POETRY FOR ALL OCCASIONS

Martin Nelson

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For Diana, without whom these poems would not have been realized.

‘I wandered lonely as a cloud

That floats on high o’er vales and hills.

When all at once I saw a crowd

A host of golden daffodils.’

William Wordsworth

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# POEMS ON CREATIVITY

# A DOG’S LIFE

Where am I? What is this place?

It smells so funny and the floor is so cold.

Strange voices, friendly and kind

Please stroke me growl, again.

I am tired yet I cannot sleep.

I must pee, pee, here on the floor,

Naughty Jemma, I hear them say

This food is good, I was very hungry.

I am walking in their garden.

What wonderful smells.

Here a soft place to sleep.

But there’s nothing to eat.

What was that I saw running away?

A small bird with a tail and a wing.

A tasty meal if I could catch it still

Before it flies into the trees.

They say my life is worthless

A dog’s life is no life at all.

But how wrong they have all got it

Cos’ a dogs life is wonderful.

# CHISEL

Cold sharp silent steel

Poised and waiting.

A sudden blow.

And the stone is entered

Step by step,

The steel

Reveals

The stone’s inner soul,

Like lovers

Hand in hand,

Each dancing

With the other,

Until fruition and calm.

# IS IT FINISHED?

Is it finished when I decide?

Or when I lose the wonder of it?

Does the day end when the sun subsides?

Though the memory of it remains?

Is love lost when a lover dies?

Or does it just change a little?

Is there a beginning and an end

Or is this a figure of my imagination.

Can creativity have a conclusion?

Or does it just become an illusion

When the idea is fulfilled

And the excitement has died.

# KEEPING FIT

I woke early one morning

To attend at the gym.

The day was still dark

As I dressed in the dim, light in my room.

I made ready to go

But the time went too slow.

The day was much warmer

Than I thought it would be.

The leaves on the path

Were so soft under foot.

A bright Hello, as I entered the room

To the repetitive sound

Of a running machine.

As I stepped up and down

To the beat of the drum.

My heart rate increased

And the sweat

Seemed to run

As the effort to pedal

Began to take toll.

But after a while

My breathing slowed down,

I felt I was drifting alone on a cloud.

My mind seemed to clear

And my vision grew sharp.

As I continued to jog,

Although wanting to stop.

The time goes so fast

When you are working so hard,

I suddenly looked round, an hour had past.

# SCULPTOR

Poised and hesitant,

Expectant

And fearful,

Like a surgeon

He stands

Uncertain.

What will be found?

He enters

Unsure but firm,

Caressing

And encouraging

Until

Reluctantly,

The stone reveals its truth.

# SCULPTURE

Hands and arms are ringing still

From the hammer’s vibration

Midday and the sun is high

We stop and seek somewhere to lie

Amidst the boulders on either side

We sit and rest and dream

Of shapes and forms in stone to carve,

And mold into eternity

About us stand some mighty rocks

Present since the beginning of time

Holding within their hearts

An eternal truth

That all mankind must learn

Born out of noble heat and simple dust

We march across the world

Inhabiting every land and hill

But seemingly unaware

Of the great burden we bear

To guard and keep this universe

To protect and save its life

In all its forms both big and small

So that our future may be

Secure to enjoy it as well.

# STONE

The stone stands alone,

Aloof and complete,

Containing the memory

Of the beginning of time.

Silently it reflects,

And engages in a dance of eternity

With my chisel,

As it reveals layer by layer

Its innermost dreams.

Where have you been?

Where are you going?

My chisel cleaves your sides.

And after our short dialogue

I will also be gone.

Joining you in another time

And another place,

No longer one being but

Part of a new creation.

# THE EXECUTIVES

Smart Suited, well brushed hair

Leather attaché case in hand,

They walk with a confident air

And do not see me standing there

The world of commerce is their field

They are the inheritors of this world.

