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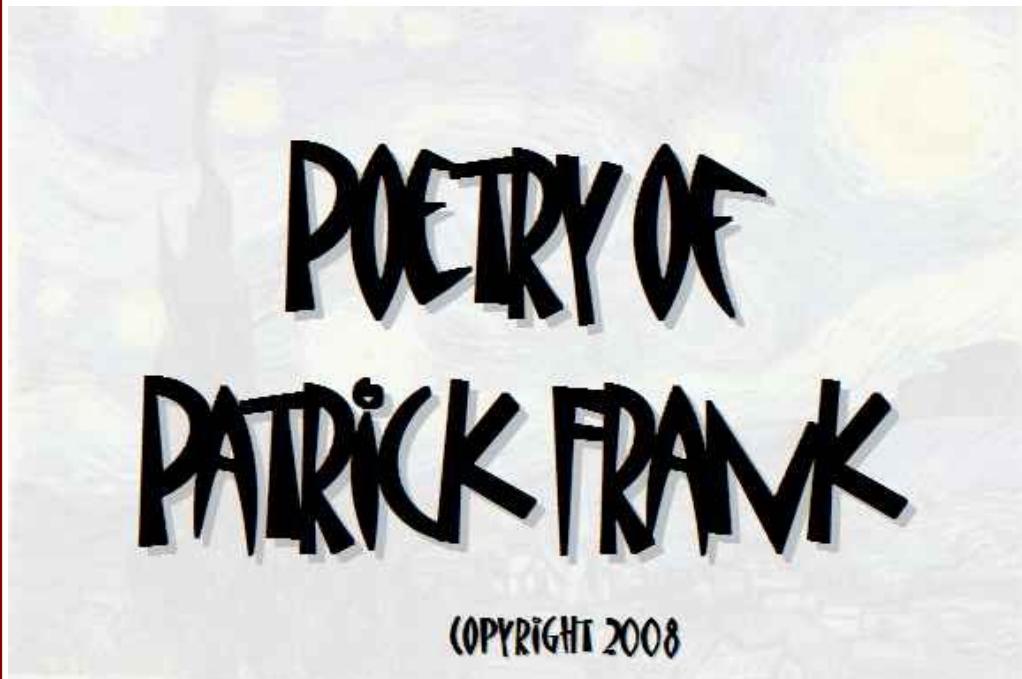
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## Hope

At the court alone, in pure light...I am surrounded by green, immense space. In the distance, there is wave of cricket sound and a line of trees. A feeling of remorse fades as I fall into the rhythm of play. A pickup truck passes and a man waves. An old woman crosses the field slowly with her two grandkids.

Almost imperceptibly, I think I hear the sound of autumn wind.

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## Life and Death

1

There are things I have yearned for and barely touched, but could not possess. I fear nonexistence.

2

Today I saw cows in a field of yellow flowers. Everything in the field was filled with light. I saw sleek horses on the other side of the road.

3

Music takes me back. What is it I long for?

Past midnight a glowing stop sign resembles a face.

4

Turned down for a job...I am back at this computer. Outside is only gray sky. Our white cat, Lilly, stares out the window all day. The I Ching says change is coming.

I think about my guitar.

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## Searching

1

Another dream of an airplane crash. Its mammoth form and array of lights descend to the horizon. I still want to carry the passengers in my arms.

2

There is no turning back...and in the dream, no perspective or mindfulness. But you are someone who put trust in me, and I am accompanying you into eternal night.

3

Someone pounds on our door. It is night and our curtains are closed. I feel panic and shout, "what do you want?"

Later on, I find out it was our black neighbor Henry. I go out into the darkness to shake his hand.

4

Dream of losing my notes before a speech...The next night I cannot sleep.

5

My country makes detainees believe they are drowning. My country tortures, makes us feel we are all under the ether mask.

6

There is the glow of the moon at three a.m.. There are dark trees and a few street lights...but no stillness. Behind the faint cricket sound there is a steady trill. And there is the sound of trucks from somewhere, out of sight.

