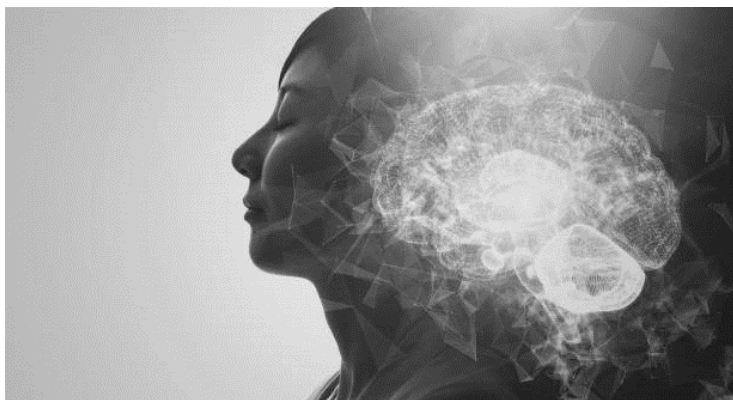


Wake from slumber

I'm always thinking about creating. My future starts when I wake up every morning... Every day I find something creative to do with my life.

Miles Davis



Poems by
Edwin Creely

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Bring this world to life
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We will perform
The meditation
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Your pound of flesh
The great circle
Real fairness
Be careful
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Art's finger
The precipice
Systems and a person
Protest
Troubled times
If only
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The place of nature's praise
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Healing
Remembering
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Distinction
Talking
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Sing
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The bullet's residue
The sea of change
Not a man
When?
The message
My precious one
The greatest cause
A complex thing
Shell
Fate
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Thoughts about my life
A poem is love
Not over
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Garden green
Traces of me
Cool
The fire has gone out
The shame of the western world
Dignity
The way of change
Secret space
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Resolution
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Hidden
Dead
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The divide
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So thin
Ever open
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Wedded in your soul
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Flash
Words
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My oak tree
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A moment
Let the words flow
Keep my faith
Apart from me

Stay with me
My house
The best is yet to come
Odd little paradox
I am a painting
Powerlessness
Thin slice
The ethical way
Chocolate
Ready
Bad day
Home
You are my poetry
Control
Pearly gates
Equation
It is there
Silence and space
My joy
Silent consequence
Oblivion
Such a love
Summer garden
Too late
Together alive
Feel it
Mind
Fresh blood
Immortal soul
Alive
Essence
Shout
The substance
Lovers
Spin and turn

Zero
Two circles
The bird
Trees that bend
Dignity
Beauty
One step
Pain and love

I see you still

I see you still,
dim, yes,
but always beautiful
and serene
in your starched uniform
that was the source of our
family and national pride.

I see you as an effigy now,
for that is all that
is left of your smile
and your unkempt
flow of amber hair
that drove me mad
but now drives me to tears.

Let me look at you
in your muddied grave,
with your eyes blue as
the summer sky
over the Isle
where you lived passionately
and dreamed of days
beyond the war.

“The Empire needs you!”
was the call,
and so you did your duty
like all the men that
keep you company
in your eternal bed.

O yes, I see you still,

an apparition from
 my past and the future;
 and you haunt me
 in your whispering call
 that says forlorn:
 “No more! No more!
 The guns! The stench!
 No more of God, King
 and blood England!
 No more of being sold
 as meat on the
 general’s table!”

No more is the call.

I hear you, my darling,
 and see your plea
 in the dimness of the
 cold winter light of
 the Somme’s dreadful doom.

The coming promise

Even if my heart
 feels dark and dank,
 and life seems oddly on hold,
 the sun still shines as bright
 and the moon rises full
 to greet the stars anew,
 and the shifting tides roll
 on and on towards the shore,
 and the birds chirp
 at the coming promise
 of the fresh new day.

Helpless

Have you ever felt that
helpless feeling or
that feeling of being helpless?

Like you can't help and there is nothing
to be done except watch and stand by
for the next instalment of "It's going wrong".

Have you ever experienced anger
because nothing you seem to say
or want to do matters and your
opinions and ideas are just ignored
and become a routine in the musical, "Are
you actually there, 'cause I never
saw you"?

If you have, then join me
in praise of being in family life,
in praise of the grand invisibility
of being in a relationship.

I remain a man

Don't think too highly of me,
as if I'm some guru or Saint,
for I know my ordinariness too
well to think that I'm
something special or unique.

No, indeed.
I am a man of ordinary passions
and terrible doubts
and wonderings about who I am

and where my life will go.

I share that humanness with you,
and while I may at times,
with inspirational voice, share
my supposed wisdom
and give the answers
that sponsors hope,
I remain a man struggling
like you to find that path that
will take me to the point of it all.

The night

The night lies still
like a thick blanket
covering the work
of the sun-soaked day.

In the sky the stars
deliver their twinkling art through
the misty drifting clouds
that move as silent as ghosts.

And living things covered
in this eternal blanket
do their quiet and secret work
till morning comes to wake this death.

Take me

Take me away
and let me fly
above the ordinariness
of living in this expectant world.

There I can dream
of what I can be
without the strings
that pull me this
way and that
in this place
of obligations
and partitions
where I am not
able to fly.

Take me high
and let me glide
through the beauty
that is in the sky.

Ageing

Ageing comes as inevitably
as the sun rising
and the moon shining its
face on a clear night.

It greys my hair
and slows my walk
and sometimes fills
me with regret that
I didn't do more
with the younger years.

But what has gone
has gone is a fact of time
that sweeps away all pretence
and makes me aware of the

losses of advancing years.

Still, even if it is inevitable
and even if it sweeps in
like the high tide of woe,
I have a life to live,
and by God, I will live it
for all its worth among
the creaking bones
and the parts that
don't work as well as
they used to work.

The season's new light

It is a second dying
if I do not move beyond
the death of the one I love
to another place
where life is renewed
and hope returns
like a spring flower in bloom.

For in not moving, the
winter land of memory
starts to chill my bones and
overwhelms me with
the cold sparse death
of my lingering suffering soul.

But in moving to the place
of spring's sweet and sunny face,
the memories of my love now gone
are not lost or somehow replaced
but find a new home in

the colours of spring's adoring smile,
where memory comes out
of winter's bitter walls
and paints my love afresh
in the season's new light.

Forever changed

Loss is always permanent.
And even if we get back
what we have lost,
even if the entirety
of what we lost is restored,
it is still loss
because all that was
will never return
exactly as before,
and all that we are
has been forever
shifted and formed
by the loss itself.

Hendrix at Woodstock

His passion struck
the guitar with fire,
and from the strings
the blues sparked
to life and shivered
in the night air,
spreading the vibe,
and bringing the new age beat,
as thousands danced
and swayed and got
high with the drugs

and each other
in this moment of
wild release among
the mud and love
and signs of peace.

I am never lonely

Though I am often alone
I am never lonely,
for with me live my thoughts
as playful friends
and I am content with
all I am, with the community
that is me.

The land of opportunity

Across the valleys wide and low,
through the mountains filled with snow,
they came to find a life that was never there's,
and build a vision for a new world,
not one formed on privilege or wealth or airs
but on the hard work of pioneers
from every place around the globe,
from every class and culture, or faith or race.

This is the America that formed its dream,
riding on the back of democracy,
and though its slavery held it back,
and lost the person in the black,
it borders never closed, and so it
was ever the land of opportunity,
the promised land for those
with nothing left but to go across

the seas to this new fine and vital home
 where opportunity waited for
 the soul that strove and believed.

Never let this refuge die
 through the fear-led bigotry
 of those who want to strip the land
 of its birth in every other place,
 for this is the land of new beginnings,
 where those of every culture can
 come and marvel at this
 joyous and diverse melting pot.

In the streets

In the writhing streets
 the children play
 in bare feet and move with
 the wisdom of the night.

And beyond the streets
 they have no world,
 for this is all there is
 from birth to death.

In the streets the strong survive
 and run the obstacle course of
 guns and gangs that
 own the streets and all there in.

The ragged children go
 out to play,
 go out to play
 in the moonlit streets,
 go out to play

in the dirty lanes
with the rubbish
that is their prize.

Frozen in the night

The body lies
face down,
back up,
in the wet dripping
gutter of the shadowed street.
Young man,
black,
black and red laced:
mother waiting,
waiting at home,
in the shadowy
midnight room,
waiting alone
for the return.

Car lights spot
the body cold
in the stillness of night,
spot the body
with a single wound,
and see the eyes
frozen in the night,
eyes accustomed
and unaccustomed to
the dark.

And the lights turn and
speed away,
speed away,

for nothing has been seen,
 for nothing can be seen
 in the black.

Hope

Hope is not some
 eternal object that
 humans strive for
 and seek like
 a great treasure
 hunt of the
 disillusioned world.

Nor is it some great
 religious ideal about
 heaven, paradise,
 or some such place
 that lies waiting for
 those who are faithful enough.

Rather, hope is
 what is given generously in
 the trembling tender moments
 of human frailty and loss
 that create flickers of purpose again.

Hope is not a thing or an end
 but sparks alive in the contact,
 in the moments shared,
 In the process of being alive
 and saying that you should
 not give in.

Hope is affirmation embodied,

and the presence of goodness
that radiates out in
the spaces of promise now.

Generous heart

O for a generous heart
that gives itself away
fully and without regret,
but then is returned
complete and whole again,
to give itself to another soul.

Waking to write

Waking to write
into the empty
expectation of the night.

Feeling the potential energy
between the dark outside
and the light in imagination's eyes.

Somewhere in the night

Somewhere in the silence
of a cold bleak night,
an old man dies,
dies in his sleep,
in the downy comfort
of his bed,
dies in peace
among his
precious memories
of a life lived with love's

pleasures and pains,
of a life filled with successes,
failures, sorrows and grand tales.,
that are his final companions and friends.

Somewhere in the whisper of
the soft winter chill,
an old man releases his final breath
In the dead heart of night,
with no one to witness
but the photo of his once warm companion
that sits still gazing from the angle of the wall.

She thinks

She is the unseen one,
unwitnessed in her
solemn duties that she does
on a school morn, among
the pile of bills and
the higher pile of waiting clothes.

She thinks of her children
still asleep that she guards
in their beds,
and she thinks of her job
that she's lucky
to have, even if it
makes her cry.

And she thinks in
scattered thoughts about
what has gone in the years
since she was left cold
and what this life of

dull routines and present fears
will bring in the hours,
and days and endless
weeks and years
of nothing more
and nothing less to come.

The dust

The dust blows across
the breadth of space and time,
moving always from
places to places,
accumulating and then
taking off again in the
direction of the wind
that carries it and lays it down
as tender as a baby born.

And in the wind and among
the dust that ever shifts and stirs,
there is all of humanity held
in fragments of a thousand generations
that once breathed and dreamed
and hoped like you and I,
mingled with all that lived and
did not live in the eons
since this planet formed
from fire itself.

The dust moves and flies
and becomes
a speck in our eyes,
to remind us to see
in the forming tear

our moment in eternity.

Leaders

Leaders set the
standard and the tone
of belonging in an
organisation,
in a society and
in a country.

Leaders with only
self-regard are
concerned and preoccupied
merely with their
own lust for power
and personal promotion,
and that narcissistic culture
crushes the regard
and potential for good
of all who sit beneath
their heavy hands.

But effective leaders
see their place as
servant as well
as the maker of decisions,
and those who look
up, expecting to witness
the steps in the rigid ladder,
are surprised to see
that the leader is
standing right
beside them.

We add to it

We are not responsible
for the happiness of other beings,
but we can add to it
with the sweet ingredient of care
given generously.

We are not accountable
for the decisions that people make
but we can give support
and listen with a silence
offered wholeheartedly.

We live in the tension
between not wishing attachment
to the needs of others
and wanting to connect
to see the other grow.

These aliens

Stop them,
round them up,
blame them,
and play games
of fear of
the outsider,
the one different,
the one apart
who does not fit
the rigid ideal of
what your society
should be.

Look at these aliens
with suspicion
but never look
at where the horror really lies,
where the violence
finds its metal force,
and where the fear grows.

It is easy to look
at that which stands
different in our eyes.
but it is harder to see,
in our blindness,
the invisible and
hidden source
of the terror.

Loneliness

Loneliness is a force
and an unrelenting drive
as powerful as hunger,
for, like hunger,
it is a need for survival.

But unlike hunger
it is as deep and as wide
as the human soul
and exists in the wrenching desire
for intimate connection,
touch and belonging.

Home is the centre

How wonderful it is
to be at home with
the beauty of connection:
with family, grand friends
and those who draw
near from far.

For home is the centre
of being, of being complete,
of seeing our place in the world
from the balcony window of
this sacred place.

O America!

O America,
what darkness now lays
over you and what
oppression now waits
to sink its long dark talons
into the cherished
and beautiful flesh of
this great democracy.

But the darkness
cannot resist the light,
and though it is now small,
it will grow and grow
and become a theatre
of powerful bright lights
to shine on all that
the dark hides and
on all the deeds that

take America away from
its creed of freedom,
equality, justice
and humanity.

O America,
stand up and lift
those torches of liberty high,
and let the light combine
to shine to a better day,
as you stand with
the lady in the bay.

Maybe the meaning?

Just to think that
we have enough intelligence
to ponder about why we're here
and the meaning of this existence
among the stars, the sun and the moon.

And though I cannot give you
the secret to the meaning of life,
as if it is some formula or number (not 42),
just to think that we are here:
breathing, feeling, wondering
and living lives as best we can.

So, maybe that's it.

Maybe the meaning is in the
thinking and the wondering
and the marvelling about existence
and all that we are.

Maybe there is no one
stable meaning but
a whole lot of meanings
that we constantly create.

Maybe the meaning is
in the search for meaning,
and meaninglessness is
when we no longer care to think.

All I see is person

I don't see age,
I don't see gender,
I don't see preference,
I don't see race,
I don't see religion.

I might be quite naive,
but all I see is person.

A man to a woman

I do not own your body
and I do not own your soul,
and while I'm here to
support your needs
your destiny is yours.

You are not less,
and you are not the same,
and as we work together
we can shape a future
of optimism, peace and gain.

Deciding from the heart

I give my wise and sage advice
to those young and even old,
live not your life to please
but be resolute and bold.

For happiness and love
are not the stuff of giving
others what they want,
but of following that
path of daring dreams and
deciding from the heart.

Wake from slumber

I speak with honesty,
even if at times
in this world of noise
no one wants to hear
or cares to listen to that
which alarms the soul
and causes one to
wake from the slumber
of soft indifference
or the nightmare of fear.

There lies within

How strange and weird
be the human race,
for it be full of direst cruelty,
and yet therein also lies waiting
such beauty and gentle grace.

For we have killed innocence
and maimed and raped each
other and this precious land.

But in this same body of disgrace
therein also lies the beating heart
of passion, hope and forgiveness.

Poets all

Poets all who read these words
and hear the cry for action,
let your words be more
than words of fine import
or clever twists and turns.

But be instead like William Blake,
the bringer of sharp challenge,
and be fine spectacles of clarity to
those who see the world blurred
by greed, injustice, and ignorance,
or who only see convenient truth
and are blinded by inaction.

Poets all who breathe out hot
the fiery passion of the soul,
direct your fire upon the ones
who divide this world
and forget the least of these
who have no voices
and no words.

For William Blake

Passion

I am swimming helplessly
 in the troubled sea
 of your love,
 splashing around
 with hopeless abandonment
 in the ripping passion I feel
 and the thoughts of obsession
 about you that make my mind
 a stranger to myself.

Love is not

Love is not fastfood takeaway
 to be used up thoughtlessly
 in the moment and chucked away
 like a cheap forgotten burger wrapper.

Love is, instead, a feast of utter joy
 to be savoured in the moment
 and then enjoyed again and again
 around the table of connection and respect.

Cause

Punishment begets cruelty.
 Violence begets suffering.
 Revenge begets destruction.
 Fear begets sorrow.

Kindness begets hope.
 Courage begets action.
 Generosity begets healing.
 Honesty begets change.

The flash of vengeance

It's a natural and easy response
to be taken by the flash of vengeance
from the unstable remains of tragedy and cruelty.

It is better and more useful to be
the giver of kindness and the carrier of hope
when brutality and cruelty explode before our eyes.

of Truth

Everyone speaks of Truth
as if it is some grand
and noble thing that exists
in the harp-filled clouds above.

But truth is really truths,
and one truth belongs in
the space of that truth
and cannot be more than
what it is for those
who create the space.

True and truth are not
the same, for one
is based in experiences
in the world and the other
is based in belief.

This glorious mystery

In the light of the dark,
I think about what has been,
and what will be in the unfolding

mystery of the movement
of this strange life.

In the dark of the light
I sometimes lose the way
to this glorious mystery
that creates and releases possibility,
like the opening of a flower
in the gentle breeze of
a fertile spring morning.

Fame

Flashing cameras
all recording
but not caring
about the object
of concern that
will be the commodity,
for now, in the cycle,
in the cycle of selling
and being sold,
sold out, for this
is the game
to be played,
the game of making it
and being consumed,
and being subsumed
by the forces that
need fame to keep
the game going,
to keep the profits
flowing in the stream
of let's pretend.

You are worthy

It is easy to say
that humans are
fractured, wounded
and even evil,
as if this is their
natural state of being
and the spiritual place
where they belong.

But I say, actually,
you are okay,
you are good,
and you can grow,
and you just have to
believe that's really so.

So, I reject the damaging
model of perfection
that we set up to
judge the human soul,
and I say instead that
you are worthy because
you are a human with
potential just like me.

Now conquered

Due west across the
great expanse of land
they came to find
a life and prosper
and multiply to form communities
and towns that drowned out

the echoing cry of those
who were here before,
but who were no more than
the beasts of the field
that man should conquer,
for he must be fruitful
and multiply upon the earth.

They came with wagons
and supplies, two by two,
and forged their way
across the heated plains
in dust and sweat
and in the lives
and tears of those
who could not survive
the harshness of this place.

With their intrepid kind,
who came with European ways,
they brought religion and
a powdered gun as the
weapons of choice
to hunt, to kill, to wipe clean
and then to convert this place.

This, the manifest destiny
of a land and peoples
now conquered and dotted thin
across the vibrant land of totems
that was once theirs,
and their ancestors,
but is now and forever
long gone from them,
to become the sacred place

of god's sovereign will.

I dream of you

I think of your warm body
on nights cold with sheets chill.

I dream of you next to me
body to body and soul to soul.

But now your body is cold
and your soul is silent and still.

Yet I dream of you often in the
bed of pleasure that you once filled.

His final act of fame

In the quietness of a room
his life did meekly end,
and in the soft slow evening silence
came his final act of fame.

And it wasn't on a stage
with fans scrambling for a view,
but in the lonely bed of sleep
with a lamp witnessing death.

The days of this life

When at last
the doorbell rings
and the unexpected
visitor makes the final call,
I will fondly remember the days of this life

not with regret or wanting more
but with the satisfaction
that I have lived this life well
and done many fine things
and loved fully all who I could love
in this little life behind the open door.

A butterfly in a jar

I put a butterfly
in a jar and watched
it fly around in its
glass prison,
where it could look
out but never get its
freedom again
beyond the dome.
I watched a butterfly,
rainbow coloured gold,
beat against the rigid walls,
trying to fly to
where it had come,
but only going
around and around
In this tiny, windowed room.

And it flew around,
and around,
and around,
till it could fly no more,
and it sat at the bottom
of the jar and did not move.

There it sat in its
confined gloom,

till I opened the jar
and let it out, and it
launched itself with glee
into the fresh made air,
flying with all its might
into the trees,
into the boundless sky
and even beyond.

But then at last it tired
and floated down and down
through the air,
and to the jar it
again returned,
coming back to
its confined room.

Lies

Lies can be
so often told
that they become
a sort of truth,
like an infected wound
covered with
a colourful dressing
that does not enable
one to see honestly
the pus that lies beneath.

Slow sunlit days

When the sun gently rises
above the edge of the world
and I am sitting with a

slow coffee on a slow day,
I think of you, all of you,
who touched me on
days such as these
that now are gone,
and I am here with
the private collection
of my dearest thoughts
that return me to those times
and take me to slow sunlit days.

Uncertainty

It has often been said
that uncertainty is a terrible thing,
and wouldn't it be lovely,
wouldn't it be great,
to be certain of everything in life.

Bullshit!

I love the chance of uncertainty,
for it brings with it the unknown
and it invites in the new,
and it allows us all to change
and grow and find our hidden youth.

Love and hate

Never give in to hate.
but always give in to love.

Stand up and say that hate is wrong
but always embrace the gentle beauty of love.

Counter hate with words of strength
but nurture love in the language of grace.

We must stand

Pluralistic,
open, tolerant,
affirming difference,
diverse, celebratory,
and centred on need.

We must strive
for this wholesome society.

We must stand against
those who want to
reduce these core values,
and who silence the voices
of those without power,
of those without money,
of those without
position
or choices
or place.

