

# TOWNSHIP EPISTLES

-by Ryan Cramer

## INTRODUCTION

*Township Epistles* is a compilation of three works written between the spring of 2010 and the spring of 2013. Each was written in a separate manner and the three works run chronologically backward. The reason for arrangement was to create the effect of obscurity into clarity.

Though the arrangement was chosen for the flow of the three works together, non of the works lapse or have anything to do with one another. Each work is based through memories or events around a person. Each work represents a different person and aspect. Even though there are specific meanings and ideas that can be drawn from each work, it is important to me that the reader also draws their own meaning and understanding.

*Epistles of Danbury* was written within a few days in the early spring of 2013. *Epistles of Arapahoe* was written over almost two years, beginning sometime in 2011 and ending toward the end of 2012. *Epistles of Arapahoe* was also not fully recognized until part three of it was written. Part three, originally titled *Not Saved*, was when I had become aware of the progression of thoughts, feelings, and memories on a particular person. After connecting the dots on other material written that was related, it began to take form. Finally, *Epistles of Cambridge* was written over the course of one week in the spring of 2010.

Originally compiled in around 2015, for a short time I self-published these and a few other written works. I hand made each cover with a set of stencils I created and bound every copy as well. I produced them for a few months and sold a few at art showings I had been in. Eventually certain events or galleries I did show in gave some doubt to selling books and I fell out of producing anymore. Maybe some day I will begin again, I'm unsure. It seemed contradictory to keep the material away from the public eye and this is why I am presenting it here. It was meant to be read and enjoyed, maybe connected with, even inspiring.

Finally, on the account of the Epistles of Cambridge, I would like to dedicate those letters to my very close friend and his mother whom passed that year.

-Ryan Cramer

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## EPISTLES OF DANBURY

I:

A single strand of blonde hair sewn through the skin at the base of both my wrists.

A single strand that connects them in my lap as I sit on an old swing

*in the park*

You stand before me, very near me.

Dear to me.

Hold me in your arms, that which is the cover.  
Sleep where no one else will, remain the timeless cover

Do you remember when the bellies burst on the clouds?  
A few drizzly arms hung down in disbelief, their fingers reaching down  
Spread out in sparkling radiance between the crease  
Where the sun bore all the weight, clasping upon the uneven horizon of tree and rooftops.

2:

Lifeless, backward drawn. Where might you go? Where I don't know or where I might make  
the discovery of your family name from a few strangers on the street?  
I do not know.  
I think our places are twisted and coiled up in rows along the homes and businesses in disuse  
along the district running down through the middle of town.  
Just over the railroad tracks that seem to snake with the highway and back onto the Main.

3:

Then you opened a space at the center of your crown, the part in your hair.  
You were whispering, but I couldn't hear  
*the words.*  
Then I saw the backs of weathered brick buildings, I saw cellar doors painted with bright colour.  
I saw vegetation and overgrowth bristling and crawling out from the earth and up the legs of  
farm implements.  
I saw all the town  
*I knew*  
Through your eyes.  
I felt the same I do when I come home.

4:

Someone told me our key is secrecy. The key to a small town, its charm and mystery.

5:

Cupid's bow.  
The Cupid's cross.  
When you leave and I am left,  
And I am the chapters of mist during each passing year  
Am the radiant dye in the clothing, on your body, that dulls in each enclosing night  
Am the wanderer unnoticed in your cloak of familiarity.  
I am the invisible admirer.

## THE EPISTLES OF ARAPAHOE

1:

Watching the gables and the trim on the windows on the numerous pale houses as I drove through your town, I could see you. Youthful, alone, more faithful than I myself could ever hope. Your grey face blending with each reflection off every deep, abysmal pane.

2:

I felt the light behind your eyes. The light that came with your look and warmed the skin and the olive, canvas cloth that covered it. It warmed the locks of my hair. Your light that was the sun, that crept from the clouds unto my body, midwinter.

