

NOVEMBER 2020 | ANNIVERSARY EDITION

MĀKĀRZINE



POETRY AT WORK

poems written by employees

Impactmakers.com

POETRY AT WORK

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INTRO

Poetry At Work is a collection of Mākarshop poems written by employees. Mākarshops are customized professional development workshops that teach transferable communication skills using spoken word poetry.

Mākarshoppers (Mākarshop participants) were placed into teams of three to five to co-write their poems. The title of each ACT reflects a workplace theme and it is the first line to each poem. Many Mākarshoppers said they never wrote a poem. Until now.

Poetry At Work celebrates Impact Mākars' 8 year anniversary and trailblazes an innovative approach to creating a better workplace experience. Here's to one of the greatest human resources: creativity.

Enjoy.

ACT 1

I Present Myself

A Certain Way

At Work.

I present myself a certain way at work.

I leave my messy, comfy, clothed self
at home.

What really is my whole self?

Will they see the real me?

More importantly,

what will they think of the real me?

Clothed in lies, sheltered secrecy,
constant denial all around me.

Where can I go to be the real me?

Into hiding?

Or, do I stand in the light shining
and become the self I am,
exposed for all to see?

Who the hell am I?

I present myself a certain way at work.
Exuding an image that isn't there in the mirror.
Sometimes I trick myself
into being something that I'm not.
Just to pass the time
as I wait for the clock.
Time ticks, minute by minute,
until I can take off my mask.
A sigh of relief.
I have thoughts and loves that I hold back
in a wall of protection.
The world misses out on my voice.
My voice, a voice of love and affection.

I present myself a certain way at work.

Sometimes it's easier to hide than to be seen.

The turtle shell is comfortable and familiar.

But that comfort and familiarity is not all there is.

I can't seem to break from the shell,

it would expose me.

But I think to myself,

is exposing myself really the end of the world?

Why does this matter?

Time to be me.

In the end, they'll judge me anyway.

Why not stand firmly before the world?

I don't have to change who I am.

The world can change its heart.

I present myself a certain way at work.

Where is the courage when I need it?

It is right there watching,

just waiting to jump in.

Because when I'm not at work,

it knows the other side of my story.

It very badly wants to be unleashed,

but patiently waits until I let myself go with the flow.

I am bold and courageous.

It is my own, no one can borrow.

True self, come out to play.

Be you. That is your superpower.

And that's who comes to work

and everywhere else.

What a gift.

ACT 2

*I'm Sitting Through
This Meeting
For The Free
Food.*

I am sitting through this meeting for the free food.
The menu sure looks good.
But the topic turned out to be as dry as the chicken club.
Must stay awake, too many carbs, too many sides.
I shouldn't have had such a large breakfast.
What are we even talking about?
Some are all about the *Benjamins*,
but I'm about the free food.
I'm not even on this team, how did I get an invite?
Oh wait, I am on this team!
Is that Brie cheese?
Ooh, and veggies, the best!
Lots of carbs, need some rest.
This meeting is Gouda,
I mean, *good!*
Lots of personalities and pizza,
I mean, *pizazz!*
Maybe I need to go on a diet.
I should schedule a lunch meeting to decide.

I am sitting through this meeting for the free food.
Imagine how successful I would be
had I been here for the topic.
Or, better yet, imagine how in shape I would be.

My healthy lunch sits in the fridge for the third day.
Another inconsistent routine.

This meeting is long,
but not as long as the life I've built in my head
juxtaposed to the life that exists in the world right now.
I'm stuck missing out on the experiences I see
on my phone.

I can already taste the *Chipotle* on my tongue.
Too bad the meeting has just begun.
Let's hope the speaker is fun.
But who cares?
I am just here for the free food.
What's for lunch?

I am sitting through this meeting for the free food
and to take a day away from my crazy co-workers.

I am really glad they didn't serve burgers.

Thank God I had my *Redbull*

and thank God for all the free swag.

I took it home in my *Illini* union bag.