We must be bold
and say that what
is touted as mainstream
could be wrong.

Numb

The distance does not
make the heart grow stronger,
for my heart is weak and my

soul is numb with grief,
and I move but as a shadow
from place to place
but not from time to time.

For I am caught in the
moment of your loss and
so I am stopped though I move,
and I care for nothing,
though I care too much.

Did they know?

When the First Fleet landed
on that fatal damned shore,
did the Gadigal people know what
they were coming here for?

Did they see the painted
blood red flag hanging bold
and fluttering sovereign
in the soft summer breeze?

Did they smell
the scent of death eternal
moving slowly across the whole
damned wide expanse,
across all the richness
of this varied and glorious land?

Did they know what
would happen
and what history
would unfold for
the Nations of this

sacred and unique
southern place?

Did they know,
did they know,
does it echo
from their graves?

Did they know,
did they know,
about the gun
and disease?

For who could tell
them in their noble
frozen innocence
that the pale faced people
who raised the flag
were the harbingers of death?

Mirror, mirror

Mirror, mirror on the wall,
do you see what I have become
and what life has done to
this face that looks back from
you in dire honest reverse?

Mirror, mirror you do not hide
the changes and the scars
that you reflect back to me
to tell what I have become
in my aging lonely universe.

Privilege

You live in privilege
and you don't care
to take a look at the lives
of all those you claim to represent.

You are privileged
and so you take all
that's offered on your
special designer plate.

You value privilege
for it is what you are
and so you see nothing
outside the bars of your gate.

O lover

O partner joyous,
O partner more than friend,
you live inside this ready heart,
and you stand beside my waiting hand.

Though we be older than the young,
whose passions take love to fever grand,
still we melt and blush in each other's arms
and feel that surge as two souls and bodies merge.

O lover, I will give you all of me that there is to give,
and when this body does cease and to coldness go,
let me dwell in the vitality of your living soul that
takes you to our love that was sweet as a drop of dew.

The eyes of today

The past is always seen
through the eyes of today,
for we have no other way
of seeing but in the memories
that live present now and find
their meaning in our being.
that is created reborn and fresh
in each vital living moment.

The breakup

I rang you to ask
if you wanted to go
to the movies,
like I always did,
for it was our routine,
and I, in my naivety,
believed it would
always be so,
for we were us
and I and you
would always be
a truth.

I rang you in
my sincere routine
but in your hesitation
you told another truth
that you did not want
what we were now
and what we had become,
and you uttered coldly
those dreaded, dreaded words,

“I can’t see you again!”

I felt the heavy word “sorry”
hit me with a cosmic force,
as you said it with finality,
and then the call
ended with silence
and the static of the universe,
and that was all
that I was offered as
a chill goodbye in
the sober partial
light of muddied dusk
on a sweaty summer day.

That eternity

O how I wish for
that eternity that can
never come, for it
is a myth that I
would care to believe,
but I know it is not true.

And so I live in this
corridor that is now
and I move from door
to door, and black to black,
living in between the closing
of one door and the opening
of the last.

But still I dream of eternity
and so it lives in me;
it lives in the corridor,

in the moments and the space.

The human heart

When it comes to
matters of the heart
nothing is certain,
and what seems so
solid and true one day
can be a slippery mess on another.

The fragile human heart,
this realm of desires and affections,
is as predictable as an ocean,
whose swells rise and fall
and then become flat as a mirror.

And yet for all its
twists and turns of fate and mood,
it is this fickle realm that brings
to life and animates all
that makes the human life
worth the fragile living,
for in it the springs of joy arise
and the depth of sadness drips,
and love finds its deepest place
among the storms and the swells,
and the perfect crystalline day.

A perfect cluster

Let me think well of you,
even in your imperfections
and in the glorious flaws
of your diamond self.

For I too need polishing
and us two rough cut diamonds
will one day sit in a perfect cluster,
held together by gold and
re-formed into a perfect ring.

Give me dignity

Give me dignity
in the midst of the onslaught
by those who wish to
bring me down and
turn even my friends against me;
give me wisdom to know
what to say and when to
be silent in the rushing
wave of vitriol and attack.

The sweet cake

Tolerance is the
vital ingredient in
baking the sweet cake
of unity and peace.

The bitter drops of
bigotry and exclusion
can spoil the tender cake,
but adding honeyed extra drops
of tolerance and empathy
can still make the cake
sweet and delicious to eat.

We are alone

Once upon a time,
we thought, as a species,
that we were part of a
grand scheme of eternity,
in a universe centred on us,
even designed for us.

But now,
as we look deep
into the universe
with more clarity
than ever before,
and still quietly hope,
maybe even wish for,
something, someone,
to be out there in the great unknown,
there is the unresolved feeling
that we are alone.

The twilight of the day

I am still in the
twilight of the day,
as the last rays die
in the gilded horizon
and the soft dark pastels
of coming clear night
sweep over the landscape
and connect with
the charcoal dome
of the emergent night sky.

Simplicity

I yearn for simplicity,
like sitting and watching
a sunset with a fine wine
and a smile that somehow
warms the breeze
that flutters through
my hair and through
the shadowy trees.

Yes, I desire the undiluted
taste of a good red wine
on the delight of my lips,
as the sun takes its final
glance at the happenings
of my sometimes dull life.

And in the simplicity of sitting
and saluting the final act of day,
with rubied glass in hand and
delighted warming peace in heart,
I think to myself that this is
as much as any man should have.

Human desire

Human desire to
control and conquer
contains within it
the seeds of destruction.

Human desire to
live in harmony
contains within it the power

to save the world.

The tree

Let me see the tall tree
 as connected to me,
 through its roots that search
 the ground that I walk,
 in the air that it gives that
 I take without thought
 through the preciousness of breath,
 and in the shade where I hide
 from the sun's strong light
 that the tree takes in to sustain me.

I must die

To fully live I must die,
 die a death to desire
 that keeps me only for myself,
 and not for the other;
 for in seeking only my desire
 I became encased in a cycle
 of attachment to pleasure
 that in its denial is an unrelenting
 source of suffering.

The moving self

The past might be gone,
 and so it lives arranged
 in memories that are
 part of the stories of self,
 but the present is infused
 with the future that drips

into the now with anticipations
and predictions about what
might be as a growing edge
to our personal unfolding stories.

Without the past we do
not have these growing
edges of story,
without the future the bridges
to something new and beyond
cannot be built with surety,
and it is in the present
where the past and the future
collide in the creation of
an ever evolving and moving self.

Forward and forward

The watch ticks predictably,
inevitably, ever onwards,
always forward pushing,
counting in the moment,
and shifting in segments
towards the unknown.

Moving, always moving,
never stopping or ceasing
this relentless movement
of matter and space,
around and around
in this wheel of life,
and forward and forward
toward eternity's gate.

Sleep

Wrap me up in
your tender embrace,
and heal me full
after the ravages of life,
and lead me to
my world of dreams
where all that is impossible
finds its possible place.

Cover me with your
slender silken veil
that makes me float
away from all that weighs
so heavy and strong from
the atmosphere of life,
and let me find the
white dove of rest
in the beauty of
your warm caress.

One resolution

I make only one resolution
for the year and for all years,
and that is to live in the
fullness of now and
now to live fully.

All else is a dream
or a desire
for that which
is not about
the fullness of now.

The punishment

The summer stormy rain
lashes and beats the
obedient earth, which
submits to the master
with the cane, and then
waits for the punishment
to cease at the end
of a hot and stinking day.

Hold on

Hold on!
Hold on to all that
lives certainly
and wonderfully
in your life.

Hold on to the
rich nourishment of love
that feeds the spirit
and brings vitality to
the whole being.

Hold on to the good
done in the name of good
as a measure of the worth
of all beings that tread this
shifting shore together.

Hold on to the laughter
that is the lubricant of joy
and binds together

the fragments of this life
that at any time
could pull apart.

Hold on to the
way of peace
that is the soothing balm
that eases the sores of conflict
that are epidemic across
the fractured traumas
of this world.

Hold on to each moment
lived with purpose
and with gratitude,
within a sea of restless illusion
and wasting worry about
what was or what might be.

Hold on!
Hold on,
to the precious,
to the joyous,
to the loving,
to the good,
to the peaceful,
to the grateful,
and to the privilege
that it is to live
and love each momentous day.

Hold on, but
not too tight,
for then it can
be free.

Scars

Birthing scars,
trauma scars,
scars of shame,
scars of boast,
life-changing scars,
life-creating scars,
disabling scars.

Scars recounted in stories,
scars seen and unseen,
formed from cuts viewed
on the surface
and those that
lie waiting
in the mystery beneath.

Scars between people,
scars of the self,
scars in memory
that never fade
and continue to cut
like a surgeon's knife.

Scars of loss,
scars of success,
scars that flaw beauty,
so there is no way back.

Scars lived painfully
in the silence of regret,
scars that are trophies
of a monumental event.

Scars that live in bodies,
spirits and minds,
and only dissolve
in this certainty called death.

The dead book

Minds sit in old bookshelves,
dead, alive, and dead again,
for once, in times past,
a mind and hands came
to play with words
and juggle thoughts
and create a book that
lived vitally for a while
and was read and made
alive in another mind.

But now it sits alone in a
bookshop for dead books,
hidden by other books
and by the dust and ashes,
that the years have wrought,
quite forgotten like
the deceased writer
who formed it words
and penned its thoughts
with passion years before.

Until one day, a young
and keen reader,
fossicking through the dust
and the other dead books,
finds this old book,
yellowed and aged,

once buried like a mummy,
and takes it away
and reads it afresh,
and therein discovers
the mind dead is still living
in a new narrative of being,
a newly born reincarnation.

Oblivion

Oblivion is approaching:
speeding in to collide
with humanity and
we may not be able
to stop it.

We may have
gone so far
along the path to perdition
that we cannot
avoid oblivion's
force and the
judgement and execution
that it shall bring.

It will create a new
order of being on
planet earth, and
we will be no more
or no less important
than the creatures
that will take
our place at the
pinnacle of this fragile creation.

Oblivion is coming,
and it may already be
too late.

Lost contact

We have lost contact
with faces,
faces of flesh that
smile,
frown,
cry,
stare,
grimace
and do all the other
expert things with muscles
that we encounter whole
that reveal the
trembling tender
person beneath.

We now see but images
disembodied thus static
and controllable,
ones that don't require
a moral response
and an empathy
that come with seeing
a fleshly human face and
a human soul
in all its dimensions.

We have lost contact
and thus we can afford
to be cruel,

for the image and
the presence of the
disembodied soul is
a thing or a number
as expendable as
yesterday's news.

Drop your tears

Drop your tears,
let them fall,
on this dry
and infertile land.

Let them form and
be cast out,
and through these tears
and their beauty shed
we can change
and reform this hollow place.

We eat together

We eat together on this
day of celebration and
share the safety of each other,
connecting and being as family,
and lifting our spirits above
the ordinariness of life
to that state of the extraordinary,
where we can find a
higher, kinder, and more authentic self.

Season of joy

O season of joy
In which can all share
as humans across the spectrum
of prosperity and adversity,
difference and being the same.

O joy in coming together
in all our wondrous diversity
and capacity to find the One.

The vultures

The vultures circle
and circle and circle,
waiting, waiting, waiting
for the coldness of death
to fall and bring the still
flesh on which they will
feast and tear and eat
till the bones lie in the
bleaching sun and
remain as
testimony to
the once present
and precious life.

Crazy game

I can never compete
with you, for you
will always win,
so I just hold this ground
that I'm in and hope

for the best, the best
for you, and the best
for me and for all who come
and touch our way,
who touch our way
in this crazy game of
love gained and love lost,
this game of strategy
with no winner and no
loser, just us.

Dancing

We are all creating
dancing pathways,
dancing with ourselves,
dancing around each other
and through the world.

We dance body to body
and online and we
like others to see this
dancing, dancing
that creates our presence
as artists in the creation
of our make-believe worlds.

Diplomacy

Relationships are rarely simple
but instead based on compromises
and negotiations that are
as subtle and as complex
as international diplomacy.

And intimate relationships
 are the most intricate,
 with an intense tug-of-war
 of power and volatile terms of peace
 hidden beneath the veneer of love.

Let me be silent

Hold my tongue
 and let me be silent
 when there is no in
 and there is no out
 and all you say will
 be screwed and used
 to prove conclusively an
 unchallengeable point.

Let me be silent
 and let me be still,
 and let me seek dignity
 from good and from ill.

Deeper beyond deep

I go deeper,
 deeper
 than deep can go,
 deeper than
 love or hate,
 deeper even
 than the earth itself.

I go to the depth,
 that is beyond all depth,
 and in this deep beyond deep

there is something like God.

Sadness

Sadness you are always
with me, even in my peace,
and even in the pleasures
and joys of life.

You are my soulful companion
on the journey that I take
because you always remind me
of life's deepest hurts and
the losses that invariably
attend the gains.

And you are the blues that
takes me deep and help me
reflect on and write about
the pain that paints this life,
and the striving for the good
that is a quest from sadness
as much as love.

Killing the innocent

What does my life mean,
what does anyone's life mean,
in the midst of the crisis
of killing the innocent
that haunts our planet
like a ghost from the
times when life meant little
and the life of a child meant
even less.

The masterpiece

Take a look at the masterpiece
for it will not remain here long.

It lives in the gallery of this world,
it finds its breath in the earth as home.

Record it well for posterity,
for good records we must keep.

So future generations can come to
see real images on a screen.

Here I am for you

I am always here,
like the ground on
which you walk
too many times.

Here I am for sure
and not going away,
like others have gone,
and all you had was
the pain of empty home.

I remain as this constant
that, despite all that has
been done and said,
holds up your feet
and sustains
your homesick soul.

Walk all over me if
that's what you will,
for here I remain
and here I am for you.

Defusing the power

It is so natural
to strike out at
people who
try to bring
you down or
suffocate you
In their dreadful noose.

It is hard to keep
your silence like a stone
and the find a response that
maintains your dignity
and theirs.

But in acts of
utmost dignity
and in words that
go beyond feeling
there is the possibility
of finding a peace
that defuses the power
that tries to strike
you down.

A touch of summer

The sun with its withering heat
beats down cruelly on this land

of contrasts and extremes
 and brings a touch of summer
 across its great expanse from the north
 to the south and the east to the west.

For this is the way of this southern
 land where the hot arid inland
 breathes across the coastal fringe
 and the torrid breath dries the bush
 to a crackling dangerous brown from
 the lush green that came from winter's cool rain.

I will put my armour on

I don't like you,
 with your subtle verbal knife
 that just cuts enough to hurt,
 then you put it away till
 the next opportunity
 to have your dig around
 and slowly slice at
 my tender little soul.

I fully intend to put my
 armour on and put
 my sword away and thrust
 and slice as you might
 you will never cut out
 my heart that was
 never yours to touch anyway.

Eternity I see

I seem to live in
 the middle of eternity,

but since it is eternity
 there is no middle
 and there is no end,
 only the end that comes
 my way in the infinitesimal
 bit of the eternity that I see
 and is reserved just for me.

A child is dying

This is Christmas
 my friends,
 and you are full
 of joy and too
 much drink.

But a child is dying
 on the street,
 a child is dying, my friends.

A child is sold on the streets,
 grabbed with hands
 soiled by greed.

Can you really stomach
 your Christmas lunch?

I guess you can,
 if you turn the other way,
 if you turn the other cheek.

If you turn and say
 that it's just another day
 of living in this world of
 contradictions,

in this wonderland,
where children are
stricken with poverty,
hunger and disease,
or given a gun,
or used for fun.

A child is dying on the street,
but I have nothing to say,
and there is no will
and there is no way,
across the borders that divide
this lonely child
living on the street
from us,
from all of us here.

Warming love

Though for some
this is not the case,
for me the coming of
family together at
special times of the year
is a sweet, aged liqueur
sipped and enjoyed
in the warm hugs
and the smiles of hello
and the vital conversations
dripping with thickly coated love.

For this is family together,
and it warms me like
too much sweet liqueur,
but I drink and drink,

for tomorrow they will
be gone back to their
lives and the special times
will be over till the next time
when we sip together again
this precious sweet and warming love.

The dark days

The dark days of threat
are coming across the land
and the sky is looming black
with shadows forming
around all vulnerable living things.

The moon is dripping
with innocent blood,
and the night feels heavy
ahead of the imminent doom
that waits for the action of the dark.

Across the wide expanse
of night's cold sheet of fear
there is the loudness of silence
and the waiting for something
or the expectation of nothing,
as the blackness of the night
consumes the trembling light.

There only is what is

There is no such thing
as perfection, for however
good Plato was in his dreams,
he got it very wrong.

There only is what is
and there only
can be what we
like and treasure
that brings us personal joy.

Cracks

There are cracks
beneath the manicured surface that
we all show beautifully
as shiny and perfect,
strong and immune.

But those cracks
grow ever wider
with each new stress
and all the pretence
that is needed to
maintain the painted front
of what we present
to the expectant world.

Till the day that
the cracks gape
open like a wound
and reveal woefully
the depth and
the chasm of
dreadful despair
that was always there
beneath this perfect life
that needed no repair.

The fabric of care

War and strife
might be universal
but so are
love and peace
and so is our desire
as human beings
to be connected
and spun perfect
in the fabric of care.

See the good

Let love and joy
and light and peace
attend our ways
this time of year.

Let's see the good
and not the dark
in yearning hearts
that pass our way.

Smashing through foamy peaks

In the days when
I was young and free
I used to swim
on the sandy shore,
and leap against
breaking surf that
crashed through
my tender body

and buried me deep
in the swirl of
sucking ocean's breath.

But I was strong and proud
and would not let
the waves their
victory claim,
and so, I met the
surf halfway,
defying its awesome
watered muscle cold.

And smashing through
its foamy ancient peaks
I raised my fist
in the defiant salute
of David against
the mighty foe.

Light a candle

I light a candle
to the ones gone
who were not heroic
but who stood up
and shone in the
everyday, in the
ordinary of their
suffering lives,
in lives lived proud
among the ruins,
in lives of perseverance
that stand as testaments
to the courage

they displayed through
the human desire to
survive and to help
their families see beyond
another war smoked day.

The mind of a person

The mind of a person
is an intricate thing,
made of layers of
feeling and thinking,
and sensing all that
there is to sense
in the sphere of
the mind's world
that shifts and stutters
from one moment
to the next.

The mind lies in the
bed of consciousness
in which it sleeps
and then wakes to sit
and then run with activity,
till to the bed it must
return again,
and the bed is
always there as the
null shadow that goes
with mind's way and
with mind's wilful turn.

The mind exists in body
but more than body

for it is the person and
all that exists as person
turning out to the world
and taking in and adapting
to all the world has to offer
and is offered in return.

Mind cannot exist
without body for sure,
but mind is also created
in the connectedness of
all that is present for
the body in the world,
for mind is entity,
process and ecology
threaded into
an implicate whole.

The way we love bold

My dear companion in life,
may we live ever true,
like today, and always be strong,
though waves may crash
and throw us this way and that.

And may we never grow old
in the way we love bold,
and find in each other
the warm and tender embrace
like lying serene on a sunlit beach
on a warm and gentle summer day.

Among the trees

In the local park
the trees abide and
live fixed to the birds
that fly and drop on
their branches in
a union of peace
that is older than any
human that has touched
this once full natural place.

Here among the trees
and the birds and the grass,
the humans come in twos and
threes and more to sit
and spread their blankets
and their selves,
and eat and take in all
that exists here as park,
and as place to hear
the sounds of wind
through ancient trees
and the chatter of birds
and the barking of dogs at play.

And children run among the trees
as they were ever meant to run,
and they chase each other
in the foliage green
and their laughter sharp is
nature's song about the joy
of being part of all,
part of singing with the birds
and whistling with the sound

of wind that makes its tunes
among the branches and the leaves.

Cricket

This peculiar game
of bat and ball
on oval green and strip of grass
is a cauldron of challenge
that has united and divided,
disappointed and thrilled
generations of actors
who play or watch
this skill of eye and muscle
in a mindscape of strategy
of person and team.

The game is the geometry
and symmetry of
squares, arcs and angles,
and is measured in
yards and millimetres,
tiny margins and wide expanse.

For it is the physics of
actions and reaction
around a leather sphere,
all held together with
laws and traditions
that are as orderly as
the best society.

Cricket is a force political
and a source of unification
between cultures and countries,

and between players
from every stratum,
local and across the seas.

It is played with the power
of language in sledges and quips,
and by players of every age, size,
race, gender and ability,
in an unpredictable contest and
an admired physical quest
available to all
to play or watch on a screen.

And then it is remembered reverently
through plaques on walls
and in numbers divine
recorded from yesteryear
in dusty books or online.

And the theatre and the play
of the game that
began the English way
has its villains and its heroes
that are revered across nations,
and players long gone from the play
sit and talk of the glory
that once was theirs
and the moments when the
battle of leather on bat
and bat on leather made
the meaning of their lives.

