

**Who Put the F in Ineffable?  
Doug Gwyn, November 2023**

Who put the F in ineffable?  
Who put the X in inexpressible?  
And another X in inexplicable?  
Why, shut my mouth, it's you!  
Who awaits at the end of words?  
Who sings through a mockingbird?  
And tells me things I never heard?  
Why, shut my mouth, it's you!  
Before I was born in time  
You put your finger to my lips  
To ensure no secret ever slips  
From your eternal sublime

*Bridge:*

And that dent just below my nose  
Almost reminds me what nobody knows  
And just what nobody knows  
Is right under everybody's nose

Who was before the beginning?  
Who set the galaxies spinning?  
And always knew I'd be sinning?  
Well, I do believe it was you!  
Who will be after the ending?  
Who will still be transcending?  
Who will still be befriending?  
Good Lord, I hope it's you!  
Before I was born in time  
You put your finger to my lips  
To ensure no secret ever slips  
From your eternal sublime

**The Dude**  
**(My Childhood Nickname)**  
**Doug Gwyn, October 2017**

Legend has it, and so it's told, that he was only six years old  
When they first called him, they called him the Dude  
His parents had named him Doug, but his older brother, Ace  
Told him to his face, man, you're the Dude

The Dude, the Dude, they called him the Dude  
Oh, he was the Dude

Was he a mystic or a space cadet, the way he looked right through that TV set?  
Only one thing's for sure, he was the Dude  
He made innocence a personal style, he faced the world with a quizzical smile  
Cause the one thing he knew, he was the Dude

The Dude, the Dude, they called him the Dude  
Oh, he was the Dude

The experts all conclude, there's a boyhood beatitude  
Sometimes called "the Dude"

He had mysterious ways with girls, he drew them into his world  
They could see someone needed to help the Dude  
More than any emotion or mood, it was a chimp-like attitude  
That somehow seemed to exude from the Dude

The Dude, the Dude, they called him the Dude  
Oh, he was the Dude

**Existential Shoes**  
**Doug Gwyn, September 2011**

these existential shoes are way too tight  
with every step I take, reality bites  
my soul is cinched, my toes are pinched  
'cause these existential shoes are way too tight  
Oh Lord – Hey Lord!

they say Dr. Scholl is the physician of the sole  
but he's yet to make a shoe that can make me whole  
and no amount of gel can ease the living hell  
when your existential shoes are way too tight  
Oh Lord – Hey Lord!

These existential shoes are way too tight  
Oh Lord, can't you see my plight?  
This 'aint no metaphor, my soul is tired and sore  
'cause these existential shoes are way too tight

yeah, these existential shoes are way too tight  
it's the quintessential blues of the soul's dark night  
am I some kind of mystic, or has God turned sadistic?  
'cause these existential shoes are way too tight  
Oh Lord – Hey Lord!

these existential shoes are way too tight  
I'm afraid to take 'em off, but then I just might  
I'm in existential dread, like Mister Kierkegaard said  
'cause these existential shoes are way too tight  
Oh Lord – Hey Lord!

These existential shoes are too tight  
Oh Lord, can't you see my plight?  
Where the rubber meets the road, I'm squirming like a toad  
'cause these existential shoes are way too tight  
I'm on the edge of despair – Lord, could I try another pair?

## **Mall Story** **Doug Gwyn, 1990**

I saw her at the mall just the other day  
so innocent and sweet – had she lost her way?  
but as I followed her around an hour or two  
I discovered a heart that beats so true  
at the department store she bought some French perfume  
with one splash she enchanted the whole room  
then she bought a thing or two in lingerie  
it was then I felt my heart slip away  
as she bought these things that dreams are made of  
I asked my lonely heart, could this be love?  
no, you can't buy love, but if you love to buy  
fall in love with the one who buys the things you love  
credit cards, not distant stars, tell the secrets of our hearts  
in converging credit lines of love

at the candy shop she bought some chocolate --  
the very brand my mother always bought  
at the shoe store she almost let me down  
but she chose those pink pumps instead of brown  
at the jewelry store I finally made my move  
I caught her eye but first she was aloof  
then she fumbled with her purse and something dropped  
and to her waiting feet I nimbly hopped  
as I lifted up that Gold-Card Visa (and peeked)  
I asked, could this be yours...Lisa?  
no, you can't buy love, but if you love to buy  
fall in love with the one who buys the things you love  
and this I guarantee, that each commodity will be touched with the magic of love

## That of Odd in Every One Doug Gwyn, April 2014

There's something odd about every one  
It goes with being God's daughter or son  
It's there in saints, outliers and outlaws  
It's in what's perfect and in what's broken  
Inarticulate or well spoken  
It's where your genius meets your tragic flaws  
You may suffer from being odd  
But it's your one and only way to God  
There's that of odd in every one I meet

