

An abstract painting with a dense, textured surface. The composition is dominated by warm colors like red, orange, and yellow, which are interspersed with cooler tones of blue, green, and grey. The brushstrokes are visible and expressive, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall effect is one of vibrant energy and complex visual harmony.

# Collected Poems

1995  
to  
2020

**Michael Ferrel**







# **Collected Poems**

**Poetry 1995 to 2020**

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# **Poems From Empty Space**

**2001**

## **The Days of Seasons**

August days are too parched and bright.  
The days leap headlong into one another.  
I retreat from the gaze of my birth month's light,  
And wait for the sleep of the wrath of summer.

Soon the cool September breeze  
Will slow and stall the maple's sap.  
October will chill and turn the painted leaves,  
And autumn winds will bear them aimless aloft.

And when winter invades with ice and storm;  
To turn urban sky and ground to gray,  
I'll often see new paradise form  
From the virgin whitefall of infinite flakes.

Late winter tree buds reappearing  
Assure us of a springtime near.  
Soon life beneath the earth is stirring,  
Pushing upward through the earth.

When the cycle is complete  
And all of life has come around  
Blessed with rain and temperate heat  
We will till and turn the fertile ground.

## **Breath of Consciousness**

I call upon you  
All divided and forsaken egos:  
Do not leave this consciousness.  
Do not leave this consciousness alone.  
Be a companion to discrimination,  
And notice taste and feel of  
Subtle space between sensations.

Converse into the body the story of time.  
Listen softly to the music of moments.  
Inform the mind with experience,  
And shape and share and dwell within it.

Reflect light.  
Soften shadow, or sharpen edges of perception.  
Transform vague landscape  
Into depth of wonder,  
And speak,  
Give forth your knowledge as a blessing.

Make real this place and time.  
Hold and touch this moment like a breath.  
Exhale, be present,  
And enter this world again  
Without haste or reservation.



## **For Robert Sardello**

"Love is seeing."  
"No, Love is blind."  
So they argued,  
Heart and mind

The logic of reason  
Is well-defined  
But, the knowing heart  
Will not tie and bind

Love in the soul  
Is caring and kind  
And may leave the  
Lie of facts behind

Whatever proofs  
That I may find  
And whatever purpose  
Will be mine  
As I take the path  
That love designs

Will come from living  
In my own time  
As I walk in the world  
With the Word divine

## **This Living World**

Pneuma, lung of very life,  
Invisible wind that outwits sight,  
You are without and within,  
Air, enveloping and embracing.

You sustain and surround.  
Your voice vibrant with every sound.  
You direct and disperse the clouds.  
By your breath life is allowed.

This living world is a threshold,  
For the senses and the soul.  
When you see a dying form,  
Behold another being born.

The rain becomes a river's flow  
Pouring pathways here below  
The Tao's intentions unapparent,  
It unfolds in forms transparent.

The rhythm of the restless tide,  
The seam where sea and land divide,  
Marks a world beyond each edge;  
The ocean wide, the earth resplendent.

This living world is a threshold,  
For the senses and the soul.  
When you see a dying form,  
Behold another being born.

God made fire a mystery,  
Desire a curiosity,  
Yet every child quickly learns,  
Fire chars, and fire burns.

Those who live by the flame,  
Trim the wick and keep it tame,  
Know that it will light the way,  
And make of their dark night a day.

This living world is a threshold,  
For the senses and the soul.  
When you see a dying form,  
Behold another being born.

Before we could surely stand,  
And walk upright on the land,  
Before the borders of the nations,  
And man's mastery of invention,

Nature designed a living whole  
In which wisdom was ensouled.  
The angels saw that it was good,  
And hoped that man would serve the world.

This living world is a threshold,  
For the senses and the soul.  
When you see a dying form,  
Behold another being born.

A ruthless firmament is time;  
A skylike phantom fast in flight.  
The form you see unfold in space,  
Transforms itself beyond a trace.

See and hear this solvent earth.  
Always dying, giving birth,  
Or find it silent like a stone,  
All its secret ways unknown.

This living world is a threshold,  
For the senses and the soul.  
When you see a dying form,  
Behold another being born.

## **Because I Stand In Empty Space**

The unfamiliar day's design  
Unfolds like Ariadne's line.  
An amateur's disguise it wears;  
Its naive moments uncomparing.

Each moment makes a fool of me.  
I only know its mystery.  
Because I stand in empty space,  
It comes apart and is erased.

What used to salve and satisfy  
Now only names or mystifies.  
This emptiness, I do not dread;  
There is now no else instead.

The past is dead to those who live  
For the farther mountain side of if,  
Yet who can say the future's better?  
It is changeable, like the weather.

Eve's fruit, I have tasted;  
Sweet self-indulgent hours wasted,  
But angels will not take me up  
If I drink from every cup.

Here between heaven and homely earth  
The devil pockets every purse.  
Between abandon and control  
I steer calm, this receptive soul.

Because I stand in empty space  
This moment's magic and unique grace  
Lets me be what I must become,  
Even if I falter, or fall, or run.

Morning's pace I make dead slow;  
There is no place that I must go.  
I each side of my soul confess,  
And pray courage to take this test.

I mark well this body's breath,  
Praise this life and forbid death.  
This moment I can my own self know;  
As if by seed I stretch and grow.

Its window worn as open crown.  
Its fruit so freshly handed down.  
I may kiss and set it free.  
The world once more has come to me.

## **Witness**

When we wonder and look back,  
We see God's grace in shadow.  
Our tentative and truant tracks  
Conceal a path's unfolding.

Yet witness of love's fond light  
Will not want for earthly evidence,  
Though flickering of our inner sight  
Allows only faint impress.

By what collaboration  
Are our souls engaged?  
What unspoken benediction  
Sees us on our way?

Spirit works with obscure finesse;  
It sounds in silent whisper  
And secrets how the soul's progress  
Unwinds itself in mystery

But what was denied 'til death  
Will be made clear on that day  
When we take our final breath  
And our soul is taken 'way.

It will be harsh punishment  
If our final fear  
Is experience of banishment;  
Finding life more precious here.

What sound strife has earned  
Will resound in acquiescence,  
As ending of our term  
Unlocks heaven's confidence.

## Today's Sky

Each day's sky seems much  
As it was the day before.  
I move along oblivious,  
Its clear expanse ignored.

Evil seems to thrive  
On all the good unseen.  
I'd passed a troubled, pressured time,  
And wondered where I'd been.

This morning I apologized  
In prayer, soft unspoken,  
And came to slowly realize  
How I felt beholden.

Later I raised up my eyes,  
And saw a larger sky.  
Confronted and surprised,  
Its endless breach had opened wide.

Love was in the buoyant blue,  
Joy among the wind and clouds.  
Wisdom rayed in changing hue,  
And mercy shone through light unbound.

## **Consciousness Arising**

My mind  
    A quiet receptive womb  
My thought  
    gestation  
My emotion  
    faithful yearning  
My desire  
    for completeness  
My sensitivity  
    turned inward  
My feeling  
    inexpressible gratitude  
My freedom  
    mercifully limited  
My creativity  
    eager and ready  
My sacrifice  
    only honesty  
My distance  
    light and air and gravity  
My remembrance  
    of death and the future  
My work  
    to help and be helped  
My awakening  
    hardship and joy together,  
  
And this is the meaning of life.



## **The Loneliness of Being in One Place**

You stand as a small tree,  
Your branches stretching round the world.

Your life a patchwork of meetings, and partings  
Of distance,  
And sympathy and antipathy of place.

Your lovers have been inconveniently located in Italy; Canada;  
And now England,  
Yet you return there to investigate a relationship,  
Still in its infant year.

The long distance romance:  
The telephone's insubstantial, yet audible apparition;  
A vague, dissatisfying sense of continuity.

Though letters outpour a transfusion of life's precious moments;  
The lover's idiosyncratic blood-script pressed on the page.

Your refugee heart has been drifting landless, bereft.  
Now you see a firm horizon,  
And anchor your citizenship here in Canada,  
Married to this country for better or worse.

## **The Marriage Sacrament**

Opponents meet on a square stage,  
Psyched up, punch-drunk,  
Each coached by a Greek chorus of  
expectations,  
Barely conscious in their corner.

Who has the sure instinct and the firm jaw  
To speak the truth without dodging?

Who has the finesse and fine  
Moves of a lover, a lioness;  
The responsiveness of an animal anticipating risk?

Who can dodge, and hit,  
fighting flat-footed in the center of the ring,  
Daring confrontation?

The beloved becomes an equal,  
A knowing enemy, who round after round  
Puts all of themselves into the fray,  
Exposing weakness, going beyond anger and vanity  
Into a new forgiveness, a new respect.

Each falls, almost beaten,  
Barely able to stand and face their adversary.

Finally they catch their breath.  
Purified by sweat and exhaustion they embrace.  
Both are uncontested winners.

## **Innocence**

We are innocent,  
because of who we are and who we are not.

We are innocent,  
because the future treats us roughly,  
and we do not want to grow old.

We are innocent,  
because time will not wait for us to catch up,  
and past and present stalk us with who we have been.

We are innocent,  
because we do not know how to love or be cared for,  
and we trust and betray unknowingly.

We are innocent,  
because we are playful and challenging,  
and do not want to know any better.

We are innocent,  
because we long for the other sex,  
and are too easily disappointed and persuaded.

We are innocent,  
with our unwanted cup of sorrows,  
dependent on God's mercy.

And we are innocent,  
because desires rise like lotus flowers from our fallen hearts,  
mirroring who we are in our wishes.

## **Living Waters**

All my tears are living waters;  
Released unbound upon my face,  
But their fall is no dishonour;  
They baptize anew this time and place.

All my tears are living waters;  
Allowing demure modesty.  
As they escape, I am captured  
In unassuming honesty.

All my tears are living waters;  
Sorrow condensed and then distilled;  
The essence of all my fears  
Emptied out, transformed, revealed.

All my tears are living waters;  
Changing boundaries of who I am.  
Emotion flowing broader, deeper,  
Beyond my ego's limiting dam.

All my tears are living waters;  
They rise as mist above a stream.  
The cloud they form, then breaks and pours,  
Confessing all, and chastening.

## **Easter Sunday**

I found an empty shell on the sidewalk, this Sunday  
Fallen and left beside the street.  
Its bright embryo sundered on this holy day  
Plundered and broken by another's beak.

Within the yellow, a drop of blood.  
The egg fragile and open in my palm.  
Such is the cup of the merciful Father God,  
A hallowed peace, both terrible and calm.

I will not make it to service this morning.  
My car gave up the ghost on Friday too.  
It is a time of beginnings and of endings,  
An open cup of what to do.

With resistance or acceptance  
I may refuse, or I may fail.  
I pray an open, willing emptiness,  
To receive Gethsemane's grail.

## Poems About Living in a Body:

### One: Birth

A new body.  
A radiant configuration  
Fresh awakened from womb's sleep,  
Without self or boundary.  
Frightened by its own cries,  
Assured by loving touch.  
The soft skin so easily fouled,  
The mind a perfect unconscious knowing.

Born to one father, one mother, one gender.  
Kidnapped into time,  
Into Earth's spiral of influence,  
By body, breath, and life,  
While future players, distracted in the wings  
Wait for their prompts and roles,  
Their lines and parts forgotten.

The infant's will to dominate and please  
And be placated is already like an instinct.  
A born whiner, a complainer;  
Surrounded by the chaos  
Of human order and intervention.  
How can the child ransom its own life  
Except to live it?

Yet distant stars twinkle  
The greatness of its destiny  
And joy at its birth.  
The child is true to its small self,  
And its long sleep is ended.

### Two: Aging

Childhood and youth  
Dream into waking daylight,  
Unconvincible and unprepared,  
Hoping larger than any sky.

Adulthood amends yesterday's dissipation  
With resolve and caretaking;  
The business of each bright day.

In old age strained resilience and angry words,  
The dropped stitch and broken cup,  
Are gathered into abundant memory  
Forgotten or forgiven, and put to rest.

### **Three: The Mystery of Flesh**

Let me put aside for this moment  
The sprawling claims of human species,  
And give thanks that I am a creature.  
This unleashes new happiness for me.

I am born flesh from flesh.  
My vocation as a human being  
Rests upon my body's pulse, the division of cells,  
And numberless, simultaneous, inscrutable processes.

Every physical function and whisper of my senses  
Has anonymity's trademark,  
Mysteriously breaching minute analysis.  
I turn my head, and look, and see, and move toward...  
How can this be possible!  
Science explains all these things;  
Synapses and information processing,  
Yet nothing is explained.

In this body I live and move and have my being!  
Its wisdom full-born and complete each moment,  
Though its muse evades my consciousness.  
Do not call it conditioned biological processes.  
Call it divine order!

The world does not revolve around my mind;  
Its curiosity and collective explanations.  
The all-surrounding life knows better:  
It does not pretend to be self-made,  
Or be more or less than it is.

## **This Peace**

This peace is a litany, taciturn, wordless;  
An impossible, but unquestioned repose.  
Suspended desire now renders me speechless.  
My understanding no longer pretends that it knows.

This silence is full, yet it answers all.  
I feel that I know, because I also am known.  
This peace, like a parachute, breaks my heart's fall.  
I trust in God's grace to let me gently down.

I move with a cloud-like ephemeral presence,  
Traveling wherever this wind must blow.  
Wherever I land, I will sing my deliverance,  
No longer alone; it is no sacrifice now.



## **Let Love Be With Me**

Wherever I walk  
Love walks before me,  
Even though my path is tangled and broken,  
Let love walk before me.

Wherever I go,  
Love follows and finds me,  
To places I have not been before,  
Let love follow and find me.

Wherever I leave  
Love remains and continues.  
Whether or not I want to stay,  
Let love remain and continue.

Whenever I fall or stumble,  
Love guides my steps,  
Because it was love that taught me to walk,  
Let love guide my steps.

Wherever I am  
Love renews and restores.  
Lord renew my heart,  
And let love be with me.

.

## Where

Where is the woman I loved?  
She is lamed by imperfect explanation.  
She pulls herself upright from her bed,  
And returns to question the world.

Where is my wandering friend,  
Restlessly searching, seemingly homeless?  
His footsteps fall in a widening circle,  
As he enters the world outside himself.

Where is the poet I loved?  
He has retired from the world.  
He lives high on a mountain somewhere,  
In a monastery behind closed doors.

Where are those in need,  
Who had once asked for help?  
Clothed and fed and warm,  
Often they are still alone.

Where is the hidden Christ?  
He is somewhere here among us.  
Has he come down from his cross?  
Is he larger now, than the world?

Where is my father going,  
As he walks with open hands?  
He carries a gift of healing,  
Sometimes of water, sometimes of wine.

Where are all the words I wrote?  
Like tarnished jewels, they are tucked away.  
My heart and my memory can not hold them.  
I recite them like halting prayers.

Where are the colours of summer gone?  
Of its dynasty there remain only fragments.  
I wait now for winter's veil,  
For its purity, and hope, and forgetfulness.

## **Butterfly**

Who is this being with its bright markings?  
I do not know it any more!  
Aloft and exposed with its delicate wings,  
What was it before?

It once was only leaf and mouth and stem,  
A restless, devouring worm,  
Then it became a mute and helpless emblem,  
Slowly taking form.

After a long and darkly sheltered night,  
Its being was transformed,  
Finally emerging, daring flight,  
Suddenly airborne!

And if we revere its triumph,  
It is also ours,  
For it has given us clear proof,  
There are no wasted hours!

## **Autumn Forests**

Feeling the approach of darkness  
You flame with colours of fire.  
Yellow and red and gold seduce,  
In parade of finery and fey desire.

Before us now, you slowly undress,  
Preparing your bed for winter.  
Such a virgin temptress,  
--Long forgotten by December!

## **My Father**

My father was born shortly before Depression's decade:  
A large catholic family in a small Protestant town.  
They had barely enough food, shelter, clothing  
To soften Alberta's northern hardships.

His choleric father, a sour, driven man,  
Drilled for water in the endless flat earth  
Pummeling holes, inches at a time.  
He later apprenticed to be a plumber  
At an age when most men yearn for leisure.

Near war's end, not yet a man,  
My father left Lacombe, and joined the RCAF.  
But Europe's slaughterhouse filled its quota  
Of youth and death and obedience without him.

After an idle year in England,  
He stayed in the service,  
Raw summers and white winters  
In Chicoutimi and the Alaska Highway,  
Studying radar and photography.

Despite vertigo and nausea  
He learned to pilot a plane.  
Yet his francophone superiors neglected him,  
And a cabin fever of wasted energy  
Drove him back into civilian life after 14 years.

While in the service he had married my mother,  
And fathered three children.  
He went into sales: cash registers.  
His ambitions were city-sized;  
He moved to Toronto, a house in the suburbs,  
And won sales perks and awards and bonuses.  
After a decade of success he taught sales at a college.

My brother and sister and I were teenagers  
When he and my mother separated.  
He seem sad and lost for a while,  
Then he took dance lessons and dated.

That is already a long time ago,  
And I am 42.

### **The Fall of Babylon**

When Babylon's false edifice truly falls,  
And its rampart of broken words collapse.  
We will not grieve for its tumbling walls,  
Or mourn that its reign of division has lapsed.

For words will no longer enclose and divide,  
Their meaning deception and separation.  
Speech will no longer merely ornament and hide  
In foreign parsing and blinding partitions.

Every word and thing will truly speak,  
Sounding forth to name itself.  
Its articulation no longer irresolute or weak:  
All will then be known like tolling bells.

## **Autumn Meditation**

Where do the colours of summer hide,  
Now that the leaves have fallen?  
A living expanse, once extravagantly dyed,  
Is now faded, downcast and sullen.

I had grieved the hurried death of summer,  
But now autumn too, has ended its show.  
Today I saw the first signs of winter,  
White frost and later, a flurry of snow.

## **Beneath the Gray Sky**

The sky is passive and gray,  
And the sun does not appear before noon.  
The forest is scattered with leaves,  
All its paths are without direction.  
The autumn snow falls effortlessly at night,  
Yet its white patches dissolve by day.  
Though it appears almost motionless,  
The river is not stilled by frost.

The forest is silent.  
The deer are no longer being hunted,  
And the moose are deep in the woods.  
Small and hurried animals  
Take shelter in hollows and broken trees.  
And though the wolves cry out like ghosts at night,  
They remain silent all through the day.

## **A Klee Angel**

A friend of mine asked me for an angel.  
I did not commit myself easily.  
(Making angels is hard to do.)  
I knew she was fond of cherubs.  
I looked for an art store angel to decorate.

One looked too young  
To be a goddess or a guide.  
I wanted an angel who had suffered  
And who could support me  
As my body weakened and my spirit flagged.

Another was too beautiful,  
Perhaps too beautiful to be human.  
She seemed naive and sexless.  
I can not commune with any virgins or cherubs.  
I decided to make my own angel.

I bought some plaster bandage,  
And formed a homely piece  
From wire, plaster, and threadbare cloth.  
Not strong, not weak,  
Not young, not old,  
Not beautiful, not quite ugly.

Yet I feel awe.  
I do not know how to meet the gesture  
Of an angel.

Do those who care for us  
Ever weary and falter as we do?  
Yearn too much, or shirk and mourn?

Like the beige brown moth  
Found in the corner of my room  
My angel seems noble and lifeless.  
I do not know how it came to live with me,  
Or how its spirit still may live.

## **Woman on Fire**

She was a woman on fire  
With passion for the Word.  
Like a candle, not a pyre,  
She spoke of how she heard:

There are revealing wonders  
Many men pass by,  
Like in a crowded station,  
Where no stranger meets your eye.

Calling out from our confusion,  
Our question must be clear.  
The way we find a loved one,  
When we want them dear.

The answer that we trust;  
The one we try to grasp,  
Is streaming now toward us,  
Once a stranger travelling past.



## **Willow Tree**

Willow tree by the river,  
You are twice my age,  
Uniquely huge and magnificent.  
Wider than my reach,  
And too big to climb.

Here at the edge of the park  
You are almost alone.  
Incomparable in presence, you stand  
Like a guardian of something ancient,  
Giving comfort to all within your reach;  
The young, or frail, or fearful.  
You calm the restless river,  
And quiet the city night.

## Harvest

Do not wager for the world  
To lose it all in an hour,  
Do not lament, or ask for more;  
Your soul soon flees from its power.

The beatific scriptures read:  
Expect greater things than this;  
Plant the potent mustard seed;  
Conquer all with agape's kiss.

Words can come from above,  
When we listen still and low;  
When we've bent down far enough,  
Touched, and healed, and known.

Honest hearts hear a hymn,  
They will witness and receive,  
Though terra firma's tragedies  
Daunt us still, and deceive.

Forlorn hearts left behind  
May find earth's meaning hollow,  
Yet heaven waits for them in kind,  
Where time fails to forge or follow.

Earthsouls make a morning bouquet  
From a field of many flowers.  
For the nightfall some may take  
A yield that teemeth over.

Even as our senses slowly die  
And diminish in a night,  
Death's door need not deny  
What spirit won in its fight.

The spirit will not let hope fade  
Or find precious what was lost.  
For once again we are remade  
In marvellous accounting of the cost.

## Untitled

It is not that God  
Does not exist.  
It is that He is empty-handed,  
And can not give us any more.

Some still pray,  
And they receive comfort;  
The worried and confused  
Find their way.

Yet, now God is silent.  
He has spoken,  
And we must listen.

## Simple Gifts

My poems are not only imagination,  
They often come from conversation,  
Or sometimes something I have heard;  
A dream, a story, or only a word.

From a phrase, an image, or whatever,  
I weave wandering words together.  
To re-create with what I've found,  
Thoughts and feelings turning round.

Meanings stretch and bend and bow,  
Then startled, stand up sure and proud,  
Bestowed now with a special grace,  
Having found their rightful place.

## **Margaret Avison**

She invents the world she penetrates;  
Writing with a partial, objective eye,  
Serious, investigative,  
Ruthlessly sparse with words,  
Wide with image and patient risk.

Some poems are dedicated to Christ,  
But she does not pretend a new gospel.  
She only assures us of her witness  
In shifting sky and day and season,  
On trains and buses and in streets.

## **Angels**

They enter in soul's detente  
and supplication  
the coming and going  
of thoughts and confessions.

Their understanding  
is patience itself.  
Their weightless wings  
are godspeed intentions,  
unbound in inviting stillness.

By these guardians I am unbetrayed.

## Cats

I like these little furry freaks,  
Especially in their early weeks.  
They'll claw up and down your clothes,  
Just ask anyone who knows.

Life becomes scrambled and uncertain.  
They'll claw and climb your living room curtains,  
Terrorize your upholstered chairs,  
Tumble up and down your hardwood stairs.

They'll follow you around everywhere.  
You can complain, but they don't care!  
Yet when they hide, they're hard to find.  
Are they in here, or lost outside?

Their purr and play are so enduring.  
The little devils have no fear in them.  
Curiosity killed the cat,  
Then it only had eight lives left.

Pointed ears and pointed teeth,  
They eat Tender Vittles, but like live meat.  
I once saw one play with a mouse  
For hours and hours, round the house.

They can be constant companions:  
Your own bed is theirs to lie on.  
How can these critters sleep so much?  
Sixteen hours is not too much!

All in all they are quite amusing,  
Either up to trouble, or spread out snoozing,  
But they are too much for me,  
Because I have an allergy!

## **Axman**

A mighty spark divides the night,  
Light then dark, silhouette bright.  
The sky is taken by surprise.  
Evening wakens before my eyes.

This violent force that breaks our peace  
Seems like a war that will not cease.  
Though the thunder brings Spring rain,  
A rising wonder warns again.

