightmares
lost in the void
between time and flesh...

cold steel revolver
beneath the pillow-
the line between fear

and 'i dont give a damn'!

and the eyes of the children
stare like poison ink
on the pages of what's left...

cold iron bars
blurr the vagabond night
with feelings that taste

like death....

karma rips the night asunder....
and you're left praying...

for clear skies,
unchained dreams...
a lover's breasts for a pillow...

eyes that plant seeds....
and a warm body to feel!

Eric Cockrell

Warrior's Pledge...

well, i've been to the mountain,
and i've walked through the valleys.
i've stood neath the cross
awaiting my turn.
i've heard the stories of children,
and the stories of old men.
there's not enough difference
for me to discern.

i've been to the battle,
and i've taken it to the streets.
i've been to the place,
where truth and dignity meet.
i've stood naked and alone,
and faced my sins.
i've felt the wrath of god,
known the ignorance of men.

i've worn boots of flesh,
and fought with my hands.
went back into the fire,
to save the last man.
slept with angels and demons alike,
drank the darkness, walked in the light.
found the right in wrong,
and the wrong in right....

as the storm clouds rage
on this face cut by age,
the mountains tremble,
and the rivers rage.
i'll stay to the end,
i'll turn the last page,
then catch a ride to the funeral
on the last stage....

i'll write the words of my heart,

with a pen dripping blood.
i'll cross the last river,
and stomp through the mud.
with the prayers of the children,
and the eyes of the hawk.
to the place of closeness,
where spirits can talk.

and stare deep and unashamed
into God's eyes.
and lay down my journey,
where the soul never dies.
where names be forgotten,
but hands clasp as one.
in the valley of darkness,
at the feet of the sun.

Eric Cockrell

Warriors Pledge... (Conclusion)

well, i've heard the footsteps
of hard determined walkers.
lost in the din and the noise
of angry faceless talkers
been twice betrayed by love,
in my hour of need.
i've planted my thoughts,
the earth swallowed my seed.

i've torn down the idols,
and exposed the lies.
been to the place
where the last raven flies.
put names on the bodies
strewn in the ditch.
been called a fugitive
and a son-of-a-bitch....

i saw that which i hated
in the mirror before me.
found the cost of my slavery,
and set my heart free.
i plowed the last garden,
built a house with doors open.
kept struggling and fighting,
believing and hoping.

i've listened to silence,
and learned god's voice.
found that we are defined,
by daring and choice.
i'll say this one time,
and return to the ground.
we are what we give,
the touch and the sound....

we are what we give,
the touch and the sound...

amen!

Eric Cockrell

Warrior's Pledge... (Part Two)

well, i've known poverty's ashes,
felt hunger's hot tears.
i've been to the place,
where men face their fears.
grieved the wars of the foolish,
the indifference of those that should know.
and known the bitter taste
of the seeds that we've sowed.

i've seen the old woman dying,
in a room by herself.
seen everything she loved,
put back on the shelf.
felt the hate and the greed
of those who buy and sell.
i've seen the distant shore,
and i've walked through hell.

i've felt the weight of my actions,
that cant be denied.
i've stood before the mirror,
with nothing to hide.
i've fallen and crawled,
but kept staggering on.
in the company of many,
and often alone...

i've written the words of my heart,
with a pen dripping blood.
i've crossed the last river,
and stomped through the mud.
with the prayers of the children,
and the eyes of the hawk.
to the place of closeness,
where spirits can talk.

i'll stare deep and unashamed,
into God's eyes.

as i lay down my journey,
where the soul never dies.
where names be forgotten,
but hands clasp as one.
through the valley of darkness,
to the feet of the sun!

Eric Cockrell

Wars Of The Heart

are we then
the casualties of love?
shell shocked, and wounded,
unable to sleep
for apparitions in the night...
limping, and bandaged,
we come to each other...
the last survivors,
in the wars of the heart!

Eric Cockrell

Washington

They're selling plastic Jesus's
in the halls of the senate,
putting band-aids on open wounds
that ooze when you breathe...

Trading worthless paper, cigar deals,
'in God we trust', or not!
puffing out their ashen chests,
strutting like empty headed roosters.

And the children of the dream
bow their heads and blindly walk;
the meat grinder turns his wheel,
the spineless monkey dances!

An empire falls in sterile silence,
throw the helpless to the lions!
no food, no water, no oil, no power,
gridlock, and a broken bow!

Eric Cockrell

Wasted

it's very hard
to have the courage
to find a cause worth
dying for....

it's just as hard,
and takes just as much
courage and commitment...
to find a cause worth
living for...

too many of us
take the road inbetween,
and our lives are wasted!

Eric Cockrell

We All Pray For!

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small children's faces,
eyes looking up with love,
too young, too true

to their hearts to lie....
too free to hold back,
too full of life to doubt....

too near to the darkness
to fear the light....
too close to the magic

not to believe....
love untouched, undefined...
...the teachers
.....we all pray for!

Eric Cockrell

We Are Defined

we are defined...
by feet tripping on the doorstep,
by the cup spilled,
by the broom calling from the corner...
by the dust on our bedroom windows,
and the book we didnt read!

Eric Cockrell

We Are Not Alone

tired, so tired...
She laid Her hand
on my shoulder,
and whispered:

'can you not see
the sky, the clouds,
the wind walking
through the treetops,
sunlight dancing on
raindrops clinging to
the long grasses....

can you not hear
the howl of the wolf,
the cry of a new baby,
the moan of the wind....

be still, and know
that God is with you! '

but i could not
see or hear above the
clamor and the roar,
the voices of the starving,
of the homeless,
of women beaten and used,
of children without families,
of families killed by the bombs,
of the prisoner wrongly executed,
of the poor and oppressed.....

She whispered again:
'look closely, can you not
see My face in each of these?
be still, and know
that I am with you! '

i stood up and smiled,

knowing we are not alone!

Eric Cockrell

We Are Not Cattle!

they destroyed the Native Americans,
killed, raped, converted them
to slavery with a sword....

and built freedom on this premise...
on the backs of African-American slaves,
and immigrants that fled oppression....

now the actions of the past
are demanding their price!
and the battle again

will be fierce and harsh!
freedom isnt built on oppression!
they'll be no more herding,
we are not cattle!

Eric Cockrell

We Are Not Strangers

we are not strangers,
you and i!
we have walked through history together.
and the dust on our feet,
be it from Atlantis or Peru,
glimmers in the starlight when we make love.
i made the ink you penned with,
you cut the trees for my pages.
perhaps i was a turtle, or a wild stallion,
and you were a mermaid, or a moth.
or perhaps i was branches gathered,
and you were the very fire.
or i was a prisoner of war,
and you the officer in charge.
or i was the plague, and you the cure.
the black man they hanged,
as you hid and wept.
perhaps i was the cross Jesus carried,
and you were Magdelene watching from afar.
or perhaps i was the star that fell,
and turned the oceans into land.
and you were the first trees born,
in the kingdom that darkness birthed.
or maybe i'm just an old hobo,
and you the shelter of branches.
no, we are not strangers,
we have been intimate for ages!

Eric Cockrell

We Are The Same...

gas rices up,
fuel prices up,
grocery prices up,
heating prices up...

and the poor man's dollar
is still a dollar!

cant afford sickness,
cant afford hospitals,
cant afford shelter,
cant afford, cant afford.

it's time to band together
in small communities,
and be neighbors again.

we cannot rely on the government,
on churches, on the elite...
we have each other,
and that is all!

forget about differences.
skin color, religion, politics...
let it go.
we are the same!

same needs, same desires,
same prayers, same love...
red blooded, dirty, stinking
human beings...
human beings in need
of each other!

Eric Cockrell

We Are! We Are!

we are not bolts of lightning,
or even unexpected rain...
we are the work of chapters,
the forging of steel.
the spider's web empty for a month of nights,
the garden sowed again and again.
trees cut and stacked in firewood lengths,
babies born in cementaries,
atop unmarked graves.
maps lost, histories forgotten,
dull knives sharpened again and again.
footprints in sand,
that the waves wash away.
wise men following the star,
generation to generation.
brown hands picking fruit,
that never touches their lips.
we are a thousand deaths,
fires that raged and were spent.
stars formed from dust,
that return to the same.
all these things and more,
and often less...
we are the mortar between bricks,
from which life is made!
we are! we are!
and that is enough!

Eric Cockrell

We Are....

we are the children
of the tears God wept.
we are the names and the faces
of the spirits that roam the night.
we are the leaves that fell
with autumnal passion...
we crumbled back into the dirt,
and returned to our mother.

we are the oaks cut
to build the house.
we are the saws, the hammers,
and the nails.
we are the water,
and we are the well.
we are the cup and the basin,
we are the mirror long cracked.

we are the fire,
and the bodies huddled.
we are the long blackness
of the unnamed night.
we are the book,
and the living words,
the preacher closing the casket,
the shovel, and the dirt.

Eric Cockrell

We Battle...

we battle against ourselves!
we starve our souls with
the 'need' to possess.
we strip our senses
with fake morality.
we quench our fires
with our limited concepts.
we wound our very love
with the image we present.
we defile our truth
with the lies we settle for...

we choose fear over freedom,
and so break our own wings!

Eric Cockrell

We Cannot Cease (World Peace)

world peace,
we cannot cease...
miles mean nothing,

as long as,
doors open, eyes open,
hands and hearts

ready for the plow...
fallow ground, sacred again,
for the hopes of our children....

speaking of God
if you can't speak human!
world peace....

we cannot stop!
hands to the plow,
hearts on fire!

Eric Cockrell

We Didnt Dare

the soul dies in the body's tears,
even as the straw nest fallen to the ground,
weeps with empty fullness.
my heart does not speak to me,
we walk in silence...
veterans of wars you cant imagine,
returning to homeless streets.
and the bodies of touch and wanting,
are strewn with a beautiful horror.
yet the guilt is named to be forgotten,
as memory turns to vanity.
the sins we wear on the outside,
are nothing to the sins we carry within.
and the weight i carry will be much,
as much as the gift i've felt.
for in the end it is the candle we lit,
and all the ones we didnt dare.
so forgive me for my failures...
and love me for the same!

Eric Cockrell

We Dont Yet Understand!

wolves pray with their teeth,
make love to the moon with their howling,
and piss on their sacred ground...

the hawk soars to infinity,
yet focuses on tiny movements,
and strikes with precision.

winos sleep with their bottle,
walk with their bottle,
see with their bottle...

all of these know something
we dont yet understand!

Eric Cockrell

We Gather.....

i go to the place
where dead people pray...
i walk the stark streets,
struck dumb by poverty's tongue.
i follow voices into alleys
clothed in broken glass.
i lick the scars off buildings
where rats gather to dance.

ghosts never chant, 'i am black, i am white'...
they moan and simmer with calloused hands.
there are no heroes, no martyrs, no priests...
only the small boy in the doorstep,
with a broken kite.
who are we, who are we?
the sweat stained pelvis thrusts.
while armies gather to feed the crows.
and gods shatter into pulse and need,
orphans walk the womb lost without sight.

the heroin needle, the nuclear strike,
at the crossroads of hell,
just past the end of time.
we gather neath oil rigs
and lift unholy hands...
eating the flesh of our children,
in the name of god!

Eric Cockrell

We Have Been Men (For Juan, And For Me!)

we learn...
somewhere in chapters
written in dust, ...
with temples turned grey,
and tired sunset eyes.
leaving tiny fragments of heart,
spread in the darkness...
to become fireflies for the poor.
with bent backs testifying,
and well worn boots.
love turned to echoes,
drawing blood from the veins.
simple hands working silently,
weaving on the master loom.
leaving only the scent of our passing,
for strangers to comb.
having lived and given,
and nothing more asked.
we turn with gratitude to the door,
and tip our hats to the night!
we have been men,
and now we are more!

Eric Cockrell

We Have Lived

you are at autumn,
i at winter...
do we look for turning leaves,
or the first hint of snow?
we are the fire,
burning in the forgotten night...
do we invite the darkness,
or pray silently for spring?
step after step,
bare feet in the dirt.
the only words spoken,
are the language of hearts!
do we win or lose?
i just dont know.
but we have lived....
we have lived.

Eric Cockrell

We Have To Find...

we have to find,
that which is real in our lives...
that which is of real value.
we seek eternity, but it is in
those moments we are most human
that we experience it.
we would seek god,
but god is not lost...
god appears to us in chance encounters,
in moments that we have the chance to be human,
when we have the chance to listen,
and so help bring change.
even our failures are victories
if our intent is compassion.
our legacy then becomes the hand extended,
the simple act of caring...
and our wealth that which we've given.....
that which we seek to find is already there!

Eric Cockrell

We Have To Stop!

we are citizens
of the world first,
and foremost...

one huge, sprawling,
and diverse family...
we are connected

both in body and spirit...
very much responsible
for each and all!

we have to stop killing
each other...
we have to stop

destroying our home!
we have to stop killing
each other!

Eric Cockrell

We Identify...

it is in silence
that we identify
sounds as other than noise!

it is in bondage
that we identify freedom
as more than a dream.

it is in loneliness
that we identify love
as both the path and the journey.

it is in anger
that we identify forgiveness
as the release.

it is in despair
that we identify hope
as one foot after the other.

it is in death
that we identify life
and give it meaning!

Eric Cockrell

We Kill...

we kill...

more people with the stock market,
than we've killed in all the wars!
with every gallon of gas we pump,
with the food we throw away.
with pain pills, crack, and meth,
with pornographic fingers.
with prejudice and discrimination,
and most of all, with religion!

with self obsession,
and the need to own.
with apathy and blindness.
with 'I, me, mine' grasping,
with judgements bound
by concepts derived from fears...
without thinking, without feeling,
without caring!
we kill...

Eric Cockrell

We Love, Or....

unconditional, and demanding!
the flame of the candle,
has no owner.
the river never repents,
and takes no prisoners...
we love, or we cannot breathe

Eric Cockrell

We Make These Choices!

who makes the choices
that change the world?
that decide who eats,
who has shelter,
who has medical care?
the choices...
whether or not to bomb,
whether to pull the trigger.
whether to see that justice is done,
or to turn the head,
and walk away...
whether to accept
people for who they are,
and what they are...
whether to stand up
for the other person's rights,
the other person's beliefs,
the other person's way of life...
whether to walk in dignity,
and respect,
or to take at all costs.

we make these choices,
each of us every moment
of every day.
what we do or dont do,
say or dont say,
give or dont give,
changes the world!
actions and inaction,
hidden thoughts and feelings,
who we vote for,
and whether we vote...
whether we're willing
to share what we have...
we change the world,
moment by moment...
for better, or worse?

We May Find Humanity!

for every bullet an open hand,
for every bomb a thousand tears.
for every hungry mouth a bowl of rice,
clean water, and an embrace.

for every country invaded by thirst
for oil.... a country invaded with
shovels, picks, axes, and books.
to rebuild, restore, reaffirm hope.....

for every shallow grave,
for every unmarked death....
we adopt and take in,
we heal with respect.....

for every inhuman act,
the acts of compassion....
and in the search for forgiveness,
we may find humanity!

Eric Cockrell

We Must Work!

the integrity of a society
is based in its working class.
for the society to survive,
and to thrive,
the working class must be allowed
to work...
and must be willing to do so!
we are builders, makers, shapers...
but we are not slaves, pawns,
or profit margin...
we must work!

Eric Cockrell

We Practice Dying

we practice dying for years,
living lives in waiting,
clinging to cobwebbed memories.
reciting emotionless prayers,
with mechanical hearts,
making credit card investments
in the afterlife...
as if the door would close!
we would be angels,
never demons,
never aware of the storms.
laying our accomplishments
at the foot of eternity...
having forgotten to live!

