**Jim Slaughter**

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**PARDON**

**MY**

**POETRY**

**My Muse Made Me Do It**

**Volume Two**

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**CAVEAT LECTOR** (Reader Beware): The poems in this volume are rated G, PG, MA, and R. Readers should use discretion in determining which category applies to which.

This volume of verses is dedicated to my three main muses

Thalia

Erato

and

Ogden Nash

**Pardon**

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**PREFACE**

This second volume of “Pardon My Poetry” is a continuation of the task of trying to answer the rather daunting question I posed in Volume One…Why poetry? And I think, perhaps, the answer I have managed to touch on, so far, is that poetry is its own validation. So, with that in mind, in this volume I will try to answer another, though not quite so daunting, question…What is poetry to me?

As I see it, poetry is a formal construct that mirrors life using language that is composed, considered, appropriate, and effective. Poetry speaks to the listening mind, and the language of poetry is a living material full of shadow and endless nuance. The carefully chosen words are selected as much for their sound as for their meaning. And, perhaps even more importantly, poetry functions as a way to remember. As I grow older, it has become an invaluable tool to use in the struggle of memory against forgetting.

Many of the poems I write attempt to describe the landscape of my life: where I come from; where I’ve been; where I am now. These are all particular places that are mine in my reality, in my memory, and in my imagination. They have helped to define me, and they influence and inform my poetry. These places have all left their mark on me, and I, in turn, hopefully, have left my mark on some of them, even if it’s only in the form of footprints. My journey as a writer is both inward and outward, and the poems I record along the way are the traces I leave, the footprints I have laid down in passing through my personal landscapes.

My poetry, in other words, is a kind of mirror of myself. I write about things I remember, I imagine, I wish or wished for, I wonder or wondered about, I want or wanted. I write about the world inside of me that I know better than anything else, and the world outside of me that draws my attention.

I write about the moments in my personal life that need telling about and that I believe are worth preserving. And, even when I don’t have a direct experience to guide my writing, I can always rely on my imagination as a bridge to knowledge.

But, the first and most important requirement of a poet, I think, is that he writes with honesty and openness. It’s only then that he can write with any authority about the extremes of intimacy and distance, anger and joy, cruelty and kindness, isolation and community that he is attempting to communicate through the medium of poetry. And the experiences I write about are not really mine alone, but are, in some sense, large or small, a metaphor for everyone’s. So I write poems for myself, and friends, and family so we can get to know me a little better, and for strangers who, after reading them, will, hopefully, want to become my friends.

Jim Slaughter

Springfield, MO

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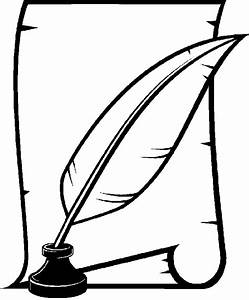
In My Dreams

She Wasn’t You

What Doesn’t Kill You

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Legacy



The poet is a liar who always speaks the truth.

Jean Cocteau

**A Moment With My Muse**

I'll tell you what my muse, Erato,

Once on a time revealed to me.

What she said so filled my head

With a simple truth ne'er writ nor read:

"Don't pursue lines of lofty rhymes

Designed to stand the test of time

And create a space wherein to place your poet's legacy.

Verse will endure, profane or pure,

If it's not meant to preach or vent.

Poets have no claim to wealth or fame,

The solitary aim and purpose of a poem is poetry."

**Imagination**

Without it

There's no magic,

Things are only as they appear,

And that is a kind of blindness…

Quite possibly the worst kind.

But with it,

And lost in the wonder of it all,

Things can be however

You imagine them to be,

And that is a kind of magic…

Quite possibly the best kind.

**Once Upon A Time**

Once there was a girl, with stars and moonbeams in her eyes,

Who sat with me beneath a willow tree.

She gently held my hand,

Caressed and kissed me, and

Vowed that she was mine and loved me so.

How sweet that moment many years ago.

Once a callow boy, with fame and fortune as his prize,

Looked at her there 'neath that willow tree.

He laughed disdainfully and cried,

"Your world's too small, my scope's too wide

For you to comprehend." And he said no.

How sad that moment all those years ago.

Once upon a time, being selfish and unwise,

I had no time for love and bade it go.

But fleeting fame flew by so fast,

And fickle fortunes didn't last.

The friends and lovers I'd pursue

Were, like me, shallow and untrue.

Once there was a time my world was sweeter than I knew,

I held true love in my grasp, but let it go.

How quickly, since, the years have flown,

My fortune, fame, and youth are gone,

Remorseful now, I wish in vain

That once upon a time could come again.

**Fiscal Calisthenics**

The thing I least look forward to,

The root of my financial ills,

Is the vile administration

Of my monthly pile of bills.

You'd think a single guy like me,

Whose needs and wants are all but nil,

Could whiz through funds manipulation

When it comes to paying bills.

It's the interest on the principal

Of credit card accounts that kills

And perpetuates extenuation

Of MasterCard© and Visa© bills.

Man cannot live by cash alone,

Hence the propensity of credit mills

And the gross accumulation

Of large revolving charges bills.

But when statements say there's naught to pay,

Oh, how that "zero balance" thrills!

No refund as remuneration,

Just dismissed from that long list of bills.

My credit's good, I shouldn't brood

Upon this fiscal tribulation,

But if I had my druthers,

I'd druther hide out in the hills

Than face the monthly calculation

Of my bills, bills, bills.

**Bad Heir Day**

When often intestate a rich man dies,

From out of the woodwork suers materialize.

Long unheard from relations from far and near,

Each one crying and vying for a share,

As they petition the lawyer to find a solution

To an awful case of "heir pollution".

**A Dancer's Dilemma**

The dancer Mark Balas\*

Had a gig down in Dallas,

But the welcome he got there was rough.

They said, "Mark, we're refusin',

There's been some confusion,

We thought we had hired Derek Hough\*.

Without breaking eye contact,

Mark produced his contract,

Showed his name there,

Then said with restraint,

"You don't want that prancer,

I'm a much better dancer,

And besides, I'm here

And he ain't."

\*Two of my favorite “pros” from “Dancing With the Stars”

**Captain And Master**

Am I the captain of my ship?

Am I the master of my fate?

Fate, or destiny, it seems,

Often has a peculiar way

Of ignoring a person

For most, or all, of his life,

And then suddenly finding him

At a most unexpected time,

And thrusting him

Into the most unanticipated circumstances.

How can blind fate know better than we do

What we should or should not be doing,

And why should we have to accept that as our destiny?

It is far more important, I think,

Not to miss the opportunity to understand

That the real privilege of a lifetime

Is knowing and being who you are.

**Some Bare Facts About Lady Godiva**

Lady Godiva wasn't trying to be cute

When she went for that ride in her birthday suit.

It was her husband's taxes she protested,

All butt naked and bare breasted,

She only did as he'd suggested, so any argument was moot.

The townsfolk of Coventry were warned not to peek,

And no lecherous looks at the lady to seek.

But one sneak did succumb,

Later called "Peeping Tom",

And was struck blind and dumb 'cause his morals were weak.

When Lady G. returned home, she re-braided her tresses,

Re-robed and prepared for her hubby's redresses.

But he didn't rebuke her for going out starkers

Or for publicly displaying bum, twat, and knockers,

And, though chagrined, he rescinded his taxation excesses.

**Of Mice And Moose**

If the plural of mouse is mice,

And more than one louse is lice,

Then it seems to me, that logically,

The plural of grouse should be grice.

A single goose duplicates into geese,

A mongoose produces mongooses,

So let me stick out my neck

And ask why the heck

The plural of moose is moose,

And not meese,

Or much better yet,

Why not mooses?

**Simply Senryu**

Belief is like a

Sabering wind measuring

The depths of one's soul

Straining to be heard

O'er the din of ignorance

Who cries for reason

**The Greatest Gifts**

Why should we fear what awaits us when we die?

Why worry about what can be neither expected

Nor even imagined?

We should live for today,

Anticipate tomorrow,

And remember yesterday.

We already possess the greatest gifts:

Life,

Hope,

Memory.

In nothing else is one truly rich;

In nothing else can one be truly destitute.

**Let There Be Limericks: A Little Bit Biblical**

**Adam and Eve**

Some biblical stories are poorly conceived,

Like, for instance, the one about Adam and Eve.

I find it *outré* how they came into play,

She from a "spare rib", and he "molded clay".

That's too faulty to fathom and too fey to believe.

**David and Goliath**

The shepherd boy David felt no hatred or wrath

Toward the menacing giant in sore need of a bath.

But as the brute unsheathed his sword and swung it,

David calmly twirled his sling and slung it,

And with one stone cleared his path of Goliath of Gath.

**A Handful Of Haiku**

Spring starts sets the pace

Summer flies then falls behind

Autumn takes the wand

Primed to win the race

Clears three hurdles just to find

Winter's grasping hand

Cold with no remorse

Obstacles o'ercome and then

Spring joins in again

**Don't Let Her Size Fool You**

Tiny ballerina, Thumbelina,

Dainty little thing.

What a treat to watch her dance,

What a thrill to hear her sing.

She's sweet and pure

And so demure,

But though inordinately small,

When ticked off and on a tear,

You'd swear she's

Ten…

Feet…

Tall!

**Before And Again**

The past is dead.

Death,

Like birth,

Is just one more phase of existence.

Most of the time I believe I succeed in believing this.

I look at my time on earth as an opportunity

To evolve, and move on, and cross over,

And although I may be at odds with religion and God,

I still manage,

Somehow,

To maintain a sincere,

If tenuous,

Belief in eternity.

And that belief is simple:

No good or evil ever really ceases to exist.

Life of any kind is energy,

And energy can neither be created nor destroyed.

It merely gets recycled.

The pure of heart,

However few,

And the purely evil,

However many,

Have been here countless times before,

And will be here countless times again.

**Such Stuff As Dreams Are Made Of**

The narwhal, so some people say,

Is the unicorn of the ocean,

And when he does what narwhals do,

He's poetry in motion.

His "tooth", an ivory swordlike tusk,

Is unique and rather spiffy,

Although it has a tendency

To make his love life iffy.

The bigger ones are thought to be

More sexually prolific,

But that's the stuff of fantasy,

So, let's not get more specific.

Norbert Narwhal's girlfriend says

That even though she's flattered,

She likes him for his intellect,

His size has never mattered.

**In Time**

At a certain age

Nothing is left

But forgiveness.

So many things

Left unsaid,

Undone.

So much said

And done

That one regrets.

It comes

To us all

In time.

**Agrarian Job Security**

An itinerant field hand named Boyd

Excelled at a job that he really enjoyed.

But the skills he used when in close quarters

With farmers, wives, and sons, and daughters

Were the principal ones that kept Boyd employed.

Now he had a twin brother named Floyd

Whose sexual bent oftentimes annoyed Boyd.

But he forgave his bro's trespasses,

'cause since he much preferred the lasses,

Boyd was glad when dads and lads toyed with Floyd.

**Simply Senryu**

Save a dream or two

Keep some wishes in reserve

Rainy days ahead

Leftover dreams and

Worn out wishes wash away

On a rainy day

Waste no time waiting

Soon enough life's storm will pass

Learn to dance through it

**The Still Legendary Lizzie Borden**

"Lizzie Borden took an ax

And gave her mother forty whacks.

When she saw what she had done

She gave her father forty-one."

Whoever wrote this jump-rope song

About Lizzie Borden got it wrong.

Though she did give her stepmom ax whacks aplenty,

By the coroner's count there were no more than twenty.

Then before anyone could scold her or scoff,

Lizzie took her little hatchet,

And whacked her daddy off.

And how many love taps sent Papa to heaven?

The doc thought maybe ten,

No, better make that eleven.

What made Lizzie do it,

What caused her to snap?

Was she simply fed up with her family's crap?

Was stepmother's embrace somewhat less than maternal,

And her dad's fond caress somewhat more than paternal?

Then, of course, there's her sister who saved her from grief

When she helped her burn evidence,

And then on the witness stand raised her right hand

And very politely lied through her teeth.

The inquest was heated,

Everyone testified,

And though she changed hers often,

Liz was well-alibied.

All through the trial she sat calm and unmoved

And was finally acquitted, her guilt never proved.

Now, all these years later her legend lives on,

Of the usual suspects she's still number one.

When I read about Lizzie, I have often opined,

If she had been musically,

As well as murderously, inclined,

I wonder if Miz Liz would still be so well-known

If her axe had been a saxophone.



Poetry is an echo asking a shadow to dance.

Carl Sandburg

**I'm Old-Fashioned**

I'm an old-fashioned fellow

In a new-fangled world,

A square peg in a very round hole.

Gone's the world I grew up in,

This one's in a tailspin

And spiraling out of control.

Sometimes it's hard to keep up

As the world rushes by,

And technology isn't to blame,

But the whole human race

Needs to slow down its pace

Before velocity snuffs out its flame.

**As He Sowed**

A promiscuous farmer from Leeds

Took delight in lascivious deeds.

Throughout the countryside he was well known

For plowing and sowing fields not his own,

And for not owning up to the fruits of his seeds.

But one day this gadabout farmer,

Who was much more a cad than a charmer,

Found himself screwed and sued

When three maids whom he'd wooed

Said he tricked them and pricked through their virtuous armor.

**What I Know**

I know I'll never be

More than I am

I can only try

To do each day

The best

I can

I know I can't undo

Mistakes I've made

I can only try

To restitute

Old debts

Unpaid

I know I cannot halt

Or alter time

I can only try

To better use

What's left

Of mine

**You Don't Have To Be In love**

You don't have to be in love

To write a love poem,

But you must believe in love

To write one well.

You don't have to croon like Bing

To sing a love song,

But the tune you choose to croon

Should cast love's spell.

