

# SEVENTY MOONS

# Seventy Moons

Copyright © 2018 Ezekiel Walker

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be produced, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer, who may quote brief passages in a review.

Manufactured in the United States of America.

For more information, please visit [www.zekewrites.com](http://www.zekewrites.com)

Paperback

ISBN 13: 978-1-64255-905-7

LCCN

2018900743

BIO026000 BIOGRAPHY & AUTOBIOGRAPHY / Personal Memoirs

POE000000 POETRY / General

POE005050 POETRY / American / African American

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Lucky Me .....	4
Protect and Swerve .....	6
Night on the Town.....	8
Ye, pt. I.....	10
Freedom.....	12
Fake News .....	14
Mama Raised Me Better.....	16
They Don't Really Care About Us.....	18
Sunny Delight.....	20
Wall Flower.....	22
He Who Hesitates Is Lost.....	24
Blah.....	26
Good Morning.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Family Matters.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Hulk Smash.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Dust.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
1985 .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Ye, pt. II.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Stepin Fetchit .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

Hi.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Non Profit.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
I'm Just a Nobody.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Ye, pt. III.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Hopeless.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
The Hole.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Wrong Way.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Tracking Blunder.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Amused.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Mud Run.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Ye, pt. IV.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Song Cry.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
I Do, pt. I.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
I Do, pt. II.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Splinter Cell.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
PYT.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Ye, pt. V.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Empty Vase.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Stranger Things.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Sabali (Patience).....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Skeme.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Get Out.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Soap.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Mirror's Mockery ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Andre's Picnic ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Black ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Cheese Eggs and Welch's Grape**Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Good Luck..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Floored..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Four ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Fake It 'Til You Make It. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Ye, pt. VI..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Flipper Purify..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Scrape It Out The Pot.... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Second Star to the Right. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Almost..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
The Light..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Streets Is Watching..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
No Thanks ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Stiff Arm ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Underground Railroad .... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Chill..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Lunch with Leonidas..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
Tunnel Visionary..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**  
The Walking Dead..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Ray's Shades .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Desk .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Ye, pt. VII.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Chameleon.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Breathe .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Seventy Moons.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
About The Author .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>





## Introduction

During the fall of 2016, I began to question my position in life and what I was doing, where I was going, and if I was fulfilling my purpose. Unfortunately, I didn't have answers to these questions and what's worse is I had no clue how I would ever find answers in the first place. At the time, I had recently quit a job where I felt like I was "just there." I had no emotional attachment to the position and knew I was only working there to provide for myself. At the same time, I was also living in a townhome in Durham, North Carolina, with a college friend and had been there for nearly three years. And while I had fun, threw great house parties, met interesting women, traveled a bit, and was outwardly satisfied with life, internally I couldn't help but feel like there was something desperately lacking.

I am originally from Charlotte, North Carolina and given that Durham is only a couple hours away, help was never too far out of reach. My friends and family were always there when I needed them; so much so that I began to resent myself for habitually having to reach out to them for assistance. They always supported me and while I am eternally indebted to them, I realized that if I kept this

cycle going, I'd never become anything more. I've always been someone who liked to do for himself and I knew I couldn't do that while simultaneously surrounded by those who helped me so much along the way.

Also while living in Durham, I had written two books that I considered to be groundbreaking, creative, and increasingly relevant, but for reasons beyond my understanding, they simply did not reach the people most in need. After spending years honing my craft and working tirelessly towards becoming a better writer than the day before, it felt as if my efforts were ignored and discarded, and I felt something drastic needed to happen.

I needed to hit the reset button on my life somehow. I had been having these thoughts for quite some time, and they became all the more exacerbated by seeing myself in this perpetual state of lateral movement—not really going backwards, yet not moving forward either. Over time the voice in the back of my head became louder and louder as it told me that I'd have to make a life-changing decision to get what I thought I deserved. There's a saying, "if you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got." Knowing this, I began ruminating about the possibilities of how best to work my way out of this devastating lull.

I needed to get away from everything I knew, everything that would be a reminder of all my failures and shortcomings, and everything that would catch me if I fell. So I began to look for work outside of North Carolina—from California, Chicago, D.C., Atlanta, and everywhere in between. Included in that "in between" was a job in Lafayette, Indiana, in which I applied for and heard back from relatively soon. After an exhaustive

application process, I was officially hired and scheduled to begin work on November 28, 2016.

