

# **“My beautiful diary”**

**Michael Holme A.K.A. Glenn Evans**

**The Complete Verse**

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**The Final Edition**

**Dedicated with passion  
to Michelle Holme**

**My Alpha to Omega**



Michael Holme wrote “Joe,” his first poem, in the summer of 1987 whilst on Nahal Oz Kibbutz. It is lost. His “Joe’s second-hand testament” alludes to it.

This volume is mostly chronological and autobiographical. Originally Michael studied sciences, then at the age of 21, piano. In 1997 he slowly started his writing ventures, including non-fiction and poetry.

The later poems in this book: “Joe’s second-hand testament” onwards, are often syllabic, musical, and as Michael would insist: poetic by structure more often than through imagery. They reveal much of Michael’s thoughts, psychology and personality. Free verse predominates in general though.

Please enjoy.

Michael Holme



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Speed camera	10/04/00
Bedroom of Madness	14/04/00
The Garden of Panic	14/04/00
Mick	17/04/00
Panic attack	24/04/00
Our kid	Circa 20(00/01)
Night in	02/01/01
Self-consciousness	28/11/01
Jacuzzi	02/12/01
Badge	02/12/01
One of the lads	09/12/01
Pond life	10/12/01
Oxford road	12/12/01
Danny	13/12/01
Metal detecting	18/12/01
Lymm Dam	??/ ??/01
Gap year	??/ ??/01
A wood in winter	18/06/02
Just good friends?	18/06/02
The herding instinct	18/06/02
The weakest puppy	18/06/02
Nowhere to hide	??/ ??/02
Quadrangle	??/ ??/02
Belle isle	??/ ??/02
Prelude to a breakdown	28/03/05
The scientist's den	29/03/05
My brother	29/03/05
Metronome	29/03/05
Bonsai (original)	29/03/05
Bonsai (syllabic)	29/03/05

Clare and I	02/04/05
Actually yesterday	31/08/06
Thomas	31/08/06
Looking for reasons	13/10/10
The photograph	14/10/10
Common Garden Spider	15/10/10
Cones	15/10/10
Lucy	15/10/10
Pigeons	15/10/10
Words	23/10/10
The words are on the wall	23/10/10
Ank	28/10/10
Bull pour homme	28/10/10
Pike plugging in Plymouth	01/11/10
Recollections of the 'Djemaa el Fna' 1989	04/11/10
Precious Clare	04/11/10
Dad's house	05/11/10
Mobile phone	05/11/10
Moston brook	05/11/10
Home life	08/11/10
Eucharist	10/11/10
Pride	10/11/10
A little canon at the third	11/11/10
York	12/11/10
University part 2	12/11/10
St Ann's Square	13/11/10
Debbie	15/11/10
Afternoon rendezvous	17/11/10
The village loner	18/11/10
Break	21/11/10
A dream	25/11/10
La Soirée	01/12/10
Wake-up call	04/12/10



University	11/12/10
Death	12/12/10
The Beach	12/12/10
Missed the boat?	14/12/10
Night time	23/12/10
The Jigsaw	28/12/10
The Osborne	11/01/11
Selimir	12/01/11
Selimir (Specially for Rolipoli of YouTube)	12/01/11
Helen	23/01/11
Must have GSOH	25/01/11
Colin	26/01/11
The announcement	30/01/11
Pete	31/01/11
Droplets	02/02/11
“NoEmotion”	06/02/11
The Lion, the Slob and the Pigeon	10/02/11
I give to you	12/02/11
Precious	13/02/11
The Jumper	14/02/11
Andy	26/02/11
Monologue to an old friend	26/02/11
Writer’s block	28/02/11
Benefits	28/02/11
Les Jes	28/02/11
Night and day café bar	28/02/11
Divorced in a year, postcard 22 VIII 1975	09/03/11
Substances	09/03/11
Jack	10/03/11
The folder	11/03/11
Buses	14/03/11
The summer’s in doubt	14/03/11
Nostalgia	14/03/11

To Clare	15/03/11
Sharon	15/03/11
YouTube	15/03/11
Obsessions	15/03/11
Please like me	16/03/11
Poison	16/03/11
Isolation ward	21/03/11
Life's in spring	25/03/11
Oldham Street	25/03/11
Isolation	27/03/11
60/40 against	30/03/11
Confirmation	31/03/11
Opus Dei	31/03/11
Spring?	01/04/11
Do not be sad mother	01/04/11
Risperidone	01/04/11
A Sketch by George Russell	07/04/11
Brothers preparing to wax lyrical	07/04/11
Irritant with compound eyes	09/04/11
Homeless?	10/04/11
Blackpool	12/04/11
Hepatitis	13/04/11
Forgiveness	14/04/11
Boggart Hole Clough	16/04/11
Loneliness	18/04/11
Designated smoking area	18/04/11
King pin	20/04/11
National pride	20/04/11
Educating Pigeons	23/04/11
Moooo	23/04/11
To Bill	11/05/11
Pride revisited	12/05/11
Tyrannosaurus rex	20/05/11

Tyrannosaurus rex revisited	20/05/11
The Sunshine room	02/06/11
The Empress	26/06/11
Nice dream, but	27/06/11
A portrait of Clare	05/07/11
The magpie's commentary	07/07/11
Sign of things to come	13/07/11
Grass snake	13/07/11
York revisited	17/07/11
On ESA	21/07/11
Islands	22/07/11
After a year	23/07/11
Penile insanity	29/07/11
Distractions	31/07/11
Same boat	??/07/11
Procrastination	02/08/11
Bella	04/08/11
A newcomer arrives	05/08/11
"Frank"	10/08/11
Strangers passing in the night	19/08/11
Letter to a lifer	22/08/11
A bipolar's writer's block	30/08/11
Revenge of the mutant camels	10/09/11
Two score years and tree	01/10/11
Ball games	03/10/11
Red Admirals	09/10/11
Conker on a string	09/10/11
Parallel lines	11/10/11
Rutting season	16/10/11
Levitation	19/10/11
Up to Lou Reed	23/10/11
Both ends	24/10/11
Jill Russell	25/10/11

Four last songs	30/10/11
Jocy	31/10/11
Night out	01/11/11
The Poppy appeal	02/11/11
Fifty seconds	18/11/11
Quid pro quo	20/11/11
Confinement	21/11/11
Friendship	28/11/11
Treading water	30/11/11
Edited notes to a CPN	09/12/11
Flying the nest?	11/12/11
Busted	14/12/11
Gestapo?	15/12/11
'65 MG Midget	17/12/11
Jesus would have walked on sand here	19/12/11
Doc Martens	22/12/11
Spring -	24/12/11
High end watch	30/12/11
Dream mistress	02/01/12
Viking burial	13/01/12
Remembering the Bongs	15/01/12
Do not be reckless	16/01/12
Sarah	18/01/12
Jazz	19/01/12
Red top	22/01/12
Blame it on my youth	25/02/12
Side-effects	28/02/12
Stargazing	28/02/12
The programmer's first job	28/02/12
Luke?	29/02/12
Did Neil Armstrong wear thermals?	01/03/12
Turning point	07/03/12
Inconstancy	08/03/12

Reflecting on my proposal to Jellicoe	09/03/12
The deleted poem -	14/03/12
Blip	21/03/12
Same old same	23/03/12
The poets	03/04/12
Just for a couple of days -	10/04/12
Drink driving	14/04/12
Everything but the girl	29/04/12
Relic	08/05/12
15th May 2012	15/05/12
There again	17/05/12
Tequila	19/05/12
Drink talk	19/05/12
Early rise	24/05/12
Alcoholic rainbow	30/05/12
Polefield nursing home	05/06/12
Anniversary	13/06/12
Two days later	26/06/12
Chapel of rest	26/06/12
Requiem mass	28/06/12
You'd gone	01/07/12
Afterwards	09/07/12
Speaking for itself	25/07/12
Ashes to ashes	18/08/12
Life's cabaret	19/08/12
A time to live, a time to say goodbye	20/08/12
A quiet place	21/08/12
Looking back	25/08/12
Weeds	31/08/12
The tour guides	02/09/12
Mirrors	03/09/12
Lifeline	03/09/12
HR meeting	04/09/12