You don't have to woo with gold

To win a sweetheart,

Just let her know that she outshines

The stars above.

You don't have to be in love

To say I love you,

But you must believe you do

To be in love.

**A Sonnet For Spring**

Phooey on sonnets 'bout flowers in Spring!

Those moldy crotchets are trite and cliché.

There's nothing 'bout flowers that makes me sing,

Ne'er to my love a bouquet would I bring,

She isn't keen on that stuff anyway.

Here is a list of a few other things

She coyly suggests she'd prefer I bring:

A silver Rolls Royce, a Tiffany ring,

Deed to a villa or castle in Spain.

To do so I'd have to live on a string,

And debt is a very cumbersome thing.

She smirks in reply, "No gain without pain."

If one day my love's dear neck I should wring,

Sing Sing, I hear, can be lovely in spring.

**Where Do I Start**

Where do I start

To differentiate the present from the past

And deal with remnants of a love I thought would last,

But didn't last?

When I recall your warm embrace,

Your gentle fingers on my face,

I fall apart.

How to decide

Which hopes and dreams were yours and which were mine?

Our lives were tangled like the tendrils of a vine,

Hearts intertwined.

The photographs and souvenirs,

Sweet memories are laced with tears

I cannot hide.

Our love soared high.

I thought it strong until one day you told me no,

That loving me had caused you too much woe,

So I must go.

And though I tried to understand,

I didn't 'til you took my hand

And said good-bye.

But I get through,

And I suppose in time one day my heart will heal.

I hope it will.

And though I can't say where and don't know when,

But should love come my way again,

There still will be a part of me

That won't stop loving you.

**Lessons Learned**

Wrong is shameful in both the old and wise,

Take it from one who's lived long enough to know.

Life is a stormy sea of wicked woe,

And tears are no less wet from older eyes.

**In Hallowed Halls Of Ivy**

In hallowed halls of ivy 'cross the nation,

In dorm rooms and classrooms,

Quadrangles and halls,

In locker rooms and laundry rooms,

In bookstores and malls,

Campus U's and coffee bars,

City trans and private cars,

Etc., etc., etc.,

Students and academics alike

Love to get up early and stay up late

To discuss or argue and debate

A plethora of currently controversial,

Debatably debatable,

Arguably arguable issues, i.e.:

Evolution or creation;

Salvation or damnation;

Missile ranges; climate changes;

Global warming; eco-farming;

Obesity; incontinence;

Casual sex or abstinence;

Fracking off and whacking off;

Free love or marriage,

Same sex or straight;

Labor or capital;

Minimum pay rate;

Democracy or autocracy;

Despotism or anarchy;

Christianity or paganism;

Civilization or barbarism;

Religion or terrorism;

More prisons or more schools;

Why so many grammar rules;

Why the federal deficit mounts;

Whether oral sex really counts;

Wearable technology;

Is war a perversion or merely perverse;

Our position in the universe;

To be or not to be;

Is there and end to infinity;

Etc., etc., etc.

And they always strive with utmost care

To present both sides of a question equitably

Because it makes them feel aloof and erudite,

Impersonal yet superior,

Open-minded, objective, and fair,

Detached from everything but essential abstract truths.

With meticulously researched facts

Neatly organized on index cards or iPads,

They argue passionately and hotly,

But behind the facts and figures,

And once they've gotten past the fads,

They have no real passions

Or even any real feelings about the issues

One way or the other,

Except the somewhat nagging concern

That they might be right…

Or wrong…

And then what?

**Prima Ballerina**

Pale limbs, vestigial breasts, long, slender alabaster neck,

In classic first position she stands alone in the spotlight,

Center stage, accepting her last applause.

It's tumultuous tonight, but midst cheers and bravas

She's certain she heard some guffaws.

Statuesque and sublime, she reflects that it's time

To quit the glittering world of ballet.

No longer breathtaking "Cracking Nuts" or "Swanlaking",

She can't *pirouette*, *arabesque*, or *plier*,

And gets no elevation when she tries to *jeter*.

She's danced with the best, and loved more than a few.

They'll enshrine all her *tu tus a*nd her best toe shoes, too.

So adieu to the realm of the dancing elite,

She's known the thrill of victory and the agony of the feet.

She'll open an academy in the southern part of France

And teach a whole new generation of future stars to dance.

And one day, when she's all alone,

She may write about the life she's known

When she was queen of her arena

And reigned as Prima Ballerina.

**I Bred A Rose**

I bred a rose of color rare

And gave it to my lady fair.

She looked at it disdainfully,

Then, laughing, tossed it back to me.

No man, she said, her heart would hold,

Lest he applied for it with gold.

That one of her high pedigree

Was not for gardeners like me.

I explained the rose for her I'd named,

But there was no swaying one so vain.

My shattered heart and I went home

And sat there in the gloom alone.

The garden that was to me so dear

I let grow desolate and bare.

Then love and roses proved to me

Their resilience and tenacity.

I woke one day in early spring

To find each blossoming again,

And in a spot where all could see

Bloomed the rose my new love bred for me.

**Sound Medical Advice**

I went to the doctor last week to see

If he could determine what's wrong with me.

"I hope you can tell what prescription’s decreed,

Seems I've too much saliva from smoking weed."

"My boy," said he, "I'll tell you what,

You just need to spit or get off the pot."

**The Next High-Tech Generation?**

Imagine, if you possibly can,

The primate called orangutan.

A great many people admire his cuteness;

They don't even seem to mind his hirsuteness.

His arms are so long that his shirts never fit right,

And his legs are so bowed that he scarcely can sit right.

But when pursuing papayas high up in a tree,

Those long arms are perfect for plucking, you see.

So unless you're a barber or tailor man,

There's no need to pity orangutan.

I've just seen on the news what's his latest fad,

He's learning to use an Apple iPad\*.

So, if you wanna find out what he's gonna do next,

You can friend him on Facebook or send him a text.

\*Per the Smithsonian Zoo, Jan. 2013

**A Girl Named Sadie Sue**

There is a girl I know,

A work of sheer perfection head to toe,

Each time I think of her, my heart beats so,

And her name is Sadie Sue.

She has a pair of eyes

That are bluer than West Texas skies,

And there's a hint of promise in her sighs

Of paradise with Sadie Sue.

The way she moves her hips

Can make me tingle to my fingertips,

And when she speaks, the honey fairly drips

From the lips of Sadie Sue.

When she turns on her smile,

It lights the world up for a country mile,

And my humdrum life seems more worthwhile

When I can be with Sadie Sue.

She has her pick of beaus,

And guys all flock around her, Heaven knows,

But by some chance if it were me she chose,

I would be true to Sadie Sue.

And then how proud I'll be

When my dream becomes reality,

And she goes walking down the aisle with me,

The day I marry Sadie Sue.

**Let There Be Limericks: Varying Shades Of Blue**

**Blue**

We met in a sweet garden bower,

I and that shy, blushing flower.

My excitement enlarged

When she told me she charged

By the day and not by the hour.

**Bluer**

A laundryman let his dong dangle

While standing too close to a mangle.

When they stopped it, you guessed it,

It had folded and pressed it,

And now he must pee at an angle.

**Bluest**

A young priest left the priesthood apostate

'cause once as he prayed lying prostrate,

A cardinal bloke

Tried to give him a poke

By offering to christen his prostate.

**Epitaph For An Unknown Soldier**

Rest now

The wind knows your name

It is heard in the song it sings to the stars

Now you can rest

And rest assured that no day

Shall erase your name

From the memory of time

**A Handful Of Haiku**

Earth smiles up at stars

Stretches arms to waning moon

Who will dance with her

Tumbleweeds roll by

Lost lonely souls adrift on

Shifting sandy seas

**Hope**

Hope is often what relieves us,

Helps keep our fears and woes disguised,

But there are times when hope deceives us,

Times when it's never realized.

Some seem content to hope forever,

While ills and torments quit them never,

'til in the end to death they all repair.

When it's too late will they see clearly

That their perpetual hope was merely

A means of denying what was really

Their perpetual despair.

**Let There Be Limericks: A Nod To Aesop And Albert**

**Aesop**

While the ants toiled at storing up food night and day,

Grasshopper did nothing but party and play.

When winter came 'round,

The ants were snug underground,

And the hopper wound up as their special *entrée*.

**Albert Einstein, Relatively Speaking**

Albert Einstein was an interesting guy,

Indisputably smart and reputedly shy.

His legacy's statistical,

But had he been more egotistical,

Instead of E=mc2, his theory might be "Me, Myself, and Pi".

**Simply Senryu**

 Now I lay me down

To sleep perchance to dream of

What's been what may be

Slow dissolve then fade

That last long enchanting dream

At the end of sleep

**Better Things To Do**

Do I believe in God?

Perhaps.

Oh, but not some sour, spiteful, vengeful god

Who would curse me to Hell for my lack of faith in him.

But, more likely, in a god who is too indifferent, or too shrewd,

To be concerned with the petty restrictions,

And jealousies, and squabbles of humans.

Such a god as that seems to have far removed himself

From this place long ago, anyway.

My god and I enjoy an "equi-distant" relationship:

I don't bother him…

What could I possibly say or ask for

That an omniscient god wouldn't already know about?

And he doesn't bother me…

What could he possibly demand I give him,

Or do for him, that an omnipotent god

Couldn't get or do for himself?

This, however, doesn't make me any less devout

Or smug in my belief.

It's just the way it is,

And the arrangement has been working well for us both

For many, many years.

What I do believe is this:

Everyone needs to believe in something.

Belief is an essential part of man's nature.

But it has occurred to me, over the years,

And especially now in light of the world's

Present precarious predicament,

That religion by itself is a pretty flimsy hook

To hang one's hopes on,

And that all extant religions are long overdue

For a major overhaul.

I don't think I'm an atheist, exactly,

I guess I'm just not bigoted enough

Not to have questions.

And I do have questions.

Lots of questions.

And, of course, I have issues with any religious doctrine

That is entrenched in ignorance,

And embraces, teaches, and spreads

Hatred, intolerance, and wholesale slaughter,

Especially when one is expected to follow its practice

Out of deference to family, or peer pressure, or authority,

Not true belief.

And besides,

I have better things to do than waste my remaining time

Paying tribute to some probably non-existent god's ego,

Or listening to the rantings of one of God's "chosen",

Who is, in reality,

Only some self-anointed egotist, himself,

As he blesses or baptizes with one hand,

While handing out guns and ammunition,

Or passing around a collection plate with the other.

So, do I believe in God?

Probably not, but I would like to.

What is my religion?

When I do something good, I feel good.

When I do something bad, I feel bad.

That's it.

**What's A Wife To Do?**

The peacock pulls out all the stops

When attracting a future mate.

He spreads his tail feathers, he struts, and he hops,

And eventually asks for a date.

If she accepts, they soon will be wed

And start planning their family,

And, of course, they both expect to live

Ever after quite happily.

But the peacock's all ego and subterfuge,

While the hen, well, you've just got to pity her.

Though she may apply makeup, and lipstick, and rouge,

Her husband will always be prettier.

**But Something Does**

Did Baal exist?

Or Ishtar, or Astarte, or Isis, or Osiris?

Probably not,

But something did.

In the ancient world there were even more ancient forces,

Mysteries, if you will, that preceded religion.

What is religion?

In my opinion, it’s an invention of mankind

In a feeble attempt to come to terms

With the terrible uncertainty of death.

The origins of these "mysteries" may have been divine,

But had nothing to do with ancient man's conception of god.

In this modern world there must surely be something

To help modern man in his feeble attempt to come to terms

With the terrible reality of life.

Does God or Allah exist?

Probably not,

But, surely, something does.

**Soul Searching**

What do I know of soul?

Nothing but its close conspiracy with death

As the soul disconnects and flies when we die.

The world's soul can be seen in the clouds,

And death looms and hovers high

Over this tumbling rock of earth.

I also see the wind in the clouds

And hear the floating truth the wind conveys.

The world is a Barnum and Bailey hoax,

An elaborate deception.

Does not the earth look flat?

Does not the sun appear to rise and set?

We are but a mere handful of dust

Thrown into the face of the wind.

That may or may not be soul,

But it sifts us along, anyway,

Like the silt of destinies.

No one is accountable for the accident of his birth,

Although he may be for the untimeliness of his death.

Life is a great chaotic secret,

And we are merely ignorant

Searching souls in constant cosmic disarray.

We are all ordinary.

What is extraordinary is that so many of us

Ignore the few strengths that do lie within us

As we try to live with and around our flaws.

"Soul" is an imprecise term,

Or so it seems to me,

Because it can never be fully explained.

"Mystery", perhaps,

Has the advantage of a more precise application,

Because there is always the possibility it can be solved.

**There's Never Been A Time**

There's never been a time I didn't love you.

No time at all, and foolish as it seems,

No day goes by when I'm not thinking of you,

No night when you don't occupy my dreams.

Too young, I fell in love with love's illusion,

Naïve to think that such a dream could last.

I know I should dismiss my heart's confusion,

Move on with life, stop living in the past.

They say the first love is the best remembered,

Time heals all wounds, and broken hearts will mend.

Perhaps there'll come a time when I don't love you,

Perhaps that's when eternity will end.



Poetry is just the evidence of life. If your life is burning well, poetry is just the ash.

Leonard Cohen

**Let There Be Limericks: Silent Silver Screen Sirens**

**Starring Miss Clara Bow**

Here's a tidbit you may not know

About the silent screen siren Miss Clara Bow:

All her films were a hit,

What she had was called "It",

And the '20s were lit with Miss Bow in the show.

**The Lady Was A Vamp**

The vamp Theda Bara was quite a gal

On the screen in her roles as a "*femme fatale*".

