

Entertainment



Mr If

Published by Philistine Press

Artwork by engelvleugels  
© Mr If, 2010



**[www.philistinepress.com](http://www.philistinepress.com)**

## Contents

[Misery](#)  
[I'm like Jesus](#)  
[Good clean fun](#)  
[Fiona](#)  
[I'm not gay](#)  
[To my love \(I think\)](#)  
[Worrying](#)  
[Not on Facebook, not on Twitter](#)  
[I'm no Casanova](#)  
[I am not a bad person](#)  
[Work](#)  
[My poems](#)  
[Someone like me](#)  
[Pleasure](#)  
[A revelation](#)  
[I'm a hypocrite](#)  
[Irony](#)  
[I'm a bad poet](#)  
[Not sure](#)  
[Definitions](#)  
[A tragedy of epic proportions](#)  
[The one](#)  
[Honesty is the new bullshit](#)  
[Me and the rest of society](#)  
[No fucker understands](#)  
[Fuck is not my favourite word](#)  
[Patriarchy in the UK](#)  
[The book of dreams](#)  
[It turns out](#)  
[Nothing on me](#)  
[The joys of not having a phone](#)  
[A note to my readers](#)

## **Misery**

I don't want people to think I'm miserable,  
Just because I'm miserable.  
I don't want people to say, stop complaining,  
There are people starving and living on the streets,  
While you're sitting on your couch,  
Eating your beans on toast  
Like you're the Earl of fucking Wessex.  
I want people to say, this fucker's got a point.  
Let's not discriminate.  
He has as much right to be unhappy  
As anyone else.

## **I'm like Jesus**

I'm like Jesus,  
I love everyone in the world equally,  
And Christ, I wish I didn't.  
It's like an affliction,  
This all-consuming love for other people.  
I think it might kill me.

I'm like Jesus,  
I love my enemies.  
What an idiot.  
I'll never tell anyone this,  
But *anyone*,  
*Anyone* could use me as a doormat,  
Any time.  
I'd still love them at the end of it.

I'm like Jesus,  
I'd love to be consumed with fear and hatred,  
But I haven't got the willpower.  
I see people walking down the street,  
All ages, colours, creeds, abilities,  
I love them all,  
Even the ones I know in my heart of hearts  
Are probably total fuckwits.

I'm like Jesus.  
Crucify me, for fuck's sake.  
Crucify me now.

## Good clean fun

She was a mother of three. Her husband was at work and her kids were downstairs. It was like a scene from *Confessions of a Window Cleaner*.

She instructed her brood, “Stay in the living room while I take this man up to the bathroom and show him my pipes.”

She had one of those *Carry On* laughs – somehow both repressed and liberated. It made me wonder if our culture would ever move away from treating women like objects.

She stood with her back to me, leaning against the wall, her face buried in the towel rail, her skirt hitched up to her waist.

When we were done, she giggled like a naughty schoolchild and said, “I can’t believe I just showed you my bottom.”

I kissed her, clutching onto her hands. She’d made my day, and I’d made hers. That afternoon in the bathroom, we were just two people having a good old-fashioned laugh, knowing in our hearts we had not done anything wrong.

## **Fiona**

I did it doggy style with my friend Tony's pregnant wife, Fiona. I ran my fingers over her spherical belly and felt their kid kick. We had to stop halfway through so she could go to the bathroom. I sat her down and held her hand while she went for a shit. It was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen, like watching a butterfly flap its wings. For a brief moment, I wished I'd been that baby's father, but I knew I wasn't.

## **I'm not gay**

"I'm not gay," he said, which was funny, because I'd just sucked his cock while he watched *Match of The Day*.

The football was his cover story. His wife went out with the girls on a Saturday night while he stayed in watching the football. So we had to have the football on, because he liked the football, and because he knew his wife would ask him about it later, because she loved him and liked to take an interest in his leisure activities.

"I'm not gay, either," I said. "I only have sex with straight men. Funny, isn't it? Two guys, naked in bed, and neither of them are gay."

"Two guys watching the football," he said.

"I don't like football," I said. "I can't fucking stand it."

"Do you fancy a beer?" he said.

"I don't drink," I said.

I rested my head on his chest and held him close while Chelsea scored.

He didn't say, but I could tell he was pleased we didn't have much in common.