Downfall	04/09/12
Platt bridge -	05/09/12
Lost	07/09/12
Straight, lost and stepping out	07/09/12
On the nose?	08/09/12
RELAX 2011.mp3	10/09/12
Tears of amber	11/09/12
Literary blues	12/09/12
Missed vocation	12/09/12
Natasha's lesson	20/09/12
DNA sample	28/09/12
Pain and other features	06/10/12
A poem for our somebodies	06/10/12
Winter alone	16/10/12
Feelings -	17/10/12
Elastic	03/12/12
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Michelle from past perspective	25/09/14
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A nothing poem to say I love you	01/10/14
Why not get engaged today? (free verse)	09/10/14
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Dollyd74 and Holmesy	15/10/14
My life	17/10/14
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You sleep. I write this love poem	26/10/14
Bag attack, bag attack; bag?	01/11/14
Your wedding invitation (first idea)	07/11/14
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Pantheist predicament	12/11/14
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Where do the birds go?	21/11/14
And only because he wanted Cairo ...	22/11/14
Wishing a happy Christmas	23/11/14
Happy Christmas, here's some verse	26/11/14
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Pessimists are protected	09/09/15
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Life choices and flashing voices	02/10/15
Osho Zen Tarot - The Fool	05/10/15
Osho Zen Tarot - Existence	06/10/15
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This winter will cripple me	18/10/15
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Elizabeth the Second -	20/10/15
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Artistic human nature	22/04/16
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I should be six feet under	01/05/16
Light and dark : the same ballpark	03/05/16
I'm going to paint a number seven	11/06/16
This is life	06/10/16
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The generation gap	05/11/16
Can pi exist?	11/11/16
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Sonnet #3 - "Isolation"	20/01/17
Sonnet #4 - "Suspicious social minds"	27/01/17
Sonnet #5 - "Personality -"	06/02/17
Sonnet #6 - "Modern men"	07/02/17
Sonnet #7 - "A conceptual verse"	09/02/17
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Empath	12/03/17
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Michelle's 2017 Mother's Day card poem	22/03/17
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Sonnet sans 'a' - "Suspiciousness"	01/04/17
Sonnet sans 'o' - "Stress"	02/04/17
Sonnet sans 'i' - "Alcohol"	03/04/17
One of those days -	10/04/17

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Gnosis #6 - "The bedroom"	07/12/17
Gnosis #7 - "Gnosis"	08/12/17
Why John dislikes being called love	06/04/18



## **The Road**

She dresses from eBay, vain cares put aside.  
Her songs touch our hearts deeply.  
She has no interest in plastic mirages,  
spurns instant joy, the soul's ruination.

She found me alone, in need of a friend;  
there was no mask, she had no agenda.  
She loved me, healed my heart,  
healed my mind, after others hurt me.

I seek truth, I must find courage,  
treading together, forgetting the past.  
A light shines before us, bright as the sun.  
We must believe it's true heaven.

We must not hate the world, it must not fool us.  
The light beckons, the road needs to rule.  
Don't look back, we must keep walking,  
we are growing you and I.

23/3/00 - 22/11/10

## **Speed camera**

Black box:  
square black box;  
pity about the white trail,  
it's such a giveaway.

10/04/00 - 03/05/13

## **Bedroom of Madness**

We can't seem to share  
our nocturnal space,

with the snoring, coughs,  
tossing and turning.

At morning I'm uncovered and frozen.  
The bed needs splitting.

Trust me to have one drawer,  
it's not enough.

Odds on at dawn, bleary eyed, I'll open one of yours,  
and floundering, will wear lace.

Then I'll move to my pile of creased shirts.  
*Oh mother, can I come back?*

14/04/00 - 17/11/10

## **The Garden of Panic**

Smiling faces of summer have gone:  
grandma's floral pleasure.  
This corner of the garden is cared for  
and a vacuum of blight.

Blades in a pair, brown, blunt secateurs,  
are rattling and waiting to be found.  
It's that time of fear for roses,  
autumn has come again.

Waiting, rusting in a drawer,  
measuring out the roses' humiliation.  
Now they're oiled and slick.  
Is grandma steady?

*Annual cut, annual cut,  
look at that damned lawnmower, think of me,  
shorten stems are all I have, says the grass.  
Look at my brown patch: thirst, the Sun's wrath.*

*Now half dressed in concrete, what about me?  
Soles of heavy feet, that's all I feel.  
Panic not, you annual bore,  
you're pruned in love, I'm cut in frustration.*

14/04/00 - 1/12/10

### **Mick**

Long hair,  
tatty clothes,  
he looks like a runt.  
Mick's Emporium's  
got to be a front.

17/04/00 - 16/05/13

### **Panic attack**

A spectacle of eyes transfixed by film  
some third-rate fifties black and white repeat.  
Three minds imprisoned by the endless frames  
are islands.

They spend the night with oral yen to stoke,  
says Freud arrested growth is why they smoke.  
And in between, small mushrooms picked that morn'  
keep mouths content, effects will last till dawn.

Ironic, caps they have are 'Liberty'  
cause Tom seems quite entrapped, the irony.  
Slow rhythmic right hand reflex feeds his face.  
He's disappearing from the human race.

When asked are any 'shrooms left in his tin  
Tom confidently looks but sees nothing.  
They tell him he's been popping them all night,  
a moment of denial, futile; they're right.  
Affectively the mushrooms make him sink.  
Effectively they're time bombs for a shrink.

A den like this is alien to him.  
He's guilty now just being in the room  
and anxious 'shrooms inside have yet to work.  
he says *goodbye* and goes.

Claustrophobic feelings the sky's vast heights relieve.  
He breathes in the fresh air, nervous reprieve.  
His small red sports car beckons patiently.  
He reckons he could handle driving home  
and longing for his bed, heads to the car.  
He shuts the door behind him - big mistake.  
Then knocks a switch. A buzzing fan comes on.  
He finds his keys, inserts them, tries to think  
so consciously, of how to drive a car.  
How does he start? Digressing, what's the buzz?  
Check gear in neutral. Clear, now what comes next?  
Digressing, what's the buzz? What gear's he in?  
He's not, he's checked. Digressing, what's the buzz?  
What is the buzz? His head? It's in his head!

His mind no longer functions.  
He's unaware of his breath.  
He's drowning in thin air now.  
Grasping the steering wheel,  
he wants out of the door.  
Think! Think! Where's the handle?  
Digressing, has he air?  
He tries to reach the knob,  
he can't, he coils back in,  
shaping like a ball.  
Just about to die,  
he has no air.

Cortex wrenching.  
(Hormone rescue?)  
A surge,  
huge rush,  
a slice of thought.  
He launches for the knob,  
the door bursts open. Out he crashes. Free.  
Wild, heart beating, jelly legged freedom.

His brain's learned panic.

24/04/00

### **Our kid**

Our kid was one of a kind.  
Take primary school:  
he thought he was the cock,  
by terrorizing Adamson and Willkie.  
So this pride got in his mind.

At high school he silently endured  
the fear of being bullied,  
so he did what he was told  
by studying hard.

He failed at university, and on his return  
played the piano.  
He tackled Bach, Beethoven and Chopin,  
and was proud of the hill he climbed.

Our kid met a girl, read C S Lewis  
and the Good Book,  
and his pride gradually lessened.

Circa 20(00/01) - 13/12/10

### **Night in**

I sit with my palmtop computer,  
trying to compose this poem. You  
with your microphone and mixing desk, are singing  
upstairs in the room we call the playpen.  
Is this life then?  
Lucy's brindle coat is drying by the fire.  
My trousers are damp too. You  
don't take the dogs at night, that's my job.  
What with the parrots we've a little family,  
of a sort. I ought  
to stop worrying whether we're normal.

2/1/01

## Self-consciousness

Can't you guess what I'm thinking,  
or see through my eyes?  
What was that smile about?  
Am I transparent?

I shyly mirror your grins  
and attempt the odd fake chuckle,  
sometimes inappropriately,  
and socially stumble.

I'm lost  
and aim to be polite,  
but my frown betrays me.  
Do you see it?

If I had words to say  
it'd be like balm,  
but my lack of focus  
is a social handcuff.

You leave and I relax,  
until we meet again;  
to greet  
or not to greet?

We meet several times.  
I say *hello*.  
How weak I feel.  
I'm my own proverbial fly.

28/11/01 - 16/11/10 - 11/5/13

## **Jacuzzi**

Bubbles rising like from eddies  
reminds me of choice fishing spots.  
Froth is transient on the surface -  
scoop an armful, watch it pop.  
Womb-like warmth engulfs the body;  
cold shower first for full effect.

Six people sit in a circle,  
soothing weary body parts.  
There's silence but for water noises,  
swishing, splashing in the tub.  
Eyes seek vacant sites to lessen  
chances of a rendezvous.

Like on a tube train facing strangers,  
there's someone here I'd like to know.  
*Aren't the bubbles nice?*  
I'll not try that one,  
maybe *this is the life* will do;  
perhaps I'd better keep my mouth shut  
and dream till you disappear.

