

POETRY FOR MORE OCCASIONS

Martin Nelson

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

'Our England is a garden, and such gardens are not made by singing: *Oh, how beautiful!* and sitting in the shade.'

Rudyard Kipling, "The Glory of the Garden"

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POEMS ON BEING

ARCHEOLOGY OF MEMORY

Those fragments of memory,
Recollections so vivid.
Slowly unearthed
During moments of being.

Altered by time,
Eroded and jumbled.
Such priceless snippets
Are reality now gone.

Shreds of imagination
Slivers of light and shade
Precious nuggets of time
Slipping through my fingers.

A shell of myself
So vital yet a shadow
Hidden away
In a pocket of my mind.

Slowly those magic moments
Exposed and re-examined
Slip through my fingers.
Now, no longer a reality
Are gradually fading,
Until solely a memory.

BIRTH

A new life is beginning,
It is creation at its best.
Still so small yet almost complete
Slowly it's becoming a person.

So many hopes, so many dreams,
Fears, uncertainties and worries.
I'm not in control of my destiny
When will the day come to change my life?

Still too small to feel movements
Will it be a boy or a girl?
I feel it's there alive and not yet kicking
My being has changed.

No longer is my body alone
But shared by another
My food is her food
My liquor is her liquor

Her life is now my life.
She's a welcome visitor
yet unknown
No name no identity
She'll be received with smiles
And open arms
As she looks into the world
That first hazy and uncertain view
A mystery of life she recreates evolution

From her beginning is our hope for mankind.

CAMEL

The bright warm sun lights up the beach
Suddenly revealing her there,
Plodding slowly, a desert ship
Alone aloof unaware.
I watch and share her loneliness
She doesn't notice me.

Now children climb upon her back
Willingly she lurches, rises and walks on,
Not seeing their smiles nor the fun she gives.

Descended from an ancient breed
She carried spices to our western world
Uncomplaining, in a caravan.
Heedless of the burden she has borne
Throughout eternity.

CHILDREN

What greater joy than this?
To see your children grow,
To hold them in your arms
And protect them from all harm.

To spot your face in theirs.
Listen to your words again
Witness that first timid step
And hear that shy word Dad.

And all the time remembering
That you were once a child
Your parents in their turn chose
To believe in a better future

That each of us owes so much
To those who went before
So many generations
Of which only memories remain.

But maybe, perhaps a smile
On my face or yours
Is a remnant of that past
That act of faith and love.

That we repeat time and again
Renewing a hope, that we can make
The world a better place

Erasing all the evil that's gone before.

A new and shining life

Has again been born

Each child gives us a second chance

To bring about the change.

FAREWELL PARTY

I should have had a party to say goodbye
Not slinked away with no one knowing.
I should have shouted from the roof tops
My thanks for all your love and kindness
Instead I left one morning, alone
As if ashamed to be seen by you.
After all forty years is a long time
More than half my life so far
So many contacts so many friends
I have left behind as memories
Why didn't I think of it?
Now it' too late
Didn't I think you cared?
Was I just too shy to find you did?
But now part of me says Goodbye
I need to move on
Into a new and unknown world
And to be a better person.

GIRLS

Sitting they talk, smile, and listen
Bright eyed, like birdsong.
They warble and sing.

At ease, with no male leers
To spoil their fun.
No masculine looks to butt in.

Smoothing their hair
Adjusting their dress,
Twisting their earrings,

Fiddling with their sandals,
On red lacquered toes
Sunglasses perched on their curls,

Like plaited hats with eyes.
Cross legged they finger their mobiles
Glancing to see the last SMS.

Others look to see who it is from.
Inquisitive, but too polite to ask.
Straws stand in their long soft drinks.

Three generations at least
Sitting at ease sharing their dreams
Each basking in the sun of the others,
Having fun.

JACK FROST

Cold crisp cracking beneath my feet,
Trees immobile in the lanes.
Jack Frost has come to show his face,
White lace against the window panes.

Each year he arrives to clothe the land
With a white carpet under foot.
Steps echo 'gainst the iron-hard soil
While ice gives way beneath our boot.

Bent low against the piercing chill
Walkers step fast to get indoors,
Away from his embracing will,
To warm the stiffness of their limbs.

A bird on its journey south
Contemplates a likely route.
Flying away from its frozen nest
To search for a warmer clime.

The ground now waits patiently
For the first sign of spring to come
Beneath, the bulbs crouch and sleep
Not yet ready to leave their home.