# THE GYMNASIUM

The throbbing sounds

Assail my ears,

As the running girls

Ignore the leers

Of the macho men

With their macho weights,

Focusing on

Increasing their pecs.

The to and fro,

The up and down.

The sweat that pours.

The continuing sound

Of young and old,

Of fat and thin,

All chasing the dream,

The need to win.

The perfect shape,

The pack of six.

The grunts, the sweat,

All for a fix.

The endorphin thrill

That suppresses the pain.

Is it all worthwhile?

For the final gain?

# THE PROMENADE

The people walk by hand in hand

Going they know not where

Enjoying the fragrant seaside air

And the sound of the distant band.

The sea beyond is ever present

Creeping up the promenade walls.

Then receding as the tide retreats

Repeating a rhythm of eternity.

# TRAVELLERS

So many different faces.

So varied are their clothes.

They share a common object

The wheeled luggage that they pull.

They look like refugees

Reminiscent of a forgotten past

When mankind was herded into trucks

And taken on a journey, his last.

# POEMS ON THE MYSTICAL

# A LETTER TO MYSELF

I received a letter yesterday

That I had written to myself

The handwriting looked so familiar

But I couldn’t remember where

And when I had composed it.

Slowly I read it and recalled that weekend

When, I stepped outside my comfort zone

And faced my demons but not alone.

I was in the company of men

Who soon became my friends.

I saw such courage and strength in them

That they gave me the will to go on

And explore my past, that deep dark well

From which my present peace has come

# A MIRACLE IS BORN

At a certain moment

A life begins

Containing

All it needs.

In a single seed.

To fashion a being

Like you or me.

To create all its parts

From the heart to the toes

The eyes to the nose

Everything is there.

From its tongue to its feet

Looking and touching

Feeling and crying

Eating and sleeping.

She grows

And explores the world

Up goes her head

And she stands unsure

Upon the ground

She takes a first step

Smiling.

Learning and speaking

Repeating a million years

Of human being..

Within her resides

A future life

Waiting

Until her eggs are ripe

To begin again.

# ANDREW

He came into this world alone,

Just a small weak speck of life,

Cleanly separated from you by a knife

Which cut the umbilical bond?

But his smile and shiny eyes

Soon re-built that bridge of love.

You called him your handbag despite his size

And wore him like a glove.

You are complete in each other arms

And together

Your charms

Make the world a better place.

# CORAL WORLD

A sentient tenement beneath the sea

Built over a million years ago

Houses a thousand living cells

Within its calciferous walls

So many different shapes and hues

From pinks to reds to brightest blues

They sway and move in unison

Like an enormous velodome

So many forms, so many shapes

Make up this watery home.

They live in harmony and peace

Beneath the deep blue foam

And when we venture into their realm

Gliding silently beyond the waves

We are offered a scene of gentle life

A beauteous world of colour and form

# I AM BORN

I was sure

That I was born in November

But really I honestly can’t remember

I think I was there

Because I was told

About it when I was much older.

I had to wait

Until I was three

To find out

If it was true.

I learned that I was the middle of three

But that was all I knew about me.

Since then

The years have flown by

And I have learned that I must try

To do my best,

Whatever the test

And to happily do the things I’m asked.

And now

That I am old and grey

I live my life from day to day

Not looking

Too far into the future

And not anticipating my departure

# NEW WORLD

It crept up unannounced

And looked so familiar,

That I was not prepared,

For what had really changed.

Gone was the world I recognized

And now a raucous one remained.

# THE RAIN

The dry parched earth

Devours the rain

You can almost hear the gulps,

As it falls onto

the waiting soil

From the dark black clouds above.

The withered plants

raise up their heads

And stand erect and tall

The river bed awakens

From its long dried out sleep

And begins to move and leap.

While resting plants stir

And new buds reappear

Even the lowly weed

Despised and unloved

Partakes of the gift bestowed

# THE RAINS CAME

The heavens opened

Torrents, cascading, pouring,

Thundering and crashing

Replacing all other sounds.