2/12/01

## **Badge**

It would hang two inches by one,  
of hallmarked silver, luring him into the shop.  
It was detailed to the belly button.  
The finely cast body made him sadden but excite,  
when he saw Christ so clearly.



He bought a two-foot chain for it,  
and tried it on. It was modestly hidden by a shirt.  
He smiled at the jeweller  
and received no response,  
as if their religions didn't snap.

He wore it with pride,  
but now it's lying in his bedroom drawer,  
neglected since his mania passed,  
one still, crisp  
autumn morning.

The crucifix mingles with strips of lithium and risperidone.  
He'd been taking those straight-jackets,  
since that turn of summer 98,  
when his mind made runaway connections,  
and he thought he'd finally grasped the truth.

2/12/01 - 13/7/11

## **One of the lads**

He's not one of the lads, he  
doesn't have a six pack;  
doesn't have a hairy chest;  
doesn't wear slip-ons,  
nor tight trunks; dons shorts;  
doesn't chat with the staff;  
doesn't exercise in the gym or swim;  
spares words in the spa,  
in case they make him look a fool;  
uses club shampoo  
and doesn't dry his hair;  
doesn't care  
for after-shave or new man skin care products;  
doesn't stand too long in front of the mirror;  
drinks Coke at the bar, he's  
kind of not with the swing of things  
but he's happy watching  
the lads.

9/12/01 - 1/12/10

## **Pond life**

My friend loved being around animals,  
any size from insects to dogs.  
He even had a pet magpie, till neighbours ended that.  
But he taught me a lot about ponds.

Have you ever watched a pond skater skate?  
They're not daft you know, look how they use  
the anomaly of water and place their legs flat,  
riding as if on cool blancmange.

What about whirligigs in Brownian motion,  
maundering the surface of the pond?  
It's no wonder they look so confused, because  
as one set looks up, their other eyes look down.

Waterboatmen look like beetles,  
but apparently they're a water bug.  
Miniature rowing boats, aspiring to be human,  
were they inspiration for ancient man?

My friend was fascinated by pond life  
and had the bright idea,  
to add extra buoyancy to frogs via a straw.  
He spent a lot of time by ponds.

10/12/01

### **Oxford road**

He sits with his dog down Oxford Road.  
Time has bought him a stake in his plot.  
His ginger seafarer looks add fifteen years  
to his age. He must contemplate his life.

A bicycle carcass hangs from a railing,  
un-rideable after several night-time raids:  
no doubt once a student's, judging by location,  
and cheapest now to leave outdoors to rot.

Standing in a kiosk is a man selling sweets,  
papers and pornography to passers-by.  
Deadpan looks greet all his punters,  
and "them that matters" get his smiles.

Buses run this, the busiest route in Europe:  
blobs of haemoglobin feeding town.  
The drivers are frustrated drones,  
tired of this monotonous tarmac vessel.

I people watch from my first-floor desk.  
Work is slack, and days long like youth's.  
Nearby a commonwealth games countdown,  
reminds me that life is passing me by.

12/12/01

### **Danny**

Danny was my friend.  
The Derby Road council estate  
was his patch,  
beyond the corn field at the back  
of dad's spacious bungalow.  
Danny let me ride his monkey bike,  
gave cigs not dockers,  
and showed me egging sites.  
Like me he lived with one parent.

I wished he didn't sniff glue,  
glassy eyed, wagging school,  
with Turkey, a local yob.  
Then he'd risk expulsion for it.  
And it's odd,  
because Danny said no  
with a light hearted laugh.  
I hear he's still on  
that council estate.

13/12/01 - 1/12/10

## Metal detecting

He puts on his Barbour,  
with scratches in the wax  
and plucked green cotton.  
The pockets hold soil dust,  
a wafer of fossilised leaves,  
and grass  
stamped like a seal,  
with a bald George the Sixth.

He sets off at dawn  
to avoid park patrols  
and the customary,  
*found ouwt?* calls.  
Like an angler  
he protects his site,  
whilst patient for the prize.  
He searches  
with crime scene attention.

Lovers of the past  
on yesterday's grass  
and children's toy fights  
of lost generations,  
bring him joy today  
and keep him searching.

He once dug up a purse, it "faired"  
a shoe heel at first. The rot  
made it open, like a string-less corset,  
but the leather was hard:  
a life sentence prisoner.  
With excitement, he saw  
a bus ticket and a half-crown in change.  
Somebody walked home sad that day.

It's Winter. The grass obliges.  
In Summer he lives for fishing.  
He's a hobbies man.

18/12/01 - 22/11/16

### **Lymm Dam**

With sun rays falling like golden sand  
from an hour glass, I'm hurrying home.  
I eat at indigestion speed and change  
office togs for denim, finishing my coffee  
as I wriggle my old Doc Martens on.

I'm soon by the lake, alone, but not viewed  
as lonely. The garden shift over, birds amass.  
Always something to upset Mrs Blackbird,  
at the same time, a duck tears open the lake.

I'm waiting for a bite, peeping at a red float.  
Robin's dancing round the bait box, sparring  
like a boxer (feather weight.)  
I move it closer and pretend not to watch. Then  
curse, as I am watching I miss a bite.

My heart changes gear, I'm suddenly aware  
of my breathing, watching the rings  
round the drying float, as it plunges again  
only to be catapulted (faster than my stomach  
sinks) behind me. And I look  
at the knot puzzle in the rhododendrons.  
Robin darts off, mouth lined with maggots.  
I smile. He'll be back;  
and this is living.

??/??/01

## Gap year

Since volunteering to man the urn,  
I'm less concerned about being on the dole,  
no "proper role" to kick start the day.  
Life in the hospital seems easy going;  
keep taking the tablets, sit around,  
smoke cigarettes, do a quiz. Strange thing  
is that people don't seem to mind,  
after years in these confines,  
sectioned in white washed halls and wards,  
long corridors bursting with emptiness,  
handrails a reminder of plodding movement.  
Tranquilized silence fills the air now.

Stan's still here, John Wayne's biggest fan,  
*three shots kill you stone dead*,  
said with word salad either side,  
profound but for his laugh and smile.  
He seems happy to endlessly circle the hall.

Bob's the man, only heard him speak once,  
under very mild duress, four cig brands in as many seconds.  
I smiled and gave him two Regal.  
He normally used his hands,  
karate chops meaning *I want*,  
the context telling what.

Do away with words, refine routine,  
over the years the priorities are clear,  
cigs, tea, food and sleep;  
in the hall with an urn nearby, tea  
else sadly, smoke by elimination.

What's to be said? Odd at first, almost a joke  
when I asked Bob what he meant,  
*tea, coffee, orange?* as he bent forward,  
chopping in pairs with half-mast trousers,  
red braces and lips pursed. I was helped  
eventually, and coincidentally, Bob took two sugars.

And I ask, what do they think about?  
Some have nothing to look back on.

??/??/01

### **A wood in winter**

The wood is a ghost. Light  
casts no shadows now.  
Leaves form a fresh layer  
of mould on the ground.  
Above birds parade,  
where once song sources,  
sat unseen.  
Wind penetrates the land.  
Ferns, not yet rotten, resist,  
huddled together in the cold.  
Brown pigment discloses their fate.

A footpath chronicles  
thousands of boots.  
But the dwindling thicket  
tempts feet to explore its bareness,  
and through a gap a stream cuts.  
Dizzy leaves sit in an eddy.  
Downstream, sticks  
form a dam, trapping debris  
and showing a lack of litter.



This artery continues to a lake  
where fishermen patiently wait,  
sustained by flasks  
and butties, breathing  
grey mist out in to the morning air.

Back on the path,  
heading upstream, a meadow  
eventually expands.  
It's a playground for rabbits at dawn,  
their best chance  
to surface  
and roam around.

18/6/02 - 14/11/10

### **Just good friends?**

The concert's over. Time dwindles.  
He's deep in thought as they approach  
the cars.  
His dilemma is that earlier look,  
wide eyed and smiling, a moment too long.

They sit in his car before parting,  
and briefly talk about the concert,  
how amazingly Michel Petrucciani played,  
despite his size.  
His mind's multi-tasking.

Then, fifteen years her junior, he chances a kiss.  
They're well matched, he fancies her,  
and she responds.  
It's sealed, they are more than friends.  
By chance it is Valentine's day, his birthday.

This was the start of something long term,  
he's too kind to break a heart.  
She later says that simple look was chance.  
But, can compatible men and women be  
just good friends?