Eric Cockrell

We See Ourselves

we
see
ourselves
most
clearly...

in
the
eyes
of
other
people...

in their struggles,
their mistakes,
and their triumphs!

Eric Cockrell

We Speak Of Liberation

we speak of liberation and shudder...
yet birds leave the nest for the last time
without so much as a tear.
trees shed their leaves
without falling to their knees.
rivers run for the sake of running.
the wind comes from nowhere,
bound for nowhere...
never murmurs or complains.
the snail crawls into infinity,
leaving only a trail for the sake of memory.
our grandparents long dead,
still speak to us in our dreams.
and the ocean that twas our mother,
is at peace that we have gone.
as god crawls out of the box,
that we put our name on...
much as clouds wink without a face.
what is there to be afraid of?
we are so much more than what we've lost!

Eric Cockrell

We Speak Often

we speak often...
of revolution, yet
we almost never speak,
of the old woman left alone,
her husband dead two years...
who sits in the dark,
and sometimes eats,
and cant see to clean her house.
we speak of peace,
and send troops to liberate,
teaching seperation in our churches.
we speak of hope,
yet horde all we can,
and keep our revolvers loaded.
we speak of justice
in terms of 'i' and 'they'....
and applaud wordplay in our courtrooms...
we speak of equality,
then call each race by name,
and demand that they speak english.
we speak of god as holier than thou...
never understanding dialogue and dissolution....
we speak a lot, yet cannot listen...
what fools we are!

Eric Cockrell

We Turn Away!

the mouth of the spirit,
trembles before it speaks.
the hand of the soldier,
wipes crumbs from
the face of god.
forever tastes like strawberries,
and sometimes you...
and then is gone!

what we dont know how to
think, or how to say,
is spoken quite freely by
the trees in the night.
what we box up
and call god,
falls in the face of the wind.
what the wind knows, it gives!
we turn away, struck dumb!

Eric Cockrell

We Walk As One!

for all those who are hurting...
souls troubled, in turmoil.
for those in need,
those left alone...
for all those with nowhere to turn.

for all those hungry, body or spirit,
for those who are beaten,
bruised, and scarred...
for those on the street,
and those addicted....

for the prisoner, the victim,
the soldier far from home.
for the lover left empty,
for the dreamer who's lost hope,
for every tear shed in the darkness...

i feel you, i am by your side,
i am the wind whispering to you,
i am the night shadows that embrace.
i am the prayer prayed for you, by you,
and the answer coming in time...

i live inside you,
in the breath you breathe...
you are me, and i am you,
and this path we walk...
we walk as one!

Eric Cockrell

We Who Are Mad!

we who are mad,
do not carry the torches,
do not run through the night,
do not babble with tongues.
for we are fire!
and we are the darkness!
and the language we speak,
is not bound by words!

Eric Cockrell

We Who Grieve... (Lights The Way)

we who grieve are the children of journey,
we bear the scars of human failure.
our hearts are bruised, our backs are bent,
our feet determined and weary.

we who search the darkness to know the light,
who are the beat and hunger of human existence.
who cannot separate the suffering of those in need,
who know that walls are bridges not crossed.

we who stink of loss and sweat pure sin,
who enter the temples of the dispossessed.
who would love the unwanted whatever the cost,
whose god lives in the mirror of human eyes.

we who find wealth in lives discarded,
who know that truth has a thousand faces.
who follow the wind without destination,
who know the joy that wipes the last tears.

for we are yesterday, today, and tomorrow!
we are the dawn that comes in spite.
we are the fire in the barren cave,
we are the faith that brings the child....

the star of flesh that lights the way!

Eric Cockrell

We Who Whisper

we who whisper...
with our feet as we walk,
with our eyes turned inward,
with our bodies that weep.

we who weep...
with hands that tremble,
with quiet desperation,
with our prayers that build.

we who build...
with the ruins of our loss,
with our spirits broken,
with our hearts that bleed.

we who bleed...
with our trials and mistakes,
with our failures to reach,
with our love that whispers.

we who whisper...

Eric Cockrell

We Who Would

we who would,
and almost can;
standing in the face
of if and should.

we who can,
and almost would;
never quite reaching
the farthest shore.

we who dare,
beyond our fears;
close our eyes and
jump into eternity.

we who pray
to an unknown God;
making a conscious choice
to be more than we are.

we who would,
and today we will;
whatever the cost,
without regrets!

Eric Cockrell

We Who Would Liberate!

we who would liberate,
must first feel the
hungry cry of freedom.
must feel the homeless
edge of despair,
must taste the colors
of skin touching skin.
must bear the blow of injustice,
wear the chains of the enslaved.
must walk inside the sorrow
that has no name or face.
must see what lies beneath prayer,
must wear the shoes of the oppressed.
must stand alone in the darkest night,
and set our selves aflame,
to be a beacon, to light the way!

Eric Cockrell

We Who....

we who would seek a home,
find our home with the homeless.
we who seek truth,
know the tree to be a tree!
we who seek liberty,
throw all that we own onto the fire.
we who seek love,
feed the hungry.
we who seek companionship,
simply become dialogue...
we who would seek god,
well, all of the above.
we who seek tomorrow,
give today to a stranger...
and wrap his feet up
with our dreams!

Eric Cockrell

We, The American Workers....

we, the American workers, work not now
for any kind of wealth... but for a livable
poverty, and a couple nights of sleep a month
without worrying about eviction, something being turned off,
or something being repossessed!

Eric Cockrell

We... (Stoned By The Struggle)

we, who are stoned by the struggle,
whose faces bear the marks of living.
whose hands tremble a little
as we unbutton the shirt...
whose eyes dim still see.
whose bodies smell like bodies,
whose feet need to be washed.
whose hearts whisper in the empty night,
whose souls restless roam the earth.
whose dreams have become the small things,
whose breath smells of brandy and smoke.
whose doors are unlocked,
whose beds are offered...
we, who are drunk with living!

Eric Cockrell

Weariness Of The Soul....

i have become wearied with the vain
arguments of men.... with the constant
striving over religion, politics, and ego
driven patriotism...
the constant struggle of we the masses,
faceless and numbered, to just survive,
to barely get by...
and i have come to doubt many and
various things...
i have a distinct hatred for the lie...
for emotional, spiritual, and physical
slavery...
i have no desire to do anything to win
the accord of the ignorant...
i have no desire to be anything that
i'm not...
i make no apology for who i am...
i have tried to live in respectful fashion....
i own my mistakes, i wear no disguise.
i am simply, a man!
i am disgusted by the state of the world...
am dismayed to be a part of the generation
that allowed this to happen...
i feel the weight of the sins of injustice,
and of all inequalities.....
while i am a part of all that lives,
i am also an individual, a wolf, a raven!

Eric Cockrell

Weeping... (Betrayed)

weeping...
i know the sound,
the feel, the taste.
the deep intensity
of storm laden skies.
the grey dust
on the building vacant.
the stink of human flesh,
when hunger ripens into need.
the death of oil tainted water,
and smoke choking out the air.
the sudden take of violence,
seems reason never justifies.
the cold clank of chains,
the sobbing dirt of endless fields.
the baby gasping for life
in a room designed by hate.
the old woman dying on a makeshift bed,
rats running across the floor.
the old man left alone,
to read books that resemble life.
the church empty, the alleys full,
the eyes staring at the ground
in the unemployment line.
the hand too poor to be touched,
the body too old to be loved.
the jack-o-lantern face of god,
in a world too stoned to know.
the rope hanging from the ceiling,
the silence when words run out...
weeping...
time betrayed by the hands of death!

Eric Cockrell

Weeps And Shudders

the hands on the clock
crawl from need to despair,
from despair to the edge,
from the edge to the fall...

they call it flight!
the gift of the body
to the spirit,
of the spirit to the night.

i call it nails,
the to and fro saw,
dust on the floor,
and dust becomes dust!

the river names itself,
when it breaks through the rocks.
the rocks shout with joy,
the night weeps and shudders!

Eric Cockrell

Weeps With Prayer

burning...
branches longing for fire,
that once reached for the sky.
aching, hungry,
sharp edges on the glass.
rhythm, beat,
and nightfall,
ready for the taste.
tongue electric,
searching,
every crevice of the cave.
wings dusted,
flap with the anger,
too long in the cage.
fangs beared, heavy breathing,
images bent by brandy.
smoke, and wildness,
who left the door unlocked?
be it a beast, or an angel,
hurried in the quick of time.
creek rising,
clouds wonded with darkness...
the wolf runs
the path forbidden,
even the moon weeps with prayer!

Eric Cockrell

Well, It's Nuclear...

well, it's nuclear rain,
voices without names,
faces etched in pain,
lives given in vain,
it's nuclear rain.
well, it's nuclear night.
cant tell wrong from right,
hope is out of sight,
men stand alone and fight.
it's nuclear night.
well, it's nuclear stillness.
past the point of forgiveness..
the dying cry out to witness.
the ego driven illness.
it's nuclear stillness.
well, it's nuclear devastation.
the home divided by the nation.
the individual sold to exploitation.
to bondage and incarceration.
it's nuclear devastation.
well, it's nuclear hell.
the spirit put on sale.
the body just a shell.
the truth it cannot tell.
it's nuclear hell.
well, it's nuclear death,
fear steals the very breath.
everything taken nothing left.
child of Cain, child of Seth,
it's nuclear death.
well, it's the nuclear dawn,
all that ever was is gone.
the weak devoured by the strong,
god left to walk alone...
it's nuclear dawn!

Eric Cockrell

What About The Child?

so your love crashed like
two runaway trains,
and the pain was too great to bear...
you who would walk away,

what about the child?

Eric Cockrell

What Anyone Else Thinks!

i would rather have had
one passionate earthshaking moment
of me and you....

even if it cost me my life....
than to have lived long and peaceful,
never knowing you!

i'd give up all i've ever had,
to kiss your lips, to take your hand,
and walk by your side for one day....

i'd give up the kingdoms of the world,
to hold you in my embrace.
i'd give up eternity

for one eternal moment of your love....
and i dont give a damn
what anyone else thinks!

Eric Cockrell

What Cant Be Sold

if time be chiseled in flesh,
then names but smoke,
leaving bricks to testify.
and destiny perceived,
the debt relieved,
who pays the cost to die?
the hallowed clothed
in rags and dust,
kneel beneath the cross denied.
we pray to ghosts,
while ignorance grows,
walking suicides.
still the rebel wind
breaks windowpanes,
tears roofs from vacant souls.
calling to the few,
who dare be true,
to give what cant be sold!

Eric Cockrell

What Color (Is Your Heart)

i dont care what color
your skin is... just dont care!
what color is your heart?

red, raw, and beating with passion?
deep purple, covered with bruises?
layered in greens, life and sustaining,
turning brown with time?

or grey as soot and death,
diseased with apathy!

Eric Cockrell

What Color Is Justice?

what color is justice?
(does it have a face) ?
what language does it speak?
what does it smell like?
what kind of house does it live in?
how many cars does it own?
is it Republican, or Democrat?
does it pray in tongues?
or sit cross-legged and chant?
is it male or female?
straight or gay?
does it have a degree?
or does it work in a factory?
does it work in a mine?
does it drill for oil?
does it draw unemployment?
does it stay at the mission?
tell me! show me!
cant find a link,
cant find a trace...
what color is justice?
(does it have a face) ?

Eric Cockrell

What Color Is....

what color is broke?
broke down, busted,
aint got a dime...
broke!
what color is hungry?
does it have a language
known only to empty bowls?
what color is homeless?
does it keep the body
warm in the night?
does anybody give a damn?
what color is jobless?
does it redeem the thief
that breaks out the window,
moving with silent desperation?
and what color is alone?
can anybody hear?
does anybody really give a damn?

Eric Cockrell

What Color? (Hope)

what color
was the dust
from which the stars

were made?
what color is the hunger
written on the child's face?

what color is justice,
forgiveness, desire, truth?
what color is the wind....

the rain, gravity,
and knowledge?
what color is equality?

what color is freedom?
what color is eternity?
what color is redemption?

what color is God?
what color were the nails
that hung Jesus on the cross?

what color was enlightenment
falling on the Buddha as he sat
'neath that tree?

what color is prejudice, hatred,
fear, greed, apathy.....
what color your skin?

ay, what color is your blood?
and what color are the eyes
of humanity staring through the darkness?

and what color is hope?

What Defines Poverty?

what defines poverty?
nothing to eat,
hungry, and cant find
a way to eat.
homeless,
and nowhere to go.
sick,
and cant afford medical care.
jobless,
and cant find work.
broke,
and what money you have
wont buy anything.
(if you have any)
hopeless,
and nowhere to turn.

godless,
the god you believed in
turned his back,
or wont answer prayers.
faithless,
with no reason to believe.
hardened,
and wont allow your self to feel.
lost,
with your back against the wall!

Eric Cockrell

What Do We Really Need?

i saw a small boy...
sitting in the dirt,
underneath an old tree,
playing with sticks.
he was making them
talk to each other,
as if they were human...
perfectly content,
with a lot of imagination,
with very few needs.

and it made me stop and think...
what do we really need?

Eric Cockrell

What Do You Believe?

we cannot say that we believe
in something, and then by our
actions, or even worse, inaction,
contradict it!

we are what we do, what we give,
and where we are standing at the
end of the day...

we all make mistakes, we all fail
on occasion, (i may be the worst!) ...
but the mistakes and failures dont
define us... how we react to them,
whether we take ownership of them,
and what we do to rectify them does!

the concept that anyone can reach
their dreams at the expense of anyone
else is false...

in order to restore integrity and dignity
to our lives, we have to have purpose...
and we have to have a deep level of
commitment...

we, and even our children, and their children,
are and will be governed by the results
of choices, choices already made, choices
being made, and future choices!

nothing happens by chance. we have no one
else to blame... and we cant put it on a
higher power... we cannot expect instant
redemption, or divine intervention...

it is up to us, as individuals, and as
community!

what do you believe? show me!

Eric Cockrell

What Do You Think We'D Hear?

what if...

for just one day

we laid down our national boundaries,
our racial, religious, and political differences...

and just for that one day,

each of us had to wear a sign that said:

'please forgive me, i've already forgiven you! '

and we just listened...

what do you think we'd hear?

Eric Cockrell

What Does It Take?

what does it take
to turn the key,
to unlock the door,

to get you to come in?
what does it take
to heal the wounds,

to take the load off your back,
to release you from your chains?
what does it take

to free the tears,
to break down the barriers,
to give you back your breath?

what does it take,
to find forgiveness,
both going and coming....

what does it take?

Eric Cockrell

What Fools We Are!

we who would talk to god...
yet cannot understand
the language of trees,
cannot read the scriptures
written in grasses,
dont even know what the
sky tastes like!
terrified by the silence of mountains,
we run barking and braying
to priests hidden behind walls!
never hearing the words whispered
in the eyes of the dog,
never feeling the passion
inside the turtle's shell...
what fools we are,
running from a few drops of rain,
building great fires to ward off darkness...
we know not who we are,
or from whence we came...
what fools we are!

Eric Cockrell

What Happens To You?

</>

what happens to you when
you're in your late fifties,
forty years of on-the-job experience....

and your job shuts down!
you lose everything you've worked for
in an instant.... no job, no future...

and no degree!

invisible people with hard earned callouses....
dedicated moral earn their way people...
not everyone wants...

to be a Walmart greeter!

Eric Cockrell

What Have I To Fear?

if death be but a step,
a flower fallen with silent shouts...
a kiss blown by wind but never lost,
a friend who tends the grave.
a hymn, a prayer, kind words spoken,
a drink at a corner table.
a book placed back on the shelf,
a child's drawing done in crayon.
a door closed, left unlocked,
cattle left in the pasture all night.
an empty bowel, a candle burned down,
a sparrow sitting outside the window.
a shovel of dirt, a broken glass,
boots left in the corner.
the dog's leg cocked,
the fire burned down....
the still darkness waiting on dawn.
the river overflowed,
the cage door opened...
then what have i to fear?