As I made plans to leave North Carolina, I called a few apartment complexes in Lafayette and got the rates of what it would cost to move within a few weeks. Having not worked full-time in over four months, I saved what little money I had in preparation for the move and planned on having housing as soon as I got there but between moving expenses, car maintenance, job application costs, bills, and two new tires for the trip, very little was left.

So, once again I ended up at a crossroad—travel to Indiana and maybe stay at a cheap motel until I get paid from my job and then move into a place, or remain in North Carolina and continue to get what I knew I didn't want any longer. Needless to say, if I had chosen to stay, this wouldn't be much of a story. Leading up to my departure, I had saved a couple hundred dollars and convinced myself I would simply figure it out once I got to Indiana. I threw one last house party the weekend before I was set to leave. The following week I packed up as much as my car could carry and drove away.

## **Lucky Me**

many roads driven but these are new  
what lies ahead I haven't a clue  
tolls and signs say I'm headed right  
so excited barely slept the last night  
yesterday behind me today finally here  
my soul applauds with ovation and cheer  
ecstasy envelopes me as I finally arrive  
and what do I find but Drops from the sky

My very first ride from North Carolina to Indiana was one full of pure enjoyment and elated bliss. It was by far the easiest nine-hour road trip ever. Before leaving, I created a playlist of my favorite hip hop songs and literally rapped the entire way to Indiana, and I mean rapping like the headliner at Coachella! I was in the zone! This trip was months in the making; everything had gone according to plan. The weather was perfect for the first eight hours—until I arrived in Indiana and the sky began to pour. I guess the rain was God letting me know what was to come.

## **Protect and Swerve**

fear  
from the rearview  
most sobering reality  
death creeps  
in the shadows  
eyes fixated  
who's behind  
dodging them people  
'til they follow  
no more

I was fully aware that traveling nine hours away would have its challenges, least of them my ability to get there safely. After saving what I needed for the trip and for my survival once I arrived, certain necessities had to be compromised. In hindsight, chief among these necessities was my monthly car insurance payments. I didn't have insurance for over two months before my trip and my license plate had expired four months prior to that. I remember meticulously strategizing to avoid main roads and highways and always driving later in the evening to avoid detection from the cops. I swear I looked more in my rearview mirror than I did straight ahead; and whenever I spotted a cop car, I made it a point to either switch lanes or pull into a nearby gas station, fast food joint, or parking lot.

As dirty as I rode in North Carolina, I was relieved to finally be out of state so at least my tags wouldn't make me a moving target any longer. Once I crossed that state line, I was so elated! But after seeing so many people who look like me pulled over for the smallest traffic infraction, it often gave me pause about how far I was driving. Leading up to my exodus, I frequently had vivid thoughts about what could happen if I got pulled over and the possibilities of me becoming yet another hashtag, only to be remembered for a week until people would eventually move on with their lives.

## Night on the Town

asylum  
four doors  
home for now  
pedal full of promise  
searches for a peaceful rest  
oh God, protect me this night

After arriving in Indiana with even less money now, I had to make a decision between putting what was leftover into crashing at a cheap motel or save that money and methodically use it to get around and buy gas, food, along with other necessities. Prioritizing my livelihood over a sketchy roof, I made the difficult decision that I would stick it out and live out of my car for the time being. Sleeping in a car leaves little to the imagination; a grown man has no business sleeping in the backseat of a 2004 Dodge Stratus.

I'll never forget that first night—driving around aimlessly for a “safe looking” spot to park near downtown Indianapolis. My new employer was conducting job training in Indy the following morning, so I tried to pick somewhere not too far away from its location. I recall it being paramount for me to find an area where I could see other people from a distance and they could hear me if needed. I found an open spot on the street across from some townhomes fairly close to downtown. I turned the car and headlights off, and squeezed and inched my way to the back where I had a blanket, two hangers, a sports jacket, and a dress shirt. I hung my blazer on one side of the backseat window, and the dress shirt on the other, providing cover from anyone who might be walking by during the night. I covered myself in the blanket, and went to sleep . . . eventually.

