

Parallax Vision

Doug Gwyn, March 2026

Parallax vision, the difference in points of view
Parallax vision, the distance from me to you
The more your point of view is set
What you see is what you get

Parallax vision, subject and object together
Parallax vision, mood together with weather
Where the picture that I see
Includes a picture of me
In parallax vision

Bridge: Parallax vision, like a sudden glimpse of me
There on the screen of a closed-circuit TV
Parallax vision

Parallax vision, the space between is a void
Parallax vision, a space we try to avoid
But negation is not the end
It's where we finally transcend

Parallax vision, seeing beyond yourself
Parallax vision good for your mental health
To see as God sees you
Brings the common into view
In parallax vision

Mirror-Image
Doug Gwyn, March 2025

Narcissus blows kisses to his image in the pool
While his Missus echoes every word he says
He gives the business to everything they teach in business school
And gives the lie to “crime doesn’t pay”
He’s a stone-cold blonde bombshell
With a testosterone tan
Jeepers creepers, behold the man!

He mirrors the interior of acquisitive hearts
And they mirror back his ulterior motives
And in the dark, behind the mirror, voices whisper and guide
Kleptocrats, oligarchs, and others besides
He’s a stone-cold blonde bombshell
With a testosterone tan
Jeepers creepers, behold the man!

But where the blind can see beyond the mirror-image
And where the deaf can hear what’s never said
And where the poor are camping out in the DC city parks
The mirror begins to turn a little clearer
They see a stone-cold blonde bombshell
With a testosterone tan
They say, jeepers creepers, behold the man!

Calling Missus Narcissus
Calling Missus Narcissus
Throw that man out of your bed

**These United States of Grace
Doug Gwyn, April 2017**

There are people everywhere
Who give themselves to loving care
They come from every faith and place and race
There are those of us who dare
Pledge allegiance free and fair
To these United States of Grace

We owe nothing but our love
To authorities who stand above
And order us to march in line and place
The Spirit blows and so we go
In patterns even we don't know
In these United States of Grace

We're dead to power's charms
We answer not its call to arms
We seek the grace in every human face
And together the shape we're in
Reveals the only Sovereign
Of these United States of Grace

So find the grace in a stranger
On the street or in a manger
The point is not to grasp but to embrace
So lend a hand and make a friend
There's nothing here to defend
In these United States of Grace

Our differences will not divide
As long as we don't run and hide
But let our lives entwine and interlace
And the fabric of society
Is stitched again quietly
By these United States of Grace

Slippery Slopes
(Two Poles in Polar Vortex)
Doug Gwyn, December 2024

You're slipping down a slippery slope
 slippery slope, slippery slope
You're slipping down beyond all hope
Remember, I told you so

I see you from the mountain I climb
 mountain I climb, mountain I climb
My mountain has a view divine
Remember I told you so

whatever can you possibly mean?
 possibly mean, possibly mean
That I'm slipping down a deep ravine
Just how low can you go?

You're slipping down a slippery slope
 slippery slope, slippery slope
you're slipping down beyond all hope
Remember, I told you so

You're turning the world upside-down
 upside-down, upside-down
The earth is flat, it can't be round
above is not below

why can't we be faithful and true?
 faithful and true, faithful and true
I'll go first, right after you
How else will we know?

How can I be married to you?
 married to you, married to you
Unless, of course, you marry me too?
Round and round we go

The Sign of Jonah
Doug Gwyn, June 2023

Why do the people rage
And the nations conspire
Against the wisdom of ages
And the heart's deep desire?
And why is humankind
In such an ugly divorce
From the ties that bind us
To our common source?

Refrain:

And the Lord said to Jonah
Is it right for you to be angry?
And Jonah answered Yes,
Angry enough to die!

Why do the people rage
And the nations conspire
Against the wisdom of ages
And the heart's deep desire?
And how does one man's greed
the itchy scratch for more
Blind him to another's need
And make life like keeping score?

Refrain

Why do the people rage
And the nations conspire
Against the wisdom of ages
And the heart's deep desire?
When your righteous indignation
Festers into a rage
Will you stew in agitation,
Or just turn the page?

Refrain

Turn the page
Break the cage
Be the change you want to see

The Parlor of No Return
Doug Gwyn, November 2013

I went to the church, the people were nice
The body of Christ came by the slice
His precious blood was poured out over ice
We met for lunch in a member's home
We all had the same color chromosomes
And that sweet churchianity chilled me to the bone
The way we talked, Jesus was white
And he preached the gospel of being polite
I was stuck in the parlor of no return

I escaped to the meeting of the humanists
And over and over we did insist
That we were not one bit like those dumb Christianists
We met in a well-furnished home for tea
It seemed like we all had advanced degrees
And that political correctness made me weak in the knees
The difference we claimed was hard to discern
It was mostly more good manners to learn
I was still in the parlor of no return

Bridge:

We're the people of moderate means
The means to an end to what it means
To come to an end, do you know what I mean?