Soon the thaw will touch the earth
Bringing with it new life and love.
And so the circle turns again
And crowns a full rhythm of life.

MILLENNIUM

Winter came very early that year
With snow and heavy frosts.
Mortality figures were up
Coffin makers were having a hay day.\

Unemployment was rising
The oil industry was on strike.
There was a general feeling of depression.
People walked about nodding gravely.

Computers are going to crash, was on everybody's lips.
The millennium was dreaded.
My stars anticipated that Mars would collide with Venus
An ominous outlook was expected.

I had predicted this many years before.
But I was unlikely to get there
Though I maintained an optimistic outlook.
While preparing for the end.

A soothsayer once said, 'beware the ides of March'
But Caesar, ignored him to his regret.
Is my own future as insecure?

Only time will tell.
I have my doubts.
Why, you may ask.
Because it has always been so.

MOMBASA YACHT CLUB

The gentle waves lap lightly 'gainst the shifting sands
Each giving way to its fellow as it breaks.
Hues blue, green and white together mingle
In the to and fro rocking of the swell.

The wind a soft whisper in the trees
Caresses the water as it passes by.
While flights of birds arriving from the fields
Rest awhile before returning to their nests.

The clouds hover hardly moving,
Promising another day of gentle sun.
Flying fish flutter across the breaking foam
Preparing to settle as the night comes on.

The moon begins her gentle skyward climb.
The sun gives way and settles in the west.
The scene is calm, at peace and full of bliss
As the farmer returns home to his warm hearth.

MOMBASA YACHT CLUB CENTENARY

-
I call upon the four directions of the wind,
The white North, the red south,
The yellow East and the Blue West
To celebrate one hundred years

Since those early sailors had a dream
They came together with a single aim
Who loved the sea and camaraderie?
To create a club for all to enjoy.

Their spirits are all around us here
Sharing a future they never saw
Happily we salute them one and all
And greet them on this special day

Now sailors from many climes
Compete for cups and flags
In a spirit of companionship
Racing against handicap and time.

-
Quiet and peace pervade this scene,
The rigged sailboats prepare to leave.
Lined up ready for the start,
Tacking and gybing, they then depart.

The bell rings, and the race begins.
Bosun Laser, Osprey, 420, all
Their sails filling with blustery wind

They compete against time with skill.

Dim anchored shadows mark the way,
The wind, dark lines upon the waves.
Boats skim like birds across the plain
Water boiling beneath their bows.

Beyond blue skies and distant clouds.
The afternoon is warm and airless
As the spectators sit and watch
A coconut falls, a song bird sings.

The bell rings as each return.
For Michael, Barry, Aslam,
Nazir, Brian, Chris, and Koki
The Victor's cup for the one who wins

At last all is calm and the waters still
As the chairs are placed for the evening meal
In the kitchen Boniface completes his magic
Transforming simple fare into a banquet
While the sun sets and the day is done.

NERO

Happy faces, sounds of laughter
Smell of coffee, tenth cup free.
A quiet oasis from the busy street.
Three girls chatting, a baby cries.
A teacher marking, a man just reading,
Fingers tapping, computer charging,
A world away from the noise outside.
Suddenly it is not so peaceful
A car backfires or was it a gun?
Feeling threatened, feeling alone
A smile, a word and the world's OK.
No fiddling while the coffee brews
Enjoying coffee in my own Nero.

PULLED CALF

What happened then?
I don't understand.
One moment I was fine
And now I'm limping.
A sudden wrench, a painful pull,
And I am held in the grip of you.

I had forgotten that you were there,
Silently functioning
Without me aware.
So you decided to give me a shock,
To let me know who was the boss?

And now painfully
Bowing to your ruling
I walk with a hobble
Until I've recovered.

SPRING IN ENGLAND

I am getting spring ready for you
And have put the bluebells on ice;
So that they won't appear too soon
Until you are here to take delight.

My daffodils may slumber a little longer,
Their crowded home keeping them warm.
While the masses of crocuses remain unseen
Or just peep out to show you they are there.

The trees are beginning to stir.
Their buds fattening and preparing to show.
Beneath, their roots are swelling with nectar
To nourish the fruit that they will bear.

My whole earth is trembling and awakening
From its winter sleep so deep
In time for you, my dearest
To enjoy and love.

THE CLINIC

Solemnly we sit waiting, each in our own world,
Waiting to see the doctor. Worrying, could I be ill?
Is it serious? What will happen?
So little is known and so much is guessed.
Now I wait, just aware of my breathing.