3:

I've been thinking a lot. I've been seeing places a bit differently each and every time I go through them. Even though not much has changed. It's hard to see much difference when it is just day to day. Maybe the weather changes, maybe it is a different time and the sun is just come on over the eastern edge, or it is full overhead. It's never enough to speak of.

I have a question for you...

*Were you chosen to defeat me?*

You were full, very full. When seeking for your existence I begin to feel I may not have a purpose. It's unkind, but I think it is what we were meant for. For you to be gone. For me to keep seeking the same places.

4:

What would you know when I pull the pages from my book? What would it mean? We do not talk.

On my way along the roads to town, I close my eyes briefly, just a few times. I cannot see for a moment where I am, where I'm headed.

*But in motion.*

I sought the shame I felt when I thought of those times I had spoke. Not for you or your words. You always came, you always spoke to save me. Reclaim me from the iridescent world.

You were wise.

But there. There. The feelings were no longer there.

I wrote this small bible for you, so I would find peace with myself and the things I can say. So I could come to fully recognize every part of my shame. You'll never release me from your kind eyes, their look that washed over me as pity on a slave. But I have come and gone. All I will remember now is that it took all this time.

## EPISTLES OF CAMBRIDGE

1:

The eyes are open to the light coming down to them, in the beams that come. I know I am the dark material, the hunting over prairie and field. This dark material.

2:

I can feel the tears ebbing, they just won't come. Not full, not awake. It would be simple enough. But I can see after a long drive, and through the rain, I am home and empty. Ghostly. Finding almost everything unchanged in the shining, wet, night streets. Emptied.

I stare into faint, pastel green lit passages across the schoolyard and the ways I once drove to all the other places.

None of it mine.

3:

The morning has gone quickly now, it's an hour before the service. There's no thinking of it, it doesn't seem realistic why I am meeting many the people I'd grown up with at a thing such as this. It's nothing anyone expected, beneath circumstances.

4:

There was a gold hue through the cramped stairway and into the little room just outside the chapel.

When I looked up, taking the first step, the pastor and his wife were standing at the top.

The coil of my memories while I made my way and saw other faces.

5:

The bed submerged under inches of water. What else is here to look at? A cut down cover of a childhood? Trees without leaves, no trees at all along the Medicine Creek.

6:

There is this ageless camouflage, whether in the trees that once rounded the creek, laughter, or just being old fashion in things. We are the best of men and women to allow it. We've come a long way when we know when to speak.

7:

You want someone to come to you, out of your own murky past. Understanding and gothic in the same setting. So you can tell them something important, something you have learned and they should know before they head the rest of the way into your life., beyond love and eternity, unknown heights where both of you meet. In a cemetery overlooking the town.

8:

The chapel was amber, I'll remember. It did as I knew it would and took it's touch on me.

The tears I mean.  
For my good friend and his brother's mother.

*9:*

I want to tell you that I love you and I've missed you and I've been two pieces since I heard the news, I've been more pieces since I left. And you've held me together when you haven't known it, even at a distance.

And I know I'm difficult and I'm distant but you do well to the grain of this self.

*10:*

Saying I have found something here would be heresy, a black hand covering the face of epiphany. What epiphany there may have been. Maybe just feelings, feelings being lost in the ginger bricks and every street.

*11:*

The Republican reflected the high expanse of the deepening, cornflower blue sky. It was two hours before twilight.

Barefoot and with out pant legs rolled as high as our knees, some of us stepped out into the cold river stream from the grassy sandbars.

He held the black box and removed the clear pouch of her pale, grey ash. Everyone was ready, everyone quiet. There were seconds of silence and he turned her into the mirror that was rippling gently high around his ankles. As the ash touched, some swept up a little into the air. Much of it kept to the surface and carried by the river went out toward the diversion dam in the east.

It's often diversion, coming home again. I'm afraid it will always be this way most of the time.

When the ash was spread we made our way back to the bank.

My bare, right foot was the last to leave the water and as I turned back, all that was in the place where she left were pointed bits of white specks coming through a stretch of sunken ash in the river bed. The bone that could not be burned.