18/6/02 - 24/11/10

### **The herding instinct**

However hard you try  
to keep your distance on motorways,  
some bovine driver can't resist  
his herding instincts, and drives up your boot.  
His notion of safety in numbers, blinds  
his actual sense of danger. Hell, even bikes  
in the fast lane ride up arses,  
on their imaginary TT.  
At my fifty miles per hour to the left,  
trucks attempt terror.  
They won't ram, so I'm stubborn,  
and their temper turns into overtaking.  
They cut back in front with a minimum of breadth,  
feeling better having made a point.  
They call this a motorway?  
It's a pasture of meat to be slaughtered.

18/6/02 - 13/7/11

### **The weakest puppy**

It's like the fisherman  
who's just missed a bite.  
He waits. Will it strike again?  
Is the hook bare?

It's the candidate writing  
for hundreds of jobs.  
He waits but most companies  
don't write back. Then a letter arrives -  
"Thank you, but ..." - and he needs  
optimism.

We're told faith,  
hope and love remain.

They drip like petrol  
from a corroded tank, chancing  
an inflaming reaction:  
a ticket to hell.

Then he lands a catch.

18/6/02 - 26/7/13

### **Nowhere to hide**

It's another day in the office. I'm slumped  
in my swivel chair.  
A dusty teak desk is here:  
*my empire*: a comfort zone.

Woody Allen is staring at me  
from my monitor,  
with his chin in hand:  
a mood mirror.

"SMILE - God loves you" is stuck on a pillar;  
thanks, born again Steve.  
Outside my life ticks away on the BBC's countdown clock;  
237 days till the Commonwealth games.

I look around to see a pretense of industry.  
Month after month keys click yet nothing is produced.  
The physical pain of boredom  
has dissolved, in a non-surgical lobotomy of web browsing.

I should have been a vet, I should  
have been a forensic scientist, I should ... ;  
what's the use? I'm a liability with nowhere to go.  
I've tried. I just can't escape from my myself.

2002 - 31/7/11

### **Quadrangle**

Where does he come from on his island in the sea?  
I work here amidst the concrete; three floors of politics.

Chattering magpies join him, in neighbouring beech trees.  
This squirrel plays on the lawn in chilly November air.

Why is he alone, without rivalry or mate?  
Perhaps a portal is closed, buried beneath the oak?

He looks for hidden acorns, provided by just one tree.  
Porters pluck his memory lapses, and offer occasional treats.

I watch him as I smoke. He's found his kingdom,  
in Manchester Met' Uni's green heart.

On graduation day, he'll be out with the strawberries and cream.  
There'll be robes, square hats, and his acrobatics to film.

2002 - 24/11/16

## Belle Isle

Lying in semi-sleep, non-volatile thoughts  
precipitate mental jigsaws.

I'm aware of passing cars, muted by double glazing.  
Memories of a meeting distort in my mind: AMWAY, sell, sell.  
Images of a vast hall filled with droids crystalise.  
They're standing then sitting, clapping or not.  
I imagine them driving the cars,  
convoys of nocturnal irritants,  
forcing pane work on the wealthy through cold calls.  
I remember that phrase,  
*you can run but you can't hide.*

I think of weekend escapes,  
childhood days cruising around Belle Isle.  
My father sat astern whilst I steered,  
trying to see more than the skirt of green,  
around the dome breaking the canopy of leaves.  
I imagine a secret society, midnight rendezvous via rowing  
boats.  
Could those days have been preparation for today?  
Could Belle Isle belong to us and everything be wonderful?  
What if life had been one long dream, a rite of passage, till now?

Wanting my friend, I opened my father's bedroom door.

*Is Andy here dad?*

*No Mike.*

My heart sank, like when I asked him if she could come back.  
My body felt like every breath gave up a little of my soul,  
and I said *I feel like I'm dying.*

Dad said *I don't know what it feels like to die,*  
and he invited me into his bed,  
just as he did all those years ago  
when she left.

2002 - 1/8/11

## **Prelude to a breakdown**

Who is *he*, nameless and referred to that way,  
even drooping fingers won't define?

*He's a yes man, he's ruined his career, he -  
can't make a decision.* He tries to filter third person.

It's a mercurial madness for the ungrounded.

Are they performing a wayward soul's late rites of passage?

Is it payback for teasing at school? Who'll  
feel sorry when the Hatter is mad?

He's like "Johnny No Mates" on a world cruise.

Only Johnny's time is numbered, and passes with drink.

He needs affirmation, this office is his port. Ships stop  
for cream, not him.

Psychosis takes form as yes and no merging. Colours  
of speech become a surreal palette. He's a washed up shell,  
crustacean covered, hiding a modest pearl.

One day he'll be found, but now he can't abide, and quits.

28/3/05 - 24/11/16

## **The scientist's den**

His room is eleven foot by nine. Frog green wallpaper  
adorns it, with rotated bass clef like symbols.

A sun bleached, walnut Bechstein  
takes up the door's wall.

A sketch of Glenn Gould sounding an eternal note, hangs -  
over a huge music collection.

Its pages suggest thousands of hours scrutiny.

But like an ignored allotment, the fruit is declining.

A studded chaise longue looks up at the window,  
with two dogs over fond of its skirt.  
It suits like strings of onions  
on a cycling Frenchmen, and eyeglasses in opera.

A restored card table  
from a farm, that never saw one card;  
no bridge or whist, but instead knew spuds and decay,  
sits socially deprived by the seat.

Facing the scores there's an acrylic of kestrels:  
a pair in a wall; nesting? It was a whimsical purchase,  
leading to love of visual art, and in a way  
saying "A kestrel for a knave."

The floor's wooden, and a wooden dragon  
hangs sprung from the ceiling. That beast reminds him  
to have humour, and that grown ups  
are part children too.

29/3/05 - 25/11/16

### **My brother**

My brother is six foot plus, 17 stone and gentle,  
like a boy's hand reaching for wren's eggs.  
He's partially grey, forty this May and single.  
He builds electronic gizmos as a hobby, he's a wiz.

Wish I could be with him, but he's hundreds of miles away.  
Wish he would phone me sometimes, but Bob Hoskins'  
*it's good to talk*, never got its way. He doesn't have  
a mobile phone, it's a craze.

My brother eats meals for two, he's addicted to food.  
It could be worse. He's as sober as a prairie dog,  
and smokeless as hydrogen. But he eats  
like a basking shark.

I wish he'd find a lady friend, have children,  
and make me an uncle. It's not really a Ming,  
but this surname will end.  
His train's approaching a buffer.

Once, my brother was attacked. It was partly my fault.  
He wouldn't hit back. He's like a handler of a rare stamp,  
and could have crushed them, but he took blows.  
I felt guilty, and my brother bled.

29/3/05 - 25/11/16

### **Metronome**

If I set you to sixty crotchets per minute,  
you count like a Swiss watch, only not  
so quiet, you click clock and wave your wand,  
making students stop infuriating me.

Your vivace is manic; it's like pistons  
in an old steam engine, never missing, driven  
by simple fuel. You're like the Mallard, the bar  
on your wheel flying back and forth.

You're a pyramid.  
I'm stable as the Sphinx, you'll always be mine.  
Your wood finish is like a jewellery box.  
You are time like a diamond's longevity.



Your lento is like a child's fire engine ride,  
in a shopping centre.  
You sweep slowly from side to side  
with little warning of when you're going to arrive.

Best of all I like winding you up  
like a mantelpiece clock: an energy transfer.  
If I set you to sixty crotchets per minute,  
I bet you don't last the lesson hour.

29/3/05

### **Bonsai**

*It's a miniature, the man said,*  
as I handed over a tenner in Piccadilly.

*It's easy to care for, give it light and water,*  
*it will take time but that will make it grow.*

I took it home, placed it somewhere good,  
added just a tad of water, didn't want it sloppy.

It flourished for a while, but in its tree like way  
it didn't change daily that I could see.

It was fine till a mid-Summer Fall  
changed leaves to brown all over.

I watered it more, but didn't know my mistake.  
I baked it in the sun occasionally.

Now it's like an inverted toilet brush,  
sitting in its mismanaged soil.

I planted it outdoors  
for nature to take over.

But I won't buy another Bonsai,  
least of all from the man in Manc'.

29/3/05

### **Bonsai**

"It's miniature," he said.  
I relinquished my last ten  
in Piccadilly market.  
"You'll find it easy to tend,  
give it some water and sun.  
Do not flood it, that's my hint."

I took it home and placed it  
in heavy beams of sunlight,  
then added little water.  
It was healthy for a bit,  
and like a tree it did not  
change much to the observer.