A miraculous reminder

Of nature.

In all its magnificence.

Regal, triumphant and unstopping,

Releasing

Its benefaction.

Refilling

The dry empty earth

With revitalization.

Stopping, as quickly as it started,

Its cloud containers empty.

Suddenly, it's quiet,

Only dripping, from trees, roofs and shelters.

The ponds and pools dry up .

A miracle,

Remaining only in memory

# THE VAPOUR TRAIL

High up in the sky I see

Thin lines of white against the clouds.

They move so slowly and without sound

I often wonder where they are bound.

They stand out bright against the clouds

Making criss-cross patterns in the sky

The people up there are looking down

To all of us upon the ground

We seem so very far apart

As they go speeding by

Into those far and distant lands

We wave but sadly can only stand

Where are they off to?

When will they return?

We stretch out our arms to them

And share a moment’s dreams.

The miracle that made it so

We rarely wonder at

Yet it is man’s continuous quest

To search for the unknown.

To reach out beyond this world

And dream of unknown paths

To slake this unquenchable thirst

That seems to know no end

# THE TUNNEL

Suddenly it’s there-

The opening into which we go.

The dark closed womb of the deep,

Unaware of the lashing sea above.

And then France’s green and flowing fields

Sunlit beneath the deep blue sky.

Two warring countries joined at last

But still divided by their past.

# POEMS ON PLEASURE

# BUYING BREAD

It was a blue summer day,

With not a cloud in the sky

A slight breeze was blowing

As I left my abode.

Not a care in the world

Only nine years old,

I cycled along

To reach the main road

On my right was a wall,

Beyond a plantation.

The bananas were still green

Not ready to eat

Each bunch of fruit

Still in its purple coverlet.

A pound note in my hand

To buy the day’s bread

I cycled on

Not a thought in my head

I reached the main road

And free-wheeled along.

Only the blurred outline

Of the pink rose of Sharon

And the Bougainvillea

Feeling the wind in my face

To my dismay on the way,

I had dropped the money

Sick and upset I cycled home

To face my mother’s fury

# DARK HEAD

A dark head upon my pillow, I awake.

Where am I? Who am I? How did I get here?

Who is she? Her soft black skin beneath my touch.

A chance meeting, an unexpected love,

That changed my life, never to be the same,

These things remind us who we are,

Flotsam upon the waves of life.

Tossed here and there we know not where

To rest upon a foreign beach

A multitude of other souls.

I turn, our eyes connect and I recall

The emptiness when you went away

A place I cannot reach, a better place

Where you will remain never to age

Your face the same as it will always be.

Tears crowd my eyes and blur my sight

At the thought that we will never be

Together as we were, to grow old

And share the twilight of our lives

In some quiet and peaceful place.

# GRAPEFRUIT

Globular, sensuous, full-bodied and sweet

Waiting on a supermarket shelf,

For someone to eat.

Carrying many memories

From Cyprus, California

Or Valencia.

It has travelled a long distance,

To satisfy my fancy.

Sharp steel, slices cleanly

Violating and laying open

Your fleshiness.

Moist, sweet, shining wet

Like the innermost parts,

Of your sex.

The sharp astringent taste

Of your sweet sour juice

Stings my awaiting tongue

With the memory of the sun.

And then it’s gone.

The empty peel, its only epitaph

# I LIKE TO WRITE

I first began to write

When I was still at school,

It felt like I had a friend

Whom I was writing to.

It has continued ever since

When time and space allowed

And in my later years

I have returned to it with pride

I don’t call myself a writer,

just like to sit and write

I try to do it every day

Even when I have nothing to say.

Would I like to be published?

I think the answer is yes

Although I doubt it will happen

It doesn’t stop me from trying

I like the brevity of poems.

The discipline of limiting

The words I use to express

The ideas that are inside me.

# LIKE A BIRD

We inhabit, two different worlds,

You and I.