I

go out back to search for our cat. She may be under the house...I call for her softly.

7

Halloween...Henry comes over with his wife and kids. We stand on the porch and the darkness falls. Their cats and ours skulk around. He helps me to disconnect the yard light.

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## Fire Within

1

The train blasting through Kingstree in the night has no soul. The engineer acts like a machine. The train blasting its horn destroys sleep. We are dimly aware.

2

I dream I must leave a stray cat by the road.

3

I need a friend in this Southern town.

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## Memory

There is a town called Lake City that has no lake and is no city. I drove through Lake City in the dark

time...after midnight before dawn. I stopped at a convenience store for something I cannot remember. The parking lot was empty except for my van. The parking lot was bleak Hovering outside was a young girl who was colored chocolate with a touch of cream

The young girl was paper thin and had a wasted look upon her face. She came up to me and touched herself and tried to get into my van. Then I noticed someone else lurking in the shadows. I pushed her away and drove out fast

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## Focus

1

Sitting in McDonald's and two other men are there and silent and staring at their coffee and I think they are out of work like me.

I call someplace where I signed up to work. The man on the other end seems distant. I shut down my cell and put it back in the bag, then read for a while and make some notes.

Walking back home...the sound of a train mingles with church bells on Main Street. Then I hear the sound of jets from Shaw AFB making practice sorties over Kingstree.

I walk slowly but keep moving on.

2

The PA system from the "white academy" carries through the night air. It is like the football game is being played in our bedroom. The announcer goes on and on.

We lie in bed and Linda moves closer to me.

3

Home alone and sick. Everything is quiet. I have spoken to my son. I am resting up for a job interview.

Linda will be back soon with cake and candles.

Not long ago I dreamed that all of my possessions were stolen by a person with no conscience. That person was me, once upon a time.

I cannot sleep because of pain and lie awake for hours.

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## On the Edge of Charleston

1

Still out of work, in the dark before dawn. My window is now open to stillness. At my feet is a black puppy I found on the street. She is starting to relax...I am too.

Light is growing in the trees.

2

I dream my soul was sucked out, in the silent halls of a complex. I dream of my mom, begging for food, in the dead past.

There is nothing new in my agency. My gift is stored in a box, behind a closet door. I dream of the box, after many years.

I have awakened to light...walk to the café, keep my pace slow...drink coffee and read and write. I have embraced solitude, but speak to a stranger.

3

We are driving to Charleston in the darkest night. As we approach the city, headlights zoom everywhere.

Angel sleeps in the back seat. She has been good.

We have been sniping at each other along the way. I feel bad about myself and a little hopeless. Soon we will be lost. Soon we will be wandering. Soon we will be traveling on dark streets in a jumbled part of town.

We are searching for a couple from Indiana who want to adopt Angel. Finally they flag us down in an alley that is also a strip mall. The girl takes Angel into her arms.

For the first time, I feel the presence of the green ocean swirling, on the edge of Charleston.

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## Wondering

A stand of trees, circled in ivy, drawing me in  
Christmas Eve

Henry next door tells us about a break-in, and shows  
me his gun

Debt rises. I dream about a mental health clinic, on a storage lot

Linda has chest pain one night. I touch her hand

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## In the Dusk

Traveling back to see my son...passing through the Okefenokee, in crimson light.

Crossing the black waters of the Suwanee. Back to see Cousin Faye, after thirty years.

On the way home we leave the interstate to explore South Georgia. In the dusk I pull over to tell Linda what is in my heart.

I have envisioned my dad, then I envision our future, in the vanishing light.

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**Patrick Frank** is a Master's level teacher-counselor, poet-essayist, and advocate for the poor from Kingstree, South Carolina. My poetry and prose have been published in a number of periodicals and anthologized three times. Currently, he's teaching homebound students, while working as a grassroots organizer in the campaign of Barack Obama.