

# Spoken Word Pieces

## **Leslie Dripps**

### **The Garden Bench**

Sowing seeds, settling plants,  
I pictured you and me sitting  
on the bench just so  
tea in hand, breathing green.

Each branch arching across the path,  
“How lovely,” you’d say,  
and smile at me warmly  
as the sun in May, and you would mean I was lovely, too, not lovely, but loveable.

We did sit on that bench,  
someone else’s mother and I,  
but I was a stranger to her, a wild thing suffering,  
and her bucket already filled with daughters.

So I labor beside the garden bench,  
feeding decay to make soil and say  
“no”  
to what might have been but was never near,  
so my path can be carved curved away from here,  
a path whose level is dearly purchased and I can say without bitterness

that

we never sat  
upon the garden bench

and forgive you.

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## **Jerrard Smith**

Life through the rainy days  
Flow be the serenade,  
Heartbreak and escapades  
Words take your breath away  
Sunshine, moonshine,  
Dancing in the moonlight  
I cry, you cry,  
Celebrate the hard times

Lights in the city break,  
Stars in the sky fade,  
Waters in the sea wave  
Flames in the sun blaze  
Long nights, late nights  
Waiting for the sunlight  
Some live, some die,  
House left, stage right

Birds in the morning sing  
Symphonies and wedding rings  
Sad songs tend to bring  
Loneliness and everything  
Days passed, time goes,  
Brooks dry, rhythm flows  
Old man in dirty clothes  
Crying through a saxophone

Rain fills these city streets,  
Pain fills where love leaks,  
Pray for my enemies  
Life's but a memory,  
A throne seats one king  
An angel as two wings  
The fall time colors leaves  
Except for the evergreens

Music is the medicine:  
Lyrical exceterin,

Rhythmical coalescence  
Spiritual, affectionate.  
Kids laugh the day away,  
Yesterday'll fade away,  
Leather coat on lay-a-way,  
Come again another day.

Life through the rainy days  
Storms in the Outer Banks  
Thought about you yesterday  
Nearly took my breath away  
Late nights, long nights,  
Praying for the sunlight,  
New day, sun rise  
Celebrate the good times.

*Jerrard Smith ©2022*

## **Hope Martin**

**1/25/21**

there is a maturation of friendship  
that brings with it  
the vulnerability to share things that you  
hold so close to your chest  
and you can find a lot of relatability with each other.

but there is a further maturation of friendship  
when you are vulnerable about how you're doing with each other.

it is much riskier  
but it is much more rewarding.

**2/18/21**

I want to be  
the friend you  
think I am.

and I want to not  
worry about

living up to myself  
or anyone else.

I want to  
view friendships as  
a walk through the woods  
rather than as a  
minefield of my own construction.

I want to walk  
in freedom, knowing  
I'll trip over roots  
and get slapped by a few branches  
and I want to not walk  
in fear, gripped by terror  
that I'll do or say the wrong thing  
and blow us both to bits.

**3/17/21**

I wish,  
sometimes,  
that we could go back;  
back to when  
we didn't have to carry  
the weight of the world  
on our shoulders—  
our parents did it for us.

back to when  
our largest wounds were  
scraped up knees from  
playing a little too hard.

when our greatest difficulties were  
fighting our math curriculums  
or not finishing school  
before breakfast.

when our biggest, baddest enemies were  
those in our imaginations.

when the heaviest weight we carried was  
unshed baby fat  
and maybe a few too many  
scoops of ice cream.

when our tallest mountain to climb was  
the hill in our backyard.

I wish,  
sometimes,  
that we could go back  
to the familiarity we  
used to have with each other.

how like strangers  
we have become,  
who used to know  
every update,  
no matter how small,  
and every secret,  
no matter how big.

how did we end up  
so far apart?

**10/24/21**

it's ok that  
I am not your go to anymore  
you are not mine.  
there are people who are  
more present for each of us,  
but we will not disappear  
out of each other's lives  
simply because we are not  
part of each other's daily lives,  
because we are not  
each other's regular community.

it doesn't mean that

we're growing apart  
it means that  
we are growing separately  
and that makes all the difference  
in the world.

**4/20/20**

two wells  
their depths rarely plumbed.

but,  
if you are willing  
to pull the ropes  
and wait,

your time and effort  
will be richly rewarded—

for their waters will take you on a  
journey  
to new heights  
and bring you soaring over the plains,  
broadening your horizons  
and e x p a n d i n g your perspective.

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