Alone and free you fly,

Leaving me here upon the ground.

Silently,

You glide and swoop,

Making not a single sound.

Having not a single need.

But you are there.

Leaving no destruction behind.

Whereas wherever I go

I destroy the world with my greed.

# MY PIANO

I will have to leave you behind.

No matter how hard I try

To keep you, I know I can’t.

No place in my new abode.

I cannot remember a time

When I was not with you.

But now you have to go

My miniature piano.

The number of hours,

I have spent with you

Playing tune after tune

Practising. .

Angry but never blaming

My fingers too large,

Pressing

The wrong keys

My fault not yours my dear

I never gave you a name.

But you were such a friend

Standing quietly and patiently.

Never complaining.

Always, waiting for me.

Ready to respond to my touch,

It’s time to say goodbye

To an old and dear mate

No last words to say.

Just to stand and stare

Your outline no longer clear

Wrapped in a soft wool cover,

Like a hearse you are leaving

A friend never forgotten

Goodbye.

# SAVE THE EARTH

‘Save the Earth, it’s our only source of chocolate’

Was a notice I saw in a shop window

It made me smile and I wondered why

Perhaps because it is so obvious.

And of course we all like chocolate

And wouldn’t want to be without it.

And yes we know it grows on a plant

As a seed that is harvested.

It smells so good and taste so fine

In whatever form we eat it.

From bar to cake, from sauce to beads

It never seems to fail us.

Imagine a world without it

Not a place worth living in

# SUPERMARKET

Lovers kiss on the moving stairs

Excited by what awaits them there.

They look about with shining eyes,

Each dreaming of a different world.

Hers tranquil, domestic and fulfilled

His turbulent, aggressive and loud

Neither will find for what they search

And each will return dissatisfied.

# THE DISHWASHER

White, silent and patient

It stands waiting.

No longer a stranger.

It serves,

Demanding no praise,

A part of everyone’s life

Essential and unnoticed.

Each has its own language

A unique arrangement of shapes

Racks and trays now empty

Await patiently

To receive

The soiled evidence

Of our everyday being.

To fill its shining space.

# THE PARTY

The delicious sense of expectation

Begins some days away

Delightfully it comes and goes

And then its here to stay.

Our thoughts project ahead

To the fun and games we’ll have.

The moment passes so quickly

And then its memory.

# THINGS THAT GIVE ME PLEASURE

A steaming teacup greets the morn,

And satisfies my early thirst.

It is undoubtedly the first

Of the pleasures I most enjoy.

My second comes in the shower room,

With scorching water down my back.

I stand a primitive alone

Cleansing my skin until it gleams.

My third I smell before it’s made

And salivate at its very thought.

Hot buttered toast at first a dream

And then a crisp reality.

My fourth comes later before I rest

Its joy I feel warming my feet

With heat so comforting and blest,

Can gently woo me into sleep.

# TOUCH

You bathed me like a mother.

With your gentle touch

Caressing

Cleansing

My wrinkled body

With your love

I stood grateful

And humbled

By the lightness of your hand,

So natural

For you

To tend me so.

I love to wash your body

With its contours

So beguiling.

But my pleasure is so selfish

As you stand there

Smiling.

# WARMTH OF THE SUN

How do I describe the feeling of warmth.

When the heat of the sun suffuses my being.

When the bright yellow orb lightens my darkness

How do I describe that so welcome of visitors.

Only by remembering the shock of the cold;

The sudden sting to the skin, the catch of the breath;

The shimmering stiffness and the shaking of limbs.

They remind me why warmth is such bliss.

The tingling heat of red hot water.

The warmth that caresses and kisses my skin.

If only I could remember you by shutting my eyes

And imagining I am there by your side,

With the light of the sun and the smile on your face.