Turned on *Letterman* and finished off a fifth.

Then, I woke up.

Only to realize it was all a bad dream.

I had to come back to reality

and be a part of the team.

I'm going to a pretty place now

where the flowers will grow.

I'll be back in an hour or so.

I'm sitting through this meeting for the free food.

Free food for the mind, body, and soul.

That's what makes me feel whole.

But is there really a distinction between
mind, body, and soul?

Does there need to be a distinction?

Can I be one and many at the same time?

A kaleidoscope whose only uniformity is its variability?

It's like a buffet, you have so much to choose from.

But then again,

who put down the roles

that we really have to choose at all?

I'm sitting through this meeting for the free food.

Smells emanating outside, bathing the room.

Yet, my hunger was focused inside.

Constantly seeking

a higher meaning of this life ride.

Consuming deep bites, nourishing my soul.

Making the uneven parts whole.

It wasn't the free food after all.

It comes from within me

and I now can hear the call.

ACT 3

I Caught

My Boss

Checking My

Facebook Page.

I caught my boss checking my *Facebook* page.
Doesn't he know he's half my age?
Oh, he must be using it for an email chain.
All these other account executives stay in their lane.
Then, I saw him check my *Instagram*.
I wonder if he **liked** my trip to Italy.
All I can think of is, "Goddamn!"
Who is this man creepin' on my 'gram?
This is work.
He doesn't need to see me twerk.
When the weekend comes,
I'm gonna have some fun.
All I can think of is,
he doesn't know me.
Could never get me.
Need more than a *Facebook* page to understand me.
You can try to judge from what you see.
But in the end, you just don't know me.

I caught my boss checking my *Facebook* page.
Like gettin' caught with my pants down on stage.
That was embarrassing and personal.
But, not as bad as when I found the pictures
of my boss doing a keg stand.
Privacy? Not anymore!
The world and your boss are ever watching.
Open eyes, everyone pries.
Yet, we give them the keys to view our insides
out.
Forever prying eyes that see and judge.
Is that really the issue?
eyes watering
Where's the tissue?

I caught my boss checking my *Facebook* page.

I said, “something is wrong,
someone has stolen my i-dent-a-tee.”

What happened to privacy?

Is this what they call work-life balance?

My love of German anime is not for your eyes.

I present myself a certain way at work.

It's not lies, it's a 'personality compromise'.

I wonder what my settings are at.

I am glad I don't have pictures of my mom's cat.

Hope she doesn't start commenting like my mom.

Do I quit *Facebook* or my job?

Which one would fix this situation?

I am going to avoid confrontation.

Time to update that resume.

I caught my boss checking my *Facebook* page.

And I'm not sure why.

She sees me 7 days a week.

Why is she watching me like I'm on a stage?

I don't deserve the scrutiny,
this place is already new to me.

So stop looking at me
and start looking at me.

I need help, clearly!!

But the help I need is far beyond my *Facebook* page.

It's within myself.

So the next time I catch my boss being a spy,
I'll look her right in the eyes and just cry.

I caught my boss checking my *Facebook* page.
Little did he know that a few of my pictures
were of my family.
But I also had pictures that were hidden.
I hope they don't
see the pictures from that party over the weekend.
I hope they don't
find out who I am dating from the office.
I hope they don't
find out what I believe.
I hope they don't
find out what I say when no one is hearing.
I hope they don't
learn that the me at work is a mask.
That when removed,
breaks the spell, the temporary peace.
I don't want them to know
what I care about.
I want to keep that to myself.
I don't want them to know
because I am afraid I'll actually grow.

ACT 4

My Fear

Of Imperfection

Is Taxing

My Productivity.

My fear of imperfection is taxing my productivity.

I imagine that which I could accomplish
without this fear.

My goal to always be the best
doesn't allow me to get much rest.

Although, it is a test to be the best,

I do my best to stay abreast
of new technologies and methodologies.

Yet, somehow,

perhaps imperfection is the perfect guest.