The Axman will come like a lightning strike.  
The rivers will run where we cannot hide.  
The Earth will open to free her soul  
From our sin and the serpent's hold.

In this cabin I could survive,  
Barely a man, barely alive.  
A store of food, a hermit's life,  
For what good, for what right?

I will abide the coming years.  
Mute my fey pride and twisted fears.  
I only pray for a kind of trust,  
To help as I may, and as I must.

No one can hide from the flaming light  
Of the Axman who rides in the dark of night.

## **My Mother**

I do not mind that my mother is so mundane.  
On the balcony she pulls weeds from the flower box,  
And moves marigolds on a spoon, one by one.

She lends me money without reprimand.  
She listens silent as David and I  
Discuss wildly impractical inventions.

She had told her friends, "He's weird.",  
When I ate a salad at Swiss Chalet Chicken,  
But happily serves fish when I come over.

We talk about small troubles and the cost of things,  
And about relatives and their operations,  
My possible reconciliation/separation with Marilyn,  
And always about my niece, who I do not see often enough.

I do not mind that my mother is so mundane,  
I do not mind it at all.

## **A Song of Abraham and Issac**

In the land of Moriah  
Abraham took his son  
High up on the mountain  
And laid his body down.

Then his only offspring  
Asked his father why  
He would make an offering  
With no lamb for to die.

Abraham told him solemn  
Before he raised his hand  
God would make there to appear  
A sacrificial lamb.

But when he held high his knife  
God's angel called out, "Abraham,  
Lay not your hand upon the lad,  
Nor do anything to him,

"I know that thou fearest God,  
And would not withhold thy son."  
And so was stayed his righteous hand,  
Which would slay his only son.

When he lifted up his eyes  
He spied a lamb forlorn  
Caught among the thicket,  
And held there by its horns.

He took the lamb and offered it  
Up unto the Lord,  
But God's angel called to him,  
And spake to him these words:

"By myself I have sworn,  
Because thou has done this thing,  
And not withheld thy only son,  
I will thee blessings bring.

"I will multiply thy seed,  
As much as heaven's stars,



## **For John**

I remembered you on waking this morning.  
How your presence strained as we surrounded your casket.  
Your vigil seemed regretful mourning.  
Having come to death, you could not surpass it.

And then I thought of my own self.  
My body then lying in first light awake;  
Feeling cold and warmth and youthful health.  
My mind lucid and shining for its own sake.

How strange our silent invisibility  
Hiding beneath the surface of things,  
The sheltered sincere essential properties  
Of both the dead, and the waking and living.

As you journey through this interim passage  
I pray your soul be patient and free.  
When your early death is assuaged  
In what kind of world will you be?

## **Anvil, Hammer, Fire**

The anvil of the world  
Sounds out of silence.  
I am forged by a mighty hand,  
And strengthened by the fire.

## **For Michaelmas**

Evening has slyly captured day.  
The stars attempt to ransom the sky,  
And the moon puts forth its best effort,  
But the sun seems distant now,  
As it watches from God's right hand.

Each warm bulb or candle  
Coaxes a small world to arise and wake.  
Boldly proud of its sustaining light,  
It seems to address the darkness:

"Here and there you inflict shadow,  
But I will call these forms my own.  
Fear has been lifted here,  
And passivity can not take root.  
Each reveals its own form freely  
And moves in harmony and knowing care.  
I will safeguard this space  
And wait for the return of full light in the heavens."

## Psalm

O Lord, do You remember me?  
Do You recall my name?  
You who live in eternity,  
Your workings unexplained.

For You are the maker of all,  
Of the greatest and the least.  
You make the stars to rise and fall  
On both the angels and the beasts.

I often have forsaken You,  
My oaths sometimes forsworn,  
But never have I forgotten You;  
With your remembrance I was born.

Let me not be led astray,  
But grant me your protection.  
Guide and make safe my way,  
With care and benediction.

By your mercy I was chastised;  
Your tests have made me true.  
I cried when I was baptized;  
Now I only rejoice in You.

## Broken Thoughts

My youthful mind once was broken:  
Septic convinced of certain fact,  
But I made a clear detraction.  
My imagination is now intact.

My family home was broken,  
But there was no one to blame.  
Fractured along its broken lines  
Its parts have been renamed.

My true love was broken,  
A star fallen from the heights.  
I piece its glimmer back together,  
And point it out on moonless nights.

My sleep is sometimes broken  
Ending too early evening's sleep  
So I wake with warmth those tired places  
That hide me from the morning sweet.

My body is tired, but not broken.  
I rise and work each day.  
Supported in every awkward situation  
By broken helpers that lead my way.

My dreams, in time, may be broken  
Either accomplished or disgraced  
Success's clamor sometimes jangles  
As much as failure's fading trace.

My sentences are sometimes broken,  
As I piece together broken thoughts.  
The words are soft, but clearly spoken,  
As if I'm learning what I've been taught.

My peace, like yours, so easily broken,  
Or quietly unmade.  
The day's small hopes forgotten.  
Its memories a few words on a page.

## **Marilyn at St. Michael's Hospital**

A peace falls soft upon us,  
As our disparate souls engage.  
Your words, as ever, honest;  
I listen to you say:

"The morphine does not really  
Put aside the pain.  
How can anybody stand it,  
Day after day?"

Your weary, but unfawning will  
Sounds tired as we talk.  
Four months now in hospital,  
Four more before you walk.

We second-guess the surgeon  
This third time, as the first.  
Your mother pays to shelter you,  
And provide a private nurse.

Besieged, uneasy, helpless,  
Undistracted from your fears,  
Rolling waves of sore distress  
Wash your eyes with salt tears.

This healing, slow, unhurried;  
Its outcome still unsure.  
Each day alone, enough for worry;  
The single hours endured.

## **The Secret**

There seems to be a secret  
That few men have told.  
The ones that would reveal it  
Have fled here with their souls.

To what some have called the other side,  
Hades, dark with night,  
Though only for those who hide  
From world-saving light.

Every infant has it on his lips,  
To speak of heaven's womb,  
Though the breast from which he sips  
Also weans too soon.

With loss of childhood's innocence,  
Enthralled by the world without,  
We fall into a mire of ignorance,  
Denial and deepening doubt.

But as the soul matures in years  
It turns round and looks forward  
To life beyond the living, where  
A future opens in full flower.

## **Rudolf Steiner's Death Mask**

His deeds a shining radiance,  
Spiritually real.  
His mask an open casket  
That lets him be revealed.  
His watchful spirit visits here  
Attentive now, but still  
Though generations passed  
Since he left this world.

Who was this man;  
Someone I never knew?  
Born again from the heights;  
Spiritually renewed.  
I take some comfort here  
That if the good I do,  
With the blessing of the Christ,  
I can go this way too.

## Words

I regret what I said to you  
My vain opinion, my comment rude.  
The words leapt free from my mouth.  
I can't get them back once their out.

I am sorry for what I didn't say  
When I saw you yesterday.  
We moved along on different tracks.  
Can we start again, and go back?

I apologize, I did not listen,  
Though you tone was so insistent.  
I thought of something else instead,  
And misunderstood what you said.

I confess I did not see  
Your unique individuality.  
Even though our eyes met,  
Perhaps I have not seen you yet.



## Dogs

My sister has an African parrot  
And a friend of mine once had a ferret  
But of all the animals to visit a vet  
Dogs are really the perfect pet.

They can be trained, they're pretty smart.  
Breeding them is an ancient art.  
They seem to understand what you're saying.  
Give a command and they'll obey it.

It may be a poodle or some pampered pooch,  
But it picks up on your tone and mood and touch.  
They are alert to what you do,  
And anticipate your every move.

Even your eager mongrel mutt  
That barks and sleeps and eats too much  
Has chosen a few special friends  
Who coax and cater and beg and bend!

It may pull the leash and quicken your pace,  
Then suddenly stall and end the race.  
At least their moods are transparent.  
They are rarely coy or deceptive.

They give a sense of security  
Having long live close among us.  
They honour an unspoken fidelity.  
Of all the animals they are most trusted.

## John 17

Father Ground of the World  
Now the hour has come  
Through the power of your word  
To reveal the being of your Son.

I pray for each human being,  
Who comes to know life true,  
Knowing you have given me everything.  
These souls I have brought to you.

In human bodies the Son is creating.  
Those you have given, with me still remain,  
Who keep your word in their innermost being,  
Because I have revealed your name.

I am coming to you, my Holy Father,  
And say these words while with them still.  
I have now fulfilled the scripture,  
And pray you protect them from the evil.

I have glorified you on the earth.  
In them my love resides.  
I am consecrated by the truth.  
Let them too be sanctified.

United through their proclamation;  
Becoming as one, perfectly.  
My joy may be fulfilled in them,  
As I am in you, and you are in me.

They have come to believe that I am sent by you.  
In them the light of my being can shine.  
They know in deepest truth that I come from you,  
And what is mine is yours, and what is yours is mine.

## 2 Corinthians 6: 1-10

Do not receive God's grace in vain,  
As his fellow workers we labour with Him.  
He exerts on our souls His holy influence,  
And turns us to Christ by merciful kindness.

We are kept and strengthened by Him,  
Who said, "I answered at a favorable time,  
To help you on the our day of deliverance."  
So now is the time for gracious acceptance.

Permit no obstruction in anyone's way.  
Let our ministry be without blemish or blame.  
We will prove ourselves to be true servants,  
By our willingness to bear great burdens.

Through confusion and anxiety,  
And stern blows of fate and destiny,  
Through all our troubles and renunciation,  
Even if we starve or are sent to prison,

Though the weight of our times be daunting.  
In restless labours, with sleepless watching,  
We will cherish spiritual insight,  
And the wielding of the Holy Spirit,

To have a heart which is pure and honest,  
A soul-mood of love, with healing goodness.  
We will honour the divine truth-bearing Word,  
The higher powers of life working in the world.

We will put on their armour, right and left,  
Whether we are praised, or held in contempt,  
Even if we are considered as deceivers,  
We will remain as truth-bearers;

Known by the spirit, though we are obscure.  
Seeming dying men, but death having no power,  
We may seem sad in suffering trials,  
But we are filled with joy all of the while.  
We make many rich, though we are poor,  
Possessing nothing, the whole world is ours.

## Mark 14

### *line 54*

To the High Priest's house they took Jesus,  
Where priests, elders and scribes had gathered.  
Peter followed him at a distance  
Right into the High Priest's courtyard.

The council had sought testimony  
So they could condemn Jesus to death,  
But though they had heard from many,  
None of them bore any truth.

Many false witnesses did arise,  
But they could not convince.  
Because they could not match their lies.  
And lacked for evidence.

Others swore later on that day,  
That they had once heard him say:

"I will tear down this temple,  
Which was built with hands,  
Another in three days I will build  
Made without any hands".

Their testimony did not harmonize,  
Not even in this way mentioned.  
The High Priest then did arise,  
And put to Christ Jesus this question:  
"To what these men have testified,  
Will you not answer one thing, even?"

But his silence was maintained.  
Not even one thing he answered,  
The High Priest asked him then,  
"Are you the Christ, Son of the Blessed?"

Jesus said, "As for myself, I am,  
And you will see the Son of Man  
At the Might of the World's right hand,  
Coming with the clouds of heaven.

His garment was torn by the High Priest,  
Who said, "Do we need further witness?  
You have heard the blasphemy.  
Now what is your decision?"

They declared him guilty  
And condemned him to death.  
"Now show us if you can prophesy!"  
And the guards struck him in the face.

Now Peter was below in the courtyard  
When one of the High Priest's maids  
Was walking by the fire, and seeing Peter,  
Looked at him in the face.

He was told by this woman:  
"You were with the Nazarene."  
Peter replied, "I do not know him,  
And do not understand what you mean".

To the forecourt Peter went.  
The cock was crowing then.  
Accused there by the girl-servant,  
He again denied he was one of them.

A bystander said to him later  
"You are definitely one of them,  
For a Galilean you surely are."  
But Peter cursed and denied it again.

He again heard a cock crow,  
As Christ had to him foretold,  
He thrice by Peter was disowned,  
And so Peter's tears overflowed

## Psalm 19

The glory of God is proclaimed by the heavens.  
And His handiwork the firmament declares.  
Day unto day pours forth revelation.  
And night with the night, its knowledge shares.

Yet no speech or sound is spoken,  
No language or voice is heard,  
All through the earth their music has gone,  
To the end of the world reach their words.

God made of the heavens a tent for the sun.  
As from a wedding chamber, he goes forth  
Rejoicing, as a strong man, his circuit to run,  
To touch and to warm the ends of the earth.

The law of the Lord is perfect.  
It revives and restores the soul.  
For the Lord will surely instruct,  
Making wise of the simple.

The statutes of the Lord are right;  
Making the heart rejoice.  
His commandment is shining bright,  
Bringing a light to our eyes.

The fear of the Lord cleanses through,  
And endures forever.  
The ordinances of the Lord are true,  
And are righteous altogether.

Compared to gold, desire these more,  
Which taste like a honey most sweet.  
By these your servant has been warned,  
Winning reward in his soul for their keep.

Who can discern his own errors and lapses?  
Cleanse me from my unknowing sins.  
Protect me from the adversaries, presumptuous.  
Preserve me from their dominion.  
Then I shall be cleared and blameless,  
Innocent of great transgression.

Make worthy my heart's meditation,  
Make my words acceptable and pure.  
For you are my Lord and foundation,  
My true rock and my redeemer.

## **Psalm 24**

The earth is the Lord's  
And the fullness of it,  
The entirety of the world  
And all who dwell upon it.

He founded it upon the oceans,  
Planting it firm beneath the waves.  
Who shall go up His mountain?  
And who may stand in His holy place?

If his works are good,  
And his heart is pure,  
If he commits no falsehood,  
And he does not perjure.

God his savior gives him peace,  
Righteousness and grace.  
This is the fortune for those who seek;  
Who seek the God of Jacob's face.

Lift yourselves up, you ancient doors,  
Lift up your heads, you gates,  
So that the King of Glory comes forth,  
Our glorious king so great.

Mighty in battle is the Lord,  
Our Lord so strong and great.  
Lift up your heads, you ancient doors,  
Lift them up high, you gates.

Who is He then, do we know?  
Who is this King of Glory?  
He is the Lord of Hosts,  
The King of Heaven and of Glory.

## **Luke 21**

Signs in the sky will cause distress,  
Shake the heavens and the earth.  
Waves will break upon you helpless,  
And many will lose their heads in fear.

Yet some will see the Son of Man  
In the clouds of the sphere of life,  
Radiant with the glory of revelation,  
Borne up by World Powers might.

Stand upright when this happens.  
On the breaking of that day  
Raise your head and seek redemption;  
With wakeful spirit pray.

See the fig trees and all the trees,  
When they have begun to bud,  
Soon they will be sprouting leaves,  
And summer is nearly come.

So when you see these things happen,  
Before this generation is passed away.  
Do not lose your hearts in dissipation.  
Hear my words, they will not pass away.



### **Luke 3**

The prophet Isaiah's words were fulfilled  
When a voice called out, lonely and shrill,  
"I speak to you of God's word,  
Prepare ye the way of the Lord.

"Make level every mountain and hill.  
Ravines and valleys must now be filled.  
Let all that is crooked then be made straight;  
The uneven roads be flattened and paved.  
Then God's deliverance will be decreed  
For all of mankind to see.

"Yet you are still sons of the serpent;  
Your already fear, but falsely repent.  
You say that you are Abraham's sons,  
Yet God could raise sons up from these stones.

"Every tree that fails in producing good fruits,  
It will be felled with an ax to its roots.  
So share your garments, if you have two,  
And if another is hungry, give him some food."

Tax collectors asked him, "What shall we do?"  
He replied, "Exact only that which is due."  
When soldiers asked him, "What do you say?"  
He said, "Do not bully or blackmail; make do with your pay!"

All the people waited in longing suspense,  
Asking, "Are you the Christ, whom God has sent?"  
He said, "I baptize you only with water,  
Yet he will baptize with Holy Spirit and fire.

"He holds in his hand a winnowing fork  
To clear and cleanse his threshing room floor.  
He will gather good wheat into his barn,  
But the fallen chaff will eternally burn.

"Yes, he who is mightier will come to you.  
I am not worthy to unfasten his shoes."

**I AM the Bread of Life      John 6: 22-59**

I say: You do not look for me  
Because you saw a miracle,  
But because you ate of the loaves,  
And you had your fill.

Do not work for food that spoils,  
But for sustenance eternal.  
The Son of Man gives it to you.  
God the Father has set on him His seal.

This is the work of God:  
Have faith in the one whom He has sent.  
Moses did not give you the true bread,  
Spiritually-real from heaven.

My Father gives you the true bread.  
It is the bread of God,  
For it descends from heaven,  
And gives true life to the world.

I am the bread of life.  
Come to me, you will not hunger,  
And whoever has faith in me,  
Will not thirst any longer.

Your hearts remain closed,  
Even though you have seen.  
All whom the Father entrusts  
Will find a way to me.

I will not turn away  
Whoever comes to me.  
I do not come from heaven to do my will,  
But the will of Him who sent me.

And this is the will  
Of Him who sent me,  
That I should lose nothing at all  
Of what he has given to me.

All who see the Son,  
And in him have faith  
They shall have eternal life,  
And on the last day be raised.

To me no one can find the way  
Unless the Father bids him,  
And to him I will give the power  
Of eternal resurrection.

It says in the books of the prophets:  
"They shall all be taught by God."  
By the Father all will find me  
Who receive the teaching and the word.

No one has seen the Father,  
Except the one who came from Him,  
Because he himself came from God,  
He alone has Him seen.

Whoever has faith will not perish.  
I am the bread of life.  
In the wilderness they ate manna,  
And still your fathers died.

I am the life-giving bread  
Which descends from heaven.  
Whoever eats of it will not die,  
But will live forever.

My earthly body I will offer up.  
This is the bread I give.  
I offer it for the life of the world  
That you still may live.

Whoever eats the body and drinks the blood  
Of the Son of Man  
I give the power of resurrection,  
Beyond all cycles of time.

For my flesh is real food,  
And my blood is real drink.  
Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood  
Lives in me and I in him.

By the living Father I was sent,  
And draw life myself by His will,  
So whoever takes me as sustenance,  
Lives through me as well.

This bread which descends from heaven,  
Eat of it and you will not die.  
Whoever eats of this bread.  
Will live throughout all cycles of time.

What if you should see the Son of Man  
Ascend to where he was before?  
It is the spirit which gives life,  
But the flesh has nothing to offer.

The words I have spoken to you,  
They are spirit and are life,  
Yet there are still some of you  
Who do not yet have faith.

Unless by the Father it is given  
No one finds the way to me.  
Then Jesus said to the twelve,  
Will you also leave me?

And Simon Peter answered:

"Your words are eternal life,  
Lord, to whom could we go?  
You are God's Holy One, the Christ.  
This we believe and truly know."

Then Jesus said to the twelve:

All of you as the twelve,  
Did I not choose you?  
Yet one of you is a devil  
Of the evil one, a false accuser.

He meant Judas Iscariot,  
Working for the Adversary.  
One of the twelve who did plot,  
Intending to betray.

## **.I AM the Gate**

**John 10: 1-10**

Anyone who does not enter  
The sheepfold through the gate,  
But breaks through elsewhere,  
He is a robber and a thief.

For the shepherd the gatekeeper opens.  
The sheep then hear his voice.  
He calls out each one.  
They follow him by choice.

The shepherd goes before them  
After he has brought them out,  
And the sheep follow him,  
Because his voice is known.

But a stranger they do not follow,  
Because they do not know his voice.  
With a stranger they never go;  
Him they flee and avoid.

Jesus told this parable to them.  
They did not understand what he meant.  
So he retold it to them,  
Speaking once again:

Let me say most solemnly,  
I am the gate for the sheep.  
All who came before me,  
They were robbers and thieves.

To them the sheep did not listen,  
But I am the gate.  
Enter through me and find salvation.  
Go freely about and safely graze.

The thief comes only to steal,  
To kill, and to destroy.  
I come to make life full,  
And bring abundant joy.

**I AM the Good Shepherd      John 10: 11-18**

I am the Good Shepherd  
And I know my own.  
For the sheep who recognize me  
I lay my own life down.

Because he is a hireling,  
And only works for pay,  
When a wolf is coming  
He abandons them and runs away.

Since they do not belong to him  
He has no concern; it does not matter.  
When he sees the wolf attacking them  
He allow the flock to run and scatter.

I am the Good Shepherd.  
I know my own and they know me.  
I know and am known by the Father,  
And lay down my life for my sheep.

I have other sheep  
That are not of this fold.  
They will listen to my voice,  
And I must lead them also.

There will be a single flock and shepherd only  
For this I am loved by the Father,  
That I lay my own life down,  
And take up anew another.

No one takes if from me,  
In full freedom it is offered.  
The power to resign and receive it  
I have been given by the Father.

**I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life      John 14: 1-24**

Do not let your hearts be troubled.  
Trust in God and in me also.  
In my Father's house  
There are many rooms,

But I would have told you  
If this were not true.

And I am going now  
To prepare your place.  
I shall return to you  
To take you to myself.

So that where I am  
You may be there also,  
And the way is known  
To the place I go.

I am the way,  
The truth, and the life.  
No one finds the way  
To the Father, but through me.

If you had recognized me,  
You would also have known Him.  
My Father you have seen,  
And know him from now on.

*Peter said to him:*  
*"Lord, show us the Father,*  
*Then we shall be satisfied."*  
Even after all this time  
Do you not know me?, *he replied*

To have seen me  
Is to have seen the Father,  
So how can you say to me:  
"Let us see the Father."

Do you not have faith  
That I am in Him and He is in me?  
What I tell you I do not say  
On my own authority.

In me lives  
Continually the Father,  
And through me he does  
His miracles and deeds of power.

## **I AM the True Vine    John 15: 1-16**

I am the true vine.  
My Father is the vinedresser.  
He cuts away any branch  
Which is not a fruit-bearer.

He prunes every branch  
That continues to bear  
Richer and more excellent fruit,  
And he makes it pure.

You are already purified  
By the power of the word.  
Make your home in me,  
As I make mine in you.

A branch can not bear fruit by itself  
Unless by the vine it is given life.  
Neither can you bear fruit  
Unless you with me abide.

Whoever remains in me and I in him,  
He bears fruit in abundance.  
I am the vine, you are the branches;  
Apart from me you are helpless.

Any who are cut off from my being  
Like a severed branch they wither.  
Such branches as these are gathered up  
And thrown into the fire.

If you abide in me  
And my words remain in you,  
Pray for that which you will,  
And it will be done for you.

When you produce much fruit  
My Father is revealed,  
And you show and prove  
Yourselves as my true disciples.



I have loved you  
Just as the Father has loved me;  
Abide in my love;  
Continue in His love with me.

If you take my aims into your will  
Then you will live on in my love.  
Just as I obey my Father's will,  
And live on in His love.

So that your joy may be complete  
I have spoken these words to you.  
This is my commandment:  
That you love one another as I have loved you.

To offer his life for his friends;  
No man has greater love than this.  
And you are my friends  
If you will follow this task.

A servant does not know the business of his master,  
But I can not call you servants any longer,  
Because I have made known to you  
All I have learned from my Father.

You did not choose me,  
But I have chosen and appointed you,  
That you should bear fruit,  
And your fruit-bearing should continue.

What you ask in my name,  
Will be given by the Father.  
What I command to you  
Is that you love one another.