But time is erasing your memory day by day

Although I try so hard to remember

But the warmth of your presence is becoming colder

And I am alone with my dreams

# YES I DO LIKE BANANAS

Oh! Yellow ones, so full and fruity,

A paradise of plump and plenty.

Grown on a trunk so tall and true.

In fingers, so fulsome with flavour,

Each curved form, fleshy and familiar.

With soft texture so tender and tasty

A mouthful so mushy and memorable.

Carefully packed in a perfect parcel,

A wholesome fare for family and friends.

A source of enjoyable edible energy.

A food for athletes, artists and actors,

In scones, scrumptious and crumbly

It’s a top banana man

From a banana republic.

# POEMS ON REFLECTION

# A WALK

The sound of wind in the trees,

So peaceful, relaxed and calm.

The sun through dappled leaves

Children chattering happily

I can see it in my mind

And feel it on my face

The memory is so strong

The details of that place.

We walked hand in hand

In the coolness of the eve

And didn’t ever think

That one of us would leave

Now the other walks alone

Remembering with tears

Those happy glorious days

And those unforgettable years.

I am still walking in that forest.

The air so cool and bliss

Reminding me of the days

When we last shared this

# A WALK ON THE BEACH

The palms reach up like fingers from the sand

A broad white carpet clothing the ground.

The breeze whistles through the swaying trees.

And waves ripple on the surface of the sea.

Tall coconut trunks wave to each other,

Thrusting up to pierce the sky.

Their leaves fluttering like confetti

And swollen fruit hang from the tree

Small boats float by like toys in a bath

Birds singing a welcoming tune,

Pot plants sit waiting to be moved.

While envying their grounded cousins.

The sun,s heat vibrates the air..

And locals lie in the shade and rest

Waiting for the coolness of the dusk,

To promenade and strut their stuff.

It is a paradise here on earth

Where nature in all her splendour

Displays her beauty and her strength

To all who have the power to see

# AUSCHWITZ

Do I need to visit Auschwitz?

To smell the stench of death

To hear the screams of the dying

And see the ovens of hell

Do I need to visit Auschwitz?

To stop my tears from flowing

For the many millions who perished

While I was just still growing.

Do I need to visit Auschwitz?

To remember that it could have been me

That each of us is guilty

For deliberately not wanting to see

Do I need to visit Auschwitz?

To free myself from lies

While I have lived and loved

And they were left to die

Do I need to visit Auschwitz?

To hear a tourist laugh

While wiping ash from his shoe

Or signing an autograph.

Do I need to visit Auschwitz?

To erase those dreadful scenes

When the whole wide world was shown

The extent of the Nazi dream

No, I don’t need to go to Auschwitz?

To see the evil men can do

I can see it all around me\

And if you look, so can you

# BEING ALIVE

The gently flowing water

Rippling softly in my ear,

Reminds me of the present,

This time, the now, the here.

But how to keep it precious

And not waste a single drop

Of this vital eternal liquor,

Which is all we’ve really got.

It passes in a moment

Like the fluttering of the wings

Of a multi-coloured songbird,

As it sings and sings and sings.

Not conscious of tomorrow

Nor the yesterday that’s passed,

Unaware that the nectar,

It’s drinking is its last.

We must make the now so vital

Thcat it lasts and lasts and lasts.

Once having grasped this secret

We must never let it pass

# BROTHERS

Blessed am I with two, but different

The one carefree, the other bent

Upon some task, some purpose to perform.

He leaves so little time to learn

That life can be spent in many ways.

A gentle walk upon the sand

A friendly chat, a wave of hand,

Not always intent on saving time.

I am that middle one

Whose purpose is unclear.,

Undirected I tread life’s lonely trail

To expel me from some simple ways,

Into a world of strange and distant paths.

Fate has cast me an unfamiliar role,

To walk alone while searching for a meaning,

To so many unanswered questions.

We who share so many genes

Are yet unlike in numerous ways.

Each has trod his own distinctive path

In life’s uncertain journey

Unpredicted

By past events.