She smooths and combs her hair
Checking her face not satisfied.
A large pale blue ring on her left hand.
No music, time passes slowly.

The air feels heavy with silence.
Footsteps, a cough, swine fever?
A nurse in black locks the sickbay.
Nervous voices can be heard,

A key is turned, She enters.
Magazines are opened and scanned
We look at the posters
My name is called...

THE OPERATION

No curtain rises on this uncertain play;
Only the sound of steam hissing in the sluice,
And an audience showing its annoyance,
When the performance fails to please.

The actors enter, gowned and masked
Ready to enact a familiar scene.
The lead, supine, slumbering, sleeping,
Waits for his dialogue to begin.

As the awesome spectacle unfolds.
Her hand rises, poised, with a blade
She incises and draws a line,
A red rosary, gaping like a mouth.

Now facing each other in this drama.
They perform a 'dance macabre,'
Executing an aesthetic beauty,
Beneath a bright fluorescent flame.

Deeper the scapellum plunges,
A hiss of breath, no more is heard.
Searching, exploring for the crab.
At last, extending the wound, it's found.

Now starts the final act,
As man and beast engage in mortal struggle.
Back and forth they sway as the blade cuts.

Finally the brute is felled and silenced.

Unseen and unknown, one rogue escapes.

Freed from the host, it celebrates

By spreading its malice far and wide

To continue its cruel path to death.

THEIR VOICES

Their voices loud and raucous
Like a chorus.
Workmen on their way,
Wake the day.
Women preparing food,
All share,
The same high pitched mood.

Reviewing the news,
Giving their views
About their leaders, most are readers.
Corrupt and thieves they steal.
Walking slowly they know not where.
No job, no hope just sitting waiting,
Watching the women labouring
Digging, cooking, breast feeding,
Holding the family together.

Absent fathers, brothers, sons,
Smiling, happy to believe in a God
Who will provide all their needs?
Sitting talking waiting ...

And then the rains come.
Thundering, clattering, rattling
Roads become lakes
Cars threw up sheets of water
Passers by shielding their feet

And then it stops,
Calm, clean, shining,
And the sun appears.

WOODHENGE

For a century you have stood
A Redwood henge climbing to the skies:
Saplings planted by our forefathers
A gift that I will pass by but once.

Now you stand straight and true
Towering mightily over me.
You face the four directions of the earth,
The white North, the Red South,
The Yellow East and the Green West.

A carpet of leaves mostly brown and decayed
Will become you again in the sun and the rain.
The silence only broken by a tinkling stream
And the sound of the wind and the birds.

The late sun now cool caresses your skin
So soft like an animal's fur.
And I hear your heart and feel it beat
In unison with my own.

Beyond the land like a rich woven carpet
Is clothed in green, yellow and brown.
And smoke curls from a nearby home
Now hidden behind a cloud.

POEMS ON HAPPINESS

GOOD HEALTH

You have it but don't know it till you've lost it.
You just take it for granted 'till it's gone
You can't see it or touch it but can feel it.
It's a blessing that you're given only once.

But you can save it if you care to make the effort.
It's now or never, don't put it off too long.
The rules are simple and require no special skills.
But just the wish to want and of course the will.

So start today and make yourself this promise.
To care for your health as you do your car.
Don't overload it or drive it too fast.
Just give it the right fuel and it will last.

So my friends, the message I offer is clear.
It's up to you to make the choice.
To live in health and glowing vigour
Or do nothing and pay the price.

MANKIND PROJECT

They came together, men from many places
To describe the journey they had undertaken.
Proudly and bravely they stood together
To confront the world and say-

I am here

Me

I am unique and a whole man
A special being to play my part,
Confidently they proclaimed
We are ready to support those in need.
Men standing eye to eye,
Confronting their battle between good and evil.

Supporting each other, they hugged
For the first time without fear.
Smiling and laughing, unashamed
By their new familiarity.
Men showing courage, honour and strength.
O love my friend, my heart, my all.

MY SON

You are the product of our love, my son.
One cell chose another to make you.
All that you are was there
A chance encounter came true.

Cell made cell again and again,
Each knowing what to do.
Slowly growing unto you
As if it was always so.

Now full grown and complete
you are the mirror of me.
So many things we share
So many wrongs we see.

You have now repeated the act
A cell of you made real
A boy , a girl, a smile.
The circle again is sealed.

SWEET SILENCE

Sweet silence, where are you hiding,
Frightened away by the sounds of the city?
Human voices raised in anger?
Radios blaring, car horns sounding,
No electricity, generators growling.