### **I AM the Resurrection and the Life John 11: 25-26**

I am the resurrection and the life.  
Whoever is filled with my power through faith,  
And takes me as his life  
Is set free from the power of death,  
And will live, even when he dies.

## **The First Sign: Changing Water into Wine John 2: 1-11**

On the third day was a celebration  
In Cana of a wedding feast.  
Jesus' mother had invitation,  
As did the disciples and Jesus.

When the wine was gone  
Jesus' mother said, "They have no wine."  
"Why do you involve me woman?",  
Jesus answered, "It is not my time."

His mother told the servers,  
"Do whatever he tells you."  
Nearby were six stone jars.  
Each held almost thirty gallons.

Jesus then said to them,  
"Fill the jars with water."  
When they were filled to the brim,  
He said, "Take some to your master."

The water had been turned into wine.  
This was known by the servers.  
When it was brought to him,  
It was tasted by the steward.

The steward told the bridegroom,  
"You have saved the best till last,  
But the poorer wine is served now,  
After too much drinking by the guests."

This first sign, this miracle,  
Jesus performed at Cana,  
By which his glory was revealed,  
And his disciples' trust awakened.

**The Second Sign:  
The Healing of the Courtiers Son  
John 4: 43-54**

Jesus left for Galilee  
When the two days were over,  
Saying, "In his own country,  
A prophet has no honour."

When Jesus came to Galilee  
He was welcomed there by some  
Who had seen his deeds  
During the festival in Jerusalem.

He returned to Cana once more  
Where he had made the water wine.  
And there came to him a courtier  
Whose son lay ill in Capernaum.

The official went to him and asked  
If he would heal his son,  
And because he was near to death,  
He begged him to come down.

"Unless you see miracles and signs,  
You never will believe", said Jesus.  
The official said to him then,  
"Sir, come before my child dies."

"Go now, your son lives."  
Jesus said to him.  
The man did believe,  
And he started home.

His servants came and met him  
While he was on his way.  
"Your son is still living."  
Was the message that they gave.

He asked them when the boy  
Had begun to recover.  
"The fever left him yesterday,"  
They said, "at the seventh hour."

The father knew that was when he was told  
By Jesus, "Your son lives."  
And he and all his household  
Were filled with faith and believed

**The Third Sign:  
The Healing of the Man at Bethesada  
John 5**

When Jesus went to Jerusalem later,  
There was a Jewish festival.  
At the Sheep Pool, a building called Bethesda  
Sheltered crowds of ailing people.

At this building, with five porticos,  
The sick waited for movement of the waters.  
They knew that the first one to enter  
Would be cured of what they suffered.

An angel sometimes came from above  
To disturb the waters of the pool,  
And when the angel made the waters move  
The helpless, lame, and blind were healed.

An illness had been lingering  
With a man for thirty-eight years.  
Jesus knew he was long-suffering  
When he saw him lying there.

When Jesus said to him,  
"Have you the will to become whole?"  
He was answered by the invalid,  
"Sir, I have no one to take me to the pool.

"When the water moves  
I try to come by myself,  
But I am too slow;  
I always enter after someone else."

Jesus said to him, "Get up,  
Pick up your bed and walk."  
And the man was cured at once.  
He picked up his bed and walked.

Because it was the Sabbath when this happened,  
Some Jews told the man who was healed.  
"It is the Sabbath, this is forbidden;  
Carrying your bed is not allowed."

But the healed man answered them,  
That the one who healed him had said,  
That he should walk and carry it,  
He told me, "Get up, pick up your bed."

"Who is this man who said this to you?"  
But he did not know  
Jesus had withdrawn into the crowd,  
And passed on unnoticed.

Jesus met him in the temple afterwards,  
And said, "See, you have become well again,  
Do not sin any more,  
Or something worse will happen."

The man who was healed by Jesus  
Told the Jews when again went back.  
For this reason Jesus was persecuted,  
Because he did such works on a Sabbath.

# Meeting the Angel

2006

## Meeting The Angel

The angel descends, and slowly  
becomes our own most inward yearning.  
Such an intimacy is pure and strange.

Though we are ignorant of their working,  
it is they who help us to  
understand what it means to be human.

Masculine and feminine are familiar to them,  
and sex and thirst are easy to comprehend,  
but our volition perplexes the angels.

Ambition and anger confuse them,  
all unbecoming acts of dark stigma,  
complacency, and forsaken love.

Yet the angel understands both our  
vulnerability and constant need for renewal:  
how our identity must be made and unmade.

Though the angel sometimes mirrors our  
own insubstantiality and elusiveness,  
we have not taught it forgetfulness.

Each human being points to their own private north,  
the compass of their heart constantly changing,  
but the angel points to the future, to what must be.

Their instructions are often falteringly perceived;  
the intention and meaning remaining unclear  
until the soul matures.

Great is their reverence for us, yet it is we  
who must discern what is significance,  
and what is error and shadow.

Sometimes this is more than we can bear.  
Indifference and false yearning  
can make our future lapse and fade.

## II

As each of us is one among many,  
our angel is one among many spirit beings,  
perfecting the mirror of imagination.

They live in an invisible sky,  
more populous than the earth,  
each one the servant of God.

They are co-incarnate with us.  
Our lives are their devotion.  
They remain with us and within us.

They do not sleep.  
Their time and their knowing are different.  
They live in the genius of virtue.

We are transparent to their sight.  
What is new for us  
was known to them long before.

They take us from point of being  
to point of being, mirroring our future  
and our becoming, beyond all events.

Theirs is not the mirror of expectations,  
but the hope and fantasy of our own heart,  
burrowing into our will and reason.

The angel points to our future,  
to beginnings and to endings,  
to our past and to our redemption.

They remind us that our future is glorious,  
yet also that death waits for us in silence,  
where lives are completed and unmade.



### III

The day's sun rises with us.  
Each of us waking and rising,  
turning to the world, turning from sleep.

Turning in doubt or uncertainty,  
turning in silence or conviction,  
turning and turning.

Turning toward one another,  
then turning away,  
each of us turning to our own direction,

Our questions revealing  
our purpose and our emptiness;  
the wonder in us that must be fulfilled.

Our thoughts begin fragmented and broken,  
finite and incomplete.  
Understanding has no home in us.

The angel bears us forward,  
each question becoming wider, deeper,  
defying what was known.

The circumference of the soul  
slowly expands, calling  
heaven and earth to answer together.

Meeting us where we are in life,  
meeting that in us which burns.  
Giving us peace.

The angel is a way station of our knowing  
entrusting us with wisdom,  
returning us to the world and to our tasks.

#### IV

The novelty and scale of our errors  
draws the angels closer to us.  
Their lamentation echoes everywhere.

We look to ourselves for meaning now,  
and mark our own intentions.  
Never have we been so free of supplication.

We have made a new world  
of cause and effect and explanation,  
fettering our devotion.

We seem to have had a long season  
with little rain from heaven, yet we  
have not been troubled by this dryness.

We have built dams and flooded the fields,  
harvesting life and power and free movement,  
--it has become *our* world.

There are so many of us now.  
We distract one another with our coveting,  
gathering what must be returned.

The angels rejoice at the flowering of plants  
and trees, the movement of fish beneath the waters,  
and each animal resting in its hidden lair,

the multitude of beetles and of birds,  
of sylphs and salamanders, and  
all the silent workings of life in balance.

They always knew that the earth was round,  
how the mountains were formed,  
and the source of rivers.

The angel knows that all creation speaks:  
the voice of every species and lifeless thing,  
speaking in gesture and in beauty.

The angels are pleased we have named so much,  
yet what is this silence now emerging?  
Have we abandoned what must still be known?

All false doubt and certainty must subside.  
The angel listens to each of us,  
or how would they know how to meet us?

The angel is not deterred by our ignorance.  
When we reach the tabula rasa of the soul  
the angel will write upon our listening heart.

#### IV

The angel comes to us,  
whispering into our dreams,  
our sleeping, and our silence.

A selfless, shining  
without preoccupation or smallness,  
wordless and presently aware.

They understand the willfulness of children,  
their desperate and questioning trust,  
the trial of their spite and affection.

Watching from a secret and invisible threshold,  
they witnessed our first steps,  
and listened as we become oblivious to them.

Must the child forget the nearby presence,  
the endlessly patient blessing,  
its confidence and its hope for us?

The guardian of our identity and  
of our freedom,  
the angel will seldom trespass.

## VI

Our sins sleep in us,  
mute, like statues,  
but hidden and unseen.

Past misdeeds and banal willfulness  
shadow our intentions.  
Our conscience is fragmented by neglect.

The angel is distanced  
by our apathy and denial,  
our aloneness and indifference.

When the angel hails us,  
our docile slumber ends  
—we waken and flail!

Captive and unredeemed,  
the angel wrestles with our desires  
—to make them more real.

Both trust and instinct fail us now.  
We have nowhere to return to,  
but to ourselves and our intentions.

The soul is bound in ways  
we did not know.  
Confusion and trial are the result.

What was empty compliance or  
avoidance and vacancy,  
becomes stark self-reproach.

Untying a knot requires great skill.  
Such is the angel's prowess!  
—a nascent will-to-change emerges.

The perpetual obsession with self  
slowly becomes interest in what is other,  
a welcoming of the world.

The soul becomes transparently open,  
united with spirit,  
resonant and whole and complete.

### **The Tides of Heaven**

My harboured senses open up,  
Water rises above the shoal.  
Perception is no longer mired;  
An angel lifts my soul.

Taken then on ocean waves,  
Seemingly far from land,  
Each thing shines with a brightness,  
A diamond in God's hand.

The heavens flood the earth,  
My mind becomes a glittering sea.  
All is wondrously changed,  
For a time, between I and Thee.

All this takes place in silence.  
Briefly, I am not alone.  
Spirit to spirit reveals itself;  
Like a father to a son.

## **Time Must Yield to Our Words**

Outside, all is motion,  
the machinery of change and  
its workshop of unbroken hours,  
but we have gathered together  
to hold time fast with our words.

Narrative and its spoken truths,  
these are what have significance for us:  
to say what is green or ripe;  
what has broken off or been left behind;  
and what remains with us.

We listen and we hear,  
and bear witness to one another.  
Our testimonies are held together by silence,  
and by our words and by our being,  
for though outside all is motion,  
time must yield to our words.

## **The Heart Which Opens**

The closed heart is a seed  
Which will not open.  
It can only be freed  
If it meets the sun.

But after many rains  
And cool damp nights  
It reaches through pain  
For the appearance of light,

Which it arches to find  
Somewhere near, above,  
And stretching, unbinding,  
From root to bud,

It finally opens,  
For all to see.  
Its dark hope ended.  
Its love now free.

## **Fidelity** (for Gabriel Marcel)

What presence was I was welcoming  
And confirming at that moment?  
What was it that defamed all laurels?  
What was it that blew gently like a wind?  
What was it I touched when I reached out?  
What was it, so perfect and vulnerable, like a flower?  
What was it that washed through me like a whisper or a mist?  
What was it that so unburdened me, that I could love once  
more?

## **I Plant My Seed**

All day long  
the sound of traffic,  
every kind of speed and motion,  
lights and signals everywhere,  
and the beating of my heart.

The sky seems restless and indifferent,  
but whatever is rooted will grow  
and sustain itself,  
protected by the night.

Suns and stars and constellations  
send light from unimaginable distance.  
A light meant for the future  
--light that must travel so far.

I plant my tiny seed  
beneath the broken soil.  
Should I surrender my small portion?  
No one has asked for it  
and it is no sacrifice to keep it.

I will remain here  
between the sky and soil,  
as if rooted where I am.



## **He Will Never Leave Us**

He will never leave us.  
His soul is the green of springtime.

He will never leave us.  
His thoughts are the blue of the sky.

He will never leave us.  
The blackness of the soil is his doing.

He will never leave us.  
The red horizon is his greeting and his blessing.

He will never leave us,  
Yet every blossom is his final word.

He will never leave us.  
Each tree and forest salutes him.

He will never leave us.  
He has hidden the road, but walks with us.

He will never leave us,  
For love is his classroom.

He will never leave us.  
He is the moistness of decay and of life.

He will never leave us.  
The sun is a candle in His room.

He will never leave us.  
He fashions the days to His use.

He will never leave us.  
For death has become his friend.

He will live forever,  
Until our passions become His.

## **Saturday Pilgrimage**

My father goes on a pilgrimage each Saturday.  
He wakes early and  
follows the signs in all directions.

Each house he visits  
has a makeshift shrine of neglected objects;  
the traces of lives  
cast off on the tables and lawns.

Though they only show their poverty  
he searches for the inner riches of souls.

Sometimes he is cheated  
by the stinginess of his own heart  
and returns home empty handed.

Other times he returns with his purchases,  
overwhelmed by beauty and treasures of generosity,  
and love beams from his heart and from his hands.

(for Father's Day, June 18, 2000)

## **untitled**

I feel briefly overwhelmed.  
What is the cause of this weakness?  
It is not because the world has overpowered me  
or because I am not rested or prepared.  
All is well with me.  
It is not humility or even repentance.  
It is that there is a greatness inside of me  
and I do not know if I am equal to it.

## **Summation**

I have been an arrow guided in and out of error,  
spiraling blindly toward a restless target,  
possessed and dispossessed by wrath and by grace,  
randomly salvaged by wholeness and by peace.

Yet flesh and desire brought me their ordinary pleasures.  
The suns still orbit in the distant sky.  
My feet and hands move as they were meant to move,  
And those who are around me give me refuge in their virtue.

## **Christmas Day**

Outside all is white.  
It covers up our sins.  
Inside, all is quiet.  
Peace on earth will reign

for a few hours here,  
--a timelessness  
to absent our fears  
and redress

briefly, the unforsaken,  
woes that daily test  
our heart. May heaven  
grant us this.

## **Paradoxes**

Thorns point to their crown.  
From barren winter comes a new season of life.  
The stuttering of animals is their secret language.  
The fire burns so that it can brighten.  
Silence may be heard, but not spoken.  
Flowers rise from the seed's unmarked grave.

## **Heaven is Not Only the World Above Us**

Heaven is not only the world above us.  
From depths of the earth to the firmament of the stars  
there is abundant evidence of its unseen hand.

You say that the Creator sleeps and  
all is natural law and mechanism.  
What would you call proof of the divine?  
You, yourself are proof!

Each soul must be broken open,  
our immutable ignorance split apart.  
Heaven is mining us for its precious adornment,  
to be the glory of Its crown!

Receive heaven and be remade!  
What is shadow in our depths  
Is to be transfigured and  
given up to light!

## **At Death**

When you die  
all your deeds will rise  
before you  
as if awakened from a sleep.

What was kind and wondrous  
will greet you like a friend and  
truthfully resound,  
and what was without feeling for others  
will rise up  
and accuse you of betrayal.

What is in your heart will  
no longer be secret,  
and all of your thoughts  
will speak aloud.

May you then meet the being of light  
whose greatest hope for you is that  
you will empty yourself in compassion,  
and be without fear.

He will remind you  
that the past and future are given  
to you in trust.

You must then  
judge yourself with courage  
and with contrition  
for the benefit of all beings.

May those you have loved,  
both those here and in the afterlife  
help you, and guide you away  
from any loneliness  
that would darken your soul.

And may your body be filled with light.

## **The Body**

An arm, a hand, a face with unique features;  
A person that we know, even by the way that they walk.

The bones accommodate gesture and movement,  
mirroring the mind's invisible eye.

The blood flows thick and  
warm with the heart's constant threshing

The lungs flap easily within the chest,  
like a graceful and silent bird.

The muscles hoist and pull  
and align themselves assertively.

The senses--no description is adequate,  
for they are the magic processes of stars,  
and the implements of worldly consciousness.

The powers of digestion and excretion;  
the belly's alchemy of fire.

And we ourselves are much more  
than the sum of these.

## **Where We Are**

Where we are is a moment in time  
Where we are is without precedent  
Where we are is a dangerous place  
Where we are is troubling and lonely  
Where we are is an ongoing struggle  
Where we are is a tragedy and a comedy  
Where we are has been brought on by success

Where we are is a trial and error  
Where we are is what the moment demands  
Where we are is an ongoing dialogue  
Where we are must not be left behind  
Where we are is everyone's business  
Where we are, God only knows

We are with the world above us, beneath us  
We are with the living and the dead  
We are with the beasts and the angels  
We are with the silent, patient earth.  
We are with one another  
We are with enemies and friends  
We are with the seen and the unseen

We are going onward, backwards and forwards  
We are going to decide the future  
We are going to make amends  
We are going to start all over  
We are going back to where we came  
We are going to grow together  
We are going where we have never been.

## **Buddha and the Devil**

Why is the Buddha laughing?  
The Awakened One, compassionate and wise.  
What a good time he seems to be having,  
Is he laughing because he's surprised?

Does the dog have buddha-nature?  
His mind is empty, but his mouth has a grin.  
Such a simple, predictable creature,  
Doesn't he know the trouble we're in?

Is the devil only a rumour?  
Does he amuse himself playing jokes on his patsy?  
I picture him sullen and in bad humour.  
Why is his mood so sour and nasty?

## **Anvil, Hammer, Fire**

The anvil of the world  
sounds out of silence.  
I am forged by a mighty hand,  
and strengthened by the fire.



## **Waiting for the Coming of the Light (A song)**

You lie awake and you cannot sleep  
You're waiting in the darkness of the night.  
Sadness fills you, but you cannot weep  
How can you say goodbye?

You toss and turn and toss and turn  
And the night is long  
You can't believe you'll never  
See them, and now they're gone

You're waiting for the coming of the light  
You're waiting for the coming of the light.

Were they strong or were they weak?  
It doesn't seem to matter now.  
Can't seem to think or feel a thing,  
Still your mind goes round and round.

What do they see and know?  
Where have they gone?  
And what kind of life and world  
Do they now hold on to?

You're waiting for the coming of the light  
You're waiting for the coming of the light

If you had a choice they would never leave,  
But God has taken them away  
Souls—they strain and bond and weave  
In distance and night and the light of day.

Pictures of love and life  
So near and far  
So many ways and times  
They tested your heart

You're waiting for the coming of the light  
You're waiting for the coming of the light.

## **Meditation on the Sermon on the Mount**

Blessed are beggars of spirit,  
Who thirst and endure.  
They lay no claim to merit,  
Their hearts remaining pure.

Persecuted and reviled,  
Righteous, but still merciful,  
They bring heaven's peace to this world,  
In harmony of soul.

Let all wrongs be forgiven,  
Receive comfort and mercy.  
Enter the realm of heaven,  
Find transparency and peace.

We shall be called God's children;  
The salt of the earth,  
When we behold Him,  
And become the light of the world.

## **Where the Lamb of God May Rest His Head**

In a place where evil is stayed  
The priest will bless and break the bread.  
All will gather to serve and pray  
Where the Lamb of God may rest his head.

Let us prepare a space for the altar to stand,  
Where words of reverence can be said.  
A sacred shelter upon the land  
Where the Lamb of God may rest his head

Where the gospel will ring out and be heard  
By both the living and the dead,  
For beloved offering of gesture and word,  
Where the Lamb of God may rest his head.

To build a home upon the earth  
We will raise the roof beams overhead  
Forever renewed, the Saviour's birth  
Where the Lamb of God may rest his head.

## **Brain Injury**

I do not remember how it happened,  
Only what people have told me.  
I did not think anything like this  
Would ever happen to me.  
There must be a reason for this.  
I do not know what it is.  
I am no longer who I was.

No one cares if I prove myself;  
It only matters to me.  
When I am with others  
I can sometimes forget myself,  
But many who knew me, shun me,  
And patronize when I explain.

My day is a patchwork  
Which I will mend together.  
My intention threads the needle,  
But show me where the stitches go.

## 1 Corinthians 13

Be ambitious for the spiritual gifts,  
But I will show a way which is highest.

If I speak in tongues of men and angels,  
And have a faith that makes mountains move,  
I am only a gong or a clanging cymbal,  
Being as nothing, if I am without love.

I may have the gift of prophecy,  
And give away all that is mine,  
Know and understand the mysteries,  
But without love, all is in vain.

Love fills the soul with healing goodness.  
It will not envy, or slander, or boast.  
It does not allow self-seeking or falseness,  
Or let the inner balance be lost.

I once reasoned in childish ways.  
My thoughts were childish imperfections,  
But my childish mind I have put away,  
Because I have now become a man.

Now we see in mirrored reflection,  
As in dim outline, until that day,  
When knowing fully, we are fully known,  
And see in reality, face to face.

Faith, hope, and love, an exalted Trinity,  
But love is greatest, throughout eternity.

## Galatians 5

Allow the spirit to give your lives structure,  
Or your earthly senses will drive your desires.  
For bodily desires are against spirit.  
Flesh is opposed; the two are in conflict.  
You can not do what you want to do  
When the merely earthly leads us to:

Unclean and lascivious sensual cravings,  
Perverse practices of sexual gratification,  
The desire to wound and stir up discord,  
And magical playing with the sensual world,  
The compulsion to quarrel, denial, and dissension,  
And idolization of the world of the senses,  
Enmity against all that has soul and has life,  
Enslavement to matter, leaving nothing left,  
Except gluttony, excessive drinking and eating,

Of this I have given you frequent warning:  
If your actions are determined by these powers  
The kingdom of God will not let you be heirs.  
But the way of the spirit  
Matures many fruit:  
Love, joy, and peace, faith, and forgiveness,  
Gentle patience of soul, self-mastery, and goodness.

Against these, the Law will say nothing  
But, those who to Jesus Christ do belong,  
Crucify their earthly-physical nature,  
The cravings and bodily passions it nurtures.  
If we owe our life to the spirit,  
We will order our lives by it.  
Let us beware of all vanity,  
And avoid competition or envy.

## Revelations of John 5

In the right hand of the One  
I saw seated on the throne  
Was a scroll inscribed on both sides  
With seven seals shut closed

And then I saw a powerful angel  
Announcing with great zeal,  
"Who will open and read the scroll,  
Worthy to undo its seven seals?"

But no being on the earth,  
Under the earth, or in heaven.  
Proved to be of such a worth,  
As to allow the scroll to open.

Because the scroll was not read  
I wept; but then an elder said,  
"See, David's scion has won,  
From the tribe of Judah's lion.  
He will open up the scroll  
And undo its seven seals.

And there, before the throne,  
And the four living ones,  
Among the heavenly Sanhedrin,  
Appeared a Lamb, seeming slain.

It bore seven eyes and seven horns;  
The seven Spirits of God sent forth.  
They were given the entire earth  
As their realm in which to work.

From the right hand of the One on the throne  
The Lamb came and took the scroll  
Then the twenty-four elders and four living ones  
Bowed before the Lamb and fell.

They each held a harp and a censer gold,  
With the prayer of saints, incense, full.

## **The Sun**

The Sun in the spiritual world is not surrounded by darkness.  
It does not turn or hide itself away from us.  
It is always before us, surrounding  
and penetrating us, opening and enclosing us.  
It does not withhold itself by time of day or by night.  
Its light belongs to all, yet its brightness does not strain.

Life is only a seeming eclipse.  
We return —and all is day!  
There was no misfortune  
Nothing, nothing was lost, or lacking direction.  
We absented ourselves for a moment.  
Time passed. Duration was endured.

The light is not separate.  
It is radiant, always present, always receiving us.  
Do not only hope for this. It is your very being.  
Be alert. Recognize and behold that Sun.  
It is yours, and for all the Earth.

## Easter

He looked far and distant into us,  
As his blood fell and touched the ground,  
Transfigured in his consciousness,  
Mankind no longer alone.