## **To my love (I think)**

If I had the money,

If I had the strength,  
If I had the organisational skills,  
And if you actually wanted me to,  
I would take you away from all these people  
Who just want a piece of you,  
And who don't appreciate you for who you really are.

If I had the time,  
If I had all those things people say you need to be committed to another  
person,  
If I could be sure that I loved you,  
And if you actually cared about me,  
I would take you away from everything.  
I would take you away from your husband and your children.  
You would never see them again, and you would be happy.  
You'd find it difficult at first, but eventually you'd realise,  
You don't need them. All you need is me.  
If I was enough for you, that is.

If there weren't all these self help gurus  
Telling you to say goodbye to Mr If,  
Say hello to Mr You (or whatever it is they say),  
If I could somehow come up with a convincing argument against them,  
In favour of embracing uncertainty and disillusionment,  
Instead of pretending it isn't there,  
If I could be sure of who I am, or who you are, or who anyone is,  
If I could sure that it's you I would like to rescue,  
And not one of the millions of other trapped souls,  
Who I may love more than you,  
And who may love me more than you do,  
If I could be sure that I love you at all,  
Or if you love me,  
Then what?  
Then what?  
Then what?

## **Worrying**

Still still worrying,

Worrying about everything,  
People are out to kill me,  
And put me out of my misery.

I don't want to die,  
I want to keep on worrying,  
Batting worst case scenarios back and forth,  
Until the world ends, eventually.

Still still I'm worrying,  
Worrying about everything.  
I'm too busy to worry about the planet,  
Or the economy, or wars,  
Or majority world debt,  
I'm too busy worrying about losing my teeth,  
Or being attacked in the street.  
Too busy worrying about people finding out  
About all the horrible things I've done.  
I worry about people finding out who I really am.

But mainly I'm just worrying,  
Worrying about nothing,  
Nothing at all, except that bad things are going to happen,  
I don't know what they are,  
But if I worry enough,  
If I worry about them enough,  
If I worry and worry and worry about them enough,  
Perhaps I'll be properly prepared to deal with them, one day.

## **Not on Facebook, not on Twitter**

Not on Facebook,

Not on Twitter,  
Haven't got a computer,  
Haven't got a phone,  
That's not what I do for entertainment.

Don't go to pubs,  
Don't go to clubs,  
Don't go to restaurants,  
Don't go to the cinema,  
Or the theatre,  
Or to gigs.  
Perhaps in another life, I would like to do these things,  
But that's not what I do for entertainment.

Not on Facebook,  
Not on Twitter,  
Sometimes I send emails from the library,  
But rarely check for replies.

Don't read books,  
Don't read newspapers,  
Don't read magazines,  
I try to stay away from TV as much as possible.

I listen to music,  
It soothes me.  
Music helps to pass the time,  
It's always around, in the background, like distant voices,  
But that's not what I do for entertainment.

Not on Facebook,  
Not on Twitter,  
I don't download pornography,  
Or watch videos of people being tortured and killed,  
Like some people do.

Don't drink alcohol,  
Don't take drugs,  
Don't binge on burgers,  
Don't go to the gym,  
Don't play or watch sports,  
Don't go to church,  
Don't go to any classes,  
I try to learn as little as possible in life.

Not on Facebook,  
Not on Twitter,

I write poems in a dusty old notebook,  
Like the screaming Luddite that I am,  
And I don't care if no one ever reads them.  
I write them for my own entertainment,  
Not for yours, fucker.

## **I'm no Casanova**

I'm no Casanova.

I know I like to write about  
Sleeping with other people's wives and husbands,  
But there aren't that many of them,  
And anyway, accumulating notches on a bedpost  
Isn't the point.

I'm no Casanova.  
I'm five foot four.  
I have an average-sized cock,  
And no real stamina.  
I feel awkward naked.  
I'm too skinny, and have misshapen nipples.  
They're like a pair of melted starfish  
On a deserted beach.

I suspect that I've chosen  
To have sex with other people's wives and husbands  
Because they find it thrilling doing something dangerous.  
If there was no cheating involved,  
No rules to break, no forbidden lust,  
There would just be me,  
And that wouldn't be enough.

I'm no Casanova.  
I'm not horny enough.  
Half the time I'm not in the mood.  
I'd prefer to sit on my own in bed with the curtain drawn,  
With my *Looney Tunes* box set,  
Wishing I was a child again.