She wore costumes revealing

That were often scene stealing

But were still quite appealing to male co-stars, et al.

**Nicely Naughty**

Silent vamp Nita Naldi was an Irish dolly

Who began her career in the Ziegfeld Follies.

She was pursued in films by paramours,

Such as R. Valentino and J. Barrymore,

And finally "talked" on TV in the '50s, by golly.

**The Ballad Of Freddie And Flo**

This is a story about Freddie and Flo,

They lived in Baltimore a long time ago.

It might be called a May-September romance,

And shows how love can blossom, if it's given a chance.

Flo taught Sunday School, her reputation was pure;

When asked his occupation, Fred said "entrepreneur".

Where he came from was a topic for debate,

Maybe Cleveland or Seattle, but nobody was sure.

Now, Florence was quite prim and proper, you know.

Her daddy was a Baptist preacher, and though

She'd had schoolgirl crushes by the score,

Like on Valentino and that John Barrymore,

But something 'bout this Fred made her knees grow weak,

When he was near, she couldn't find words to speak.

Those Sunday mornings all to her were a blur

'cause all through the sermon she kept sneaking a peek.

Young Freddie Jones was quite the man about town,

And lots of ladies let him squire them around.

Tall ones, short ones, large ones, and lean,

He kept quite a scorecard, if you know what I mean.

But that preacher's daughter wouldn't give him the time,

She seemed to think that she was much too refined.

Until one day as he was leaving the church,

She dropped a hint if he should call, she wouldn't mind.

Flo's invitation took young Fred by surprise,

What her intentions were he couldn't surmise.

She'd always seemed to him a standoffish lass,

As if she thought she was a queen, or maybe made of pure glass.

But clearly, she was not some snobbish recluse,

And to decline her invite, he had no good excuse.

Still he was on the verge of saying, "Thank you, but no",

When the preacher made an offer Fred just couldn't refuse.

Flo's dad was getting near the end of his rope,

That she would wed he'd all but given up hope.

Her views on virtue were as cute as could be

When she was ten or twelve, but now she's past thirty-three.

So when she seemed to show some interest in Fred,

He saw his chance, and he thought "Full steam ahead!"

As he shook Fred's hand, he whispered into his ear,

"My boy, I'll pay you fifty dollars if my daughter you'll wed."

Now fifty's not a lot of money today.

In 1910, though, it went quite a long way.

A spinster for a wife on Fred's agenda was not,

But he warmed up to the notion when dad sweetened the pot.

Fred hardly could believe what he was hearing was real,

But what her dad suggested had a certain appeal.

So Fred applied his special marketing ploy,

"Make it an even hundred, sir, and you've got a deal."

So Freddie Jones stopped his tomcatting around,

And with his new bride soon was settling down.

On their wedding night he met a whole different Flo

Who showed him things in bed Fred never knew he didn't know.

They both were happy as two peas in a pod,

Fred stopped entrepreneuring and applied for a job.

He quickly lost the hundred on a horse at the track,

And so he started running numbers for the Baltimore mob.

A year went by and then their little family was three,

But one day Fred got busted, and Flo found out that he

Was not Freddie Jones, and that his real name was Yates,

And he was warranted for bigamy in seventeen states.

Freddie went to prison; Flo moved back in with dad

Who had to give up preaching when the gossip got bad.

When Florence learned the truth, she called her father a beast,

He should have had the sense to offer Fred five hundred, at least!

So that's my story about Freddie and Flo,

It could have had a happy ending, but no.

Destiny's to blame their baby, too, turned out bad

Because, of course, the lad grew up to be a cad like his dad.

But his career of vice and dissipation was brief,

At his incarceration fathers sighed with relief.

One could conclude bad attitude made Junior a jerk,

Or just a prime example of genetics at work.

**Point Of View**

When faced with the choice of being moral and dead,

Or immoral and alive,

Most intelligent people will choose life every time.

Fundamentalists, zealots, and petty theologues

Are little more than anal retentives

Whose warped sense of religion precludes

Human compassion and basic common sense.

Is morality, in other words, all in the point of view?

If so, then hypocrisy, in its way,

Must also be a token of civilization.

Morality must keep up with the times and technology.

If God created this ever-changing universe,

Shouldn't He, like us, be expected to change along with it?

**Another Sonnet For Spring**

I used to think, when I was young,

How strange to hear that "Spring has sprung".

I knew that seasons come and go,

But gave no thought to fast or slow.

Summer lingers through September,

Slow to go from glow to ember.

Fall patiently awaits its cues

To fade the leaves and change their hues.

Winter's pace is quick and steady,

Always here ere I am ready.

Its icy grip will clutch and cling

Then yield, reluctantly, to Spring.

Though I am now no longer young,

My heart still thrills when Spring has sprung.

**To A Lady Sitting**

I'd call her handsome.

Not pretty, really, but handsome,

And in her face, there's a subtle trace

Of a faded grace.

Life might bend but never break her,

And her will and courage make her

The very kind of woman a man could need.

She isn't old,

Just no longer young.

No, that time's gone by,

But her dreams won't die,

And her head is high.

Though her past is dark with sorrows,

Her future's filled with bright tomorrows.

Yes, a proud, resilient woman any man could need.

Then she looks into my eyes,

And something's there,

Something warm, something wise,

And I feel my spirits rise

And soar with hers up to the skies,

As if our hearts are one, connecting,

And our lives are intersecting.

I raise my glass in mute hello,

She smiles a bit, and then I know

This handsome, proud, courageous lady

Is just the kind of woman a man like me could need.

**All Too Often**

All too often

Do human dramas

Become

Unintended comedies,

And motivations

Thought so grand,

Depressing trivialities.

The players,

Often missing cues,

Become

The butt of life's atrocities,

And efforts

To appease their god

Just encourage

His depravities.

**There’ll Always Be A Little Texas**

It's nigh on twenty years since I left Texas.

I've settled down, no longer roam,

And now I call Missouri home.

I'm happy here for many reasons…

The lifestyle, people, all four seasons…

And as the years go by,

I must confess,

I think of Texas less and less.

But though distance, time,

And circumstance my take their toll,

To tell the truth, sometimes the fact is

I miss the tumbleweeds and cactus.

I guess there'll always be a little Texas in my soul.

**Tegucigalpa**

She said she'd like to see Tegucigalpa,

It had been her heart's desire since she was ten.

She'd read about it in a book

With lots of pictures someone took,

And ever since to go there was her yen.

She'd like to see the view from El Picacho,

Explore a Mayan pyramid or two,

And pick wild orchids off a tree,

And watch a sunset there with me,

And other things that second honeymooners do.

I brushed her cheek and promised I would take her.

She smiled, and I could see she understood.

She squeezed my hand, and with a sigh,

I kissed her lips one last good-bye,

Then she was gone,

My love, my life,

Was gone for good.

I'm taking her to see Tegucigalpa,

I've kept my word, I'll satisfy her yen.

I'll climb Picacho, and once there,

I'll spread her ashes in the air

And watch the sun set for a while,

Then I'll come home again.

**Better Luck Next Time**

She left me a letter,

Hoped I'd understand.

Things like this happen,

It never was planned.

Sorry she hurt me,

She knows it was wrong.

Tried so hard to love me,

But then he came along.

No use feeling bitter,

It wasn't meant to be.

I'll try to forget her

And move on, *c'est la vie*.

What I thought was true love

Was just one of those things.

Oh, well, better luck next time,

That's how the pendulum swings.

Friends tell me it's better,

And I'd like to agree,

But what if this past time

Was also the last time,

And there isn't enough time

For a better luck next time

For me?

**He Said/She Said**

He said I love you,

Whispering softly

So she wouldn't know he lied.

She said I love you, too,

Whispering softly,

And the lie was multiplied.

**Truth Like The Sun**

Not everything is good and true,

But there is something good and true

In everything.

And truth is like the sun,

Or that annoying ringing in the ears,

You can shut it out,

But it doesn't completely go away.

People stumble over the truth,

Pick themselves up,

And go on about their business

As if nothing had happened.

**The Boy I Left Behind**

I've been thinking of a boy I used to know.

Seems like only yesterday,

Was it so very long ago?

We parted ways,

I don't know when,

I'd like to find that boy again.

Would he approve if he could see

The man that he grew up to be?

So many years have come and gone since then,

And time takes a heavy toll.

Forever young will he remain

While I have grown so old,

And memories begin to dim

Of places I might look for him.

How much that world I knew has changed.

Or has it just been rearranged?

I've been wondering what would happen should I find

Somewhere, tucked away,

The boy I left behind.

What would he say?

Would he like me, or despise me?

Would he even recognize me?

Was that his voice whispering in my head?  
"I'm not the one who changed," it said.

**Christopher Columbus, A Man With A Plan**

Columbus was not the slightest bit offended

At King Ferdinand's dismissive sound

When he declared the world was round,

His was not a plan that very many comprehended.

Though the queen, Isabella, thought Chris a fine fella,

Her spouse wanted nor hair nor hide of it.

"The horizon", he snarled, "marks the edge of the world."

But Capt. C. was convinced that the horizon was not the edge of The world, and that India was somewhere on the other side of it.

"Well, the subject is moot, Spain is broke, we've no loot.

Coffers practically bare, nodinero to spare,

Such a venture is out of the question.

Why not Egypt, or Malta, or Crete, or Gibraltar,

Or something cheaper that we can invest in?"

As Chris started to go, Isabella cried, "Whoa!

Let's dispense with pecunious tomfoolery.

Though we've no ready cash for a project so brash,

I can hock some, or all, of my joolery."

So three ships were anointed, and westward they pointed,

And the horizon they bravely set sail for it.

But the monarchs bailed when Chris' treasure search failed,

And to Spain he returned, but no honors he earned.

Instead, he was stripped of command and put in jail for it.

Later, of course, his accomplishment was plain,

And a whole New World was laid open for Spain.

No, Columbus wasn't looking for America when he "found" it,

He just couldn’t seem to navigate three caravels around it.

**Simply Senryu**

A hell of a thing

To happen to a person

That is what life is

What's this thing called death

The ending of the first act

Or final curtain

**A Twisted Path**

Life is at best a twisted path,

A crooked line from start to end.

Often murky, sometimes clear,

With ups and downs and curves and bends,

Always unknown which way it wends

Until the very end is near.

But, however twisted, craggy, flat,

Strewn with stones, or smooth as glass,

The path we take is up to destiny.

No matter how we may obsess,

To no avail we second guess,

What follows life will always be a mystery.

**Don't Hate Him Because He's Beautiful**

Quirina and Quiqui Quetzal

Were a truly splendiferous pair.

They won first prize at Mardi Gras

As if nobody else was there.

This had ruffled a number of feathers

Among some who'd come very far

And spent weeks and months on elaborate costumes,

While the Quetzals were "come as you are".

But they'd been down this road before,

And Quiqui had a plan.

He'd arranged to start a brawl or two

So later Quirina could brag

That he really was her "macho man",

Not just a sissy guy in drag.

**The Ballad Of Daphne And Jack**

Listen, my dears, and I'll tell you a tale

Of a princess, a pirate, and glory.

There's a shipwreck, a rescue,

A romance, a ransom,

And a handicapped whale in the story.

There once was a princess, fairest of all,

But also quite vain and spoiled rotten.

She had a semi-private

Affair with a pirate

That would be but for me now forgotten.

The pirate, Mad Jack, was bloodthirsty and crude,

When upset, he'd explode, blow his top off.

Merchant vessels he sank,

Made their crews walk the plank,

Or, more rudely, their heads he would lop off.

One day Princess Daphne set out to sea

With her maid, they were bound for Majorca.

But the maid, in a gale,

Was swept over the rail

And inhaled by an asthmatic orca.

Lifeboats were lowered, the crew clambered in

And rowed quickly away, only thinking

Of saving their own necks,

Not the princess below decks

Left alone on a wreck that was sinking.

Then through the storm a ship hove into view,

At first Daphne though it would dodge her.

But before she could hail her,

She felt courage fail her,

From its mast flew a vast Jolly Roger.

When Princess Daphne was brought before Jack,

She was haughty, but thought he was handsome.

But to his greedy eyes

This fair royal prize

Represented a shipload of ransom.

But Jack was still human, Daphne was too,

And soon they were sharing their privates.

To his quarters she moved,

And his crew all approved,

Not one loves a love tale more than pirates.

And what of the ransom, yet to be paid?

Well, here the plot gets even deeper.

The stingy king said to Jack,

"No, I don't want her back.

It's cheaper for me if you keep her."

So Princess Daphne became Jack's sea wife,

And though common, but not mandatory,

When they became parents

They stopped being pirates

And passed peacefully out of the story.

For now then, my dears, that's the end of my tale,

An adventurous one hard to equal.

But, if I may be so bold,

And there's more to be told,

It may one day unfold in a sequel.

**A Handful Of Haiku**

A questioning breeze

Cutting moonlight into stars

Always asking why

Cicadas singing

To fireflies sifting moonbeams

Lazy summer night

**A Spiritual Agnostic's Prayer**

Dear God, in whom I have little faith, help us.

I find it difficult to believe in you,

Even though I do believe that the need for belief

Is part of the essential nature of Man.

But, the opposite of faith is, in my opinion,

Not disbelief, but unbelief,

And it is, also in my opinion,

Unrealistic to believe that any one faith

Is better than any other,

Or that any one faith is worth killing or dying for.

But if I am to accept the infinite Evil

That exists in the world today,

Then I can only pray that

Infinite Good exists as well,

And that it will, ultimately, be manifested

In whatever remains of our humanity.

**The Ballad Of Daphne And Jack, The Sequel**

Gather 'round me, my dears,

I'll continue the tale

Of a princess and her pirate lover.