Suffering early autumn,  
leaves changed all over to brown.  
My mistake: I watered more  
creating the Amazon.  
Now it's like a toilet brush.  
I put it out for nature.

I'll buy another toy tree,  
but next time like a dictum  
it will have to be tougher  
and I'll enlist some study.  
It won't become a victim  
of my lax horticulture.

29/3/05 - 3/3/15

### **Clare and I**

I'm sitting drinking alcohol free beer upstairs  
as you teach the piano down.  
Jaded by the sound of student scales,  
I don't play much now.

We met through music; talked over curries  
and into the night about Beethoven, Bach,  
whether Gould's second Goldbergs were alright;  
thought music would do.

Like the art of fugue our counterpoint  
is scarcer now but loyalty has taken its place.  
I can see we're in it for the duration,  
another duo will find our voices.

2/4/05

### **Actually yesterday**

He doesn't want to play the piano, he's too proud  
of his Bach, where's the love?  
He doesn't want to walk the dogs. He's not fit  
and hates routine.  
He can't smoke, can't drink, his last rendezvous  
forced him to think.  
It's hard to exist when God hides away.  
He doesn't want to talk; he's got nothing to say.

He doesn't want to spend a fortune online,  
then to regret the long wait till he's paid.  
He doesn't want to sit here thinking about himself,  
her needs exceed his. He doesn't want the shame.  
He doesn't want to wish days away, he'd sooner live in the now.  
He wishes they could meet afresh  
somehow.  
He doesn't want to feel like this, but can't see change  
today.

31/8/06

### **Thomas**

As a puppy our Thomas had legs like a crane fly.  
I used to call him 'Horse' what with  
his snout an' all. He's not quite a staffy,  
but as fine a dog as you could love.

It's funny how when pulling his lead from your hand,  
he'll stop dead like an old toy tank unplugged.  
Thomas always forgets we'll return.  
He's nervous, there's possibly greyhound in him?

He eats like he's never been fed, he urinates -  
like a bitch. Flies and spiders entrance him. Sometimes  
at night he opens his eyes, and they're headlight white.  
Maybe he was once a Yogi.

Thomas doesn't like being petted until late,  
but will lie over a shoulder with delight.  
That's when I know he trusts me,  
he's sort of like having a son.

31/8/06

## Looking for reasons

He's looking for reasons for his feelings.  
His switch has been thrown, he didn't want to retire -  
to another night alone.

She's there on the Internet: family and smiles. He starts  
to make music at three a.m.,  
contemplating missed chances of twenty years ago.  
Life was just starting. "We all had to grow up some time,"  
she later wrote.

He still loves his wife, but everyday domesticity  
is chipping away at his charcoal fragile life.  
He needs holding, Earth's crust warm and tight.

He stares at yellow walls covered in follies of acrylic; pen;  
pencil; prints and a map -  
of Morocco, where he had a jolly. Two pianos and an electric -  
Sherman tank, helped to break  
his mismanaged bank. It's been: up, spend,  
down, sell, smile or yell.

He sometimes blames his work obsessed dad,  
for driving mum away.  
Priests say Moses said that's wrong.  
He's pious while low,  
but not when he's strong.

It might not be the Internet: he's just lost his job.  
Money is dwindling, so he's calling on the Lottery, and God.  
Trapped liked a fish in a pond,  
with his wife providing more;  
this fish may evolve,  
and clamber down a new-found shore.

He's looking to explain his feelings.  
Many years have passed, things aren't outside.  
He should accept it's his mood disorder at last.

13/10/10 - 25/11/16

### **The photograph**

My dad took it in his home.  
As a pair waiting for our fate,  
we stood in front of stone,  
irregular lumps: a chimney breast.  
This was a house that echoed time's test.  
With a flash we were captured,  
an instant in our lives.

She wore snow on snow,  
with a collar like a cake's circumference,  
like lace, corrugated-white-patterned lace.  
I complemented with white, and had a maroon jumper.  
We were "spick and span," "fine and dandy," "well turned out."  
Dad didn't know the moment was precious,  
and it hadn't been planned, it had no orchestration.

Thin faced and dimple cheeked,  
my smile was shy,  
but I had a certain twinkle.  
My hand cupped her shoulder.  
Her eyes smiled, she knew, though I was younger -  
that we were solid.  
Our skin had a darker tone, like we'd been away.

Now sixteen years have passed. We're still together;  
older, bigger, less healthy, and our single  
young picture's a diamond.  
Love has matured, but we remember  
those exciting first months: young bodies and senses?  
Loyalty's taken over, by caring for each other.  
Rings on our fingers, we're relying on each other,  
but for a while, if we could only go back...

14/10/10 - 26/11/16

### **Common Garden Spider**

Orb weaving spider,  
you wait in your web for whatever might stick,  
to micron thin ropes doused in spider glue.  
They're stronger than steel.  
You're immune to their snare.

Your back is like a native American's chest,  
patterned for war.  
I can see hairs on your eight banded legs.  
They detect vibrations from visitors who'll stay.  
They're soon wrapped in silk  
after bites from poisoning fangs.

You carry silky parcels to your side-den,  
dissolving innards and devouring the flies.  
You eat little: life's sedentary,  
and you live a long time.  
But on a windy day your web may tear,  
creating work, perhaps of use?

You're often in a bush or tree,  
but today it's my kitchen window,  
offering an excellent view.

I've never seen birds take you,  
but as a youth I had lizards  
that loved your taste.  
Your rarity in neighbour's conifer trees  
grew.

15/10/10 - 26/11/16

### **Cones**

Cones, traffic cones, why do you come out at night?  
"Caution Workmen in road" drop cones, not a reason apparent.

Cones, traffic cones, red and reflective white,  
a line of cones in the fast lane form congestion, the driver's  
plight.

Cones, traffic cones you're like aquatic weeds constricting a  
canal.  
Then by some miracle you end, and in synchronization cars go  
like hell.

What happened to the Cones Hotline?  
What happened to that crass idea?

15/10/10

### **Lucy**

Lucy's brindle coat doesn't dampen. She's straight back in  
from the rain. Lucy likes fires and food, and she smiles across  
her broad face  
when her cries are humoured.



The vet says Lucy's weight is ideal, great for a girl of 91 -  
in dog years.

We give her Baker's Complete and tit-bits.

Lucy is not fit though, arthritis (and sniffing) slow her.

Lucy likes baskets, bones and crisp bags. But her favourite thing  
is her front door pillow. Through frosted glass she sees the  
world,

does she know it's obscured like a pebbled pond, as she sits,  
with forward paws?

Lucy loves plastic bottles, chewing the ends like artificial bones.  
She grabs them like a retriever and trots  
to her pillow with her confident tail high.

Lucy can be left in alone. She's good and will sleep.  
She switches on, and curiously drinks water when we return.  
We affect her as Bagpuss did its friends.

15/10/10

### **Pigeons**

Down in the dozen  
on oil seed rape.  
One doubled barrel gun  
can't fully control  
of this vermin,  
that feeds on the seedlings.  
As the farmer waits up field,  
down field they feed.

For every downed bird,  
two more seem to come.  
There's only one solution,  
it takes more than one man.  
Scarecrows scare crows,  
"scare-pigeons" is no. 6 shot.  
Farmers hate pigeons,  
they're not even fit for the pot.

15/10/10

### **Words**

Words are incessant hailstones  
piercing.  
There's no hide,  
our oasis is drowned.

Twenty years have passed.  
Once we'd be like an amp on nine, now we're quiet  
as I imagine  
space is.

But we're troubled,  
though food  
will soon free us from standing out  
in this people patchwork.

Once I could be confident yet quiet  
like Hines' Gamekeeper,  
and proud in the storm; a lighthouse.  
Now I'm dimmed and confused, an autumnal muffled bird.

A standard BLT  
with rocket added,  
causes renaming of my fodder, pricing it  
accordingly higher.  
You eat pizza Margherita  
with no surprises. How could there be?  
The food is delicious and our mouths  
are engaged.

It's Friday night and no wonder  
ear density is high, as is volume.  
We finish and I tip with just enough to make sound  
into a golden metal piggy bank.

We leave; for good?

23/10/10

### **The words are on the wall**

Words are incessant hailstones.  
They pierce our hide. We are drowned.  
Ages have passed. We were once  
magpies. Now we are quiet  
as I imagine space is.

But we are troubled,  
                                  though food  
will soon free us from gazes  
in this patchwork of people.  
Once I could be confident  
and quiet: a Gamekeeper.  
I was proud like a lighthouse.  
Now I am dimmed and confused:  
an autumnal muffled bird.

