
**Social Constructs Creatively Deconstructed:
A Collection of Six Poems**

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Cost of Living

My currency
Is energy
Charged by the second

My peace of mind
A piece not mine
Claimed by every fear

My balance is overdrawn
Ideals of saving-up forgone
Checks constantly voided

My daily wage lump sum
Of living income
Comes in with no proper credit

Pretty|Ugly (The Beast of Beauty)

We've been taught to value patterns over people
The carefully fabricated versus the naturally featured
 Smoothed out, glossed over, dolled up
Youthful faces prematurely aged and grayed
By the heavy expectations applied
Around eyes, tweezed brows, hollowed cheeks
Died hair, plumped lips, turned up noses
Senses told to stop the function of design
Composed behind plastered smiles reflected in
Mirrors entreating to have a seamless surface
Of contoured features concealing a raging inner turmoil

The fountain of youth proves a siren's song
Luring us to a superficial sound
Drowning us in deep dissonance
 Evened out, painted over, propped up
Exclusive is just a term to sell more magazines
Not caring about the individual but the
Masses
Size is subject to scrutiny where anyone can weigh in
But the one on the scale

Silence is fool's gold, glittering in hollow glory
Distracting from the internal distinction
Screaming for attention
But fearing it as well
Wondering what will be the tipping point
Of authentic acceptance
If everything is stripped away
And all that remains is plain as day
Clearly seen
Will the blunt edges be received with the truest intentions?

Can vulnerability pull down walls of resistance
Built from every stone cast in fear
From an endless war on genuine integrity
Because a whole and undivided force can't be reckoned with
And control can't be cast out from the power hungry
Indulging on every defenseless innocent
A famine of fresh focus
Perfection is the only permissible presentation

School of Love

Social Studies said we were the perfect match
Then things changed and we found ourselves detached

Math has never been my strong suit
Why can't we make the figures compute?

They say relationships are a Science
Though they never detail the alliance

Our Chemistry devolved in volatility
Pressure, vaporizing equilibrium to futility

We started to Artfully combine palettes
But somewhere along the lines, we no longer synced talents

English was our main communication
Until we lost our common foundation

A Physical Education filled in the gaps
Preventing us from realizing our lapse

We sought solace in Literature's plots
Avoiding all the second thoughts

Drama consumed our after hours
Where barbs were thrown instead of flowers

The pathways we traveled drifted away
Geography now dictates our choices each day

History is what the *Texts* book us as
Those daily "hi"s, "goodbye"s, now stuck in the past

So here I'm left, Creatively Writing out my soul
An Essay on the effect of the emotional toll

Invested

Taking stock
Of what I value
Energy spent
As time went

Bye
The arrow
Up and down
Like a rollercoaster
Track
Cycling round and round
There is nothing new
Under the sun
But still it's how we
Keep
Count of our days
Averaging the data
Tallying the points
Finding purpose
And meaning in the numbers
Suggestions
Of how the world really works
How we echo each other
Looking to each other for
Directions
Reliving the past
Forgetting the present
The future trapped in
Projections
Spending moments
In hopes of a larger payout
Playing the market
In turn for the chance to
Profit
Audit our intentions
Our perceptions
My perspective
What's worth it
Am I doing this
Right
Risky business
More manageable
When the odds
Are bet on
Myself

The Great Deception

One imagines at some point
The idea of putting a price
On everything would make it
All fair
And lower the odds
Of deals going sideways
Making a marker of honesty
To compare
That everyone had equal
Opportunity to access
Labor and goods
To share
Instead humans Capitalized on value
Now being externally monetary
Instead of intrinsically held
And yet
What was lost was the care for each other
In community and consideration
Only owing kindness & goodwill
No debt
Being held over each other through
Greedy lusts of power
And obsession with hoarding
The net
Sum of all things desirable
Manufacturing scarcity of resources
Just to be in ultimate control
Bah Humbug
To the scrooges who haven't
Met the ghosts of those
Whose lives they've impacted for worse
So smug
In not having a bone of generosity
To give, live and let live freely
Instead willfully indenturing and enslaving
An amount
So largely oppressed and mistreated
By this perpetual patriarchy
Not a nurturing nature to be saved but held
To account

Sociological importance for chosen pieces:

I have been writing poetry and prose for over 20 years. Growing up, I was always on the outside looking in - having been homeschooled through all of grade school - which I have discovered works very well for the sociological imagination. As I came into adulthood and started branching out in the world, my writing reflected those changes and growth through more serious themes full of questioning. Now that I have been studying sociology for several years, I see so many sociological observations and imagination interwoven throughout my pieces. These selected pieces span the last decade.

Cost of Living explores working a minimum wage job under the burden of capitalism, while experiencing alienation from oneself due to division of labor.

The Masquerade of the Perfection Parade woke me up from a dead sleep, begging to be written. This piece investigates why humans conform to the same societal norms when they obscure individual authenticity. *Masquerade* further investigates imposter syndrome, fear of being found out to not measure up through never ending performance, while people are often hiding behind masks to fit cultural expectations.

Pretty|Ugly (The Beast of Beauty) covers a cross section of cultural norms and capitalistic messaging. Marketing and social media present idealized images of the perfect, happy life to sell more products while typically leaving the buyer feeling empty and wanting more.

School of Love studies romantic interpersonal relationships within the framing of school subjects or academic fields as an attempt at a whimsical yet poignant look at how im/maturity and societal expectations impact intimate relationships.

The Great Deception and *Invested* were both written in 2020, the former around the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown and the latter at the end of that tumultuous year. *Invested* was inspired by the thought "What if I was investing in MYSELF?"; another exploration of alienation and trying to reconnect with one's own authenticity. *Deception* exposes a capitalistic mentality that over-values money instead of camaraderie.