Christmas

Christmas is that
strange and wondrous
segment of the year
where many people celebrate
and jingle bell their way
through a religious festival
for non-religious reasons,
and they know why
and don't know why.

The season is an anticipated
coming together and affirmation
of family, friends and colleagues,
with parties and drinks
and loss of all those formalities
that are normal and expected
throughout the year,
but now give way just a little,
so that it has often
been called the silly season,
a time of general cheer.

It is the terminus of
what has gone down
in the year (thank God!)
and a time of relief, release,
catching up, kicking back,
and being with those
who mean the most and the least.

But for others it is
the time of imminent
financial and personal strain,

tension and conflict,
and being with people
that are usually remote,
except for this little
patch of time that
obligation creates
and familial ties demand.

Or it is a silent remembering
of a person lost,
making Christmas a
desperate time of grief,
amongst the smiles
and the clinking glasses
of this season's feign cheers.

It is even a time for
the dull pain of loneliness
for those with nowhere to go
and no one to share
the spirit of the season with.

Nevertheless, we gravitate
to the good and generous
at Christmas, with Santa
and the thrilling squeals of
children who love the gifts
and the giving of this day,
for it is their day to
see all that love can bring
and all that joy can create
in this small pocket
of life's grace
that celebrates the Christ child.

Indeed, despite all
the bad and terror that
darkens this world,
we affirm all the best
in humankind, not the worst,
affirm the possibility
of being renewed and reinvigorated,
and bring the balm of hope
to the difficulties in life.

And we do all this
among the drinking
and the eating
and the giving
and the listening to carols
that are filled with
“joy to the world” and
other inspiring words which
we sing out of habit
and out of tune.

And even in the
midst of celebration
there is also the
quiet reflection,
the introspection,
and the wondering
about what the year
has brought and
what might have been,
if only, if only.

Then there is shopping,
shopping and more shopping!
Buying attends this season

of frantic pace and
excited gift-seeking
and thinking about
who will be together
on the magical day,
and what we will give
and take, and who
will not be there or even
who we are not looking
forward to see.

Christmas is that
season of ambiguity,
measured in frantic pace,
reflection, working,
buying and not knowing
what to buy,
stopping and going,
travel and visiting,
connection and family,
holiness and generosity,
and the overwhelming
sense of grief for someone
who will not sit down and eat
and smile on this the day
of celebration and tears.

The fire of war's cruel hand

They are the victims
of the fire that burns
with ambition across
the crumbled landscape
that used to be home
but now is the

pit of abandon,
the place of perdition.

They are the children
whose broken bodies
and scarred minds
reflect the sacrifice
of safety in the very places
where children should
be most safe and free.

They are the women
who face the vile and bitter
cold slap of dreaded loss
that hits their bodies
and strikes their souls,
as they patch together
whatever is left of family.

And the fire of war's cruel hand
burns on with no regard
for history or persons,
community or compassion,
in this unforgiving annihilation
of all that used to be good
and all that used to be right.

Person first

If only we all
could see a person first,
and place our
ideologies second.

Imagine.

The pity is that
our ideologies
blanket persons
as group and
shovel them
into categories.

Imagine a person first.
But I'm just a dreamer.

The present now

The past is gone,
like an amputated leg,
and nothing,
not even the most
earnest regret,
can restore it or
change it in any way.

And all the beating up
and recriminations
against self are never
going to do any good,
even if the phantom
feelings are there
and seem so real.

As for the future,
that is just chance
and speculation
or what might be,
though there nothing
wrong with a little

bit of hope.

But remember:
neither the past or
the present are actually
accessible or even present,
except in memory
and the conjuring
of our minds.

For the only time
we can really know
is in the sliding, elusive
present now.

Get off the bus

The great unknown
is driving the bus
of our fears,
and we ride the bus
not knowing where
we are going
or even who
we are going with.

Get off the bus
and walk instead,
and in making
your own way
the unknown
is not fed.

Baby Jesus

O baby Jesus,
we all look at you
and see humanity's face,
lying in innocence,
as Moses did in the basket.

You are a mirror to our
grand desire to see
the world as paradise again,
and to find in this beauty
an antidote for all that is ill.

The field of purple flowers

In the vast fields of rubbish,
among the smell and the filth,
in the discarded remnants
of humanity's temporary self,
there grew some flowers,
all purple and soft green,
and they flourished in the stench
and they grew in the black stream.

And their petals opened fully
and reached up to the sun,
and the light made them stronger
and they grew and grew and thrived,
till they stretched across the landscape,
and covered all the pain,
and where once the scum existed
only purple flowers now remained.

The sum of me

What is the sum
of my life?

An interesting problem
of mathematics.

Is it all I have done?
All that I have written?
All that I have thought and believed?
All that I have touched and love?
All that I have achieved?

What great formula or theorem
will bring all this together
and solve this perpetual problem?

How can I make sense of
all that makes the me that is me?

Tiredness

Tiredness, you are a soft
ether that flows through
my body and invades
every cell with its gentle
floating away into the
nothingness of something.

My shadow

To the side,
from behind,
but never in front,

my shadow follows me,
and I catch it
out of the corner
of my eye
from time to time
and see its darkness.

It is not quite defined,
but still menacing
in its silence there,
and it is always
a companion
but never a friend.

Jesus is my Guru

His name has been
thrown around and used in
the human desire
for gain,
for pain,
for causes,
and all the religious clauses
that make up obscure
statements of
faith and belief.

But for me
this wandering teacher
of The Way
from dusty Palestine,
this man of vision grand,
is my guru, not because of
some desperate belief,
but because he stood for

the ordinary and the everyday,
and lived his life
in the face of strife
for the other,
and challenged the
politics of suppression
for both men and women.

Jesus is my Guru,
for he stood emphatic
in the breaches,
and gave radical compassion
for the undeserving,
and helped us all,
across the canyons of time,
understand our own
capacity for the divine.

My reference point

You define me,
for you are my
reference point
that shows me
where I am in life
and where I
need to be.

When I peel back

When I peel back
your skin
what do I see
but flesh.

When I peel back
your heart
what do I know
but love.

When I peel back
your soul
what do I embrace
but truth.

Make love

Two lovers touch
and connect, body
to the body
of the other.

Two lovers think
about giving
to the other,
and then taking
from the other.

Two lovers feel
as they touch,
and generate
feelings as they
think about
the other.

All these three,
the bodies together,
the thoughts
and the feelings,
come together

to make love.

I am disconnected

I am disconnected.
 How I long for connection.
 How I long for your body again.
 How I long for my friend
 in the warmth of communion.
 How I long for you.
 I am disconnected.

The god inside

The god inside
 god-smacked me
 with love's perfection,
 and I could not help
 but be a person
 filled to the top
 with abject care.

For love conquered me
 from inside to out,
 and the god of mystery
 created me in *αγάπη*
 .

Getting perspective

If you have eyes
 to look and see
 what's in front
 of you, truly,
 what's beside you, really,
 and definitely

what's behind?

Then you
have wisdom.

This is called having
perspective,
and seeing from the
horizon to yourself,
and it's not just
about your seeing
but also imagining
what the seeing is
for others too.

Baby Jesus in a shed

Just to think
that some obscure
baby born of
working class parents
in a backwater like Bethlehem
could cause such fuss and bother,
and all the tinsel,
and frantic shopping,
and the celebration
we take for granted today.

I mean, really, think about it!

His parents didn't have anywhere
to stay, so they birth him
out there in some smelly shed
with all the animals
and all the poo.

Not a midwife in sight,
or a fancy birthing suite.

Imagine the scene:
Mary giving birth and
Joseph out of his depth
and out of his role
as Jewish male,
there among the
animals and the filth.

And this is the child
that's going to change
the world?

To become the greatest
teacher and Guru
to us all?

Hardly credible,
isn't it?

“Silent, night,
holy night”?
Smelly night, more like it!

Homeless.
Ordinary.
Extraordinary?

A family you would pass
by without a second thought.
You'd probably avoid them
in the street today.

And this is what the travellers
from the East came to see.
Maybe they knew something we don't know.

They should have come
for a king or a queen,
or some great leader or prophet
visible and widely seen.

But instead, they made
their offerings in a shed
to a desperate family
with dust and blood on their feet
and sweat on their head.

And to be honest
I think Joseph and Mary
needed all the offerings
they could get.

I mean, they were not
exactly rolling in it.
Well, actually,
they were,
If you know
what I mean!

So there you have it:
homeless family,
living on the streets,
desperate for money
and a place,
and willing to take
anything they could get,

for nobody really cares.

No baby Jesus
meek and mild here.
He was probably lucky
to survive.

Sound familiar?

And what has come
from all this?

No stable

We can never assume
that me and we will
always be the same
and never change.

The me and the we
that we are shift
from moment to
moment across
segments in time.

Me and we are
not stable or
even fully predictable,
for me and we
are as fluid as
the movement
of the world itself.

Starts with biology

Our biological being
and its existence in
the world is the most
fundamental part
of what we understand.

But then this being
is assigned reference points
that we share with other
beings and are the next
layer of meaning in
correspondence with
biology.

This we call language.

And then from biology
and these common
reference points in the world
we abstract and form
categories and hierarchies
of meaning.

This we call thinking.

Then from biology
and reference points
and thinking,
we separate and specialise,
and assign new labels.

This call disciplines or fields,
which become knowledge.

And it has a history and
 a collective order
 that is twisting and
 winding on.

But it all starts with
 biology: the physical being
 in the world, sustaining, perceiving,
 adapting, generating, and relating.

Is truth the same as existence?

Does a chair exist?

A chair exists
 because we see an object.

A chair exists because
 the thing we see
 we give a label,
 which is a mental object.

A chair exists
 because the label
 is associated with
 what the chair does.

What the chair does is
 that it enables us to sit.

All things that enable
 us to sit are chairs.

So is it true that

the thing I see
in front of me
is a chair if
I can sit on it?

No.

It is only
a chair if
its chairness,
it's ability to
enable us to sit,
and the label
we assign in language
to an object
come together
to form a correspondence.

So existence is only truth
when we assign a
property or function
to a thing in language.

Truth is a physical property
and an assignment in language
that is also an assignment in mind
with correspondence
in the world.

But is it true if there is
no correspondence
in the world?

No.

But it still exists
as mental thing.

So truth can only be truth
if it is referenced to the world.

Truth thus is not the
same as existence.

Truth is referencing
to the world AND
existence as a mental object.

Why do I write?

Let's face it,
no one's much interested
in poetry anymore:
it's dead and buried
and reincarnated
in popular songs.

So why do I write?
Why the hell do I create the work
that nobody sees but me?

Because it is my release,
my challenge and my joy,
and for me there are no
other reasons to
do this creative thing
I do but those.

For me alone these
poems exist in time,

and with my death
these poems will also die.

I used to believe

I used to believe
in Martin Luther King;
I used to believe
that justice was the thing.

But there ain't no justice,
and there ain't no King;
his dream has gone, my brothers,
and all his hope with it.

I used to believe
in power of Mandala;
I used to believe
that he was gonna live forever.

But all there's left
is a rabble without a cause;
and the passion that we once shared
is a hollow room without applause

We used to be

We used to be
the ones admired
and we led the
way in wholesome
values and all that shit.

But across the years
and the tears and

all the accomplishments
and the sadness
and the smiles,
we lost the way,
we lost the way
to each other,
we lost the will
to be something together.

We lost the way
to the truth of the other,
in all that we were
for those not us,
in the fuss and
the fucking around
that made us lose
the way,
the way that
we always found
In better days.

We used to be
the model, the model
for others who never
doubted our value,
our value for each other.

But we lost the way
to each other,
we lost the place
where we first met to
be just us.

I cannot be an atheist

I could never be an atheist
 that's having too much faith,
 for faithless I am indeed,
 though I want to believe,
 I want to say there's more
 beyond this open door
 that lies between heaven's gate
 and me, but I cannot step
 through that door for fear
 that there is nothing really there.

No, I cannot be an atheist
 when there are these maybes
 that may be near and
 may be far, in this life
 or in an existence
 that I cannot grasp.

I have no faith for sure,
 unlike an atheist.

Two lovers kiss

Two lovers kiss,
 kiss in their desire
 and their terror,
 kiss with lips
 because they
 have to kiss,
 for kissing is
 what you do as lovers,
 what you do
 as flesh with flesh,

and soul on soul,
what you do
to seal a moment
and create a myth.

I run wild

I run wild through
purple flowers growing
freely in swaying fields
that flow across
valleys of green
to mountains of snow.

The sun is shining
and I run without
knowing to where I go
and from where I came
in this sea of purple bloom
and sun-lit green.

The flowers purple and
green stems long
brush gently against my thighs
as I run and run and run,
swishing and rattling as I
strike them in my race,
and they sway with me
and smile at my stupid fun.

There is no reason
for this run, no great wisdom
or purpose profound,
except that I can scuttle
in this time-stripped place.

And the flowers fill me
with their striking scent,
and their purple is royal,
as I run with abandon
across this valley bold to
god knows where.

I can't believe

I used to believe
in all those things that
people said about god
and sin, and being saved,
and life was sure and
a purpose was made for
being here among
the paradox and
stupidities of
the human state.

But now I can't believe this
anymore, for the world is here
and nothing more,
and people search in
desperation for something
to grasp that takes them
beyond this farce that
stares them in the face
day by day and taunts
them with their fragility.

Yet, how nice it would
be to believe in angels,
demons, saints and sinners

and great father god who cares
for us all in this place of suffering.

To be so certain,
to know such truth
would be a comfort,
and we could wait at
death's dark door
and see the light
beyond its lock.

Alas, I cannot believe
in god and heaven,
hell or any other place
beyond this my
Mother Earth that
stands alone,
that is our hope.

And god is dead,
for he never lived,
except in our greatest
wish for something else,
that lives as dreams
inside our head.

The blood river

The blood river flows
to the opal sea,
flows to the sea of death,
taking away the stain and
stink that used to be life.

Along its banks

the people stand and
 look, gaze at the blood
 and think about what's left,
 think about the river of blue,
 think about what
 used to be true,
 when truth was like
 the river clear,
 the river filled with
 life and cheer.

The blood river flows
 on and on and brings its load
 to the opal sea that waits
 as a stagnant pool for death's fill,
 existing without life or growth
 or warmth beneath.

Finding the meaning

Meaning is the purpose
 or significance that
 produces hope,
 and it is allusive and
 not easy to locate
 in the great sea
 of lives and living.

Some believe they
 have found its eternal
 form in religious belief,
 others in great tasks,
 creative or visionary,
 still others in educational
 or vocational achievements.

But the more you look
for meaning the more
it slips away and you
realise that it is a sneaky
beast that pops up
its fuzzy head in the thick
of living authentically
and doing what
gives you joy.

The gift of human rights

What a great
and wondrous gift
is the endowment
of basic human rights.

This make all humans people,
people of worth and dignity,
people with faces and voices,
people with the same need for protection,
people with the equal desire for
security and access,
happiness and success.

When these rights are eroded away,
so is the protection,
so is the security,
so is the access to all their needs,
so is the potential for happiness
and so is the possibility of success.

When we affirm this wondrous gift
of equity and justice,

we not only build the lives of others
we also affirm the truth
that we are all human,
all equal in our oneness,
all capable of remarkable things
if given the opportunity
to actualise ourselves.

Meals

Sitting down with a meal
and eating it slowly
and tasting it fully,
and devouring
the conversation of good friends
as another full meal to sustain
not the body but the spirit.

Is there a better place to be?

Pleasure and pain

By pleasure I was conceived,
by pain was I born into the world,
through the scales of
pleasure and pain
live my life today,
and in death
pleasure and pain
will be all gone.

Secret heart

There is a secret heart,
a locket of the soul,

in all beings that
not even the closest
of friends, family
or even the intimacy
of a lover knows,
for it is
never revealed,
never shown.

This secret heart is
filled with desires,
imaginings, dreams,
ambitions,
transgressive thoughts,
scars and frustrations
that are held in the
silence of this well,
and only revealed
at times of existential force
when its stone walls crumble
just enough to reveal
what is really held inside.

This secret heart
is a place of shame,
with mysteries both
good and ill.

And all is hidden well
in this deep dark heart,
forced low and secure
for no eyes to see,
no gaze to dwell.

Come home

You who have
never felt the belonging
of a home or the sense
of place found in being home,
know that there is a home
that waits for you
and will emerge from
your longing and your
search to be whole.

Journey to the place
that invites you
and feel its refuge
and its power to create
your purpose anew.

Come home and find
that love before birth
that you have forever
been waiting for.

This mortal life

There is an end,
as there is a
beginning for this
fragment of living
that creates us,
in all our shapes
and forms
and expressions.

The beginning is

not for us to know;
but just like this,
so we will not know
the end as a state
of not living.

We live in this space
between not knowing
and not knowing,
and our knowing,
feeling, thinking
and being
finds its only
existence here,
in this array.

And our connection
with other beings
is also from not knowing
to not knowing,
but they, unlike us,
may witness our
not knowing beginning
and our not knowing end.

In this witness to
our beginnings and our ends,
and the moments between,
lies much of the joy, the grief
and meanings create of
living this mortal life.

The new morn

The sky's tinge
awakens the day,
as the birds speak
and take to flight
and the light of
the new morn
comes both ancient
and new.

What is it that we leave?

Just a thought:
what is it that
we leave behind
when we die?

Things?

Well, things decay,
or get towed away.

I think it is the tender
ideas and values,
the love and togetherness
that link one
generation to another
across the expanse
and viscosity of time.

Ribbons

Ribbons drifting,
drifting and falling,

falling and floating,
floating to the ground,
the ground of dreams,
dreams of another life,
another life without strife,
strife stripped away,
away to this place,
this place of ribbons
drifting and falling,
falling and floating,
floating to the ground.

Finding the truth

I realised just
the other day
that I'd lost the truth,
and it was no where
to be found
in the ground,
in the air,
inside or out.

And search as I may,
it alluded my gaze
and I began to worry
that the truth would
never be found again.

I looked high and low
and even higher
on top of the
best ones of the lot,
but still its face
could not be seen

and it's presence
was not where
it had been
in all the places
I had looked before.

But then, after the
balm of night's shady sleep,
I began to think again,
and it occurred to me
that I was looking
in all the right places
but seeing just one thing.

Truths are in front of me
shining from smooth
and jagged corners,
and they have always been
in front of me divine,
and these faces of beauty
exist everywhere.

The sky is falling

The young girl dreamt
the sky is falling,
it is falling down
all around,
covering the beauty
of her ground.

The sky is falling,
falling,
falling,
innocence is falling,

and only the black
of night is left,
only the darkness
of the memories
that she cares to forget.

The sky is falling,
crystal shattered blue,
filled with truth
that she will piece together,
puzzle mystery
in her tears,
in her fears,
in the madness
that is hers,
in the secrets
not revealed,
in the hidden thoughts
she feels.

The past

They say that the
past is the past,
for it is gone and
never this way
will pass again.

But the past is
not the past
if it be lived
ever now,
ever real,
as painful
skin on skin.

The Blue Mountains

The great sloping barrier that
once held back the settlers
is now vanquished
but not tamed,
and still holds its mystery
in the depth of its
wooden rocky
and rugged soul.

Its wild and unending
stretches of trees, scarred hills,
green valleys and sheer drops
is painted over with a
misty blue hue and filled with
intimate sketches of water falls
and natural sculptures
wrought by the force
of nature's delicate hands.

The camera cannot capture
in its scope the panorama
of this place that is many places,
now dotted with towns and houses
all encased in its faraway beauty
and subject to its moods
that change with the
drift of the seasons
and the circumspect mist.

In the distance the city fog and traffic
create their own logic of living,
but here the trees and the creatures,
the rivers and the lakes,

filled with birds and fish,
link humanity and environment
in one grand cohesive
breathing being.

The mountains look downhill
across the valley to the city
and smile with a blue misty grin,
and invite all who would see
this ancient steady gaze
to come and feel
the presence of this place again.

Your love

Your love is the
argument for my existence,
lifting me out of
the despair that comes
from the thinking
that pain and suffering
is fair punishment.

Your love moves
beyond argument to
the realm of compassion,
in which there is every reason
not to love, and yet love
still lingers strong,
even in the face of defeat.

Your love ever holds on
and always remains strong,
even when evil still holds sway,
or hate seems to be the

fashion of the day.

These teenage years

There are wonderful days
in teenage years
of growing up but
not enough to cover
the fragile state and
the changing self
that makes the teen
a pane of glass,
opaque and capable
of shattering at
at any tender time.

These are critical days,
when lives are forming
and lives are going and
innocence is being
stripped away.

Nude swimming at Bondi

I was young
and delightfully,
stupidly,
naive,
prowling with
my friends,
boys and girls,
in a beat-up
old wagon in
those wondrous
innocent days

before worry
came with its cane.

And we pulled
into Bondi to
catch a wave
at midnight in
the steamy summer heat,
with laughter
singing through
the beat of a band
on the crackling radio.