Where have Nature's gentle sounds gone?
The sweet song of birds on the wing.
The rustle of the breeze in the trees.
The gentle sound of waves on the shore

Are they lost to be no more.
The wind whistling through the sails
The rustling water beneath the prow
Why are they lost? Where are they now?

Have we abandoned nature to a world of strife?
No longer able to see the magic of life
Insensitive to her magical powers
To revitalize and renew our lives.

POEMS ON LOSS

A DREAM I HAVE CONTINUALLY

A dream I have continually;
My hands blood red within your core,
Searching for the devil that lodges there,
A bright light glaring above my head.

Powdered gloves, a scalpel sharp as steel,
The warmth of your entrails,
Writhing in my hands.
This is bizarre, where will I find it?
I cannot tell, it feels so real,

Then I see it, surely I cannot fail
To reach it but it moves away
And disappears from sight.
All night I search, all night.
I awake and am alone.

Dreams are what you wish
Or things that happen out of chance.
Could this be a premonition
Of what is about to pass?

How can I guess what all this means?
Will time tell me what will be?
Will I ever know?
What awaits me now.

I toss and turn, my mind alive

In the darkness of the night.
The hours pass so slowly,
The light never seems to come.

Has time stopped?
I check my clock, ten minutes
It can't be so slow?
Have I entered another world?

A FLOWER

What divine ecstasy,
That a flower is a plant's last cry before it dies.
Its crowning glory is its last goodbye.

A MUSEUM

A museum is now erected,
Where visitors can come and gawk,
Unable to believe what they see.
They just stand amazed and talk.

The prison huts are no longer there.
The paths to hell are overgrown.
Gardeners leisurely mow the lawns
While the birds still swoop and sing.

Can this be really be the place?
That I remember so well.
A place I can never forget
Where so much evil dwelled.

Is this really where my hut was
In which so many died in pain?
Can this be the furnace
Where they all went up in flames?

Time has passed so quickly.
Can some memories linger on.
The next generation is now born.
Will they forget this infamy?

ANTON CHEKHOV

The story that the writer's penned
Is of a poor man who has lost his son,
Who died too young from an unknown cause.

He wants to speak about this terrible thing.
But no one has time to listen to him.

He is a poor cab driver at the beck and call
Of any passenger who can pay his fare.

He believes that he should have died
Before his son with his whole life to live.

But he is unable to describe to anyone
Except his mare who listens while chomping.

CRYING FOR THE WORLD

I'm crying again and I don't know why.
Tears well up, my chest feels tight.
I fight them back, but they tumble still.
Why am I crying? I cannot tell?

Am I crying for the world,
The pain, its ills'
The lost opportunity,
The failed attempts.
The mistakes we make,
The hurt we cause.

Not pausing to see the beauty around,
The blue sky above, the trees, the sea,
The distant horizons, the world beyond,
So much we have, and yet we want.
Must we always just seek and fail.
Won't we ever be satisfied?

For the love I see in your eyes.
The sparkle of a child's smile,
The warmth of your hand in mine
The gift we share as your face lights up
How did I deserve such a prize
That you so freely give, my love.

DEATH IS MY FRIEND

Death has been my companion for some time.
I can't remember exactly when it began
But everyday he stands quietly by my side
Reminding me if I need to be that he is my friend
That in the end he will have the last say.

Sometimes I even forget he is there
But it never lasts for long.
Each day something awful happens,
And he smiles and says I did that,
I took that little girl's life away.

I stole that father from his family.
I pushed that boy and let him drown
I let that cancer eat her away.
But when my time comes, will I be ready?
To sink into his arms and rest for eternity.

GOODBYE

Footsteps echoing on a wooden floor,
A butterfly settles on a window ledge,
Its multi-coloured wings fluttering no more.
Children's voices heard from the road outside.
A dripping tap – a car's exhaust.
Dust trapped in a beam of light,
Rows of bottles by the sink.
A half empty peanut jar.
Ants climbing into a biscuit tin.
I shut the door and lock them in.

HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH THE LOSS

How do you deal with the loss
Of someone you loved so much?
How do you fill the gap
That she leaves in your life?

What do you put in her place?
To fill your waking hours.
How do you find the reason for being
Through those long sleepless nights?

How do you fight the melancholia
That faces your waking day?
What stops you from getting lonelier
And falling into an abyss of despair?

By learning to manage each moment
In a manner which gives you hope
And strengthens your purpose for living
For finding that vision you dream.