## **I am not a bad person**

I have fantasised about being the last man alive, and having every single woman in the world waiting patiently outside my door. I'll come out each morning, and pick five or six of the best-looking ones to impregnate, in a variety of inventive positions. In the evenings I'll go out and pick the ones I think look like nice people, and I'll take them inside just for food and conversation.

I have fantasised about gathering together all the people with hateful views; people who hate other people for no reason; people who kill, torture and rape; people who want to bring back the death penalty. I'll line them all up against the wall and machine-gun the fuckers.

These are just idle thoughts, created for my own entertainment. I refuse to believe that I am a bad person, and I make no apology.

## Work

I have problems with work,

Like some people have problems with drinking,  
Like some people have problems with sexual partners,  
Like some people have problems with depression.  
I've quit every job I've ever had,  
And I'm not sorry.

I have problems with work because I'm lazy.  
I'm hated. I am the enemy.  
I just don't see the point of working.  
It never seems like anything is being achieved.  
We're just shuffling money from one account to another,  
Like mental patients weaving baskets from the ones we've just unravelled.

If I could be bothered,  
I might campaign to get laziness classified as a disability,  
If only to piss off the *Daily Express* readership.  
But it's not laziness, really,  
It's something else.  
I don't know what it is.

You probably think this is a joke,  
But I went to university.  
I studied poetry and history,  
And I loved it.  
I really applied myself.  
It felt like I was doing something worthwhile,  
Working towards a future of some kind.  
It was nothing like working in a job,  
Where there's no end to it,  
You just carry on working for its own sake,  
Until you die, retire or quit.

People say I should train to do something fulfilling,  
Something that makes a difference to people's lives,  
But I don't want to.  
I'd mess it up.  
I'm not reliable or sensible enough.  
I'm smart – too smart, maybe.  
I couldn't be a teacher.  
I wouldn't be able to resist the temptation to inform my students  
At every available opportunity,  
Education never got me anywhere,  
Except a series of dead end jobs,  
And a series of dead end dole queues.

## **My poems**

I've tried to write sonnets.  
I'm no stranger to iambic pentameter,  
But it takes too long to cram all those syllables in,  
And the end results aren't very good.  
My best poems are the ones I make up on the spot,  
Like this one.  
This took me roughly the same amount of time to write  
As it's taking you to read.  
You might think it's flimsy, and a load of bollocks,  
But it's the best I can do,  
And I think it's quite good,  
So fuck you.

## **Someone like me**

I'm not the object of anyone's affection,  
I'm not the subject of anyone's fantasies.  
You can fantasise all you like,  
You'll always end up with someone like me.

I'm not the object of anyone's desires,  
Or the man of anyone's dreams,  
Not even my own.  
I fantasise about being someone else,  
With a superior body,  
A superior mind,  
A superior moral code,  
Or at least the necessary charm it takes  
To create the impression of these qualities,  
So I can fuck whoever I like,  
Instead of taking advantage of people  
When they are most vulnerable.

## Pleasure

Most of my friends don't live for pleasure,  
Which makes them sound like saints, somehow.  
They work and work, and rip their hair out.  
Why do they do it?  
What's in it for them?  
What's in it for other people?

My friends don't live for pleasure,  
They live for spending money.  
For houses, cars, clothes, TVs.  
They work for twenty-five days holiday a year.  
They work so they can fly off to the Seychelles  
For one week out of fifty two,  
And stress the rest of the time.

Presumably,  
They would shudder at the thought of living for the moment,  
Or for enjoying themselves.  
Somehow such a lifestyle would be beneath them,  
Like that's the sort of thing children do.

They would never admit this,  
But they are no better than me,  
Somewhere inside, they must know,  
They are no less selfish than I am.  
The crucial difference  
Is that they are selfish in an acceptable way.

I will never say any of these things to their faces,  
Because I am two faced, and because I like them,  
And don't want to hurt them, because they are my friends.  
I like writing poems under this ridiculous pseudonym, "Mr If"  
Because I like the thought that my friends will read this one day,  
Having no idea who wrote this,  
And might see my point,  
And think, "Hey, this Mr If seems like a real insightful guy.  
I would like to be friends with someone like that.  
Perhaps I could learn something from him."