Eric Cockrell

What If

what if Jesus and Magdalene
were lovers... and their
descendants were marching
for peace and equal rights
somewhere in the Mid-East?

and what if nuclear power
is a cancer... disguised as
progress... that sneaks up
on and devours the living?

what if money is a drug?
an addiction that cant be cured....
that drives a man to leave his
family, and all that he believes in,
to find a fix?

what if Aids and other new diseases
are just germ warfare... the tools
of the elite to weed out the poor?

what if the concept of 'God'
is a mask mankind wears to
hide from its own responsibilities....

what if holy wars are just murder,
and if liberation is just another
term for your new master!

what if poverty and ignorance
were the two greatest weapons
in the struggle for survival....

and finally, what if
666 is just the symbol
for the oil machine....

whom we worship by our actions
if not by our intent.....

'in God we trust'...
gasoline prices fell today!

Eric Cockrell

What If For....

what if for...

Christmas someone gave you
the air you breathe,

the water you drink,
vegetables that came
from the earth...

meat that lived on the same?
enjoy the moment!
for the next day he comes

to take it all away!
cant happen?
we're doing it to ourselves,

without even a thought!

Eric Cockrell

What If God.....

what if god is a dog,
or a fallen leaf?
the pebble that bruised your foot,
dust on the windowpane.
that old milk cow,
the stall that needs cleaned.
the plow caked with dirt,
the bag of seeds.
the fallen tree,
or the gust of wind.
rainwater in a barrel,
the pile of trash in the alley.
the river rising,
the eyes of the owl.
the upside down bat,
the darkness of the cave.
moonlight sifting through branches,
the leader of the ants.
the word the hand speaks,
when it brushes away tears.
the hatred of the ignorant
that weeps when no one sees.
a cup of coffee,
or a bowl of rice.
the smell of failure,
asking for forgiveness.
the baby bird that fell,
the nest left empty.
the child born,
that no one wants.
the disease that kills,
snow on the ground.
the old bridge that shakes,
the lantern waiting to be lit.
the last page of the book,
that no one reads!

Eric Cockrell

What If I Fell In Love?

what if i fell in love with a leaf,
became the tree that nurtured?
became the sun, the rain, and the wind,
and the turning of the seasons...
what if i fell in love with the lock
on the knob of the door to eternity?
what if you were the only key?
whose hands would make the turn?
what if i fell in love with shadows,
etched by the blade of hungry light?
whose face, whose form, whose scent...
whose imprint on my soul?
what if i fell in love facing death,
and you were my last breath?
would you breathe into me rivers...
rivers and trees, and stone laid paths.
what if i fell in love despite of...
despite of wars, poverty, and anguish?
would you restore hope to the hopeless?
and build a fire to warm the night...
what if i fell in love again,
and we met like strangers for the first time?
would your hand fit into mine?
could we find passion stolen by loss?
what if i fell in love because i have to,
because i want to, because i need to?
because life demands to be lived,
and time is but a moment!
what if i fell in love with a leaf...
what sound would it make when it fell?
would the world be strong enough to go on?
would the sun ever rise again?

Eric Cockrell

What If I Took The Time?

what if i took the time
to name every star,
every grain of sand,
even the deserted web
blown by the wind!
every unwanted child,
every family made refugees
by war, or by poverty.
every angry kid on the streets,
every forgotten man in prison.
would my work be finished?
what if i took the time
to wipe away every tear,
to clean the wounds of the wretched,
to fill the bowls of the hungry...
to touch the untouchables,
to free those in chains...
would my work be over?
what if i took the time
to forgive the unforgiven,
to love the unlovable,
to accept people as they are...
to embrace the gods and the questions,
to stand up for doubt...
would i be done?
what if i took the time...
and gave it to you!

Eric Cockrell

What If We...

what if we all stood up,
and laid down our guns?
what if we quit drilling for oil,
quit living for the deal?
what if we built a new world,
for our daughters and our sons?
a world that's honest,
caring, and real...

what if we stopped all invasions,
stopped the bombs and the greed?
what if we laid down religions,
and opened our hearts.
what if we gave our possessions
to those in real need?
what if we stopped pretending,
and made a stand...

what if we looked in the mirror,
with eyes that can see?
what if we walked away from nations,
and found the family of man?
what if we stood for truth,
freedom, and equality?
they say that we cant....
but what if we can?

Eric Cockrell

What If, And Why?

what if there is
no land over yonder?
what if this is it?
what if our trials
and tribulations
are the destination,
not the journey?
what if tomorrow is a dream?
and today is all we have?
and how many times have you
seen God today, in stranger's faces,
in outstretched hands?

what if every thought,
every word, and every action
were tiny parts of eternity?
what would we do different?
and why dont we now?

Eric Cockrell

What If... (To Be Human)

what if we went to war,
and just stopped?
what if we did what we do best,
and quit worrying about profit?
what if we housed the homeless,
and fed the hungry?
what if we were blinded
to the color of skin?
what if we did away with religions,
and searched the spiritual?
what if we forgave all debts,
and gave away what we owned?
what if we overthrew governments,
and became governments of people...
that chose to work together?
what if we quit drilling oil,
and found another way?
what if we destroyed
every nuclear weapon?
what if we saw each other as equal,
and acted on it?
what if we took the chance,
and dared to be human?

Eric Cockrell

What If... Again And Again!

what if it never rained again?
what if the night went on forever,
and the dawn never came?
what if all my dreams turned to salt,
and lightning left the skies?
what if my body turned to ashes,
and my bones were scattered unknown?
what if my name were lost
to the emptiness of time...
and my heart, cut as firewood,
to feed a stranger's fire?
what if everything i've done,
forgotten as if i never lived?
what if i never held you again,
never kissed your lips,
never looked into your eyes?
what if there were no God,
and death were the end? ...
what if for the simple touch of your hand,
i'd do it again, and again!

Eric Cockrell

What If? What If?

you are convinced...
that i am a socialist,
a deviant, a rebel,
a lost cause....

what if your mother
lived in Iran,
Afghanistan, Syria,
or even North Korea?

would you want to drop
the bombs then?
what if your father
was on Death Row?

convicted of a crime
you knew he didnt commit?
would you still vote
for the death penalty?

what if your sister,
strung out and desperate...
was a whore on the corner?
would you still want

to cut social programs?
what if you brother,
jobless and penniless,
had his house foreclosed?

leaving him homeless and hopeless...
would you still vote
to bail out the banks?
what if your children

were hungry and starving,
and no one would help them...
would you take the law in your hands?
what if? what if?

look around you!
the faces you see
are no different than yours.
maybe a different skin tone,

maybe speaking a different language,
maybe worshipping a different god...
but really, not any difference!
the faces you see are your own!

Eric Cockrell

What I've Always Been

god stepped from the shadows,
light my smoke and poured a drink.
we walked in the rain,
without so much as a word.
it was as if everything that hurts,
drained from my soul.
and i was left empty,
echoing the stillness in moonlight.
and i thought if not tomorrow,
or even yesterday,
then let it be this moment.
when beauty whispered in my ear,
and the owl winked from the tree.
nothingness flooded,
taking away my name...
allowing me to become,
what i've always been!

Eric Cockrell

What Life Demands I Be!

if i wake up in the morning,
and the guns of war are silent.
if the hungry bowls are filled,
and the homeless have a place to lay down.
if all people are treated equally,
regardless of color, religion, or beliefs.
if dignity be restored to the common man.
if men and women respect each other,
and the art of living is just that.
if forgiveness comes as easy as breathing,
and caring becomes the way...
then i will know this journey is over,
and will lay down in perfect peace.
if not....
i will wake up standing,
fighting, believing, singing....
i will be what life demands i be!

Eric Cockrell

What Love Looks Like

how many of your sons and daughters
will
....you
.....sacrifice?

sent off to your unholy wars...
in your prisons, on your streets....
to addiction, no hope, to bondage.....

their futures traded as your stocks rise,
their jobs sold away, their future borrowed.
they believed that you loved them most of all...

is
...this
.....what
.....love
.....looks
.....like?

Eric Cockrell

What Matters? (Sands Trickle...)

so much easier to see
the flaws in others,
than the flaws in ourselves.
we stumble through life,
pretending we can fly,
never realizing...
that we can!

what matters?
ask yourself today!
our actions
(and our actions within)
speak for us!

the sands trickle
without restraint.
forever doors unopened,
or closing...
what do we want,
what do we need...
more than?

Eric Cockrell

What Respect Is

have we forgotten
what respect is?
did we ever really know?

every human being deserves
the respect of every other human being,
and should respect every other

human being as well!
it has nothing to do with
color, religion, political views,

or financial status!
respect is a God given right,
and responsibility!

respect is about being human.
treat people the way you wish to
be treated... treat people like people!

Eric Cockrell

What The Heart Allows

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thoughts on fire, pure desire,
even the violent pray for peace.
broken plans, empty hands,
burning flags and stormy seas....

wont buy the lie, it's live or die,
waiting for the clock to strike.
drunk with loss, done paid the cost,
too many fingers in the dike.

the first day of forever begins now.
tear it down, it doesnt matter how!
tired of lying lips and sacred cows....
the mind only buys what the heart allows!

Eric Cockrell

What The Heart Allows # 2

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nuclear strikes, the market spikes,
people too scared to pray.
bodies burning, the earth stops turning,
cant go, but you cant stay!

terror threats, oil war debts,
children born into slavery.
political balm, the last chill calm,
the turning point of history!

the first day of forever begins now.
tear it down, it doesnt matter how.
tired of lying lips and sacred cows....
the mind only buys what the heart allows!

Eric Cockrell

What The Heart Allows # 3

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workers picket, thorn and thicket,
the many stand up to the few.
equal compensation, strong dedication,
demanding what they're due!

human rights, the depths and heights,
hunger drives the soul to battle..
tired of chains, working for change,
putting faces on the cattle!

the first day of forever begins now.
tear it down, it doesnt matter how.
tired of lying lips and sacred cows....
the mind only buys what the heart allows!

Eric Cockrell

What Then Is Love?

what then is love?
if it be not this...
the sound of your voice,
the stillness i breathe.
your scent, rainswept pines,
and wet plowed earth.
your skin the feathers
of dead crows seeking flight.
your hunger the thunder,
splitting clouds swollen with passion.
your eyes a bucket of rainwater,
shimmering in the moonlight.
your breasts the river,
your heart moss covered stone.
your soul the wind,
coming and gone without restraint.
your kiss the crackle
of branches in the fire...
your taste the shadow
that just stole the light.
your body the harbor,
this ship lost at sea.
your memory the anchor,
salt spray on my lips!

Eric Cockrell

What We Are!

that which we hope for
when all hope is gone.
that which we dream
when dreams are exposed.

that which we pray for
when God has turned away.
that which we give
when we've nothing left but heart.

that which we believe in
against all evidence.
that which we stand for
when all else run.

that which we know
and cannot validate.
that which we do
that defines what we are!

Eric Cockrell

What We Are.... (Freedom)

Thomas Jefferson said, 'every generation needs its own revolution'....

freedom is not passive, not set, not a past attainment.

it is the act of evolving, becoming more human.

it requires seeing the face, and knowing the heart.

it has to be the way we live... the way we give....

and the reason we breathe....

a constant joining, listening, and caring.

the responsibility of needs met, and shared.

the shout of the question, and the embrace of faith...

freedom must be who we are, what we are,

and what we believe...

or freedom dies!

Eric Cockrell

What We Believed...

what we believed yesterday was a part of yesterday...
time has passed, a new day has dawned.
our believing has to evolve.... while having the
same roots, the plant changes, coming to fruition.
our thoughts and feelings ripen, or they rot.
we walk this path with eyes looking forward,
strengthened by the memory of what has been!
we are children of the forever dawn...
and the ghosts that disappear into setting sun!

Eric Cockrell

What We Call Love...

what we call love...
sands trickling through
an hourglass,
on a bare table,
in an empty room.

what we desire...
total and reckless
abandon,
drenched in touch!

what stands between us...
the tight grip of your hands
on your bags!

Eric Cockrell

What We Discover...

what we discover...
is not another world,
or a better world...
but the universe within!
and in so doing,
make this world
a better place!

Eric Cockrell

What We Fear Most!

since primeval times...
man has gathered in tribes,
offering blood sacrifices
to what we fear most!
and it has not changed.
the children of tomorrow,
born and unborn,
blood let on the altar of today!
what we fear most...
the images of our selves,
dancing on the walls of the cave!

Eric Cockrell

What We've Clinged To.... (Only Straw)

this body, made of straw,
now empty, blown by the wind.
leaving only the faint scent of eggs,
the echoed imprint of wings.
no more, and no less,
than the branch, than the tree,
than the memory of sunlight,
and the haunt of rain.
freedom sheds its bark,
god is buried beneath leaves...
perhaps only snow can transform.
only voices linger,
nay it be not names!
while squirrels devour the nuts
of a thousand passions!
nests be not wings, nor beak or talon...
what we've clinged to is only straw!

Eric Cockrell

What Will Remain

perhaps...

you are light, and i am darkness.

you are dawn, and i am sunset.

you are the candle, i the match.

you are the sun, the moon, and the stars...

i am rain, trees whispering, and mountains praying.

you are the heart that grieves,

i am the still grief.

you are the hope of peace,

i am the end of wars.

you are the sinner, i the sin.

you are redemption, i am flight.

you are healing, i am the scar.

you are the bridge, i the lantern.

you are the hungry, i am hunger.

you are the homeless, i am shelter.

you are footprints, i am the sand.

you are faith and belief,

i am doubt and questioning.

you are beauty, i am mere dust.

you are the rainbow, i am the storm.

you are the cross on the hill,

i am the buddha neath the tree...

you are the empty house, i am the wind.

you are tomorrow and yesterday,

i am right here right now...

and what we do together,

is what will remain!

Eric Cockrell

What You Believe Is Real!

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dont tell me about
the God that you believe in,
dont show me your temples,

sing me your songs,
or read me your scriptures.
dont try to save me....

show me by the way you live
that what you believe is real...
and i will respect you,

and walk beside you!

Eric Cockrell

What You Do!

if you want to know
who you are as a person,
look at how you spend your time,
what you expend your energy on,
how you react to people around you,
and whether you take the time to listen.

not what you say, what you do!

Eric Cockrell

What.... (If Not To Listen...)

what are we here for then
if not to listen...

to words spoken by the longing heart,
to the sound and inflections of suffering,
to the very heartbeat of need.
to the human cry against injustice,
to the song of freedom
borne by an angry wind...

to listen...
to the soft cry of the newborn baby,
to the moan of lovers entwined.
to the hum of the tractor,
and the thud of the axe.
to the hope of the hammer pounding nails.
to the voices of people choosing dialogue,
to the honest plea for forgiveness...

to listen...
to the song of the mockingbird,
the bark of the dog,
the meow of the cat...
to the marching chant of the ants.
to the sound of the butterfly's wings,
rhyming infinity!

to listen...
to the stillness in our own heartbeats.
for the name we had before birth.
to the prayers of clouds and trees.
for the sound of the Lover's footsteps.
to the ancient wisdom of mountains,
the forever birth of the rivers.
for the voice we've followed throughout time...

to listen...
for the bowls of hunger being filled.
for the silence after gunfire ends.
for the sound of hands joining ours.

for the sound of feet walking beside!