We meet on different planes

Yet find so much to share

# CAN’T SLEEP

Awake in the dark

I lay staring,

The light from the moon

Glaring.

No peace only pain

persisting,

Three o’clock again

Unstopping.

Thoughts assailing

The future dreading

Indescribable.

Alone in my bed.

A dry cough in the shadows

What does it mean?

Should I be worried?

On whom can I lean?

The future unbearable

The present a whirlpool

My mind ever turning

I feel such a fool.

I know it must end

But I don’t want to think

Of my life beyond this

How far will I sink?

# GOD SMILES WHEN MEN CRY

How did we invent a God?

And thought that he was good

When all we see is bad.

Why do we think he is for us?

When he really doesn’t care.

How did we make

Such a striking mistake?

When the evidence was so clear.

That God if he exists at all

Really doesn’t care.

So much suffering

We see around

So many people in pain.

Why does God just stand and watch

When he could intervene

How can God

Look the other way

And not see my wife in pain

As she loses all her dignity

As her body decays and dies

I think I know the reason

He doesn’t make a move

To help all those in greatest need

Because he doesn’t exist at all

He is a figment of our imagination,

Created because we need to believe

That there is some greater reason

Butmeanwhile we simply grieve.

# HOW WILL I KNOW?

How will I know when I have become?

The person I want to be.

Will there be a message in the sky

To show me that I have arrived.

Will the birds sing a different song?

Will the cloud smile?

How will I know that I have arrived?

Because I have tried and tried,

To become that person, I know, I can be.

Strong and silent, articulate and wise,

Knowing where to hold my tongue

And when to give advice.

Never speaking out of turn,

Never knowing too much.

Always waiting for the right moment.

Just having the light touch.

The fact that I have put the question.

Means I’m halfway to the answer.

I must be aware of what I want.

And to learn not to want what I can't

Be patient, my son and you will see.

That the time is almost nigh.

When a friend will say quietly

Yes, you have arrived

# IN MY THOUGHTS

I don’t cry anymore, the tears don’t form.

Yet you’re as real to me as ever you were.

Your face less clear but I know you’re there

Deep in my thoughts for ever.

I don’t look at your photo as I did before.

Almost too frightened to see your face

In the fixed image never to change,

Never to grow old as I do.

So many people have passed to that void.

So many generations have struggled in pain.

What was it for those who now lie in peace?

It seemed so real, was it all in vain?

# I TRY TO RECALL HER MOOD

They say it’s in my mind,

But here it feels so real

In this empty space I’m in.

The memory of her survives.

In her room unchanged. Within

I can almost hear her move,

But cannot see her smiles.

I try to recall her mood

I sink into solitude

I know she’s unaware

Of the void she’s left behind.

I’m in a sea without a wave,

A beach without a sound.

A garden but not a flower,

A storm without a shower.

I try to recall her mood

I sink into solitude

My life has lost its aim

No reason to start the day

There’s no one to say hello

It all seems dark and grey.

I look for her in vain

And only sit and stare

Into That empty chair

And wonder where she is.

I try to recall her mood

I sink into solitude

My eyes can only see

A sky without a sun.

Two lovers but not a sigh

A song without a tune.

A tree that does not sway.

No matter how hard I try

I fail and only cry.

I try to recall her mood

I sink into solitude

I cannot bring her back

Nor see her face once more.

Her memory lingers on

Within my history.

Still her picture stares at me

It has no life nor feel..

I try to recall her mood,

I sink into solitude.

# I WANT TO TELL SOMEONE

# The truth about myself.

The real me, concealed

Beneath the bluff.

I want to unburden

And say it as it is.

But I know that I can’t

Because it’s really tough.

I want to share my failures,

The things that I get wrong.

I need to tell someone

Who will listen and not judge.

But I know it cannot happen.