If you are one of my friends,  
And you are reading this,  
I know you don't know who I am,  
But I want you to know,  
I have nothing to teach you.  
I like you, but I also like writing bitchy poems about you,  
And I'm probably having sex with your partner,  
While you are too busy working,  
And ripping your hair out,

And spending money  
To notice.

## **A revelation**

I know what women want.  
They don't want to fuck men with rippling muscles,  
Athletic bodies, six packs and massive cocks.  
They just think they do.

I know what men want.  
They don't want to fuck skinny girls  
With fake tits and airbrushed arses.  
They've just been suckered  
By *Loaded*, *FHM* and fucking *Nuts*.

I fucked my friend Martin's girlfriend, Annabelle,  
While he was at the football.  
She had tan lines round her waist,  
And little red dimples under her breasts where the bra had dug in.  
She had a spot on her arse,  
A big red, angry volcano, with a tiny white cap,  
Just waiting to be squeezed.  
She was a real woman.

I bet Martin never appreciates these details.  
I bet Martin will be the father of her children.  
I know what Annabelle wants,  
And I know what Martin wants.  
But I cannot help either of them,  
I can only help myself.

You see, I have these revelations,  
But I'm just another freeloader,  
And I know that I am the shallowest one of all.

## **I'm a hypocrite**

If I said I'm a hypocrite,  
A cunt and a hypocrite,  
Would you think better or worse of me?  
Would you appreciate my honesty?

Sometimes I try to justify the things I do,  
But I can't, really.  
I use other people's partners  
Because it's fun screwing people over.  
I'm not giving people what they want,  
I'm not giving them anything their partners couldn't give them ten times  
better.  
I'm not trying to promote free love, or any such platitude.  
I'm just a hypocrite,  
A cunt and a hypocrite.  
Does that make things better, I wonder?

I could say, this is what people do. They sneak around,  
They break the rules, not because they think the rules shouldn't be there,  
But because they *are* there.  
They tell the most outrageous lies, and get a kick out of telling them.  
It gives them a rare opportunity to be genuinely creative.

Hearts get broken because of all this.  
Lives are destroyed.  
Kids are administered scars that may never fully heal.

And I don't give a fuck.  
Now that I've admitted that,  
Will it make me a better person?  
Even though I'm not sorry, I'm not sorry at all,  
Perhaps this acknowledgement that I've done something wrong,  
That I've done lots of things wrong,  
Makes some small difference.  
Or does it just make things worse?  
I am here on this earth to spread love, not hatred.  
I do not hate any man woman or child.

I'm a hypocrite,  
A cunt and a hypocrite.  
But I still want people to like me  
For "who I am".

## **Irony**

Where exactly does Catholic guilt come from? They don't teach it in the schools or churches. No one ever says, "You will grow up to feel guilty, not about things you do wrong, but about things you do right. Basically everything." No one says that, but it's still there, this feeling of not being good enough for God, long after you've stopped believing in His existence. (You even continue to spell "His" with a capital H.)

Think about it. This is a faith that allows you to commit any kind of crime, indulge in any variety of depravity, and then repent, and all will be forgiven. It's funny how Catholics never forgive themselves for anything.

## **I'm a bad poet**

OK, I'll admit,  
I'm a bad poet.  
But there are worse things I could be.  
I could be a terrorist, or a racist, or a Tory,  
Or just a complete dickhead.  
But no, I'm just a bad poet.  
Get over it. I have.

If I have any literary ambition,  
It's to get even worse.  
I would like people to say,  
"Mr If has turned bad poetry into an art form.  
Just imagine what his next collection will be like.  
Will it be even worse than this one?"

I would like poetry fans to have drunken arguments  
Over who is the worst poet, Purple Ronnie or me.  
I will win, hands down, because I'm not doing this for ironic effect.  
I really am this shit.

## **Not sure**

She does things with me that she will not do with her partner, or even with her other lovers. She lets me stick my tongue up her asshole and come all over her face. She'll happily let out a massive fart when I cuddle her under the sheets.

"Do you do that in front of him?" I'll ask.

"No," she'll tell me. "I'm different when I'm with you. I feel like I can be myself."

When she cuddles him, she tells him that she loves him, and that he's the best fuck she's ever had.

I'm not sure who's the winner here.