Eric Cockrell

Whatever It Takes!

fuel prices keep rising,
and it trickles down.
grocery prices skyrocket,
people walking behind empty buggies.
small businesses shutting down,
people left without work.
either the rent, the light bill,
or a little something to eat,
you've gotta choose.

over half the people in this country
on the edge of going under.
and it's as bad or worse
around the world.
where does it stop?
where does it end?

the elite continue making money
on the backs of the poor.
starting wars, drilling for oil,
making closed door deals.
and the anger rises, simmers,
and threatens to boil.

the only hope for the future
is an equal distribution of goods,
a system where everybody
that will work has a chance.
now the question is
what does it take
for that to happen.
do we have to burn Rome down again?

whatever it takes...
now is the time!

Eric Cockrell

Whatever The Cost!

into the wetness, ,
lips burnt and bare..
hard hands gone soft,
thoughts falling like drizzle.

gentle, almost tugging,
pulled close to the fire.
till singed, still smoking,
left in the darkness to die.

a thousand deaths though it be,
with each a universe conceived.
the walls of Rome crumble,
to the shouts and the horns.

a crucifix, and a blade,
sharp on both edges.
the taste of blood and beginning,
raw, simple, and strong...

into the wetness,
whatever the cost!

Eric Cockrell

What's Inside!

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it does not matter

whether you're Christian,
Buddhist, Hindu, Moslem,

or atheist by choice...

we are all born human!

with the potential to be...

fully human!

we have choices everyday....

what we do with our time,

our will, our feelings, our actions...

determines what we really are...

it doesnt matter so much about labels...

what matters is what's inside!

Eric Cockrell

What's Your Name?

while walking...

i stopped beneath a tree,

and spoke to a leaf:

'what's your name? '

the leaf paused for a moment,

and spoke,

'you can call me child of the limb,

or child of the tree,

or child of the earth,

or child of the sun and rain...

or you can just call me, Bob!

what's your name? '

i thought for a moment,

and smiled:

'you can just call me...

.....leaf! '

Eric Cockrell

When

When we make love...

Does God weep?

Does the earth stop turning,

For a holy instant?

Do words find meanings?

Does night name need?

Does the wind come a knocking,

On the door that doesn't exist?

Does time expire?

Do thoughts undress!

Does empty carve windows,

In the soul of heat?

Eric Cockrell

When All Else Is Gone... (For Terrence Craddock)

when all else is gone,
they take your dignity.
in the place of truth,
take your identity.
on backs bent with work,
and the cooking pot empty...
no tomorrow, take today,
no money, take your family!

Eric Cockrell

When Dialogue Stops

when dialogue stops,
the soul has already died,
and ice has formed on the lips
of the heart...
close the eyes softly,
prepare for snow...
praying for the promise of spring!

Eric Cockrell

When Eyes Meet

the most intense part of lovemaking
is when eyes meet and undress...
and the world dies, and is born anew.
storms rage, oceans swell,
trees are bent with longing.
paths touch, and are deeply burnt,
and thousands of years are spoken...
without a word, without a thought,
infinity revealed in touch!
the candle flickers, goes out,
and darkness itself becomes light...
wolves howl, and the moon whispers!

Eric Cockrell

When I Made That Choice

god came to me in a dream one night,
and whispered, 'by your gifts you are named'.
to some i give dignity,
to some i give grieving.
to some i give prophecy,
to some i give doubt.
to some i give determination,
to some i give faith.
to some i give patience,
to some the gift of listening.
to some i give peace,
to some revolution.
to some i give healing,
to some i give suffering.
to some i give love,
to some i give loss.
to some i give eyes,
to some i give feet.
to all i give understanding,
though few choose to take it....
and remember, you chose your own gifts! '...

and i thought for awhile,
and then asked....
'but what about me? '

god laughed...
'to a few infidels i give poetry,
to sing to the weary! '

god, what was i thinking,
when i made that choice?

Eric Cockrell

When Living Was Real!

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old men,
gnarled hands,
missing fingers,

backs bent with time....
standing in front of
an abandoned service station,

down by the tracks
where the train dont run....
talking about the years,

talking about the work....
or not talking at all.
postcards from a time

when living was real!

Eric Cockrell

When Love Becomes...

when love becomes...
conversations never finished,
the book laid down,

dust on the curtains,
the plate that needs washed.
the broom in the corner,

the empty spot on the bed.
the head nodding from the chair...
when love becomes!

Eric Cockrell

When Simply Given

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a broken shard of glass
embedded deep,
cutting from within....

fingers burnt by the fire....
the wail of darkness
swelling through the tombs

of the soul...
walking the razor's edge,
and the stink of human flesh.

nothing more immortal,
more infinite, more redeeming...
not even falling stars....

the moment of human life,
in minutes or years;
that only the courage

of revealing oneself can unwrap....
the moment becoming eternity
when simply given!

Eric Cockrell

When The Rent Comes Due

i was thinking about New Orleans,
i was thinking about the ride.
now you dont know my name,
you dont even know i tried.
if you think you're angry now,
if you think you've lost it all....
what you gonna do
when the rent comes due,
and i aint across the hall?

you used to call me baby,
i used to rock your world.
work all day and love all night,
you were my baby girl.
but we fought too many battles,
i lost too many wars...
fire to ice, truth to lies,
and you walked out the door.
if you think you're angry now,
if you think you've lost it all...
what you gonna do
when the rent comes due,
and i aint across the hall?

now i'm walking down this road,
aint got nothing left to show.
no regrets, paid love's debts,
wherever this wind blows...
you took my heart and my soul,
and everything that i am...
i left my wings and my guitar
and a dream built out of sand...
if you think you're angry now,
if you think you've lost it all...
what you gonna do
when the rent comes due,
and i aint across the hall?

When The Wind Returns

a soft strong voice called me,
a voice i'd heard before
but couldnt quite remember...

and my spirit rose from my body,
and left through the bedroom window
without looking back...

there is a space beyond the stars
in the darkest sky... a place
beyond the mind's understanding...

when light returns to darkness
and is reborn.... in tiny particles
of dust that gather and are formed....

a song that has no human words...
but is known and knowing... and
can only be played by human hands...

i do not know... dont have to!
but i know beyond knowing...
and have drank water from that brook...

when the wind returns, so will i...
i need no name, no familiar face...
you'll know i'm there when you breathe!

Eric Cockrell

When We Believed

the surgeon's hand,
the painter's brush.
the carpenter's hammer,
the hungry touch.

gravity and motion,
moon driven waves.
bowls of rice,
the end of days.

turn back the clock,
shut the window and the door.
walk back down that path
we walked before.

before we lived,
before we died.
before we walked away,
before we lied.

to prayers and giving,
hearts on the sleeve.
to when we loved,
when we believed!

Eric Cockrell

When We...

when we take our hands
out of our pockets,
and put them back on the plow...
things will change.

when we open our eyes
to the suffering of those
all around us...
we will begin to see ourselves.

when we open the doors
to our hearts and let
our spirits fly free...
we will find each other.

when we find each other,
we will find our selves...
and so find God!

Eric Cockrell

When You Touch...

when you touch someone
with desire, let your desire
be driven first by your heart,
then by your soul,
with gratitude by your spirit,
in total awareness...
willing to give beyond receiving,
willing to stand in the face of fire,
willing to wait through lonely winters,
willing to believe in and search out new life...
let love be your hunger...
and only then, feed your body!

Eric Cockrell

When Your Money (Is Worthless)

what are you going to do,
when your money is worthless?
when it wont buy anything?
not a loaf of bread,
not a jug of water...
not even a gallon of gas!

when you're left alone
in the dark, with no one
to count on by yourself,
with no friends,
no instant gratification...
what are you going to do?

Eric Cockrell

When You'Re Afraid!

your love
killed me...

now i'm nothing more
than the blades of grass
the gods walk on...

the cool stones down
by the river where
they go to wash...

the small twigs broken
to start their fire....
the stillness you run to

when you're afraid!

Eric Cockrell

When You'Re Done!

pick up your tools,
sweep the floors,
haul off the trash...

when you're done.
take down the signs.
lay down your guns....

leave your morals at the door!
box up your visions,
take down your cross...

sing your last song!
set the fire, fan the flames,
turn off the light....

when you're done!

Eric Cockrell

When...

when my prayers
picked up shovels,
hoes, hammer, and nails...
they began to be answered.

when my concepts of truth
put on human faces,
they became reality!
when the eyes of my heart

began to see myself
mirrored in others,
my blindness was healed!
when i finally gave away

the last thing i clung to,
i became free!

Eric Cockrell

Where Beginning Begins...

are we the clowns of eternity's fair?
we who drink madness,
who are tortured by the smallest web.
we who pack daylight in cardboard boxes,
who follow the trail of the broom and blade.
we who dance on the ancients' graves,
who tear splinters from the fingers of god.
who destroy kingdoms of sticks and stone,
as if we dared to be the wind!
who bury our children with drunken desire,
and cling like leaves to their memories...
we who eat the fingers of the forgotten old,
and pray with footprints on abandoned porches.

ah, but all is not lost, or perhaps it is...
one never knows that which is not lost!
while joy falls like winter rain,
and love whispers in the ears of silence.
as the branches gather in forgotten nooks,
and steam rises from prayers of dung.
squirrels gather over brandy and broth,
stoned on busy and thoughtless heat.
your hand or mine, there be nothing forbidden...
where there are no maps desire leads!

i have no regrets, all is spent.
the curtain is drawn, the window broken.
history a vein on a leaf consumed,
by dirt, as all must be!
i want you, the moon still pulls,
the waves rear and turn with force.
till time is lost, and perhaps beyond,
to the darkness where beginning begins.

Eric Cockrell

Where I Wait!

bandaging the wound
with hands that dont connect
to your heart,
am i real? just a ghost?
a wisp of smoke,
the faint taste of rain?

stop running!
the riverbed is dry.
and the sound of the crows,
all that can be heard.
the cup on the windowsill,
empty and untouched!

the small child races
barefoot through the garden,
the paper turned yellow,
the inkwell is dry...
cobwebs in the corner

where i wait!

Eric Cockrell

Where No One Works!

hauling scrap metal,
junk...
old washers, dryers,

old beat up cars,
rusted down high octane
roads going nowhere.....

metallic flowers,
dying and dead,
never to bloom again...

hauling junk...
trading metal for milk,
bread, and potatoes...

in the land where no one works!

Eric Cockrell

Where Nobody Lives

i can taste my desire
on your lips, turned bitter
with the wounds of time...

your body walks
apart from your soul,
strangers on diverging paths.

passionate ashes blown
by the wind, falling like
charcoal tears on a silent tomb.

with only the sound of a screen
door banging in the wind...
a house that smells like a home,

where nobody lives!

Eric Cockrell

Where There Is....

where there is breath, there is hope.
where there is hunger, there are faces.
where there is injustice, there is need.
where there is doubt, there is truth.
where there is prayer, there is searching.
where there is understanding, there is compassion.
where there is slavery, there are bodies.
where there is hurt, there are hearts.
where there is sickness, the need for healing.
where there is prejudice, there is fear.
where there is condemnation, the need for forgiveness.
where there is a moment, there is eternity.
where there is involvement, there is change.
where there is loss, a chance for freedom.
where there is war, the deep cry for peace.
where there is darkness, there is light.
where there is truth, hope abides!

Eric Cockrell

Where You Been, Baby?

where you been, baby?
where you been?
anywhere and everywhere,
but mostly nowhere...
listening to the paint
come screaming off the walls!

if it stinks,
it has my name.
if it bleeds,
it has my face!
if it howls,
it aint just the wind...
it's me come hungry searching
for the fire and the want.

shadows unto shadows,
we pass leaving scars...
silence unto silence,
hearts groping for hearts!

fighting for love...
no other way, and
nothing else will do...
the cross we carry
just the reflection
of our own failings and mistakes.

where you been, baby?
where you been?
standing outside your door,
with a shovel,
and a dozen roses!

Eric Cockrell

Wherever These Feet May Roam.....

be that land so far so lost,
where freedom first touched these lips.
where the taint of love
scorched heart and soul,
where the path met by howl and want.
where the song found words,
and the night named stars,
where moonlight be the holy drink.
where the rebel rose courted moss and stone,
where the fire was lit by true bent hope.
where the wind undressed,
and the mountains wept,
and the sea called me home.
where the light was forged from human sweat,
as angels danced barefoot by night.
where the promise of dawn be more than enough,
and the spirit walked through walls!
be that land my home my heart's desire,
wherever these feet may roam!

Eric Cockrell

Which Line?

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people....

standing in line...

waiting for a bowl of food,

a blanket, a kind word...

people...

standing in line....

credit cards ready,

faces twisted with hatred, , , ,

which line are you in?

Eric Cockrell

Which Side Do You Belong To?

i hear the cry of the hawk and the rabbit,
i feel the talons tearing flesh.
i smell gunpowder, and bodies burning,
i hear the sound of boots on the road.
the groan of the tanks turning without faces,
the buzz of the drones flying above.
the mechanical order, as life is destroyed,
the cry of babies on their mother's dead breasts.
the mourning sisters who bury their brothers.
light making shadows on all the colors of skin.
the shout of the flags, the bowls left empty.
the bolt of the rifle, the knife slid from the sheath,
the sound of the falling just before impact.
the cry for freedom on the lips of the martyr.
the pages of the holy book turned down forever.
the prayer of justice over equality's grave.
the soldiers of poverty who fought against all odds.
the sound of dead elders drawing in their breath.
the wind named liberty howling and lost.
the fingers of the child touching dead lips.
the song of the bruise, the scar, and the dream.
the smell of flesh bartered for hope.
the last drink of daylight, the dark night unending.
the face of eternity in slivers of moonlight.
the star of humanity falling from the sky.
the presence of god, and the absence of presence.
the mountains crumbling, the rivers gone dry.
the last trees walking into the distance.
the sound of the chisel carving in stone,
the last tear wept by the shadow called being.
and i turn and i stand in the name of dignity,
holding in my hands the pages of history.
the moment lost to vast infinity...
saying, tis now, or never,
truth counts the cost...
which side do you belong to?

Eric Cockrell

Whiskey And Jesus

He said, it's whiskey and Jesus
it's grandkids at the door
it's the woman lying speechless
she cant take it anymore
it's the roar of desperation
that sickens and devours
it's the stillness of alone
that turns minutes into hours
it's whiskey and Jesus

He said, it's whiskey and Jesus
it's the hoe in the field
the hawk circling overhead
dust on the windowsill
it's empty shelves in the pantry
callouses on his hands
it's nowhere to turn
the pride of a man...
it's whiskey and Jesus

He said, it's whiskey and Jesus
it's the lines 'neath his eyes
it's the tight lipped anger
that never questions why
it's the memories and ashes
of a thousand highway miles
the hard face of dignity
painted by the trials...
it's whiskey and Jesus...

Eric Cockrell

Whisper In The Night!

this world no longer black and white,
maybe it never should have been.
i've always seen colors, and shades,
hints and hues...

people have always been people.
different colors, different faiths,
different thoughts...
all sit down to eat!

love and shelter,
and a loaf of bread.
all whisper in the night,
to lovers and gods.

the sound of the whip
offensive to all!
the smell of sweat and blood,
the sound of bare human feet...

all whisper in the night,
to lovers and demons!

Eric Cockrell

White Republican Male Jesus?

White Republican Male Jesus?

what about...

black Jesus, brown Jesus,
Asian Jesus, atheist Jesus,
female Jesus, poor Jesus,
jobless Jesus, prison Jesus,
homeless Jesus, illegal immigrant Jesus?

dog Jesus, cat Jesus,
baby in a dumpster Jesus,
addict Jesus, old Jesus?

gay Jesus, union Jesus,
hungry Jesus, foreign Jesus?
bumming a cup of coffee Jesus?

brother Jesus, sister Jesus?
just bombed Jesus,
food stamp Jesus?

how many bodies? how many crosses?
you tell me!