Is there a mystification so deep and vast
As the discreet charm of the middle class?
That passes the time 'til time is past
But Jonah changed his tune inside the whale
And in the street Lazarus tells a different tale
Of a pearl of great price that's still not for sale
But this one great horizontal plain
Is like being in Kansas all over again
There's no place like home in the parlor of no return
So equal, entitled, classless, and free
We're peasants as far as the eye can see
In the one great parlor of no return

The Good Is a Merciless God

Doug Gwyn, January 2021

Jesus said to the scribe, don't call me good, though he saw his good intentions
God and God alone is good, the rest is human inventions
'Cause God is God and you are you, and for the sake of your mental health
Love the Lord for all you're worth, and your neighbor as yourself

But the good is a merciless god

The scribe said, but who's my neighbor? How big is my neighborhood?
How many do I owe a favor? He was still trying to be good
So Jesus told him a story, and the point was, in effect
The neighbor you're asking about may be the one you least expect

But the good is a merciless god to be served with relentless devotion
Demanding your purest thoughts, craving your sincere emotion

The good is not a thing apart, it's just a matter of will
And the will is a matter of heart, and the heart knows its Lord still
Yeah, in stillness the heart still knows the presence of I AM
And from there peace flows between the lion and the lamb

But the good is a merciless god

Peace, peace, there is no peace while good sits on the throne
'Cause good versus good shall never cease 'til God is God alone
So listen to what the shepherds heard: somewhere in a stable stall
There's been a birth of peace on earth in God's good will to all

Miss Information
Doug Gwyn, September 2020

Miss Information, with her tiara and sash
She's a queen and she rules over experts and fools
With a cool, value-free panache
Miss Information, with her command of statistics
The facts and the trends, a stream that never ends
Why, it's very nearly mystical!
So many zeroes and ones, piled higher and deeper
To infinity and maybe beyond
Floods of information with the sly insinuation
Of a wink and a wave of her wand

Bridge:

She's a means to an end
But her means are the end
So don't pretend to know her
You're at least a step slower
And her will never bends

Miss Information, with a twinkle in her eye
She teases and beckons, come back to me for seconds
Of what and how much, but never why
Miss Information, she's strictly the facts
She deals in quantities, not qualities
And what's it all mean? Well, it's not polite to ask
With her siren-song she leads you along
And you forget what you came here for
On a curious path beyond right and wrong
Where there is no point, there's only more

Miss Information

Shekinah!
Doug Gwyn, February-March 2020

The presence whispers in my ear
Too long have you wandered and roamed
She says, poor boy, have no fear
I have come to take you home
And as I follow her on her way
Her way is winding and long
But I start to see day by day
Her way is home all along
The strangest love I've ever known

Oh, Shekinah, Baby!

I don't turn left, I don't turn right
I keep moving in her zone
She's here but she's out of sight
Watching over her own
The strangest love I've ever known

Oh, Shekinah, Baby!

In the arid land of this gilded age
The temples are emptying out
And the dove escapes her gilded cage
To find faith in all this doubt
Just as she flew from Noah's ark
To find land in a raging sea
She flew all day, into the dark
That's where she found me

O Commodity!
Doug Gwyn, December 2025

O commodity!
A bright, shiny object
With your own compelling logic
You hide so much more than you reveal
O commodity!
I'll give my quid for your quo
I don't really want to know
The mess below the surface of our deal
The plundered resources
Exploited labor forces
I don't see or feel
But the way you make me feel
They're not even real

O graven image!
You glimmer on my screen
Constructed to be seen
And become the object of my devotion
O graven image!
I don't resist, I don't escape
Your color, size, and shape
captures every thought and emotion
The background disappears
As my aching hopes and fears
Are all I know or feel
And the way I feel
The background can't be real

O spectacular!
With an audience of millions
And a budget in the billions
You mystify the workings of the world
O spectacular!
With technical know-how
To create a global Now
That captivates every boy and girl
As if the still, small voice
From beyond consumer choice
Could never have occurred
But some of us have heard, in a background we can barely feel

The Blues of Heaven
Doug Gwyn, September 2016

There are troubles in this world, and none shall be spared
And Lord you know, I've had my share
Some fall like pianos on our unsuspecting heads
Some we bring on ourselves instead

Refrain:

But no eye has ever seen
No ear has ever heard
Nor the human mind ever conceived
The blues of heaven

In the realm of delusion, things may appear like magic
Then end up something more like tragic
The beginning of wisdom
Is no illusions left to lose
That's when you learn to love the blues

Refrain

Bridge:

Sleepy John Estes and Yank Rachell
These men walked the earth in my time
They sang and the lived, and they still give me hints
Of the blue sublime

I felt a great earthquake, I heard a mighty wind
I saw a fire that had no end
But the Lord was not in them, just a lot of such and such
Then came a deep, pentatonic hush....