Of her crown unencumbered,

They pillaged and plundered

As they wandered the seven seas over.

Maritime crimes were elating,

And invigorating,

'til Jack noticed a bulge in her tummy.

The princess first was offended,

But then she comprehended,

He would soon be a dad, she a mommy.

Two months later, one morn,

Daphne's baby was born,

She said, "Time to rethink our position.

If we stay here, our child

Will grow wicked and wild,

We must provide better, milder conditions."

Jack's crew were confused

When he told them the news,

All they knew how to do was be pirates.

None of them had a dime,

And all too far past their prime

To go home and move in with their parents.

Jack chuckled and chided,

Their fears he derided,

And then much to their mirth and enjoyment,

He said, "We'll start a new industry

That sells hospitality

And offers year-round and seasonal employment."

Do you remember the king?

That mean, stingy old thing

Died alone in his big empty palace.

But before his reign ended,

His will was amended,

And Princess Daphne inherited *alles.*

She thought the place would work well

As a swanky hotel

Or a posh B&B just for pirates.

But Mad Jack and his gang

Were arraigned and then hanged,

They should have kept their retirement more private.

And thus, dear ladies and dudes,

My narration concludes

About Daphne and Jack's days of glory.

She turned her dad's mausoleum

Into a pirate museum,

And made a killing, some say,

Conducting tours every day

For visitors who'd pay

To hear a pirating princess' story.

**Now Here's A Question**

To desire

Is to question.

To question

Is the desire to know.

Now here's a question:

Do you ever question

Your desire?

**My Life Upon The Wicked Stage**

Thirty years as an actor have shown

That it takes more than talent to make a star,

Though I tried very hard, I didn't get very far.

When auditions were past,

And I didn't get cast,

Here are some of the reasons I've known:

I was either too young or too old,

A little too ripe or else much too green,

Too over the line or too in between,

Too long in the tooth,

And they were casting for youth,

That's what my agent said she'd been told.

I was either too short or too tall,

My navel an "outie" when they needed "in",

My hair was too thick and the script called for thin,

My skin tone would do,

But my eyes were too blue,

And my dimples too large or too small.

I was either too shy or too bold,

Too over the top or too underplayed,

Too limber and loose or too stolid and staid,

My voice was too brassy,

Or too upper classy,

And my love scenes too hot or too cold.

I had plenty of talent and heart.

With each failed audition I upped my game,

And though often rejected, some remembered my name.

But I never stopped trying,

I kept on applying,

And now and then I'd get the part.

That life seems a lifetime ago.

Three decades and longer I trod the boards,

No Tony's or Emmy's or other awards,

But I can say without guile

For me what made it worthwhile

Was the applause at the end of a show.

Now my acting career is on hold,

As a poet I'm making a brand-new start,

Didn't have to audition to land the part.

I still can be entertaining,

And no agent's explaining

That I'm either too young or too old.

**Jack Be Nimble**

Jack was nimble,

And Jack was quick,

But he miscalculated

That candlestick.

It was skinny and tall,

He was thick and quite small.

When he lit,

It was with an undignified bump,

With a blister

The size of his fist on his rump.

Then a notion occurred

To this game little actor,

Before he tried it again,

Jack would use a protractor.

**Simply Senryu**

Death needs hold no fear

It's just another step to

Who and what we are

And what then is life

Just some preposterous joke

But what's the punch line



Poetry is ordinary language raised to the Nth power. Poetry is boned with ideas, nerved and blooded with emotions, and held together by the delicate, tough skin of words.

Paul Engle

**Tumbleweeds**

Tumbleweeds,

Like lonely searching souls

Adrift on ever shifting sandy seas,

Roll blindly by.

Spindly, prickly fingers

Rasping, grasping,

Scraping, scratching,

Trailing skeletal ribbons

Behind them in their wake,

Ephemeral reminders

Of their sad, brief passing,

And their desperate,

Vain attempt

To reconnect with earth,

And life,

And each other.

In a brutal landscape of arid desolation,

Under a relentless and unforgiving sun,

Tumbleweeds,

Unwilling vagabonds composed, perhaps,

Of memories of where they've been,

Tumble onward,

Forever impelled by an also searching,

And equally lonely,

But coldly impartial desert breeze.

**My Love Is Like A Summer Rose**

Shall I count the ways I love her?

No, that's been done too well before.

Calculate the stars above her,

Or waves as they caress the shore?

Oh, I could list so many ways

That'd put a feather in my hat.

To rainbows, moons, or summer days,

I could compare my love to that.

My love is like a summer rose,

And rainbow's beauty can't compare.

Her love e'er blooms 'neath winter snows,

And moonlight is not half so fair.

But my love's much, much more to me

Than seasons or astronomy.

**A Casual Acquaintance**

She was just a casual acquaintance,

And I a mutual friend.

I remember how we met,

And I never shall forget,

For our romance had such a tragic ending.

A friend of a friend

Was the one who introduced us,

Then left us alone on our own.

We dined and we danced,

Then we danced and we talked,

And then she let me take her home.

We drove to her apartment,

We climbed up the stairs,

I opened the door with her key.

She smiled a little smile,

A gleam came in my eye,

Then she shook hands with me and said,

"It's been such a very lovely evening."

Then turned on her heel and went in.

And so she remained just a casual acquaintance,

And I a mutual friend.

**Blame It On My Youth**

When I was young, I fell in love

With every girl I ever kissed.

Each one, each time

Became my rhyme and reason to exist.

My naïve heart believed in miracles,

And I prayed so fervently

That each girl I'd see would prove to be

The miracle for me.

When a girl was on my mind

Each hour of every night and day,

Then often I'd forget to find

The time to eat, or sleep, or pray.

And if I cried each time I tried

But still would lose the game,

I never thought to fault my heart,

In truth,

I only had my youth to blame.

**Girls In White Dresses**

I still have my own teeth,

My hearing's mostly unaided,

I still dream about girls

In white dresses with sashes.

But sometimes I feel

Out of sync and frustrated

When I wake up alone,

And the fantasy crashes.

I didn't mind growing up,

But growing old's overrated.

**Words**

Words have shapes,

Each shape crafted from elements

Of the immeasurable power of the alphabet.

Each letter has meaning within its sound;

Each word is a compacted spell.

How undernourished speech is.

Words are timeless,

They never exit genesis.

**The Race**

Spring begins the chase

And quickly sets the pace.

Then Summer takes her place,

But stumbles, and then tumbles into Fall.

She gamely picks up the baton

To carry on,

But loses face

When Winter sweeps right in

And wins the race.

**The Sea Of Love**

Love demands no explanation at the start.

When the game of love's in season,

There is no governor of reason,

All that's needed is a firm, courageous heart.

With youth, and charm, and beauty in control,

The sea of love is easier to troll,

But one day when all charm and beauty's gone,

And the succulent allure of youth has flown,

You'll rue the ones you caught and then tossed back,

And all the times you chose to hesitate

Before you cast your line, alas, too late.

But good things often come to those who wait.

The sea of love is teeming still,

And angling is no less a thrill.

The fish are older, now, and wiser, too,

And the same old fishing lures won't do.

That trophy catch, that wish fulfilled,

Will not be caught with rod and reel,

So leave at home your pail and creel.

Your permit's good, it won't expire,

All older, wiser fish require

Is a lot more patience…

And a better bait.

**How Still The Trees**

How still the trees outside my window,

Their autumn leaves now slick with rain.

Though summer's gone, sweet mem'ries linger

Of sun-streaked hair and lips of flame.

Faintly I hear hoar winter calling,

As shorter now the days are falling,

But spring sleeps just around the corner

To waken in dew time again.

**Sticks And Stones**

A rhino's eyesight is really myopic,

Perhaps that's what makes him so misanthropic.

His hearing and reflexes, though, are sublime,

He can turn on a nickel and stop on a dime.

The projection that grows

On the end of his nose

Is not really a horn, though,

As one might suppose.

And when he needs scratching,

There's another small hitch,

His legs are too short,

So he can't reach the itch.

He's ugly, pugnacious,

Rude, and unsociable,

And his manners at mealtime

Are simply atrociable.

And should you insult him,

He'll never reveal it.

His hide is so thick

That he won't even feel it.

**Axiom**

An axiom I once heard states:

If you always do

What you've always done,

Then you'll always get

What you always got.

To paraphrase and reiterate:

What's worse,

Waking up one morning

And realizing you're not

What you hoped you'd be,

Or realizing you still are

What you always were?

Tack on this wisdom to round out the plot:

You can only do the best you can,

So, remember as you end each day,

Tomorrow hasn't happened yet,

And yesterday is best forgot.

**Let There Be Limericks: The Bard Robbie Burns**

The bard, Robbie Burns, was a braugh bonnie fellow

Who wrote fine Scottish verses both lilting and mellow.

He spent most of his days

Prowling “ye banks and braes”,

Whilst at night wi' his wee wyffe he'd wallow.

**Innocence**

She said:

Tell me, love, how do you think wine tastes?

Will it burn our lips? Will it make us glow?

Why is that fruit forbidden, there,

Just beyond our fingertips?

Oh, love, I long to know!

There is so much to taste and touch,

So much to teach just out of reach

Of our little world,

This safe, narrow world.

He said:

What do you think would happen, love,

Should we break the string?

Would it be lovely, thrilling,

Maybe even frightening?

Oh, there is so much we've missed,

And so much more we've misunderstood.

Dare we throw open the door

And break the string?

Shall we bid childhood adieu,

Throw our hearts in the ring

By tasting the fruit, and drinking the wine,

And discovering together if it's good?

**Just Barely Goldilocks**

Not much about Goldilocks is really well known,

Except she liked to hang out in the woods all alone.

Of other customs and habits we have just a splintering:

She was whiney, persnickety,

And obviously skillful at breaking and entering.

No deadbolt or burglar alarm could defy her,

A common criminal, then, is how history should try her.

The three bears, that morning, had gone outside to forage

For sweet berries and nuts they could add to their porridge.

On returning, they found this young girl in their bed,

And their first misconception was that she was dead.

Since she also was human, they were somewhat afraid,

But after looking around at the mess she had made,

They debated the question of how they should treat her,

Then took a quick family vote and opted to eat her.

Now, bears are opportunistic, don't adhere to the letter,

And when it comes to cuisine, "haute's" not necessarily better.

These three had had Christian, a Muslim, a Mormon, a Jew,

And a Tibetan monk, just to mention a few,

But they couldn't care less for religious perversity,

When it came to free food, they were all for diversity.

What they weren't quite sure of was how this one they'd render,

Or was she naturally tender because of her gender?

So heed this warning all squatters, all breakers and enterers,

Before invading the space of home owners or renterers,

Beware lest your miscreant action finagles

A sad end, like our heroine,

Who never dreamed, I'll be bound,

She would ever be found with three bears chowing down,

Complementing their porridge with Goldilocks and bagels.

**A Poet Prepares**

Ballpoint pens or sharpened pencils,

Scads of pads of virgin papers,

These are the tools,

The base utensils,

This poet needs for his mental capers.

Thesaurus and dictionary close at hand,

A steaming mug on the chairside stand.

Prepared, I wait with anticipation…

What's keeping that muse

With the inspiration?

**A Handful Of Haiku**

Changes taking place

Swift and irreversible

Catastrophism

Earth slowly changing

No violent transitions

Gradualism

**Softly, Gently**

If you ever leave me,

I hope you'll do it softly,

Gently.

I fear my heart would break

If I should wake and see you go.

So leave me softly,

Gently,

Before I have a chance to miss you,

Before my arms and lips

Can plead with you to stay

For one more embrace,

For one more kiss,

For one more hour,

For one more day.

Could you really leave me

After all these years?

Could you bear to look at me,

Could you bear my tears?

If leave you must,

And if, I trust,

The leaving brings you ease,

Then go, my dear,

Just leave me here,

But softly,

Gently,

Please.

**A Handful Of Haiku**

 As seasons change we

Watch in awe as Nature works

Her silent wonders

On summer mornings

All the world is bright and fresh

And brimming with life

**A Few Words About Poets**

Poets come, and poets go,

And poets coincide.

Some rhyme time and time again,

Others "free verse" with pride.

But those who let their egos reign

Oft fade and never scribe again.

They succumb to the literary sin of authorcide.

**A Fine Bromance**

A seahorse named Irv finally got up the nerve

To ask a starfish named Larry to marry him.

Said Larry, "Sure, swell, and it's high time as well,

Now it's legal in this aquarium.

But, oh, what I would give if we could live

On an island somewhere in fairyland.

But for you, my love, I'd also move

To Maine, Vermont, or Maryland.

And while we're on the subject, dear,

I guess I'd better warn ya,

That even though it's okay now,

I still won't live in California."

**A Long And Winding Road**

Life is a long and winding road,

Mine follows no design or plan.

Encumbered by its heavy load,

I plod along as best I can.

No star or compass for a guide,

The far horizon is my quest.

No place to stop, or long abide,

Or crawl inside awhile to rest.

Other travelers pass me by,

Some nod or wave, some pay no heed.

Some veer away when I draw nigh,

And so imply no time, no need.

When I've no more time or mind to spend,

When all I've had to say is said,

What prize will I find at the end,

And will it be worth the toll I've paid?

This weary road goes on and on,

So many miles since it began.

Around the bend ahead, it's gone,

Still on I plod as best I can.

**Giving Thanks**

I'm thankful for sunsets,

And rainbows, and stars,

And for ice cream, and cake,

And, of course, candy bars.

I'm thankful for movies,

And for TV, and books,

And that internet banking

Is not as hard as it looks.

I'm thankful I've food,

And a roof, and a bed,

And if I don't want to drive,

I can "Uber", instead.

I'm thankful for family,

And for good friends I've known,

For the generous love and support

They have shown.