## Ye, pt. I

losing has never been easy to accept  
ignoring risks I go forth without regret  
feedback, heard enough for a lifetime  
eccentric thoughts not allowed to shine  
one miraculous day this will all be a blur  
far removed from throes that often occur  
prosperity looms above if I could only reach  
and grab my fleeting dreams as I lie asleep  
bulldozers bash barriers which once stood solid  
lo and behold failure's debris stains my wallet  
onward I press from my safety net in Charlotte

I've always been conflicted with my tunnel vision and how I attack a singular goal without distraction, never diverting my eyes from the goal ahead. While it does open one up for a variety of experiences, it also exposes you to unforeseen dangers to the left and right. This job was the sole reason I came to Indiana; before leaving North Carolina, I completed and paid for city, state, and national background checks, two sets of fingerprints, reference checks, a credit report, and tuberculosis testing, I mean it was thorough!

A month before I hit the road, I signed their employment contract for a substantial salary, which convinced me that it would all pay off in the not so distant future. Everything was set in motion and after getting to Indiana safely, the very next day I completed job training and was soon thereafter assigned to shadow another established co-worker so she could show me the ropes. Everything was going just as I had planned. After shadowing her for a few days, I was finally ready to work on my own. I was so excited to get started so I could begin to live a life absent of the worry, stress, and inadequacy that I'd known all too well before.

## Freedom

a suppressed rage I continue to feel  
wounds and scars have yet to heal

sad song hummed again and again  
loved by enemies hated by friends

rhythm so constant I don't even blink  
melody so tragic the deeper I think

questions abound what to do where to go  
as I sprint in quicksand with nothing to show

a cage's bars are no stronger than the welder's steel  
let my mighty hands bend them until only freedom I feel

I often felt stagnant while I impatiently awaited for the fruits of my labor to finally manifest, and I didn't know how to bring them about other than writing. After working too many years in a field I knew wasn't for me, and after releasing two dope books which were grossly unrecognized, I knew I had to make a change. I've always been a person who could see others and avoid similar pitfalls and mistakes they may have made, but what do you do when you're at fault? When you're the only person responsible for your condition? This was not the first time I had to look in the mirror and blame myself, but it was the first time that my own decisions altered my life drastically for the worst. As a result, I didn't get angry, but depressed. I was more depressed at this time than any other, but even still, I knew I had to press on; distilled apathy was a drink I had grown tired of long ago.

## Fake News

a trusted friend without a name  
protected by the faceless alibi  
deepest secret I dare not divulge  
for their sake more than mine  
probes galore test my improv

*who is he*

*where is he*

*why haven't we heard of him before*

details fogged like the Indiana sky  
told are words they need to hear  
as I juggle these many fables

Before leaving for the trip, I told friends and family that I would be staying with a fraternity brother in Indianapolis. They didn't know I completely fabricated my living arrangement just to ease their apprehensions and shelf any questions or condemnations they likely would have had about me sleeping in my car. I knew how illogical it was to move so far away without knowing anyone or having anything there once I arrived, but there was such a burning desire within me to get up and leave that I couldn't ignore it. I couldn't stay in Durham a minute longer doing the same things, eating the same foods, and going to the same places. I had to leave, and I knew no one would understand. I made the decision to lie, and as painful as it was then and continues to be now, I felt like there was no other way.

## Mama Raised Me Better

as a young boy I was taught simple things  
to shield me from harm life would bring  
of all lessons one was learned more than most  
truth can be shouted but lies are whispered close

layers upon layers days upon days  
I find myself trapped in my very own maze  
outrunning the truth but it's right on my heels  
ready to reveal the mayhem I've concealed

*I did it for them* is how I rationalize  
even as guilt waters both my eyes

feeling like that young boy all over again  
scared to tell Mama everything that I did  
hope she understands I was under pressure  
'cause Lord knows Mama raised me better

Like most people, family means everything to me. I knew that telling them, in particular my mother, of the conditions I was living under, would have caused alarm, concern, and admonishment—none of which I wanted to hear. Days into living in Lafayette, my mother and I had a conversation where she probed me about who this mysterious frat brother was and I just started saying whatever came to mind that couldn't be verified. In the back of my mind, I always felt like she knew I was lying, but she never called me out on it. I remember the deflating and damning feeling of lying to her. I hated lying to my mother; since I've been alive, she has always instilled in me the right things to do and say—no one could ask for a better mother. She and my father raised me better than this and I knew it.

## **They Don't Really Care About Us**

compassion  
all I truly seek  
deal's a deal  
so I thought  
great just what I need  
this gravest mistake

I had been calling our company's management every day since I completed job shadowing. After all, for this particular job, an employee is only paid based on the clients seen and the length of time with those clients. Sometimes the company's management would reply and sometimes they wouldn't. When they did, they kept telling me I would begin working soon and they were compiling a list of clients for me.