## Definitions

I'm her lover  
But I don't love her.  
She's my lover,  
But she doesn't love me.  
She loves that other guy,  
The one she sleeps with at night,  
And watches *Coronation Street* with,  
And eats beans on toast in her pyjamas with,  
That bloke, who she calls her boyfriend,  
But is neither a friend nor a boy.

We've got these definitions  
All wrong.

## **A tragedy of epic proportions**

You don't love me for who I am, she says.  
You don't love me for what I look like either.  
You just love me because I love you.  
It's a straight swap. The ultimate barter.  
What's more, she says,  
I don't love you for what you look like.  
And I don't love you for who you are.  
I just love you because you love me.

I agree.  
It's a real chicken and egg scenario.

## **The one**

I love her,  
Because she is the same as me,  
And that's why she'll never be mine.  
She's too interested in other people  
To really be interested in me.

I love him,  
Because he is the same as me,  
And that's why he will never be mine,  
Because he's still too interested in women.

We all know there isn't one person for everyone.  
It's a ridiculous concept,  
But somehow we still cling to it for dear life.  
Don't think I'm not immune from this deadly delusion.  
The more people I meet,  
The more people I sleep with,  
The more I wish I could just be with one person,  
Just one person.  
Is that too much to ask?



## **Honesty is the new bullshit**

Don't listen to these gentlemen who say you've got beautiful eyes. You *have* got beautiful eyes, but that's still an aesthetic statement. These men are just as shallow as the dribbling meathead sitting staring at your tits on the bus, who makes you feel like a whore for wearing that particular dress on that particular day.

Pay no attention to these polite types who'll only give you compliments. It's a socially acceptable form of lying. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with you. You are a beautiful person, as far as I can see. I will make my intentions perfectly clear. I'd like to crawl into your pants, and stay there for a while. It seems like a nice place.

I'm not saying I'm any better than the gentlemen. I'm just a little bit more honest – although, it's probably best if I warn you not to believe a single word I say.

## **Me and the rest of society**

Sitting on the bus to work in silence. It's the kind of silence that follows a particularly insulting remark directed at a loved one. There are things we would all like to say, but we refuse to. It isn't worth it. I want to slam my hand against the mud-flecked window, and shout and scream that none of us is doing anything worthwhile, that none of us ever does anything worthwhile. I would like to suggest that instead of going to work today, we all get together and try to make the world a better place, just for one day. But I don't say any of these things, because I am a coward, and because I don't really mean any of it. I'll give it till the end of the week, then I'll quit. You can't say I haven't given work a chance.

## **No fucker understands**

What the fuck is poetry anyway?  
Entertainment for the educated,  
Desperately trying to appear superior  
By understanding shit other fuckers don't.  
I wonder how many acclaimed collections are out there  
That no fucker understands,  
Not even the fucker  
What wrote them.

## **Fuck is not my favourite word**

You say, “Fuck is your favourite word” – accusingly, like I’m a bad person – ironically, because you just said “fuck” yourself.

Fuck is not my favourite word. It’s too commonplace. It has too many uses on a day-to-day basis to ever be considered special. It’s just there, like people are just there.

My favourite word is haberdashery. I’m not really interested in haberdasheries. I’m interested in fucking, but not haberdasheries. I just like the way the word sounds – the music of it, the poetry of it. I’ve been trying to squeeze it into a piece of writing for ages. I hope this isn’t a wasted opportunity.

## **Patriarchy in the UK**

As soon as we're over with this notion of ownership,  
Men owning women, women owning men,  
People who have sex with other people whilst they're owned by someone else  
Getting labelled as the worst kind of thief,  
Maybe then we can get a grip on this hot jacket spud we call love.

Wealthy white folks like to sneer at “inferior” cultures,  
With their patriarchies, polygamies, women-into-slaveries,  
But they still want men to own women, and women to own men,  
Like people are flatscreens, or trouser presses.

I told her all this  
While we climbed into our clothes,  
And before hubby came home, she escorted me out the door,  
For what I expected to be the final time.

## **The book of dreams**

I was sitting in the park, writing my poems, when a voice beside me whispered, “What are you writing?”

I turned to see a little old man sitting next to me, with a little old beard. We were like Miss Muffet and the spider.

“Poems,” I said.