I must keep it to myself

And learn to accept my weakness,

My failures and the rest

# LIVING TOO LONG.

Where have they gone? -- I *was twenty yesterday,*

Where are my friends? -- *So tall and so strong,*

My family doesn’t come. -*So sure and so certain*

These faces so strange- *That I would be different.*

That I see every day, -- *I would be special.*

Staring and questioning, - I *would make a change,*

“Are you alright? ---- *The world would be better*

Why don’t they stay? *--- Now that I’m here.*

It was not so before----- *But it doesn’t seem so*

My phone always rang-- *Now I’m so old.*

My friends came to me-- *Now I’m so weak.*

We went on the town- *Now I’m so alone.*

Life seemed so much fun.. *The faces so strange;*

As if it would never end. *The voices so harsh;*

Why did it change?---- *I wish it would end.*

Where has it gone?--- *I am ready to go*

# LOCKED OUT

The screen shouts

‘You are locked out’

(The bank has rejected me)

I shout back ‘I have my key

And the door is open’.

I’m banking on-line,

So simple and convenient

You don't need to queue.

It’s handling my money

Without cheque or cash.

‘You are locked out’

‘Why me?’ I cry

Helpless and impotent,

No where to turn.

No one to help,

No way to go back.

I am powerless.

Three strikes and you're out

Three attempts three stabs, three shots,

And you're closed down

In your best interests, Sir?

By not giving the best interest.

My identity number is needed,

Since nine eleven

Continues

To reverberate

Around the world,

With increased security everywhere.

What is my code number?

My secret word,

My security number,

My personal identifier.

I’ve put in the wrong numerals

And my cash card is out of date

They made a decision

To alter the laws.

They gave me no option

And placed many barriers

For me to overcome.

So many hurdles to leap,

Leaving a sense of doom.

But it’s my money, isn’t it?

# LOST WORDS

What has happened to them?

Where have they gone?

Those words which are no longer used.

Has their day been done?

Actress, waitress and chairman,

Manhole cover and duchess

Priestess, empress and burgess

They have gone it seems for ever.

But mistress still has a meaning,

We know.

Or should it also go

The way of the others.

But will we need a word.

Which we would use undercover.

To describe those woman

Who live in the never never?

# NATURE OR NUTURE

What has happened to them?

Where have they gone?

Those words which are no longer used.

Has their day been done?

Actress, waitress and chairman,

Manhole cover and duchess

Priestess, empress and burgess

They have gone it seems for ever.

But mistress still has a meaning,

We know.

Or should it also go

The way of the others.

But will we need a word.

Which we would use undercover.

To describe those woman

Who live in the never never?

# SKIN DEEP

Worn like a suit of finest gold

Bespoke and seamless, it covers you.

Large arid plains, deep tropical crevasses.

It embraces every surface of your being

From mountain ridge to deep valley

It hugs you.

Steep ravines and inlets,

Large caves and curved creeks

It enfolds you.

In the cavern of your mouth

Stalagmites and stalactites

It protects you.

In many shades of colour

Brown, fawn pink white and yellow

Thick foliage emerging.

Or a smooth and hairless meadow.

As a friend it protects you

As an enemy it torments you.

In youth, soft and yielding

In old age, wrinkled and sagging.

Seven score years it's lasted.

Love it or hate it, you can't replace it

But like a snake

Would love to do so

# THE DAY THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

It seemed a long time coming,

I didn’t recognize it at the time.

But in one short day my life

It changed forever.

How could I have known?

That it would affect me so?

I thought I was complete.

Other people I didn’t need.

I knew I could make my way

As I had always done.

Sharing only part of me

Keeping so much alone

And then it happened

So quickly at the end

A long drawn out separation

And suddenly she is gone

You lay there calm unmoving

As if you were still with me.

But you had already flown

To a place I could not be.

I sat and watched you changing,

Discarding your earthly form.

Until the daylight faded

And I was all alone

Ever since then I have been alone.

Unable to fill the space

That yawning empty hole

That I cannot erase.