By accepting what has happened
And be thankful for what you have had
Not dwelling on what you have lost
But celebrating the love that you knew.

IN WHOSE EMBRACE ?

In whose embrace do you wish to be when you die?
Is it someone you have loved and cherished?
Or will it be a person you are yet to meet?

Who will be with you at the end?
To hold your hand and share your journey
Into that unknown place alone and scared.
Are you ready for that voyage into eternity?
Unaided, unknowing and unprepared.

Maybe you will die alone like so many
Your family and friends no longer there
To share your last moments on this sphere
Before you leave this mortal residue
And fly into those distant skies.

MASTECTOMY

The bright umbrella of light above,
No shadow, warm comforting,
Scalpel, cold and hard in his palm,
Steady, pause and incise, cut cleanly,
Confidently, the skin taut between fingers and thumb,
No slipping, no hesitation,
Cut, red beads, then yellow and brown
Familiar paths, slipping easily between valleys and hills.

Opening, exposing and seeing, considering,
Yes, this is the way into the forbidden.
Uncover, revealing the damage,
The disease, the dysfunction.
Clip and cut, stop and search.

Gently, slowly calmly ease, uproot
Deeper, beyond and behind, unknown.
Carefully release,
Freed , removed,
Closed.

O MEMORY

O memory why taunt me so
With sweet images of a love now passed.
A life shared with one so dear
A partner, lover, mother and friend
With whom my true life really began.

Beyond us our children carry our genes.
And their children, until eternity
Are living evidence, if need be
Of the life and love we shared.

That is now gone and all that remains
To taunt and reduce me to tears,
Are those memories now fading fast?
To reappear at times like this.

When alone, they return and I see your face
And even hear your voice, amongst a crowd
And stop, stunned and dejected
When it's someone else
Who looks and sounds like you.

SHE DIDN'T DIE

When will I be able to accept?
The reality of her death.
How can I dispels these hopes
That it didn't really happen.

That she's there waiting for me
If only I knew where to look.
But I know that she is not alive,
But her spirit still visits me
And for a moment she is real.

I no longer dream of her,
But in the quiet of the night
I feel a sudden belief
That she didn't die that day.

SOMETIMES WHEN I'M ALONE

Sometimes when I am alone
I feel you sitting by my side
Waiting silently for me to speak,
Reminding me of those halcyon days
When we were young and free.

I listen for your sweet soft breathe
But can only hear the wind
Your words so faint have almost gone
And floated away I know not where.

I wait not moving, hoping you will stay
And share this moment with me.
I look around, you are no longer there
Having gone to a place I cannot yet reach.

Still I wait hoping you will return
To share some time with me.
Perhaps one day we'll meet again
When all this toil and pain have gone.

TEARS

I'm crying again and I don't know why.
Tears well up, my chest feels tight.
I fight them back, but they tumble still.
Why am I crying? I cannot tell?

Am I crying for the world, the pain, the ills'
The lost opportunity, the failed attempts.
The mistakes I've made, the pain I've caused?
By not pausing to see the beauty
Within my midst and all around.

The blue sky above, the clouds, the trees.
The distant horizons, the world beyond,
So much I have, and yet I want.
Must I always just seek and fail.
Won't I ever be satisfied?

POEMS ON LOVE

BROTHER GEOFFREY

Three score years and ten
Is our allotted span
So the good book says,
But you have proved it wrong
Once again,
And added another ten.

And since eighty is the new sixty
So we are led to believe,
You are clearly heading to ninety
And we all wish you Godspeed.

Surrounded by your family
Who increase day by day?
We honour and love you
And want you to stay.

As fit and strong as you are
For many years to come
So we can stay together
No matter where you roam.

So raise your glasses
And make this toast.
Father, Uncle, Brother, Friend,
We wish you all the Best
To Geoffrey!!

GRANDCHILDREN

We met at Waterloo, but they forgot your passports.
So we got a later train to Brussels.

While they retreated into their iPods,
We contemplated the rows of white crosses in a
cemetery.

We stopped in Paris for a meal.
We had Coq au Vin, they had hot dogs.

We wanted to take them to a museum or gallery
Instead they wanted to go shopping.

So we left them at MonoPrix with some Euros,
While we admired Monet and Picasso.

We shared a chambre, four in one, a mistake.
They slept late so we crept from the room.