Eric Cockrell

Who Am I?

who am i?

the man who plowed your garden,
and tended your crops;
who hoed the weeds
in the hot summer sun.

i am the man who cut your wood,
sawed it into stacks,
preparing for the coming winter.

i am the carpenter
who built your home;
with boards of flesh,
and nails made of blood and tears.

i am the infidel
who brought you a holy candle,
and made love to you
while it burned down.

who am I

i am the minstrel in your courtyard
dodging bullets and angry lynch mobs.

i am the soldier you sent to battle,
not expecting him to come home.

i am the doctor of your heart
mixing balms of listening and caring.

i am the wolf that mounts you,
teeth gleaming in the moonlight.

i am the prayer you cant put to words,
and its answer!

who am I?

i am the reflection of your face
in the darkened window.

i am the bridge you walk across
to reach tomorrow...

i am the price of a lifetime,
the cost of passion.

i am the fire that burns,
the pot that boils,
the cup that's filled...

i am the colors,

the stink, the raw taste
of living.
i am the hawk that circles
o'er your freedom...
the hand that opens the door!

Eric Cockrell

Who Am I? I Am!

who am i?
whose voice do you hear
when i growl?
whose face do you see
when i moan?

i am the train
that hasnt come
for twenty years,
the tracks left to whimper
like a deserted bride.
i am the lock rusted,
and the key that is lost.
i am the cross of silver
on the neck of the corpse.
i am the soldier come home
to no home at all.
i am the father burying
his only son.
i am the vote not cast,
the prayer unspoken.
i am the homeless shelter,
and the house in the suburbs.

i am the husband and wife,
splitting after 25 years.
i am the abused child,
the worker without a job.
i am two young men who are
in passionate love,
and the families that
turned their backs.
i am the young boy and girl
making love for the first time,
when nothing else matters.
i am the empty church,
and the library closed down.
i am laws that take away
the individual's rights.

i am a poet, a hammer, a wheelbarrow,
and a bag of used clothes,
left on the doorstep
of the family in need....

Eric Cockrell

Who Am I? I Am! (Part Three)

who am i?

i dare speak again...

i am the migrant worker,
going from field to field,
none of which i own.

i am the addict gone straight,
the saint addicted to sin.

i am the child adopted
by women life partners,
loved and fulfilled,
and taught to respect.

i am protest, i am questioning,
i am doubt, i am reasoning.
i am the teacher, the mill worker,
the doctor, the dairy hand.

i am love and sweat,
the passion that trembles.
i am failure and forgiveness,
i am the crack in your mirror.

i am the end of wars,
the end of oil, and the shift.

i am hatred held close
till it breaks and shatters.

i am the preacher gone silent,
going from door to door.

i am the book well read,
and the end of ignorance.

i am equality,
in action not words.

i am a cold drink of water,
and a warm bowl of soup.

i am the shadows
you dare not name.

i am the name,
you dare not speak.

i am the body
of your desire...

i am the grave,
tended by crows....

Eric Cockrell

Who Am I? I Am! (Part Two)

i am the abandoned dog,
covered with ticks.
i am the wedding ring
flung against the wall.
i am the old man
who cant seem to remember
why he did what he did.
i am the restless boy
roaming the streets.
i am the old woman waiting
for her check to come.
i am the rent unpaid,
and the lights cut off.
i am the gun in the corner,
covered with dust.
i am the broken teeth
of the homeless man.

i am a child of Jesus,
and a renegade sinner.
i am the buddha in the dumpster,
covered with trash.
i am a Muslim, a Hindu,
and a Bhakti searcher.
i am the atheist who questions,
the prodigal who repents.
i am the gallows, the prison,
and the prison of fear.
i am more than less,
and less than more.
i am black, i am white,
i am brown, i am red...
i am human, i am eternal,
i am dust, i am tears....

Eric Cockrell

Who Bears The Guilt.... (In The End)

i close my eyes and go back...
sixties angry churning deep south,
to the old oak tree in the clearing.
where two bodies hung side by side;
one young black man, local,
one young jewish man,
who came from the north to protest.
both stripped naked, badly beaten,
whose sins did they die for?
black and white Jesus's,
neath a guilt ridden limb...
whose crown of thorns?
and who will roll away the stone?

45 years later,
a couple lines in the news.
a young gay man hanging from a rafter.
the victim of bullying and discrimination.
will we never learn?
how many Jesus's?
how many crosses?
in the end... who bears the guilt?

Eric Cockrell

Who Cries Herself To Sleep...

the young pregnant girl
waiting tables in the greasy diner,
whose boyfriend left her two weeks ago...
whose mother told her she was going to hell,
whose father drank himself to death.
whose used to skip rope
and go to Sunday School...
who freckle faced picking flowers,
who stuck her bare feet in the creek.
whose trailer has no heat,
whose cell phone has no minutes.
whose old Gremlin smokes but still runs,
whose heart is broken tho her lip is strong....
who wants to name her little boy Abraham,
who cries herself to sleep!

Eric Cockrell

Who Do You Love?

i dont need you
to fulfill me...
i need you to accept
my fulfillment.
i dont want to own you,
or to be owned.
i dont want to change you,
i take you for who you are,
and expect the same.
i love you
because you are you...
who do you love?

Eric Cockrell

Who They Are!

i dont want people to remember my name
when i'm gone.... i want something i've done,
said, shared, or given... to help them remember
who they are!

Eric Cockrell

Who Turns Out The Lights?

what happens when
the United States of America
cant pay the rent?
i mean, do we get evicted?

do we pack up our senators
and congressmen, and
load them on the back
of an old pickup truck...
and send them into the great
beyond? what happens?

do Native Americans get it back?
do the Chinese take over?

and who turns out the lights?

Eric Cockrell

Who Will Teach?

have you ever
built a house,
plowed a field,
cut firewood,
caught a fish,
and cooked it over
your own fire?
have your children?

what happens when
it all falls down,
and we have to start over?
who knows how to survive?
and who will teach others?

Eric Cockrell

Who Will...

who will make your socks, your shoes?
those left barefoot in poverty!
and who will make your beds?
those who sleep on dirt floors!
who will grow your food?
those whose children are hungry!
who will bring you your oil?
those whose blood stains the sands.
who will write your poetry?
those held in your tiny cells!
who will build your houses?
those who sleep in their cars!
who will build your roads?
those who wander with no direction!
who will you send to war?
those who grew up on the abject streets!
who will march for your freedom?
and whose head will they demand?

Eric Cockrell

Who Will.... (Answer The Call)

when death tastes like living,
and bodies walk barefoot in the ashes...
when the heart devoured,
sings in the sinews of the oppressed.
when light screams with fury,
and wipes the chin of the child...
the day is born, the line is drawn,
who will answer the call?

Eric Cockrell

Whole Lifetimes

we travel whole lifetimes
through the mud and the mire;
struggling, fighting, loving,
dreaming, believing against all doubt...
to find our brothers and sisters
lost in the passings,
in the comings and goings,
of birth and death...
to find the face of our mother,
in lands foreign and strange.
to do the work of our father
in the ruins of our shame...
to know each other,
the scents familiar;
and hear the sound of our own hearts
beating in another's return!
we travel whole lifetimes,
on this journey together!

for Dave, Terence, Smoky, Patti,
Valerie, Juan, Robert, Veeraiyah,
Romeo, Rajendran, and all the other
poets who tend this fire..

Eric Cockrell

Whom We Touch!

we choose whom we touch,
and whom we let touch us.
with our own feet,
we walk the path.
we choose the path,
and how far we go.
we trip ourselves,
and get back up.
we are the faith,
and the answer to it.
we own the scars,
the defeats and victories.
we are what we are,
because we choose.
in the final end,
we have no one else to blame!

Eric Cockrell

Who's Guilty?

they busted a young man,
for stealing a couple packs
of meat at the grocery store,
and running...

but they stole his chances...
for a job, for an education,
for today, and for tomorrow!

now his wife and baby sit alone
in a bare apartment with no electricity...
they stole their hope!

who's guilty?

Eric Cockrell

Who's Next?

with every swing of the hammer
that drove the nails,
into His feet, into His hands,
He felt...

the hunger of starving children,
the pain of those sick,
the lost agony of the homeless,
the shame of the beaten...

the repentance of the fallen,
the last hope of the downtrodden.
the dignity of the poor,
the torment of those in chains...

take Him off of that cross!
it's our turn to be human.
time to be who we are,
or to be nothing at all...

who's next?

Eric Cockrell

Whose Faces, Whose Souls?

stripping layers of burnt skin
from lifeless bodies...
digging shallow ditches with tractors.
smoke filled silent skies.

the screams of the dying
swallowed up unheard...
the gods turn their heads,
and the trees that wept
are now on fire....

the stench of emptiness...
glass broken on the sands.
who sent the planes?
who pulled the triggers?
whose faces, whose souls?

Eric Cockrell

Whose Footsteps Will Haunt Your Sleep?

it's easy to bury the pen,
to break the glass vase
that held the light.
will you then burn the book,
and wipe your shoes at the door?
is it easy to forget the address?
some graves are best unmarked you say...
let the preacher say a few words.
and it's back to home and the dinner dishes,
things that must be done.
what's too painful we walk away from,
and name our victories by our needs.
but on that day when spring arrives,
will you recognize a bud on the limb?
will the sound of wings bring back memories?
will you fall to your knees and weep?
and whose face will you see when
you cry out to god?
whose footsteps will haunt your sleep?

Eric Cockrell

Whose God (Do We Worship Now)

your God preaches success,
and individual achievement.
lives in sanctuaries of gold

with windows of colored glass.
doesn't get His hands dirty
on the down side of town...

turns His head from the ugly,
from the smell and the stink...
walks on the other side of the street.

demands sterile cleanliness,
prefers people of stature!
no touching, no feelings...

out of control!

our God walks the tracks
leading the lost home...
slept with us under the bridge,

and shared our pot.
sat with the addict,
spent time with the prisoner...

held the little girl's hand
who was afraid of the dark.
washed clothes with us

in borrowed bathroom sinks.
wiped the tears from the old woman's face
when the old man shuddered, moved on....

picked up the young whore's clothes,
and led her from the room.
took the gun from the hand

of the man whose family

was just put out on the street...
stood in line with the jobless,

wearing worn out boots!

so tell me now,
and tell me true...
whose God do we worship now?

Eric Cockrell

Whose Image?

man, created
in the image of God.
guns, created
by man's hands.
war, created
in the image of man.
even the animals know!

whose image do we worship now?

Eric Cockrell

Whose Journey?

i am sick
of a thousand births
in a thousand forms,
is light not light?
is not the water dripping
from the faucet,
the same water that
fills the ocean?
is not night the darkness
of the womb?
be not the fallen leaf the bud
of another time?
is not the old man just buried,
the baby in the mother's arms?
is not the soldier that just fired,
the child killed by the bombing?
is not the lover that just left,
the young girl in first love?
is not the king of the world,
the begger in the alley?
whose journey is this now?

Eric Cockrell

Who've Lost Our Mother...

joy, peace, stillness,
forgiveness, and understanding...
seems like it shouldnt be so hard,
what else is there that matters?
we keep looking the wrong way,
keep turning our backs on the truth.
forgetting where we came from,
with no idea where we're going!
life runs like sand through our fingers.
we race madly towards the flame.
are we moths, would be gods,
or just small children,
who've lost our mother?

Eric Cockrell

Why Have We Forgotten?

crows bark,
clouds hiss and sputter,
grass moans,
mountains whimper like children.
trees groan and turn,
rivers dance in silence.
owls speak Greek and Hebrew,
and cattle speak in tongues.
snakes plant corn by moonlight,
and snails dance in the dark.
turtles carry messages from god,
and hawks search the skies for truth.
buddhas laugh...
and small children know.
why have we forgotten?

Eric Cockrell

Why I Write!

why do i write?
and what makes it real?

be it clever use of words
and phrase... rhymes,
cadence, hidden meanings....

no, what makes it real
is this: when you can
take the tears from a

hungry child's face...
and write them with a
naked hand... and give

them as a gift so intimate
and near to the heart,
that it causes someone else

to feel this hunger, and
to want to do something
about it, to get involved....

that's why i write!

Eric Cockrell

Why Is It (We Can)

why is it?
we can only see clearly
by virtue of loss?
we can only see suffering
when we are suffering?
we can only feel compassion
when we are hurting?
we only stand up
when we're pushed in a corner?
we can only find God
when the situation is hopeless?

we spend our whole lives
building walls that keep us
from being free!

Eric Cockrell

Why Is It?

why is it...

patriots dont smell like freedom?

Christians dont act like Christ?

lovers dont give like love?

and dead people need you to weep?

a free country doesnt allow freedom?

poverty doesnt justify?

great men forget about small men?

and you've forgotten my name?

why is it?

and why do i care?

Eric Cockrell

Why We Are Here!

climbing the ladder...
out of the hole,
one hand on the rung above,

one reaching down
to the person below...
of such is life,

its secrets, deeper meaning...
and the whole of the reason
why we are here!

Eric Cockrell

Why We'Re Angry!

</>
spent some time talking
to a man from Michigan this morning...
he'd been a plant supervisor,
personally developed a product
that became his company's mainstay.....
which the company patented....
they then moved the patent and the
whole operation to their Mexican affiliate....

he lost his job, his house, his life....
living on unemployment, and side jobs....
another angry working man.

they want to know why we're angry!
just another story, another faceless number.
he said, 'it's like being 19 all over again,
with no world out there! '

homelessness, foreclosure, evictions....
empty houses every where you look!
joblessness, unemployment lines....
the jobs shipped out, somebody got paid!

stealing cars, breaking into businesses,
the prison's already full!
the invisible body count gets higher....
and they want to know why we're angry!

Eric Cockrell

Why Would I....

if i couldnt trust you
enough to sit down and
eat with you...
why would i vote for you?

if your words are laced
with hatred, deception, and fear...
why would i vote for you?

if you're part of the problem,
and see no need to change...
why would i vote for you?

if you're so insulated
in your affluent world...
why would i vote for you?

if you're drunk on apathy,
and cant feel the need and the hunger...
why would i vote for you?

if your only goal is profit,
at the expense of whomever...
why would i vote for you?

Eric Cockrell

Why Write? (The Message)

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it's all about the message!
one form, another form,
non forms... doesnt matter.

and i dont have your answers,
most times.....
i dont even know the questions!

i just want you to listen....
not to me, or anyone else
in particular....

to listen to the honest
and raw beating of
your own heart!

if i have to stand on my head,
or rhyme the gates of hell....
or walk before you naked....

so be it....
the message.....
freedom, equality, sensuality,

spirituality, compassion, beauty...
all begin in your own heart....
know thyself!

Eric Cockrell

Why, Why, And Why?

another tree cut down,
another tanker filled with oil.
another book gets banned,
another protest on American soil.

another politician lies,
another banker forecloses.
another family on the street,
another small business closes.

another mill shut down,
another farm goes bank.
another river polluted,
can you put that in your tank?

another child becomes an addict,
another young girl sold like meat.
another old man dies....
dancing to the beat....

why, why, and why?
cant you hear your children cry?
are we too beat down to try?
the eagle spreads its wings...
.....and flies!

Eric Cockrell

Why? Why? Why?

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if you're a white man
walking through a black neighborhood,
do you feel nervous?

why?

if you're the only black family
living in a white neighborhood,
do you feel isolated?

why?

and why do we think a poor
black man came from the projects?
and a poor white man
came from the trailer park?

why?

every time you see a Hispanic
family in the grocery store,
do you think 'they're illegals'?

why?

did it ever occur to you that
the people who've programmed you
to think and feel this way....
might have an ulterior motive?

Eric Cockrell

Widens!

for every person,
...every citizen,
you detain, arrest, beat,

and pepper spray for
raising a voice of dissent....

the
...crack
.....in the
.....liberty
.....bell
.....widens!

soon, too soon,
...the sound of freedom forgotten
.....in a land that's lost its way!