I'm thankful for mental

And physical health,

And the myriad small things

I esteem more than wealth.

And even with all the turmoil

In this country today,

I'm still thankful I live

In the U. S. of A.

I will also be thankful,

Until I run out of time,

If I can keep trying

To cheer the world up with rhyme.

My thanks are ad infinitum,

But to pare them down to the core,

I'm simply thankful I've things

I can be thankful for.

**Beneath A Desert Sky**

I sit

Beneath a desert sky

And watch the aisles of stars

Leading away to infinity

As my breath catches

And my heart palpitates

In helpless wonder

I listen

As a desert breeze

Whispers the enduring story

Of the boundless and eternal love

Of the passionate paramour sky

For the coy and maidenly horizon

And how their mystic

Ardor for each other

Is quenched and satisfied

Twice each day

In the rapturous beauty

Of dawn and twilight

I sleep

Beneath a desert moon

Peacefully in the aqueous shadows

Of starlight

Lullabied by the ancient duet

Of the welcoming naked earth

And the caressing desert breeze

**Let There Be Limericks: On Writing**

Writing is for me both pain and pleasure,

The time I spend with pad and pen I treasure.

I must confess, though,

Sometimes I stress so,

When syllables I try to use refuse to measure.

**Favorite Mornings**

I am an early riser,

Usually between 4 and 5 a.m.

That's my quiet time

For reading,

And thinking,

And sometimes writing.

I especially enjoy it when,

After a pre-dawn shower,

I can look out my window and see,

In the apricot light of dawn,

To the spattering applause of rain,

The miscreant predatory night

Being borne reluctantly away

In manacles of rainbows.

**Mary Had A Little What?**

Mary was a shepherdess,

Reputation white as snow,

Until one day she went away,

But where did Mary go?

When she returned, with baby lamb,

It caused a lot of bother.

She would not tell a single soul

Who was the baby's father.

Her explanation was, in fact, quite weak,

Like that other Mary's "lamb" deception,

She claimed it was "divinely got",

An "immaculate ovine conception".

The priests conferred, "Oh, well, perhaps,

It happened once before."

But the people were more skeptical,

"More like Mary Magdalene!", they swore.

Mary's family never bought the tale,

But elected to endear him.

They reasoned, “When he's big enough,

We can barbeque or shear him.”

**The Ballad Of Bunnie And Claude**

Gather 'round while I tell you a story,

At the end you may scoff or applaud,

But I'm swearing to you every word here is true

In this tale about Bunnie and Claude.

No one remembers their names,

Two others hogged all the fame.

Bunnie Packer was a dime-a-dance hostess,

Claude Burrow was a sailor on leave.

He was a big, burly guy but kind of awkward and shy,

And she was stacked like it's hard to conceive.

They met one Saturday night,

And it was love at first sight.

Bunnie's shift that night started at seven,

Claude wandered in around ten.

She was dead on her feet, but he seemed so darned sweet

That when he asked her to dance, she gave in,

And the next thing they knew,

The joint was closing at two.

Bunnie's boyfriend was a bouncer named Bruno,

And as he escorted Claude to the door,

Something gave him a whack, then the whole room went black,

And brawny Bruno fell face down on the floor.

And when the lights came back on,

Claude and Bunnie were gone.

By then the place was abuzz with commotion,

And Bruno spied his boss looking glum.

As he was counting the till, something whacked him, as well,

Knocked him out, laid him flat on his bum,

And what he feared most was true,

The cash receipts were gone, too.

Claude and Bunnie got as far as Penn Station,

They were going to hop a bus for L.A.

It would be so much fun to live their lives on the run,

And maybe stop and get hitched on the way.

But the Navy takes a dim view

Of gobs who miss their curfew.

Bunnie said she had to go to the ladies,

But when she returned from the loo,

The L.A. bus had pulled out, and no Claude was about.

Now what was poor Bunnie to do,

Left alone with her shame,

And not a dime to her name?

Here should be an end to my story,

But to leave her like that would be flawed.

When Bruno found her, of course, Bunnie lied she’d been forced,

And by the time they got back things had thawed.

Back with that dime-a-dance crowd,

But no more sailors allowed.

Two weeks later Bunnie said yes to Bruno,

They had a big wedding bash at the club.

After three days in jail, Claude and his shipmates set sail,

His life of crime neatly nipped in the bud.

Now you can scoff or applaud

My tale of Bunnie and Claude.

**Tomorrow's Just Another Day**

Why worry about what the future brings?

Tomorrow's just another day, they say,

No need to pout, and pule, and pine away.

Instead, I'll relish this day's offerings,

Anticipate tomorrow's profferings,

And strive to keep all gloomy thoughts at bay,

And let the future bring me come what may.

With fortitude I'll weather fortune's stings.

I may not always know the world's largesse,

But sure's the sun keeps rising and setting,

And sure's the world continues its spinning,

Worry is no way out of hopelessness.

A chance to renew, the past forgetting,

Each day's reward is a new beginning.

**Little Pig, Little Pig**

When the wolf applied nicely if he could come in,

The pigs replied thricely he shouldn't.

Then they scratched at the hairs on their chinny chin chins,

And tightly bolted the door so he wouldn't.

But wolves, when out shopping, are not easily put off,

Even faced with the risks they are takin'.

This one ignored the wheezing, and the nagging, rasping cough,

In his lust for ham, pork chops, and bacon.

First, he blew down the straw house, then the one made of sticks,

But by the third he was straining and grasping.

It was a veritable fortress of well-mortared bricks,

And emphysema left him panting and gasping.

With one last mournful howl, the wolf knew he was done

And lay down in the driveway, embarrassed.

The pigs regained their composure and called 911,

But when the cops came, the wolf claimed he was harassed.

The argument raged for an hour or more

'til the cops gave them all a citation.

Still gasping for breath as he slunk from the door,

The wolf was stopped by a squealed invitation.

"Wolfie, oh, Wolfie, please won't you come in?

We'd so like to have you for lunch."

And he would have gone on and ignored the appeal,

If he only knew that "ragout de loup"\* (pr. rah-goo-duh-loo)

Was the entrée, but he had no hunch,

And he was not one to pass up a free meal.

When a wolf's sick and hungry, he might let down his guard

And do dumb things a wolf shouldn't ought to.

But for pigs, it's expedient to get the final ingredient

Required for a tasty "wolf stew"\*.

The wolf's huffing and puffing couldn't even come close

To the pigs' stratagems and devices.

After seven martinis, it still hadn't dawned on the dope

That intelligence wasn't one of his vices.

If he'd had more brains than brawn,

This poor wolf might have known

That the pigs never meant to surrender.

They'd no more need to fear or hate him,

They knew the booze would marinate him,

So when they served him up and ate him,

He'd be quite succulent and tender.

If this tale has moral, I'd like to propose

That "three heads are better than one" be selected.

In this case, not the one who worked the hardest,

But the ones wo worked the smartest,

And as the little piggies guessed,

The wolf was the perfect luncheon guest.

Of course, their table manners weren't the best,

So they still made pigs of themselves, as expected.

**Progress, Not Perfection**

When I write,

I strive for progress,

Not perfection.

Perfectionism,

As I have learned

On far too many occasions,

Can lead to mental paralysis,

Which in turn,

In my case, at least,

Usually leads to

Procrastination.

Perfection is,

I believe,

An illusion.

To achieve it would,

More than likely,

Be more than a mortal

Heart or brain could bear.

No one can make a thing perfect.

God tried…and couldn't…

You've probably tried…and couldn't…

And even though I keep trying,

I can't.

But then,

I'm pretty sure

I don't even want to.

**Climate Change**

All hearts are young and gay in Spring

When youth's charade is in full swing.

Toward love's sweet well you shyly slink,

Once there you do not hesitate to drink

Or stop to think what will tomorrow bring.

Youth, flagrantly ablaze with Summer's fires,

Engulfed in new and strange desires,

In words naïve, but honey sweet,

You prate of love without deceit,

But passion's heat, unbridled, soon expires,

And all the torrid promises you made

By Summer's end begin to fade.

Those fervent words hang dry and bare

When Autumn's chill is in the air,

And rare the fruit that ripens in the shade.

But, 'neath the glaze of Winter's snows

Love's ember dims, yet still it glows.

It hides and bides its time 'til Spring

When hearts revive and come alive again,

And love's sweet well reswells and overflows.

**Life Is A Journey**

Life is a journey to another place,

We know from whence we start

But not the destination.

It lies somewhere,

That terminus,

Within the scope of time and space,

Yet still may be,

For some of us,

Beyond the reach of our imagination.

**Blackbird In A Redbud Tree**

Blackbird singing in a redbud tree,

Why such a sad and mournful ditty?

I like your song, but, oh, tell me

Is it meant to please or pity?

Little brook babbling to a willow tree

Of where he's been and where he's bound for.

He tells his tales so joyfully,

But willow's he can't stick around for.

When romance dies, what's left of love?

A heart that's filled with pain and sorrow.

And all that lingering ache will prove,

Love's here today and gone tomorrow.

Bird moves on to another tree,

Willow bids the brook good-by now.

Does misery crave company,

Or shall I sit alone and cry now?



Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origins from emotion recollected in tranquility.

William Wordsworth

**It's In The Details**

When it comes to poetry and fiction,

The last thing a writer should want to be

Is a liar.

Ironically,

In his quest for the truth,

A writer must frequently lie.

Absolute accuracy is not the point

In a poetic or fictional landscape.

The most important element

Is that the writer,

Himself,

Like the most convincing actor,

Believes the lie he is telling.

Writing,

Like life,

Is in the details.

What really happened

Is irrelevant.

The truth,

As it were,

If it were,

Can always be found

In the perspective

Of an observant reader.

**If I Never**

If I never lift up my voice,

How will I know how sweetly I can sing, or its tenor,

Or how well I harmonize

With the music of the universe?

If I never open up my heart,

How will I hear the echo of its beating in time with another,

Or feel the exquisite pain of love,

Or the infinite joy of forgiveness?

If I never open up my eyes,

How will I see the beauty in a falling drop of rain,

Or the wonder in the vastness of the skies,

Or what the mirror tells me in its stark honest reality?

If I never spread my wings,

How will I know how high I can soar, or how far I can fly,

Or what it's like to race the moon,

Or dip my fingers in a cloud, or touch a star?

I do not want bitter tears shed o'er my grave

For songs unsung, or deeds undone,

Or fruit untasted, or love untested.

But, if I never learn to live before I die,

What will I do to make it through eternity?

**Let There Be Limericks: The Lone Star State**

Texas is the Lone Star State,

And the people there are really great.

But when they stop to think it over,

If one lone star their whole state covers,

Shouldn't they get an energy rebate?

**A Matter Of Perspective**

I sometimes find myself wondering

Why a Creator would take the time

To create such ridiculously useless things

As, say, aphids and gypsy moths.

And then, contrariwise,

I'll find myself wondering

If gypsy moths and aphids

Ever wonder the same thing about us.

Arguably, I think it is very probably

A simple solemn truth

That humans appear every bit

As ridiculously useless to insects

As insects do to humans.

**A Lesson From The Dinosaur**

Dinosaurs once ruled the earth,

And their bones are found all over.

They're in the ground

Just waiting around

For some paleontologist to discover.

There were thin ones, and tall ones,

And fat ones, and small ones,

But they all lacked one basic requirement.

Though all were distinct,

They all went extinct

'cause they didn't plan well for retirement.

**Reading Is Fundamental**

Most strippers can't do more

Than just "bump and grind",

But I know one who reads

Every book she can find.

From Dr. Seuss to Schopenhauer,

She devours volumes by the hour.

She plays a bibliophiliphic role

As she swings 'round that phalliphic pole,

Which adds a high degree of class

To an act that's mostly tits and ass.

And while she's raking in the tips,

She's turning pages as she strips.

As those who scoff at her soon find,

Her brain's as big as her behind,

And then they whistle and applaud

And all her attributes they laud,

For she's no intellectual fraud,

Nor is she just some tawdry bawd.

I know her name is Ermentraude,

But on the grand marquee out front she's "Maude,

The broad with a broad, broad mind."

**Simply Senryu**

More feasible now

Evolution calls the shots

Darwin got it right

We're in the same boat

But we're not all rowing in

The same direction

**Wishful Thinking**

I'd like to walk once more on a pristine shore

And feel the morning sun caress my face.

I'd like to smell the crisp, clean, salty air,

Feel playful ocean breezes rustling through my hair,

And should storm clouds dare to gather there,

I'd laugh out loud at those scowling clouds,

Throw off my shroud of solitude and revel in the rain.

I'd like to forget about space, and time, and place,

And age, and loneliness, and pain.

I'd like the bliss of a kiss and a warm embrace,

And if the universe would care to spare

One single final *coup de grace,*

I'd like to be in love again.

**Wonderland Redux**

**Alice**

Alice was just going on eight years old

When Lewis Carroll made her fall down a hole.

The incredible place she imagined she'd found,

Buried in her backyard so far deep underground,

Teemed with people and creatures with fabulous features

Too strange and bizarre for a child to behold.

Some of their stories Lewis failed to unfold,

But five better known ones will now here be retold.

**The Trouble With Tarts**

The monarch of Wonderland,

The vain Queen of Hearts,

Had a prodigious fondness for raspberry tarts.

Though tasty and classy, they made her quite gassy,

And whenever she ate one, it gave her the farts.

Her pastry chefs baked them with infinite dread

Because with each royal "raspberry",

Off came someone's head.

**The Shadow Of His Smile**

The Cheshire Cat wasn't evil or vile,

And his manifestations only lasted a while,

But he never complained as he ebbed and he waned

Until all that remained was a big toothy smile.

Not quite a surprise,

But neither anticipated,

He just sat and conversed

As he evaporated.

