



## **Scratch and Dent Dreams**

**by Eric Darby**

**Recited by U.S. Poetry Out Loud National Champion Kristen Dupard**

Come on in, I've got a sale on scratch and dent dreams.  
Whole cases of imperfect ambitions, stuff the idealists couldn't sell.  
Yeah, I know none of it's got price tags, you decide how much its worth.  
And none of it's got glossy colored packaging but it all works just fine.  
I've got rainy day swing sets good night kisses and stationary stars still flying at  
the speed of light.  
And over there out back if you dig down through those alabaster stoplights and  
those old 45's  
You'll find a whole crate of second hand hope.  
Yeah right there, that's no chrome, you just gotta work, polish it up a little bit.  
Most folks give up too easy—trade it in for some injection mold and here and  
now. And over there across the freeway, you see that purple awning flappin' in  
the breeze? Well that's Momma Genuine's shop. She's older than all of us put  
together  
But she still laughs like a house. Now, she only sells tools but not like ya know,  
She's got saws that put back together, drills that make whole...  
Momma's a cool legend to know, and she sells duct tape too.  
And down there at the end of the block are two kids, crew cut and pig tailed sittin'  
behind a bindle-top table selling peanut-butter ice-cream out of a galvanized  
pail, And there's no metaphor there it's just good ice-cream.  
So here's whatchya do, take a look around pick out what reminds you of places  
You wanted to be but gave upon going  
And jam it all in this big box called "now."  
Then go across the street to Momma Genuine's, ask her how she's been,  
Show her what I gave ya, she'll know exactly what you need  
And then go back in the center of that freeway and get to work making it all fit.  
You wont have any directions or factory numbertabs but don't panic.  
There's a hundred ways to do it right and none to do it wrong cause you're startin'  
out with what's already been given up up on, you cant do any worse.  
Use the tools momma gave ya, hum a little while ya work.  
Then you find yourself sproutin' extra thumbs!

Take a break.

Go around the block, get yourself an ice cream.  
Smile when they hand it to you, tip 'em if you can  
And when you get back it's all gonna make sense.  
You'll see where it's gonna fit perfect and where the duct tape has to go.  
And when you get finished, take whatever spare parts you got at the bottom of  
"now"  
And make yourself a little sign that says "tomorrow," and hang it on your  
masterpiece.  
Then you go back down the block to where those two kids are packing up their  
peanut butter enterprise cause somebody told them they'd fail and I want you to  
hand them tomorrow.  
Make sure they know how important it is.  
After they've run off with it all elbows and smiles y'all can come back here,  
We'll do it all over again. Now I'm not telling you this to make a profit,  
That's how so many good ideas go wrong.  
I'm just tired of seeing every day people screaming through these doors  
Convinced they're gonna hock even their littlest hopes and dreams to fund their  
401Ks.  
I'm tired of seeing this whole world bet on going big or giving up.  
Only handing out glory to newspaper headlines and storybook endings,  
'Cause the truth is I think we need those swing sets most on the rainy days.  
I'm happy going to sleep after just a goodnight kiss,  
And I believe that beauty can be as simple as two kids, crew cuts and pig tails,  
handing me a scoop of peanut butter ice cream that tastes so good, you'd think  
it was a dream.