

Light  
on  
the  
Stairs



Joshua  
Scott

# TUMBLING

Somewhere a line was drawn  
I swore when I left her  
I'd never look back  
I was wrong  
she was written into my blood  
my soul and my skin  
and ever since I've been on this  
downhill grade just tumbling  
Somehow I persuaded myself  
that I was an island  
that I needed nobody else  
from the cliffs of my youth I jumped  
and ever since then  
I've been starting and stopping  
but mostly just tumbling  
I was right on the verge of salvation  
when I fell through a hole in the wind  
I remember a hollow sensation  
and wondering if I'd ever get back home  
again  
Someday she'll understand  
that I'd have given up the world  
to be her everyday man  
but for the demons  
that color my soul from within  
I'd be with her today but instead  
I'm still tumbling

# LOOKING FOR YOU

I saw you once  
walking through a narrow door  
in the evening heat of Jerusalem  
I saw you twice sitting on the windy shore  
with your hair tied back  
and the rain coming in  
You were everywhere  
fading into thin air  
I was always close somewhere  
looking for you  
and in my mind  
I crossed every line  
I spent so much time  
looking for you  
I threw my nets  
into wide lagoons  
to catch the stars  
reflected there  
I followed you into countless rooms  
from where I stood  
you could have been anywhere  
you could have been everywhere...  
Every glimpse I catch of you  
only serves to keep me strong  
and so I strike this match for you  
every day until my days are gone  
I'll see you everywhere  
fading into thin air  
I'm always close somewhere  
looking for you  
and in my mind I'll cross every line  
I'll spend all my time  
looking for you

# ALLIES

Don't be long  
I am a child\I am not strong  
don't be late  
I am impatient\I will not wait  
I am your lion  
wed to my pride  
I think of love as extreme  
no cameo roles  
no half-written scenes for you  
and me  
I take this vow  
I'll always love you  
I'll always know how  
love like mine  
is love intravenous  
headlong and blind  
I promise you nothing  
and give you the sky  
I think of love as extreme...  
Far away I see us standing  
weathered and gray  
but I could tell  
we made something from nothing  
in spite of ourselves  
we were those lions  
lawless and free  
we took our loves to extremes  
no cameo roles  
no half-written scenes for you  
and me

# YESTERDAY'S MAN

Bound by silky strands  
of another memory  
exiled from her heart  
I'm running seeking sanctuary  
from her indifference  
she wears like a flowing cape  
from my own irrelevance  
the fact of which I can't escape  
These are the rains that fall  
out in this no man's land  
these are the static sounds  
from the outpost of yesterday's man  
you may discover me  
riding on your train of thought  
in the company  
of every man that you forgot  
I call your name  
but just then the whistle blows  
and drowns me out  
and I wither like a long-stemmed rose  
These are the rains that fall...  
I wish I  
could take my tired sails  
and tether them  
to the wings of nightingales  
and hover so high above the world  
out from under the spell  
of yesterday's girl

# PARALLEL LINES

Well, well  
don't we make the same mistakes?  
don't we wallow in the ashes  
of the history we make?  
don't we build our dreams too high  
and then wonder why they break?  
You know  
that I have to say you're right  
we never found our colors  
it was always black and white  
and I'll miss you every morning  
and I'll curse you every night  
that's right  
You and I  
like parallel lines  
not close enough to touch  
not strong enough to change design  
locked into a meaningless rhyme  
like parallel lines  
Well, well  
we're the children of an age  
where certainties are scattered  
and boundaries blow away  
and so love becomes religion  
and we lean on love that way  
well, well

# A MIGHTY DISTANCE

You stand at a mighty distance  
you hang in the dark like the moon  
you build these beautiful ruins  
you walk out of a room too soon  
You stand among the living  
but you hold hands with the past  
I leave jewels on your doorstep  
you mistake them for pieces of glass  
I know none of this matters, I know you'll never change  
It's in your restlessness  
It's in your soul, I guess  
can you hear a thing I say  
when you stand that mighty distance away?  
You drive into the water  
off the Bridge of Broken Dreams  
You are the Prodigal Daughter  
up against the time machine  
I know none of this matters, I know you'll never change  
It's in your restlessness  
It's in your soul, I guess  
can you hear a thing I say  
when you stand that mighty distance away?  
Somewhere we were undamaged  
somewhere we were ideal  
now we hurry through places  
the same places we used to kneel  
you know all of this matters  
you know we always change  
It's in our restlessness  
it's in our souls, I guess  
it's in the things we say  
when we stand that mighty distance away

# DOING BATTLE WITH THE GHOSTS

There's one up ahead  
and there's one behind me  
    wherever I go  
    they always find me  
there's one with your eyes  
    that hovers above me  
    there's one who swears  
    that she'll always love me  
I can hear the breathing  
of the ones I miss the most  
doing battle with the ghosts  
    They're in the things  
    that I never told her  
    in the war of love  
    I'm an AWOL soldier  
    they lay their heads  
    flat on the ground  
    they listen hard  
and they track me down  
    I can feel them  
    right behind me  
    walking down the coast  
doing battle with the ghosts  
Every life is somehow haunted  
filled with things we thought we wanted  
you can give it up and just stand still  
you always can but you never will  
we are destined from the cradle  
    to the last outpost  
to do battle with the ghosts



