

**A DREAM**

**FOR SALE**

**Nik Richard**

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TICKETS

SOLD OUT

Let this serve as  
a testament to all those **dreams**  
not yet deferred  
prayers still unanswered  
but not unheard.

Dedicated to the woman  
who always supports my dreams  
**my mother.**

*”And the only way to choose is to jump ship from old truths  
and trust dolphins as we swim through changing ways”*

*- Saul Williams*

# Introduction

**You never hear the stories about the ones who never make it; no one would ever read a book that long.** It's a never ending story rife with disappointment and broken promises, but every now and then a little something is left behind that shows how that struggle can be so beautiful when the impossible is attempted. This book is for all those who ever tried, all those who have been buried alive by their own desires to keep the promises they made to their younger selves. I am not exactly sure which one of those stories this book will be, but as a dreaming man talking in his sleep I give you an exposé of that journey, that moment when you wake up and your dream still feels real, but you can hear the alarm going off in the background, and you're existing somewhere in-between.

**4:26 a.m.** Have a dream about your high school graduation that is interrupted by the urge of having to use the bathroom. Use the bathroom. Don't feel relieved. See your father pop into the bathroom and say "it's the restroom when you're out in public son. Or when you're writing a book. Don't let people think you're a heathen." **5:41 a.m.** Wake up and realize that you were dreaming and you still have to use the bathroom. Remember that it's the bathroom now because you're home and it's where you take your bath. **5:43 a.m.** Look at your alarm clock and count the hours you have until it goes off. **5:49 a.m.** Fall back to sleep. **7:00 a.m.** BEEP BEEP BEEP Knock your phone off the dresser as you try to cancel the alarm. Be relieved at the fact that you set two alarms. **7:44 a.m.** Wake up one minute before the second alarm goes off. Look at the clock. Fuck. **7:45 a.m.** BEEP BEEP BEEP Hit the snooze button. **7:52 a.m.** Dream about her. Again. **8:15 a.m.** BEEP BEEP BEEP Wake up. Try to remember what day it is. Divide the expected minutes of traffic delays by the time you have to be to work and multiply that by the time it takes you to get there. Subtract the time it takes you to ride the elevator to the 21st floor. Realize that you failed Algebra II and you have no idea what you're talking about. Hit the snooze button. Again. **8:30 a.m.** BEEP BEEP BEEP. Remember you hate alarm clocks. Realize you probably overslept. **9:07 a.m.** Slip into your office while trying not to jingle your keys. **9:12 a.m.** Burn your tongue on a cup of coffee. **9:14 a.m.** Avoid conversations that require you to remember what you did over the weekend. **9:48 a.m.** Wonder what you're eating for lunch. **11:56 a.m.** Get Lunch. **1:08 p.m. – 4:09 p.m.** ((Blur)). **4:19 p.m.** Look at the clock

and realize it's **4:19**. Wonder why you always look at the clock at the same time every day. **4:45 p.m.** Slip out of your office while trying not to jingle your keys. **4:53 p.m.** Decide to take a different route home. Have one of those moments where you wonder if this is God's way of having you avoid a traffic ticket or car jacking. **5:24 p.m.** Rear-end a Corolla at a yield sign 5 blocks away from home. Exchange insurance information. Think how stupid it was for you to try and take a different route home. **6:29 p.m - 8:30 p.m.** Nap. **11:11 p.m.** Make a wish. **Midnight.** Get a sudden burst of energy right when you decide that its time to go to bed. **12:01 a.m.** Remember that novel that you said you were going to write. Spend an hour naming all the characters in your head. Never actually write anything down. **1:01 a.m.** Pull out your phone to set your alarm. Instead, read through all of your old messages from people that you no longer talk to and wonder if you died tonight would you be satisfied with the last text you sent. That reminds you, get up and delete your browser history. **1:23 a.m.** Play a Prince song. **1:30 a.m.** Remember how long Prince songs usually are. **2:02 a.m.** Lay in bed with your eyes close, don't fall asleep. Stare at the ceiling fan until it turns into the propellor of an airplane. Fly away... **7:00 a.m.** BEEP BEEP BEEP crash back down to Earth.

# For The Dreamers

Our sleepless nights are where our romance is  
and our waking days are trances  
because our dreams fade into real life  
and we no longer pinch ourselves to chance it.

We just pursue and prolong the nights  
no matter how fleeting they may be  
we don't awake, we just give chase  
until they fade from memory

or the alarm goes off and startles us  
to remind us it's too late  
as our dreams drift away  
from outstretched hands  
like sand into the sea.

And everyone we meet has bad advice  
but that don't stop us from trying  
they say get a job, save your money  
buy a big old house to die in.

I always knew I wanted more  
but afraid to make it on my own.  
Now time has set fire to all my desires  
as I fall asleep in a burning home.

And once you smell the smoke  
it's impossible to rest  
we dream with our eyes open  
and we gasp for every breath.

Every night it's a fight to sleep  
because we're burning up inside  
but there is no turning back  
because we set fire to the steps.

Our only options are to jump from the roof  
or be buried alive under the ashes  
and every morning we wake up with a fear to fly  
cursing the day God gave us matches.