Is it a curse or is it salvation?  
Or just what comes with individuation?  
That of odd in every man and woman too  
Oddliness and godliness can intertwine  
'cause odd, like God, means one of a kind  
It's a gift to all and not just a few  
To be at odds with custom and fashion  
Is one good way to learn compassion  
You'll find that of odd in every one you meet

Yeah, there's that of odd in every one  
So remember, it takes one to know one  
There's more than seven billion ways to be weird  
You may think that you can judge  
Well, throw away that mental crutch  
The truth is so much stranger than you feared  
Jesus was a real oddity  
And he promised, if you just follow me  
You'll find that of odd in every one you meet

## Hair Envy Doug Gwyn, August 1997

friend I hope you will not care  
if my eye begins to stare  
at your head and shoulders every now and then  
it's not that I mind being bald  
so's Sean Connery, after all  
but a head of hair makes me remember when...  
hair envy – is it all in my head?  
hair envy – no, it on yours instead  
oh why do I love your hair?  
because it's there

yeah, brunettes and carrot-tops  
buzz cuts and dreadlocks  
all have a place in my heart  
golden streaks touched by the sun  
ponytails and tight little buns  
I hold them all in highest regard  
hair envy – is it so diabolical,  
hair envy – that I cherish your follicles?  
oh why do I love your hair?  
because it's there

I believe that baldness is a very special grace  
it's not that I am losing hair so much as gaining face

oh, what's it like to have no hair?  
just run your fingers through the air  
and find out what it's like to be free  
no, there's too much hair gone down the drain  
to dream of paradise Rogained  
rootlessness has got the best of me  
hair envy – you've got hair and so be it  
hair envy – better there where I can see it  
oh why do I love your hair?  
because it's there  
it's there, it's still there

**Am I Tragic Yet?**  
**Doug Gwyn, June 2002**

I go this way and that way, but they all lead deeper into loss  
and every calculation underestimates the cost  
and what looks at first like destiny turns out at last to be fate  
and the moral of the story comes too late  
tell me, am I tragic yet?  
or do I still have more to regret?  
will I grow wise, or just learn to forget?  
tell me, Lord, am I tragic yet?

tell me, when does simple confidence become the deadly sin of pride?  
and why does heaven's providence make me want to run and hide?  
and as I plow through these long, strange years of middle age  
is there enough to say about it to fill a single page?  
tell me am I tragic yet?  
or do I still have more to regret?  
will I grow wise, or just learn to forget?  
tell me, Lord, am I tragic yet?

no, it's not that I'm sensitive, it's not that I can't take a poke  
it's just that after all these years, I still don't get the joke  
meanwhile, heaven and hell are firing all these flaming darts  
in a contest to see who can light up this old fart  
tell me, am I tragic yet?  
or what would it take to make this fool wise?  
is all this ruin only grace in disguise?  
tell me, Lord, am I tragic yet?  
please tell me, Lord, am I tragic yet?

**Gravity**  
**Doug Gwyn, May 2012**

*(Refrain)*

Gravity keeps dragging me down  
Every year closer to the ground  
A bit more bent, a bit more bound  
Gravity's the pull of the grave

There was a time I had spring in my step  
Gravity had very little effect  
On my body, my mind, or my affect  
I was light as a breeze in May  
Now every year and every loss  
Adds a little more to my gravitas  
Which hangs from me like Spanish moss  
Gray as a November day

*(Refrain)*

*(Bridge)*

Jesus hung from a Roman cross  
And revealed to us the awful cost  
Of the depravity, the tragedy –  
Or maybe just the gravity – of our Fall

Well, my hair fell out, I got no wealth  
I'm holding on to what's left of health  
But I got more than ever of myself  
And I'm as heavy as plutonium  
But when I give myself away  
I'm a little lighter every day  
A bit more peace, a bit more play  
From here to kingdom come  
So don't assume this song is sad  
Gravity 'aint all that bad  
Some days it even makes me glad  
I'm not aiming for the Smithsonian

*(Refrain)*

'Cause I'm gonna lay my burden down  
The day I hear that trumpet sound  
And when I'm lost, then I'll be found  
On the other side of the grave

**Baby, I'm Retired!**  
**Doug Gwyn, January 2019**

I've been hired and I've been fired  
and jumped through every hoop required  
'til my sell-by date expired  
and now my very soul is tired  
so I'm putting on that cardigan sweater  
and I'm already feeling better  
Baby, I'm retired!

the cybernetic Rapture has left me behind  
I don't want a phone to replace my mind  
or to live my life through a little screen  
not after all the worlds I've seen  
I don't need another app  
to tell me it's time for my nap  
Baby, I'm retired!