**The Brain Drain**

Neither Tweedle twin was renowned as a "comer",

And making clear sense of things was a bummer.

Their brains needed tweaking, and logically speaking,

No one could actually tell Dum from dumber.

Identical twins were Dee and his brother,

Sometimes even they couldn't tell who was which,

Which the other.

Alice asked Tweedle Dee, “What is logic?”

Tweedle thought for a moment, then said,

“Though I never before have considered the question,

Here’s how it rolls ‘round in my head.

A thing that is so, just may well be,

If that’s not too abstrusely quaint,

But I really don’t see how a thing that can’t be,

Can be anything other than ain’t.”

**Tempest In A Teapot**

Tea party etiquette's an important matter,

It's considered bad manners to slurp, spill, or splatter,

And never sip from a cup that is bottom side up,

That exception's reserved for the very Mad Hatter.

Why do such a ridiculous thing's hard to tell,

Perhaps he just didn't like tea all that well.

**A Hare-y Situation**

The March Hare needed something to keep him on track

So he'd stop losing time he could never get back.

Or was it his fate to always be late?

His time management skills had a serious lack.

He didn't need pep talks

Or cute knicker knack words,

Just a new pocket watch,

One that didn't run backwards.

**The Further Adventures**

After this you'd think Lewis would be finished with Alice

And let her live out her days in a manor or palace.

There was one more adventure in which he'd appear her,

But falls and scrapes take their tolls,

So no more rabbit holes.

To start the next one, it's true, all the child had to do

Was simply walk up to and step through a mirror.

**Let There Be Limericks: A Medical Adage Reinterpreted**

Poor old Doc Quackenbush is gone,

How he happened to fall down that well is unknown.

When they found him, he was dead,

His obituary read,

"He should have tended to the sick and left the well alone."

**A Handful Of Haiku**

You can't fool Nature

She demands variety

All part of the Plan

From Nature's viewpoint

Each season in its own turn

Is the loveliest

**Irony**

Being born

We survive infancy

Miracle

Being young

We survive childhood

Fortitude

Growing old

We cannot survive adulthood

Irony

And then we die

When we no longer believe

That what lies ahead

Is better

Than what is past

**A Dragon And A Minotaur**

The dragon and the minotaur are mythological creatures.

They romped and stomped in ancient tales

Of Greece, and Rome, and France, and Wales,

And have kept kids through the ages biting their nails,

But they shared no other features.

A lonely dragon, so the story goes,

Decided the rift was demeaning.

He thought it high time they both along,

And tried forging a bond between them.

But minotaurs, it seems, are bull-headed and mean,

And this one quipped he would never be seen

With someone whose skin was so scaly and green,

And whose breath was so fetid, and foul, and obscene.

The poor dragon blushed,

He turned red,

He turned blue,

Then he started to stutter, and stammer, and stew,

Which made the minotaur chortle, and bellow, and scoff,

Which at first startled the dragon,

Then just plain pissed him off,

And the very last thing the minotaur knew

Was the savory aroma of bar-b-que.

Moral:

A friend is the very preciousest thing,

And well worth the effort to get him.

So, if a dragon should offer to be your best friend,

It's in your best interest to let him.

**Trouble At The North Pole**

Santa has a problem,

Mrs. Claus is really sore,

Working one whole day a year,

She hardly sees him anymore.

Even on his days off

He's hanging out with elves,

Or playing games with reindeer,

Or restocking toyshop shelves.

Could it be that he no longer thinks she's hot?

What do elves and reindeer have that she ain't got?

But Mrs. C. knows just what she will do,

When he gets back this time,

She'll be brand new.

She'll go out shopping for clothes,

And maybe nip-tuck her nose,

Then on to address some excess adipose.

Her bosom's rather small,

So she'll enlarge it.

When asked how she will pay,

She'll just say "Charge it!"

"Then maybe he will pay attention to me.

He certainly will when the credit card bill comes due!"

But will it be enough to change him?

Dare she try to rearrange him?

The big galoot is what he is,

Still he is hers, and she is his,

And his Christmas biz is all that gets them through.

Santa knows he's been neglectful,

But what's a guy like him to do?

Can't disappoint the girls and boys

Who all depend on you.

And, it's true, they don't go out much,

Sometimes to a coffee bar,

But living at the North Pole,

You can only go so far.

Now he has a little secret

He hopes will make her less upset,

Next year he plans to work from home

And just use the internet.

But he won't let her know that right away.

He'll wait 'til he's back home,

And they have some time alone,

Because he's really keen to see

Her brand-new physiognomy

Before he springs his big surprise

On Christmas Day.

**Reasons And Rhymes**

I've used up nearly all the primes of my life,

Heard all the whistles, bells, and chimes of my life,

And traced the seasons and the times of my life

Through the ambiances and climes of my life.

The squandered nickels and the dimes of my life,

The acts of goodness and the crimes of my life,

The dark despairs and bright sublimes of my life,

The loves, the laughs, the grimes, and slimes of my life,

The noisy words and pantomimes of my life

Make up the reasons and the rhymes of my life.

**Life Is A Secret (Per Heraclitus)**

When we die

There awaits for us

What we neither expect

Nor can even imagine

Life is a secret

Death is no mystery

Life's urge leads to death

The enemy of life

Is not death

But indifference

**Let There Be Limericks: Two Questions**

**For The French**

Why does a Frenchman wear a beret,

When it makes him look so suspiciously gay?

They're worn in bistros and shops

To cover their tops

Since fedoras are now déclassé.

**For The Swedes**

Why do the Swedes love a sauna so much?

Does it make their skin supple and soft to the touch?

It won't make them wealthy,

But it helps keep them healthy

Through long Scandinavian winters and such.

**Old Mother Hubbard, A Cautionary Tale**

When Old Mother Hubbard examined her cupboard

And found not a scrap there to munch on,

Not one morsel that clung to an ort or a crumb,

She felt foolish and dumb, and stood sucking her thumb

While her dog, Butch, got nothing for luncheon.

"She forgot to go shopping again," grumbled he.

She just scratched his ears, sighing,

"Sorry, pal. C'est la vie."

When pangs of hunger are felt, humans tighten their belt,

But poor Butch started howling as his stomach was growling,

For a mastiff has needs to be regularly fed.

So, since there was no baloney,

And, since she was nice and bony,

Mother Hubbard wound up on the menu instead.

This tale has a moral, as some nursery rhymes do,

And this one's a little bit gruesome, it's true:

A pet owner's job's to protect not neglect him,

So feed yours each mealtime,

For if too long overdue,

Your "Butch" might be inclined to make a meal out of you.

**A Handful Of Haiku**

Sun looks down upon

A field of yellow flowers

Sees mirror image

Sunflowers gaze up

Stunned to see there beaming back

Their own reflection

**Listening For Echoes**

In my youth,

The prelude to my life,

The nettles of desire

Often stung my fancy.

Now,

Groaning from a heart

Darkened with age

And regret,

I often fancy I can hear

The voices

Of those old lost loves

Drifting back to me

In echoes.

**A Fine And Private Place**

When my long day's journey's over,

And my dues have all been paid,

And I've had a chance to glimpse what's 'round the bend,

When I reach my patch of clover,

And to my final rest am laid,

Will I find it's all been worth it in the end?

Why must thoughts of death be frightful

When it brings an end to pain,

And fears, and tears, and turmoil

On this crowded, noisome plane,

If the next one's more delightful

And more rewarding to attain?

Life has been by boon companion,

Death will be my next best friend.

We'll spend eternity together,

It's like that, always, in the end.

I have no fear, no trepidation,

And I'm convinced that when it's time,

I'll lay me down, no hesitation,

The grave is comfortable and fine,

A chance for rest and relaxation,

A place that's private and all mine.

**Come September**

Come September,

I may wander through

The balmy vestiges

Of Summer's carnage,

And I may also be inclined

To pause and smile wistfully,

In passing,

At the faint but lingering memory

Of the warmth of her embrace.

**The Trouble With Jellyfish**

If Mrs. Paul© got together with Planters©

To create a new breakfast treat

That everyone, kids and adults alike,

Would be eager and happy to eat,

It would be quite spectacular,

To use the vernacular,

One no other product could beat.

They'd tout their new filling

As natural and thrilling,

Organic and super delish.

But who would be thrilled

With a pastry puff filled

With peanut butter…and jellyfish?

**Luck**

Luck = opportunity + preparation.

What luck is not

Is getting what you want.

What luck is

Is surviving what you don't want.

To wish someone luck

Is merely to apply

The odds of probability,

And leaving the outcome to…

Well…

Luck.

**There Oughta Be A Law**

Laws are the pillars of civilizations,

They underlie great cultures

And shore up great states and nations.

But laws are only as good as the people who make them,

And they're no good at all if those same people break them.

A law can be too flexible, too one-size-fits-all,

And too strict ones face being redacted,

But, if a law is necessary and answers a call,

There's no reason it should not be enacted.

This country was founded, to everyone's relief,

On democratic principles, not Bible-based beliefs.

Through the years, as we know, some laws have been amended,

And others, under fire now, are staunchly being defended.

Why shouldn't two men or two women get married?

Why can't women and men work and earn equal pay?

Why's abortion an issue that has so many men worried?  
Shouldn't that be left up to a woman to say?

Why make laws that're bound to be undone

And dismissed or hissed in history?

They should benefit the many, not just the few, or one.

Why that creates such strife's to me a mystery.

For a law I see no justification,

And for that matter, no defense,

That doesn't have as its foundation

Just plain old common sense.

****

Poetry is not only dream and vision; it is the skeleton architecture of our lives. It lays the foundations for a future of change, a bridge across our fears of what has never been before.

Audre Lorde

**Simply Senryu**

Sounds one hears today

Are whispers of tomorrow

Echoing the past

Withheld or bestowed

Forgiveness is a power

Perhaps the greatest

**Another Christmas Day**

Another Christmas Day will soon be here again,

It used to be my favorite time of year.

Now it's not as much fun celebrating for one,

When the one I'd like to share it with's not here.

I still send out some Christmas cards and get a few,

And email greetings pour in every day.

It's so nice to hear from friends and loved ones far and near

And to read the cheerful things they have to say.

But over in the corner where a tree should be,

Now there just sits an empty rocking chair.

And when I close my eyes, I can still visualize

You crocheting afghans with such care.

I'll listen to some carols on the radio,

Have some egg nog and a slice of warm mince pie.

Andy Williams, et al, help me fondly recall

The happy memories of Christmases gone by.

I made out a wish list like I do each year,

Jotted down a lot of things, then crossed them through.

There’s no need for a list, Santa knows that all I've wished for

Is to spend another Christmas Day with you.

**Past, Present, Future**

Most of us come from the past,

And we use it to create the present.

Those few who manage to really excel in life

Come from the future.

They have a vision, a mission that impels them forward.

They are the architects and advancers of civilization.

But there are those many who allow their lives to be controlled,

Manipulated, and molded by outdated religions,

Antiquated traditions, unnecessary routines…

The accepted way…

And they become so bogged down in the past

That it becomes their present, and they have no future.

They are the adversaries and hinderers of progress.

We are all damaged pilgrims making the same journey.

The trick to a successful life

Is not to let yourself be trapped by history.

Get past the past,

Create and live in the present,

And have a clearer vision of the future.

Sound easy?

It isn't, but it can be done.

There are no accidents in life.

Blink or look away for just one second

And life can smack you squarely in the face,

Or you can miss a large part of it altogether.

Sooner or later we all must let go of the past.

We cannot become what we need to be

By remaining what we are.

**Let There Be Limericks: Black And Blue Hawaii?**

**Waikiki Wipeout**

A surfer who suffered a fall

Found a float and for help he did call.

As the drama unfurls,

It seems curls will be curls,

And buoys will be buoys, after all.

**Hurricane Hips**

A substantial *wahine* named Beulah,

To please her husband was learning the hula,

But the wind she created

As her grass skirt gyrated

Devastated most of Maui and half of Honolulu.

**Little Jackie's Christmas Surprise**

Little Jack Horner was sent to the corner

For sticking his thumb in the Christmas plum pie.

The guests were also not pleased when he sneezed on the peas,

Or sang nursery rhyme ballads while fondling the salads,

And then tried to lick consommé spoons on the sly.

But what got him bounced was when he announced,

"Hey, look everyone, what a good boy am I!"

"No, you're not!" one guest spat, "You're a horrible brat,

And I demand that you be reprimanded!"

So Dad gave him a pat on his bum and then sat him

Away in that corner in utter disgrace,

Where he pouted awhile 'til a sly little smile

Soon was spreading all over his little brat face.

Little Jack had one final surprise up his sleeve,

I hesitate to relate it, it's so hard to believe.

It seems that the lad, while his dad said the blessing,

Had peed in the pudding and pooped in the dressing.

Now, why someone would do such a thing is confusing;

Just something a three-year-old boy found amusing.

But the guests dug right in and both dishes did savor,

And exclaimed, "What unusual texture and flavor!

But what made them taste so exotically pleasant?”

Mom said it was love…

But Jackie knew that it wasn't.

If you think that was gross and disgustingly murky,

It's best that I hid what he did to the turkey!

**A Handful Of Haiku**

Summer has moved out

Of temporary lodgings

Fall's lease begins

The natural world

Is an integrated web

Man barely fits in

**Three Secrets**

One of the many secrets of life:  
There is no true freedom.

Man is slave to his own ignorance

And to his own personal sense of reality.

This, in turn, leads to another secret:

The only true sin is ignorance.

All the sought out and accepted teachings

Of priests and prophets,

Rabbis and theologians,

Imams and evangelicals

Are just rhetoric, empty words from hollow men

Purportedly meant to give

Comfort and order to Man's life,

But only succeed in burdening him

With a genuine and profound sense

Of undeserved guilt for sins he did not commit.