B-L-T with rocket too,  
adds to naming pretensions  
and questionable prices.  
A pizza Margherita  
clearly has no surprises.

Granted it's all delicious,  
and our mouths are occupied.  
It's Friday night. No wonder  
noise and curiosity  
battle. We finish and tip  
with just enough coins to sound  
a gold metal piggy bank.

We leave, thinking it's for good.

23/10/10 - 12/6/14

### Ank

He's built like Goliath but with Lennon morals.  
He strides in his sandals like a soldier on parade.  
His hair is just greying. My brunette locks are clear.

He laughs when I call him facetious,  
he was bred on Python gags.  
He has Woodstock tastes  
but didn't attend the gig.

He had an electronics kit when just a young boy.  
Fractional-N synthesis is now his current game.  
I could see him as Marconi in a masquerade,  
because he's definitely a spark and a mystery.

He's very in the head,  
perhaps computing truth?  
I feel he needs a woman,  
or to join a social club.

He's an occasional spelunker.  
As a dare we did Ibbeth Peril,  
and he likes to visit wrecked old buildings; any excuse -  
for stone!

He doesn't like sport; he cannot catch a ball and his two left feet  
don't dribble. Rarely  
he gets wet, when he's a wrasse in water,  
and he exercises on a treadmill, to lower his kilo count.

That's my brother in a nugget, 22 carat.

28/10/10

### **Bull pour homme**

Is there anything worse than good behavior, brains and beauty?  
As a curse, they're what steal the show.  
The twenty something year old from Dallas is crowned.  
Now marketing cogs are working.

With two associations, cattle and crude,  
Miss Texas is immortalized in glass.  
It's a black horn holding a curious black essence.  
This potion claims girl gravitation.

Now bulls have a certain, je ne sais quoi.  
It appeals to the brute and hairy. They don't know  
this perfume is pizzle condensate,  
and is blended with stout for their post-shave!

28/10/10

## **Pike plugging in Plymouth**

I build a sandcastle every day,  
and the night tide knocks it down.  
Alone in that double room, while you  
are unable to climb.

It seems we never have a Whiskey Galore,  
and I edge  
closer to the front  
door, but it's impossible.

Pike plugging in Plymouth:  
hopeless,  
but we made a promise,  
so I'm Labrador loyal.

We stick it out,  
Catholics. Memories  
are like fossils in shale,  
fettering.

You, subjected  
to my poems,  
are my stability.  
No captive; I'm the ball.

1/11/10

## **Recollections of the 'Djemaa el Fna' 1989**

I remember  
a daily circus,  
a belt enchained monkey  
and pacified snakes.  
There was no high wire,  
but heights came  
via a whisper  
of hashish.

The sun was ungoverned.  
Canopied fruit carts  
were like oases,  
huddled  
in a row,  
offering only orange refreshment;  
across  
from the labyrinth portal.

No one direction  
could transfix eyes.  
Senses were jostled.  
A cauldron wafted its lure,  
and I couldn't resist one too many  
local-priced bowls of soup.  
The next morning I exploded  
after this digestive Cemtex.

Several grey bearded water sellers  
were beacons,  
Santa red, tasselled  
and draped in cups.  
One offered me his image,  
we shared,  
and I tipped  
this tourist magnet.

I stole an over shoulder snap  
of two hares, gloved  
but with no referee.  
Was it staged,  
like American wrestling?  
They put sporting rules  
to the test,  
in the shade of thinning light.

Like foxes,  
three men and a temptress appeared.  
No vixen, she was silent,  
with intricate henna tattoos  
curved like clefs and tile red.  
Her dark blue, silk hooded garment  
hid pleasure. I sinned in thought,  
but risked no faux pas and chatted to the men.

I long to return  
and drink sugar-saturated,  
swirling mint tea,  
looking down  
from a balcony  
on the Assembly  
of the dead,  
Marrakesh.

4/11/10

### **Precious Clare**

Precious Clare, fifty, but her smile  
reveals her childish heart.  
That's when she beams her love for me.  
We're china pretending to be steel.

Precious Clare clothes herself from eBay  
and smells of no more than soap.  
Her only jewel is an amethyst birthstone,  
hung with my St Christopher.

Precious Clare took an interest in me  
when I was cast out and broke down.  
She offered lifelong stability.  
Seventeen years on, it feels sure.



Precious Clare observes speed limits  
and she's squirrel sober.  
We go out for meals and to shops,  
and sometimes watch piano recitals.

Precious Clare touches me with her singing,  
the classics and songs she wrote.  
But the most heart rending of all is at Eucharist,  
when she accompanies herself to our favourite hymn.

4/11/10

### **Dad's House**

My father's house  
has a long climbing drive.  
It's calcite white and on stilts.  
The slate roof is as grey  
as a bank holiday sky;  
typical in his beloved Lakeland.

His attractive garden represents  
much retirement time.  
It's a favourite for church socials.  
Water follows its edge to Windermere.  
In the distance, mountains pump more,  
whilst flea sized climbers conquer the tops.

A deer from surrounding woods  
raided expensive bulbs.  
Dad's airgun reversed costs,  
when he hit the thief in the bum.  
Daily Red squirrels differ,  
they're like the prodigal son.

One cream carpet covers the house  
and accepts stockings alone.  
Items from miscellaneous lives intermingle,  
like a phoenix of decor,  
destined to last  
this course.

5/11/10 - 11/3/11 - 27/11/16

### **Mobile phone**

You live against  
my heart,  
vibra-alerting  
with warm tingles.  
Just mum and wifey ring,  
but everybody has one.  
So being a gadget freak, your sex appeal  
clinched the contract. I'm a certified  
sheep.

5/11/10

### **Moston brook**

December air  
is turning breath grey.  
The dogs  
look like brown  
dodgems, randomly  
rummaging.

The ground farts underfoot  
and grass sleeps. In the middle,  
reeds thrive, hiding a snipe.  
A zigzag shotgun evasion ensues.  
It lands  
for a while.

Lucy becomes a herbivore,  
it's curious.  
She seems unaware  
of her singular stomach.  
Thomas still runs  
and is wet as a retriever.

We follow the edge of the field.  
I constantly look out  
for dogs.  
My pack of two  
think this  
is their empire.

5/11/10

## Home life

You teach at your mirror black grand.  
I listen to favourite Beethoven:  
Für Elise;  
which by definition I detest;  
as I write my poem.  
I long for your session  
to end,  
to read to you  
my verse.  
You've listened to bad timing  
for three hours,  
then I request  
your ear.  
You oblige with honesty.

Lucy mostly sleeps.  
Whiskers mingle with her grey chin.  
Her brindled stomach  
attracts affection.  
We talk of Bella,  
yet to come.  
Our private life would be quiet  
without dogs.

You shuffle about indoors.  
I wheel you outside.  
Damn that commode,  
it belongs in a cell.  
I empty it.  
You've nursed my affective disorder.  
I owe you everything.  
We are well matched.

8/11/10

## Eucharist

The same two prepare,  
always aiming to be *first*.  
Cynically, I think  
they're biding time, and I enter  
at my convenience.

Being a convert I never learned  
all the minutiae, and wonder  
if a certain hand should accept  
the host.  
So, cupping right under left,  
exposing my ring  
from an unrecognized  
marriage, I listen to those sacred  
and literal words, feasting -  
after saying Amen.

Those versed in Luke 13:30  
finish. We sit  
after our knelt prayers.

The silence is like a bank vault  
in the chaos of the city,  
broken by the words,  
*Let us pray*

It is Tuesday evening, Mass  
is over, we leave without talking.

10/11/10

## Pride

The  
Grand Old  
Duke of York, was  
kind of like me because  
like him I hauled myself up  
ego first; then shrank my ego down  
to its present deflated level.  
They say it's pride that  
causes man  
to fight  
man.

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10/11/10

### **A little canon at the third**

*You talk in riddles.  
They call it Word Salad, I give love regardless,*

***his words make no sense.  
But like a valley deep; she loves him whatever way***

*and your home is mine;  
but like a chasm wide, there's a river with no rest*

***and she roofs his head  
with Lucy the staffy; there's a torrent in his mind.***

*One in a hundred,  
who needs children anyway. Your genes are best worn than  
spread.*

11/11/10

### **York**

I formed a friendship at university  
which I thought would last forever.  
We laughed all the time, drank,  
and smoked pot; both ending up with thirds  
(people called them Douglases, after Sir Hurd.)  
We went our separate ways,  
but I wanted the friendship to be sealed.  
Meeting later, I caused the opposite for years  
by saying, *I love you like a brother.*  
Truth scares.