Allowing me freedom to.....jest?

Yes, I must exist,

even revel with this natural state.

For it is this with which everyone can relate.

My fear of imperfection is taxing my productivity.

How can I get out of this quagmire?

Will it take a shrink, psychic, prayer,
or deep introspection?

When will I understand, truly understand
that imperfection is life.

The physics of chaos that we try to control,
tame in vain,
keeps me from taking that 1st step.

Simple step.

Oh, great!

scratches out a line

My perfectionism at its best.

Embrace the scratch outs and the imperfections.

Push past to see the creativity of the process.

My fear of imperfection is taxing my productivity.

And my lack of productivity is magnifying my anxiety.

My anxiety is reaching magnificent heights.

Where is the exit to this rooftop?

Life gets better, its all about the journey.

The people I've met and places I've been.

That's what makes me the man I proudly am.

I am proudly me,

I am me so why should I reject any part of myself?

Even the worst parts.

My shadow self.

It's time to embrace my shadow and not be afraid of it.

After all, it walks with me.

I have been shaped by experiences

as hard as they may be.

They are the culmination of what made me.

My fear of imperfection is taxing my productivity.

My fear of failure

is holding me back from being successful.

My fear of love

is holding me back from reality.

My fear of truth

is holding my beautiful.

My fear of loneliness

is holding me back from extroversion.

My fear of dying

is holding me back from really living.

My fear of complacency

is taxing my relationships.

My fear of the future

pulls me back.

My fear of the past

prevents to move forward.

My fear of imperfections are drowning me.

ACT 5

If I Don't Close

A Deal Soon,

I Will Be

In A Pickle.

If I don't close a deal soon, I will be in a pickle.

Thinking of what I have to say

for them just to say yes.

Living with the stress of the day today.

Nothing feels like its going my way,

but I know its gonna be OK.

Tomorrow is a new day.

Myself promises, I'm going to pay.

No, self-doubt,

this is my rhythm so let's play.

I'm now without fear.

Going to do what I have to do to get there.

Fear is not the answer,

only the desire to exceed my own expectations.

Take each day with stride.

Play with pride.

Enjoy the ride.

If I don't close a deal soon, I will be in a pickle.

But my heart wants to burst

and these DMs are so fickle.

I hustle and dial, stuck in the hamster wheel.

But where is my will?

I will not kneel because I have an iron Achilles heel.

So I'll change my perspective

and put a smile on my face.

Dial a few more times and keep up the pace.

But I know how to do the job.

I will be able to overcome the objection and close soon.

I am the one in control.

My process is sound, I just need to believe it.

My script, my Bible.

My phone, my pulpit.

My company, my soul.

ACT 6

*I'm Only Here
For The Free
Beer.*

I'm only here for the free beer.

Can't steer this ship, chart a new course.

Voice horse from empty promises.

I try to find my voice amidst all the noise.

But I feel like the only disappointment
amidst everyone's joys.

Joy! Ahoy!

I see land, a horizon.

Promise for better days.

Can't wait to clear the haze.

When I am down and out, I need an escape.

I am not sure if this is for me.

Trying to find the silver lining in a dark place.

I'm only here for the free beer.
I ask myself if its to deal with fear.
Fear of stopping.
Fear of losing.
Fear of asking for what I need when I'm here.

But how can I ask for more
when they've given so much?
I feel like a child,
reaching out my hand and such.
And how else will I learn?
You keep watering me like a fern.

So, I'm here now for the free beer.
Or, is it really for the free beer
and maybe its a lesson
I've just learned about fear?

ACT 7

I Was Living

In My Head,

But Now The Rent

Is Too Expensive.

I was living in my head, but now the rent is too expensive.

I would try my hand at rap and rhymes,

but the lyrics would be too offensive.

Where would I begin?

I think my thoughts are too progressive.

Progressive, I need to get an insurance policy.

The thoughts are flooding my head.

Words are building up.

There's a backlog of thoughts.