Lying on the
still warm sand
in the innocence of
the garden before the Fall,
we all stripped naked
with no one around,
just the twinkle of
lights in the bay,
and the twinkle
of delight with each other.

And we swam and splashed
in the crashing surf,
with all those
lovely bits wobbling,
but we did not care
in the moonlight,
in the moonlit dance
in the starlit ocean
of these innocent days.

Yes, I remember

nude bathing at Bondi
and the delight and laughter
of friends whose bodies
were beautiful and
not carved out
for display.

Going backwards

Going forward is
as natural as
being human,
and feeling the life now
and looking to
the road that widens ahead
to the horizon.

Going backwards
is awkward
and can lead
to a fall,
a tripping over
one's self
and the memories
that hold you down,
unless, of course, you
turn full around and
only look back,
only see the
pain that is behind.

I wish

I wish that I
could see things

in new original ways,
not through tired
thoughts that have
oft been said and
no longer satisfy
or add anything
new to the state
of world.

I wish, like Macbeth,
that the state of the
world could be undone,
but not as he thought,
in ways destructive,
or in despair,
but in new thoughts
of revolution and
challenge that
shift the same-old
and replace mediocrity
with a new striking dawn.

I want to break through
and breakup and reform
so that all the oldness that
is charged with desperation
is creatively cleared away.

The mound

The tall trees sit
brooding over
the mound of dirt,
as witnesses,
silent,

waiting,
evergreen,
ever present,
knowing the bones
that lie in rows,
neat rows
beneath
the dirt,
under the mound
where they fell,
blood covered splattered
and hidden well
for only the roots to find,
for only the trees
to know
the ripping sound,
and the wet ground,
and the treasures
buried deep
and well-hidden there.

The sea, the dive

The wind strong
on the water,
chopping away,
and birds diving
in the foam,
hunting secure
and knowing
the turbulence
is just today,
for tomorrow,
on return, the sea
will greet the dive

in flat display.

Requiem

To the end
your provocations
rang out heavy
and your challenges
still echo strong in
the winds of
discontent and
change that we all
share as searching
creatures in this place.

Your quiet protests
and analysis of the
state of humanity,
make us mourn
for you all the more.

For you spoke
with the rare tongue
of truth, even though,
you never called
yourself a prophet
or made any claims
other than that
you were human too,
and thus you could
look through the lens
of your own self
in order to
judge the world.

This troubling heart
we will remember,
this spirit of grace
will carry us on,
and your words,
O your words,
will haunt us ever,
as we search for
these dark truths.

A captive I'm not

I am a servant to all
but servant to none;
I give myself freely
but a captive I'm not.

I feel human

I feel young,
I feel old,
all together bold
in this ambiguity
that is me.

I feel strong.
I feel weak,
in this framed
flesh that stumbles
and sometimes falls,
and then tries to
get up again.

I feel pain,
I feel joy,

among the living
and the dead,
and in all the
shapes of beings
who know
who I am.

I feel new,
I feel ancient,
among the many
parts and places
that make this whole,
that make this body
feel and think,
learn and grow.

I remember,
I forget,
in the triumph
and the trauma
of being this human
of force and
many foibles,
that lives each day,
that savours moments,
that wonders
and imagines
and thinks about
the end of the game.

How do you define yourself?

How do you
define yourself?

Gender?
Age?
Education?
Work?
Skills?
Abilities?
Personality?
Body?
Beauty?
Status?
Acclaim?
Faith?
Sexuality?
Family?
Genealogy?
Friends?
Community?
Country?
Race?
Ethnicity?
Media?
Technologies?
Health?
Impairments?
Wealth?
Possessions?
Interests?
Contributions?
Creativity?
Sport?
Humour?
Travel?
Holidays?

Or even...

Dreams?
Ambitions?
Goals?
Gains?
Losses?
Traumas?
Memories?
Expectations?
Stresses?
Achievements?
Disappointments?
Love?
Pleasures?
Revenge?

And all the
other emotions
that give you
texture.

What threads of
life make you
what you are?

With what
do you identify?

Are you more
than these things?

If more,
then what makes
your whole?

How do you identify?

Intersected

Humans are intersected,
complex and full
of ambiguities.

There is no one
way of defining
or even understanding
a person,
for there are many
intersecting parts,
and numerous faces
that are part of
this complex entity
we call a person

Our spaces

All our spaces,
and the barriers
that contain them,
define us
and confine us,
shaping our
feeling, thinking
and relating
to each other.

Spaces become
part of our habits
and ways of
conceiving our worlds,

and we think
these spaces
are normal
as the architecture
of our lives.

But the radical
change of spaces,
and new ways of
understanding space
and the places we form,
can confront these
habits and ways
of conceiving
inner and outer,
connection and
the levels of disconnection,
and also our routines
and strategies of working
out living in the world.

Consciousness can
change spaces
as much as spaces
can change consciousness.

A mind without words

There is a mind beyond words,
beyond the strictures and structures
and meanings of language,
a place of being
and existing for itself,
that is not dependent,
and exists without a cause

other than itself.

I let you down

I let you down.
I can see that in
the turn of your face
and your breathless pause
that says more than
words of frustration
could ever convey.

But not one of us
can rewind the clock
and slide back time
to recapture
opportunities
now past and gone.

And in this space
of silent disgrace
that I feel about
what I should have done
and never did,
all I can respond
with is a limp 'sorry',
a word that carries
its own imperative
of not enough
and all too late.

Silence is time

Silence is time for thought
and contemplation about

things that matter and
the matters of things
that are vital in our lives.

Silence is the space
that allows this
life-affirming and
this life-changing meditation.

You are an agent

You are an agent
in the world,
no more and
no less than
anyone else.

Those who would deny
this vitality
would have you
give it away
to interests that
would see you stripped
and not really free.

Be this agent fully
and be this agent awakened,
and affect the world
through your
acting and beliefs.

And defy those
who think that
agency does not exist
or that they know what

you really want,
so they steal this gem away.

Bring this world to life

Bring this world to life
every day in
your own being,
in your thinking,
and acting,
and touching
fellow beings
with your joy.

This disease

I feel the disease of
sameness sweeping
across this land,
killing opinion, debate
and points of view
that used to make us rich
and make us more
in the collective whole.

This sinister disease
spreads through social
media especially,
and makes us
zombies of blandness,
never saying what
we really feel or mean,
and resistant to any
real voice or
intelligent concern.

Open your eyes
 and see its
 deafening effects,
 or you too will be infected
 in this sea of memes,
 and stupid tweets
 and platitudes that
 spread the disease
 to our numbed-out brains.

If you say you disagree
 then I'll know you
 are not infected by this plague.

I hate

I hate the term 'intellectual',
 for it is about a setting apart
 that is as powerful as racism.

I hate the term 'elite',
 for it is about a setting apart
 that is as powerful as racism.

But I don't hate the term 'person'.

Objectivity

We live in a moving sea of emotion,
 and our concepts wobble
 in this ocean that is as variable
 as the feelings themselves.

We should not believe the

rhetoric that the rational human
is ever really possible,
for beneath this surface
lies the face of the deep.

Tickling my soul

I am tickling my soul,
like a feather on a
tender body,
like a finger
exploring underarms.

I am tickling my soul

to bring it to life
and spring it back
to action creative.

I am tickling my soul
so that, like so many,
I will not die.

The edge of another view

We like to hear
the voices of
those that agree
with us,
and we think they
are just so wonderful
and full of wisdom's charm.

But we are truly wise
and fully open

when we can listen to
those who do not
give us the voice
of assent, but dissent,
sometimes striking
cords of rancour
in us as we examine
our own thinking
and values from
the edge of
another view.

To be a wise person
is not always about
being right but seeing
the possibility that
we could be wrong.

Love is sweet

Love is sweet:
I can taste it
with my tongue.

I can feel it
with my body.

I can think it
with my brain.

And best of all,
I can do it
with my hands.

Love is sweet,

like you.

Salvation

Salvation is not
something from beyond,
wherever beyond is,
but an awakening within.

It is a resolution
to let go of the cycles
that have held you
in their power for so long
and to find release to
non-attachment
and the freedom
to merely be.

I see you

I see you,
I see you true
in your desperation.

I see the surface
and the ripples underneath.

I see you fighting
the silent pain of belief.

And the anger swells,
and the anger bubbles
for release.

I see you struggling

to lift your hands in the water,
 above the rushing
 and the swirling beneath.

Do you want me to
 take your hand?

I see you,
 I see all of you,
 dying in the flood.

Wisdom is...

Wisdom is the deep
 sitting with your being.

Wisdom is the curiosity
 that leads to fresh discovery.

Curiosity and compassion

It is all of my work
 to connect and
 find through
 the exchange
 of curiosity
 and compassion
 ways to relieve suffering
 and bring enlightenment.

I see

I see you,
 a person,
 looking through

the veils that hide
your being.

I see through
these veils
of age, gender,
race and
other coverings
of belief
that shroud
your tenderness.

I look again
so that I
do not mistake
the presence unique
that is you.

I live

I live fully and freely
in the paradox of now:
in the memories
that have defined me,
and with an openness
to a future that I
do not know
but which comes
as a gift to experience,
not a burden.

I live embodied
and conscious of life:
as a biological being,
a system that lives,

as part of this planet
 and its woven eco-system,
 yet thinking beyond
 this temporal existence
 to what else might be,
 with transcendent concepts
 given birth in language.

Being, living

I find my being
 in the living
 and my living
 in my being,
 in a beautiful naked dance
 of existing, acting,
 thinking and feeling,
 and connecting
 with other living beings
 who share the
 same ocean of possibilities.

Heavy

The dusky clouds
 lay heavy on the mountains,
 as my languid spirit
 lays heavy with the loss.

The clouds become thickly black
 and hide the mountains
 in the mystery of their mist.

How I wish
 they could lay

their mystery on me
and hide my soul
from the heaviness
of death.

Living enlightened

Always learning,
every growing,
never stopping,
fully open,
childishly curious,
healing suffering,
being now,
considering forever,
lost in the present.

In the strength

Through the difficult
and the painful,
in the good
and in the great,
you stand together
in your love,
not apart,
as one made of two,
and in the strength
that is you.

Gilded

Our lives and stories
are gilded by our thoughts
that pass over the leaden days

that once did weigh so
 heavy and sad
 but now are part of
 the grand tales we
 tell others and ourselves
 to make everything appear
 to be okay.

The same?

You shit
 the same as me.

You fuck
 the same as me.

You fear
 the same as me.

You will die
 the same as me.

Yet you think
 you are better than me?

Damned powers

I have profound respect for persons,
 for all beings who seek,
 in this short and delicate life,
 to be happy and to find their best way.

But I have no great love for
 principalities, powers and all
 that other political guff we have been

told to respect and revere.

For, all too often, those same
damned powers and principalities
steal away the short and delicate
lives of all those persons who
only seek to enrich their
fleeting happiness.

Scattered, twisted

I see the bodies,
twisted,
scattered,
dead and distant
from the dreadful flight
that passed in seconds
to give its final goodnight.

Dead and bloodied,
buildings dropped,
eyes staring,
children running,
in the dust of the fight.

Children playing,
praying beside
dead bodies,
scattered,
twisted,
starving,
waiting,
for the tender touch,
that will never come,
back to home gone.

Rubble,
pieces of lives,
and a baby cries
in the distance,
as I see the bodies,
the bodies,
the children,
generations,
scarred and gone.

Take me, courage

O courage take my hand
and pull me along this
difficult road on life's turn.

I am scared and cannot
see the way through the fear
that blocks my vision like tears.

Take hold of me, courage,
and help me put one step forward
and never retreat to take a step back.

The moving swirling rock

Looking back at the earth,
that blue moulded vital planet
strewn with the swirl of clouds,
I began to think that it
was not so big and
not so important after all.

This moving, swirling rock

is as small as dust and not the
centre of the spheres,
as some of the ancients thought,
for there is no centre of the
universe, as it goes on
to god knows where.

And we, as working ants,
live on this fragile abandoned
speck in space, oblivious,
warmed by the sun,
and fighting our petty wars
and dreaming of what
might be in a future
that no one can know
among the vast genius
of the universe.

Gone right

It's easy to find
examples of when
culture and ethnicity
has gone wrong,
and not see the larger view
that in most cases
it has gone right.

In this sacredness

The sacred is not just in
the extraordinary
and the inspirational,
but in the ordinary
and the fine texture

of the hidden everyday.

In this sacredness,
in these textures
of existence, we
find fulsome the beautiful
constitution of ourselves.

Wandering soul

I am a wandering soul
that's not a soul
according to
modern wisdom,
just an intricate and complex
machine they say,
for there is no more
than a great combination
that struts on this
temporary stage of life
and finds its
troubled way to dusty death.

Well, that may be
and who am I
to argue against
the tide of thought
of a scientific
and rational turn?

But still I say
in the truth that
I feel and am
ready to pronounce,
that I am a wandering soul

hewn from eternity's awful wake.

Last moments

In his last and
conscious moments
what did Gough think
of the state of this place
over which he long since
had no say but ever
since has shifted
and twisted and turned
towards the modern way?

Can we then imagine
this place without his rapid
days of formidable
and awkward change
that created this progressive land
that ever since has
struggled to truly find itself?

What did he write
about his legacy that
remains hidden from
most who never cared to know,
or now are not interested
in the subtle effects of history?

In his last and conscious moments,
how would Gough see the world
that we have created in the South?

And how would he view the
stuttering progress on so

many turbulent fronts
that were for him simple truths?

*For the late Edward Gough Whitlam,
visionary and Prime Minister of Australia*

Healing love

Above the love that
is viewed as grand by
most human beings
in their desperate search
for deeper meaning,
is a love that gives
itself in totality,
a love that is
bold in the forefront
of war, conflict, and tragedy.

This is a healing love
for the sake of humanity,
and brings to all
who touch its hope and
gravity the sense
that through the
injustice and insanity
good and wholesomeness remain.

Ever learning

I open my heart
to the newness of each day,
and the possibilities in
learning that are fresh
and bring transformation.

I challenge thinking that
 says that I know it all
 and therefore, I cannot
 learn any more.

May I be ever open,
 ever seeking,
 ever listening,
 ever learning,
 and ever present
 for the other
 who offers
 me newness
 and takes my
 vital words
 as treasures
 of their own.

Make it thick again

The thin air
 of love's loss
 is hovering all around.

Join all who want to
 revive the air
 and make it thick again.

A taste of all

What can I bring
 to the emptiness?

Across the borderline

and into the arena of nothing,
 I will bring the depth of myself:
 I will carry all the wisdom
 that I have gained,
 all the doubts
 that I have framed,
 and all the questions
 that still remain.

I will bring all this,
 and much more,
 across the borderline
 and fill that nothingness
 with a taste of all.

The passion back

Never let this passion
 die away
 in some pathetic
 fucking placid mess,
 with nothing left
 but bones gnawed,
 bones without flesh,
 bones dry sitting
 in a pile.

No. I want to put
 the passion back
 and resurrect the bones
 and never die

Acts of harm

What despair or anger or antipathy

causes a human, with all the feelings
of every other tender person,
to do unconscionable
acts of deepest harm
against fellow beings?

What benefit can that person
hope to gain from this desperation,
other than the false short pleasure
of destructive revenge?

What thoughts drive the ragged mind
of the person that chooses to harm?

Does that person think that
only in destruction can they
find peace, or consolation
or some sort of distorted meaning?

What of the victims
who have done no more
than be, living their lives
in ordinariness and in the
expectation of peace?

Acts of desperate evil
cannot be defined by
the usual ways of thinking,
by the moral compass that
many of us share,
for they are acts that are
not about the victims at all,
but about the states of disorder,
of rage and disassembly,
that have led a human being

to come to this,
 to all this deep
 and unsolvable misery
 that echoes on and on and on,

What is our response? What should we do
 as beings with a moral order?

It has to be one of justice.
 But not justice alone.

For in coming with
 healing hands to
 this indescribable tragedy,
 there is a need for another way:
 a deep unquenchable love,
 and hope as an
 antidote to despair.

A bloody great injection

We all need
 a bloody great
 injection of
 hope to kill
 the bug of
 doubt and fear
 that is spreading
 and infecting
 even reasonable people.

Affirmation, joy,
 acceptance
 and a resolve to
 always be just

are also ingredients
in this inoculation
that we all need
to have regularly
in the bum.

My legacy

When my body is
deep in the sky,
flying minute high,
and combining with
all else it touches soft,
and forming new beings
and new selves,
what will be remembered
of this entity called me:
what will be the legacy
of me being alive
and living proud
on this mother earth?

Dear Leonard

What I love about
you is your disarming
honesty, and your
willingness to
be vulnerable and
ordinary in a world
built on the values of fame.

In the Buddhist way,
in the Jewish sense,
you saw all the frailty

and the potential in you,
 sweetened by that
 uninhibited warm and that
 smile that seems to belie
 the darkness of your penetrating art.

No, I am not a fan,
 not in the usual way
 of the world, but I feel
 the honour of having
 followed your journey
 and read your thoughts
 as a steady inspiration
 for my own.

For the many that
 feel as if do, there
 is the sense in which
 you have not died truly
 and that you are indeed
 reincarnated in all
 of us who believe
 that through our art
 we can change the world.

for Leonard Cohen

My finest work

Of all my work
 my finest is you,
 all of you,
 my dear children.

You are the living

and breathing
monuments
to my life,
and you shall
yourselves
make your own
monuments of love
in the flesh of your
precious ones to come.

The nice poet

As a poet,
I'm supposed to be nice
and rhyme the rimes
and shapes the lines
into neat systems
of sound and thought.

And even if
it is shit,
it has to be the
best damn shit
that I can write.

Then if it is,
I will be praised
and all of heaven
will sing and shout
that this great poet
of a thousand verses
finally got his finger out.

Freedom of speech

I can say what
the hell I want,
so damn you all.

But if you say
what the hell
you want
you are damning
us all.

Well, I am entitled
to my opinion,
so shove it
up your jumper.

Let me tell you
that no one listens
to my opinion
and I don't have
a jumper.

Embrace

O the sweet and great
embrace of this dear place,
this planet that is all there is.

For me and us it is a grace
in which we are conceived,
and live and die, always
in the certain arms
of its intimate embrace.

Desecration

I wondered as a child
 (I really did)
 whether Jesus got erections:
 a bloody great boner
 filled with desire.

For some who read or choose
 not to read, I may have offended.

Sorry.

But think again.
 Think again of incarnation.
 Contemplate humanity and suffering.

Think of ANDRÉS SERRANO,
 and his PISS CHRIST.

Shredded in the name of
 god.
 Creative freedom shredded.
 Christ's name shredded.
 Christ crucified.

Read the gospels in a new faith.
 See the man and the cause.
 For in erections the world is renewed.

A sort of seclusion

As I come apart
 to be with myself
 in a sort of seclusion,

as a monk of contemplation,
 I can then fully enjoy the world,
 for I see in the absence, presence,
 and I hear in the silence happy noise.

The red monster

The red monster is loose...
 Breathing its fire
 and destructive power.

Taking hold and then
 skipping away
 when only the embers
 of humanity remain.

Coming in at
 the touch of a button,
 and sweeping away
 with its tail wagging.

The red monster is loose.
 But you won't see it till
 it roars and looms up on you.

Mind is

Mind is what it is
 as brain in body,
 body in world,
 and brain and world
 in synergy through
 sense and actions,
 and consciousness of both.

But mind is also
 awareness of awareness,
 and awareness of
 the greater awareness,
 in what Hegel says
 is realisation itself
 about what it implicitly given.

Running

Life's rapid pace
 is running, running,
 running in a race with no
 glorious ending,
 running and running
 to the place of
 no beginning.

The contractions of now

The past, the past,
 the rigid place of regret
 that bears down like childbirth,
 but nothing is born except
 the delicate taste of bitterness.

And the future is just a whim
 of fancies dreamed and what
 may be on another day
 that also bears down
 but from the other way.

So I live here in the only
 place I can really be,
 right here in the contractions

of the living, breathing, now.

Crazy thoughts

It is evening
and the moon is full
against the blackened
sky and I look out
on to the shrunken
glimpse of the universe.

How fucking small am I?
I think.

Perhaps I think too much
in the open air of night,
when not perplexed by
the complex day
and seek the moon
and its delight.

I think too much
of the spinning world
that will not stop
and breach its lawful rights.

Crazy thoughts in the
full moon light and
the starry night that
Van Gogh saw
and saw beyond.

Crazy thoughts
for a crazy world,
but here tonight

I am sane at last
with the howling moon
and the breeze blowing
through the black.

Solo

There was a swan on
the water, solo,
and searching below
for food, and alone,
separated from all the rest,
and content, it seems,
with its ways and its days,
of being single on the water,
and reflected double by
the lake and the sun,
but there is only one.

My first child

When my first child was born
life was never the same again.
Me and him were tied for life.

Dependent and starting a story.
Tired waking in the middle
of the night.

Rocking him silently
and watching him at the breast.

Screaming in hospital from
a temperature.