*Bridge:*

I started out to make the world  
maybe a little bit better  
now before long I'm gonna be  
just another old bed-wetter – is this really happening to me?

I've got the memory banks of an elephant  
but it's ninety-nine percent irrelevant  
to all the big money corruptions  
and technological disruptions  
I guess it's time to take my rest  
I wish you all the very best  
Baby, I'm retired!

## **Growing Old Absurd Doug Gwyn, August 2023**

I'm sitting at home reading the latest from the Double-ARP  
With tips for my health and sniffing out those scams  
And a cover story on a movie star who's just gone old  
He sounds so well-adjusted – way more than I am  
Outside my window, the world goes raging on  
Helter-skelter, I believe, is the word  
While I sit in a state of wonder – wondering how  
It came to be I'm growing old absurd  
I'm a senile delinquent, oh, Baby, can't you see?  
Come on over and be absurd with me

No, it's not like I'm losing my marbles – they're all here somewhere  
But they don't seem to apply to these times  
So to be nihilistic seems only realistic  
I've stopped making sense but at least I rhyme  
I'm an uncle without a cause, aw Honey, can't you see?  
Come on over, and be absurd with me

We'll laugh, we'll cry, and never even wonder why  
Come on Sister, and be absurd with me  
We'll run wild in the streets and terrorize the young  
Come on, Brother, and be absurd with me

## **Time Is Like Wine** **Doug Gwyn, September 2005**

time is like wine, time is like wine, time is like wine, in a way  
you start taking sips slowly over the lips and a little goes a long, long way  
'cause when you're young, under the sun, eternity kisses each day  
and the wine is sweet, like the girl you meet, and the games the two of you play  
time is like wine, time is like wine, time is like wine, in a way  
and the more you drink, the more you think, tomorrow is another day

each year goes past faster than last, you take time in bigger swallows  
it's less about fun than getting things done, time passes and youth follows  
the kids are growing, your age is showing, you wonder where it all goes  
and in the gathering haze of so many days, your mind begins to wallow  
time is like wine, time is like wine, time is like wine, in a way  
"yeah, that was 'bout five – no, twenty-five! – years ago now," you say

life's final stage is a golden age, if you're still hanging around  
the wine of time is still very fine, and you're really gulping it down  
and now you're sloshed, completely awash, in all the time you've found  
'til some days you recall almost nothing at all

and sorrows are nearly all drowned

time is like wine, time is like wine, time is like wine, in a way  
and for every ill, there's another pill, to take each and every day

when the new morning dawns, the great beyond is where you will discover  
if your eternity is destined to be clear and fresh and sober  
or if your eternal is more infernal, to be forever hung-over  
the question will hinge on whether time's binge made you a better lover  
time is like wine, time is like wine, time is like wine, in a way  
forever is there in the time that you spare to drink of me today

**Down the Hall**  
**Doug Gwyn, December 2021**

Well, I'm taking a little stroll  
Down the long hall of recall  
Not a hall of fame, shame, blame  
Or anything else that small  
No, I'm looking at people and places  
framed by memory on the walls  
I grieve, but I'm still grateful  
As I walk on down the hall

I see the faces of friends and neighbors  
allies and nemeses  
All with names and dates  
and the Lord in parentheses  
I look each one in the eye  
I gotta thank or forgive them all  
So I give each one a wink and a nod  
as I walk on down the hall

Now I'm passing a trophy case  
just like my old high school  
There's one for Epitome of Doug  
there's another for Perfect Fool  
But the only one that really matters  
Is one that says He Answered the Call  
And I hear it calling me further  
as I walk on down the hall

Now the echoes of dear voices  
and the replay of favorite tunes  
are wrapped in velvet silence  
Mysterious as runes  
And as I look a little further on  
no floor, no ceiling, no walls  
Lord knows, I can't stop now  
as I walk on down the hall

**Lost at Last**  
**Doug Gwyn, September-October 2023**

Ventured all, paid the cost  
Nothing gained, all is lost  
Looking back, I wonder how  
All those days add up to now  
And now I'm lost, lost at last  
No more future, almost passed  
Course completed, die is cast  
Lost at last

Ashes to ashes, earth to earth  
Birth to death, death to birth  
Cycle round and round again  
Rising leaf, falling grain  
And now I'm lost, lost at last  
No more future, almost passed  
The Word endures, all flesh is grass . . .  
Lost at last

Some regrets, but mainly thanks  
Looking back from Jordan's banks  
Count me lost, or count me found  
All are yours on common ground  
And now I'm lost, lost at last  
Lay me down common ground  
All around common ground  
Lost at last  
Lost at last in you