All the answers Man thinks

He learns from these teachings about life's secrets

Are merely vague, naïve assumptions

Based on unlistened to answers

To unanswered questions,

In his trite and pitiful attempt

To deal with the biggest secret of all…

The reality of death…

And coming, finally, to the inevitable conclusion

That there is no arguing with reality.

There is no forestalling the inevitable moment,

Whenever it may come.

The best that most of us can hope for is,

That when it's our turn,

We might possibly go saddened but not embittered.

**Let There Be Limericks: Totally Unrelated**

**Shoulda Had A Prenup**

The divorce was drawn up as a draft,

Their property neatly divided in half.

When the smoke had all cleared,

It was just as he feared,

She got the mine, and he got the shaft.

**The Centipede**

Please don't think it odd if I intercede

On behalf of the poor lowly centipede.

Though he does get the blues

When he has to buy shoes,

He's better off than his cousin, the millipede.

**Simply Senryu**

Anachronism

Like an old-time five-and-dime

In a Walmart world

What's become of love

Where does all the hate come from

Why doesn't God care

**Shapes**

The world is full of shapes

That have no place in nature:

Circles,

Triangles,

Rectangles,

Squares.

Circles are pointless;

The triangle

Is the only

Stable form.

Squares and rectangles

Comprise the obstacles

And set the limits

Imposed by the world,

And mold the very shape

Of one's identity.

**S\*\*\* Happens**

When things don't turn out

Quite the way you hoped they would,

Don't withdraw into a shell, or worse,

Don't scream and curse the universe.

Onto each head some rain must fall,

Life is a crap shoot, after all,

S\*\*\* happens.

When you hold on to dreams

Much longer than you should,

You will find out, to your dismay,

With time, some dreams just fade away.

But the world keeps turning even then,

And hearts that break can also mend,

S\*\*\* happens.

But, don't give up on dreams,

Don't banish them for good.

We all will have our turn at plate,

And call it luck, kismet, or fate,

We each get our allotted share,

Life is dispassionate, but fair,

And to everybody everywhere

S\*\*\* happens.

**Pieces**

Never start the day

With broken pieces

Of yesterday,

And never end the day

With those pieces

Still in pieces.

If you put them back together again,

They're much easier, then, to put away.

**One For The Road**

Another Saturday night in a piano bar,

Trying to lighten the mood I was in.

When the waitress said "Last call!",

I ordered a highball

To top off the draft beer and gin.

The guy at the keyboard glanced up at me,

Didn't seem all too keen to go home.

He said, "One for the road?"

I said, "Sure, make it good.

Help me get through the night on my own.

‘Play a tune that reminds me of yesterday,

Life was sweet and complete as could be.

There must be a song

About why love goes wrong,

If you know one, please play it for me."

He said, "Mister, I've just the right song for you,

I wrote it myself years ago.

It's not one of my best,

But it suits your request,

'cause I've been in your shoes, and I know."

As he played and he sang, that piano man,

I couldn't help it, I started to cry.

It was as if he knew me,

His words cut right through me,

And I finally understood why.

Then they turned up the lights in that piano bar,

I thanked him and tipped him a ten.

"It may take me a while

To relearn how to smile,

But thanks to you I'll start living again."

No one understands love, it's a mystery,

And too often it's far from ideal.

It may flame out too fast,

But though love doesn't last

Doesn't mean that it never was real.

That's the lesson I learned in that piano bar,

Now my heart is beginning to mend.

It was just what I needed,

I'm glad that I heeded

Good advice from a wise piano man.

**Mary Had A Way**

Mary had a special way of waking me.

She'd lie there gazing at my face

Until I opened up my eyes.

She'd claim she woke me with her mind,

And I'd pretend to be surprised.

Mary had a hundred ways of pleasing me.

When times were bleak and bare,

The future dark as darkest night,

She'd make candles out of moonbeams,

And she'd love me by the light.

Mary had a gentle way of loving me.

I miss her every day

And will until the day I die,

And every night I tell her,

Just before I close my eyes,

I'm on that lonely road again, love,

That led me once to you.

Those special, gentle things you used to do, love,

Perhaps, someday, I'll know them with a new love,

But it could never be the same sweet true love,

Like the way love was with you.

**Above The Din**

A writer does not shape his time

Rather the times

Shape the writer

Who gives voice

To his time

In his own special way

In hopes that

His one small voice

May be heard

However faintly

Above the din

That time makes

As it marches on

**The Plot's The Thing**

I always try to write poems with a plot,

Sometimes pithy, and sometimes not.

My muse and I team up as one,

But if she bails before it's done,

And I can't finalize what's within,

I'm left without a plot to pith in.

**Poets For Peace**

 Since I was a tot, the world has gone to pot.

When I was a lad, it wasn't all that bad.

When I was a teen, it was somewhere in between,

But now that I'm a man,

I feel I must do what I can

To add some humor, grace, and beauty to the stew.

Of course, my work alone will not

Ease all the turmoil in the pot,

So I'm aiming this appeal at all of you.

Join me in a "Piece Crusade",

And let's write poetry that's made

To touch an adverse heart

And soothe hostility.

For though our faiths and cultures differ,

That's no excuse for us to suffer

From the ignorance and fear

Of intolerance and war,

So come and be a Poet for Peace with me.

**Versatility**

Versatility, versatility,

I have no problem with that,

But my versatility's not virtuosity,

Those two don't go tit-for-tat.

It's a true revelation when my inspiration

Comes seemingly out of thin air,

But I don't analyze, I just write and revise,

I'm so happy my muse is still there.

I write both allegorically and metaphorically,

My verses may well make you think.

Frequently whimsical, but never flimsical,

I don't turn them loose if they stink!

I love writing terse verse and cherish long free verse,

Though I prefer verses that rhyme.

They're lyrical, comical, sensual, spiritual,

Whate'er be my mood at the time.

I write poems to please, not earn royalties,

Though I wouldn’t say no to some pay,

And hope that my versatility will show, categorically,

That I have something worthwhile to say.

**I'm A Poet**

I'm a poet through and through,

Though I cannot explain to you

How it happened or what it was

That led me to it.

I didn't set out to pursue it,

I just, one day, began to do it,

And then ten years flew by

Almost before I knew it.

The poems I pen are mostly true,

Though now and then I stretch a few,

To imbue lines with more *élan*

Is why I do it.

The verse to which I lend my name

Won't tend to fortune nor to fame,

But I'll keep scribbling just the same

And never rue it.

My heart and soul are in my style,

If I can make one reader smile,

My efforts will have been worthwhile,

Although I may never know it.

I'm no Shelley, Keats or Poe,

Or Frost, or Nash, but even so,

I hope in time my rhymes will show

That I'm a poet.

****

Every single soul is a poem.

Michael Franti

**That's Mrs. Santa**

Who's that swell dressed, well-developed lady

Struttin' round the old North Pole?

Well, bless my soul!

That's Mrs. Santa,

You'd hardly recognize her.

Lookin' like a million-dollar baby,

Heatin' up the cold North Pole.

Back in control!

That's Mrs. Santa,

She's had a transformation.

She was always short and plump, but pretty,

Matronly, a "six" at best.

But after just a month in New York City,

She came back slenderized,

And glamorized,

And tantalizing as Ms. Mae West.

Now they're doin' fine up there in their icy palace

Where she outshines the aurora borealis,

And Santa's one happy gent,

In debt, but more than content

That it was money well-spent

To reinvent Mrs. Santa.

**A Tale Of Ancient Times**

This is a tale of ancient times

And a knight of valiant heraldry.

He followed true his courtly code,

The weight of righteousness his load,

All sheathed in heaven's grace he rode,

And practiced naught save chivalry.

From the Pope a rally call went out,

A Crusade to the Holy Land.

A Christian force endorsed by God,

His might would be their shield and rod,

To travel to where Jesus trod

And rescue it from Muslim hands.

With hand on heart the knight stepped forth,

And allegiance to the cause he swore.

He came in piety enthralled,

Pledging fortune, honor, life, his all

In answer to Pope Urban's call

To fight in this most holy war.

The "holiness" of war wears thin

When it endures for three full years.

The knight felt doubt begin to brew,

Still would he slash, and hack, and hew,

And pray for his and each benighted soul he slew,

And wonder why his God would not allay his fears.

Not all who fought were soldiers of the Cross like he,

Many came for just what they could take.

Though claiming to be blessed and heaven sent,

The knight soon kenned their chief intent.

He watched them kill, and rape, and pillage as they went,

Leaving ruined lives and mutilated corpses in their wake.

His faith now frayed, the knight, dismayed,

One day his shield failed to deflect a fatal spear.

His eyes sought heaven ere he died.

Was this for naught, had the Pontiff lied?

In anguish, "Wherefore, God?" he cried,

Then falling to his knees, but not in prayer, he perished there.

Two hundred years the battles raged

With no real Christian victory attained.

The ones who died there now are dust,

No matter if the cause was just,

The Crusades failed, and at what cost,

For so much lost, so little gained.

Here ends my tale of ancient times

And a knight who died vaingloriously.

His life was brief, his ending sad,

He learned too late, as Jesus had,

He'd trusted in an unjust God,

And Death cares naught for chivalry.

**Shadow Dancer**

You've been shadow dancing in my mind,

And memories start to unwind,

You were in love but I was blind

So many years ago.

We were so young that yesterday,

Two children acting out a play,

I missed a cue and lost my way,

And fool, I let you go.

Now do you ever think of me,

Do I appear in reverie,

And is it sweet the memory,

Or have you let it go?

I still have your photograph,

And I could swear I hear your laugh,

It nearly breaks my heart in half

Its music haunts me so.

Of all the loves I keep among my souvenirs,

One memory's remained unchanged

And now it's clear,

You were my favorite love,

That was my favorite year.

**Playing The Game**

There is a game we all must play

Without the slightest hope of winning.

It doesn't cease at end of day,

From start to end, it's one long inning.

The game observes no rules, no guidelines,

Though there well may be a master plan,

Much like a game of "Cat and Mouse",

Or "Tag", or maybe "Catch Me If You Can".

No one gets benched, or sits on sidelines,

Though only two at once can play.

One side's the cat, and one the mouse;

Death is the hunter, we the prey.

The odds are badly stacked against us,

And there is no way to hedge the bet,

But we play with firm determination,

One shot at life is all we get.

There is no coach, there is no scoreboard,

No victory party to attend,

No one can tell the game's duration,

But all too well how it will end.

**Lucifer Wept**

Lucifer looked up at all God had wrought

And he thought,

"This is good."

God gazed down at the world He had made

And He said,

"Something's missing."

So He scooped up some dirt and clay in His hand

And made Man,

But he was lonely.

The Man convinced God he needed a bride,

So a rib from his side

Became Wo-man.

Their life in the garden was serene as could be

Until she found that tree,

His plan all along.

And when he understood what God had in mind

For Humankind,

Lucifer wept.

**Coming And Going**

As little movement as my entrance caused

In the fabric of the universe,

I expect my exit,

When and where it comes,

Will cause no less a ripple

In that same fabric,

Or in the sands of time.

**From Start To Finish**

Life starts with hopes and expectations,

Then encounters trials and tribulations

That are rife with tempting fascinations

And fraught with ruinous frustrations

That exacerbate our limitations,

But ameliorate our inclinations,

Which may vindicate our speculations,

Or facilitate procrastinations.

Still we allow imaginations

To mitigate our meditations,

And to life's moral machinations,

With all their false interpretations,

We apply applause and adulations,

And supply vain verbal venerations

For dialogues and dissertations

That foretell angelic visitations,

Or describe some heavenly habitations,

But can't forestall our gravitations

Toward death's foul rot and desiccations.

It ends in one bleak observation,

There is no joy, no jubilation,

When the grave's life's final destination.

**The Epitome Of Beauty**

There is nothing lovelier, to me,

Than the verdant beauty of a tree

Dressed in Spring and Summer's finery.

Her charms grow languid and more lush

When Fall's caresses make her blush.

And still I find her passing fair

When cruel Winter frosts the air,

Winds his wanton fingers through her hair

And strips her leaves and leaves her bare.

She feels no shame or hides her face,

And needs no poet to plead her case.

It's Nature's plan she must embrace

And wait for Spring with dignity and grace.

And so remains the tree, to me,

Of beauty the epitome.

**If You Listen Closely**

Nothing is as important as being present

In your own life.

But for some,

Life sometimes becomes submerged

Beneath the dark waters of a secret place,

No longer able to remember the past,

Incapable of holding on to the present.

And sometimes,

On a quiet night,

If you listen closely,

You might hear those old imprisoned souls

Screaming in silence

That life is a hell of a thing

To happen to a person.

**The Saga Of Veronica Vole**

This is the saga of Veronica Vole

Who committed the perfect crime.

She murdered three lovers,

No, not all at once,

She did 'em in one at a time.

The first was a lemur,

A two-timing schemer,

Who seduced all thirteen of her nieces.

Every female enticed him,

So she sliced him and diced him,

Then stir-fried and ate all the pieces.

The second, a lobster,

Was also a mobster

Who threatened her once with a putter.

So she got him alone,

Then boiled him well-done,

And finished him off with drawn butter.

The third was a vulture,

Devoid of all culture,

Whose name, so he told her, was Vince.

He was planning to eat her

After he bet her,

So she tased him in self-defense.

In a big pot she tucked him,

Then scalded, and plucked him,

And served him "en casserole"

To her fourth beau, a critter,

Who'll make a good fritter,

She thinks as she spoons out his food,

'cause though she doesn't tend

To have good taste in men,

She does tend to like men who taste good.