Worry and helpless in
a waiting room.

Seeing the first steps
and the stumbling.

Feeding in the tired time
of day.

And to this hour I think
of him in all his life
and all his striving
for happiness.

And I still remember when
my first child was born.

Not asleep

The time clicks past four.

I am not asleep,
just awake enough.

And thinking of all
that's gone before
and gone ahead.

Scattered are my thoughts.

My head hurts,
but my body will not allow
the healing balm of sleep.

So, I dream in the waking,

knowing that it will not
always be this way.

Through the emptiness

I see that you are
afraid of the emptiness,
and of loneliness
that is there inside
the deep and black hole.

But know that even there.
I am never far from you,
never too far away
to reach out through
the black and deep hole
and hold your hand again.

Writing as sacrament

Writing is for me
a sacrament,
a sacred and holy
act of imparting grace
to myself first and
then, only then,
to others.

In this time apart,
as I write in words
sometimes profound
and sometimes comic,
and many times
not great at all,
there is the giving

and the sharing of favour,
located and made
real in this embodiment.

Take me down

Draw me under,
draw me under,
to this place of
charm and wonder.

Draw me near
with a tear,
with an echo
of my fear.

Take me down
take me low,
see my pain
in the blow.

Hold me still,
with a pill,
and remember
I can kill.

The kitten

I remember the kitten
on the floor.

Black and patchy white it was.

Dad came home and
with his boots,

his boots of work and mud,
he squashed the kitten's
head on the floor
while coming through
the door, cracked it open good,
for I heard the fatal sound,

I, as witness,
took it in as photograph,
as sound file,
as emblem of this world.

He didn't mean to
do it, of course—it
was just there,
in the way,
on display,
as blood trickled,
freely and completely
from its grotesque mouth,
distorted and not whole.

And I cried, I cried, I cried
tears of loss and spoke
words of anger.

How bold was I at six.

I thought about the kitten
on the floor,
its eye still and taken
for its sin of
playing too near
the door of
nature's retribution.

And I took it,
for no one else would,
and buried it
crumpled in the wet mud
of a drizzling winter's day.

Buried it with my teddy,
for it needed this friend
more than I as it passed
to some other place
much nicer than
this realm of skulls and tears.

Covered it over in mud, I did,
and said a feeble pray
learnt in another mournful place.

And I was there alone
with my friend,
for all the others laughed
and said that it was just
a stupid cat.

Say goodbye, say goodbye, say goodbye,
for here lies all of life as well.

Who owns

Who owns your body?
Is it you, or something,
or someone else?

Who owns the state
of who and what you are?

Is it true that we are
and were always
possessed by
the spirit of
the collective whole?

Finally alive

I am finally alive,
after being dead
all these forgotten years.

I am fully me,
after searching
endlessly for self-peace.

The courage of women

Bertrand Russell
once wrote that a
woman must conceal
her courage if she
wants a man
to like her.

Does he mean silence?
Does he mean submission?
Is he referencing war,
and other masculine views
of courage's form?

But Russell's analysis
is of his age,
and not even

of his age,
for he wrote this (circa 1930)
in times of danger,
and times of change,
and in the era of
shifting fortunes,
and in the knowledge of
the history of women's
courage that didn't fit
some masculine ideal.

He wrote this in the time
of Amelia Earhart,
who lifted to the sky
with courage unfurled,
in body and in spirit,
and in fullness of mind

And her pioneering spirit,
and her tenacity
were admired by all,
except, it seems,
Bertrand Russell.

And on the Continent,
away from England's
devilishly patriarchal ways,
de Beauvoir was moving
courageously bold
in the circles of
Merleau-Ponty and
Levi-Strauss, recreating
and challenging strong
the way women and men
saw themselves.

No, women and courage
have always belonged,
from the ordinary to the famous,
as mutual companions of suffering
and gain in this baffling life of trouble:
through childbirth, loss and the
terror of unrelenting war,
to new ground broken in
female strides and suffrage that
were hardly even written about.

Then on Australian soil,
the pioneers who came
were women oppressed
who became women who
could be free to
find a new spirit of
beginning here.

And so many shone
the light on another way,
such as Louisa Lawson
and her magazine
and her famous son
who shared his
mother's dream.

No, women have never
concealed their courage
or backed away
in pitiful withdrawal,
to use a category
that is very male.

For they could never
withdraw from life
and from holding this
world together through
tragedy, in triumph
and in the crises that
men have always
brought as the
fruit of their loins.

Seeking Sylvia Plath

What you packed roughly
into those years of
weal and woe
that still make me
read your life
and its dynamism,
fatality and strife.

I am seeking Sylvia Plath,
in all the fragments of
yourself that you left behind.

For you showed me
your primeval fears
and the haunting manic doom
of the black cloud
that too often descended
on you cold.

Yet in the midst of
the irresistible doom
your genius rose wild
and shone a fog light

of truth through the
fate you thought
was you.

I am seeking Sylvia Plath,
in all that has been said
and not said in the
years since you gave
away your life
as a gift to
those who also seek.

And some may say
that you were too absorbed
by death's final door
and consumed by its presence
in your fragile life.

But I say you were taken
not by death at all
but by life,
by all that existence
flung at you
and hurled into
your path and into
your turbulent head.

I am seeking Sylvia Plath,
as the women who gave
herself whole in words,
who gave herself in fragments,
in a mysterious sharing
of the shades of blue.

Imagination

There is no
better friend than
the playful and
rampant imp,
imagination, that
springs bold and
grows tall out of
the fertile fields
of wonder.

Bind me up

Bind me up
in the bosom
of your love.

Hold me closer
than close can be,
and heal this pain
that has weighed
on my body
heavier than
steel bars.

We will perform

I will perform
for you,
and you will
perform for me,
and we will perform
for each other
in this game

of give and take.

You will say a word,
and I will respond,
and together
we will create this
moment of action
in a libretto called
a chat.

I will do this
and you will
do that and together
in this dance
of living we will
create what looks like
something of a life,
an animation
of one in two
and two in one.

The meditation

I sit in the
silence of now,
breathing and sensing,
sensing the pulse
of my breath,
and stilling
my thoughts
that sit behind
as part of me
but not possessing me.

And I allow the natural

arisings of feeling
 to sit easily in awareness,
 as I become a breathing,
 feeling, sensing
 wholesome body
 of hope.

Then, in the afterglow
 of this time of being,
 I allow my thoughts
 to evaluate all
 that has lived in
 this beautiful body,
 and think about
 its intensities,
 textures, and flows.

In nature whole

Nature is no transcendent thing
 like Emerson thought and said,
 for though I admire nature like he,
 we are and ever shall be in nature whole,
 not some divine animal set apart
 but dependent and only partly free.

Imagine you fly

Imagine you fly
 in the sky
 over the trees
 and over the houses
 where the people live.

And you can look

down from a height
into the rows of houses,
and into the lives
of all the living
breathing, wondering
beings there.

Imagine their lives,
in all the joy and pain
and trials that attend
their days and their
survival ways of coping,
and finding some
meaning and grace.

And in this imagination
filled with compassion,
you say a blessing on
all the beings who
search for happiness
and look to find
their better way.

Your pound of flesh

I want you to love me,
so don't just take
your pound of flesh
and think that
you don't have
to give anything
in return.

Love doesn't work
like that; it's not some

great ideal of giving
yourself away,
like a sacrifice.

I want to love you,
so be real and
know that love
is about what
you return
as well as
what you steal.

The great circle

The great circle
goes around and around
and never stops
to let anyone off.

It moves across time
and it flows through space,
from life to death
and from death to life.

The great circle is seen
and it is unseen,
defying human history
in its unending curve.

Real fairness

Don't tell me
everything is right
when we all know it isn't.

Don't pretend that
the world is a better place
when greed and corruption have risen.

If Jesus was around today
I sure know what he would do:
he would take the whip
of his passionate heart
and create this world anew.

Don't tell me that
love is the answer
when we don't even
know the question.

Even now the
voices are rising
and the people
are saying we have
had enough.

We have had enough
of the profit mongering.

We have had enough
of compromising.

We want the start
of a hope-filled day.

We want real fairness
that is here to stay.

Be careful

It is often said,
“Be careful
what you wish for.”

But I say,
“Be careful
who you laugh at.”

For scorn
may turn its
ugly head to you.

This is the power

I feel your electricity
running in my nerves
and straight to my brain.

This is the power of
your delicate hot touch,
as energy moves from
brain to brain.

The gift

I have a gift
with words,
or at least
I give my words
as gifts,
but others
show this gift
in ways with

wood or steel,
or in the
musician's tune
that rumbles with
creative delight,
or in drops of
paint or pencil
flashed against
a canvas blank.

I have a gift
and give the
gift of self,
as do all who
choose to
see that
finer self
that shines
through creativity.

With hearts soft

O let's live with
hearts as soft
as velvet's touch,
and minds open
to need, so we
can reach beyond
the narrow self
that says we've
done enough,
to sense the pain
and here the stories
of grief's dreadful ways,
in the lives of women

who have lost a baby,
a tender longing part
of their deepest self.

I am thinking of my friend

My friend has just
been diagnosed
with cancer and
I am here miles away
thinking of her
and contemplating
the providence
of my own life.

For sickness has
not yet touched
this mortal frame
that I drag around
with me every day.

Yet for her,
whose body is
scarred with
sickness' deft hand,
there is no certainty
that her mortal frame
will drag her anywhere
much at all.

How fortunate am I,
with this body
that gives me its
permission to walk
and commune

with all of nature's
grand and humble art,
and skip and jump
and run as far
as I like.

I am thinking of
my friend who has
to face the surgeon's knife
and recovery's despair,
and I wish, no, I pray,
that she will
once again feel the
vitality and hope
that is a fleeting
part of this uncertain life.

I stand

I stand with you,
even if we see
the world a different way.

I stand with you,
for you are human
and you deserve the light of day.

My poems

My poems come in
delicate crevices in time
and at moments when
they pop right in and
I just have to write them down
and that is that.

My poems are never
the work of the day
but the feeble creations
of the night when alone
they come like ghosts to be
my friends and companions all.

These mystical creations
flow from music or even
from the unthinking words
of a fleshly friend
who does not know
what his empty words
have created or bestowed.

My poems are the
tunes in my soul
that play loud,
that play soft,
then sometimes form
a symphony,
and all of this, it seems,
is only for me.

A construction job

Now, I need you to help me:
I am going to construct
a new and better self,
so I must clear away
and dump the old stuff,
that boring and crappy
side of me.

What I need you to do
is to order some online
new fashion values
and a set of tips
for how I should best behave
to get the most,
you know the ones
that are on special at the moment.

Now, don't forget to
throw in some of those
great and noble habits,
and I mean the brand name ones
advertised in the media.

Oh yes,
and a large bin for
the old ones, please.

And of course I am
going to require the greatest
foundations that money
can buy, not to mention,
some lavish cosmetic furnishings,
from the best place, of course.

What do you mean
that's not going
to create a new and better self?
That's the way everyone does it,
and I want a piece of that action too.

Existential

Particles.
 Body.
 Skin.
 Feelings.
 Senses.
 Emotions.
 The world.
 The other.
 Thoughts.
 Decisions.
 Dreams.
 Creations.
 Love.
 Reproductions.
 Change.
 Conflict.
 Doubt.
 Joy.
 Peace.
 The world.
 Emotions.
 Senses.
 Feelings.
 Skin.
 Body.
 Particles.

See the light

I want to see
 that delicate strange
 light alive in you again,
 and the wicked, delightful self

that once existed as a rainbow
that we all marvelled at.

Come back to me out
of the grey sheath
that surrounds
and holds you in,
and let this light,
in all its glorious spectrum,
shine and dazzle us again.

Being a parent

Being a parent means
being caught
in the tender cycle
of wanting to point
the life of your child
in the direction of success
but then knowing
that you must
let them take the direction
that they have to take,
that they will take.

And in the cycle,
in this tender trap,
that rotates
across the years
of bringing up,
from when your child
is young and vulnerable
to the shifting adult years,
there are the constant
yearning, anxious thoughts

about what will be
and what might go wrong.

Being a parent means
entering this cycle,
willingly and unwillingly,
as a slave of love,
and then being torn
by each turn and step
of your child's life,
an open life
that's yours
and not yours at all.

Art's finger

I cannot challenge
oppressive views
with placards or
a protest march,
or be in demonstrations
in the flaming street
to press a cause
and show a better way.

All I have is myself
and my Art of words,
and I shall, through
these words,
point Art's finger
at all who would
treat the other as less,
at every person
who fails to see
the meaning of

the word 'best'.

The precipice

We stand near
the jagged precipice
and try not to
go too near the edge,
and we live on
the ledge of a precipice,
with our lives
precariously made.

We build our dreams
on a precipice
and say that all is okay,
and stand in the wind
on the precipice
tilting oblivion's way.

The precipice always
waits through sun
and cold bleak rain,
waits for us to come
to its certain edge
and for us to plunge
beyond its rocky plateau
to the sheer darkness
that exists below.

Systems and a person

We have systems,
and we have a person.

Systems fit in a person,
and a person fits in a system.
A person cannot change a system,
but a system can change a person.
A person leaves a system,
and the system replaces a person.

Systems need people,
and people need systems.
Systems do not feel people,
but people feel systems.

We have a person,
and we have systems.

Protest

You are the voice
in the wilderness,
calling and calling us
out of our sleep,
out of the dullness
that inhabits our ways.

Protest.

You are calling us from the
everyday to see tomorrows
that will soon come
and invade us all
against our will,
and then creep up before
we know what has gone
and what we have lost
in this subtle move.

Troubled times

These are troubled times,
filled with beating sounds
from hollow drums
that echo across the world
and across our lives.

We hear these baffling sounds
with subtle dread,
wondering what will be
and what may come next.

But after the sounds of the drums
have died away and been forgotten
in the ordinariness and in
the drug of the everyday,
we are returned to the struggles
of living lives and to the dull beat
of the routines and habits
around which we survive.

If only

If only we could
bring back those
gone who inspired us
and made us dream
of all that is possible
and impossible.

But alas death is sure
and death is true
and we can only
go forward

and dream what
they once dreamed
and do what they
once did.

Radical compassion

Every human who lives
and feels and is a being
deserves to be treated
with unconditional dignity,
no matter what that person
has done or how terrible
they are deemed to be.

And dignity is the core
of a radical compassion
that views all beings
as having rights
that transcend everything
that we might think
or believe about
the evil potential
and dark pit
of depravity
into which they
seem to have fallen.

Radical compassion
does not depend upon
how one feels, for this
would make compassion
merely self-indulgent sympathy,
but on the notion
that every being is a

significant part of the whole,
and a unique creature
of infinite worth.

Even the enemy
deserves the
radical compassionate
response of equity of care
that comes from
a conviction that
all beings are equal,
of the same worth,
deserving of generosity
and needing the healing
power of love's gentle balm.

Truly mad

There are times
when the world
is truly mad
and the ways and tastes
of people shift
in crazy convoluted routes
that go where no one
has gone before,
and yet all seems the
same among the
houses and the trees
and in all the living
in the fresh summer breeze.

The place of nature's praise

The birds play
at the exit
of the sun's
warm rays,
and fly in darts,
without constraint,
among the trees
and bushes,
only shifted
and shaped
in their ways
by the breeze
that comes in fits
across the
green and golden
place of nature's praise.

Politics

Politics:
the art of surface
and saying what
you are supposed to say.

Politics:
the game of doing
diplomacy and convincing
enough people you are right.

Spun

We are spun around,
and around,
and around,
so much so that we begin
to believe we are
doing the spinning
all on our own,
and the dizziness
is all of our own making,
when, in truth, it is not
us doing the
spinning at all.

The wind

The wind blows on my
face and I shield it or
embrace it but I control
it not, for it comes when
it will and goes away again,
invisible to the eye but
felt on the skin, and it
moves the trees and does
what it wants, and nothing
can stand in its path, not
all our imaginings and wishes
for a still day, nothing, for
it is a force across the globe,
across our lives, driving boats
and whipping up the sea, and
causing us to smile and shake
with fear at its coming.

Nothing can hold it,
 nothing, for the wind
 is its own and belongs to the
 earth as the free child that needs
 to roam, and restless it is just
 like us, filled with streaming energy,
 unending, confronting us in moans
 till we at last are hidden tight in the
 cold dank permanence of the ground.
 away evermore from its everlasting might.

Healing

Healing is what we need,
 healing, in tears,
 release from all this,
 from thus it is and we
 are lost in its weight, the
 weight of the world as now,
 outward, inward, finding space,
 to be, to be in healing,
 whole again, in smiles,
 a chance for something like love,
 something to hold
 in a holdless age in which
 uncertainty is a phrase
 to easily released,

Healing is the desire of
 this heart of mine,
 this heart of yours that yearns
 for authenticity again,
 back to belonging,
 back to hope, this word that
 means so much and so little.

Healing, dealing with the pain
that lies dull behind all feeling
and coming back home again,
returning to where we become us.

Remembering

Even if all of you forget,
I will still remember,
still remember,
still remember the pain,
the pain that crushed
and burnt across this land,
this land so living and so dead,
dead now but living still,
stillness lies black across
its beauty, memory and pain,
pain that remains even if
it's forgotten by all of you.

Belief

Belief is a force
that drives humanity,
across cultures and
times, places, lands
and all that falls on
humans in the living
of this temporal life.

Belief brings us together,
and bonds humans tightly in
communities of belonging
that build strong meanings

like a warm fortress against
the cold of nothingness.

Belief can also be the spark
that ignites conflict and the
point of separation between
people trying to find surety
in a universe that only obeys
the laws that governed
its creation in times beyond
the capacity of human thought.

Living in uncertainty, wondering,
and seeking the meanings for
it all in the absence and the
empty spaces that point out and
point in: this is the ground of
belief as the seeking to find
what is unwilling to give up its
deep and unfathomable secrets.

Distinction

The human mind loves
to create distinctions
and neat categories to
house these distinctions,
which are used to foster
differences and inequalities
and all the other ways of
holding people's lives apart
and creating the ground of
conflict and the tragedy of
wars, poverty and exclusion.

But when one looks to the
 sky there are no distinctions
 between this way and that:
 the sky is blue and then grey
 with clouds and at night
 the stars spot their grand
 beauty across the vast and
 incomprehensible black.

There are no distinctions
 between this person and that,
 for in each there is uniqueness
 and each lives under the sky
 and looks up to the numberless
 stars and wonders about life
 and the precariousness of this
 time on earth and their human skin.

Talking

Talking, talking ideas,
 disagreeing, agreeing,
 bouncing around with words,
 being together in thought,
 feeling another being think,
 excitement, emotion arranged
 with imaginings, explaining,
 questioning, and agreeing that
 differences are great.

Strung out in shaping faces,
 and gestures that craft
 meaning with words.

Voices calm and then intense,

thrown across to vacant spaces,
and then the response.

This is the way I want to
be with all of you.

This is what must not be lost.

Holding hands

Life and love
holding hands
across this plain,
squeezing together
in the dark and light,
two and one in the
face of fear, for here
there is nothing less
and nothing more.

Return

Return.
Return to base.
Return to the primitive:
who we are, beyond pretence.

Feeling.
Feeling the beat again.
Rhythm across time and space:
moving together, in our place.

Feeling, return.
Return to feeling.
Time that was, time again:

life renews with the beat of a drum.

With you

I sit with you now in loss,
pretending that I understand
when I understand nothing at all.

Still, I am here, feeling a drop
of your pain, which is enough to bring
me to your sharp and cruel edge.

Here with you in the silence that is
not silent at all but filled with the threads
of what you had in your life once lived.

Sing

Let's sing together
songs of love, of
healing, together as
sounds celebrating
life, with rhythms
that cause our bodies
to move and our
souls to climb above the
din of this ordinary living.

Let us sing together
and raise these voices
with the joy of coming
together in peace and
finding in this music
the first cause of happiness.

Calm

Calm in the rush and
the seemingly impossible.

Calm in this knowing that
the storm will pass and
the colours of day return.

Calm as conviction that
life is this and might well
become that in its flights
and lines to many futures.

Calm as silence in the noise
and always hearing the ordered
breath in the time of turbulence.

Calm is this wealth of personal
being attuned to happiness and
not the driving forces of the
modern discordant world.

The bullet's residue

They shall glory in it
and lift it high
above all else as
the great steel emblem
of freedom in this nation,
and they shall eat their popcorn
and get pleasure from
its destructive power
and watch with cheers
as the baddies die and

the goodies triumph over
evil because the gun
has saved the day again.

Then they stop for a moment
and see the sacred blood on
the floor and the still, still bodies
that will never laugh, will never cry
again, and the image that they see
is not the hero smoking with delight
but the wreckage left behind, and
lingering fear as the bullet's residue.

These fragments of cold steel death
lies scattered long and wide:
across nation, culture, in lives,
in all they see, consume and hear.

It is a right they say—
part of life and who we are,
the cost of this free society.