"It is finished", were his last words spoken,  
As he drank deeply of death's cup.  
His spirit was released, unbroken,  
But it was not yet time to be taken up.

Into Hades realm he plummeted,  
Where his glory was first revealed.  
Death was befriended and illumined,  
Overshadowed by his bright veil.

And all who recognized him there,  
Drawn by his grace and counsel,  
Were bathed in light beyond compare,  
Cognizant once more of themselves.

He rose after three days, and drew near  
Two women on the road to Emmaus.  
He listened some, then asked to hear  
The cause of their distress.

"Jesus of Nazareth", they replied,  
"Was God's prophet, before all of the people,  
But he was condemned and crucified,  
The one who would redeem Israel.

"His tomb was visited by some of our women,  
Who found it empty when they arrived,  
But then angels appeared in a vision  
Proclaiming he was alive."

He said, "You are foolish, and slow of heart,  
To believe all that the prophets have spoken."  
Then told how Moses and all of the prophets  
Spoke of Christ's death and his resurrection.

He later broke and blessed their bread,



And they recognized who he was,

Then he vanished from sight, and the women said,  
"Our hearts burned while he spoke to us!"

They went to where the disciples had gathered,  
And were told "The Lord has risen!  
Indeed, he has appeared,  
And shown himself to Simon."

As the women revealed what had taken place,  
The risen Christ appeared,  
And though he gave a blessing of peace,  
They froze in shock and fear.

He asked, "Why do doubts appear in your minds?  
Look at my hands and feet."  
And because they required more signs,  
He asked for some fish to eat.

He said, "This is the meaning of my words,  
Which I spoke while still with you,"  
Then opened their understanding of scripture.  
The prophecies about him had come true:

"The Messiah is to suffer and die,  
But after three days to rise again,  
So that repentance of heart and mind  
Will find healing from the sickness of sin.

"Of these things you are the witnesses.  
And soon the promise of my Father  
I will send upon you from the heights,  
To clothe you with its power."

He then was lifted high  
To our Father in the heavens,  
But none will spiritually die  
Who accept his resurrection.

Death was overcome.  
Christ rose and walked among us.  
The Holy Spirit has also come,  
Fulfilling the Father's promise.

## **I AM the Light of the World John 8: 12-29**

I am the light of the world.  
To my own self I bear witness.  
Follow me and have the light of life.  
You will not walk in darkness.

My testimony is valid.  
This you do not know,  
But I know from whence I came,  
And also to where I go.

You judge by what is human,  
But I judge by no one.  
And even if I did  
I would not be alone.

It is said in your law  
The testimony of two persons is true.  
The Father who sent me also testifies.  
He is my witness too.

If you knew me  
You would also know my Father,  
But you do not know me,  
So you do not know Him either.

You will seek me,  
Though soon I will be gone.  
You will die through your sins,  
And where I go you can not come.

I am from above.  
You are of this world.  
You are from below.  
I am not of this world.

If you do not fill yourselves  
With the power of my being,  
As I have said to you,  
You will die through your sins.

I have much to say to in judgment.  
He who sent me is truth itself.  
Only what I have heard from Him,  
To the world will I tell.

When you lift up the Son of Man  
You will know I am who I claim.  
I do nothing from myself.  
What my Father teaches, I proclaim.

He who has sent me  
Has not left me alone.  
My Father is ever with me.  
What pleases Him, I have always done.

### **Psalm 23**

The Lord is my shepherd.  
He guides me to fresh pastures.  
By Him I am restored,  
Beside His still and restful waters.

Your staff will guide and Your rod protect  
To lead me on a path without blame.  
Through the valley of the shadow of death  
I will walk upright for the sake of Your name.

Of evil I now have no dread:  
Prepare a table before my foes;  
With refreshing oil anoint my head;  
Fill my cup 'til it overflows.

The goodness and mercy of God's love  
Shall follow me for all of my days,  
And the house of my Lord above  
Will be my unfailing dwelling place.

## Christ

A god without beginning became  
the new Adam,  
and a brief life, in ending,  
became the new story of God and man.

Christ entered the breach between  
heaven and earth.  
Through his timely death  
all was reborn.

And so began a constant harvest,  
the threshing of souls  
in the heart of Christ, a silent,  
almost  
imperceptible emancipation.

A redemption without measure,  
an endless beginning,  
all creation waiting and receiving him,

Moving with an unearthly certainty,  
open, undefined;  
a trust we are unable to comprehend.

Reborn through the mystery of his love,  
changing and being changed,  
blessing and enduring;  
a constant lifting of veils.

Out of the firmament of silence  
the greatest deeds are spoken;  
a life lived in fullness and in wisdom.  
Yield, and stand firm.  
Trust,  
and go forward.  
This is the working of Christ in us.

Our life is a seed and a parable.  
Righteousness and compassion,  
--these are our eyes and ears.

You have heard your life calling.  
He is the one who sent you,  
and who waits.

You must remember him!

### **Prayer**

O Father,  
All of heaven calls your name.  
May all kingdoms hear!  
We give thanks for our bread,  
And for your mercy.  
May we remember you  
In each other and in all things.  
Please preserve us and keep us whole,  
For you are our Lord and God, forever.

## **When I Saw the Future**

One morning I woke up and saw the future. It was very excited and seemed to be running around in circles. I could see that it wanted to be friends. I thought that it was too much for me and I asked it to go away. It would not be put off and came with me everywhere. When I imagined what life would be like with it, it did not seem to suit me.

Eventually, we got talking, and went out for a beer together. It was pretty entertaining. It told me some wild stories. It said that it had some great adventures in store for me. At home, later, when I sobered up, I found that the future had moved in with me. It was disruptive and rude. It cleaned out my fridge and would not stop eating. It said that it was hungry. My cupboards were bare. I told it to leave--I was starving!

It ignored me, then went to the living room and lay down in the middle of the floor. I thought that it would just take a nap, but it slept around the clock. I couldn't wake it up. Days and weeks went by. I couldn't even move it. Eventually, I forgot about it and just ignored it. I was glad that I finally had some peace.

When it finally woke up, months later, it seemed to be running circles around me again. It would not stop or go away. Finally I said: "Get out of my face!" I swung out and tried to hit it, but nothing landed. A few more wild swings. It disappeared. I was angry, but relieved.

Time went by. Every now and then I imagined that I saw the future, hiding behind a tree, or getting out of a car. I think that it waved to me from a bus once, but I can't be sure. It might have been someone else's. I'm much older now, and I kind of miss it sometimes. Occasionally, I feel that it is following me around. Some of the things it said have come true.

# **Bridge To The Future**

**2010**

## All of Creation

All of creation  
Calls out to be known.  
Now, it is not only God  
That knocks at our door.  
The blessed multitude cries out to us,  
Simple and naïve,  
Plain and unadorned,  
Abandoned, yet ever receptive to us,  
Calling, and yearning for a love,  
For a love.

Each thing proclaims its own uniqueness,  
That it is humbly worthy,  
Testifying to itself and its attributes,  
Begging to be known,  
If it would please us  
—to be known.

With a consciousness humbled,  
Stripped-down, yet incomplete  
Each living thing,  
And each mute and motionless substance,  
Every transfixed article and stubborn object  
Calls out to our consciousness  
To be known  
—to be known.

And, *loveless dullards* that we are,  
*Sleepy, indifferent, lame-minded,*  
*Hypocrites of the soul* that we are.  
*Dense, hardwired automatons,*  
*Single-minded self-interested fools;*  
*Selfish, flat-earth worshipers of senseless sensation*  
*and meaningless icons of the mind*  
*Restless revelers of paralytic boredom;*  
*Empty broken-hearted cast-out-of-Eden sophomores;*  
*Half-brained false witnesses to untruth.*  
Our doctored testimonies yield  
NO EVIDENCE OF GOD!  
And this is what we call our life.  
And this is what we call our life.



And yet our salvation and our  
Redemption is near.  
Our new-found self-awareness  
Is at hand,  
All around us,  
Ready to greet us  
Closer to us  
Than we would dare  
—than we would dare

Say hello to what  
You were indifferent to and greet  
The SELF, so LARGE and WIDE  
That you have ignored.  
So subtle, yet not so elusive  
Not so elusive as ourselves  
—as ourselves.

Spirit tends toward smallness  
This I know—yet can not explain.  
Such is the nature  
Of the great soul of the world:  
The inbetweenness of identity;  
The strident humility of uniqueness;  
The mutual abasement and accommodation of  
creation;  
The contented play of the many and the multitude;  
The each-in-itself, in-its-own-way, in-its-own-  
place.  
Each shining artifact of God  
In its singularity and in its many aspects,  
Waits, not quite hidden, yet largely  
Undiscovered and unmapped,  
Waiting to be known.  
Waiting to be known.

We see our own loneliness and separation  
There, in the abandoned not-myself  
—that seems so blank and neutral,  
So indifferent and easily analyzed,  
So passively manipulated,  
So purposeless, so dead and *not-alive*!  
O, if the heart could see.  
If only the heart could see!

## **Collapse**

One day they all just left the hive  
And went somewhere to die.  
Their life had collapsed.  
They refused to continue living in their home.

There were all kinds of reasons.  
I think that they just committed suicide.  
They wanted to tell us something  
And it was the only way.

Some considered that perhaps  
the pollen of the flowers was becoming sterile.  
Others said that the habitat  
of the wild bees had been lost  
And their tame cousins in their little boxes  
could not bear the stress of modern life.

Parasites and viruses,  
Pesticides and fungi,  
Genetic meddling,  
Climate change and  
Electromagnetic radiation;  
A failing immune system.  
The long siege of the 21st century.

The bees had seemed to be happy  
in their little homes  
and even seemed to thrive.  
"Why did they have to die?"  
People asked.  
"What will happen now?"  
And what will become of us?"

## Conspiracy/Black Ops

I

Thoughts fall from the sky,  
like weapons that soon will explode.  
They intend to kill as many people as possible.

Thoughts of mass destruction!  
Evacuate! Evacuate!  
Stop the thoughts! Stop the thoughts!  
But there is nowhere to hide, nowhere to run.

They are vicious and relentless,  
but they do not fall,  
They are suspended in the air.

I cannot grieve in advance—only panic!  
When will they fall?  
Where will they explode!

II

The truth will step forward.  
It is standing there in the line up.  
It just has to be pointed out.

The truth will step forward  
and be acclaimed.  
There is no one else that can do the job.

The truth will step forward.  
Will it do so voluntarily?  
Does it have the courage?

The truth will step forward  
—that authored  
so many anonymous rumours.

The truth will step forward and  
deceit will retreat into the shadows,  
fearful for its life.

## **I Saw That the World Was Green**

I imagined you were surrounded by flowers.  
It cheered me to see you  
smile because you were glad to see me.  
Your love and the sky were vast and intimate.  
I was sorry that I had forgotten that,  
and I saw that the world was green and alive.

I imagined you showed me a portrait of your  
mother,  
(admitting that you weren't a very good artist).  
You had captured an essence of her,  
a part that had refused to surrender.  
She was seated at the dining room table.  
All was set and in place.

Then I noticed cut flowers were the centerpiece;  
an offering without a name,  
a grace that did not have to be said.

Then I listened quietly to the Earth.  
To Her anger and broken solace.  
I could not admit what She wanted to hear;  
That Her grief was my own and that  
I felt the same pain.

Then I heard you repeating "forgiveness",  
"forgiveness"  
as a question or a prayer, asking; "How?"; and "If?"  
—that all of those named would reconcile,  
And that silence would lose all of its anger.

## **I Was in a Burning House**

I was in a burning house,  
The house in which I nearly died.  
That burning house was my ego,  
My selfishness, lust, and unforgivingness,

Homelessness has given me back my freedom.  
Love has given me back my self.  
I will build a new house  
Which is safe and cannot destroy itself.  
The time to change is at hand.

You are the God  
Who I was warned about;  
The God who leads me on,  
Who makes captive and makes free.  
The God Who dwells within.

## The Redemption of Faust

Faust was recently reborn as a female.  
She had been very busy in her previous life  
—Getting into all kinds of trouble  
When she should have known better.

The devil was upset when she was able to ascend  
After a restless life full of intrigue,  
Murder, deceit, and seduction,  
Indifference to the suffering of others,  
And abandonment of responsibility;

She had been a maniacal, ambitious, and  
oversexed fool,  
A puer, a dreamer, a bringer of despair.  
She was able to witness her folly in the afterlife,  
With Gretchen, who forgave her.

She saw that she perhaps  
She had done some good along with the harm:  
Overcoming the floods by constant vigilance and  
effort;  
Countering the blundering Mephistopheles by  
Refusing a passive life of ordinary comfort;  
And living out her destiny,  
However flawed and regrettable it was.

She had not meant to be cruel, but she had been  
Obsessed with novelty and power  
—As if by a magical spell.  
She made a commitment to steer her life  
Away from her previous temptations.

The world to which she has returned  
Are her past fantasies and ideals fulfilled.  
Nature is now completely subjugated  
And what may have seemed magical two hundred  
years ago  
Is now commonplace.

What can she do to break free?  
Can she find the Eternal-Feminine in her heart?  
Can she undo the chaos brought on by her selfishness?  
Can she and Gretchen make a new world?

### **Little Star**

Each day I pray to the little star,  
giving thanks that we have come so far.  
I pray that we remain awake,  
both for the world and for thy sake.

Some say that you are up so high,  
though you meet us by and by,  
both in our deeds and in our sleep,  
in our joy, and when we weep.

You speak in all that we can see!  
Wondrous is your company,  
when we listen to what you say,  
witness behind the light of day.

You are the co-joining arc,  
the world-incarnating spark,  
the until-now unseen star  
that reminds us who we are.

## Morning

Forty years of learning how  
To rule, but never overthrow.  
My bitterness is ending now.  
All my little selves in tow.

Decades my soul lay in want,  
Insufficient to the deed.  
I was a slave and a bon vivant,  
An ascetic without need.

This is not an empty celebration.  
My fire brings light, but not to burn.  
I feel no woe or indignation.  
The forty years, the forty years it took to learn.

I made promises to myself:  
Work and pray. Work and pray.  
Kept my spirits up; blamed no one else;  
Enjoyed the novelties of the day.

Yet I'd stumble into remorse;  
Asking, "To what purpose was I born?  
Why did my life take this course?"  
Saying, "I don't want this any more."

I fought myself and rarely won  
Reward for not telling lies.  
It seemed that my only consolation  
Was "Death now would be unwise."

I was constantly bargaining,  
Making promises I could not keep.  
Every night I was restless, waking  
Up from a shallow angry sleep.

I can still say that I loved.  
I was not bitter to the core.  
Yet I could never get enough.  
I always wanted more.  
And this day I woke early.



Pleased that the violence now has stopped.  
Light is on the horizon. Clearly  
There is no reason to play so rough.

Kindness is not justice blind  
When I allow myself to lose,  
If I now make up my mind  
Which of the testaments to choose.

I am no longer burdened with want  
To be other than I am.  
I will not be a grim contestant;  
Rueful, proud, and solemn.

### **Winter**

This summer seems endless;  
Temperate and fruitful,  
Abundant and plentiful,  
All things easily within reach

The flow of the rivers steady  
From towering glaciers  
To basins unimaginably deep,  
Feeding pastures forever green,

Our yields are fantastic;  
Our resources almost infinite;  
Our sciences  
So marvelously applied.

That summer changed to winter  
some time ago.  
We disputed the  
Falling crest of autumn

The world is failing.  
Our paradise is over.  
The summer is over.  
We are already in early winter now.

## Bridge To The Future

This new bridge will be made by our walking,  
Defying both fate and what we think is real.  
A subtle cosmic parlor trick is breaking  
Down laws of time and habit like a miracle.

You have not walked this bridge before.  
It is like a pasture open wide in all directions.  
What you sow by your own steps becomes core,  
Your willingness—your discretion.

To live the next two thousand days  
Is a summons to fortitude and valour.  
There is not a day to waste.  
We will not wait a thousand years.

Do not say to the moment that it must last.  
We will not be allowed to hesitate.  
It is chaos—we spin too fast,  
Yet no one can make the summons wait!

You have not heard it all before.  
Something unknown is breaking through.  
Wolves and angels are at the door:  
The bully; the crone; the old love; the new.

In these moments we are all weak.  
We can not say what we need to without crying.  
But it is not necessary to speak  
More than a few words to what has been dying.

What falls apart we must leave like dust.  
Nothing heavenly stops our forward motion.  
What once was seen as blind faith or empty trust  
Is now our bridge, our sacrifice, our communion.

## **I Bear Witness to Love**

I saw that I was love and every other was myself.

I realized that I was loved and that love had no  
boundary or limit

In time

In completeness

In beginning

In ending

In extension

In death

In life

In cause

In effect

In compassion

In gentleness

In immediacy

In truthfulness

In knowing

In jurisdiction

In mercy

In judgment of any kind

In quantity

In purity

In worthiness

In forgiveness

In authority

In patience

In beauty

In capability

In clarity

In depth

In perfection

In strength

In helpfulness

In humility

In flow

In resilience

In grace upon grace

In reliability

In attentiveness

In ego-shattering presence

In respect

In honouring

In friendliness  
In unfoundedness  
In soundness  
In power  
In virtue  
In freedom  
In errorlessness

## Little Steps

Into the world the child is born  
Gazing around and above itself  
Wanting to move and  
Touch what it meets  
Eventually it stands upright  
and lets go—amazed with itself!  
Clapping its hands together joyfully  
Celebrating its moment in the world  
As it takes its little steps.

And a young adult  
Surveys the world around it  
Looking to itself and to what may be  
Willing to master itself and the world  
Happy that its time has come  
Pushing forward into the world.

And an older person  
Who had come into the world with purpose  
Reflects and bears witness to their life  
As they participated in it  
And as it came to be  
Pleased with what they and others  
Have done and experienced.  
So many days for such a journey!

And someone who has died  
And finished with their life  
Sees what they have done  
For themselves and for others  
The path and their own participation  
The landscape and the roads not taken  
And forgives themselves for their little steps,  
Their little steps toward God.

## **This is What I Want to Say:**

My words are like an echo  
I have not heard before.  
They take me with them.  
I follow them around.  
I am helpless without them.  
They are all that they are,  
And all that they can be.

Words can sometimes be reduced to silence,  
They arise from silence and must eventually  
return.  
They are a celebration of the moment,  
The creative birthright of a moment in time.  
And even when words are inadequate  
It is wonderful that they  
Mark their own trepidation with feeling.

Sometimes I have hurried to write something  
down  
That took me many years to say.  
I wish that I could write reconciliation  
And forgiveness upon my own heart.  
Prayers are useful then  
—For God to write them in my soul.

I yearn to acquire a new language.  
It is all that I can do to keep  
From going deaf and dumb.  
My hearing is so fragmented  
I can barely respond.  
I will not offend anyone if I try—  
They would only hear me babble nonsense.

Say no more. Say no more. Say no more.  
I wish that I could quiet down the noise.

My ears are ringing.  
And my heart is full of doubt.  
I forgive you, but please, say no more.  
Whenever we speak misunderstandings arise.

(as they sometimes do) they mean  
much more than facts or convictions  
I seldom say the world love.  
Let me whisper it to you again.  
Let us both strain to hear it  
Until we both are sure.

## **Particle and Wave**

I am loved  
I am a particle  
A speck in my own eye  
A spectator  
A spectacle  
An inspector  
A drama that is happening  
in the instant  
that I forget that I am loved

I am loved  
I am a wave  
A wave that comes to me  
A wave that goes through me  
A wave –pulsing  
A happy joyful wave  
I wave hello, hello!  
I signal that I am one  
with you

Together we join and bless,  
join and bless  
and part and depart  
Join and bless and  
ride and dance  
We move  
We are swept up  
by the wave  
—then separate again.

## Time

The present is running away from me.  
I reach out to push it away.  
It gives up on me.  
I have nothing to say.

The moment shifts, then reappears.  
Something shuffles from the past.  
Time estranges what is near.  
The distance slows, then comes up fast.

My opponent is myself.  
An ancient biography wants to be paid.  
A past that belonged to someone else  
Who can not, does not live this day.

It's a tragedy  
(They didn't tell you this in school.)  
Mockery, dishonesty;  
This whole life to play the fool.

Only eternity can reduce this sentence  
It has no right or wrong.  
Each of us could be doing love and penance:  
Rhyme and melody, rhythm and song.

The meaning is not what is given.  
It is not what is given alone.  
If I am either beaten or driven  
I may not hear the meter, the rest, the tone.

It's not that there's not harmony here.  
We do well enough for what we are:  
Misguided hope and mistaken fear—  
But each of us a luminous star.

*It's not that there's not harmony here  
—Each of us a luminous star.  
Between misguided hope and mistaken fear  
We do well enough for what we are:*



## **Living on the Moon**

You and I alone together  
—what can that mean  
when all the world is Yours?

I try to love You back,  
but I do not know  
how to extend my love.

You are the Sun,  
yet I only see  
Your shining reflection.

Here are ridges, shadows  
and dark craters;  
Appearances, appearances.

All is not what it seems.  
Goodness prevails in Your world.  
Here it is brief respite.

I know You.  
At least I can say that,  
yet here— all is confused.

## **For Marilyn**

You and I,  
We travel in circles,  
Round the block,  
Round the city,  
Here and there.

You and I,  
We circle each other,  
Round and round,  
In questions,  
In conversation,  
In embrace.

You and I  
Are part of a circle,  
Equidistant from the center that  
We keep circling around.

I meet you there too,  
In the center,  
The center of our being,  
Where we can be together  
Without movement, or question, or hurry.

## **The Time has Come to Ask for Meaning**

A part of each of us has been abandoned,  
Made vacant by facts and pictures  
And restless familiarity.

The soul's young season  
Of discovery and discernment  
Was usurped early on, and  
Its harvest of loves and interests  
Became meager.

When the time came to ask  
About meaning  
It could not find the words  
Without strain or distress.

For some, the feeling for truth had  
Suffered insensitivity and neglect.  
For many, an appreciation for beauty  
Was stunted, pushed aside  
By constantly manufactured images.  
Others became locked in themselves.  
Their moral sensibility and compassion  
Became confused.

So many people do not know  
What to do with themselves.  
Boredom, emptiness, and fear prevail.  
Selfishness binds them so tightly.  
When can the soul look intently  
In the mirror and see  
Itself as it was meant to be?

## **God is Looking Large for You**

God is looking everywhere to find you,  
To see what you are doing.  
Maybe you are kind of embarrassed  
To hear that, but  
He is really interested.  
Maybe you're not up to much.  
You're really not proud of yourself.  
It's not a good time for you now.  
That's OK.

He will find you right where you are.  
He won't ask you any questions  
Or put you on the spot.  
He's not going to show you up  
Or put you down.  
He just wants to say hello to you  
When you notice Him.

## **Where Love is Found**

It often seems that Love is tucked away in some closet and it's only there for emergencies or when we absolutely need it.

It is put on display in churches, art galleries, and museums, but everyone is surprised when it shows up for real.

It can pop up in the middle of an argument and make the blaming stop. It sometimes appears as an unexpected detour or as an afterthought.

It may bring peace—when we feel uncomfortable or dissatisfied.

It will step right in and tell the truth, when we could not admit that we were wrong.

Yet, when it is found in the heart it never has to go away or hide.

## **It's Not Unusual to be Crucified,**

It's not unusual to be crucified,  
though most people talk about it  
as if it's a bad thing—  
All that useless pain to no end.

It begins by being pulled apart  
from who you thought that you were  
until your heart dissolves,  
and your identity is broken.