12/11/10

## **University part 2**

You made a friendship you thought would last forever. You laughed all the time, drank, smoked draw; both ending up with thirds (people called them Douglasses, after Sir Hurd.)

You'd built the friendship on low tide sand. After you came home, you wanted permanence and built breakers with a confession of love. A tsunami separated you till middle age, but twenty years was an un-scalable wall.

12/11/10 - 3/5/13

## **St Ann's Square**

A busker is playing Caravan on repeat. His amp captures ears as he mimics "Hank Marvin" gyrations; plucking tunes, stuck in grooves, as pounds collect in his case.

Once rattling carts and collecting manure, the square echoes its past. The fountain's bathed a million pigeons, and at night time watched many lovers meet.

A market is imminent with delicious pricey fudge. And its cheese, earrings, sausages and scarves will tempt too. But hopefully ale won't lure ...



Gradually the shops have changed. In the south  
the church was a former bastion. Now infiltrated by arts;  
God's house is a venue to worship  
aspiring artists.

The square has a theatre. This writer painted the seats.  
Big Issue sellers wait outside, working for food and shelter.  
They're hoping for sensitivity and kindness  
by displaying humility.

13/11/10 - 27/11/16

### **Debbie**

Debbie stands as if to hear  
the verdict.  
Bluish white light engulfs  
her head,  
breaking through the canopy  
of green.

The hard clay path divides  
beyond her.  
Though drawn by the light  
she stares  
towards the murky green,  
waiting.

Her long fine hair complements  
her dress  
like extensions, of one another.  
Her breasts  
protrude from her plumb-line  
straightness.

Buttercups drip in a far  
field.  
Debbie is captured.  
Her destiny  
is already decided  
in acrylic.

15/11/10

### **Afternoon rendezvous**

Dropped off from an Audi  
round Cheetham Hill Road,  
with no apparent destination,  
she starts to walk. He notes her.

Returning the next day, he scouts and sees her.  
She's walking slowly, her bag:  
a pendulum, her summer dress clinging  
to her slim figure, and her long brown hair still.

He pulls over, his window already down.  
*Are you working?* he says. She smiles  
and approaches, and she is in his car.  
*What's your name?* she asks. He lies.

They drive to a pub dive, with waste-ground  
at the back. She walks straight to an old  
corrugated sheet and moves it away.  
Heading to a brick hut she tries not to break a heel.

Twenty pounds buys him her standard offering.  
She bends down, time passes, then  
his right leg quivers. She is good.  
He drops her off nowhere special.

She trawls for another punter,  
whilst he drives, away having felt  
alive. If he'd have known he was feeding  
a heroin habit, would he have...?

17/11/10

### **The village loner**

He stands at the fruit machine:  
a tax on his drinking.  
He figures they'll think his mind is engaged,  
despite not socialising.

It's Friday night.  
Why should he be home with cans and a television?  
He steals *company*,  
becoming the village loner.

He won't overstay, just risking two.  
He thinks people will assume he's being swift,  
at each stop:  
five in total.

Sad thing is, he's so low he doesn't care  
about driving bar to bar.  
If he's lucky the police will stop him  
before he ruins a family's lives.

18/11/10 - 11/3/11

## **Break**

Boys had their backs to the wall,  
not to take the piss out of Ray,  
whose name had an unfortunate rhyme.  
As social misfits, they were scared  
of a rearward kick in the bollocks from Turkey.  
Frowns spoke for their lack of words.  
Turkey was a lanky terrorist.  
Away from break he punctured legs with dividers,  
and spat in exercise books.

The boys in smokers' corner didn't fear.  
From the mining village, they were hard as Jud Casper,  
with blazers stinking of smoke.  
The cane didn't deter them from their habit,  
teachers ignored them  
or even chatted with them.  
Those with rounded personalities  
avoided both evils, and honed their social skills  
elsewhere.

He hated break.  
Science and maths were his refuge.  
The comprehensive school  
was programming his brain how to be dull.  
Computers appeared and saved him from break,  
making the lab was his new school yard.

21/11/10

## **A dream**

He's spying from a bedroom window.  
A man strolls passed, finds a golden box of litter,  
opens it and tosses it away.

Adulterers snail on posh bikes.  
The man breaks promises  
to his wife who trusts his word.

Dawn is bleeding.  
A woman emerges from a neighbouring house,  
like his: backing on. Just as on every day,

her face reflects the dawn's pain, and she heads  
to the off licence to sell cigarettes and drink  
to youths.

He doesn't work, this is part of his share in life.  
A man walks his dog. It must be kept on a lead,  
signs say.

A bin is provided near to the crouching dog,  
which fouls; but the man just looks both ways,  
and quickly departs from the heap in the verge.

Echoes of past trains: class 08s to Deltics, still resonate.  
He moved here in '76. The bedroom windows  
were an ideal location for train spotting by a boy.

He'd sooner have the trains, powerful engines  
And near endless trucks.  
However, this must be progress, he muses.

25/11/10

### **La Soirée**

An insecurity of amateurs is gathered on seats and carpet,  
communing around a Steinway grand.  
The fabled teacher, Eva, has invited a prodigy;  
making anticipation high in the room.

Frustratingly he slips midway through a hackneyed  
Chopin piece, and repeats.  
But his Bach is Gould reborn:  
a duet between separate brains.

In between, mouths reawaken. *What are you learning?*  
(peck, peck)  
he is asked; *Grieg's Nocturne, how about you?*  
(Touché) *How did you meet Eva?* etc. and so on.  
People pry to reign.

Eva's a good hostess, offering brews and snacks.  
This is his chance to catch the maestro.  
What's said doesn't matter, having spoken is the thing.  
It's personal and better  
than an autograph.

1/12/10 - 2/12/16

### **Wakeup call**

A curse of Southern Comfort  
is bleeding down his throat.  
The piano is an orphan,  
his fingers stiff as inch long dowels.

He's rich in time but spends it  
like it's stopped.  
Who is he? Does he strike  
a unison with you?

Excuses for drinking don't wash  
with him. Redundancy money  
won't sustain him. Denial  
is wearing thin, he glimpses the truth.

Charity is made to beggars,  
in case he's ever one.  
His mood is controlled by lithium.  
Do you know him yet?

Is it time to change?  
A bit of math' would show the foolishness.  
He's been here before.  
I know him well, do you?

4/12/10

### University

John stood in the queue taking in the back of a head.  
Trying to look cool, he didn't expect an approach,  
but not trying too hard sometimes attracts.

A lad from Belfast with caramel-tongued charm spoke.  
Dribble was his magnetic verse. He could sell hashish  
to Moroccans. But he was prospecting, and probed John's  
resourcefulness.

John's shoulder length hair drew him in.  
Three years were spent smoking,  
in John's case, to excess. Their academic success was polar.

It started with a queue position, a butterfly wing beat, and ended  
with a drunken scuff, caught on film and hanging in the bar  
for generations to see, with Irish advice, *watch that chin*.

11/12/10

## **Death**

We start with a fresh slate,  
subjects accounting for us.  
It's like a chance to define who we are,  
and make new learning mistakes.

Some spin a wheel, some are in the groove,  
some are chameleons changing colour.  
But I followed my brother  
who lived in town, a base in case it went wrong.

Three years can seem an eternity,  
but days turned to weeks, turned to terms.  
Time could be spent in an alcoholic haze,  
heightened with interesting herbs.

Leaving the place was a Death card drawn,  
for me the Tower appeared too.  
And I got my payback for that hedonistic time  
with a lifetime of implied '*I told you so*'s.

12/12/10

## **The Beach**

We walked along the beach.  
The worm man preferred not to speak,  
piercing the sand with his metal tube,  
ravenous as a blackbird.

My arm was around her shoulder;  
she fitted me well. We filled ourselves  
with refreshing air. The beach was ours,  
on loan from the sea.



The sun was sulphur on the hot plate  
of the edge of the world,  
slowly melting into an abyss  
of night.

The scale of the coastline  
was dwarfed only by the infinity of sand grains,  
which the worm man hurriedly pecked at  
for bait.

12/12/10

### **Missed the boat?**

We never know what will come,  
but life doesn't always work out.  
They say it begins at forty,  
time passes, some sit alone on a pew.  
We may drift from day to day,  
like a cloud waiting to rain.

We're not stood at primary school gates,  
we never visit Toys 'R' Us,  
and those that do need 'Child On-board' signs.  
One day we'll be old  
and unvisited,  
bequeathing to the local dogs' home.

Maybe our tolerance needs rewiring  
before we hit the ground.  
Men may buy motorbikes. Late women embroider,  
and pets may enter our homes.  
We could be that person whose bins don't appear,  
two weeks on the trot.