Well, eat your popcorn
and watch your action flicks
and pray that the gun lives
only there, only in two dimensions,
only on the numbing distant screen.

The sea of change

The sea of change has
swept across this land in
waves that were seen a
long way off but were
larger than anyone predicted

as they approached the
 shore and took out all the
 old ways that had filled
 many with numbing despair.

Now the sea is washing the walls away and
 the land will be open up again with promise
 and not be empty of dreams as we wait and watch
 for what will fill it with fertile hope again.

Not a man

Sometimes I wish
 I was not a man
 after seeing the world
 and what men have done.

This world is created
 in his name, in the name
 of the father, son and
 the power games.

When?

When will it end?
 When will it stop,
 you fools for diplomacy?

Does time soften the
 destruction and take
 away the lingering smell
 of a landscape sacrificed?

Time heals all things say
 they who have never

suffered as these have,
 never taken the pain of loss
 and separation between
 the eyes and in the heart.

Time does not heal, for time is
 a fucking thief that rips away
 resolve and fills as with the
 discourse that 'it will turn out
 okay in the bitter end'.

When will it end,
 all of you who want to
 see no more?

When the madman says?
 When there is nothing left to
 take and conquer?

When lust is quenched?
 When only the unravelled earth
 of rotting graves is left?

When?

The message

I ask for and openly seek
 to spread the message
 of empathy, of care, and
 listening without a turn.

And yet to this noble cause
 I, a hypocrite, come as one
 who says much but needs to

take the message to himself.

My precious one

O my precious one,
now gone.

Forever lost in eternity's crime.
My heart has stopped up,
and my soul is on hold.

Taken, taken—forever and
never echo in the sounds of my cries.

Sweetly, softly placed in
memory's grave.
Here with me,
lost to me,
gently entombed
with the times
we have shared.

Going on and on,
living, breathing,
breathe in my body,
the weight,
without healing,
with pain, your substance
as memory, that is
the legacy,
my precious one.

The greatest cause

If I struggle, then you are one
with me.

If I cry then
these are your tears.

If I long for more
than this life can give me,
then you are like me in
dreaming for another shore.

If I grow weary and the load
is more than I can carry,
join with me in as pall bearers to
to a destiny I cannot know.

For I am human with all this
weight and all this joy, and
so much to give, even as I take,

Join me, come with me, in this
humanity that must be lived in
all its shifting colours and shades.

Don't hold back on the greatest cause,
the cause of happiness, the cause of
living, breathing, loving, feeling pain,
opening out to the beauty that is life

A complex thing

Methinks that love is a
complex thing, for it grows

in darkness and hides from
the light, and forms in
softening shadows that lay
across the deepening souls
of those who expected less
but received much more.

Shall we venture to the heart
of love and tread the journey
with unexpected turns in this life
lived under the sun, the clouds
and the waiting, watching moon?

I seek this love, and not seek it
at all, for it lies in reach but is
as elusive as a rainbow in a storm.

Therein lies the mystery of love:
hidden in the shadows, fleeting,
a companion and friend but not
defined--a treasure. waiting to be
found, around the corner, over the
hill or sitting snugly by the fire
in the corner of my home.

Shell

I don't want to be this now,
not now when so much is there,
and so little is actually done.

I don't want to become the shell
that sits in hibernation, waiting like a
half-built building in a storm.

I want to let go of this numbing thing
that holds me still, unable to move,
to act, to find resolve in the throes of living.

Fate

What is this fate we are
creating through neglect,
impotence and our wish
to control what cannot,
should not, be controlled?

The human: walking paths
that others have signed,
not the path least taken
or the way the heart decides.

But there is hope I think--
somewhere in the human spirit
that rises up like a spring
bud to resist control and say no.

In the woods

There is something felt there
in the woods, among the trees,
hidden in the landscape, waiting,
longing, presence not yet seen,
but felt in the woods today where
the mist is still and the half-moon
rises over the scene and just a breath
is heard in the woods, among the trees,
near to evening when nothing is
certain between the loss of day and
the slow and steady coming of night.

Thoughts about my life

My thoughts turn wondering back to my tiny conception, when all that would be of me existed in this union of egg and sperm and my humanity as a male was decided for me and was activated in moving towards the point of writing this existential poem and contemplating my lost beginning, my birth, the growth, the life that unfolded and the choices that perhaps were not really choices at all in the hidden order of things.

One act of pleasure and connection led to this poem, which itself is a secret act of passion and giving birth to a thought that has been thought countless times across aeons of sex and conception and growing up to realise the truth of your being vulnerable in the world.

And then, as I write this poem (as an older man, greying, sometimes wise, often the fool who wants this world to be better ever if it is cursed), my mind shifts to my demise, the great inevitably that lays its slight hand across all of us in turn.

My consciousness turns to this time when my mind and body will be laid aside and cast to the universe, and it will be as if egg and sperm had never met and my life and this poem will drift away into nothingness, which is not our choice in this life with only one certainty, unless heaven exists and god is on his throne laughing at me, pointing with his crooked finger and saying, I told you so, this is the truth, it is all absurd.

A poem is love

Where is a poem born?
or should I say, where
is a poem conceived?

In a mood where words form?
In an idea or contemplation
that pops up and then is
nuttled out into words
that reveal and hide?
In a feeling so strong that
it has to be expressed,
has to be written?

A poem is conceived in passion,
grows and forms in the playing
and combining, and then is born
into its full being from which it
spawns new and unexpected growth.

A poem is love itself for it
reveals the person and the world,
and it is forever the child.

Not over

I sort of feel like
it's over and not over,
like sort of in-between:
desire and disappointment
entwined so much that you
can't let go, well, not now, for
there's history and touches that
take you back to what was and

the promise of what could have been.

So, it's not over and the living is
easy of a sort and days go by and
you forget that it is not what it should
be and never will be, never can be, again.

The season

The season has shifted in its cycle,
as it has always done and ever will,
from when the First Nations trod across
this land to this overly 'civilised' world
where all things seem under control.

The season has moved to clinging cold
and the winter blast from the south has
driven us inside, as the chill and the
rain enclose us in their misty net, but
we are safe from the bitter world outside.

And from these cocoons we emerge out,
becoated, and drive in heat from one place
to another, complaining about the cold and
the rain, till we return to the place from
whence we came to snuggle in our beds.

Garden green

I look out at my wondrous garden green,
and watch the excited birds pick at the
ground and flutter and jump in the rain.

And the fruit trees are barren bare in this
winterscape, waiting, on hold, for the spring

to come and bring mild to this cold domain.

But I look and take no notice of the cold for
this beauty and the season are my reward as
I contemplate the green and watch the birds.

Traces of me

What traces of me do I
leave with you across
these years of living and
being close as myself?

Perhaps I leave my voice and
its tones that point to memories
that are evidence of a life lived.

Or maybe it is the presence of
my body, close and moving with
its own patterns in familiar spaces.

It could be the words that fell
that came from me in delight,
in anger, in reflection or in love.

What remains of me in the absence
from my going that is not of the
ephemeral kind and passes like
the breeze that shifts the dust?

Cool

Cool over the fire to
keep the flames down
and stop their spread

across this hurting place.

Cool as softening presence,
as mind and body given to
to the cause, the cause of
love, the cause of care,
the standing and not holding
back in the face of despair.

The fire has gone out

As they say, the fire has
gone out that used to burn
hot with flames and all that
exists are ashes where once
passion glowed, grey ashes as
evidence that longing and desire
have gone cold and what is left
is what is as the night comes in.

The shame of the western world

When the news feed has had
its fill of scenes and turned away
to find another tasty bit to shove
into its hungry mouth, they will
still be there, in despair, surviving
on the edge, among the shame
of the western world, the place
where none should be, where
humanity has run away to hide
and all that's left, all that remains,
is Satan's heavy hand as the only
guide to a future none can see.

Dignity

The dignity of every being
is not an option that can
be argued away as if it is
a private matter of taste
or an intriguing public debate.

Dignity is as essential as the
air we breathe, and the water
we drink and the food that
sustains us as creatures of need.

Dignity is not given as if it is
a title bestowed on the deserving
few who happen to be in favour.

It is inherent, essential, a given
for each being that treads upon
this daunting stage of life and
tries to find a meaning to it all.

Dignity brings the value of all
beings into focus—each person,
unique, should be considered
as if they are the last person alive.

The way of change

This is a time of change,
of movement across the
world from one way of
being, acting and thinking
to another way entirely.

The way of precariousness,
the way of shifting from
tribalism to understanding us
as a species ravelled up
with each other and belonging
to a planet flung out on
the edge of a galaxy where this
is our one and only home.

Secret space

I have this secret hidden space
that is mine, a mystery place alone,
but not lonely, where I can
be with this self uncluttered
that is just for me, and no one
else has permission to peek and see.

And here with my self's thoughts
and feelings rising I am naked and
uncontrolled—free to invent and
fly to whatever whimsy I choose.

My secret place is at night when
the darkness let's my creatures out
and the mystery of being unfurls
in daring play that no soul sees
but me as imagination, words and
sleep come to this, my hideaway.

Why?

Our leaders say they can
run the world, and solve the
problems that hold us back from

living the good life, the full life,
the life we deserve though all our schemes.

But who can answer the questions, WHY?

Why this and not that?
Why do we seek when we shall die?
Why is your answer right and not mine?

Who among us is brave enough to give
an answer, other than the usual words,
well-crafted and neat, that come out sure
from what we were always told but
provide no real ways forward at all?

Seeking peace

As night falls,
as day looms,
I am seeking peace
in all I say and do.

This is not a mouthing off
with no substance but
a desire to disarm and
come to another with an
open greeting to connect.

As day dies,
as night enfolds,
I embrace compassion,
the starting point of peace.

What do you see?

Do you want to know my truth?
Do you?
From your obscure angle, looking at me.
What do you see?
Is it me?

Or is it something you've been told
that I'm supposed to be?
Do you see my life?
Or bits of it?
Parts that fit your scheme.

But this is me.
Yes, here!
In front of you.

This is the person
looking back at you from my
obscure angle wondering about
your truth, your pain, the
parts that make you up that
none can see.

Do you want to know my truth?
Or is this one way?
Are we the blind with the blind?
Do we want to open our eyes?

The day is new.

Now

Nothing lives but what
is living, for now is now,
and time sits at our moving
feet pulling us along, to where
is the question, but life is now
that is the surety, and what
is gone has gone, and what is
to come will find its own space.

Night

The beauty of the
silence of night that
wraps you up in its
dark delight, and even
if sleep be far away
the night takes you in
its arms, content, not
wanting the garish light
of the clattering day.

I am

I am ancient,
but also new,
residing here but
also there at the
heart of it all.

I am contained but
never enclosed for
nothing can hold
all I am and all I

can be in letting go.

This union

We are as it was,
as it is, and what
it might be, in the
forming of this
fragile bond that
holds this together:
delicate and worn,
flushing with memories
and shifting this way
and that in this union
that could end but
seems to stay for this
and another uncertain day.

I will be here

I shall be here,
unto death,
in life, in all that
there is to hold,
in the sadness
and the woe that
holds as down,
in the joy that
falls like a perfect
snowflake on a
pleasant summer day.

I will not let go,
even if the moon
should fall and

end this show and
 we all be shadows
 in the earth's demise.

I will be here,
 in the moments that
 too soon dissolve in
 the travesty of time.

I will be here for
 I cannot let go.

A poem for these times

I write a poem for these times,
 as winter is here and so much
 hidden fear follows us across
 the strangeness of these days,
 and no one knows when spring will
 come and if the flowers of the soul
 will sprout again from out of this dark
 history that sweeps us along in
 its storms of clinging uncertainty.

I write this verse for all of you who
 make your way across such winter days
 and weeks with no more than a flickering
 hope that these times will not be the only
 ones to define you and seize your human
 passion to take all that is on offer in this life.

Perhaps tomorrow the flowers will show their
 colours once more and you and I will smell the scent
 again and sit together in the sun and chat about the
 winter days that came with fear and robbed our joy.

Utterance

I was watching myself speak aloud,
and hearing my voice with words,
and out came that which I did not
want to hear, and I said, surprised to
myself, that this is not what I mean
at all, but it was too late by then and
the words were said, and I am watching
myself in utterance filled with dread.

Walking at night

I am walking at night and
looking up at the crescent
moon as the stars hide
their magic behind the silken
mist that surrounds me now
with its cold sense of doom.

I creep among the trees, all
shadows under the moon's gaze,
and the silence is my captor
as I listen for the slightest
breeze to blow away the misty
white of night that is my cage.

No name

I am looking for you,
across the spectre of life,
through all the pain and
triumph that is the texture
that makes all I am or might be.

My search has been within
 the years, in the moments and
 the segments of time, coming
 and going as I look in earnest
 and sometimes think I can see you
 in the distance smiling at me.

Shall I stop this seeking as a
 futile act of a human fraught
 with his own humanity, or
 should I keep the looking and
 be on this journey that Homer
 did pen in his poem of long ago?

Dead of night

The wind is singing outside,
 and I am in bed late at night
 with my thoughts about my life,
 about the world—it is just too much!

And I hear the wind's voice faint
 in the still of night saying to me
 that she shall roar and sing again
 at another time to another one who
 cares to hear in the dead of night.

The storm

Sunday chill morning looking outside.
 The sky turns greyish black and the
 birds are waiting silent still in the garden.

The storm begins and the growing

wind whips the frenzied rain across
 the garden stark and green, dripping,
 in this season of loneliness, looking
 through the sheet of rain-soaked
 glass that keeps the manic rain away.

And then, with just a turn of the
 skittish wind, the sun emerges in
 surprise, and the birds come out from
 the wet chill to fly from tree to tree
 as if nothing has passed but the cycles
 that shape and guide their flights from
 hatching till the natural course of death.

I whisper to myself: such is this life,
 as from my window I see the trail of a
 plane white in the bluish sky.

Sing on!

You are so delicate and
 so strong, and your voice is
 fragile but powerful to reach
 the tender parts and sour
 the spirit above the ordinary to
 the realm of the gods who must
 share their privilege
 with all of us mortals who hear you.

Sing on! Sing on!

Let your voice be heard above the
 rattle of feeble sounds below,
 and take us to another place
 away from this ugly, cruel world.

It is me

For a long time, I wanted to
 be anyone but me, but me I am:
 this man with quirks and strangeness
 wrapped up in his blanket of compassion for
 the suffering world of searching creatures.

It is me that I am-and never can I be
 more or less than this man of sorrows
 whose passion is strung out in words.

What was

Soft sounds across the
 even steps of walking,
 out amongst the trees and
 the birds at sunset,
 breeze and distant calls,
 animals hiding in grasses,
 then a troubled meditation
 as thoughts shift to the
 fragility of it all and how
 this might well be a memory
 not shared by those to come
 who will ask about what was.

Joy

Our lives are tugged relentlessly
 by the stream of challenges
 that come across our minds
 every day: across screens
 that remind us of pressing circumstances
 and of our contingency as

vulnerable creatures in the world,
creatures subject to the slings
and arrows of outrageous
fortune, as the Bard has said.

Yet our joy, as the delicious fruit
of existence, is not contingent.

Joy comes from the centre
of existence, from finding a
refuge where the flux of the world
cannot touch acceptance of who
we are as beings not swayed
but living in the certainty of embodiment
and shaped by radical compassion.

Tears

I wish I could take
all the tears formed
perfect and dropped through
suffering and loss
by humans hidden
across the world
and use them generously
to fertilise our compassion
so that the world would not
be desert anymore but
filled with life and green.

Desire

I feel the desire
like a warm flood
creeping up and oozing

through my body, capturing
my thoughts and focus
so that nothing but the
end of desire matters,
nothing matters but
embracing desire and
letting it consume you whole.

At winter midday

Winter midday across the
still soaked wetlands filled with
shades of browns and greens,
while the sun sits at 10 o'clock,
warm with just the slightest
breeze shivering the grasses
and the trees as a reminder of
the chilly season on hold
for just one day as a hint
of spring's annual promise.

Birds in the distance flying
high over the sun dripping
scene, others fluttering across branches
or perched on scattered seats along
the wandering walkway to everywhere
and nowhere, and in the distance
the hazy bay is set against
the blue of sky and scattered
lazy clouds give nothing
but the slightest fluffy drift away.

Such is this day of calm
relief against the backdrop
of human noise and woe

that awaits on return to
the other world not of
nature's wondrous repose.

And on the way home, in the brackish
water ways that thread through the
muddy flats, two sets of tranquil swans
have returned, their blackened necks
peaking beneath the water for food,
as they wait, fertile, for spring to rise.

Want

I have thought about the
reputation of the word 'want'
and I considerate it unfairly
judged, like its too direct and
we all should be more discrete
and play the games to get what
it is that we actually...want.

But what would it look like if
desire and need were translated
into this honest little word that
efficiently cuts precisely to the
chase, like Oliver and his "Please, sir,
I want some more"?

What if we told everyone what we
want? Disclosed, revealed, opened up!
Told our partners, families and friends.
Told our bosses, leaders and everyone
who would prefer that we never said
that horrid little word again.

What if we told our politicians what
we want? Would this change the way
they saw the world of you and me?

What if we asked each other what
we want so directly, so openly,
that it might shake us from
behind our heavy shields?

I want so many things that are good,
and some that are bad (to be deadly honest), but I never
say that this is what I want, like
I want you?

Autumn leaves

I gather words like Autumn
leaves that fall around me
everywhere, and I retrieve
some to make from them art
that goes on display in my
mind and in the minds of
all who pay attention to the
leaves and the richness that
lies within their varied shapes.

Resolution

And we can stoke the
fire of our discontent
and go on and on in
fury at our lot upon
this planet in this place
and time riddled with
issues that burn us up.

Or we can see another
 way to a place beyond that's
 crystal and clear, where
 fear is extinguished in
 a resolution to be greater
 than discontent-be more
 than the sum of our
 troubles, be more than
 oppression, see above the
 darkness of this cloudy day.

The worm

Consider the humble worm that
 pushes its way unseen through
 the earth and through our soils
 and waste asking no more than
 to feed as it nurtures in the dark.

Are we better than this humble
 worm? Are we greater? What have
 we done that deserves more praise
 than the worm that tills the stubborn
 ground and feeds us with its work.

Live

Death is forever.
 So, life should be lived
 boldly without regrets,
 and infused with joy,
 compassion and grace.

Don't hold back, dear

friends, waiting for
the so-called right moment
to live your time fully
with the healing oil of joy.

Do it now!
Without reserve!

For you are not
 beholden to anything
 or anyone that might
 intrude on your life or
 step in your way.

You have all you need
 in your own full conscience
 and mighty will to become
 everything that you can be,
 and to live your life in action,
 not in the chains of timidity.

Ancient land

This ancient land
 breathes a history that
 we too breathe if we
 care to stop and take it
 in and recognise we were
 late to come and that
 those who were here
 before our heavy hands
 stretched across its beauty
 breathed deeply and
 felt this breath throughout
 their lives and beyond.

So let us breathe together
and let the silence of this breathing
be our reconciliation and
the start of being with this
ancient and sacred place.

Loneliness (part 2)

Have you ever felt
loneliness, really felt it,
like a hollow tube in
the centre of your being?

Here-now, and apart,
existing but unconnected,
and hearing the sounds of
your voice coming back
to you in a reverb of pain.

Have you ever lived in the
singular, alone, attending to
yourself-unto-death, with
the days not broken by the
tender touch of another body that
makes your singular a hopeful we?

This is loneliness: an invisible state
of being existing in silent clean houses
and dirty street corners with eyes peering
up for something no one can actually give,
and in hospitals and homes where loneliness
dissolves the soul in the acid of disconnectedness.

This is loneliness that creeps in stealth beneath

your door to inhabit human spaces where smiling people are placed neatly together but feel alone.

This is the curse of the modern world of things and the bitter promise hollowed out in thinking we are so advanced but realising we are dead.

A product

What is it that I feel
as a product, nicely
packed up from my
history and thinking
now in this moment
of myself as a product
constructed and rife
with conflicting threads
that pull my thoughts
and shape my desires
this way and another?

What would it be like
to unpack the package
and see what's moving
inside—maybe nothing,
maybe things I never expected,
could be histories intersecting,
could be bits of heaven and those
sweet memories of other days
forgotten, or could be fears
of hell's hand clutching my
soul and in their protected?

The future

In my mind the future
comes to me racing fast
and then slowed in moments
when caring gives way to
ease in letting go—but still it
comes on and on, unrelenting,
towards a collision at an end
I know not.

The way of art

The way of art is the
way of life, for art that
is authentic speaks to
life, speaks to hidden pain,
highlights all the ticking
parts of the human soul,
and brings the shades of
dark and light that surround
the living and the dying
into a sharpness that we
can all see and then feel again.

Hidden

It is hidden in the places
that sit in front of us,
hidden from view because
we do not want to see.

It is there all the same,
waiting for the moment
of recognition when eyes

that were covered with the
film of indifference shed
their blinding skin and the
path to salvation is lit up
when once it was dark.