Then what seems like wrath or mercy  
descends upon your trembling and insignificant  
life  
until the seemingly limitless pain  
rinses clear and pristine

And your phoenix hopes  
(which you thought had died)  
return, poignant, transcendent,  
demanding more of you  
than you could ever imagine,

And you are chastised and grateful  
for the entire experience.

## End of An Age

It feels like tiredness,  
Every day a not-yet.  
So, so close to the divine,  
And yet so far away.

I meet the stresses of the day,  
The duties, the annoyances,  
Death and distraction lurk everywhere.  
My small complaints have no meaning anymore.

Sentimentality has become surface-like  
Habits of feeling appear stale and artificial.  
Emotions often seem passive or stubborn,  
Yet love still breaks through at times.

My soul cries out  
To be freed of its passions.  
Another of its abundant paradoxes,  
Its exuberant sorrow.

The heaviness will only be lifted  
When we have come full term.  
We are too far along to be stillborn.  
All these changes are larger than ourselves.

From the silences that we can not decode  
Peace will come—and a joyful release of pain.  
Many healing hands will gather  
And sing a child's lullaby.

## **If I Sing Clear**

No one can sing my song for me.  
I am sorry if you feel lonely.  
If I can sing clear,  
For anyone to hear  
Then they will listen  
To what I have been given.

Everything that I've seen  
Leaves me with so many questions.  
Where did I leave off?  
I did not mean to stop.  
What do I want to sing?  
There is still something.

If you find the melody.  
The words will come easy.  
Don't ask when to start.  
If the song is in your heart  
You will mature,  
And sing into the future.

Living large and living free.  
It's not about the money.  
You know that it's real,  
If it helps you to heal.  
If you have worth  
You will find a purpose.

## **Who Is Your God**

**Am G Am**  
Who is your God?  
**Am G Am**  
Who is your God?  
**C E7 G Am7**  
Is your God calling to you?  
**Am G Am**  
Who is your God?



Is your God love and light?  
Is your God love and light?  
Does She comfort you in the middle of the night?  
Is your God still alive?

Does your God tell you lies?  
Does your God tell you lies?  
When you pray and ask Him why,  
Is it simply black and white?

Is your God someone you love?  
Is your God someone you love?  
Is God a stranger you passed by?  
Is your God someone you'd like?

Did your God fall from grace?  
Did your God fall from grace?  
No longer pure, now disgraced?  
Did your God hide away?

Is your God someone you know?  
Is your God someone you know?  
Do you trust Her even when  
You don't know which way to go?

Did your God rise from the dead?  
Did your God rise from the dead?  
Do you wonder what He meant  
When you like awake in your bed?

Is your God bigger than you?  
Is your God bigger than you?  
Does He push and shove and have His way  
And make you do what He wants you to?

Does your God still please you?  
Does your God still please you?  
Ask once more what a God is for.  
See through your hurt and pain.

## 2012

I feel as if I am seated on a train.  
I do not know where we are going.  
Sometimes I hear others  
talk about the destination.  
I only know that I have been there before.

I seems I was always  
in a hurry to get there  
—and my happiness depended on it.  
All of us rushing around—but still on the train!  
As if there were no other route.  
The longing brings me to tears.  
(excuse me while I weep.)

Sometimes I seem the most desperate,  
sometimes the least.  
I would not mind  
if you got there before me.  
Some people blame the baggage.  
Some people complain about the conductor.  
Some say that we are there already,  
but do not know it.  
Some say there is no destination.  
Some say there is no train.  
A few say that we never got on.  
A number insist that we will arrive soon.

All my life I have wanted to stop  
the train—to simply be there already,  
but I do not believe that it is a punishment.  
Some say that there will be many definite stops on  
the way.  
Some say that there are a constantly fluctuating  
series of detours.

I always wanted to make things better on the train  
—hand out snacks, or help people be  
more comfortable with their seating.  
Now I don't know,  
I really don't know what to do.  
There is no real imperative.  
It just seems to be something that we  
make up as we go along.

## **No One Can Take My Love Away From Me.**

No one can take my love  
Away from me.  
It does not belong to me.

You who do not belong  
Away from me,  
Take my love.

No, my way  
Does not belong to me.  
Take it, my love.

You who take my love,  
You belong to me.  
Take me.

Take my longing.  
Take my love.  
I am no one.

Love  
Take my belongings  
away from me.

Be,  
And love.  
Take my way.

You, who love  
Take away  
what does not belong to me.

My way is  
One way to belong.  
One way to love.

## Beauty

I do not know what beauty is.  
So I can not tell you or explain,  
But it seems that you must  
Love form, and stillness  
And movement, and change,  
And how things come together and unfold.

Some say that beauty is a puzzle,  
That it can be known.  
They will show you  
Where it has been at work,  
But they can not fully penetrate it.

Yet if you trace it carefully,  
As if from beginning to end,  
You will find its mystery,  
A presence that both hides and reveals  
An open secret that desires to be known;  
Alive and complete.

***Solace  
and  
Joy***

**2011**

## **The Intimation of Christ**

I would never try to imitate You.  
What would that achieve?  
You have so much to bring that is new.

We could intimate You;  
Listen, support one another,  
Suggest a few things here and there,  
Give a helping hand,  
Encourage each other.  
It's common religious practice.

We may be brothers,  
But I don't think that means  
We have to do the same things.  
I love You.

I'm not trying to change the world  
That's Your job.  
It's my work to be at peace  
With the changes.

## **Big Brother and Big Mother** (song—bouncy folk tune)

Big Brother and Big Mother  
Are watching over you.  
Big Brother and Big Mother  
See everything you do.  
Big Mother loves you  
With a heart that's big and wide.  
But if Big Brother is after you,  
You better run and hide.

## **My Anger**

My anger is like a neighbour  
Who turns noisily,  
Troubled and restless in his sleep.  
He may awaken fully at any moment  
And start banging on the walls.  
Who does he blame?  
What revenge does he seek?  
There is nowhere I can go.

He does not care about the facts.  
It does not matter if  
I call the police.  
They will not understand my complaint.  
But now he can only mutter  
And bothers no one else.

I often call to him through the wall.  
Wake up! Wake up!  
But he is not in his right mind  
And can say nothing.  
Perhaps he is sleepwalking now  
Or having a nightmare.  
I cannot tell.

The alarm that I feel is a  
Kind of foreboding,  
Another layer of grief  
That must be exhumed.  
When he fully wakes  
Will he be silent, whole, and content?

## The New Man

I

I would write a long poem  
all about us,  
our greatness,  
how we inspire ourselves,  
and what we have already overcome.

How we may now face death,  
but will succeed and triumph over our  
own ignorance and defeat.  
Our community is coming together  
in new wholeness,  
bringing about the New Man.  
What was impossible is now dust.

I would convince you  
that we are the best learners  
and Earth is the most perfect school.  
We will soon have high marks in  
meaning and substance.

Please do not weep and say  
that we will not be able to turn ourselves back  
or laugh and say that  
our contempt for our selves is well deserved,  
and our future is most bleak.  
No, no, there is much about us that has not yet  
been written.

II

Living in an island in the universe  
where fear dominates  
we are pressed with hungers of every kind.  
Yes, we seem like refugees from the spirit world  
begging to prosper in a strange land.

It is not indifference that is killing us.  
Individually we are passionate enough  
—talented in exploitation, survival, and renewal.  
It's the application of mutual benefit  
and concern that is lacking.

Of course there have been



too many wars!  
Now they must be met head-on  
with imagination and resolve,  
A new imagination of who we are.

O—the silence of the many.  
We cannot yet speak,  
because we have not yet learned how.  
What we call science and progress  
Is a long way from where we once were,  
but we are not yet fully engaged.  
We have not married our resources  
together for something higher.  
Our Family of Man  
has not yet met the Child  
that we are to become.

### III

Do not fear the Mother  
who wishes to scold the Child!  
If the Earth cracks and shakes and turns,  
if we drown, or starve, or perish from thirst  
it will be temporary.  
Keep the heart of who we are  
for future generations.  
Honour the Mother.

Who we are  
has been kept secret until now.  
The apocalypse has been slowly appearing.  
Some believed it was initiated by freedom of  
speech.  
Some thought it was the birth of farming,  
or the printing press, or the internet,  
but the secret is the Child, the New Man.

It is not what you can point to or express.  
I am running out of words, because I have  
too much to say: Our wholeness is incomplete.

What does the Mother teach us?  
As always, She is there for us,  
newborns in the world,  
to experience our own coming into being.  
There cannot be too high a price for this.

## Narrative

It's all narrative,  
Story, fiction, half-true.  
Some mystics call it  
A big lie, an illusion.

Our souls are y & r.  
It's not just passion that  
Keeps us going  
It's engagement and curiosity and fascination.  
We are constantly trying to explain  
What is going on.

The causal series of events  
The carousel that we call reality;  
Our unhappy little merry-go-round  
Is often only our random hypothesis.

The what cannot explain the how.  
Appearance cannot explain being.  
To return to the source  
For a moment  
Is to know—but not to explain.

Don't run away—hold back that thought.  
Why are you so afraid of love?

When fear stops telling the story  
The mind grows silent and the heart opens,  
And the wheel of life stops turning  
You around, and around, and around.

## **Sometimes...**

It often seems the veil between the worlds  
Is like a makeshift wall  
Of bricks randomly shuffled into place.  
At any moment it might twist and fall.

Each layer of bricks built upon the other.  
Held together by time and vague intent.  
Ordered chaos of hearts and minds fragmented,  
Held loosely together, bound by consent.

Dying seems to have as much to do with it  
As living. Sun, water, soil, and seed  
Have their own organic patterns  
Of life and death, cycle and deed.

It's not that it will topple at any minute.  
Gravity will not fail any time soon.  
It's a veil, after all, not a fortress under siege.  
It's more like darkness at noon.

The darkness is not evident at all.  
The shadows hide behind the things themselves.  
The dark and light are all confused.  
Heaven has made a pact with hell.

It seemed solid. Evil appears real.  
"Lead us not into temptation. Deliver us."  
My mind is reeling now. Bricks fall.  
I want to build a new house.

One that is less uniform and solid.  
A veil that is not as well defended.  
It may have a floor and roof and windows.  
Maybe a mobile home with fenders.

I may want to separate myself  
From the threat of a collapsing wall  
Assembled by fear and anger and hesitation.  
It may not be there at all.

## Sisyphus

It's a brief respite from tyranny.  
For a moment I stand above the world,  
The end of another day,  
The stone and I on the top of the hill.

I am living out a myth.  
It must be so.  
Though I am not a fool like Sisyphus,  
I cannot say no.

I do not want to live like him,  
The hours passing unrequited,  
Participating in the waking dream.  
Co-operative—divided.

The boulder has begun to shrink a bit,  
Its surface smooth and worn.  
As I strain and twist  
My soul is slowly being born.

## **Saving God**

Hold still the hands of this old Clock,  
Its mindless motion has lost heart.  
Tic Toc. Tic Toc.  
Wind them right back to the start.

Gather up the tired shards of Time.  
Restore Creation's birth.  
Remember the First Design,  
Before Heaven shattered and fell to Earth.

Remember the Morning Light  
Before the Beginning's waking hours.  
When even the angels were not yet ripe  
For adventures such as ours.

O—That happiness is come again,  
For God will not remain alone!  
We are like the stars and constellations  
Kneeling down before His throne.

We ourselves must begin the new day.  
As if we were starting over.  
Not to leave Earth, but to stay  
Here, in the moment, with Him forever.

## **After A Thousand Incarnations**

After a thousand incarnations  
I imagined myself free at last  
My mundane body awakened with wisdom,  
Mistakes forgotten, erased, and past.

After a thousand incarnations  
I wanted a constant friend within myself,  
Separate from the moment passing,  
But a valiant knight, not a sleepy elf.

After a thousand incarnations  
I look in the mirror each morning  
Searching the reflection for myself,  
Clearly the resolve is burning

After a thousand incarnations  
To become the person that I am,  
Hidden just below the surface  
Underneath the indifference and the man

Who after a thousand incarnations  
Appears a simpleton, a dunce.  
As if he did not know any better.  
As if he just showed up this once.

After a thousand incarnations  
I might have gotten my act together  
With bright armour and a shining sword.  
I wouldn't have to wonder where

After a thousand incarnations  
I had stumbled and fallen,  
Tripping through the dark,  
Missing the cue, again.

After a thousand incarnations  
It's not as if all my time was spent  
In pursuit of pleasure and the flesh  
Or on the sidelines, awaiting punishment.

After a thousand incarnations  
I have created a semblance of a self,  
An often wide-awake version  
Of a clown dressed up, amusing himself,  
After a thousand incarnations,  
Happy that he can put on a show:  
A little help here; a little humour there;  
A little magic on-the-go.

After a thousand incarnations  
I can not turn back the clock.  
Time is in a hurry these days.  
The spirit pushes, refusing to walk.

After a thousand incarnations  
We can now be shown  
How to enter into life to  
Meet the silent and unknown.

After a thousand incarnations  
Of embracing happenstance  
The spirit is ever-present  
To dance, to dance.

## **Make Room For the Miracle**

All my dreams are fallen,  
Fallen to Earth,  
Fallen from the tree of life,  
Like spores from heaven.

We are made for times like this.  
We were born to live these times,  
In them, through them, with them.  
We are meant to be here.

Heaven has no interest now in our excuse.  
It is the Earth that needs us.  
We are the seeds of heaven  
Activated by these uncertain times.

The miracle that we need now  
Is our capacity to love.  
We were born to care deeply,  
To toil in this garden.

The comfort that I'd hoped for  
Left for the day.  
My lazy heart  
Wanted to go back to sleep.

Now reassurance comes in  
Like a bird flitting nearby,  
That I invited  
To enter into my soul.



## **Slowly The Time Body Returns To Light**

When I witness a stone in my hand  
A thousand wrongs become right.  
My heart silently understands.  
My body awakens with sight.

Love blossoms in full flower.  
From its peace a thousand blessings flow.  
Divinity holds me in its power,  
And I know more than any words can know.

## **Who?**

Who might have told me  
That tenderness was an explanation,  
Or that a gentle heart  
Was the wisest of the wise?  
How could I have known  
About effortless patience,  
Or love without any demands?  
All my trials might have been without judgment,  
All of my struggles only  
Kindness and play and service.  
Who is that person—  
That I sometimes know as myself?  
Have I met him?  
Do I understand?

## **Can I Trust You With My Heart?**

If I give my heart to you  
Will you give it back to me?  
Will you change it in strange and unexpected  
ways?  
Will we delight with surprise and astonishment?  
Will we recognize ourselves?

When you give your heart to me  
Will that unfamiliar trust amaze you?  
Will that bold absence of requirement and  
measure  
Suspend all time and intention,  
And break you open wide?

And even if this is what we want,  
Could we keep it to ourselves?  
Would our secret and forbidden pact  
Prove our separateness?  
Would we be able to share our joy,  
Our retreat from loneliness,  
Our uncontrived passion and contentment?

If that perfect moment comes to us,  
While the past is silenced,  
And the future is fully embraced,  
Will you still love me?  
Will you know who I am?

As we enter this mystery together and separately,  
This awareness beyond words,  
Where knowing is only union,  
Will you recognize me,  
Familiar as I am?

Because my smallness frightens me,  
And all seems precious and fragile and tender,  
And each living thing so temporary and undefined,  
And I am so uncertain  
In this world, so large and unknown.

## **The Hungry Ghost**

During the 20th century consumer buffet  
We became overshadowed by a hungry ghost.  
We piled too many things on our plate.  
Each of us wanted to have the most.

The Earth's riches had slept safely underground,  
But then we began drilling wildly for ore.  
We brought up great masses of whatever we  
found,  
Then eagerly descended again for more.

The mind is easily enthralled.  
It wants it all, and wants it now.  
That is the problem with the Fall.  
That is all it wants to know.

For decades I gambled on mining stocks  
Hoping for a few grams in a tonne of ore.  
They crush and spin and poison the rock,  
Until the mine can give no more.

My mind in a way works like that,  
Blindly forcing its way down the mine,  
Until finding itself at the end of a shaft  
It wants to break apart all it can find.

There is a sweet alchemy that tames the ghost,  
The other spirit, that is easily bidden.  
It seems above, the other below,  
Though both are veiled and subtly hidden.

I now give thanks for each Dark Night,  
The disenchantment within my soul,  
The binding of my appetite,  
The emptying out of what seemed full.

## **The Party That I'd Plan For You**    Feb. 11/11

I see the truck has pulled up.  
It's bringing the party supplies and the costumes.  
It's looks like El Dia de la Muerte and Valentine's  
Day together.  
Everyone is getting ready for the celebration.  
It is a sad occasion, but we're happy to be there.

People are dressed up like skeletons, and Grim  
Reapers.  
A few are dressed like priests or nuns. Some like  
angels.  
Some folks have chosen togas.  
Others are just wearing their street clothes.

The Dixieland band is getting started,  
Slow, solemn, and mournful, but still upbeat.  
The clowns have put on sad faces.  
They are doing elegant improvised dances amidst  
the crowd,  
Just to loosen people up and get them in the  
mood.

Elsewhere, Jesus is saying,  
'Set another place at the table.'  
No one is complaining there,  
But it's not what you would have expected.

The Buddha is wandering around,  
Chuckling like the Dalai Lama.  
He thinks the whole thing is funny.

Your friend Jim is finishing up your portrait.  
He wants to show it to you, but I think  
That he made you look too young.

Even though you have had to wait so long,  
Nobody seems to want to answer your questions.  
They either pretend that you are still sleeping,  
Or try to get you to join in the celebration.

Eventually, you ask someone, "Is this for me?"  
—Though it all seems to make no sense.  
I overhear, as I am coming toward you.  
"Yes", I say, "it's for you!"

## **The New Theology**

O—to remember our lost fragments of goodness,  
The Eden that we once knew;  
A paradise without dissatisfaction or complaint.

Yet we have misunderstood.  
Our weaknesses will not be undone.  
We will always be in need of one another.

The new way is the way of wholeness,  
Of mutual completion, and forgiveness,  
A willingness, without clear direction or reward

Heaven can remain within our view,  
Even as we are constantly recreating it.  
It will never be fully imagined or measured.

All our tasks are voluntary.  
Joy—not yearning, will become our entryway.  
Without it we falter so easily.

O—to remember our lost fragments of goodness,  
The Eden that we once were,  
The heaven that we are.

## She Was Gentle

Marching along the sidewalk with her crutches,  
Or marshalling her power chair through crowds  
She hoped you wouldn't jostle her or get in her way.  
She was a force in motion, anxiously aware,  
Yet she moved gently too.

Questions were how she fought or befriended you.  
You had to be brave to answer.  
She wanted to win you over, to make you pause,  
To hear you, to make you confess,  
But her arguments were gentle too.

When she was young, her brother would tease her  
Just to make her giggle.  
I liked to tell her funny things.  
The nurse said she had a ferocious laugh.  
But her laughter was gentle too.

She was relentlessly inquisitive.  
She rarely stopped her threshing of thoughts.  
How to separate the gleanings?  
Her objectivity was demanding,  
But her mind was gentle too.

She was socially vulnerable, prone to worry.  
She'd watch you, and scrutinize your response.  
She could be defensive, shrill, an open wound,  
She wanted you to be gentle too.

She feared that God was a brute,  
Arrogant, harsh, and indifferent,  
Watching from His judgment seat.  
She loved Christ,  
But she wanted God to be gentle too.

She wanted to be loved,  
And she was fierce in loving.  
For her, love explained a lot  
About the way the world should be,  
And what it lacked,  
But her loving was gentle too.  
I could not turn her away.

She always wanted to give more.  
I was often inconsiderate when I was young,  
More focused on myself,  
But she was gentle,  
And she made me gentle too.

She saw Nature as an interconnected web,  
Wondrous in its overall design,  
Magnificent in its details.  
Life is not always gentle,  
But she was gentle,  
That gentleness was hers.

March 19, 2011

### **Cats One to Four**

Cat number one  
Had lots of fun.  
It once cornered a mouse  
With one great pounce.

Cat number two,  
He didn't trust you.  
When worried or rankled  
It bit on your ankles.

Cat number three,  
She was very sweet.  
Quiet and pretty,  
She was a good kitty.

Cat number four,  
We loved even more.  
She always talked back,  
The number four cat.

## **Sweet Apple, Tender Love**

Sweet apple from the garden  
Sweet apple that fell  
Sweet apple dividing souls  
Narrowing heaven, widening hell.

Listening ear that bends toward us  
Listening ear, quiet voice  
Listening ear, silent whisper:  
Time; fate; choice.

Tender love that wakens hearts  
Tender love that knows  
Tender love that enters into us,  
Illuminating shadows.

Evening follows day  
Day follows night  
What emerges in-between?  
Radiant silence, twilight.

## **Michael's Computer**

Michael's computer passed away last Tuesday.  
Suddenly, of a failed hard drive.  
The computer had provided Michael with  
Many years of selfless and dedicated service.

It will be remembered for its  
Careful final drafts of poems,  
Its precise spreadsheets for the church,  
And countless emails, searches, and downloads.

No funeral will be held.  
In lieu of flowers the owner would appreciate any  
copies of  
Poems or financial documents he wrote in the last  
year  
Be sent to [michaelf.1@3web.net](mailto:michaelf.1@3web.net)



## **Grief Was Stalking Me**

Grief was stalking me even before you died.  
It would cut me off on the way to work,  
Or suddenly show up in the mirror while I was  
shaving.  
I declared a truce early on.  
When I tentatively raised the white flag,  
I could see its black flag waving in the distance

Grief cornered me when I was alone and  
defenceless.  
It grabbed my attention when I watched the news.  
It ran like a 24/7 infomercial:  
'FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY'  
It was not sneaky.  
It was only telling the truth.

Grief knocked on my walls in the middle of the  
night  
When I thought that it should be sleeping.  
When I said, "We need to talk."  
It replied, "There is nothing to say."  
That is just the way it is."  
Grief has been a strange companion.

When your death was approaching  
Grief became more civil, more compassionate.  
I wasn't expecting any kindness then.  
It had my full attention.  
There was no avoiding it anyway.

The day you died, grief softened.  
It was tender then.  
It knew you so sweetly.  
Now I do not mind its interruptions.  
I seek it out.  
We talk about you.

# Memo

**To:** Mr. God

**From:** Michael Ferrel, Union Representative

**Date:** April 3, 2011

**Re:** Change of Job Status

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The purpose of this memo is to notify You that Your job description is being modified. During the ongoing transition period some of Your duties may be subject to change. Your work as Executive Director and Creator of the Universe is gratefully acknowledged. We are pleased to inform You that You will continue to serve us in Your capacity as Supreme Being. As before, You will be responsible for Research, Innovation, Engineering, and Development, as well as General Supervision and Implementation of the Divine Plan.

The anticipated changes are due to recent initiatives by groups of mortals who are requesting greater input in World Direction.

We will continue to keep You informed of any specifics, as they arise, particularly of any significant reorganization or structural changes.

We gratefully appreciate Your cooperation in this matter,

Yours Truly,

Michael Ferrel,  
Union Representative

## **The Constant Reminder of Unseen Things**

Untold orders of angels  
Whisper against our misgivings,  
While departed souls keep a vigil  
Reminding us of unseen things.

Perhaps they see the coming day  
When the lion and the lamb will rest, at peace.  
They witness light breaking through dark gray,  
An unbridled love--at last, released.

We have been living in retrograde times,  
The apocalypse foreshadowed, but still  
unperceived,  
But the spirit that now transfigures our minds  
Asks openly to be received.

We stumble forward immersed in our fears,  
Yet forgiveness in surety will be fulfilled.  
Like the sweet music of the dance of the spheres  
A harmony will rise up over the tumult.