Being new to the Midwest, the biggest adjustment was acclimating myself to the constant freezing temperatures; it was something I hadn't experienced at all in North Carolina and was ill-equipped to handle in Indiana. Sleeping in a cold car for hours at a time made this all the worse. It was of the utmost importance that I begin to see clients immediately, so I could earn money and get the hell out of my car.

## Sunny Delight

our sun coy and shy  
hides its face in the thick clouds  
far from those who drudge

Another major adjustment in moving from the East Coast to the Midwest are the ubiquitous clouds seemingly every single day during winter months and how that can affect one's mood adversely; someone told me it's called "seasonal affective disorder" or SAD. Having already been in a state of depression before leaving, waking to those somber skies every morning made it nearly impossible to think optimistic thoughts. Sure it was chilly and sometimes even cold during the winter, but the sun always came out in North Carolina. However, in Indiana clouds covered the skies all day and night for what felt like weeks at a time. I never thought I would miss the sun, but I surely did.

## Wall Flower

dance  
beats blare  
the song skips  
yet they keep moving  
toes stepped on without apology  
tune unfamiliar to my bleeding ears  
bizarre melodies loved only by the cult  
they continue dancing and pay me no mind  
so away I'll stand and sing my favorite song

Sliding on those frozen and slippery streets, uninsured, often lost, and re-learning how to drive in wintry conditions took some time. I remember praying to not get hit or hit somebody since many of the cars on the road looked like they had been involved in a hit and run accident. It was like a weird dance—how I often dipped, dodged, and avoided potholes, ice patches, cars, and all other road hazards. The city of Lafayette was pretty good about using salt trucks and whatnot, but in below-zero weather, there's only so much salt can do—you're on your own.

## He Who Hesitates Is Lost

to form these words often comes absent of delay  
the mind's liberation I've found no better way  
but today's thoughts feel scattered and mixed  
as she seduces me and grants my only wish

her hair color of midnight wrapped into a bun  
her macchiato skin glows like morning's sun  
my iris aggravated I'm forced to blink  
shameful and sloven what will she think

my hair color of an aged cracked road  
my skin ravaged in rust just like my soul  
what could I provide what could I offer  
pipe dreams maybe some empty fodder

I've seen this movie before  
it doesn't end well  
the smallest downed anchor  
forbids a ship to sail

God one last favor I ask of you  
I know this prayer is long overdue  
but as she gathers her things and readies to leave  
make me whole again and send her back please

As a result of not working with any sort of regularity and in addition to my confined living quarters, I always made it a point to get up and out early. I hated living in the car, and I would find any reason to get out as soon as possible. One of my favorite places to go was a nearby bookstore where they also had a café inside. I was sitting in the café listening to music and writing poetry as I had been doing for some time now, and then walked in this breathtaking Black woman who my better self would have approached.

That visceral impulse ran through my mind—to do what I'd done before, to make her laugh, charm her, and ask her all the right questions that would surely lead to something more. But, then I looked down at myself. At this point, I had been living in the car for well over a week, hadn't changed clothes in about two days, and hadn't bathed even longer. I was in no position to speak to anyone, let alone to someone I'd like to know romantically. My confidence was gone; who was I to approach anyone?! She sat down and enjoyed her small cup of coffee while reading *The Tipping Point*—my kind of lady on the wrong kind of day.

## **Blah**

meaningless minutes fade into the dusk  
today is just that and nothing more  
robust clouds swallow the timid sky  
meaningless minutes fade into the dusk  
exiled into oblivion beyond eye's view  
apathetic sighs exhale the only truth  
meaningless minutes fade into the dusk  
today is just that and nothing more

Just another day in Lafayette, awaiting my assignments to come in for work. It felt like the more days that passed, the heavier the clouds appeared and the harder the wind seemed to blow. After nearly two weeks of getting the runaround, I quickly began to notice that my situation was not an anomaly, but it was the norm. The list of clients the company finally sent over was outdated and only one telephone number was active. I later spoke with other co-workers who also complained about the inconsistencies and unprofessional nature of the company, late or no payments to their employees and mishandling of standard operating procedures that any functioning organization should not have. At that very moment, I began to think I had made a terrible decision coming to Indiana.