And we can feel the window closing  
as our house fills up with smoke  
but as long as that fear of dying  
overcomes our fear of flying  
no matter how weak and thin  
our wings may seem  
we still have hope.

## II.

The nights, they hold us hostage  
because we're afraid of the days to come.  
They never last, they go so fast  
so many things we left undone.

We cling to the past to bide our time  
as we wonder what to do.  
Nightmares scare us for a while  
but we live in constant fear  
our dreams might come true.

**If I could invent a machine  
that lets me film my dreams**  
you would probably never  
have to work again.

I would just broadcast you  
live from my mind every night  
while the rest of the world  
tunes in.

# I Used To Have These Dreams About You

They were so vivid I'd wake up to see the blood rushing back to my skin where you had just let go of my arm.

I would open my eyes in mid-sentence while mumbling something incoherently only to realize I was talking to a ghost.

It felt like you were there, but every time I would try to grab your hand, or touch your hair, my arms would go right through you.

Why don't you ever take your shoes off when you walk around my mind at night?

You know my head is made of hardwood floors. They creek with every step you take. At least close the door behind you so my thoughts don't escape.

Waking up was always like walking away from a car crash. I would see my life flash before my eyes every morning, happy we're still alive, but still holding regrets for those mistakes I made in the past.

I would always have so much to tell you,  
but the nights never lasted long enough,  
  
and the dreams always ended too soon.

I hate when people show up to my dreams uninvited,  
but I always made exceptions for you.

I'm glad you're here in this room so I no longer have to  
pretend... damn,

I'm waking up again.

**Her:** “What did you dream about last night?”

**Me:** “I kept dreaming I was falling”

**Her:** “Flying?”

**Me:** “I couldn’t think my wings fast enough”

**Her:** “What do you want to be when you wake up?”

**Me:** “I’m not ready to hit the ground yet”

**Her:** “But you can’t dream your life away”

**Me:** “I can’t tell the difference between my dreams and my memories anymore. If I wake up on the floor at least I’ll know I gave the bed a good fight.”

# Hollywouldn't

CALIFORNIA

knows how to  
party

and they're charging admission.

The city of "whats your angle?"  
And the angles don't fly  
because they sold their wings  
to feed their addictions.

Don't fall victim, babe.

The palm trees don't offer shade  
they just wave and applaud  
because every street is a stage  
and everyone gets an award.

Pick out your star, babe.

I'll walk Hollywood Boulevard  
with a Sharpie marker  
and write your name on each one  
so the fame can feel numb

because I don't want this town  
to change you  
when the world finally sees  
who you really are.

Don't let them take your heart, babe.

When it all fades  
and you're trying to feel your way out  
in the dark  
I'll be here to remind you.

Don't turn your halo off, babe.

# We All Get A Star

What would you do  
if I told you  
that nobody was watching  
but me?

The line outside is for the stage  
the audience is empty.

You walked up the stairs to find  
there's nobody important in VIP

there are no cameras pointed at you  
because they're only taking selfies.

You are free to be yourself  
while everyone else puts on a show

and when the batteries die  
in their spotlights  
I'll be here to watch you glow.

# I Need to Start Writing Again

because the written word is dying  
and I don't want to risk  
anything I said being misinterpreted.

Our language  
will soon be hieroglyphs  
in un-translated libraries  
that will one day be stumbled upon  
by curious kids  
like the walls of the pyramids  
decoded, reworded, falsely interpreted, and relived.

Something Sphinx  
and I think it's poetry.

Such a powerful alchemy  
losing its potency  
because the magicians  
have mis-spelled  
and casted a hollow doctrine so vocally.

I don't want to be a poet anymore  
if I ever was one to begin with.

It is the WORD  
and has such been since the beginning  
and poets have done nothing  
since except twist it and bend it.  
I am just here to testify  
not apologize if you're offended.

For I have recognized  
that the WORD is not mine  
it belongs to a greater poet than I  
The Most High.

For Jehova's sake  
if the first poem was "LET THERE BE LIGHT"  
how does another poet follow  
that on a mic?  
Self righteously trying to decipher  
his own scribbled handwriting  
as he reads in the dark.

Without these scrolls I'm just a babbling man  
a crazed fan  
of hearing myself talk.

So I write  
to paint my soul on ice  
with all the blues  
of Langston's hues.  
They taught you how to kill a mockingbird  
and I'ma teach you  
how to bring him back to life  
resurrected in the wombs  
of Maya Angelous  
so the caged bird that sang  
can finally take flight.

Before the grapes of wrath dry up  
and become raisins in the sun.  
Before somebody else walks into  
the Audubon Ballroom with a gun.

Maybe I can save just a little bit  
of right now  
if I open my eyes  
close my mouth  
and write it all down

because the past must first be binded  
so the future remains bound  
and a path will unfold  
like falling pages  
laying pavement  
on the ground.

I just want my words  
to serve justice  
to the forests you cut down.  
Use this ink  
to plant seeds  
which grow new trees  
that cast shade and bear fruit  
where new cities are found.

If you write  
like this  
then anything you say  
will start to look  
like **poetry**.

**Nik Richard** is currently an artist and urban planner in New Orleans with his Master of Urban and Regional Planning from the University of New Orleans. He is also the author of a previous book of poetry, *Love and Water*.

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