Time has passed so quickly

And it is now many years ago

Since that fateful day now gone

That changed my life forever.

# THE HUMAN CONDITION

We share the human condition,

It’s the same journey for us all.

No matter where we start,

We know it’s going to end.

A journey of love and sadness,

Hopes and failures.

Of wealth and poverty,

Of health and illness.

Each finds a path

To overcome the barrier

To discover a place in the sun

Despite all the challenges,

We must learn to accept

The failures and disappointments

To enjoy the successes,

The rewards and the congratulations.

Whatever the colour of our skin,

Whatever the beliefs we hold.

# THE RIVER TEES

Where have you come from?

Where are you going?

So intent on your purpose,

So constant you’re flowing.

The sound of your rushing

Is like music to my ears?

It promises for ever

Unchanging for years

As I sit here just watching

You flow past my window

Across rocks and boulders

And beneath the tall willow

We shared some great moments

My love, you and I

When we watched from the bank

The river rushing by

So dear when your soft fingers

Reached out for my face

I saw love in your eyes

Which I can never replace.

But now you've gone forever

But the river carries on

The image of you remains

In my heart for ever long

It’s an unforgettable sound

That rings in my ears

Long after you’ve left me

Just its noise and my tears

And when I return

Sometime in the future

You’ll greet me as a friend

And I’ll know you are there

By the sound of your flowing

And the sight of your waves

The rocks that you polish,

It’s your memory I crave.

# THE SILENT ENEMY

I am living in its shadow

It never lets me rest

No family is without it

No person can it best.

It lurks there in the darkness

Just waiting to hit you hard.

You can forget it for a moment

Then it catches you off your guard

No matter where you hide

No matter where you go.

It always finds a pathway

To remind you every day.

The end can come so suddenly

When you think it's gone astray,

And before you can respond to it,

It's taken your life away.

# THE UNREALITY OF REALITY

We sit and smile and share a joke

It all seems calm and loving.

We do not note the passing time

Or think about its meaning.

Inside us each a devil lurks,

Growing and spreading deeper.

To strike when we can least expect

And destroy our peace forever.

The days pass by so very fast

As if no thing is changing

Yet the cancer is marching a pace

Waiting to reveal its sting

The swan floats gracefully by

Its feet furiously peddling.

To remind us that which we always knew

A calm outside conceals an evil brew.

How will it strike?

When will that be?

The fear of uncertainty remains.

It colours every instant of the light

And chases night away.

No matter how much we try,

We know that in the end

It will have its final way.

# WAITING

“We won’t be long”, they say,

“Just a few minutes”

“OK”, you say and sit,

Relaxing and dreaming a while.

Time goes by and then.

“Where are they? what are they doing?”

It seems impossible they can take so long.

And then they reappear,

And it is as if,

They had never been away.

# WHY

No matter how much I question,

No matter how hard I try,

I still can’t find the answer

To why she died so young.

Should I have been more vigilant?

Should I have watched more closely?

Could I have prevented the illness?

That finally caused her death.

Now two years thereafter

I still can’t believe it’s true.

I can’t accept the reality

That her body is no more.

I sometimes visit her grave side

And stand and stare and cry.

For the life that was taken too early,

So cruelly and before her time

She had so much more to offer

Now that her burden had lightened.

As the loved parents she had nurtured

Had served their time on Earth.

But alas it was not to be.

Her life so unfulfilled was taken.

And I sit and see her face

And wonder why it happened.

# BIOGRAPHY

Martin Nelson was born in London in 1932

During the Second War he was evacuated Bermuda and returned in 1945. His wife Diana died in 2005 They have a daughter Sarah, a son Paul and 4 grand children. After a career as an Orthopaedic Surgeon he returned to college to gain a BA in Fine Art and an MA in sculpture.He began writing in the years after retirement following courses at NEC, Arvon and the Open University He writes poetry and short stories that cover a wide range of human emotions and experiences.

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