# OUTSKIRTS

I watch you prowl the outskirts  
of my memory  
and when the floodlights scan  
that dark heartland, it's you I see  
standing on the edge of a world  
where you don't belong  
and don't voices carry on the wind  
when you're on the outside  
looking in?  
The borders of our cities  
are sanctified  
but I saw you cross over  
to the other side  
when you know that you just don't fit  
in a world that was once your own  
and your logic gets lost in the wind  
when you're on the outside  
looking in  
The maps our memories give us  
are drawn to scale  
every boundary, every landmark  
in aching detail  
so when you stand  
on the edge of a world  
where you don't belong  
just remember that it might have been  
me on the outside looking in

# THE UNFORTUNATE TRUTH

In the middle of the room  
you were huddled in a chair  
and you dropped a little smile  
that vanished in the air  
in that moment I could see  
with the vision of a fool  
how often we mistake  
something shiny for a jewel  
It's the unfortunate truth  
that found us at last  
the unfortunate truth  
there is no way to undo  
the unfortunate truth  
I bought a silver frame  
for the picture in my head  
but the idea was too big  
and the colors ran and bled  
we never really fit  
in a perfect little square  
you worship on the ground  
and I worship in the air  
it's the unfortunate truth...  
Now I'm standing in a world  
where everything is new  
I can see a hundred miles  
and still no trace of you  
the sun is coming up  
and I'm standing on the sky  
but when you're right where you belong  
it doesn't matter why  
it's the unfortunate truth

# IT'S A JUNGLE OUT THERE

There's a tiger in my tree  
there's an eagle making love to a crow  
there's a woman with a cobra's head  
taking aim with a big cross bow  
it's a jungle out there  
Wild dogs in the hot Savannah  
looking hard for a water hole  
barefoot girls with high antenna  
taking aim at your little boy soul  
it's a jungle out there  
I wanna jump  
I wanna rattle my cage  
I wanna hang  
from a different tree  
oh yeah  
There's a man with the soul of a monkey  
there's a woman with retractable claws  
there's a child with the bones of a sparrow  
there's a god with big black paws  
it's a jungle out there

# WHEN I REMEMBER YOU

I could blame it on the weather  
I could rewrite history  
make every sad thing better  
than it was meant to be  
I could lie  
but the truth will have to do  
when I remember you  
I could edit every memory  
I could reinvent the wheel  
I could learn to reinterpret  
everything I feel  
I could colorize  
but grays will have to do  
when I remember you  
There's a room that I abandoned  
I don't walk through any more  
still sometimes I see you standing  
where you stood before  
I could write the book  
but a song will have to do  
when I remember you

# HALLOWED GROUND

The day that we first met  
the clothes that you had on  
the way you're threaded through  
the fabric of these songs  
old versions of ourselves  
old lovers presumed drowned  
converge out of the past  
to pave this hallowed ground  
If I seem somewhere else  
there's no cause for alarm  
I'm in no danger  
there're no tethers on my arms  
I may be wandering  
some graveyard that I found  
just reading headstones  
in the hills of hallowed ground  
Sometimes it's best, my love  
to leave the past alone  
no point in shining down  
a light on broken bones  
but there are times  
when I just have to turn around  
to watch my contradictions  
breed on hallowed ground

# OPEN WINDOW

When you're with your man  
and the room is quiet  
and your neck is kissed  
by a sudden breeze  
through an open window  
will you understand  
(though I would not linger)  
that I am the wind  
reaching for you then  
through an open window?  
And the statue's eyes  
when they follow you  
will belong to me  
as I belong to you  
Like a tail of smoke  
snaking through your fingers  
I will always be on the periphery  
like an open window  
I will walk your dreams  
a fugitive forever  
and as you sleep  
you'll hear angels weep  
through an open window  
I've always been the one  
with his soul on fire  
and every lover's hook  
made me want to look  
for an open window  
Will you understand  
(though I would not linger)  
that I'll be the wind  
reaching for you then  
through every open window?

# LIGHT ON THE STAIRS

I can still recall  
a northern tree standing tall  
and you in those rooms  
with colored walls  
and when you spoke to me  
I felt so strangely at ease  
and everything was new  
every night  
I wanted you there  
the light on the stairs  
would dim every time  
someone came and passed on by  
and then they dimmed once again  
and I turned to see you  
Circles of friends  
we had so many back then  
and I was so alone and needing you  
somewhere in that time  
we left those people behind  
and all the past was through  
and every night...  
And here I wait for you  
and I guess I wait for myself too  
to feel that new again  
and I hope it's soon  
I'm so alone without you  
and I still remember when  
every night...