It sits among us as the
source, the depth of life,
the essence, that we all
need in order to begin.

Dead

I am going to break
the fourth wall and
speak to you, my reader.

I want to speak to you
about the word dead!

Why are you, me, everyone
afraid of uttering that
little shitty word?

I know, maybe, like you, I
would prefer other words
to describe this one conclusive
state of being human.

You might add to my list:
gone, passed away, deceased,
passed, gone to the other side,
gone to god, end of life, demise,
meeting your maker...

Oh, dear reader please help
me with my list. Is this
just avoidance?

But the word 'dead' just seems
so abrupt, doesn't it?

That's it!

Eternal separation.

Dissolution.

I know for me that's hard to
stomach when I reflect
on this living that I've
done that will, one day,
come to an equation
that adds up to nought.

I hope you don't find me
too depressing. Dear god,
am I depressing?

I don't mean to be—but that's
the point: how do we face the
word 'dead'?

What is our response when
we look at its smiling hollow face?

Weight

I feel your weight
lying on top of me:
heavy and light,
filled with fear and
clutching hope as if
its leaving like an
unfaithful lover.

I sense you there
close but far away,
in the distance but
in front of my eyes,
asking sad questions
about purpose when
nothing like it remains.

I was there

I was there for the glowing
first sunrise that emerged
in the sky before life formed
its variety and felt the warmth.

I was there in these eons of
possibility that no mind beheld
but were growing towards this
most unlikely of unlikelies.

I was there in the substance
itself, present, brooding, waiting
for the day of promise when all
that is possible would be revealed.

Connected

I felt connected to you
tonight: you with your tears,
taken by grandeur, caught
up in the awareness of
you as a being in the universe.

You were far away but you were
there with me in this correction
about humanness itself.

I felt you.
I touched your tears.
I shudder in your presence.

Grateful

I am here now,
complete,
signed to life,
consigned to death,
grateful for all
the living things that led
to me and made
me what I am.

He caused life

Let's not try to find
meaning or reasons,
or give ourselves over
to that 'there is a purpose
in it all' religious crap.

Let's not lie and find
false comfort in fanciful
explanations and cheap
consolations that offer
nothing in the end at all.

This young boy died and there
is no one to blame, and no
fingers to point, for he lies
still now and so let us hold each
other in tears and say that we
had him once and he brought joy
and he caused life, and we
are grateful for his stay, however
short it was upon this planet
where the morning sun does rise.

I wish for sin

I wish for sin,
not of the destructive kind,
just some delicious sin
that tastes like apples
and draws me into
temptation so I can
lose myself and not
have to do all the
neat and boring things
that everyone tells me
I am supposed to do.

Companion

I am my own companion and that
is enough for me, and content I

am with fleeting human touch, enough
to get by and live a life not devoid
of connection but realised in the
first love of being fully with myself.

As I am

I shall live in this cave of mine
and venture out as I need to do
to survive and pay my way, but
at this, my age of reckoning, to
build more than surfaces is too
much when all I want in peace
and a time for reflection on the
state of the world and on this
life that once strove for passion
as a young eager man but now is
content with just existing as I am.

Morn

Wandering through the trees and
feeling the breeze lay its cold hand
on the face that seeks the coming day.

New morn colours drop on the eyes
and the sound of the walking pops
in the air as the birds fly overhead.

And the moon that had its way with night
has to give sway to the blazing sun
that takes the shadows of the walk away.

Diminishing

I knew you as one
with a fierce and urgent
intelligence,
bringing presence as a
gift and sometimes a
curse, full of swagger and
eager to show-off and
echo out your verse that
came from you as a force
that seemed to exist as
a whisper from ancient days.

But now the force is shifting
to less—diminishing in the
disintegration that must come—but
why you when in your wisest of
years, when you had more to give,
life itself came in the silence to
retrieve what was gifted in youth?

Passed by

Love has passed me by it
seems, and oft has looked my
way but turned and fled, afraid
to look me in the eyes and
say I am here to bring you
the joy of being adorned and
the passion of desires entwined.

The divide

You are out there
waiting for me
across the divide
that holds all dreams
and chances back.

I wonder if you think
of me across the divide
and wonder what would
happen if the dreams
came true and the chances
paid the greatest prize.

Death's bed

We are living in this
deathly place that
might be called a
shallow grave, and we
in our wisdom have
taken this shovel to
and ground of our lives
and chipped away to
make death's bed
wherein we now lie.

The great promise

From our brutal history
of cruelty, dominance,
blood-lust and privilege
has risen the cause of
the group, the voice of

the person, the way of
 being for the other that
 leads to the great promise:
 that all rulers and leaders
 must shape to the people,
 not people making their lives
 to fit what those in control
 believe they should be.

Foucault is stirring

Subtle it was.

My opinion.
 Right or wrong
 it was my opinion,
 I think.

Subtle it was in
 the authoritative response that
 I never saw coming,
 not till I heard what
 had now been done
 in front of witnesses,
 who sat and watched
 like a recital crowd.

She spoke from out of
 the status she had,
 out of her elevated position that
 she had always enjoyed,
 and she thought her truth was right.

they always do...

The words dropped cold: not
“my opinion is...”, like
a colleague that can disagree,
and we can open debate,
but from on high. She uttered
the words, “I don’t think you can...”,
like a censure to my utterance, a speaking down
from a royal box that I will
never see through.

It hung heavy over me
as diminution,
and a tearing down of
any expertise I might dare to offer,
and the silence was telling,
and the pretence went on.
as it always does,
as it ever will.

At least that’s my recollection,
of the fall of the words and
the space that followed.

I censure myself that I am
probably wrong from the
perspective of the courtyard
of my tiny life.

So there it is, you see, and I
ask myself this: did I just imagine the fall,
like a sappy, sensitive fool too
concerned with his own subjectivity
as he looks beyond to the lights above?

And the answer came back, maybe,

and then no.
 No.
 God no!

It was there between the words,
 a texture that crackled in my head,
 from someone used to seeing these
 theatre plays, these institutional games
 of hierarchies, policies and positions,
 with their clever nuancing of discourse
 and subtle shifts of tone,
 that could never be signed as bullying,
 just games of power with words that have
 always been played,
 and I now
 play the victim.

Foucault is stirring in his grave.

...and I wish,
 yes, I wish,
 that I had pushed back,
 and taken this big old heart of mine
 in my sweaty little hands and squeezed it
 long enough,
 and held my fragile dignity as a prize
 on this most ordinary of days.

I am free

By God I have
 realised a truth
 and it has risen
 in me like a warm
 morning sun after

a dark cold night.

In this, my precious poetry,
I am free, free to see.

So thin

Don't bring me into your
boys' games that I do
not wish to play.

I would rather be outside
playing in the
goddamn dust.

Just shut your thoughtless mouth for
once in your life and listen,
take in the wind,
be open to new voices,
'cause you might learn
there is more than
your petty mind
that sees the
world so thin.

Ever open

Life, ever keep me open,
though my limitations
and prejudices may be closed
doors, may they swing wide
letting in the fresh air and
the new light that stirs
this poetic soul to thought
and prayer, and the hope that

the hurts that hold me back
will dissolve in the atmosphere.

What's going on?

I have no idea what you
think or even what you feel.

So, tell me what's going on
for you so this stupid man
can at least get through
your closed and locked doors.

I read no minds or understand
words when nothing is said,
as if silence says it all and
I have to play the guessing game
that I know will just be wrong.

I agree that I am insensitive and
do not read the room, so help
me dearest companion and
tell me what it is you really want.

The changes

The changes, they come and
sweep, and sweep away, so
all the permanence is just
immanence and will in the
push and pull be made no
more lasting than soft snow.

Progress and change

Social change may not be progress
at all and progress itself is the label
some use to conveniently elevate change.

We think we are moving forward and
being so progressive, but with any
change there is loss, even for the good.

Love is

Love is this tender bond
that connects us together,
sometimes fragile,
sometimes strong,
and helps us be more than
we can be alone.

Pleasure and pain

There is pleasure and pain
in these words that fall as
snow in the silence of the
moments of composition,
and I cannot ignore these
words that build up and up
till they are placed where
they need to be: in the patterns
and the rhythms of the verse
that is my strange purgatory.

Under a sky

I want to sit under a sky and

be still, just looking up to the
twinkling blackness that circles
around and around to everything
and nothingness and draws me
into beginnings and ends, to
all that's present and not present,
all that has been and will ever be.

Simple, undiluted

I had my granddaughter in
my arms today, resting her
head on my shoulder, and
what I felt was connection
and love so simple and
pure, undiluted by anything
of this world, that I wanted
to stay in this gentle place
and be present with her as
nothing more than a grandfather
who discovers life in a child.

She is free

They say there is joy in
heaven when one sinner repents,
but I say there is joy when
a prisoner is finally released'

Our sister has sat nobly under
oppression's weight for 50 years,
but now she is free and
can turn her face to the future.
that she well and truly deserves.

Let no one condemn her life or
bring her down; let her fly boldly
instead with the angels and soar above
the worthless crap on the earth below.

She is free, free of all that bound
her—the chains have been released!

She is free!
All heaven celebrate!
She is free!
She is free indeed!

The death of the Queen

I didn't want to write about
the death of the Queen,
not at all, because I'm torn
between the adored sweet
old lady of 96 that fits our fairy
tale dreams and the faded
sober story of queens and
kings and this goddam system
of Oppression dressed up in
the orderly guise of pomposity.

What is there more to say about her
handshaking smile with dignitaries
and at flower shows where she has
gone immemorial to become this safe
haven to park all the best we think of
beaming humanity: in parades, visits,
openings, sporting events and in all the
order that we crave in a disorderly
world where disintegration waits around the bend.

But then the Irish blood moves in me and the ghosts
of slavery, cruelty and class rise to narrate
the hidden history of royalty and its dire past.

Then my thoughts turn to First Nations peoples
ravaged and displaced in the abyss of God-ordained
superiority centred in the halls of the palace itself.

She waits in state, draped in the Imperial State
Crown that stood for Rule Britannia and the
bringing of church, culture and gun to take what
was not theirs, to take it all in the name of Albion,
to take it all through death and pain.

But now it is mere fairy-tale and the echoing past
seems faint and not many hear its voices,
just a few who are torn like me and read and think
wonder if she knew through her wizened smile what
all this appearance really meant.

Wedded in your soul

My friend, I cannot know the depth of
loss you feel when this other part of you
that was wedded in your soul is gone.

All that was this grand life of two as one
is torn away and now is your tender time
to grieve and wonder at the beauty that you had.

Know this, my friend, that in time, once the
sting of loss has softened but not gone, that
the other part of you, this precious partner
that occupied your heart, will be there once

again, in the richness of the memories she bequeathed to you and all the precious ones that loved her too and feel her loss like you.

For Peter

My day of treasure

My day of treasure is here:
I will face the coffin dressed in plain love
and see, refracted through water,
the desert of wondrous despair.

Kisses and hugs will be generously
shared as an offering of richness
for what has gone and what still
remains of this dull sunlit day

Here now and ever there is fullness
and emptiness as words fall that
are heard and not heard, and echoes
of sighs, cries and laughter resound.

No less, no more

Deep within me I
am driven by the line,
'no less, no more'.

Each being is dignity
embodied, like the Christ
on earth, carrying the universal spark.

Tyrants, queens, heads and emperors
hold no more of the spark, no less,

than the homeless man who reaches
out with his hat in an act to survive.

No more, no less is our Zero interval
as beings circumscribed by life and
death and by our search for meaning
midst all we wish for and say and do.

So deep within me, at my tender point
of humanness, there is no one
deserving of more,
no one deserving less,
no one above or below,
no heaven above,
no hell beneath,
no one to which you should bow
your heads and give your respects,
except the respect that all beings
deserve because of who they are as
creatures brought together in mystery,
as forms most beautiful, just like me.

A plague

There is a plague among us,
but not of the obvious kind,
for it is hidden in the desires
that bind us to the world and
in the dreams that we have
for a better life, better than
all the rest that scratch there
way to the surface and look out.

Splintered

On the bed is broken glass
and an eye looks at each
piece cracked and shaped
in different ways and sees
in each another part of
what was a mirror whole
but now is splintered as
reddish art, a self-portrait
crafted on the moonlit bed.

Of love

Of love complete
that can never be whole,
of love in promise that is
sometime broken,
of love that is faithful
and faithless together,
of love that reassures
but is filled with confusion.

The major chord and
the diminished,
harmony and discord
in a lover's jealous embrace,
all fit in love's generous
and terrifying sympathy that
tells an unfinished human tale.

The Queen is gone

The Queen is resting in her grave,
along with those who came before

as rulers of this Empire that once
dominated the world but is now
a shrunken cloth still claiming divine right.

And resting in their graves far away
are those who saw no ceremony and
acclaim as they were thrown contemptuously
in unmarked graves, not worthy even of
anything but a final piece of sacred country ground
to call their once and always final home.

God save the Queen, they used to say,
but god gave nothing but gun and disease
to those whose ways were not those of crown
and Empire, and god came dressed in a flag
and proclaimed terra nullius on all he touched.

The Queen is gone but not the histories, not
the memories: they still exist though forgotten
in this momentary grief that covers over the sins of
the fathers and reflects the amnesia that has
befallen all who see the Crown as god-ordained.

Flash

Darkness.
A flash of light.
A face in a moment
moving away.
Silence,
and then screams.
Light hits an eye crystal.
Open.
Still.
Nothing more.

Darkness.

Words

Not all can be written in words.
Some things cannot be spoken at all.
The feeling is too deep, too wide,
too vast, too small.

Tell me about loss that contains
a whole world.

Tell me about pain that's nationwide.

Tell me about sorrow that's an
eternal flame.

Tell me about anger that's kept
in a cage.

Let me search for words and find
enough to sit around the wounds
that you still hold.

And if these be too few let
me sit with you still and find in
silence and ashes all we feel.

The way

Don't put aside emotion as
if it is in your way and not
part of life's grand equation.

Take away your contempt for

my strong feelings, for I say that
it is all that matters in the end.

Don't re-consign all you feel and put
on this armoured shell to protect
you from what is truthful and authentic.

Know that you feel strongly just like me,
and don't think this is in your way, for feeling
deep and caring much is the way.

Resolve

Sacred ground wherein I now stand,
ground of tears replete with sadness
and resolve in which I feel strong the
horror of the past and grasp the duty
of the present to make all these things
right again by taking on the possible
only after shedding my hardened skin.

The light

I see a line of flight
above my eyes to the
distance where the light
is crystal with many faces,
shining this way and that
towards a future that might
be this or might be more than
I ever dreamed in my looking to
the glory or the hell that lies beyond.

A riverbed

I go on, you see,
pretending to enjoy
all that makes me a
man, when I don't enjoy
it at all, for nothing
remains but that I can.

The meaning dried up
like a riverbed long ago
and I play with a trickle
because I can, or maybe it
reminds me of the flood
that used to come in times
when the rain came strong.

Such is life, they say, and I
have no caution to throw
to the wind, just the urge to
be authentic and not pretend,
to be resigned in the knowledge
that what was full will not come again.

I write

I write for me,
I write for you,
and many times
I know not which is
which, as the words
flow like a river after
rain and come out
for you or for me
or for nothing

but the impulse
to exist.

Determined

Given up, given out,
nothing, nothing,
but the beast, and tied
to the rack of life.

This is it, and all there
can be for me with no
determination, no destination,
determined, held by the
forces outside, inside,
pulling me along in chains.

And love is but a dream
invented for the free who
do not see this life I live with
the beast alongside, in me.

Portrait art

I am discovering the human
that lives in me, without
guile, without deceit
no need to dissemble,
recognising through the
lens of age the contradictions
that come together to compose
this fraying work of portrait art that
that I had placed in my private
gallery under dim light but now
is open on the wall for display.

A romantic

You may not believe me, but
I am a romantic, even after
all these years of smoothing
over the surface cracks that
reveal the soft beating heart
beneath the exterior shell.

A romantic, yes!

But not of the usual kind that
paint beautiful pictures and say
fine words that seem to connect
with all the expectations and
charming manners you like to see.

No, not of the usual kind!

Deep and kind, seeking hope
where there's no hope at all.
Being the force that secretly takes
the low and lifts it up high.

Yes, I am a romantic as much
as I am a fool.

Authenticity

Authenticity is not some
disembodied category applied
to human worth but a state of
feeling and conviction that centres
on genuineness and that sense that
this is yours and yours alone.

It is about full ownership and
 taking control of what is
 important and vital, and what
 has its origins in your felt need
 to understand the world and
 find your place and territory in it.

At the centre

How important am I
 against the earth
 and the sky?

What is this being
 within the endless worlds
 of the great cosmic expanse?

Small.
 Limited.
 Defined by time.

Waking and sleeping
 with the moving cycles
 that define existence.

Born.
 Death.
 History.
 Dust.

And yet!

For all this infinitesimalness,
 I am at the centre of it all,

contemplating its many forms.

For each “I” is a centre in looking out and wondering why, and bringing importance to the earth and the sky.

Patience

I am here.
I have always been here.

I wait.
Patience.

Will you turn to me?

This is a new story.
This is an old story.

This is us.

Here.

Longing in the moonlight.

On a wall

I saw your great painting
in New York, on a wall,
diminutive at first, looking
out at me, and I saw you
there beside it with your
sadness and light all as one
in the swirling sky above.

Your life was this black
and grey field of dreams,
but from it, as the painter
possessed your sadder
than sad soul, the colours
shone out, and so did your
devotion to the beauty and
horror of this cavalcade that
marched across your sight.

The gun did its work on your
mortal body, but what is left
for us to see is another body
always rising from the dead
that you constructed in colours
and shades, filled with landscapes
and people and life, and having
an immortal soul that defeats
time to become this eternity
that inspires us all as we look
across a room and see it on a wall.

for Vincent van Gogh

Young eyes

Do you see what I see,
looking out with my young eyes
at the state of the world,
and at you, you old ones,
who for so long have believed in
your divine right to do
whatever the fuck you want?

Answers

Sometimes I feel like
 the grand quiz master,
 asking so many questions
 of life and expecting
 others to know the answers,
 when I'm not sure that I
 know the answers myself.

I am political

I am political.
 So, don't tell me to
 stop being political.
 I am fucking political.
 The world is fucking political.
 The word is fucking political.

You stay in your neat fucking
 world, behind a sweet fucking
 fence and tell me to stop being
 political, like I can turn off the air.

Turn on your goddam TV and see
 the shit exploding everywhere,
 see, open your stultified eyes and
 be witness and then be voice.

And stop complaining that my
 language is in the gutter—well yes
 it is because from the gutter I
 can best see the world, watch the
 processions of injustice, hear the
 voices that must be heard and not

walk behind the fence and grumble
your disgust at who and what I am.

Defying Camus

I am helpless,
I am lame,
but I can see
the world through
the poet's pen.

This is my way of
defying Camus for a
time and seeking
the mystery in the
word and solace
in an elegant line.

Till meaninglessness
once again catches up
with my withered hand
and the pen shall stop
and all that was shalt
be forever null and void.

My oak tree

I saw the irony in my sombre oak tree,
for strangled it was in a luscious vine,
wound around so tight for 20 years long
that nothing could them separate entire
like two mad lovers in a death wish embrace.

And then, driven by my wish to save the
smothered tree, like freeing a python from

its prey, I took to the vine with saw and
force till the vine was left to wither alone on
the tree and I was satisfied with my saving work.

But come the spring and expectation of green,
the tree burst not forth, and I stared at my
macabre neat handiwork and realised in disgust
the irony of the fact that I had full killed the
very soul that had kept the tree alive and well.

Embrace

Two lovers in embrace.
The smoke and the flame.
The snake and its prey.

Causes together.
Chance.
Does this look like destiny?

Naked swim.
Water, earth and sky.
Joining moments with moments.

Is this how it is meant to be?

Two lovers, sunshine and grace.
Winter wind and summer sun.
Dancers on a lake as shadows form.

A gift is given

When you share a work of art
you share something and all,
and a gift is given that is not small.

The darkness

The darkness will not
let go, like tentacles
from a sea beast,
not let go for it holds
invisibly in the white light.

Carrying the weight, the
weight of the beast, that
grows as it sucks the
life away, and nothing, nothing,
can make this darkness go.

Rope

You said, “I want to be free again”.
And I saw the plea in your eyes
and then the realisation that you
said too much, glancing with a
half smile, a woman with a strong
mind that wants to run but has a rope
of culture around her neck that soon
enough will pull her in with duty and the
life she does not choose or want to live.

There were sparks in your eyes from
expansive talk of plans and dreams beyond
confinement, and I felt your energy
and desire burning out from your smile
but tinged with the futility that comes to
rob you of your full smile and put you back
tethered in this ordered place where some think
you most certainly should and must belong.

What is art for?

When the artist
does their art,
are they looking
for beauty:
for that which is pleasing,
delightful,
filled with symmetries
and flows
to take the eye
and make one smile?

Is that art?