Refrain

Liberate the Corporation Now!
Doug Gwyn, July 2016

There's a kind of person called a corporation
With the same rights as me and you
But it speaks with much more amplification
For the cause of the fortunate few
To a Congress that understands
Just how loud money can talk
While the highest court in the land
Puts truth on the auction block
Liberate the corporation now!

The corporation is a chattel slave
Whose soul is traded in shares
Whose nature grows vile and depraved
When profit's the only care
No, the corporation's not a free person
In fact, it's a big cash cow
And the damage will only worsen
Till we break these chains somehow
Emancipate the corporation now!

The corporation's bound in chains
With a board cracking the whip
Slaving away for the capital gains
Investors grasp and grip
But before your blood begins to boil
I really have to mention
The corporation also toils
To fatten your sweet little pension
Liberate the corporation now!

Oh, if I could only see your face
I'd look into your eyes
And see if there is any trace
Of a soul I can recognize
Then I'd ask how you presume
To move our jobs overseas?
And does anyone in your board room
Speak for the birds and bees?
If you really are a person
You must have a moral center
But it's locked away in a prison
Where no ray of light can enter

An Epiphany Waiting to Happen
Doug Gwyn, April 2011

when everything you value comes with a dollar sign
and you find your soul in brackets or quotation marks
when your life in all its range turns to equivalence and exchange
and those unanswered questions circle you like sharks
when that swarm of electrons buzzes around your head
and slavetothsystem.borg is your career
well some will sit around and boast, but resistance is futile for most
locked up in a cell you hold up to your ear
well, you just might come around sometime and see me, my friend
turn 'round and see me

when the one you love has traded you in for an upgrade
and you've got tire-tracks up your back from bottom to top
when the world and all that it seems is coming apart at the seams
and the question arises, oh, where will it stop?
before the tragedy of whatever that was you meant to be
gives way at last to centrifugal farce
and the balance finally tips on your blithering apocalypse
and your life is a sentence not even you can parse
well, you just might come around sometime and see me, my friend
turn 'round and see me

yeah, I'm standing right here, just beyond your worst fear
turn 'round and see me!
I'm here, right here! – right behind you in that mirror
turn 'round and see me!

The Bell Jar
Doug Gwyn, November 2024

Bicker and bite, moan and groan
Heads are stuck way up our phones
In the bell jar, the bell jar
Left and right, love and hate
Choice is freedom, freedom fate
In the bell jar, the bell jar

Transcend! no we can't transcend (2x)
The bell jar

I've got mine, you've got yours
Anything left over, can feed the poor
In the bell jar (2x)
A game by any other name
Zero-sum smells the same
In the bell jar, bell jar

Transcend! no we can't transcend (2x)
Can we?

Temperatures rise, earth runs a fever
Still we follow the great Deceiver
In the bell jar, the bell jar
Running around with our magic wands
We're quite a sight from beyond
The bell jar, beyond the bell jar

Transcend! no we can't transcend (2x)
Can we?

Welcome to the brave new world
We gasp for air, our toes are curled
In the bell jar, bell jar
Sylvia Plath wrote it right
And now her path is all our plight
In the bell jar, the bell jar

Transcend! no we can't transcend (2x)
Buzzing, buzzing around in the bell jar
Buzz, buzz, buzz, buzz . . .

I Don't Really Exist **Doug Gwyn, April 2003**

I don't really exist, I'm just a collection of worn-out myths
that try to explain how it comes down to this, I don't really exist
when you hear someone mention my name
it may be in praise or it may be in blame
but after a while, it all sounds the same
when you hear some one mention my name
so call me a human invention, or a set of social conventions
or a process without an intention, or whatever you care to mention
but I don't really exist, it's a fact that's easily missed
I am what I am but I still must insist, that I don't really exist

well, I may have a certain grace, moving through time and space
and a passionate love for the whole human race, but who can prove the case?
did I ever stop a bloody war, or convert a single carnivore?
did I even help poor Al Gore? so tell me, what am I good for?
I am the figmentation of a dangling conversation
the secret assignation of a vain imagination
but I don't really exist, I recede into the mist
I am what I am but I must insist, that I don't really exist

*oh, he walks with me and he talks with me, and he tells me I am his own
and the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known
[from "In the Garden"]*

well, your mind must be free, 'cause 'to be or not to be'
is not the right category, if the subject – or object – is me
but if you're a friend of mine, come walk with me along that line
between eternity and time, but don't ask me for a sign
'cause I'll give you no sign but this, a bleary vision of bliss
and the moment you catch it is the moment you miss
I'll give you no sign but this
'cause I don't really exist, I linger among those worn-out myths
that try to explain how it comes down to this – I don't really exist...