Eric Cockrell

Wild Law

trees talk,
wisdom of the elders,
exchanging secrets

with mountains,
older than time.
birds speak,

and honor the sky,
waiting, arms outstretched,
for flight....

rivers sing,
while the big cats pray,
the great herds stroke

the earth with hooves.
fishes gather,
flow with the water....

sunlight bathes,
rain washes away.
and the gift of gifts,

the air we breathe,
pure, full of being,
from time unto time!

Eric Cockrell

Wild Sex!

title get you?
does your neighbor
have enough to eat?

does he/she have heat?
is he fixing to be evicted?
is he lonely? hurting?

have you asked?
have you spoken to him?
do you know his/her name?
do you care?

Eric Cockrell

Will Kiss You First

when your breath stinks of wars,
and your eyes bleed with rage...
when your tongue is a stranger
that your heart denies...
when your feet sink in the sand,
and your hands tremble with lust....
do you think that death
will kiss you first?

Eric Cockrell

Will Remain...

get away...
from the rat race
we call society...
a small house
next to the woods,
with a big garden spot.
green beans, corn, and tomatoes,
can and put back.
stack firewood in neat stacks,
chickens, maybe a cow.

it's gonna fall!
we have reached the breaking point.
go back to what matters.
family, spirit, neighbors...
living simple means free!

the kingdom of oil implodes!
only the kingdom of the heart
will remain!

Eric Cockrell

Wind Of The Human Spirit...

i climbed the mountain with Moses,
and watched in silent awe.
i lay in the well with Joseph,
as they tore my coat of many colors to shreds.
i stood on the rooftop with David,
watching Bathsheba bathe...
i walked to Gethsemene,
and wiped the tears from Jesus' face.
and when each had finished their task,
mine had just begun.

i sat under the tree with Buddha,
the image of my son burning my eyes.
and lost myself in the darkness,
to find my heart in the dawn.
i rode away with Lao-Tzu,
leaving words written on the wind.
i died with the last buffalo,
while the Great Spirit wept.
and when each had finished their task,
mine had just begun.

i was there the day the earth was formed,
i seperated the water from the land.
i crawled forth from the ocean,
without limbs or even a map.
i discovered fire in the cave,
and etched drawings on the wall...
and when each had finished their task,
mine had just begun....

Eric Cockrell

Wind Of The Human Spirit... (Part Four)

i stood on the brink of tomorrow,
wading through the ashes of yesterday's failures.
i choked on the oil in the oceans,
and the smoke that filled the air.
i wiped the tears from my face,
and the blood from my own hands....
and felt the weight of humanity's sins,
the deep mark upon my brow...
and when each had finished their task,
mine had just begun.

'who am I? ' you cry,
'how dare you speak! '
i am nobody, i am everybody,
i am not me, but i am!
i am not you,
but i couldnt be else!
i am not more, yet i am not less...
and this task is shared by all!

for i am the wind of the human spirit,
where i come from nobody knows.
my destination does not hold me,
for i am because i blow.
i blow in the name of freedom,
justice, equality, and dignity....
my language is compassion,
my name is every name!

Eric Cockrell

Wind Of The Human Spirit... (Part Three)

i slept in your homeless alleys,
grieved for the baby in the unwanted dumpster.
walked the streets with the pregnant young girl,
just turned away from the clinic.
watched the family that lives in their car,
buying sandwich food with food stamps.
saw the old man pull the plug on his sick wife,
and walk down the hallways to forgotten.
and when each had finished their task,
mine had just begun.

i broke the window with the angry young man,
crawled in and stole what i could.
i felt the junkie inser the needle,
and the whore being beaten to death.
i saw the boy raped by gang members,
down on cellblock C....
while the guard turned his head,
texting on his cellphone.
and when each had finished their task,
mine had just begun.

i watched them vote for indifference,
and drive away in SUV's.
and tonight their grandson committed suicide,
couldnt take the bullying anymore.
i saw gay lovers condemned to hell,
by those afraid to feel.
and the young Muslim girl afraid to walk home,
in the land of the free....
and when each had finished their task,
mine had just begun.

Eric Cockrell

Wind Of The Human Spirit... (Part Two)

i came to America on a slave ship,
to work their fields in the sun.
and the earth i plowed gave up the bones,
of the ones they'd killed to make their home.
i hung from their trees in the moonlight,
as they drank with chests that swelled.
i signed the Emancipation Proclamation,
with the blood of the Civil War...
and when each had finished their task,
mine had just begun.

i felt the bomb at Hiroshima,
and became a nuclear ghost.
i swallowed napalm in Viet Nam,
while they protested on Kennedy's grave.
i was with Martin on the balcony,
and with Bobby on the floor...
and when each had finished their task,
mine had just begun.

i died for the rights of unions,
was buried with coal miners unnamed.
i picked fruit with illegal immigrants,
slept on the floor of southern jails.
i lived and died on factory floors,
stood in line when they sold my job.
i packed my belongings on the old truck,
the day the bank took our farm....
and when each had finished their task,
mine had just begun.

Eric Cockrell

Wind, Rain, And The Eyes!

i went from the shadow of Jesus,
to Tao's uncarved block,
flowing with the water

for over a decade....
to the feet of Buddha,
awareness and universal compassion...

respect for all that lives.
each of them now a part of me,
of who i am and will be.....

but when i thought each the end,
my destination....
came a voice... Go further!

i went from virtue to evil,
to night needs day,
just as day needs night....

and still i was not finished.
i went from addiction to jail,
from jail to books....

each leaving a scar,
each feeding the fire!
i went from love to loss,

from family to old age...
and still i felt the hunger!
and now i've returned

to my primitive spirit,
i hear voices in the wind,
i make love to the rain!

from time to time....
seeing glimpses of God,
in the hungry eyes of children,

in the eyes of the oppressed....
in the eyes of the homeless,
in the eyes of dead bodies,

without home, naked and honest...
in the eyes....
wind, rain, and the eyes!

go further!

Eric Cockrell

Window Left Open...

the vase fell to the floor,
and shattered into tiny pieces.
the broom in the corner wept.
the box in the closet drew breath sharply,
the book on the shelf turned away.
the bulb in the lamp burned out.
the spider packed up its web and left.
the empty nest fell from the tree.
rainwater gushed from the gutters.
the young boy locked in his room
crawled out the window.
the neighbor's dog barked...

god gathered her clothes,
and put on her shoes.
while warships sailed for another land.
drones killed three women on the way to market,
another baby died without having lived.
another factory shut down,
another church burned to the ground,
so many things said and unsaid.

another chapter, another book unread.
things are not what they seem.
another war on pillows fought by silence,
another day in a land untouched.

old trees pray for lightning,
old dogs wait without fear.
old photographs turn yellow and fade.
old men empty their pockets and die.

even Jesus couldnt wait this long....
they say the good die young.
the thief in the garden steals roses,
that he gives to a girl wearing glasses.

while passion weeps waiting for snow.
and leaves prepare to fall...

the vase fell to the floor,
and shattered into tiny pieces...

the moth flew through a window left open!

Eric Cockrell

Wings Headed South

mid-afternoon sleepy eyed,
late summer sun defying autumnal chill.
dogs pray silent prayers
that passing cars bow to.
and the hum of being vibrates
from somewhere undefined within...
counting canned food by threatened days,
cigarettes burn on slow crosses.
while still the grass turns brown
as if to hide in the shadow of dirt.
too early for a drink...
and black coffee demands you follow.
what made sense is now gibberish,
shadowy friends pull unseen triggers,
and exchange small talk at the funeral.
somewhere between sadness, anger, and an erection...
listening for the sound of wings headed south,
as if some implied redemption.
quietly smiling, tense, and hopeful!

Eric Cockrell

With A Question (For Jimmy Rumble)

for every answer,
there is a question.
for every what,
there is a why.
for every ignorance a cause,
for every cause a choice.
for every choice a reason,
for every reason a condition.
for every truth a light,
for every light a darkened corner.
for every mind there is a door,
locked and unlocked by will.
for every failure an excuse,
for every excuse another.
for every triumph,
hard work and reasoning...
which begins with a question!

Eric Cockrell

With Beckoning Fires!

why is it...
yesterday i walked on water,
today i tripped crossing the room!
you are only as distant
as the prayers of
semen stained thighs...
i am only as near
as the spider sleeping
in the hollow of your neck!
god yawns.... people get old,
sputter, and die...
but the voices remain,
with beckoning fires!

Eric Cockrell

With Before!

a poem...
a letter kept
in a favorite book,
too long on the shelf.

the memory of your lips,
whispering in a language
that only the wind knew!
now your silence betrays...

we are the grain
too deep imbedded!
the tree itself
cannot remember!

the door that wont close,
the broken pane in the window.
the pot now empty,
charred with before!

Eric Cockrell

With Broken People.....

i seem to do better,
to be able to communicate better,
with broken people.
knocked down, bruised, wounded,
devastated by loss,
but still walking people.
people who've tasted love,
who've drank fully from the cup of living,
people with scars....
for these are the people
who have the capacity to fly!
if you've never wrestled demons,
how can you know what an angel is.
if you dont know the depths of darkness,
you will never see the light.
if you've never had to break chains,
how can you know freedom?
these are my people...
my philosophy is kindness,
compassion, and involvement...
my goal, to walk beside!

Eric Cockrell

With Dignity, In Stillness...

if the time has come,
then let it be done,
with dignity, in stillness.
that rare moment
when the bird flies from the cage,
is not the time for weeping.
does the river mourn
when it breaks through the dam?
does the storm apologize for passion?
then who are we to cling to dust,
to darkness as dawn approaches?

the leaf turns
in a fury of color..
for just a moment,
then brown, and falls.
the tree stands still in respect,
and begins the time of waiting.
the first snow comes,
the winds howl, never grieving...
for there comes a time,
when the womb is split,
a time of new life, and beginning!

Eric Cockrell

With Every Moment...

what we do with every moment either
validates who we are, or betrays us....
the only unforgivable sin is indifference.

Eric Cockrell

Without

men without work
are dangerous.
men without hope,
even more so.
men without dignity
fight without fear.
men without freedom
have nothing to lose.
men without love
cant find their way!

Eric Cockrell

Without Hope Of Redemption....

it is then that we dance,
sitting hunched in silent contemplation...
without moving a finger,
perhaps it is in the eyes.
as leaves most certainly dance,
turning color awaiting the fall.
and old glass bottles turned on their side,
are filled with something we cannot fathom.
it seems saviors come and go,
while detours become some kind of destiny.
the only scriptures i know curl from chimneys,
to haunt the wings of nameless birds.
i am not alone, small creatures make good companions.
there are things they know that need no definition.
i sleep with mountains no face has seen,
and know well the scent of their longing.
do you love me, dare i ask?
my heart mows the grass beside your grave.
while cattle graze on silent hope,
and my fingers walk the grain of weathered oaks.
as hunger stands with a shovel and an axe,
and time pays the cost of heartbeat.
i love you, i do dare say...
without hope of redemption!

Eric Cockrell

Without Looking Back

trees cut down,
without a thought;
rivers fouled,

never looking back.
mountains blown asunder,
and oceans oiled....

nuclear meltdowns,
all captured on facebook.
coal dust fogs,

carbon monoxide clouds....
drilling, pumping, humping
the earth... stealing the skies....

polar ice gone...
fish floating belly up....
pesticides sprayed

over vegetables in condoms....
no, never a thought,
...without looking back!

Eric Cockrell

Without Names

when the destination
is but the journey,
and the fire we seek
is but a reflection
of the fire within us...
when the cross is a part of the body,
and the war we protest,
is the war within us...
when the leaf is known
as always tree...
and the dropp of water
contains a river.
when breath is hunger,
and love is fullness.
when the spirit is a finger,
and the soul is a foot!
when forever is a touch,
and death is a season...
when we speak without words,
and know each other without names!

Eric Cockrell

Wolf Cub

rolled up in a ball
in the curling hollow
of your heart...

the wolf cub sleeps,
milk dripping from his chin....

dreaming of blood,
shadow and flesh....

your heart races!

the wind whispers
his lullaby...

Eric Cockrell

Wolf Killed For Pelt

he just got out
of the joint again...
caught dealing hillbilly heroin...
has that far away look
in his eyes when he talks,
part of him, a big part,
still locked up!
remember riding with him
in a 'vette,40 years ago...
when the wolf in him still hunted,
120 mph....
now the wolf is dead,
he's mostly dead,
maybe i'm dying too,
maybe we're all dead...
and the words on his headstone read:
wolf killed for pelt!

Eric Cockrell

Wolves Cry!

wolves cry...

...their howling moan

.....of lust and spirit,

haunting moonlit forests

...with the pulse

.....of primordial longing!

the hands of fire

.....before beginning.

Eric Cockrell

Woman

i look into your eyes
and i still see.... the most
beautiful woman that ever lived.

i still see... fire and rain,
the soft touch of a hand,
the laughing pajama dance...

i still see... the mama who watched
with passionate dedication...
the woman who made love
in the dirt...

the smell, the touch, the feel....
listening to dylan and tom petty,
taking in stray cats.... walking the dogs...

the woman who gets mad, can be
tender and sentimental... who
cooked for her dad and me....
and put up with us while we watched

john wayne yet again....

the girl i walked off with
to find a tomorrow....

the woman i believe in...

the woman i still love....

Eric Cockrell

Woman (Respect)

woman...
divine made flesh,
births,
nourishes,
loves,
gives,
sensual intimacy,
spiritual companion...
the most human,
creation,
darkness and light;
the door of eternity,
opening and closing
by her will!

woman...
demands,
deserves,
RESPECT!

Eric Cockrell

Woman!

the most beautiful
act of all creation....

the bringer of life,
the cup of the sensual.
the wings of the spiritual...

the earth wrapped in flesh.
gentleness in mortal rain.
the body of the heart.

the mystical, the enchanted,
the song of all being....

to be honored, respected...
to walk beside!

Eric Cockrell

Womb Of Stillness

i leap from the cliff,
spreading my wings,
catching wind currents...

soaring with no effort,
mind clear, no thinking,
the sky wraps around me...

holds me in the
womb of stillness!

Eric Cockrell

Women! (Forget Not!)

</>

women....

too long too often

held down, beat down,

treated like second class,

no class, throw aways...

no voice, no choice,

emotional garbage....

mankind should bow

it's head in shame....

beauty, intelligence,

heart reasoning....

human beings with will,

equal in every way,

human beings with rights....

man! forget not

from where you came!

Eric Cockrell

Wont Leave Enough!

no more fruit to pick,
no more vegetables to harvest!
what you gonna do with us now?

pass out guns and pills,
hope we kill each other....
turn our towns and cities...

into new oil fields!
spread the cancer,
sterilize by unseen chemicals,

AID's, and even worse,
by design, not fate....
cant spread the wealth,

wont leave enough
to fill your tables and
feed your beastly stomachs!

Eric Cockrell

Woodsmoke Rising From The Chimney...

it has come down to moments,
perhaps it always was...
small, tiny, rude, and precious moments.
orphaned, common, stinking moments.
holy, infinite, fleeting moments....

i know that god is alive,
i can feel her breath on the backs
of my ears.....
i can feel her long hair blowing
across my face on the longest nights.
i can hear her footsteps
in my darkest room...

there is a magic in the thorn,
a power emanating from the grain of the tree.
i know what forever tastes like,
and yet i have to be reminded.

there are no good and bad people,
just people wearing tired shoes and spectacles.
that which sustains must first die,
and sickness is the path of healing.
does not the bare limb tree grow erect
with longing? do not stars weep in need?
while sparrows draw maps across the mountains,
dying for the kiss of spring.

poor people hunched in kerosene rooms,
rolling cigarettes, laughing at the children playing.
while the wealthy toss and turn in sweated sleep,
stroking the guns of apathy...
yet all will die, some more than once,
leaving dust on time's windowsill.

prayers, and woodsmoke rising from the chimney.