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

Somewhere twixt London and Mombasa, a bird flies
High in the sky amongst the clouds
Seeking a place to rest on her journey south.
Driven by forces beyond her control
And by navigation beyond belief,
She returns to her southern home each year

To restore her strength and fertility
Only to make the journey back like clock work.
What does she think about on that long dangerous
flight?
'Why am I doing this,' she may ask.
More likely she will just get going as the winter sets in,
And the length of the day shortens and the darkness
begins.

She follows a tortuous and difficult path in this annual
migration
Yet she has no choice if her future is to be assured.
The voyage is as natural as breathing to ensure that her
young will survive
And another generation will be born in the warmth of the
sun.
When large enough they will take the journey north
Guided by eons of memory inherited from centuries
And the cycle will go on.

I MEANT TO LEAVE YOU BEHIND

I meant to leave you behind
Trying so hard to move on
But instead I brought you with me
In your paintings, your pictures, your songs.

You are there upon the mantelpiece
Smiling and looking down.
I am lying still in the bedroom
Staring up at you from the floor.

Your presence is all around me
No matter which way I look
You enter my life while I'm sleeping
And tease me while I am awake.

I thought that time would fill it
That empty space in my heart,
Instead unknowingly
I have stored you in my head.

I SAW THE SEA TODAY AS IF FOR THE FIRST TIME

I saw the sea through your eyes today
As if for the very first time.
Through the eyes of a young woman
Who had never seen it before?

What a wondrous sight, it must seem
Stretching as far as the eye could see.
Its waters blue black and green
White washed sand on yellow beach.

She staring to the horizon, disbelieving
Her dress blowing in the wind.
Never having seen such a scene before
What must be going through her head.

What can it be like to first feel the breeze
And smell the ozone in the air?
Walking on the warming sand
Hearing the breaking of the waves upon the beach
And tasting the salty spray in your mouth
The low-flying birds diving for fish,
The sea glistening like glass on the swell
The breaking waves whispering to the sand
While the horizon, stretching out as far as can be seen
Seems to be tumbling into that distance,
Beyond that deep thalassic oceanic dream.

RENEWAL

Forged,
In the deep heat of the earth.
Bent and buckled,
Melted and moulded
The serpentine stone
Is now distinct.

She rests and waits
For the intimate stroke
Of the sculptors hand
To seek her innermost secret
And unveil her hidden beauty
That lay dormant,
Waiting to surprise him.

Alone she has slept,
Deep in her stony bed
For more than a million years.
She has been changed forever,
And will never be the same.
She is prepared
For the quarryman
To cut deep and clean
And take her from her bed.
Gently he lifts
and releases her.

She is now ready,
And free to be caressed

By the loving touch
Of the sculptor.

Proudly she stand
For everyone to see.
Her innermost dreams
Transformed
By her lover's hand
Into an immortal shape.

SOPHIA

Nine months later, a baby girl is born
And nature repeats its miracle once again.
From that single fused cell has come
A full and wholesome child.

Equipped with all she needs to face the world.
She lies asleep unaware of the journey
Which moments ago she began.
She smiles and gurgles obliviously.

Her name a mirror from the past
A rebirth of an ancient long passed.
Returning in a new and unblemished form,
She offers hope and a brand new start.

TOUGH LOVE

The old man sat shaking,
Tears running down his cheeks;
The boy huddled on his lap trembling,
Exhausted by his recent outburst.
Never knowing his real father.
The old man loved him as his own
As close as father and son could be
More a granddad than a dad.

Now four years old
He hasn't learned that none of us
Can always get what we want.
Wishing to watch TV.
Quite mesmerized by cartoons
He sits staring for hours.

The two returned from the beach
A broad expanse of fine white sand.
Where the boy would play for hours.
An onlooker could be persuaded
That he seemed to be engaged
In conversation with an invisible friend.
Later he wanted to watch cartoons,
The old man didn't dislike cartoons,
He marvelled at the skill in their making,
The life like movements of the characters.
So the stage was set for an almighty conflict.

It began slowly, Andrew tried to switch on the TV

When it became obvious to him
That the old man was not going to weaken,
The paddy began with shouts and screams,
His voice rising to a crescendo.
Andrew on the floor kicking and punching
'Go downstairs and play with the other children,'
Andrew shouted 'I don't want to.'

The two were at an impasse,
The old man seated in a chair
Andrew crouching on the floor
Not far away out of control.
It went on for a long time,
Andrew grew tired, his shouts weakened.
The old man watched and remembered;
Remembered his own childhood.
The many occasions when he went into a fury
Unable to get what he wanted.