Ms. Vole is not a siren or a femme fatale,

The kind of dame who'd tell a guy to take a hike.

At heart she is merely a sweet natured gal

Who simply never met a man she didn't like.

**Backward Glances**

I've been to Cheyenne for the wild west show,

I've climbed a pyramid in Mexico,

Lived in L. A. awhile

To polish up my acting style,

I've been on TV, stage, and on the radio.

I've meandered with *a ma'mselle* near the Eiffel Tower,

Serenaded *señoritas* in a Spanish bower,

I've wined and wooed in Italy,

*Frauleins* pursued in Germany,

And I've lolled with London lasses by the hour.

I've been to Mardi Gras on Bourbon Street,

*I've laissez rouler les bons temps* to a Cajun beat.

The music there was simply grand,

Zydeco and Dixieland,

And Creole cuties can be very sweet.

Glancing back at everything I've seen and done,

I think that, all in all, it's been a very happy run,

And well worth the remembering,

I wouldn't change a single thing.

I don't regret a moment of it,

No, not one.

**The Name Blame Game**

A Capulet named Juliette

Exclaimed to her ardent beau,

"You're not to blame Montagu's your name.

By its nature a rose's aroma is sweet,

Though in nomenclature it be not so neat,

But wherefore art thou Romeo?

Why can't you be John, or Frank, or Ben,

Gregory, Justin, Bill, or Farley?

I'd even go for Joe, or Charlie,

Or Abelard, or even Sven."

"Hey, I didn't choose it, so please don't abuse it,"

The young swain gently pleaded.

"We must conclude our families' feud

If our love's to proceed unimpeded."

But these star-crossed lovers

Were destiny's fools,

They drank poison and ended up dead.

In that feud Shakespeare roped them,

When he could have eloped them,

And written a happier ending, instead.

**This Little Piggy**

The first little piggy went to market;

The second demurred and preferred to stay home;

The gluttonous third one

Ate all of the roast beef,

So the fourth hungry piggy got none.

Although it's not clearly stated,

His thirst must have been sated,

And his bladder inflated,

'cause number five urinated

All the way home.

**She Liked Having Me Around**

She never really said she loved me,

But I could tell that she liked having me around.

She thought those words were overused,

Exaggerated and abused,

And though it bothered her a lot,

I said them every chance I got

To let her know that I liked having her around.

Through countless cheerful celebrations,

And tearful trials and tribulations,

I was her rock, her friend,

Her knight, her circus clown.

The time we had was more than good,

I wouldn't change it if I could.

She didn't need to say she loved me,

Her eyes told me that she liked having me around.

**Sad State Of The Union**

In this so-called modern world today

There's lots of cause for apprehension,

And all the crazy stuff that's going on,

Like the hubbub up in Washington,

Where no-one's getting nothing done,

Is only adding to the tension.

It’s not that I don't care about

The cost of healthcare, global warming,

And homelessness, and poverty,

And gender inequality,

But sheer governmental lunacy

Is what, to me, is most alarming.

I express my views as best I can,

Never preen, or preach, or yammer,

Keep disdain in check, reproaches small,

And strive through verse to rise above it all.

But now and then, when gentler words begin to gall,

I'm rather glad poetic license lets me call

Upon the recourse of bad grammar.

**A Bee In My Bonnet**

Behold the busy bumblebee

Gathering pollen and nectar, his treasure.

He transports it home

To be stored in a comb

For his queen to dine on at her leisure.

How doth the humble bumblebee

Manage all that he does without stumbling?

He toils night and day,

Earning minimum pay,

Her commands he'll obey without grumbling.

Wherefore's he called a "bumble bee"?

Throughout all that rough and rowdy tumbling

Industriousness is no quirk,

There's no task he will shirk,

So, don't smirk, he is anything but "bumbling".

In a thriving hive of buzzin' bees

Will reside several dozen cousin bees,

All of whom are humble bees,

And very busy bumblebees,

Knee deep in bees' activities

And apian proclivities

That show their main necessity

Is just to bee or not to bee.

**Being Bad**

I don't cuss or smoke,

And I don't chew "tabakky";

I don't sniff or dip snuff,

Ugh! That stuff is just tacky;

I only drink on occasion,

Like at sundown and such;

I rarely go to casinos,

Or play the lottery much;

I've never had to pay child support,

Or owed back alimony;

I may go shopping for steak,

But usually bring home baloney;

I don't snort or shoot drugs;

Have no rings in my nipples;

Tried to get a tattoo, once,

But couldn't stand all the tickles.

Folks who're loaded with vices

Seem to have all the fun.

Why am I the exception

And not have even one?

I admit it, I'm dull,

And my life's complete boredom.

Sure, I'd have vices, too,

If I could better afford 'em.

The real reason I'm good,

And I won't try to fudge it,

Is because being bad

Is just not in my budget.

**Let There Be Limericks: The Princess And The Pea**

The queen's plot was more than merely a jest,

But still Princess Winifred proved she was the best

When that small pea-sized lump

Left a dent in her rump

And allowed her to pass the "sensitivity" test.

**Absent-Minded Heart**

Every time I fall in love,

It seems I'm through before I start.

What's wrong with me's

No mystery,

I have an absent-minded heart.

I meet a girl, she seems ideal,

But when Cupid shoots his dart,

I tend to duck and dodge

So it can't lodge

In my absent-minded heart.

Before too long the girl moves on,

Another romance falls apart.

And when she's gone,

I'm left alone

With my absent-minded heart.

I hope, if love should come my way again,

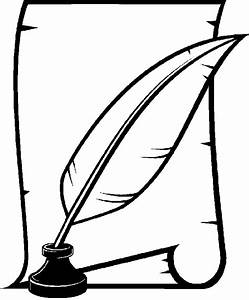
The one who'll win me will be smart,

And in her tender way remind me

To let Cupid's arrow find me

So it can cut the ties that bind me

To an absent-minded heart.

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We all write poems; it is simply that poets are the ones who write in words.

John Fowles

**The How, The When, And The Why**

We started out, as lovers do,

Unheeding as the world slipped by

Of how, or when, or even why

We fell in love,

And nothing mattered then but me and you.

And then one day, as if on cue,

The music stopped, I can't say why,

And there we were then, you and I,

Two lovers out of love,

But were we sad or glad the dance was through?

I think of us now, now and then,

Not of the how, or why, but just the when,

With some remorse but no regret,

And I hope I never will forget,

Even should I let love come my way again.

**A Prickly Situation**

The porcupine's a modest

And mostly solitary beast,

Akin to capybara and to beaver,

Though in size he is the least.

He rarely gets invited

To a bar-b-que or feast,

But long as he's not on the menu,

He doesn't mind it in the least.

He'll never write his memoirs,

Although of stories there's no lack,

But penmanship's beyond him,

He just doesn't have the knack.

And though he ports around a vast array

Of sharpened quills upon his back,

There's not one that's fit for writing

In all the clicking, clacking pack.

When "she" sends forth her pheromones,

And "he" rises to the bait,

Safe sex is uppermost in mind

As he advances to the plate.

His approach must be well-timed, precise,

Lest she shish-kabob her mate.

If they don't get it right the first time…

There won't be a second date\*.

\*Old joke:

Question: How do porkypines mate?

Answer: Very carefully.

**Pomp And Circumstance**

How the majestic spectacle of Nature is revealed

At the end of a dull and gloomy day,

When the bullying, storm foreboding clouds give way

And allow the struggling, setting sun to gild, and flush,

And glorify this tiny expanse of rocks and shrubbery

With an awesome pomp and circumstance of color,

And cast a mesmerizing spell that holds the eye,

And caresses and stirs the spirit like martial music.

**Someplace Comfortable And Warm**

The nights now seem a little colder,

Each morn I wake a little older,

My view of life keeps getting bleaker,

And my will keeps growing weaker.

That star has dimmed that used to guide me

And helped me when I lost my way,

And though there's no one here beside me,

Somehow, I still get through each day.

But life is just what I have made it,

I've some remorse but few regrets.

When comes the end, I won't evade it,

But hope that the reward I get's

Someplace that's far away from harm,

Someplace that's comfortable and warm.

**You And Paris**

Once in a while I'll hear a voice, or see a smile,

A glimpse of hand will brush aside a strand of hair,

And for just a moment I'll be there

With you again in Paris.

The midnight walks along the Seine,

The quiet talks in quaint cafes,

I close my eyes and hear you say, "*Je t'aime*",

And for just a moment there I am

With you back then in Paris.

So young, so gay, how could we know love fades away,

The flame will die when time and distance lie between?

At times I wonder, though, what might have been,

When I think of you and Paris.

**What's Science Got To Do With It?**

Galileo looked through a lens one day

And, boy, was he astounded.

The Earth wasn't flat as he'd been told,

It was, in fact, quite rounded.

Pope Urban VIII then came along

And said, "No, that's absolutely wrong,

For, I, the Church, do not agree, and I'm the Wise One.

It's just as plain as plain can be why my pontifical decree's

The Earth is flat and ends right there at the horizon.

And for infallibility, you know, I am renownded."

So Galileo relented and recanted his boast

So he wouldn't be tortured or turned into toast.

A few centuries passed, a new Pope said he guessed

The old theory might have been misjudged,

Since back then science was begrudged,

And the Church owed Signor G. a pardon,

Or a posthumous papal "perhaps", at the most.

**In My Dreams**

I make a perfect dry martini,

I read and write and speak *Français*,

All my suits, and shirts, and shoes are custom made.

I own a Porsche and Maserati,

A house on Acapulco Bay

With scores of floors of marble tile that's all inlaid.

I have a staff to fetch and carry,

My every wish is their command,

If I drop things, I just leave them where they lay.

All I need do is snap my fingers,

Someone's always close at hand,

And they look after Master Jim in every way.

I host the most elaborate *soirées*,

They're in society's upper niche,

On my birthday and, of course, on New Year's Eve,

Where the hoi polloi and high born

Mingle with the *nouveau riche*,

And they're all the better for it when they leave.

This all may seem a bit pretentious,

And I don't mean to self-inflate,

For wealth and fame, of course, do not equate with happiness,

But, in my dreams my alter ego

Will oftentimes exaggerate

And make seem real what, to be sure, is pure B. S.

**She Wasn't You**

She was gentle, she was kind,

She had a bright, inquiring mind,

And could be playful when inclined,

But she wasn't you.

She had the deepest, bluest eyes

That were as warm as southern skies,

And there was passion in her sighs,

But she wasn't you.

She'd bear my whims and never tire,

And though she filled me with desire,

She never set my soul on fire

The way your kisses used to do.

Some of the years with her were good,

And though I tried the best I could,

I couldn't love her as I should,

So she moved on to someone new.

My memories of her are such,

I miss her kiss, her sighs, her touch,

And now I realize how much I loved her,

Even though she wasn't you.

**What Doesn't Kill You**

The vicissitudes in life I've faced

Have neither dulled me

Nor defined me.

I prefer to think, instead,

That they have honed me

And refined me.

**When One Door Closes**

When I think of how my life's turned out,

I can say without restraints,

This simple boy from dry West Texas did just fine.

There've been some bumps along the way, of course,

But, all in all, I've no complaints,

And any failures or successes all are mine.

When I retired from teaching,

Oh, so many years ago,

To seek my fame and fortune on the stage,

I quickly learned how fleeting fame is,

How feeble fickle fortune's glow,

Still, I've no guilty conscience to assuage.

I make a decent margarita,

I read and speak *un peu Français*,

My suits and shirts are off the rack from JC Penney.

I rent a one-bedroom apartment,

I drive an ancient Chevrolet,

And of stocks and IRAs, there aren't any.

But when the muse of poetry

Sought me out and said, "Hey, Jim,

I propose the role of poet you embrace.

If you let the page become your stage,

Your acting bulb need never dim,

And we can help to make the world a better place."

Sure, my life has had its ups and downs,

But, as I said, I can't complain,

I've my health, good friends, some money in the bank.

My dream is now to write a play or novel,

And if that goal I should attain,

I'll have this practice penning poetry to thank.

**Legacy**

Nor wealth, nor fame, nor progeny have I,

And when I slip these churlish bonds to fly

To whither souls unfettered go to die,

No comet heralds my departure 'cross the sky.

Perhaps someday a budding poet will find

This legacy of verse I'll leave behind.

He'll see no wit nor wisdom for the ages,

Nor note my name writ large in lists of sages,

But, if words have magic, he'll read mine and believe

A life on stage and page was how I chose to live,

And when the time was come for me to leave,

A winsome wealth of words

Was the most I could bequeath.

My name may not live long in history,

And even if, perchance, my verse survives,

It may not alter destinies or lives,

But if its humor, grace, and style

Can give its readers cause to smile,

Then I'm content that's what my legacy is meant to be.

**EPILOG**

We are the legacy we leave behind. Haley's Comet marked the entrance and the exit of my favorite writer, Mark Twain. A scant four months after my arrival, World War II erupted, and, given the horrendous state of world affairs since then, I sometimes shudder to think what is waiting to usher me off stage. I can only hope that if my meager words somehow manage to survive, they will help to soften the blow.

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You don’t have to suffer to be a poet; adolescence is enough suffering for anyone.

John Ciardi

**Pardon**

**My**

**Poetry**

**My Muse Made Me Do It**

**Volume Two**

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**About the Author**

Jim Slaughter is a retired teacher and actor, originally from Texas. He immigrated to Missouri in 2003 and has been living in Springfield ever since. This is his third volume of collected poems. The pieces here also display a spectrum of styles and themes that are generously laced with his unique sense of humor, seriousness, nostalgia, reflection, exaggeration, fabrication, inspiration, and imagination. Though not intended to change the world in any significant way, he does hope that, in some small way, his verses might help to make it a kinder, friendlier, happier place.