The being that lives in the heart of all things,  
The primeval spirit uniting us all  
Tolls a bell that constantly rings,  
An intimate trust, a most timely call.

We will be illumined by Grace,  
In spirit reborn, though in Christ we die,  
To see clearly, as if face to face  
All we now sense, but can not see with our eyes.

## Watching Poets On TV

Sometimes poets are inserted  
in-between commercials.  
They have interesting faces.  
The camera likes them.

They speak in small rooms,  
often coming from great distance to  
recite a handful of poems.

We watch the audience  
share the poet's trance.  
They clap when each spell is over.

When the poet is sitting still,  
the camera closes in  
and touches them.  
You can almost take their pulse.

When they take the stage  
they gather momentum, pacing urgently,  
or breathlessly drawing us in.

From the closet where we keep  
our useless and unused things,  
they share disappointment and wonder.

What the poet brings  
no factory can make,  
and no one has offered for sale.

Sometimes the small screen makes  
them appear as large as they really are,  
Away from the small rooms where they write.

## **They Do Not Sleep**

I

Those who have died  
may remain close.  
If we listen intently  
we can hear them speak.

They may enter our thoughts,  
announcing their presence  
softly as a whisper.

We have removed  
ourselves from their world,  
but they wait for us to join them.

II

The crystal beings,  
ever wakeful, also wait  
for us to discover their world.

To enter their deathless realms  
is to relinquish superfluous desire  
and share their joy.

They speak the forgotten  
languages of our soul,  
a new vocabulary of the heart.

They abide in a mysterious heaven.  
Can they help join us  
to those we thought have left?

They do not sleep or die.  
Can they wake us  
to what is timeless and unborn?

III

We constantly hurry.  
We do not understand waiting,  
its purpose, its loving trust.

Yet this waiting is for us,

weak and blindly distracted,  
who daily thirst and hunger.

How to comprehend such forgiveness,  
such overflowing mercy,  
seemingly contained within a stone?

But we are the ones who rejected them.  
We are the ones who are strange and unfamiliar.  
We are the lonely ones.

### **Teacher**

I would like to teach humility,  
But that is impossible.  
I could teach resistance.  
I could teach stubbornness.

I could teach willfulness, spite,  
Irritation, annoyance,  
Contempt, disgust,  
Anger, and disciplined selfishness.

I've shown promise (and creativity)  
In the pretence of cooperation,  
The appearance of goodwill,  
And feigning compassion.

I could show you how to make  
Self-justification work for you  
No matter what the situation  
That happens to be confronting you.

I have a gift for holding out,  
For systematically saying no,  
For denial,  
and not giving in.

I've become a master at  
"I couldn't care less."  
"You can't make me,"  
And, "To hell with you!"

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Self-justification work for you  
No matter what the situation  
That happens to be confronting you.

I have a gift for holding out,  
For systematically saying no,  
For denial,  
and not giving in.

I've become a master at  
"I couldn't care less."  
"You can't make me,"  
And, "To hell with you!"

I would reveal working principles  
Of behavioural intervention  
And covert manipulation,  
With convincing proofs and remarkable  
anecdotes.

I have good, all-round knowledge to share  
About how to evade responsibility,  
Getting away with doing the minimum,  
And making others afraid to ask for help.

I have constantly found new ways  
To stonewall my own heart  
Over many years of practice  
With a quiet, unspoken arrogance.  
So I am not really able to teach humility.  
And I'm not that much good at repentance either  
So you are pretty much  
on your own,  
But I wish you well.

## Dear Robert and Cheryl

It's hard being a spiritual teacher these days.  
There is plenty of work to be done.  
Whoever might be up to the job gets conscripted.

It means holding back and patiently waiting,  
Sequestering the stockpile of yesterday's wisdom,  
While opening, improvising, and looking forward in time.

Allowing the present mystery to reveal itself,  
Listening with attentive care to the present moment,  
To the future, and to the Great Wide World.

Sacrificing authority for unfamiliar territory,  
Believing that the next generation  
Will go much further. God willing.

Accepting that no tradition proves you right,  
Abandoning the tired redundancy of proof,  
For the inspiration that may emerge as true.

Incarnation is hard work for everyone.  
Restless trouble and pugnacious chaos  
Are always looking to start a fight.

We are all half-saints these days.  
Moral perfection isn't possible,  
But doing the Work is;

Helpful, compassionate interest,  
Disciplined mindful observation,  
And entering the quiet all-embracing heart.

Heaven remains a background score,  
The pulse beneath the skin of time,  
But you share its blessings.  
Thank you both for continuing to serve,  
For being Co-Workers, and accepting us as such.



## **Not Drowning, But Waving**

Never a strong swimmer, caught in the undertow,  
Your illness took its course.  
Have you lost your fear of drowning now,  
Having followed the river back to its source?

In the end you simply took on too much water,  
Silently flooding and feeling adrift.  
No starlit compass to guide you on later.  
No way to measure the final risk.

We watched and helplessly waited  
While you sank beneath the engulfing tide.  
Your once-salvaged body abdicated.  
Abandoned and left, it was washed aside.

But now I see you near a spectral waterfall,  
Sometimes floating, sometimes wading.  
The water does not bother you at all.  
You are there in the distance, waving.

## **The Hymn of the Stones**

Their spirit is a mystery,  
A song that few have heard,  
A chorus rising from the Earth,  
Whole and high, and pure.

Each stone sings alone and perfect  
In a symphony of jewels.  
A hymn of many facets  
A song of sparkling hues.

The noble crystal amethyst  
Hides an angel, gently singing,  
And the blood-red stone, carnelian,  
Veils the voice of spirit beings.

Who designed and fashioned them?  
They answer His heart's command,  
Praising divine glory,  
Guided by His hand.

Agate, quartz, and tourmaline  
Sing the wonders of His presence,  
In Him, through Him, with Him,  
United in one essence.

## **The Master of the Stones**

Who was raised up from the ground,  
All creation's cornerstone?  
The Workman of the Earth.  
The Master of the Stones.

Who prepared the new foundation  
When the temple was to fall?  
Who carries the weight of centuries  
And answers to our desperate call?

Who in time descended  
And entered deep within the Earth?  
Who restrained the darkness  
And purged it of its wrath?

He is the Master of the stones,  
The arbiter of their gifts,  
Shining in the crystal,  
Hidden in the amethyst.

He is known by a thousand names,  
But is ever one,  
The Master of the stones,  
The ever-radiant Son.

## **Labyrinth Angel**

I might have been standing still  
When the angel called me to dance,  
This way, that way, all around  
The circuit of the labyrinth.

Sometimes he stepped closely.  
Sometimes he lagged behind.  
Sometimes he was far away,  
Then he'd come back, swing me around.

We all dance with angels,  
Our partner round and round.  
Dancing in a circle,  
Pacing up and down.

Who knows where we're going?  
Something he won't disclose.  
Though standing in the centre,  
I might claim to know.

But I never will step backward,  
Even when I remember  
The awkward distance we have travelled  
Holding hands together.

## Dear, You Are Here

I often visit heaven here,  
Another country right next door.  
Sometimes the gods come up to me  
And introduce themselves.  
I swear I have never met most of them before.

Some are princes, some are wisps.  
One is dark and scruffy.  
He likes to live close to the ground.  
I think he knows you.

I must be sharing my sorrow with you,  
But I am not in any hell,  
And I have learned in this life  
How to keep my mind out of trouble.  
Though I am sometimes treading water  
I am not drowning.

So many times you kept me warm  
When I might have isolated myself and frozen!  
I watched the embers of your eyes darken  
While your body turned cold last winter,  
And the tumour put a spell on your tongue.

The stars here,  
They sparkle in the ground,  
Not in the sky.  
Each day we walk around a constellation,  
Which was made with human hands.  
Everything is different here  
From what you would expect.

I am glad to share this heaven with you,  
And I am willing too.  
It's the willing that makes the difference,  
Here in this new kind of heaven,  
A kind of will you are familiar with,  
A kind of will called love.

## **After the End of the War**

Things were different after the war.  
No one came to the services after a while.  
There were some who might have wanted to,  
But they could not find the will.

The church had been destroyed during the conflict,  
Along with everything else.  
The bombs had fallen, row after row,  
And the fires took much of what was left.

People tried to hold a mass in the open air.  
They were able to make a clearing.  
They improvised something for the chalice  
And they were able to make a little bread.

But they could not bear that the icons were lost.  
Only the blackened empty frames remained.  
They reminded them of what had happened,  
All the things they wanted to forget.

Of course they wanted to rebuild the church;  
The sight of the rubble made them restless,  
But the struggle to survive was overwhelming.  
There seemed little time for beauty or for worship.

The devastation had changed them,  
But the bitterness that they had felt during the fighting  
Had been abandoned by most of them.  
They recognized that their enmity had been misguided.

The feeling of regret was palpable, but unspeakable.  
The loss of each person seemed identical,  
Yet their grief was tinged with a kind of forgiveness.  
Peace had become more necessary than anything else.

They could be happy sometimes,  
Sharing a communal meal at sunset,  
Or singing songs together in the darkness.  
Sometimes they sang hymns by the fire.

They knew that God had witnessed what they'd done  
And that the many dead were with them,  
Sharing their newfound peace,  
Celebrating the end of the war.

They knew that they could not go back  
To who they were before the conflict.  
They had lost their appetite for war,  
And their conscience told them not to judge.

Then one day, while salvaging, they found an icon.  
The frame had splintered,  
But it was mostly intact.  
It was astonishing, unbelievable.

Many people wept through that first service,  
That they held together with the icon.  
They overcame their feeling of numbness,  
And began to grieve, to deeply grieve.

## Playing Scrabble

Games involving gambling and risk  
Didn't interest you in the least,  
So we didn't play board games much.  
To you, pulling a surprise card or rolling the dice  
Seemed a pointless waste of time.

Though others often found them enthralling,  
Building hotel empires or sinking battleships  
Was not something that you liked to do.

Scrabble was your favourite game.  
You could take it seriously.  
It meant taking command of those small letters  
In order to create a strategic position,  
And baffle and impress your opponent.

But that game never really appealed to me.  
Having a large vocabulary,  
It just meant frustration for me.  
What I could express with those tiny wooden blocks  
Just made me feel helpless, and often bored.

My father was a master player.  
Of course, he knew all the rules and their exceptions.  
It was almost like he was cheating.  
I played him sometimes, but rarely won,  
But I enjoyed seeing him get so excited.

Perhaps he is with you now.  
(Though you never talked much in life)  
You probably have some new interests in common  
Besides me, and my restless, uneven life.

Perhaps you sometimes hear my prayers,  
Or my thoughts assembling on a page.  
Trying out different combinations of words and feelings,  
Trusting that the right one will come along to complete a line.

You knew the force of words.  
Always asking people questions,  
Trying to get them to open up.



So we put aside our games and contests.  
They only distracted us from each other  
And the conversation that we always wanted to have.

## **Apocalypse**

The Great Conversation in which all may speak  
The Great Work in which all can participate and  
contribute  
The Great Classroom in which all can teach and all can  
learn  
The Great Remembering through which we will come  
to our senses  
The Great Forgiveness in which all can have mercy.  
The Great Reckoning by which profit and loss are  
erased  
The Great Forgetfulness as our attention and care go  
out to each other  
The Great Door of Salvation that opens and invites  
everyone in.  
The Great Alchemical Fire that purifies through  
sacrifice  
The Great Tree of Life that is forever sprouting green  
The Great Raft which can carry all lost beings home  
The Great Journey that finds its destination  
The Great Healing of time and loss and sickness.  
The Great Secret that is whispered and disclosed.  
The Great Annunciation by which all are called  
The Great Resurrection in which death becomes a  
celebration  
The Great Communion in which all becomes the bread  
and wine.

**Free**      Melody from 'Creep', by Radiohead

I'm trying to meet  
Whoever you are  
Whoever I am  
That we've become so far.

You're like a mirror  
That I enter into  
Below the surface  
Of whoever I am

*When I'm free  
There is nowhere to go  
I belong here  
I feel we belong here*

I'm trying to merge  
The inner and outer  
My heart and my senses  
The world and the soul.  
I want to notice  
All that's around me,  
But sometimes I shut down  
When I don't even want to.

*When I'm free  
There is nowhere to go  
I belong here  
I feel we belong here,.*

I've come a long way  
Just to be near you  
It doesn't matter  
If you're not perfect.  
Whenever I'm free  
I can actually see you  
As you are  
And you're beautiful.

## **I Am One Whole**

Some selves I have met only recently.  
A few within me remain strangers.  
Others constantly knock on the door,  
and some secret themselves in dark depths

Truly, I am not removed from myself,  
I only pretend to be.  
All of my faults and idiosyncrasies  
wait to be absolved.  
What is lacking is their reception.  
What is holy has no calling card.

I am always starting over.  
It is the best practice and my dearest hope.  
I was unsuccessful in so many things  
that I did not even think to undertake.

I am turning 56 next week.  
I have accomplished more than I set out to do.  
Clearly this was necessary.  
Thank you All for your help.

## To The Angels

You who watch over us,  
Can you help us remember who we are?  
For a long time we seemed indifferent to our fate.

Not knowing that we might be led.  
We made blind and incremental steps,  
Without any notion of the distance required.

We were exhausted by pointless efforts,  
By our fluctuation and haste, constantly  
Trying to recreate infinite small pleasures.

We broke acknowledgements with you,  
And became incoherent to ourselves.  
Much still remains outside our fearful boundaries.

Do you regret that we fail to hope?  
That we perceive danger everywhere,  
Yet allow such disorder and unseemliness?

We have dishonoured ourselves long enough.  
Soon we will lift our veils.  
Is it not time to remove all masks?

Fate took us for fools,  
But *you* did not accept our sightlessness,  
Continually working toward our emancipation.

You have *prepared* us for freedom.  
All obstacles and difficulties were only  
To help us to train on the goal.

Once, we did not know that we had a will,  
Or what its true vocation was,  
Our wisdom tarnished by lack of use.

But the time of regret is over.  
Our shadowed tasks will soon brighten  
And illuminate all that we do.

Here at the stark crossroads of time  
Our choices will culminate in change.  
Lamentation can have no purpose now.

We may feel anger for a time,  
Bitter over naive pretences of the past..  
Yet soon we will rejoice, startled by new  
perceptions.

How well you have hidden yourselves!  
For millennia we have gone without a proper  
mirror.  
Now, we will be able to see ourselves through  
you!

Our science has only been a child's toy.  
Yet soon each thing will be newly catalogued in  
spirit.  
Light will find its way into every corner.

Why were we constantly repeating our mistakes?  
Compassion was always our greatest deficit.  
We now must seek clemency with each other.

We were distracted by indulgence and misfortune,  
By the confines of our own thoughts,  
Always preoccupied with immediate concerns.

Now, when our need for Grace is urgent,  
*You* finally show us our true nature,  
Calling us to new tasks and to celebration.

Divine Hospitality is constantly changing guise.  
We are being invited to strange new worlds.  
Hidden doorways are being opened.

Thoughts now sprout in our hearts like seeds  
Allowing us to conceive of mysteries  
Buried beneath the surface of time and sense.

Our loving attention is required.  
Our response must be as unconditional  
And reciprocal as the invitation.

We can remember the whole  
While listening in silence,  
Discovering strange new laws.

We will accept and give thanks,  
healing and sharing together,  
Preparing ourselves to begin anew.

Grace pours down upon us like a steady rain,  
Coming to alert, yet also to pacify.  
Do not be afraid!

All is brightening.  
We see by first light, but many still sleep.  
The world of the many and the few must end.

Each of us has been sorely restrained.  
We defaulted on ownership of ourselves.  
Now we must turn to you, our intercessors.

You can make clear our common path.  
We are coming to a marvellous fruition,  
Radiated by the sweetness of innermost being.

We are called to be dutiful mystics.  
If we had but a flake of your vigilance  
We would have wings with which to fly.

Without your overt guidance and support.  
Life proceeded with dullness.  
Now a litany of joy has been unbound.

Now reason must topple.  
It has no faith, no substance.  
It must become transubstantiated.

We will make way for a chastening of the senses  
And a cleansing of the heart,  
As you assist us in our awakening.

We are to be a new incarnation,  
United with the Earth,  
Reconciled with each other.

We lost so much through separateness.  
Our feeling mostly of pleasure or pain.  
Now we will learn impartial feeling.

Pain and pleasure will only *explain* our desires,  
Learning what we fear,  
And what will satisfy us.

Feeling will unite, not divide us.  
And will and reason  
Will follow.

### **Little Pink Tourmaline**

Yesterday I lost my little rock.  
It had fallen from my pocket.  
I've been looking all around.  
It's lying somewhere on the ground.

It's a pastel rosy pink.  
A pretty stone, don't you think?  
But, I don't have it now to show.  
I'm sad to see it go.

Each day I'd stop and rest my mind  
Upon my little tourmaline.  
At first it gave me quite a start  
To feel it gently hold my heart.

I felt love from head to toe!  
What surprise! I did not know  
How a stone could touch the distant stars  
And the darkness in my heart.

It held me in its radiant sphere  
A warm embrace, close and dear.  
Such great depth of feeling!  
Such a quiet, soulful healing.

I will miss my precious stone.  
If you find it, bring it home.

## **The Music Between Us**

The music between us  
Is not distant from the world.  
It enters into us.  
We are its instruments.

I hear our song everywhere.  
A celebration of our life together  
One life almost past,  
One still living.

I sense you in the darkness  
Between the night stars,  
And hear you humming out the key  
For me to follow and join in.

I did not lose you.  
No, I found you again.  
The tune that I thought I'd forgotten  
Keeps coming back to mind.



## Time & Form

Have we been deceived by our minds?  
It is time which is fantastic and impossible.  
We believe that things simply happen,  
And that they *are*.

Time continually surprises.  
It is magical that something can occur,  
And pass, and perhaps begin again,  
Taking a different course.

Time is difficult to prove.  
We have only supposition and memory.

Time is a symphony of our errors and mistakes  
Woven into an orchestration and  
Played back for our senses to enjoy.

Time is for us to be together,  
To meet and part and move and dance,  
And meet again.

When the music stops,  
And the chair is missing  
We fear--How will we continue!  
Oh--but the music never stops.  
We only think it does.

## **The Heart's Protest**

Oh, how strains the weary heart,  
Carrying forward the weight of Earth,  
Pressing on in fits and starts,  
Yearning to fulfill its worth.

Yet when bound by hostile fate,  
Unable to release its tether,  
The heart may refuse to wait,  
For relief, seemingly forever.

Suddenly it may decide to stop  
And tilt or shift its load,  
Or in protest, it may let drop  
Parts of its burden along the road.

Yes, the heart may pause.  
Its courage will sometimes yield.  
Though it follows no common laws,  
Slowly the world is healed.

For the heart loves reconciliation,  
And wants to make amends.  
It can forgive the starkest violation.  
Witness what tragedies it often befriends!

The soul is no stranger to adversity  
--Sometimes the only world it knows.  
Its heart compassion and diversity,  
Its love in all the ways it grows.

**Poems**

**2012**

**To**

**2020**

## 2012 Poems

### Turn My Heart Around

My mind is peopled with thoughts.  
I push their conversation away.  
I talk to myself,  
But is it more like a prayer.

I don't know how I became confused.  
I lost my way again.  
It's not unusual for me  
To forget what is whole and good.

I long for an encounter  
Where I can respond as one voice,  
Where who, or what I meet  
Becomes as mysterious and familiar as myself.

A whisper or a song  
Might turn my heart around,  
But I need to be drawn out,  
Or touched in some way.

With my imagination I reach out  
To touch and know the world.  
It changes.  
It is no longer indifferent

The genius of the soul  
Is that it can see beyond itself,  
Yet always, always  
Might find itself there.

## **Jesus/Insomnia Poem**

Two hours after midnight, I wake.  
There are no boundaries or horizons.  
All is dark and still.

The hour is confessional,  
Yet I've done nothing wrong.  
I just want to be alone for a while.

I could pray--and turn myself in,  
But I've already done that.  
I've been spending the reward ever since.

I don't need to make excuses.  
I learn from my mistakes.  
That's why I keep on making them.

If I were a criminal  
I would set myself free.  
That's what I intend to do.

## The Secrets Police

When they first learned  
that I'd planned my escape,  
they went mad.  
It confounded them.

I had outed myself.  
"How can he do that?", they said,  
"Impossible!  
"He's just a regular guy.  
All he does is write poetry.  
Now he is leaking vital information."

Slowly, I'd infiltrated their system  
and learned all their dirty tricks.  
How they twisted the mind with new distractions.  
How they invented new flavours and sold them.  
How people lined up to have their lives appropriated.

Their search warrant was only a piece of paper.  
What they really needed was  
a mission statement or an article of faith.  
I told them I was willing to answer fully,  
but only if the questions were not scripted.

When they put their cuffs on me,  
I threatened to talk at all the wrong times.  
This made them squirm.  
They had to let me go.

They were paralysed  
by the blunt and direct force  
of my questions.  
They could not turn them around.

But when I told them,  
"I will go viral!"  
They laughed and said,  
"Go ahead, that's what we want!  
Who cares!"

I realized what they said was probably true.  
The poets will just have to wait  
for the official announcement,  
when it all collapses in on itself,  
and we all confess the secrets we already know

### **Jesus/Kite Poem**

My cross is a trinity  
of paper, thin sticks, and string,  
a makeshift, fragile article of faith.

I pray for a gentle current.  
Sometimes I wait all day,  
but the moment does not arrive.

Yet when the breeze is full and firm,  
my cross becomes a playful communion  
of earth, and wind, and sky,

and my heart lifts up with joy.

## The Body Is A Place To *Be*

The body is a place to *be*.  
I use it to  
touch and see,  
hear and sound and move.  
It *knows* in special ways.  
It is beautiful.  
It is where I *feel*.

It is my center.  
Without it I can not  
compose myself  
or bring order into my life.

Without it I would have no sail or rudder.  
I would sink into an ocean.  
I would be homeless.

My body is a fine instrument.  
I use it to measure the distance  
between the past and the future.  
It is never wrong in this respect.

My senses extend my mind  
to places it can not go alone.  
They are not accessories or ornamentation.  
They only sleep at night.

Without my body  
Where would I be?  
How could I meet *you*?  
How would you know I was listening?

I use it to carry *me*,  
my scattered soul,  
which is constantly going out,  
and going in,  
seeking the known and the unfamiliar.

My body marks the place  
where I left off and begin.  
It holds the stars in position.



It does me good.  
That is why birth is a celebration, a reunion

Its successes are all brief,  
though memory harbours its remnants;  
a new sound or colour,  
a novel taste in the mouth,  
a comfort, a pleasure,  
someone to hold,  
a run or a climb,  
a day of work.

It suffers  
the difficulties of aging,  
harm and hazard,  
hardship and disease,  
pain and anxiety,  
dullness and lonely hours  
when shut off or disengaged.

Do not blame the body for sin  
only because it was  
found at the scene of the crime.

When called upon  
the body shows its nobility.  
The Buddha recognized this  
when he decided  
to remain seated under the Bodhi tree,  
until his purpose was realized.

Christ knew this too,  
stumbling,  
picking himself back up,  
shifting the weight that was  
too much for him to carry alone.

Be good to the body.  
Why make it an enemy,  
a jackass, a mirror for vanity?

It is a temple  
where all worship begins.  
It waits, only to serve.

## Forgiveness

Forgiveness has been a word  
falling from the lips of saints  
who forsook the world.  
Now we who are worldly are taking it up.