He waited and watched beckoning
Eventually and very reluctantly
The boy slowly relaxed on the old man's lap.
He closed his eyes and the two hugged.
The closeness of the boy and the poignancy of the
moment
Reduced the old man to tears.
At that moment he was reminded
Of what he already knew
That he wouldn't live long enough
To see this beautiful gracious boy into manhood.

TREES

Forests of dead trees frozen in time
Mark the place where a volcano shook.
Now standing solemn stately silent and stark
No longer part of the living world.

They mark a tempestuous time.
The world in turmoil and rage.
They provide wood, oil and coal,
Creators of climate, rain and shade.

New rows of saplings straight and true
Springing from the fertile soil,
Watered by the giving sky
Providing shade to the weary soul

Your roots travelling far and wide
Hold the soil against erosive rain.
Mudslides can no longer cause
The loss of a single human life.

Splay-footed trunks anchor your heavy hulls
To hold you against the strongest wind
Your air roots reaching to the ground
Are a haven for insects, monkeys and more

I walk inside the fullness of your heart.
And feel the slow beat of eternity.
You shelter me from rain and shine
Without you I could not be.

WHERE IS LOVE?

It's so obvious when you think of it
No one ever disagrees.
We constantly search for it
And know it when it is near.
Yet it's so difficult to remember
When things are really tough,
That there's one way out of it
That all of us can trust

Why is it so much easier,
To get angry, shout and storm,
Get indignant, outraged and foam?
Than it is to stop and pause
And think and feel and hold
And hug and kiss and yield.

YOU MUST LEARN TO LOVE

You must learn to love yourself again
Forgive all those failures that are yours.
Remember your strengths and not your frailties
Look into a mirror and see
The face of someone you love
Smile and say Hello.

Bid welcome to another day
Say thanks for the sun to shine
And the rain to fall
And another chance to love.
Laugh and accept your faults
And grow, into a better person
Day by day.

POEMS ON REFLECTIONS

A DATE

It was a long journey so I thought
Tedious, like a snail crawling across a road,
But on looking back today, it seemed to fly.
In the blink of an eye,
The yesterday I had has gone forever
Surviving only in my memory.

Different for each of us,
You recalled the surprise of my call
I, the deep blue of your eyes.
You, the sweet music they played.
Me how short a time you stayed.
You wondering, would I phone again?
Me, thinking how soon and when?
What a chance to find your name
Thumbing through my diary
You hadn't changed your number.

It was so scary
Waiting for you to answer
After so many years.
And your voice I remembered
You hesitated then said yes.

ANOTHER PRECIOUS DAY

Another precious day,
Another chance
Taken from the time that's left.
Each valued day slipping by
Is less time to make amends?
To put right all those wrongs
To say I'm sorry for all my sins

The sun rising bright and new
Gives me another chance to renew.
To start again as if I've just come
Into this bright new world
Discarding all the sins I've done

As if a newborn child again
A black board with no writing on
No heavy burden on my back
To weigh me down and stop my step
Into a new and perfect day.

BOOKS I LOVE

Their covers may be hard or soft,
and contain both truth or lies.
They can be about letters.
and have contents and chapters.
with pages and borders,
Indices and references.
No annotations and footnote in margins.

They set the reader on a voyage of discovery.
It's a magic journey into secret places
Where information lies ready to be revealed,
So many facts reside there within their covers
It's like entering a hidden cave.
They provide a source of excitement\
And an escape into dreams.

CAPSIZING

It was any other day,
When under blue skies, the crisp winds
Threw up gentle waves.

The boat, sail dressed
And seated on her cradle
Slipped gently into the water.

I clambered aboard
And set off, one hand on the mainsheet.
The other on the tiller.

Gaining speed,
She heeled against the wind
With water lapping.

Tiller firm, feet locked against the hull.
No better place to be.
I prepared to tack,

Pushing the tiller away and moving across.
Then, falling, flailing, spluttering, sinking,
Ropes and sails snagging,

I surfaced to find the hull up-ended
And the keel reaching to the skies
I had capsized.

I AM FREE

I was moved to tears yesterday
It took me by surprise
Sudden, violent and uncontrolled,
Shaken, I was asking why?

A woman and a man were released
After they had been kidnapped.
Each rejoicing in their new found freedom
From years of imprisonment.

Liberated after long incarnation,
In wonder at their new found freedom
Each seeing for the first time
The colours and the smells
That we take for granted.

Why is it that we only appreciate?
What we have, when we lose it.
Forgetting to greet each day
And say I am free! I am free!