It's getting explosive.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

There goes the dynamite.

Drop the rent.

Another valuable lesson,

but it's too damn expensive.

I was living in my head, but now I cant afford the rent.

I cannot break free, my will is spent.

I wish I had a way to get out.

All I can think of is what I'd do for clout.

My God, what will happen next?

Can I at least still cash my checks

to my own thoughts?

Or, will I just rot?

Is it here and jot a line someone else started

and start to think as if time departed?

Left broken hearted.

Fuck it, time well spent.

I was living in my head, but now the rent is too expensive.
There isn't even a *Starbucks* in the neighborhood.

It's just noise and chaos.

My neighbors are constantly arguing
about who gets to be in charge.

My mind begins to suffocate under the weight
of my own thoughts and everyone else's.

My mother telling me what I "should" do.

I need to be who I am.

Not who others think I should be.

Cynthia's daughter.

Patrick's mother.

His wife - *you don't need to know his name.*

So many hats to wear and the heaviest load to bear
is the one we carry for others when we make their
expectations our own.

I need to be who I am.

Keep your labels and hands off me.

Let me be who I am meant to be.

Let me live in my head rent free.

For the love of the goddess, let me be.

I was living in my head, but now I can't afford the rent.
I was looking out with my eyes,
ready for the ultimate confidence test.
My hair was standing up like a tent.
I hope to not live vicariously, but rather live my best.
All this wisdom, but no money to my name.
Maybe the landlord will take wisdom
as payment for the rent.
If my thoughts were expressed, I'd be rich and with fame.
If my heart was poured into a glass,
it would be a million dollar milkshake.
Sometimes I'll slap the ground
'cause ain't no one to high five.
I found some quarters on the ground,
but it seems no one supports my belief in wishes
as down they go into the well.
If this is my fate, I will accept it.
There's no reason to break out of this system.
Sure, life seems to resemble a whole lot like shit.
Y'all only care about money so let's forget the wisdom.

I was living in my head, but now the rent is too expensive.

The same thoughts over and over

have me on the hunt for a new space.

A space with wider corridors and darker walls.

Cavernous with exponentially more room

to expand and grow.

Maybe a new city, space, environment to let me develop.

A space that can let me fly free.

A space that will truly let me be me.

Perhaps this change will ignite a spark

and therefore, on a new journey I will embark.

Burn that old house.

It just takes a first step.

A first spark.

I was living in my head, but now the rent is too expensive.
No where to turn, need somewhere to hide.
All these thoughts slowly eating me alive!
Looking for a light at the end of the tunnel,
every time I think I see it, it fades.
Always thinking of success,
yet fearing not giving it my best.
Over-thinking turns into sadness,
which is one step down the road to madness.
Pills keep me from going insane,
but do not target the source of the pain.
They just relieve the “symptoms”.
“Move on, tomorrow is a better day”, they all say.
But they are not living with the monster inside my brain.
Sleeping is my form of release.
At least, when I am asleep I am at peace.
No one is there but me, alone in my head
where I can't afford the rent.

I was living in my head, but now the rent is too expensive.
Yet to leave, I must go to great lengths.
So I stay and strive to replenish in an effort to fix
every wrinkle, crease, and blemish.
But with every replenish goes through a drought.
Why did I ever choose this route?
So I ponder on the narrow house
with a foul grimace and a meaner grouse.
And I see her standing there
in her favorite white blouse.
I'm frozen in time,
until I'm awoken by a gentle breath
and a wind chime.
She touches my cheek every night,
leads with a kiss as I shut off the light.
But, that was a dream as were all the others.
You were never mine so now I must lease another.

fingers snapping

OUTRO



Founder, Isaiah Mākar

What did you think after reading *Poetry At Work*? Favorite poem or rhyme? Share your thoughts with Isaiah using the email or number below.

Email: Info@impactmakars.com

Cell: (312) 785-8454

Instagram: @Impactmakars

LinkedIn: Impact Mākars & Isaiah Mākar