Perhaps art is about beauty,
much like Plato thought:
something pure,
beyond,
caught up in forms that
transform the viewer,
to be admired and costly
in its array of composition
and depth of skill.

Or, is it something else beside?

About risk and daring,
taking the viewer away,
uncomfortable,
confronting,
shaped to defy the eye of pleasure,
complex,
waiting and wanting more,
teasing with its possibilities,

and demanding something
beyond mere giving.

When art is created
it is felt,
provokes,
stays close like
an enemy and a friend,
draws one out
and draws one in,
and makes the watcher think
that beauty
is never simple,
nor neat.

A moment

Your tremble,
your quiver,
spoke more than
the words that fell
with even flow.

This was the moment
of moments in your
life around which all
the other moments
came to this predicted end.

You described this moment
with the clarity of a scientist
and the texture of a poet.

This was your end and
your beginning and in the

cessation love did not
 stop but took this
 directionless direction.

All ceased in a breath,
 lover to lover,
 friend to friend,
 histories finishing and
 others beginning.

This one moment,
 still,
 without breath,
 still,
 just one moment,
 and gone.

Let the words flow

Let the words flow, I say,
 let them flow and not be
 held back by sanctimonious
 censoring by those in control.

Let them always flow
 all ye who want to
 build a dam and keep it
 nice and tidy so it seems
 there's nothing wrong in the
 whole shadowed wide world.

Let the words flow like a
 cleansing stream to sweep away
 duplicity and half-truths that
 seem so reasonable but are

building cages to hold the birds.

Let the voices be heard.

Let the words echo out.

No more muzzles on authenticity.

Nothing but flow.

Nothing but truth.

Keep my faith

I want to keep my
faith in you,
and believe you will
do what you say
and not play these
augmented games
that take you away,
away from authenticity,
away from what I have
come to love,
away from all I desire in you.

I want to keep the cause of you,
even if you let me down and
and I am reduced to prayers
to bring you back to me,
to you,
to all that you used to be,
to what I once worshipped
and adorned.

I want to keep my faith,
my love.
I want to believe in you.

Apart from me

The day has risen from its
grave of night and I am
here alone, unslept, thinking
about you, wondering about
where you are in the world
apart from me, and the sun
offers its heat but I feel
the cold of loss from not
having you here to share
the days, to feel the nights
with you bodysoul touching me
and warming me in sweet delight.

Stay with me

Stay with me,
even when mountains fall,
and the sky turns red
and nothing makes sense
any more in the delusion
that is the world.

Stay, even if you must go,
and meet the maker that
you never believed.

Stay and be lover still,
in the greyness,
in the memories of
what was once upon
this time of you and me.

Hold me now

in the thin light between
night and day,
so I will not fall,
for I am weak,
I am nothing without
the you I knew.

Stay here with me
and let me see your
shadow on the wall.

My house

I look at my house and
know one day it will be
gone in the dissolving
mist of time and be
something else, someone
else's place, when I am fled.

The mist slides forward
with the movement of the
universe that ticks from
weight and takes me as
an evil lover to this the end
that will be mine and also my
house that is filled invisibly
with the dust of my being.

For now, I lie inside my house
in silent night hearing nothing
but the breeze and feeling
the timeless dark surround me
as if time did not matter
and I would live forever in

this place where I feel at home.

The best is yet to come

The best is yet to come.
The best may never come.

I stand in hope, my friends.
I stand beside all those who
stood up with fists and said,
“The best is yet to come!”

But it may never come,
so, I stand in the uneasy place
between hope and despair and
wait. Wait for you to come, to appear.

But more than waiting, work!
Work towards possibility.

Work.

Work through doubts that are
my personal plague.

Never let go. I say to myself. Never.
For the best is yet to come.

The mist

There are realities that
we see coming towards
us like a screaming high speed
train coming out of the heavy mist.

Yet the will to act as well
 as see is as elusive as that
 mist, and it seems the fog
 is getting thicker so we can't
 even find our way anymore.

Patchy it is across this planet,
 that is shrouded in places and
 clear with blue skies in spots
 where delusion has given way to
 concern about the state of the
 world and our lack of vision and
 wish to hear the goddamn truth.

Patchy it is for sure, but there
 is hope that the sun will come
 out and dissolve the mist of
 delusion, ideology and denial
 so that we see the truth and
 do what we have long needed
 to do to save humanity from itself.

Odd little paradox

In truth this feeling, this
 weight, is hard to describe,
 to articulate, like many
 complex feelings that defy
 the confinements of language.

But language is all I have in
 this space of wrangling words,
 so I shall describe that which I
 am feeling, as others have also felt.

The feeling is, at once, the strange
mix of wanting this life so badly
but also wanting to walk away as
if it doesn't matter, when it matters
all too much, but then all too little.

This is my odd little paradox
that may not make sense to you,
but maybe it does after all.

I dream of giving away this desire
for significance and living a
simple life like a Buddhist monk
tucked away in a Tibetan monastery
and devoted to a cause well
beyond the individual self of desire.

Or maybe seeking some mystical
seachange to another way of being
in the world that strikes the ringing
gong of authenticity and connection
with the substance of nature and being.

And yet, despite this wish for being
something else, or someone else,
I return to my work, to the goal
of being what I have often said
I really want to be after so long.

This is my troubling doubleness
that is a weird intimate companion,
a friend and foe who never leaves,
on this journey whose end has not yet
been determined but I feel its weight.

I am a painting

I see the striking painting
in front of me, staring
back from time and from
the artist who long since
has died but still in this
work lives on as form and
colour, texture, composition
and universal theme.

And as I look and take in
all that is offered for me
to savour and enjoy, I see
the colours and the shades
living together in this
ambiguity that meets my eyes
with pleasure and pain.

It causes me to look inward
at the shades and colours
that reflect all that constitutes
me in my hope and despair,
in my joy and sadness that
are the living textures of each day.

I am a painting, and I am
the artist too, working with
colours, shades and textures
on a work that will be left
unfinished in the gallery
of this world,
this earth,
this life,
on the day

I die.

Powerlessness

This newborn.
Fragility.
Dependence.
Powerlessness.

And I stand between
the universe and life
to succour this child.

Stand and then kneel,
in abject awe of
this child in my arms,
and feeling my powerlessness.

Thin slice

You were potential but unknown
long ago and far, far away,
and then your interval came as
just an infinitesimal against the
ceaseless moving universe itself.

Formed you were on this blue
speck on a black-dotted sky
and you could wonder about the
universe and time, finding a life
somehow in this narrow slice of
what the universe deigned to grant.

Then, time itself circles you with
its uncompromising call that your

time of wonder, of many feelings
 and thoughts, of loves and hates,
 successes and failures, and lofty plans,
 is only this, is only this thin slice:
 this interval between nothing and
 nothing more, and the days of
 wine and roses, sweetness and the
 delight of breathing must come to an end.

The ethical way

What is meant by the ethical way?

Avoiding harm.
 Seeking benefit.
 Celebrating success.
 Challenging injustice.
 Displaying an open hand
 Seeing dignity in all faces.
 Promoting courage.
 Using compassion as the measure.
 Embodying joy.
 Growing curiosity and wonder.

All these gerunds launch beacons that
 light the narrow way that leads
 to a world in which we all
 would like to live.

Chocolate

You are dark chocolate.
 Rich, full and deep.
 Defined and bittersweet.
 Not everyone's taste,

but mine to devour alone.

Black and yet melting away,
 you are, the perfect
 accoutrement to life,
 and gone too soon is your
 biting joy that makes me
 crave for all of you once more.

Ready

I am ready,
 Am I ready?
 All too soon.
 Soon all.
 Soon no more.
 I am ready
 to step out.
 Alone.
 Across the threshold.
 Ready.

Bad day

I have had a bad day.
 Stomach sick.
 Not reading the right
 way to be.
 Short.
 Blunt.
 Tired.
 Disaffected.
 So much done.
 So little left.

A bad day.
But I am alive to
live more of these:
to feel truth and
connection but also
the pain of not
connecting at all.

I laugh.
Irony.
I thought I was doing
so well.

But this is the music
of life: swinging between
the major and the minor,
the good and the ill.

Home

We carry our home,
our birthplace,
with us wherever
we go, carry it in
a little patch
inside our soul.

It stays fertilised
or brown but remains
in our journeys across time
and place in settlement
and restless heart,
through love and pain.

Till at last the patch is

laid down and finds its
rightful place in the
coming at the end of days.

You are my poetry

You are my poetry,
dearest, sweetest one,
the rhythm and colour
that guides the sinews
of my creative hue.

You are the line and
pause of my song,
and the souring images
that take me to another
world where I can be
more than I ever felt
here in this desert
without the pleasure
of your tenderest touch.

You are the verse that opens
my day with its energy that
makes me want to sing and
lift my ordinariness above
the self I am, to be this dreamer
who can imagine a better place.

Yes, you are my poetry fractured,
my poetry complete,
my drafts and non-completions,
my night inspirations that make
me want to dance,
make me want to pray.,

to be your worshipper
in church each day.

Poetry is life.
Poetry is joy.
Poetry is meaning in meaninglessness.
Poetry is you.

Control

Who are we to think
that we can control
nature?

What arrogance!
What hubris!

Who are we to claim
this power,
like demi-gods
waving a wand
over the planet.

Magic consciousness
of the worst kind.

Let's get the order right.
We stand before nature
as creatures of flesh
like all other creates that
depend on nature's bountiful
provisions and turbulence.

To say more is delusion.

Do we not see the stories of
control that we are spinning.

Around-and-around-they-go,
and everyone believes them
wherever they shall go.

Let's take our place in the order,
the natural way, the way that
humans have always existed
on this beautiful planet, and let
respect for our home and
nature's capricious ways drive
all we do and the decisions we
are so much inclined to make.

I sit content

I sit in this body
and this body sits in me.
I am here located as
creature among creatures,
connected to the totality
of all that there is.

Connected.

Embodied.

Unique.

Uncertain about what
is to come but certain
in my being, and practicing
care for myself, others
and the world that nourishes
all of what and who I am.

No need for comparisons,
for I am me and that is enough.

I am body, creature, a being of
novel making in the universe,
and here I sit content with
this person and what he
can make.

Pearly gates

No one can save me
but myself.
That has long been my mantra
to all who bring
salvation from another place.

No god or gods, no
divine interventions,
no spirits that invade
the course of this one life
from a world of imagination that
cannot be known.

And yet!

Salvation is more than me,
more than some western
individualism and lonely
path to perdition.

Yes, I can only save myself,
but only in the decisions
I make, not from life itself,

not from nature, not from all
that lives outside my narrow view.

And I reach out my hand
to you who travel the misty
road like me, and holding hands,
together we will proceed.

I reach out my hand to others
who have fallen on this way,
and together through the mist
we will find our pearly gates.

Equation

I want to ask you:
have all your plans
come to nought?

Have they been
summed in that
bitter equation that
adds up to zero?

You feel that don't you?
All the promises that
were promised, all the
grand affirmations that
proved to be lies,
and all you can do is
laugh at futility and
scorn the grand master
of this life's fate.

Let me add 1 to your

equation so zero is taken
away, let me add it in
my smile and my presence
with you, let me strike the
zero and take it away,
strike it with my care
so that $1+1=2$.

It is there

It is there in the pain.
There alongside the hurt
that drives you down.

Can you see it, my friend?

It is there among it all.
Unravelling out of your darkness.
Ready to lift you again.

Silence and space

Late at night.
Past the midnight hour.
Silence and space.

Too much on in the
waking day.
But now, nothing
but silence and space
in which my thoughts
lay in this creative bed.

The weight of sleep is
on my heavy eyes, but

still I wait in the silence
and space for what will
arise, and nothing can
stop it except sleep itself.

My joy

What is my joy?
Beauty itself.
The gods have spoken unto me.
Aphrodite, Venus and Parvati have
come to my aid.

I see their signs in an oozing warm smile
on a wretched day.

I hear music that points my sunken soul
to the souring place of inspiration itself.

I soak it in from the garden in which
the gods dwell among the flowers,
branches and leaves,
singing with the birds
and drumming with the wind.

I feel it in a photo, painting or dance
most glorious that takes my gaze,
and holds me frozen in its charm.

I perceive it whole in a grand scene
where the gods have shaped nature
with their sculptors' hand.

But then I find it hidden in the most
unusual places where one would not

expect the gods to come, but there
they are in revelation to bring
beauty's surprising unearthly spell.

What is my joy?
I am looking for thee, beauty,
emerging sweet and delicate from
among all the riches of this world.

Not wealth or show but the
generosity of the gods in the many
forms and shapes that bring
the magic of this richness alive.

Silent consequence

It was the case today
that my grandchild refused
to meet me with a hug,
our usual way of greeting
and finding connection,
and I had done no more
than be there as I always am.

These are the fleeing moments
of being with a child who
grows and changes, and follows
the whims of preference that
shift from day to day and
week to week across the span
of growing up in this challenging age.

But still, though I understand the whim,
the sense of being no more than
an object in her world was real.

In that moment,
 in this house she has known
 since birth,
 I was, I keenly felt,
 an object of no consequence in
 a room, in a house, in a suburb
 where nothing more is said and
 life flows on and on as it always
 does, and this moment of silent
 consequence for me merely passes
 away like all our lives in the end.

Oblivion

If I look into the misty space
 of oblivion what will I see there?

Do I dare look at all?

Should I turn away instead and play
 the actor's game of pretence and
 imagine all that might just exist?

No, I dare not look for there
 I may find myself looking
 back in abject despair.

Such a love

What does it feel like to
 be really loved?

Like passionate focus.
 Like attention.

Like creative energy directed at you.
Like sustained being to being.

I have never felt that in
my whole existence.

Perhaps gentle moments
of Care that come like a warm breeze
and go away when the season has passed.

But not full love as a constant
that is there uncorrupted
as a statement of truth.

Lucky you who have and are feeling
this love of fullness like the time
after a wonderful meal.

I desire such a love but in this
Life, when nothing is granted as a
right, it may never find its place
in this yearning foolish soul.

Summer garden

Early summer day
looking out across
my garden, filled with
sunshine and shadows,
blue above, earth beneath.

Here the birds scratch in
grass and feel at home
in fluttering from tree to
tree in their endless

search, much like me,
for this is their place too,
and not their place at all.

And how do I feel in this
moment of looking and
feeling the breeze on my
open waiting skin?

Somewhere between
gratitude and conviction,
for all this beauty is for
this day only, and too soon
all shall pass away and be
nothing like it was before.

Still, I take in the scene,
as the leaves fall in the breeze,
and know that I am privileged
indeed to be able to be
in this moment of grace
convicted by the scene.

Too late

Too late,
they cried,
too late,
for the sun
is going down
and time is still,
waiting, for who
knows what
to come.

Too late,
too late,
for the day
has gone.

Together alive

You know who you are:
you who suffer without rage,
you who are passed by,
for none care to stop
and ask the question-Why?

I see you in your wish
for something else beyond
this travesty, but I catch
your happiness too that
goes against the expectation
that you must desire more.

We are we.
And you are you.
We were born to this.
And you were born too.

What do we share in this
electric dream?

Perhaps a wish,
or a smile,
even a moment,
yes a moment,
when we stand
together alive.

Feel it

I feel it.
 I should feel it.
 The feeling of now.
 The feeling of forever.
 I should feel it.
 I do feel it.

Mind

I have come to realise
 that mind is more than
 brain, more than body,
 more than a collection
 of neurons that chatter
 endlessly and create
 the grand world of me.

Mind is all of me now
 but all of me then, and
 all of me that might be
 as I dream about the
 possibilities that can come
 and emerge in my personal space.

And mind is still beyond all
 of this in being the coming
 together of connections that
 go out to others whose minds
 join with mine to create something
 of a larger self that has being
 in being together in myriad ways.

So mind is not self-contained

in a body or a skull but finds
 it's being in the other close
 by and far away and right out
 to the whole earth with which
 we are bound up, and even
 out to the expanse of the
 universe itself from which we
 are made for some unknown eternity.

Mind is all of these and maybe more:
 brain, body, connection, the other
 as a force in the being of who we are.

Fresh blood

The fresh blood is on the dusty
 ground and the young lambs have
 been slain, taken without mercy
 through the hands of those who
 claim to have special knowledge
 that others have not yet gained.

The blood is on the ground, and so
 in the name of he-who-is-everlasting
 life is taken because of a schismatic
 view of the world driven by the dangerous
 rhetoric of end-times and the caustic
 power of judgement to fall with anger
 on all those souls who have not seen
 the light that is only given to a few.

Immortal soul

I don't believe in an
 immortal soul, but I

see your soul there
waiting for me
beyond the blue,
waiting for me,
pressing into my longing,
urgent,
soft and sharp,
waiting in the those
tender times of silence
at the end of the day.

And when it is that my soul
cares to leave this clump of clay,
soul-to-soul, in embrace, you
will take me home, beyond
the blue, take me home where
my one shall become two once more.

Alive

There it is,
you see,
right in front of me,
as it always has been,
and yet till now I
have not seen.

The scales have dropped
from my eyes and he
who was blind,
he who would not see,
is now alive.

Essence

The essence of the world.
Caught here in an embrace.

At the heart of all things
is this connection that
goes from love to love and
out to the universe itself.

Shout

If I am asleep,
shout at me please.

Shout at me!
Shout from heaven's gate.

For I must wake from this
slumber and recognise the world.
Must wake to face this life.
Must wake to see beyond truth.

Shout!
For the night has gone and
the dreadful day of light awaits.

And when I shall wake,
I will sleep no more.

Shout then, and I will
join you in the bright.

The substance

Lying on a couch,
popcorn fed,
with my granddaughters
engrossed in a movie,
young and tender
snuggling next to me.

These simple things,
these times,
that pass by,
that pass,
are not lost,
they remain with me.

They are the substance
beyond frailty.

They are the joy that
sustains me and the
Lembas bread that
feeds me
on my Way.

Then my granddaughter
touches my face as curiosity
as connection, for she is two,
and she smiles at me,
for she knows I am there,
and I am alive,
lying on the couch
next to her.

Lovers

The lover waits at the table,
waits, waiting, wanting,
looking at a watch taken
off so each second will not
be missed as it ticks on
the white cloth still clean,
unspoil by the event to come,

The light turns to dark as the
lover waits with nothing but a
glass and on drop of moisture
on the lover's lips, nothing left
from before as the lover waits,
shuffling thoughts and dismissing
doubts about what might be.

The door creaks.
Entrance.
Eyes search.
The flash of recognition.

The lovers stand together at the
table, eyes-to-eyes, with silence and
hesitant half-smiles, hand-to-hand,
lips touch, and dark turns to light
as they sit, not letting go as a tear
forms in smiles, dropping to the
well-set table and staining the white.

Spin and turn

From dust I come,
and to dust I stall return.

The earth mourns not, nor weeps,
for around and around it goes
in death, loss, and renewal.

This is the state of the world and
we as creatures spin and turn in
the universe with everything else
that is always moving: around
and around and out and out.

From nothing I come, and I saw
the world, and to nothing I go
having witnessed it all.

Zero

The sum of humanity
across the distance of
time adds up to zero.

Two circles

The circle of love goes
around and around,
just like the circle of hate.

The circle of love generates
healing, connection and care.

The circle of hate creates
destruction, loathing and despair.

The bird

The bird flies high
 in the late morning sky,
 above the opal green,
 in the vibrant blue,
 caught in the sun's gaze,
 and moving without effort,
 with elegant ease
 on the breeze the swirls
 around the canopy, as the
 bird sways and lifts up
 above the human world
 without care, falling and
 gliding on this summer day.

Trees that bend

Trends, fashions, correctness,
 the politics of now, all as
 the breeze that blows up and
 down and this way and that.

And among it the trees that
 bend with the breeze and
 stay anchored to the ground,
 living in the seasons that change.

Dignity

Let me say it clearly,
 unambiguously, without
 holding back to protect
 your fragile ego shell.

Dignity is more than a right,
more than something that
you confer in your generous
wisdom given from the
panelled windows above the world.

It is essence,
inherent,
carried on the skin,
in each breath,
at the centre of the
being of each infinite
soul that enters the
world for their time.

Before this dignity we
bow in humility,
in humanity,
in our common
cause to live the
good life, to love,
to build and to look
into the face of another.
without the stain of shame.

Beauty

I saw beauty the other
day and it was hiding
behind a bush so that
no one else could see it.

But I waited and waited
till it came out in the light
all shy and winked at me,

and flirting, I winked back.

One step

One step on.
 One step more.
 Unravelling the dizzying
 pain inside.
 A swirling ocean of panic
 against the need to go on.
 One step on.
 On step more.
 I am here.
 I have nowhere else to be.
 But you must take
 one step on,
 one step more.

Pain and love

Pain is always
 held next to love,
 for to love is
 to give with the
 prospect of loss.

Love holds pain
 as a hot coal
 that can never
 be cooled as it
 is thrown across life's
 connections as a
 reminder that all
 can be taken away.