MEMORY

You'll never be free from the memory
Of the one you have loved and lost.
It will come back to haunt you
At an unexpected cost.

It will reside deep in your conscience
Apparently gone and forgotten.
And then something quite unexpected.
Will cause it to erupt into pain.

You will live your life very fully.
Continuing with things you enjoy,
And then the sound or a voice will catch you.
And you are back in that river of pain.

The tears will come without warning
Pouring in streams down your cheek.
It will come as an enormous surprise
That this sadness is still deep inside.

They say it will get much better.
And you're soon learn to live your new life.
That the pain that you carry within you
Will hide in a corner, but remain.

MY LIFE

Is this the life I want?
Satisfied with what I've done.
Maybe today maybe my last.
Or will I when that day comes
Sooner than I think
Lament so many things.

Will I face it with regret?
Wish that I had done better,
That I cared more.
The many opportunities that I ignored,
And let go without a thought,
And missed the things I could have done

The friends I could have helped.
When you stand at my grave
And read my name and date.
Will there be memories of someone fine
Or will you express disappointment
And simply pass me by.

And say that I failed
That, which I could have done.
He had the opportunities
But let them slip through his fingers
Always saying I will do it later
But later never comes.'

PEACE

The gentle waves lap lightly 'gainst the shifting sands
Each giving way to its fellow as it breaks.
Hues blue, green and white together mingle
In the to and fro rocking of the swell.

The wind, a soft whisper in the trees
Caresses the water as it passes by.
While flights of birds arriving from the fields
Rest awhile before returning to their nests.

The clouds are hovering hardly moving,
Promising another day of gentle sun.
Flying fish flutter across the breaking foam
Preparing to settle as the night comes on.

The moon begins her gentle skyward climb.
The sun gives way and settles in the west.
The scene is calm, at peace and full of bliss
As the farmer returns home to his well earned rest.

ROUTINE

I need a routine in my life
To help me to get through,
The long list of chores
That are becoming such a bore.

I need to introduce change
To help me pass the day
How am I going to manage?
When everything is left to me.
There is not enough time
I just can't fit it all in.

Why can't I just stand and stare
Like other people seem to do.
Carefree and act irresponsibly,
Have a bit of freewheeling,
Responding to my every whim.

Exploring the wide-open spaces.
Searching for an inner peace.
Just live and accept myself
To be free to come and go,
But there is so much to do.

TIME

Time why hurry so?
Stay and rest awhile with me.
Stop and see the world go by.
Relax and be.

Yesterday is now a memory.
Tomorrow not yet here.
Time is just a vanity,
So stop and be.

The now is all we've really have.
So don't let it slip by.
See it for what it actually is.
The only time we've got.

I wake alone and calm.
Time stands still and waits
But suddenly, it races
And the day has gone.

Time where do you go?
In what place do you hide?
Tell me your secret
So that I can also find
That calm tranquillity.
The timelessness of peace.
Where you no longer rule,
And I can be at ease.

WHAT ARE WE?

I'll say goodbye and walk away
And cry
Coming and going
Is all my life..

A pen lying on the table
A jar of peppermints
Your toothbrush on the shelf
An open address book.

Scissors lying on the counter,
Dishes drying in the sink,
Bread burning in the toaster
A kettle whistling to be answered.

Cushions piled up on the settee
Still dented with the shape of you.
The TV's eye still closed,
A half open book on the floor,
The things we left behind
That make us what we are.

WHERE AM I? WHO AM I?

How do I describe the feeling I feel
It's a sense of disconnection
I am not quite in the world your world,
What I see is not what you see?
What I hear is not what you hear?
What I smell is not what you smell?

Even the pavement I walk on
Is a different pavement
I am on it but not quite on it
Here, but not quite engaged,
Listening, but not hearing,
Touching but not feeling,
Smelling but not tasting.

Time passing but so slowly
Not stopping and waiting
As if each day is the same
I'm always waking up,
Going to bed
Eating the same meals,

Each week is the same,
Each day is the same
Each hour that passes is the same
I'm in the same place, at the same time
Without stopping.
Passing without leaving any sign.

Reality is an unreality
Footsteps but not my footsteps
Voices but not my voice
Somewhere within me I reside
Searching and not finding
Nothing just lost and confused,

I'm waiting but nothing happens.
I'm sitting and listening but not hearing.
Is everyone like this?
Are you like this? Am I making sense?
My sense? Your sense? Nonsense?
Where am I? Who am I?