The little old man smiled, like he understood. “Poetry,” he said, “is like a dream to me. There is something about great poetry that connects with the subconscious, reaching out to something deep within us. Don’t you agree?”

I said, “To me, poetry is like vomit. It’s not a pleasant business, but it’s better out than in. And when it comes out, even though it’s ugly and it stinks, it makes me feel a little bit better.”

“So, you agree with me?” said the man. “Poetry is something that comes from deep inside.”

“You’re right,” I said.

“Are you working on a collection?” he said.

I said, “Yes. I’m thinking of calling it *The Book of Vomit*, but maybe I’ll call it *The Book of Dreams*.”

The man disappeared, and I woke up.

## **It turns out**

It turns out there's nothing you can do when things go wrong.  
I thought there was such a thing as hope,  
But I have been proven consistently wrong.  
I used to think there were achievable solutions to life's little problems,  
But it turns out whatever you do to fix things,  
Just fucks it all up a million times more.  
It's a real comfort to know I don't need to try anymore,  
Or worry about anything ever again.

## **Nothing on me**

You've got nothing on me,  
The cops have got nothing on me,  
My friends have got nothing on me,  
My parents have got nothing on me,  
The government have got nothing on me,  
Even I've got nothing on me.  
None of the people listed above know who I am,  
And I suspect none of them know who anyone is,  
But I don't really care about that last part,  
Because I only really care about myself,  
Whoever I am.

## **The joys of not having a phone**

I went over to my friend Harvey's house at eight o'clock in the morning with a pair of cardboard coffee cups I'd bought from town.

"What are you doing here?" he said.

"I was in the area," I said. "Just thought I'd pop round. I bought you a coffee."

"What did you do that for?" he said. "We've got a kettle right here."

"This is a cinnamon latte," I said. "You can't make a proper cinnamon latte at home."

"I don't like cinnamon," he said.

I stood like an injured kitten on the doorstep.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I'm really sorry. I appreciate the gesture. You'd better come in."

I stepped into Harvey's spotless, immaculate house. I removed my shoes straight away before I contaminated anything.

Harvey's wife, Jacqueline, was sitting at the breakfast table.

He introduced me to her, and offered me a seat.

"I have to go to work now," he said. "You really should call ahead next time.

People don't just turn up out of the blue anymore. They drop you a line or a text."

"I haven't got a phone," I said.

"Oh yeah," said Harvey, "I forgot."

Harvey left. I sat with Jacqueline. We drank our cinnamon lattes.

"So, what do you do?" Jacqueline asked.

"I don't do anything," I said. "What about you?"

"I don't do anything either," she said. "That's to say, I'm a housewife. Isn't that funny? I bet you thought such things didn't exist anymore."

"No," I said. "I've met a good few housewives. Do you like it?"

"It's OK," she said.

“People probably think you’re lazy and a freeloader,” I said. “That’s what they say about me.”

“So we’ve both got nothing to do for the rest of the day,” she said.

“What about the housework?” I said.

She said, “We have a cleaner.”

“Perfect,” I said. “These would be ideal circumstances for an extramarital affair, wouldn’t you say?”

We laughed and laughed.

Later we had sex on their Persian rug, in their Jacuzzi, and in their four-poster bed. She tasted faintly of cinnamon.

She said goodbye to me at the door, like I was her husband leaving for work, not caring what the neighbours thought.

“Call me,” she whispered.

“I can’t call you,” I said. “I haven’t got a phone.”

“That’s right,” she said. “Sorry. I forgot.”

## **A note to my readers**

You may think you know something about me because you've read these poems. I'd just like to say, you don't know anything about me. You'll never know my name, or what I look like. You know nothing about what I'm like in real life. You can think whatever you want. I would like to say I don't give a fuck what anyone thinks, but that's not true. I want people to read these words over and over until they are dizzy, until they are sick.

I'd like to see these poems get studied in universities, with lecturers asking questions like, Who is this Mr If, really? Is he a recluse, or is he the alter ego of a more well-known poet? Andrew Motion, perhaps, or Michael Rosen.

It's so frustrating, they will say. We don't even know the colour of this man's skin, his nation of birth, or what his father did for a living. How can we place these poems within a cultural or socio-economic context?

What do these poems really mean? Of course it's obvious what they mean, but what do they *really* mean? Are they actually poems at all, or just words? Does any of this really matter?