It has become as necessary as breathing.  
Forgiving the ruin and inconvenience  
of an wasted afternoon,  
a late night with one's children,  
an abrupt morning change of plans,  
an anxious pet, or a betrayal at work  
the distracting pleas of a television.  
faith and trust in the future,  
resolution of time-worn grievance,  
or sharp and immediate annoyance.

Allowing-forbearance-in goodwill  
--It is the new medicine of Earth  
a guarantor of humility and respect,  
a privilege to be claimed,  
a perpetual sunrise,  
an undoing of pride and vengeance,  
a leveller that will raise all of us up.

Forgiveness has been the enemy  
of all that we stand for, an aberration,  
a distortion of justice, a religious pathology,  
a boon to criminals and social deviants.  
an unworkable convolution, a paradox,  
a blunt and disturbing disparity.

It seemed like an illness no one wanted,  
a one-off, a defect, a betrayal,  
a sacrifice, large and impossible.

An offence to injury,  
a ridiculous expectation,  
a triumph for believers,  
too easy for a fortunate or privileged few.

Forgiveness has been following us  
like an devoted adversary,  
waiting to betray and disarm our fears.

Does healing always need to retrace the wound?  
Fault and error are part of our full humanity.  
We fail. We are human. We carry on.

Forgiveness will salvage what was rotten  
and make new use of it.  
All our tears will be collected like rainwater  
and made living and pure.  
Our purpose will be redesigned.

Forgiveness is a work-in-progress,  
an unruly child that requires a disciplined parent.  
There is no telling who it will grow up to be.

## **You Were Born In Bethlehem**

You dumbfounded the teachers  
and astonished the multitudes,  
bringing forth wine from timeless wells,  
and healing with truth and with spittle.  
You cast out fear and demons,  
and woke up the night of death.

You defied all that had been known,  
confirming our new conscience,  
re-ordering our hearts and minds.

You came from the centre of everything,  
ensouled in sacrifice and power,  
yet all will be forlorn unless  
You be born a thousand times in me.

## **The Way To The Mother**

Why is the way to The Mother filled with such sorrow,  
with failed love, forgetfulness, and death,  
even while each life is something bright and shining?

I am learning to walk through stone walls,  
and read men's hearts at a distance.  
I am inventing questions that have never been asked,  
and finding answers that can not speak.

I can enter the realm of death  
as if it were close at hand,  
and at night I have visits from parallel worlds.

During the day I learn how  
to make love from scratch,  
and how to swim alone and without fear  
in an ocean of hungry predators.

I keep discovering new and living  
saints and apparitions that the  
Church has not yet recognized.

I am learning how to transfuse my blood  
with the courage of others,  
and soon I will have the power  
not to fear my own rage.

But my memory has become so poor  
that I forget the purpose of my own life  
and what it was I was going to do.

All the dirt from the hole I have been digging  
is still piled up beside me.  
It seems I have rejected so much.

But when I am overwhelmed  
and my heart begins to keen aloud  
I am comforted by The Mother.

And I see that there is nothing much that is new,  
and what was strange,  
again becomes bright and shining and secure.

## **Snowball Fight**

(It is snowing outside as I write this)

It would be wonderful  
If we could all meet and  
Gather up freshly fallen  
Poems with our hands,

Forming them into instant  
Round and ready  
Little missiles of joy,  
Ready to hurl at someone,

(They will never see it coming,  
-as if out of nowhere!)

So that suddenly,  
They're overcome with passion  
And want to get back at the person  
Who threw the poem at their head.

## **Trial By Water**

At times we seem to be  
pulled out to sea.

Random tides force us  
to swim fiercely  
or surrender to the depths.

We constantly stretch beyond ourselves,  
reaching toward an unmarked horizon.

What ripples out is our being.

## **Marilyn 2012**

Here, clocks do not stop.  
One thing replaces another.  
Each day has a sunset, and a noon,  
and a slow awakening of the sun.  
Memories erode, but I repair them.

I remember you with love,  
and touch you with my mind--  
The rhythm of palsy in your shoulder,  
the humid warmth of your hands,  
the beseeching quality of your voice.

When you are more forcefully present--  
Is my soul more visible then?  
Your disciplines have all changed.  
The world must be inside you now.

## **Christ the Bearer of All Things**

He is rhythm song emerging,  
Awakened mist anointing earth.  
He is all water falling,  
His death become new birth.

All is kindling for his brightness,  
A fire setting shadows free.  
He transfigures tired senses,  
So that eyes begin to see

He is holy ruah, wind, and storm.  
All is ordered by His breath.  
By His grace, all conform,  
Who witness Him, His birth, His death.

## **Knocking at the Door of My Soul**

I am called by silence in timeless night.  
I can not give voice to anything.  
I can only listen.

I must go to trial.  
I am charged with weakness,  
neglect, unlovingness, denial.

I argue.  
I confess.  
I must sleep until dawn.

## **What Faith Is**

Faith is the distance you must travel on your own.  
Faith is the map that gets you out of the mess.

Faith is what pulls you out of bed in the morning.  
Faith lets you rest and close your eyes.

Faith buoys you up when the waves are overwhelming.  
Faith can give you strength for eternities of time.

Faith is the box car that homeless people travel on.  
Faith is the straight line that winds through life.

Faith is something you thought you forgot.  
Faith precedes memories of who you have been.

Faith is the finish line, the celebration of victory.  
Faith got you started, but doesn't brag about it.

Faith lets you forgive yourself for broken promises.  
Faith honours every good impulse you ever had.

Faith is what leads you out of the labyrinth.  
Faith is the string that pulls you along.

Faith is the secret your soul confided in.  
Faith is a community and the familiar sense of home.

Faith followed you through all the mistakes you made;  
the STOP sign, the Road Closed, the Under Construction.

Faith lets you start over, even at the end.  
Faith is the Silence that calls your name.



## **I Have Been Tidying Up My Life**

I've been tidying up my life,  
Finding new categories for everything.  
I change the names.  
It does not make them better.

All explanations seem gratuitous.  
Even when my mind is sober,  
I seem to be driving drunk:  
I think I can do this by myself.

## **A Century of Forgiveness**

This will be the century of forgiveness.  
It is a work in progress, blatantly needed.

We will start with the most recent crimes.  
The ones that have not yet come to trial,  
And slowly work our way backward.

Eventually it will all blur,  
--Who did what to whom.

Even if you do not presently believe  
That you have blood on your hands  
Time will stop for you and wait.

Some day a beggar will come to your door,  
Asking for a cup of forgiveness.  
You will hear yourself say,  
"Sorry, I need it all for myself."  
Only later will you realize your mistake.

There will be no court.  
We must judge ourselves.  
Our emptiness will indict us.  
There can be no appeal.  
Humility will make way for a compassion  
That we are not now able to comprehend.

## Falling Angels

4/4 time

Am D  
This is the way  
Am D  
You are supposed to be  
Am D  
A night that seems like day.  
Am D  
Chains your liberty.

Am D  
Seeds of many lifetimes  
Am D  
Fall along the way,  
Am D  
When they slowly rise.  
Am D  
Do not be dismayed.

Am C G D **CHORUS**  
We are falling angels  
Am Fm7 G D  
We are falling angels  
Am Fm7 G6 D  
We are falling angels  
Am C G  
We are falling angels

Am D  
Maybe we fought it  
Am D  
Every step of the way  
Am D  
But it's like we bought it,  
Am D  
And now we have to pay.

Am D  
We are hero, we are villain  
Am D  
All the world's a stage.

Am D  
We are not unwilling.

Am D  
Living is our wage.

**Chorus: We are falling angels (4x)**

Am D  
You come in, come down,

Am D  
Pick up where you left off.

Am D  
Gather all the players round

Am D  
Forgive what you have lost.

Am D  
You wonder what this lifetime is,

Am D  
What it's supposed to mean.

Am D  
You can't see your passport

Am D  
To show you where you've been.

**Chorus: We are falling angels (4x)**

Am D  
Remember what you told yourself

Am D  
Before you left your home,

Am D  
That you promised someone else,

Am D  
"You won't be alone."

Am D  
You are here to make it better

Am D  
In a world where nothing lasts.

Am D  
To rework past and future,

Am D  
Going by so fast!

**Chorus: We are falling angels (4x)**

## **Ascension Prayer**

Beings of Light,  
Help me along  
My wayward path.

Beings of Warmth,  
Keep my loneliness  
From harming others.

Beings of Darkness,  
Let me help you,  
As I free myself from your grasp.

O Time, may the days of my life  
Yield the Eternal through your work.

I am here to serve.  
I am here to redeem.  
I am here to transform darkness  
into light and warmth.

## Gaia's Child

Gaia is round with fullness,  
She enters into labour soon.  
Birthing a childlike wholeness,  
Yet some fear She swoons.

They say the birth will be bloody.  
There are countless signs of Her distress.  
Disasters erupt--She seems moody.  
Who'll be around to clean up the mess?

Will it happen all of a sudden?  
It is Her time, our fate?  
As She comes to term, a dragon  
Lurks. It stalks. It waits.

We have no assurance of safety,  
But let us still delight and pray.  
Earth reveals a wondrous divinity.  
She will help us find our way.

So for so long, the world seemed to sleep.  
Spinning soundly, circling the Sun.  
There was no threat, no reason to weep.  
Earth was subdued, her riches won.

Now there's a battle of souls, a siege of the spirit.  
A war being fought on many strange fronts,  
Some deny and refuse to hear it,  
Though wisdom is born of wondrous founts,

What you believe  
Matters less and less,  
Than courage to receive  
Our Gaia's child, pure and blessed.

## **The Paradox of The Soul**

When the soul lives in falsity and surface,  
Its perceptions are only mud and wall.  
It vaguely mirrors images of its own face,  
And forgets its heights, its lapse, its fall.

How does the soul enter mystery and knowing,  
When it stalls and blandly denies its lament,  
Indifferent to spirit, constantly losing  
Itself in passivity, distraction, and argument?

It may seem the soul is satisfied  
To live in the world's mortality and death,  
All of its yearning unfulfilled, denied,  
As eternity pretends to take its final breath.

Yet the soul can not become a thing.  
It only seems that it dies.  
It was once at one with everything.  
It is in hiatus now, in fictions and lies.

Can it undo its learning?  
The world promises illusion and wealth,  
Yet the soul will become a fire burning  
With selfless shining of the Self.

For years it has endured its sleep.  
It turns and mutters in this early hour,  
Yet out of the silence of the deep  
It rises with nuance of its power.

The soul can find spirit alive, incarnate,  
The diamond unsullied, in the rough,  
And resolve the trials of life, of fate,  
Though its own courage is not enough.

Take the broken pieces of your life.  
Let them go, let them fall.  
Denial, regret, and pointless strife  
Mean little now-- as nothing at all.

It is no longer only up to you.  
Forgiveness can have new meaning now.  
Let it all go--you will be carried through.  
Set no limits of what you allow.

Vow again to make your choice.  
Again, again decide.  
Lift up your silenced voice.  
Let grace redeem what the world would hide.

### **Bad Mood**

My words are rusty this morning.  
My thoughts creak.  
They all got stuck in one place.  
Now they won't move.

My feelings are stubborn.  
I don't like myself right now.  
Nothing is good.

I'm usually handy at this kind of thing.  
I tried a few things from some how-to-books.  
Nothing seems to work.

I don't want your advice.  
I don't feel like being patronized right now.  
I know that you mean well, but I'll get over it.

Let me work it out.  
I'll be fine.

## 2013 Poems

### The Soul Seeks Itself

The soul is curious.  
It berates itself with questions.  
"Who am I? What do I want?"

It is afraid because it lacks the discipline of love.  
Often it seems that it has only itself to run to.  
A shame of secrets may hide it from view.

As a child, the soul was fearless.  
Its questions were simple.  
Now they must be lived.

The soul wants to proclaim itself,  
But may be unsure of how to speak.  
A listener must have skill beyond words.

Even a small conversation can liberate the soul,  
One person a perfect mirror for another,  
The soul in-camera, recognizing that it is known.

We hold ourselves back.  
Sometimes it is hard to unburden ourselves,  
To ask, dearly, to be heard.

Conversation exposes our vulnerability and fear,  
As well as our wisdom and our striving,  
Our tenderness for each other.

It is how we mature out of our loneliness,  
And how we forsake it, standing in the mystery  
Of knowing and being known.

We are beginning to ask the same questions.  
If they seem new and unfamiliar,  
we may feel an emptiness, a solitude.

Each of us learns them incrementally.  
We are becoming reacquainted with ourselves,  
The mirror of our ignorance softly prompting.



As we change, answers go out of focus.  
We may doubt what we once believed.  
What seemed ordinary and true can become a lie.

Yet if we speak to one another  
Our consensus will change.  
The poverty of our ignorance will not seem so bleak.

What you love already is an answer and a beginning:  
What you can recite without words;  
What brings you timeless hours of undivided meaning.

We can praise ourselves for our resilient hopes,  
Hopes that will shelter and lead us  
Through the secret passageway of self.

We are not broken,  
And the world is not loveless.  
Can you find the will to love it back?

If I can not yet answer you  
Because of distance, real or imagined,  
Let me say that we will find that ripe meeting  
Sometime, when the right moment comes.

## **Who Do You Say That I Am?**

Who do you say that I am?  
Is it more than you believe?  
If they ask, do you know me,  
What answer will you give?

Did they tell you that I died,  
And after that, what then?  
You yourself are resurrected.  
I have rolled away the stone.

I am son of the living God,  
But who am I in you?  
You have been anointed also.  
My spirit lives in you.

## **No Sympathy**

Since Adam, you have been running loose,  
Exploiting naivety, misguiding weakness.  
Apprehension and fear tighten the noose.  
Many believe their life is worthless.

Yet how empty is your opposition!  
Fear remains your only offering.  
Our despair will cease, becoming fiction.  
Your resistance will be seen as nothing.

We will no longer permit or allow  
The harrowing of souls, your pretence of fear.  
The soul renews in silence, and in sense's fallow,  
To end devastation, your wasteland of terror.

You will no longer taunt and deceive.  
We see you clearly behind enemy lines.  
After two millennia of uneasy peace  
We know your plans; we see your designs.

## **Awaiting Spring**

Today, a mixed forecast of rain and snow,  
A few hours of afternoon thaw.  
Some buds have started to show on the trees.

Many confirm that Spring will come.  
Their eyes have seen  
And their hands have touched.  
They know that every flora will bloom.

Dandelions will not hide in shame.  
Shrubs and herbs will discover their own heavens.  
The honeysuckle will share their fragrance with the field.

The daffodil will not be forgotten in a year,  
The tardy sedum will not be refused its place,  
And the noble rose will not live in the garden alone.

## **New Clothing For The Soul**

The day is long.  
The soul insists  
to stretch itself so far.

"New clothing", it says,  
"New clothing for the sun and moon,  
an ending to the war."

Silence whispers and confides,  
"My venture is sound,  
My way is sure and clear."

Yet it seems too wayward,  
formless, insecure,  
strange, and unfamiliar!

The dream of self is emptying.  
My heart palpates.  
All is otherness. It opens.

Beyond a wall of dissonance  
is timelessness;  
love beyond emotion.

What I once thought  
were golden fruit  
are rust and tears and grief.

I am timid and estranged.  
I can only trust.  
It is an ending to belief.

## **Stopping The World**

I want to put the World on pause.  
To stop all that lives and breathes,  
all we see and hold and touch  
from moving for a good long while  
--longer that you can hold your breath.

Long enough,  
in the spaciousness of that moment.  
for an inner stillness and surrender to take place.  
Long enough to feel the rush of time  
as a prison or an enclosure.  
Long enough for Being to ascend  
and for doing, doing, doing  
to take some badly needed time off.

We would know radiant spiritual beings  
intimately for that good while.  
They would reveal themselves sublimely,  
and the fierce separateness we often feel  
would give way to a mirroring of love.

Then all clocks would be reset to zero  
and time would begin again.

## **Like Stone Soup**

Friends send me homemade photos,  
The morsels of their life;  
What occurred while they were walking,  
Their children at play,  
Their projects or works-in-progress,  
The unpredictable antics of their pets,  
The surprise of the seasons,  
A pose of their loved one at rest.

Their snapshots form a random recipe,  
The savoury snacks and delicacies  
Of their loved and ordinary life.  
A stone soup, a fragile legacy  
Of brief moments keenly shared.

## **Giotto, Daddi, Pacino**

The gallery light is dim.  
It has become a tabernacle.  
The background music is sacred, a hymn.  
The inward gaze of saints stare back from the walls.

Purity shines through the strained and crackled paint.  
Substance transfigured, glowing, alchemical.  
Gold rises above the nimbus heads of the saints.  
The gild adorns the wealth of their souls.

Mary's eyes are vulnerable, human.  
A measureless love, serene, divine.  
She has surrendered all for her Son.  
Her grief fully rendered, her acceptance sublime.

Nuns nearby inspect each painting, while  
Others offer academic remarks.  
St. Francis has a vision of Christ as an angel.  
We walk slowly around a Plexiglas box.

Who is it that I might have been?  
A farmer, a servant, a man in the street?  
Are these paintings I may have seen?  
Was I an artisan, bookbinder, perhaps a priest?

## **Divining The Heart**

I don't hurry myself in matters of love.  
I resist its slow, indelible searing.  
Affection contrives false when it is rushed.  
The heart must pause, to overcome its caution.

If the wealth of love would become mine,  
I must abandon claims to any sure course.  
Disputing ownership of my oracle heart,  
I listen instead for echoes of its confirmation.

Love may spin counter to all my schemes,  
And pull me gently from my guarded seclusion.  
But I can allow myself to be happily led,  
If it seems I follow some kind of path.

I am not indifferent to my fate,  
But I find it better not to rush.  
Though it seems to wander aimlessly about,  
The bee knows its way back to the hive.

## **My Accounting Of Myself**

I love and remember You.  
This is my accounting of myself.  
I swear to answer all my lapses  
With this intention.

I do not seek to renounce the world,  
Any soul, or any thing,  
I will not disengage from life.  
I give myself to You.

Through Your blessing,  
The world becomes an open book,  
A page held open to be read,  
A sacred, fragile moment.

In my heart then,  
All becomes clear.  
My long wait for  
A timeless moment is over.

## The Summer Of The Mind

I ask my God for a summer of the mind.  
It's the season I most want again,  
Though the breeze may turn and become fierce wind,  
Or afternoon be nearly spoiled by tumultuous rain,  
The sun brings light, and warms.

There the soul is always bright,  
Steadily in bloom, it constantly flowers,  
And the sun will still come out at night,  
The mind happily busy, even in wee hours,  
Untroubled that it once seemed alone.

Blizzard storms may come and bite the skin,  
But the mind will rise and laugh it off.  
The body may shiver (the veil is thin),  
But the sun still holds the world aloft.  
It blesses, and does not divide.

Seeds of love will sprout like songs,  
Sung in chorus to the proper pitch.  
None will proclaim that anything is wrong,  
Or best, or better, saying which is which.  
Harmony rules the summer of the mind.

And no one will say (as if confused),  
That the sun must be shining somewhere else.  
The mind will stop tinkering with words; the ruse  
That heaven hoards and guards its wealth.  
Our gratitude will be full.

Let that season last a thousand years,  
And dance in time with heart and soul.  
Upside down are all our fears,  
No longer naive, that summer for fools  
Will remind us always of the sun.



## **Sun Time/Invisible Time**

Future time waits  
patiently for your answer.  
It is in no rush.

It rises like a sun  
that will never set.  
It cannot pass you by.

Its courage will break over you,  
and force you to change your life.  
It does not doubt your strength.

It will make you disbelieve  
all the stories you once accepted.  
You will grow accustomed to unfamiliarity.

If future time presses you into service,  
you may never catch up.  
It is deathless.

## **Autumn of the Soul**

Autumn takes us where we do not want to go.  
The body may seem like a tired puppet,  
Memory a phantom, a mirage.

We may not believe it at first.  
We have reached a distant point.  
The mind's threshold has changed.  
We have begun lift-off.

Timelines go out of focus.  
Where is our sun now setting?  
We fight against endings.  
Will our ripeness sour?  
We want to remain who we have been.

But here is a new blessing:  
An unfamiliar wind comes in,  
Pushing bitterness away.

How we hear may change:  
We listen to stories differently;  
More tragedy, more comedy,  
More innocence, more worry,  
More matter-of-fact.

We bend with more than stubborn strength.  
Courage slowly billows in us,  
So that death will not take us by surprise.

## **Yourself, Sometime Later**

Who is it that waits for you  
at the limits of your own self?  
How can you meet who you will be?

Much of your conditioning will remain,  
following you beyond death.  
But you will feel alive in a way that  
you may have been unable to feel before.

You will see that all trials were meant to help,  
arranged with care and great dominion,  
not only for your benefit.

When you ask God for courage over your fears,  
armies of goodwill will arrive,  
showing defiant and imperturbable force.

All knowing is intimate then;  
Who you are and who you've been,  
who you must become, and with whom.

And always a love,  
a love you have ever known,  
healing all the ways of the soul.

## **Children Know Why They Get Out Of Bed**

Mornings often make plans while you sleep.  
Messes and spills later appear out of nowhere.  
Things get out of hand.  
Events have an unfamiliar rhythm.  
They go against your will.

Evenings may be dreamy,  
but mornings are abrupt and in-your-face.  
They can go all-out or full-stop.  
It's nice if you have someone watching your back.

Mornings can be intimate or adventurous.  
They can make love or make war.  
Mornings are bad times for arguments.  
It is better to wait until things have settled,  
--You may say something you regret.

Mornings tell you: 'Get ready. Prepare yourself.'  
But heavy mornings, when you can not sing or dance,  
Will still carry you forward to noon.  
Then you can make lunch, or do something sensible.

Mornings are for joy.  
They want to test you, then convince you that you can do it.  
If you go back to bed, don't feel defeated.  
Life, as they say, goes on.

## 2014 Poems

### Epiphany

When I look from the shore  
--how far the water reaches out!  
The waves are repetitive and familiar.  
So much of life is like this.

Yet today, the Sun greets us  
with an intimate warmth,  
blessing from inside out.

It does not pretend not to care.  
Its concern is a steady wave;  
Forgiveness and gentle chastisement.  
A call to attend to spirit,  
An invitation to forgiveness,  
A time for the soul to surrender  
And meet the spirit from whence it came.

## **When Christ Returned**

Before He left, He had not known  
Of the darkness of the sun's descent;  
The bracing chill of the morning air;  
Or the sound of rain at night.

He had not tasted of freshly fallen fruit,  
or bread prepared with human hands and fire.  
He was not familiar with flesh's soft warmth,  
Or how the fingers press firm against one another.

Yet He saw how heaven is veiled,  
And returning, He said,  
"Father, forgive them.  
I will help them to remember You,  
Until the end of time."

## **Otherness (a memory)**

This is what otherness is for;  
the fleshy meeting of surfaces,  
a soft yielding and tumescence,  
a brief and intimate journey to joy,  
from me to you and back  
knowing outside and in  
touching and pressing  
rubbing and tickling,  
the friction and innocent fire of passion  
each bonded by affection  
and curiosity about the other  
becoming so familiar in wordless ways.

## **Childhood Self**

I was once a childhood self,  
sleeping awake in an unknown world.  
My life was tiny.

I was only known  
where I could walk or was taken.  
My soul was much quieter then.  
My thoughts were simple and undemanding.

I found many descriptions and names  
for things and how they work.  
Yet, over time these words became lifeless.  
My story of self and world was changed.

Sometimes now,  
I remove my self from words,  
and live within my own being.