Eric Cockrell

Woody Guthrie

Woody Guthrie,
where are you now?
with your dust covered boots,
and your old flop hat.

your rusted strings
ringing out freedom
for all to hear...
your words exposing fascists....

your heart free as the sky...
Woody Guthrie,
tell me which way to turn....
those dust covered roads

filled with the lost again...
aint no more trains to hop,
aint no work to find....
and the armed thugs are coming

to take us away...
Woody Guthrie,
tell me what to say...,
make me hard and soft,

make me know when to pray.
and if we be the children
of this land free and wide....
help me know how to tell them

all i'm feeling inside....
Woody Guthrie,
the fire's gone down low,
walk with me down this lonesome road!

Eric Cockrell

Words!

it has been said
that God spoke worlds
into being...
and that Jesus
was the word of God.
that we are created
in the image of God...
that we are the dreams
of God made flesh...

yet we open our mouths,
and nothing happens!
bats hang from the rafters
of our souls.
we speak, windows rattle,
and wars beget wars.
we write with invisible ink!

no cosmos, no stars,
only hunger and despair.
our words close the door,
and choose to be strangers.
we shout, and graves are dug,
we whisper, and no one hears!

could it be that true word
is written in silence,
spoken in awareness,
breaks concepts, tears down walls.

and we who live in fear,
running from the image of our selves,
cannot touch the source,
and have forgotten the breast.

speak worlds into being,
or speak this one into destruction?
spirit becomes flesh,
and blooms or decays.

choice?

awareness, and silence,
crucifixion, and fire.

Buddha spoke, Jesus listened,
Jesus spoke, Buddha listened...
perhaps we could learn!

Eric Cockrell

Words... (I Am)

words...

fall like bombs

on the straw huts

of the soul...

the sky of silence

torn by the colors of noise!

or silent epitaphs,

that only whales understand,

or perhaps elephants...

written on the inside of the turtle's shell.

spoke into being...

or being adorned,

with the trinkets of ownership...

do we choose?

what is language then?

should we ask the trees?

perhaps the mountains will tell.

the rivers only laugh!

does it have a smell?

a taste? a touch?

does it recognize identity?

spoke into being...

are we then spoke into death?

is the veil between paper thin?

is there a veil?

perhaps the only difference

between darkness and light

is vantage point...

where we stand in the shadows!

dogs bark, cats meow...

I Am!

Words... (Tiny Bodies)

words have tiny bodies,
some young, some aged beyond thought.
words carry swords and plant tears,
words form tiny lamps in darkness.
words express the unexpressable,
ride bicycles on children's journeys.
words taunt silence with definition....
and some of the best are never spoken.
words heal wounds, and fill bowls,
weave webs while we sleep.
words often turn and betray us,
and often die for our sins.
words create universes,
and shed their clothes on well lit stages.
words translate both the wolf and the whale,
and bear the flag of mountains.
words bear children, but leave no tracks.
words hammer rusty nails.
words never ever wear shoes,
and dance with every other step.
words stroke the breast and touch the lips,
without apology or fear.
words give stars their destiny,
and name every grain of sand!

Eric Cockrell

Words.... (Poetry Itself)

words do not heal the broken hearted,
words do not end wars.
words do not change the face of indifference,
words do not impress god!
words do not feed the hungry,
nor set the captives free.
words do not give shelter to the homeless,
or hope to those ridden with despair.
words do not stop discrimination,
words do not bring justice.
words do not bring forgiveness,
nor do they bring understanding...
words do not fill the empty,
nor erase the scars of love...
words do not define dialogue!

it is only then,
the hands and feet of the human heart...
and poetry itself is nothing more,
than the action of involved compassion!

Eric Cockrell

Work To Do!

i came from a generation
that worked.... was born to
work, daylight to dawn,
for everything we had.
we grew our own food, we
cut firewood, we worked
with our hands.
we were taught to work...
we built houses, bridges,
paved roads... worked on
farms, worked in sawmills,
worked in factories...
whatever it took for food
and shelter...
and if a neighbor got hurt,
or sick, and couldnt work...
we helped him and his family
till he could.

those of us left who can work
are still working, a lot of us are
out of work, and cant find work!

and so the world has changed...
it seems like a lot of people
spend more time avoiding work
than working... a lot of people
look for the easy way out...are
dependent on society...
still a lot of good and willing people
just need help.

they call this progress...based
on technology, and looking out for
number one. seperated, almost islands...
greed has taken the place of the bent back!

so when it all falls apart, and that will
be soon, what happens? who knows how

to survive? who has the backbone?

things to think about, and yes...

work to do!

Eric Cockrell

Workers Of America

good work...
hard work that you're
respected for, compensated

fairly for.....
no work is menial!
the man who picks up

and hauls your trash,
just as important,
just as worthy,

as the banker or businessman!
picking fruit, working in hospitals,
working on machines...

all needed!
all work done well,
is poetry in itself!

do your job!
hold your head up!
and employers,

pay your people well!
the workers of America,
the backbone of freedom!

Eric Cockrell

Working And Committed (Response)

it is not the plow,
but the farmer's back,
and the farmer's legs.
it is not the hoe,
but the farmer's hands,
and the farmer's heart,
working and committed!

it is not the political system,
but the moral fiber beneath.
not the moral fiber of judgement,
but that guided by human compassion.
for the back and the legs,
and the hands and the heart,
are the working cogs of freedom.

anything done without love will fail!

Eric Cockrell

Worthless

i have never believed
that there was any such thing
as a worthless human being...

yet you keep standing
on the platform
that it's better
to take from the
poor, the sick, the elderly,
the minorities...

to cut social security,
medicare, and
educational benefits
from our children...

in order to protect
the elite, the filthy rich
from being taxed at all...

and you call this fairness...
democracy in action!

your blatant unfeeling arrogance
is making me question
my beliefs!

Eric Cockrell

Would That...

would that we knew,
what fireflies know.
would that we went,
where the setting sun goes.
would that our pride,
gave way to our knees.
would that our eyes,
felt what we see.
would that our prayers,
had hands and feet.
would that our minds,
and our hearts would meet.
would that our tongues,
spoke familiar and true.
would that the real me,
met the real you!
would that the bridge,
be sure and crossed.
would that love be our goal,
and living the cost.
would that today,
would begin anew...
would that we were conscious,
of what we say and we do..
would that hand in hand,
and side by side...
would that we'd live,
before we die!

Eric Cockrell

Would You... (Open The Door)

if i set fire to my heart,
would you see the flames...
and stop, a stranger in the night,
to warm your soul?
if i broke the glass of my dreams,
would you pick up the pieces...
would the light shining on them,
become the prism of your thoughts?
and if i shed my leaves,
would you say farewell to the swallows...
and rake in the stillness, waiting on snow?
if my silence shouted...
would you hear... would you hear?
if i took off my mask,
would you open the door?

Eric Cockrell

Would You.... (Love Me?)

would you then love me?
for i am nothing but the wind.
i roam the earth with passion.
i have no home.
i carry the voices
of hunger and need.
are you then the rain?
falling on the good and the evil.
giving without asking,
touching deep without guilt.
dialogue, and encounter,
we rock the darkness.
leaving the trace of our madness,
in branches blown asunder...
and small puddles of water,
in the cracks in the pavement...
that children will wake to,
and leap over with awe!

Eric Cockrell

Would You?

if i made love to you with words,
would your breath quicken?
would your heart race?
would the moan of the wind
excite you, make you tremble?
would you see me in the shadows?

if i made love to you with rain,
would you stand in it till
you were drenched?
would you take off your clothes,
let the water run down your body?
would you kiss the clouds that bring?
embrace the lightning?
ride the great peels of thunder?

if i made love to you with stillness,
would you lay forever,
listening, panting, dissolving?
would you give that up
which you have never given?
would you wrap yourself
in the arms of darkness,
and wait with the mountains
for the coming light?

would you?

Eric Cockrell

Wouldnt Fill A Thimble!

Jesus was not a capitalist,
Buddha owned no stocks or bonds...
democracy has nothing to do with invasion.
freedom cant be bought and sold!

the earth is not 'property'...
salvation doesnt imply donation.
equality doesnt have limitations,
respect is a two way street!

much judgement, few qualified judges!
forgiveness has to be given to receive.
wisdom not bound by degrees...
no tomorrow unless we validate today!

love doesnt imply ownership.
and death is not the end!
what we know wouldnt fill a thimble,
what we seek to know already seeks us!

Eric Cockrell

Wouldnt It?

wouldnt it be amazing,
if every word we spoke today
were human in content?
if every action we took
were based in compassion?
if every thought we had
were original?
wouldnt it?

Eric Cockrell

Written In Human Blood

i heard you crying...
i dont know your name....
i can almost see your face,
can feel the warmth of your tears.

i felt your hunger,
twisting at my gut,
sharpening my stony glance,
and the set of my jaw.

i was driven by your lostness,
walking forever going nowhere.
with no beginning and no end,
no country, and no home.

i was angered by your scars,
could name each and every bruise.
i walked inside your chains,
in the darkness of the fog....

yet i found that still small light,
the fire that cannot be quenched.
the book of freedom in your soul....
written in human blood.....

yours, and mine!

Eric Cockrell

Written With Nails (For Terence)

metal jacketed truth bullets
spat from the empty tomb
on the third day, ...
grave clothes lying empty.

human stink garbage sweat grime,
hands reaching for hands...
candles made of flesh,
matches of dried bones.

truth lightning gentle weeping sorrow,
food bowls held by shaking hands.
eyes that see, hearts that feel,
simply living, by the fire!

spiritual writings written with nails,
compassion's hammers, caring's shovel...
lifetimes building shelters,
and planting gardens for the poor!

Eric Cockrell

Wrong Number

do you always kill
the one you love?
the one that loves you?
do you spin your web,
only to eat your mate?
is the cross you give
your only embrace?
the crown of thorns
your loving kiss?
is your secret name death,
your womb filled with darkness?
do you always burn your dreams
at the stake?
or am i just the wrong number
you happened to call,
and cant remember how
to hang up?

Eric Cockrell

Years Of Travel...

lover...

the tongue severed,
chopped in tiny pieces,
laid carefully in a box,
that sits silently screaming
on your shelf!

the heart does not know
faces or names,
is not bound by distance,
1000 miles, or 20 feet
across the room...
that seems even further.

we die a thousand deaths
at each other's feet.
love's crucifixions,
bodies wrapped in cloth,
and perfumed.

souls drawn to each other,
clothed, yet bare naked.
live wires touching,
that light up the night...
drinking the darkness that names!

intimate strangers,
are we ever any more?
even after years of travel,
so much we dont know...
even after years of travel!

Eric Cockrell

You And I

you and i
are the reason
things are
the way they are...

no, we didnt invade
Iraq and Afghanistan,
but we voted for
the clowns that ordained
these actions...
or, even worse,
didnt vote at all.

no, we didnt cause
the big oil spill...
yet by our reckless
consuming lifestyles,
driving our big SUV's
going nowhere...
maybe we did!

no, we didnt cause
the disaster in Haiti,
the hurricane in New Orleans,
the Japanese nuclear disaster...
but what have we done
to help fix these problems?

no, we didnt tell the banks
to foreclose on all these houses...
but we stood by doing nothing
while our government bailed
them out... and their CEO's
drew their bonuses....

no, we didnt tell them
to cut social security
and medicare, to cut
educational aid...

but we sit and watch
while the elite do their thing,
and pay no taxes...

you and i,
standing by, doing nothing,
saying nothing, not getting
involved...

you and i
are the reason
things are
the way they are...

Eric Cockrell

You Are

you are...

the swollen tongue of destiny,
spilling from the mouth.

the lips of hunger,
swallowing the sword.

the rose petal fallen,
shaking the ground like thunder.

the beating sound of wings,
shaking the skies.

you are...

the block wall laid,
with skill and precision.

the smell of turnips,
boiling on the stove.

the cupboard door open,
a full bag of sugar.

clothes worn to revival,
drenched with redemption.

you are...

the bridge between, I and thou...

Eric Cockrell

You Are (My Body)

you are my body,
my shelter, my refuge.
your flesh sustains me...

i see through your eyes.
your lips quench my thirst,
your heart feeds my hunger.

your darkness my womb,
your emptiness fills me...
you are my body,

and i am yours!

Eric Cockrell

You Are (My Path)

you are my path,
my journey, my song.
the sunlit table,
the book, and the cup.
the baby's soft whimper,
the angry stare at the news.
the pot that simmers,
the meat, and the bone.

you are the fire,
built 'neath the trees.
the hug of the limbs,
the forever of the roots.
the sound of the lone bird's wings,
in a sky no one touches.
the smoke from the chimney,
the cork in the bottle.

the spider's web,
the quilt turned down.
the hands on the broom,
and the empty corner.
the reason for God,
the ghosts of the night.
you are my path,
i am feet, and desire!

Eric Cockrell

You Are (Not Alone)

the stink on your breath,
is poverty...
the blood on your lips,
human blood...
the scars on your hands
match the scars
on your heart...
you are not alone,
you are not alone....

the only true value
is the value of a human being.
all true actions
come from the point of dignity.
holiness, not aloof or afar,
human flesh, breath, and bones...
you are not alone,
you are not alone...

Eric Cockrell

You Are Human

the truth
is not bound
by legality,
neither the free man!

if what you do
is in accordance with nature,
and in rhythm with the breath
of humanity's longing...
do it!

even the rocks sing,
the trees pray,
the wind moans and howls,
the rain weeps...
should we do less?

with every bite you take,
feel someone else's hunger!
every time you make love,
feel someone else's aloneness!

get dirty, sweat, breathe,
shake your head, curse...
make love, make a fool of yourself,
aim to fly, get up when you fall!

you are human...
the universe prays to you!
dance naked, open the door,
welcome the Guest!

Eric Cockrell

You Are Not Alone....

have spent all morning
talking about taking responsibility...
the problem is we come from the
generation that blames...
we blame every one and everything
else for the mess we've created.
we blame politicians, businessmen,
religions, people of different
colors, different sexual orientations...
our parents, our neighbors,
bigots, the world economy...

but bottom line, people.
we are responsible.
we are the price, and the cost.
we are the reason that there is
hunger, want, need, and poverty.
we are the cause of the fighting,
and the victims of our own choices.

nothing will ever change until we do!
until we face the man/woman
in the mirror, there can be no tomorrow.
until we learn to live,
not just to exist,
there can be no eternal life.
until we own and forgive,
there can be no forgiveness.

i make just as many mistakes,
and probably more,
than you do...
but i can see the bottom line.
and the truth is,
i know i am responsible!

nothing left to say...
you're probably tired of my ranting...
so if you're going to listen,

listen to the voice inside
of your hearts...
and follow your path...
you are not alone!

Eric Cockrell

You Are The Empty...

i am the cross,
and i am the kiss...
i am the embrace,
and the parting stillness.
i am death falling from the trees,
i am eternity in the promise of snow.
i am the word spoken and heard,
slowly undressed with awe and hunger.
i am the tongue drawing history's face,
in every secret place, in every hidden treasure.
i am the fluid of love spillt with passion,
i am the touch, trembling and sure.
i am the shadow that lit the candle,
the shoe that fell to the floor.
i am the covered bridge,
and the sound of horses' hooves.
the screech of the owl,
the taunt of the moonlight.
i am the glass broken,
the panting of the darkness.
i am the chimney too long cold.
i am the name spoken in grunts,
the moan of the waves that cant find shore.
i am the wings that define the night,
you are the empty waiting to be filled!