My childhood self is also there,  
and the earlier time before words;  
My self before I was born.

**Memories Sweet**      a song for Archie and Irene L.

Memory itself is sweet  
When all that's bitter has found release.  
When warm tears have fallen and flushed the wound,  
Memory's sweetness is coming through.

Chorus

Grief is bitter, it's bittersweet.  
Remember the people you were happy to meet.  
God will join, and God divide,  
Yet one day soon, we will be side by side.

Death holds its secrets behind a veil.  
Those we love—it hides them well.  
But we will join with those who wait.  
When we end our turn on this wheel of fate.

Chorus

Grief is bitter, it's bittersweet.  
Remember the people you were happy to meet.  
God will join, and God divide,  
Yet one day soon, we will be side by side.

You may feel that you are all alone  
When they pass into the great unknown,  
But if you remember them as they were,  
You may find sweetness in memory's cure.

Chorus

Grief is bitter, it's bittersweet.  
Remember the people you were happy to meet.  
God will join, and God divide,  
Yet one day soon, we will be side by side.  
Yes, one day soon we will be side by side.



## **The Social Ballast**

I spend much time listening to  
the parts of myself that want reparation.  
They wrestle and fight; top dog/underdog;  
A constant re-education of identity.

I find the social ballast everywhere  
The daytime self holds sway.  
Events and opinions pass through the moment;  
Past and future, figure/ground.

Rarely am I asked questions  
that are difficult for me to answer.  
I can hide in plain sight.

Those I counsel have the same dilemma;  
Of their soul and its confession.  
"Who can I tell my story to?  
How can I say it whole?"

I do not want to take anything away from them.  
What they say cannot harm me,  
Though their story may become my own,

And sometimes their nameless soul rises  
Above the cluttered debris of their daily lives;  
The ballast that has weighed them down,  
So they can be known for who they are.

## Small Things

I am aware of my smallness.  
I seem diminished by creation,  
And often hanker to be bigger, more, a larger size;  
Impressive, flamboyant, a study in ambition and success.

Sometimes in humility or shame or confusion,  
I want to shrink myself down  
And make myself insignificant, small, a nothing,  
But not always sincerely.

And at times I've asked God to super-size me,  
To make me as LARGE AS HIMSELF,  
But in between there lies an abyss, a bridge;  
From something to nothing,  
From being someone to THE ONE.

But mostly I pray to make myself smaller;  
Small enough to fit into tight spaces,  
And uncomfortable situations.  
I ask that I ask for less, yet be more present.

I am not a hunger artist  
In a cave, or cage, or monastery.  
It is life I want to fit into and to fill  
--All the darkened corners of my life,  
Dividing my separation with joy.

## What Has Been Given

I sometimes yearn for an earlier season,  
But a fire goes out with little to burn.  
Emptiness follows with its anaemic reasons:  
That time has passed, and can never return.

My life now seems awkward and off the pace,  
But past reward cannot now be earned.  
Happiness and auspicious grace  
Were early lessons, once eagerly learned.

But want for pleasure is now a restless search  
That only sows discontent and sorrow.  
Seemingly held beyond my reach,  
Even its memory is stilted or borrowed.

My strength now fails, weaker by half  
Of its pride and former ascendancy,  
So I release my ties to a fallen past,  
And abandon fruitless memory.

All my past joys are buried in the earth;  
Their sweetness soured, or set apart.  
I have no idea of anything's worth,  
But I want a an encore, a reprise, a start.

When I rested high and free upon a perch  
I could fly--and all my dreams would follow.  
I had no pain or need of a crutch;  
I wandered wherever my dreams allowed.

Though I no longer demand the loose privilege of youth,  
I can open my wings this evening song,  
And comfort, nurture, calm and soothe  
Some few others who also worry, and falter along.

I will make peace with what has gone.  
And more, with what lies before me.  
I can sing chorus both at morning and evening song,  
Without falseness or sentimentality.

My heart insists that it can still go on,  
Opposing wayward, indulgent fear,  
Free of confusion, of regret and wrong;  
Its love is present, and always near.

## **Emptying Out**

Dissatisfaction endless; random from want to want.  
Restlessness—a phantom bridge; morning, evening discontent.  
A facade of pleasure haunts my soul  
Enjoyment empty, entirely predictable.  
Yet sometimes, these hours are offered as sacrifice,  
And I yield, at peace again with my life.

## **Fragile In Our Soul**

It is difficult to be with this present,  
This here, this how,  
without wanting something else.

We extend the reach of our minds,  
but cannot stay long in one place,  
the place of inner knowing.

The mind bobs upon its own sea,  
Wanting to leave confusion,  
And longs to swim to shore.

We all seek landmarks of meaning;  
What is constant and true.  
Yet we seem lost in ourselves,

The prescription of grace evades us.  
How to be our better self?  
Our doubt must take up its bed and walk.

The world is here so that  
We may overcome ourselves.  
It can not measure our success.

In the same way that we are born with sight,  
We are called to oneness,  
Yet we are slow to call the other, self.

In our heart we learn the names of things,  
The shore of every sea.  
The peace that stills the storm.

Yet the soul sees only shifting images  
Until it becomes a lens,  
magnifying beauty and splendid order.

The mind, lost in reflections  
of what it wants and what it knows.  
must bring focus, without waver.

Light can shine through our being,  
So that all can rest  
On the shore of our heart.

In our heart are the forgotten  
Spellbound names of things,  
Their living and intimate names.

Each and every thing calls out  
In its fullness and its mystery,  
Confirming the truth of own being,

When the mind brings love as a question,  
The heart trains the mind,  
To quietly notice what each reveals.

When the mind leaves the shore of stillness,  
It acts without full care.  
Emotion can not rest.

The infirm soul circles in fearful steps.  
Reaction can take hold,  
And lead us to falter blindly.

Dispassion can lift our tethered soul,  
Yet root us deeply in the earth,  
Bearing our humanity without strain,

We belittle our own strength;  
Our capacity for bold, undivided wisdom,  
And acceptance of our trials.

Wanting to unburden ourselves;  
Denying our intransigent weaknesses,  
and the core of our suffering

We did not see how we can share the cross,  
Lifting its burden from each other,  
Offering up our self-concern.

We all share in this coming into being.  
Living, so that spirit can be realized;  
Consciousness in matter.

Christ is the Gate,  
The Way through this World,  
How becoming is made whole.

He will calm the troubled waves of feeling,  
the tides of insensible desire  
and the wayward laments of our heart.

It seemed that we did not have a guide.  
Our way always slow and unsure.  
This will change, as all will change.

Like Paul before he was blinded,  
We are convinced of our righteousness.  
We defend the gods that we know.

You cannot discount what comes  
Toward us with violence and purpose.  
What thwarts us and turns us back, adrift.

You must protect your soul!  
Protect it from clamour and indecision.  
Protect it from mean pleasures that consume.

Face what brings prejudice and harm,  
The soul-drowning wrath of false light.  
Seek a calm and unsentimental trust in life.

Forgive all malice that comes  
Toward you from other human beings.  
Restrain the tempest of sorrows in your heart

Bind all ignorance with the light of compassion.  
Allow that you and others will sometimes fail,  
Yet advance through the wisdom gained.

Against the emerging heartlessness take heed.  
Despair will come to you, wanting a home.  
Fear and selfishness will petition you.

At times, there may be nothing that you can do.  
Yet, the Good will endure.  
Invite it to guide you.

When there is war, pray for peace.  
Pray for the Peace of Christ.  
Pray that it be known.

When you are suffering, and in pain,  
Pray for the health of all,  
that they be restored to wellness.

Let your will be changed by Him.  
Offer up your weaknesses.  
Let your heart return His grace.

The All is on your side  
If you surrender to It.  
This is your daily lesson.

Brace yourself against distraction.  
Patience is the fallow field of the soul,  
The water that turns into wine.

Even if you cannot still the mind,  
Direct your thoughts to good outcomes.  
Let your deeds testify.

Anchor your will in bedrock faith,  
so that your courage can renew.  
Allow misfortune to excuse itself in time.

Light will always turn away darkness.  
Trust in the All-Sustaining.  
Let the intention of your work be clear.

Through overcoming, the self emerges,  
Witness of all that has been,  
The journeyman master of soul.



We have been convinced of our aloneness,  
The seeming indifference of the world.  
Perhaps this has been our hardest trial.

How to define our identity when  
Only others inform us of ourselves?  
We must seek what cannot be seen.

We have had many names.  
Memory can not restore them to us.  
Time divides us into fragments.

I am my own enemy.  
My cousin incarnations all have faults.  
I am oppressed and hounded by them.

Success is marked by the instillation of virtue,  
The harmony I bring to my character.  
The integration of wisdom.

Why believe in a false mortality?  
This veil must fade.  
Life is what allows us to become whole.

Death is the completion of all cycles  
and the beginning of the new.  
We must become intimate with death.

Each of us must find the door to self,  
But we wildly knock and at random,  
Wanting to confirm known pleasures.

Will death announce our becoming,  
The self that seemed confined,  
The essence of our being?

Each life must fully testify.  
Can we answer death in life;  
Not following blindly, but be led?

Were we given over to the eternal?  
Did we recognize what seemed obscured?  
Did we open the door?

Salvation is to bear witness  
To what is undying in us,  
And has no pretence

To reconcile as timeless witness  
is to reach beyond paradox  
and behold how all is grace.

The small and restless self  
Confines itself to pasture.  
It wants to be fenced-in, protected.

Rarely does it command itself to order,  
or call out to grace.  
It wants to avoid all tests and annunciations.

But knowing world laws and means  
Brings no respite from the Divine,  
Its fullness, and its revelation.

Emptiness is the opening of your heart;  
The beginning of surrender.  
All doctrine fails on this doorstep.

This is the meaning of the Earth;  
How grace is found;  
And what time is granted for.

## **2015 Poems**

### **Hopeless Romantic**

I am looking for a woman with these qualities:

Open about her feelings and past history  
New-age, preferably energy healer  
Smart, tolerant, and truthful  
Beautiful eyes, nice skin  
Touchy-feely, enjoys sex  
Talkative, easy-going, playful  
Lives in or near Mississauga

Must be relationship-ready  
Preferably employed, but available in her free time  
It's OK if she is a widow, has children

You are looking for someone who:  
Is funny, open, affectionate, kind  
Accepting, spiritual, and truthful.

Please contact [michaeltom59](#) and include a photo

## Reassurance

The desire for affection is so uncomplicated  
--to be the whole centre of someone's attention;  
held by their mind and heart and waking sense;  
known, accepted, and loved.

The infant cries out.  
It wants to be intimately  
assured by another's being,  
by their warmth and touch and care.

As we become older, we see this as weakness,  
and divide ourselves:  
How to plead and invite, but not efface our self?  
How to ask, but not demand?  
How to wait, longing for just a word?

Love is forsaken  
by fear in all its forms;  
the desire to control love  
as payment, contract, guarantee.

Love in the moment may often seem  
emaciated, weak, mortal, insufficient.  
Yet, for we who live,  
it may be the best that we can do.

## **Reaching Beyond This Day**

We passed the long day together,  
the Sun at the apex of its charity,  
our lives returning again to summer.

We share stories from our past,  
the ladders of our identity reaching up  
to where we now meet,  
belonging to each other  
touching with our gifting hands  
reaching far beyond words,  
beyond whatever may have happened  
before this day began.

## **A House, Built Without Hands**

Bring to me your well-travelled soul.  
Bring your heart to me.  
I want to listen to your show and tell.  
Open up now. Let me see.

Close the roads you no longer travel.  
Stay at home with me.  
There is no need for heaven or hell.  
There is nothing out there. Set it free.

All is here and now between us.  
We both are servants in this home.  
The scaffold of our love, our trust  
Supports this house from falling down.

I enter softly into what you say,  
Your words falling slowly into me.  
It may be night, or still day.  
In this moment, you are all I see.

## **I Know What You Are Talking About**

I know what  
you are talking about  
when you say the word  
love, and I know  
how you feel  
when you touch me.

I want what you  
want when you want me  
and I know  
the satisfaction that you feel  
when we are present to one another.

I feel the same content  
when grief subsides  
into the new expanse of life,  
and the wound of loss has become  
an entranceway, and a blessing.

And our experience is shared  
when our hearts  
flush and swell together,  
renewed in confirmation.

And I can say,  
as you have said,  
that we are here together at last.

## **In Our Soft Resilience**

Sometimes the fall of grief is hard.  
Trying is an afterthought.  
It's too far to reach again for love.

Treading water,  
searching for someone to keep my soul afloat,  
I often retreated to dry shore,  
far from the lapping waves of affection that I wanted.

My inner life seemed stalled like daytime traffic.  
Stop and go. Rush hour again.  
Stop and go.  
Loneliness was like this.

Though we are fragile now,  
in our soft resilience  
we have found each another.

So early in love.  
The promises of bliss seem authentic,  
unvarnished by habit.

When I lay down with you now  
my heart  
is timeless and full of hope.

## **Be With Me**

Say what you feel,  
Feel it now with me.  
Tell me now,  
Share your heart with me.

Tell me what your what you want  
And we will see.  
We will make it work,  
The best that it can be.

Let me know,  
Tell me what you need.  
I'll make a sacrifice,  
But my love comes for free.

I want your love.  
Give your love to me.  
We will share with the world  
Our love and harmony.

And when you are tired,  
Rest with me,  
We can sleep,  
And touch and feel.

And when sing,  
Sing with me.  
Every song we sing  
Will be in harmony.

And when we walk  
Tell me what you see;  
The world around us,  
And every little thing.

When you're weak  
I'll give you strength,  
As much as I,  
As I can bear.



And if you must wait,  
I'll wait with you.  
I'll stay beside you,  
We'll see it through.

And if you are angry,  
I am sorry.  
I did not want  
To make you hurt.

If you want to dance,  
Dance with me.  
Take me to another place  
With the rhythm of your beat.

You mean the world,  
All the world to me.  
You make each new day  
Something sweet.

You always bring me up.  
I feel so happy  
Whenever  
You're around.

When you have to work,  
Then I am sorry.  
I am sad  
That you have to leave.

For me  
There's no one else.  
We'll be together  
In sickness and in health.

## Communion

Ellen July 29/15 Michael Aug 4

When we are in  
communion

we gaze  
into the  
endless depths of  
each other's  
eyes

and find our  
souls  
reflected.

When we are in  
communion

we touch  
and revel and  
mingle our senses  
and rediscover  
the  
oneness  
of our being.

When we are in  
communion

our bubble  
selectively  
and slowly  
expands  
with love.

When we are in  
communion

the breath  
quickens,  
the pulse  
rushes,  
and the world  
recedes.

When we are in  
communion

we trust in each  
other and in  
the gift of love  
that we know  
is ours

and in the intent of  
the Giver  
to allow it breath.

When in communion

our edges	
	blur
and I am	
	you
and you are	
	me
and we are	
	one.

## **Against Bright Day**

We talk plans and places, people to see.  
I reach over to touch your hand.  
You release me from everything else,

I enter into your being, as if into darkness,  
quietly present to how you meet me.  
The chatter that separated us falls silent.  
The touchstone of this moment divides the day.

We enclose ourselves against the day,  
a shadowed intimate fire shielded between us.  
We answer the koan, "Who are you now?",  
a culmination that bridges all that came before.

We share an inheritance; the spoils of lives  
lived separately until now.  
Can we be untroubled?

I want to embrace you  
so that our love cannot escape.  
We are confidants, keeping a secret,  
that only we can intimately confess.

Time eases.  
We slow its encroachment.  
Its sands fall, yielding a life deeper and more  
alive.  
I am now a guest in your softly lit world.

## Ellen

I enter your orbit.  
We circle one another.  
All is spinning,  
and I am spinning too.

We are giddy with forward motion,  
each falling into the other,  
redefining what was ground  
and what was sky.

Our intimacy encapsulates us,  
yet suddenly it now breaks open  
--so wide that others may join.

They beam in on our location,  
tracking our signals,  
and give us clearance to land.

Sibs and children, sons and relations,  
separate families of friends,  
each welcome us home,  
applauding our landing.

And I, who had been so lonely,  
feel awash in this outpouring.  
It seems this is now our life.

## **The Thousand Seasons of the Soul**

Each soul has its own seasons.  
They are called lives  
And the passing of lives.

They follow one another,  
Each preparing for the next.  
Each has their own unhappiness and their own  
joy,  
Which they may also bring to others.

All loneliness passes  
As does fertility, longing, and success.  
Each cycle is different and  
Unique to itself.

The childhood part of season is  
Often bright and untroubled,  
The end of a season,  
Dark and full of cares.

Though our sweet guardians witness  
Both the long and short hours of the soul,  
They can only whisper  
And will not postpone a waiting future.

Their patience is the soul's foundation,  
Though often what seems like penance  
Is only preparation for the soul.

All error is to be erased.  
So much of a life fateful,  
Yet fluid and undetermined;  
The days of seasons wakefulness and sleep.

Our body becomes our closest companion,  
Beside us all of our days in the world.  
We may gallop and race full stride,  
Or ramble without apparent direction;  
Like a horse that will not be broken or led.

Each season seems unwritten,  
Without imprimatur,  
Yet, exceptional in design;  
The hard seasons balanced by softness and comfort,  
Each day's trials a work-in-progress for the soul.  
Its full context mysterious and unseen.

To glimpse this is to know  
The full extent of divine compassion;  
The life given to us in trust.

All is allowed and given as dispensation,  
Each failing, a temporary disguise.  
Each season, true to itself,  
Yet a mask to be discarded.  
An awakening and a sleep,  
A full season unto itself.

## **Becoming Together**

Reaching out and  
Touching you;  
A bond of love  
That is slowly setting.

Hours and days;  
Blossoms.  
Nights and years;  
Fruit.  
Our life is not decay,  
But gestation.

Spring passes into  
Days filled with sun.  
These are not our autumn years;  
Spring is becoming summer.

## **The Best Of A Bad Lot**

She is silent on so few things;  
She has so much to say.  
She's telling me about everything.  
I want to see her everyday.

Oh, she's giving me her best years,  
But she doesn't always act her age.  
I'm on fire, when she's near.  
I cannot walk away.

I met her in that wall-less room  
Where so many have been betrayed.  
She offered herself much too soon.  
I didn't know what to say.

I waited for quite a while  
And wondered who she was.  
The online photos--her warm smile,  
Was she someone I could love?

So I said no, then I said yes,  
But it's so wonderful we met.  
She's the best of a bad lot,  
And I'm the evil genius.

She held me like she wanted me  
And asked me for a kiss.  
It was not enough, I could see,  
"I want even more than this."

We knew then that we were meant  
To be together all along.  
The magic weaving of events--  
She was right and I was wrong.

I said no, then I said yes,  
But it's so wonderful we met.  
She's the best of a bad lot,  
And I'm the evil genius.  
Oh she's the best of a bad lot  
And I'm the evil genius.



## Each a Full Cup

In my life  
I have met two women  
Each a full cup,  
Full to the brim.

I swim in their waters  
Backwards and forwards  
Backwards to who we were,  
Forward to the mystery  
Where we are not separate  
Where time is presence,  
Still and alive, yet not in flesh.

I met one when I was a man-child  
Both of us intense and filled with fire  
Fired with passion and undefined dreams  
Each of us becoming ourselves  
Friends and lovers, separate and together.

The other, whom I love now,  
She is harmony and resonance  
I show her fingers where to hold and strum  
She listens for the beat  
We sing together.

What is past seems to sleep  
I awaken to it slowly  
Recollecting and remembering.

The future also seems to sleep  
I must trust for it to awaken  
It waits for me to come.

In my life  
I have met two women.  
I swim in both their waters  
Each a full cup,  
Full to the brim.

## **The Shortest Day**

Now, we near the shortest day  
When the sun stops and reflects,  
Standing still briefly,  
Then marching about -face.

Though we seem to want to sleep,  
Or frantically rush to completion,  
This year is full-term

The harvest of days;  
Crying infants and silent passings,  
A lasting mid-summer love and  
Celebrations of union.

Old tyrants have fallen;  
A tiredness has left, and  
There have been endless evenings of joy.  
Happiness seems more precious now.  
This time is full.  
I am all-in for another year.

## 2016 poem

I

How far to the carousel's outer ring?  
The next new rung of the mindfield?  
We are learning to see around corners,  
To tell time without a clockface.

We are all turning with the Great Wheel.  
25,900 years to our here and now.  
A Leap Year of Spirit.

Time's destination is a new way of being.  
We have known surfaces, obdurate and silent.  
The new knowledge is soft and yielding, tender and at-  
tentive,  
Gradually noticing all in flux; the integrated detailed  
whole.

What is far and impossible is now near, taking new forms.  
Our timepiece is not of cities, but of constellations.  
It is not beyond us, as it always seemed to be.  
Fragments of the puzzle gradually fill in a frame without  
boundaries.  
We bear full witness to what we had suspected and  
hoped for,  
Announcing itself in subtle ways;  
Death is not an end.  
Virtue is not forsaken.  
We are not alone.  
There are many mansions.

## II

We have learned to deconstruct mindframes,  
A strict and necessary exercise and release.  
We are rebuilding a future where  
The lion and lamb will lie down together,  
Both wilfulness and passivity denied.

Can we see as far as 1,000 generations?  
The tumult around you now is only the rounding of the corner.  
Witness another generation coming toward us  
Forcing out the deniers and the dead wood of indifference.

We are turning toward a narrow opening  
That will grow broad and fierce with light.  
We will soon see ourselves in a mirror  
Without shadows, crevices, or surfaces.  
We will see the light that we are.

This is the moment  
I have long been waiting for  
Lounging, longing, wasting my time for  
Forsaking, feigning, holding court for  
Baiting, pretending, holding space for  
Practising, preparing, tuning up for  
Wondering and wandering aimlessly for  
Cried and raged, putting aside too much for  
Deferred and debated, and went to war for  
Bled life and soul and spirit for  
Fell hard and blind, and cursed and prayed for,  
Quietly surrendered, but not patiently enough for

This long vigil was in daylight hours  
And kept me company through the night

I have been guided by silence  
In a sea of distraction

Now I see.

## A Poem Is Like A Recipe

2019

Remembering what you learned last time,  
Blend the will of the heart intently,  
Warming your thinking until intuition comes on.  
Imagine what the meal might taste like.

Take any raw notions ready to be transformed,  
Make a base of what you have already lived through.  
Measure, mash, chop—whip and stir.  
Drop them all into a metaphor.  
Blend. Dissolve.  
Cook until done.  
Cool.

Then—ask all your senses—your taste, your tongue.  
Is it novel enough to serve?  
Does it need anything else?  
Is it too bitter?  
Does it have enough joy, enough gravitas?

Read it once more.  
How can I enhance this?  
Make it more playful, more sacred, more true?  
Share when ready.  
Repeat according to taste.

## Light

2020

Light is a force of compassion  
That fixates and ruptures all in its path  
Sundering the once-convenient self

Time becomes limitless yet still  
All false barricades are breached  
The mundane is silenced

Do not weep  
Peace quiets the astonished soul

Yet too soon,  
Life pulsates need and necessity  
And calls for your return.

But the light does not betray  
You are regenerated and intact  
Changed by the endlessly unchanging  
Like a pebble touched by the ocean  
Now drying in the noonday sun.







# Collected Poems



**This collection of poetry  
Includes the booklets:**

**Poems From Empty Space 2001**

**Meeting The Angel 2006**

**Bridge To The Future 2010**

**Solace And Joy 2011**

**Most of the themes deal with the  
thresholds of life and death, love and  
loss, spiritual inspiration and living in  
the world.**