Eric Cockrell

You Are The Gravity

you are the gravity
of my own soul
searching for itself...

the stars in a
black expanse
that point the way...

the sharpened blade
in the woodcarver's hand,
i am only the log....

the prow of the ship
bursting thru the waves,
the compass, and

the final destination!

Eric Cockrell

You Are The Prayer!

pray for peace,
and then live your prayers!
pray for love,
then give your love a body.
pray for hope,
then make the changes needed
to bring hope life!
pray for forgiveness,
and then forgive!
pray for courage,
then dare to do!
pray for fulfillment,
then give everything you
cherish away!
pray for wisdom,
then listen intently!
pray for tomorrow,
then live today!
pray for truth,
then walk naked and strong!
pray for the earth,
then treat it with respect...
pray with all of your heart,
then be silent and still,
knowing, and believing,
that you are the prayer!

Eric Cockrell

You Are.... (Part Two)

you are....

the grey damp lines,
beneath the eyes of my heart.

words intimately spoken,
falling on an empty room.

the broken wheel,
left spinning in the dust.

the letter carried by crows,
to the snowbound north.

you are...

the faucet dripping,
the candle hidden in a drawer.

the sound of the spoon,
falling to the floor.

that pair of old shoes,
and a copper kettle.

the smell of perfume,
become the stink of time.

you are....

Eric Cockrell

You Bomb...

you bomb...
the brown skinned children
of the world,
with ignorant patriotic pride,
taking what is not
yours to take!

you bomb...
the poor children of America,
with napalm poverty,
taking what is not
yours to take...

you bomb...
the children of the common,
that stand in the way
of your excess,
taking what is not
yours to take...

you have no conscience...
so, you bomb!

Eric Cockrell

You Call This America!

morning splintered,
justice stinks like the
dried blood on the concrete walls
of an abandoned building.
you call this America!
lives wrapped in color,
in calloused hands.
standing in line
for a loaf of bread.
a bullet, a token,
a fresh covered grave,
you call this America!
you wear your god in sunday best,
throw words and prayers
into a bottomless well.
afraid of your shadows,
you arm yourselves,
you call this America!
the hands of take flex
and shout...
while dirt faced children
stand with mouths agape.
mothers die, and brothers are killed.
sisters sold on the block
beneath colored lights...
you call this America!

Eric Cockrell

You Cannot Stop Me....

i am a free man by choice.
you've allowed me to read, to question,
and to reason....
now nothing you can do to me
will take away my freedom.
you can imprison or kill my body,
but this body is old and dying anyway.
you can silence my mouth,
but my eyes will sing.
you can pluck out my eyes,
then my feet will sing.
you can cut off my feet,
and my heart will sing.
you can bury my heart,
and the very earth will sing.
i am free!
you cannot stop me from singing!

Eric Cockrell

You Cannot Tell Me!

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you cannot tell me
that freedom sees color,
religion, or financial status.

you cannot tell me
that freedom divides
between classes.

you cannot tell me
that freedom is for the few,
and not for the many.

you cannot tell me
that freedom can be bought,
sold, or traded.

you cannot tell me
that freedom can be won
by destroying innocent lives.

you cannot tell me
that freedom invades other countries
for political or economic reasons.

you cannot tell me
that freedom exists without justice.
you cannot tell me

that freedom is out of reach!

Eric Cockrell

You Cannot!

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you cannot win freedom by bloodshed!
fighting for preordained sections of land,
oil and mineral rights....

we dont own the earth,
.....and never will!

you cannot convert other peoples
to your capitalistic form of Christianity
with a sword and vengeance....

ask the Native Americans
.....how they feel about this!

you cannot bring about justice,
when your judicial system is oiled
with money and color...

when you have more people in prison
than any other country!

you cannot convince anyone to do
the right thing when everything you do
is based on selfish greed....

doing the right thing means being human,
being human is something we've forgotten!

you cannot bring about change,
unless you're willing to change yourselves...
all good things begin within....

we are what we choose to be,
not what we pretend to be!

Eric Cockrell

You Cant Hide...

grey face ghouls
dressed in suits,
tongues ripped out,
human skin boots.
thought marines,
black cloud guns.
you cant hide,
and you cant run.

babies taken,
sons in prison.
wearing masks,
violent 'Christians'.
ignorance drugs,
prejudice and hate.
you can barely stand
beneath the weight.

white men, black men,
all men inside.
same needs, same wants,
dont believe the lie.
fists to hands,
hands to hearts.
only takes one candle
to light the dark!

when you cant be free,
they give you rules.
when you cant see the truth,
they make you fools.
when you cant speak your mind,
your mind is closed.
when no one dares,
then no one knows!

Eric Cockrell

You Do Not Own Me!

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you do not own me!
you do not own my body!
i will not wear your chains!

i take off my shirt,
and show the marks on my back
to the world, defiant to the end!

you do not own my mind!
you cannot tell me what i can think.
you will not tell me

what i can and cannot read!
you cannot tell me what to believe.
i do not buy your lie!

you do not own my heart!
you cannot limit my ability to feel.
you will not tell me whom i can

and cannot love.
you do not own my words.
i speak from the scars on my body.

i speak with the thoughts
of a free mind... i speak
from the feelings of my heart.

you do not own me,
and you never will.
i have decided to be free!

Eric Cockrell

You Dont Own Me!

you cannot define me,
put me in a box.
you cannot restrain me,
cannot mold me, or shape me.
you cannot lead me,
for i will not follow!
you cannot make me
believe in your gods.
you cannot scare me,
cannot break me or make me.
you cannot buy or sell me,
cannot make me your slave.
you cannot tell me
who i am, and am not....

bottom line:
you dont have anything
i want or need....
you dont own me,
i am free!

Eric Cockrell

You First Have To Know!

in order to break
the chains of bondage,
you first have to know
that they're there.
you have to feel them
cutting into your flesh.
you have to feel,
and to name,
the weight of oppression.
a bird that's never known
life outside the cage,
has no idea what freedom is!
a man whose feet
are buried in the ground,
can never touch the sky!

Eric Cockrell

You Gave Me A Name!

i threw a rock into the ocean,
you sent me moonlight.
I laid down in the sand and wept,
you gave me the wind.
i died in the darkness,
you gave my body a face.
i never lived,
yet you gave me a name!

Eric Cockrell

You Have To Decide....

even prophets are pilgrims,
and infidels are priests.
the murderer you sent
to be executed,
is just you in another form.
the child he killed,
is also you....
the drunken father who beat him
mercilessly as a child,
you got it, also you!
the prayer he prayed before he died,
you have to decide!

Eric Cockrell

You Just Being You!

if i could give you a gift...
it would be you!
you just being you,
in all of your youness...
as no one else can do!

Eric Cockrell

You Just Cant!

you cannot believe in God,
and continue to live in a way
that abuses the living,

that takes from those in need,
that turns its back on those hurting,
that uses people for profit!

that walks away from the hungry,
closes the door on the homeless,
that looks at diverse people

with prejudice...
that kills under any flag!
you just cant...

life itself is sacred!

Eric Cockrell

You Know The Rest!

you can smell poverty,
without ever asking.
you can taste hunger,
you can feel unspoken sorrow.
open your eyes,
you can see the season.
and in a lover's eyes,
the door, and the bolt.
feel the ashes,
too cold to stir.
take a deep breath,
move your mechanical feet.
time doesn't lie,
and doesn't know truth.
'ashes to ashes...'
you know the rest!

Eric Cockrell

You Never Sleep On

that book on the shelf,
the one you've forgotten,
waiting in silence,
untouched and unread.
the crack in the window,
rainwater seeps through.
the lamp by the table,
you never turn on.
the axe in the corner,
covered by shadows and web.
the limbs ripped from the tree,
blown by the storm.
that old photograph album,
pictures yellowed by time.
the guitar in the closet,
waiting to be strung.
and the sound of the ocean,
in the shell you never pick up.
the skin left by the snake,
clouds that cover the moon.
the letter you never opened,
the ring in the drawer...
my heart on the pillow,
you never sleep on!

Eric Cockrell

You Return Again

you return again,
or maybe just the wind,
softly knocking on the door....

or maybe it's a train,
on some distant track,
hurtling somewhere with purpose....

or maybe just winter,
blowing hard against autumn,
wrapping all that has been life...

in the silence of the snow....
or maybe it's tomorrow,
returning today to yesterday....

this moment of living to memory.
or maybe it's just my heart,
calling out to my soul....

listening for an echo....
you return again,
or maybe it's just my tears,

or the coming of rain!

Eric Cockrell

You Smell Like

you smell like....
your skin, your hair,
your gentle touch;
your eyes that have loved,
and lost many a battle.
your fierce heart wrapped
around your children, your dogs.
your sadness weeping
with every step you take.
your ashes remembering fire,
your fire that burned down,
sweeping away all that was,
and dared to be...
your dancing soul crippled
by shadows that haunt.
your wings of flesh and feather...

you smell like... me!

Eric Cockrell

You Wanted To Know....

the starving child you saw on your tv screen,
the one that made you turn the channel.
the old homeless man who tried to bum a dollar
when you were pumping gas...
whose hands were shaking,
who smelled like trash,
who you made fun of when you left...
the one you gave 50 cents to,
just to get away from...
the young painted up girl you called a whore,
the guy strung out on pills
buying groceries with food stamps...
the veteran who came home
to find his family gone....
no job, no home, he blew his brains out!
the gay boy who slit his wrists,
tired of being bullied.
the old couple evicted broke and sick....
the bodies of women and children killed by the drones,
the young man in prison who just got gang raped.
the disabled woman you cursed when she made your change,
the old man buying dog food who doesnt have a dog...

well, you wanted to know what god looks like!

Eric Cockrell

You Who Bury Your Poets

America....

you who bury your poets
like fallen leaves beneath weeping trees.
like the sound of the tire
that strikes the stray cat.
like the trembling dark skinned hands
you ban from your voting booths.
like the flag draped caskets
of your sacrificed young.
like the books you burn
with religious fervor....
like the shuffle of boots
in your unemployment lines.
like the faceless ones
in your clinics shutting down.
like the ones who speak out,
then suddenly disappear.
like the crack pipes and needles
of your 'worthless' poor....
like the babies born to babies
in your rat infested government housing.
like your Native Americans
in your 'poverty prisons'....
like the angry young men
you put behind bars.
like the hungry child sleeping
in the back of a broke down car.
like your factory ghosts
haunting empty shells.
like your foreclosed farms,
the fields left to crows.

America,
you who bury your poets,
and dance drunkenly in empty rooms,
neath the shadow of the noose
your indifference tied!

You Who Have Never Been There....

what then doth the bird
learn from the cage?
what doth the bare limb
learn from the snow?
what doth the starving child
learn from his hunger?
what doth the homeless man
learn from the lighted window?
what doth the oppressed
learn from his oppression?
what doth the one discriminated against
learn from discrimination?
what doth the hopeless one
learn from his despair?
is it that easy for you to know,
you who have never been there?

Eric Cockrell

You Who Would Speak....

you who would speak...
take off your clothes,
for your bodies are a testimony
to the stars themselves.
one does not adorn the moon,
nor hide it behind veils.
our imperfections themselves,
are the map of desire.
one cannot be holy,
who dares not touch the flame!

Eric Cockrell

You, And I

september, and roses;
a lot of things turn grey.
and the book never read

stands alone on the shelf.
the clock ticks, scraping
against the walls of eternity.

part the Sea, or just walk
on the water, what difference?
lying naked on the rose petals,

or standing in the unemployment line.
the ghosts of Martin Luther King,
Jesus, and that old cat

who slept in my guitar case.
every ordinary moment, holy!
and small memories we leave behind

the real history of the human heart
tiny universes complete with
falling stars you, and i!

Eric Cockrell

You... Now!

you are... now,
the small fire built
'neath a tree in the rain,
the song of the whipporwill.
the dirty faced little girl
playing down in the barn,
the milk cow butchered
to face the winter.
the gurgle of the stream,
the whisper of branches bare.
the taste of blood
on the tip of the tongue.
the yelp of love,
the stink of hunger.
the cup held out,
and the hand that pours.
the howl of the wind,
the arch of the back.
the mouth of desire,
and the holy whore.
the long far echo
of the heart's screaming beat.
the soft falling rain,
the prayer, unanswered!

Eric Cockrell

You.....

the book...
on the shelf
for twenty five years!
opened with care,
the musky smell
hangs in the air.
the ink brittle,
yet sharp,
the words like ghosts.
i run my tongue
down the page,
and swallow a life!

Eric Cockrell

Your Body, My Body, Our Body

your body
a holy sepulcher
that my spirit
rises from.

my body
that pair of old jeans
that fits you
the best.

our body
an unknown cosmos
where self and self
are lost

in the darkness
of one.

Eric Cockrell

Your Call!

you dont have to be
Gandhi, Martin Luther King,
JFK, the Dalai Lama, or even Jesus,
to make a difference...

all you have to be is you!
no one else can answer your call!

Eric Cockrell

Your Choice!

stop the senseless killing!
right here, right now!
murder is murder.

nothing you own or possess
is worth the price of a human life...
killing never brings peace!

the bombs you drop
you lack of faith.
the bodies you bury

in the shallow ditch your children.
only God knows the price you pay,
only you know the God you face!

every action brings either
life or death... your choice!

Eric Cockrell

Your Face...

it comes on me sudden,
lightning without thunder.
a hole in the bucket,
the branch falls from the tree!

the quake and the tremor,
harsh wind slaps my face.
the fire gone out,
the night cold and dark.

a bent nail in the bridge,
the road that just ends.
the door left open,
the stranger's heavy breathing.

the touch, the smell,
and the taste of want...
want carried by love,
and love wears your face!

Eric Cockrell

Your Gods!

you have shown me your gods,
by the glint of your teeth,
by the knives in your hands,
by the stink of your breath.
by your churches built,
over the unmarked graves
of your own children...
by the wealth you gather,
or that gathers you.
by the crumbs on your pillows,
and the roar of your success,
drowning out the tiny voices,
you grind beneath your feet...
you have shown me your gods,
they look a lot like you...
and leave me with the empty
sacred rage of the poor!

Eric Cockrell

Your Heart

the burning bush...
or maybe Arthur's sword?
an unknown planet
where life does exist....

a butterfly in winter,
the Red Sea divided.
the mother of God
at the community center!

heal the sick!
help the poor!
stop all wars!
set free all those
imprisoned wrongly!

house the homeless!
be a father/mother
to the orphaned child....
stand arm to arm
in the face of prejudice....

all this, and more...
and i still cant touch
your heart....

Eric Cockrell

Your Lips Taste Like

your lips taste like
my heart wrapped in brown paper,
and left out in the rain....
the cloud that drifts by taunting,
the old dog dying in the field.
the rose just before it opens,
the blood surging from the bullet wound.
the bottom of the bridge
the homeless sleep under...
a falling star, a leaf blown by the wind.
the hungry child's whimper,
the howl of the wolves.
the desire of the turtle,
a flat tire on a deserted road.
the surge of the ocean,
and the pulse of the mountain.
like a postage stamp
from a faraway shore...
like the little girl's hands
opening the door of the cage,
and the sound the feathers make,
the light glinting on her tears.
and the soft underside
of my own heart!

Eric Cockrell

You'Re Praying

every time you stop to help
someone stuck on the side
of the road... you're praying.
every time you go over
and help your neighbor
mow his grass... you're praying.
every time you give a couple dollars
to the down and out person
bumming in the parking lot....
you're praying.
every time you take the time
to listen to someone whose
life is falling apart... you're praying.
every time you go and give blood
during your lunch hour...
you're praying.
every time you stand up
for the person everyone else
is running down... you're praying.
every time you take in a
stray dog or cat... you're praying.
every time you give more
than you have to give... you're praying.
every time you care
when no one thinks you should...
you're praying!

Eric Cockrell