14/12/10

## Night time

The cheapest whiskey trickles  
down his throat.  
He's getting too used to it.  
It no longer burns or makes his face shudder.

Pretending to be tee-total,  
he hides at night  
with virtual friends,  
and a guitar that's occasionally strummed.

Lucy the dog visits  
till she hears the snuff box opening,  
then she proudly struts out to avoid the explosion  
of his orgasmic sneeze.

His partially clad pencil-drawn woman  
hangs beside his bed.  
Like snuff, it's another minor grown up vice,  
which he won't share with others.

A quest for truth, coupled  
with hypomanic spending, fills the room  
with books. Obscure ones go to Oxfam.  
Others are a financial medicine.

23/12/10

## The Jigsaw

Never-made remarks, etched below actual memories,  
remind me of when life seemed stagnant: painfully-lonely.

Voices are my only explanation now.

*He's a bizarre combination*, seemed real within silence.

My needle jumped, and scratched that confused spiral -  
of mine.

I prayed the record would end.

People seemed to see through the clarity of my identity crisis,  
and aimed to force odd pieces into my jigsaw.

I pretended not to hear the voices.

*He's a yes man. He's ruined his career.*

Not fit for work, I delivered an enveloped NO.

Mental illness suits asylum.

Uncaring bastards suit education.

I'd never referenced directly in third person.

Do we all receive such addresses?

My jigsaw was becoming a mismanaged montage.

I needed a patient, caring nurse.

I thought I heard dad's wife with her back to me,

talk about the open-fire, without calling me.

Loosely, I connected a decade old event.

What do you mean Dad, *he's a rogue and a vagabond?*

Et tu Brute? I denied, but who was "HE?"

You repeated, *he's a rogue and a vagabond.*

I knew I'd not always been good,

and my heart sank, just like when I asked

if mum could come back.

Then I was silent.

My jigsaw is built; with some holes.  
They're apparent in situations.  
It took forever, it's a shield.  
We're all more of less broken projects.

28/12/10 - 22/1/17

### **The Osborne**

It stood on Oldham Road:  
a landmark for four lanes of cars.  
Its clock reminded us of the time  
that power died.

A flowing Lauren resisted  
on the whitewash,  
and trees were antlers  
above its boarded face.

As a black-and-white,  
this cinema is his in a still.  
Projectors made way  
for disco lights.

Being out of town,  
the last dance drew no one brave enough.  
Today it flourishes  
with weeds.

His photo captures a quiet moment,  
but Halifax Howard on a billboard,  
and Lauren, eternally delinquent,  
live on, framed on his wall.

11/1/11

## **Selimir - (Specially for RoliPoli of YouTube)**

He's a Venezuelan poet  
of pianism of Chopin kind,  
and occasionally plays Scriabin  
which the audience doesn't mind.

An outspoken person,  
who rants about issues wide.  
His comments about Asians  
in the Chopin competition, took a side.

As gay as they come, and he does.  
He'll even hug a pig,  
but with his healthy drinking habits,  
I'm sure he's not partial to a cig.

Of course this is Selimir,  
who calls "herself" Julia today.  
I wish he'd stop the ranting,  
to practise and play.

12/1/11 - 3/12/16

### **Selimir**

He's a Venezuelan poet  
of pianism of Chopin's kind,  
and occasionally plays Scriabin  
which audiences devour.

He's an outspoken person,  
ranting about wide issues.  
His comments on the Chopin competition's  
Asian musicians, caused vascular highs.

He's as gay as Elton John,  
he'll even hug a pig.

With his healthy juicer habits  
I'm sure he doesn't smoke.

Of course this is Selimir,  
who renamed himself Julia.  
I wish he'd stop the bitching,  
to practise and interpret.

12/1/11 - 10/4/13

### **Helen**

Helen exuded innocent availability:  
a younger Tracey Thorn  
with equal boyish good looks, and an '80s dress sense  
from Carnaby Street.

A little sullen: on the one hand, you thought  
"best left alone," but you also wanted sex.  
It was the power of Grendel's mother. On first meet  
I aimed a kiss, receiving partial rejection.

At a college dance, my friend had claimed her,  
whilst I drank Freshers away with the lads.  
Born on the same day, my friend and I  
mismatched in cloth: Harris Tweed versus denim.

I was soon waiting for footsteps. Alone, I watched nightly  
behind a campus curtain as they'd stroll to her room.  
Occasional special moments, scraps, when he was away  
were my blinkered gold stars.

But the summer of '87 was ecstasy, she was mine for a week.  
I drove down to hers in my open MG,  
and showed her off round Guildford.  
I'd longed all my teens for this.

Then - plug out, flushed away; the new year made me feel  
as valuable as sweat on haggis.  
Parents had spoken: "*your wicked daughter ...*"  
and the triangle became islands.

Neither of us had another girl at university,  
maybe it was astrology again.  
After some years, we met at a friend's.  
I got a passive-aggressive *fuck you, asshole*.

23/1/11 - 3/12/16

### **Must have GSOH**

Debbie was a bucking bronco.  
She was girlfriend version two,  
distinguished from one by her darker fur,  
clownishly gaudy make-up and short neck and size;  
vertebrae intact. She was thirtyish and my senior.

We met on an Outreach day.  
She was manic-depressive, stable, and I was down.  
She could play a cool boogie on piano,  
and Bridge over Troubled Water.  
She was indifferent to my attempts at Chopin.

We'd smoke and mingle in social therapy;  
not ready for the workforce yet.  
She snapped me up, asking,  
*d'u want to go out with mi?*  
I didn't laugh, agreeing for a possible foot in the stirrups.

I was no buckaroo, but had hopes  
as I watered and ferried her around.  
Our last attempt to avoid staring vacantly in pubs,  
was a trip  
to see 'The Bodyguard'.

A few days later  
she queried my pub *meditation*.  
I was thinking how little we spoke,  
but replied that I was thinking *nothing*.  
She didn't want the Dalai Lama as a boyfriend.

Any hopes of a ride were over.  
I could forget horse-whispering ideas.  
We walked in silence across the car park,  
sat in my car as I fired it up; and again,  
and again, till my old Herald's battery died.

25/1/11

### Colin

He's spent 50 years as an artist,  
punting pictures in a basement gallery.  
His longevity must mean something,  
in a Dickensian shop, where he's the old curiosity.

He mixes colours at home in Burnage,  
and his sword is brush and tissue. His mother  
was a lifelong companion.  
He lives alone now. Though not short of friends,  
he seeks a woman's comfort.



He paints faceless cowboys, faceless females  
and faceless horses in greenery; acrylic scenes from nearby -  
woods  
make up his romantic repertory.  
They're like movie stills, abstracted in a makeshift Wild West.

He's the unflinching trier  
who wants American success.  
His concept may catch on there  
one day.

Meet Colin Jellicoe of Portland Street.  
We have good chatting bouts,  
about art, women, work;  
life.

He hopes to build a b-movie cowboy museum,  
and prospects on the EuroMillions.  
But would he really want to haul ass from his basement,  
for headaches?

26/1/11

<http://www.colinjellicoe.co.uk/>

### **The announcement**

Silence was pervasive  
under a blanket of Pink Floyd,  
and a sewing two litre Cortina Ghia engine.

Weekend ferrying  
to a fast cabin cruiser,  
was an attempt at reparation,

and a chance for one of the party  
to fantasise about a new life  
in the Lakes.

Silence had existed as long as memory had kicked in.  
The day the passengers were requested down,  
as if extracted from school assembly.

It was cold as a snake's belly, pointed and short.  
She didn't speak, they had to be men and watch,  
as she drove away in the car he'd recently bought for her.

James at eleven was tangled in wires and resistors.  
John, three years younger, needed counselling -  
    he lashed out at school.  
Help came much later, when the damage had been done.

As young men they did drugs and drink, flunked university,  
thought with the sheltering they were given, life would twig.  
Dad never cried. John grew to weep in empathy for pain.

30/1/11

### **Pete**

Tom's only happy respite was in dreams.  
He'd dug a grave, jumped in  
and tippled the soil on his head.  
Any opportunity to drink was snatched,  
especially lunches, punctuating the days he spent  
computing alone, in his first job.

His refuge was the Ducie Arms:  
Irish and hidden by a huge library.  
The landlord was hunched and expressionless.  
Problem drinkers were people he'd pour for  
unprompted. Weeks passed in solitary Guinness supping,  
till his alcove was invaded.

The invader was late forties, sporting a moustache  
and jacketed spread. He tried a joke.  
Tom chuckled then replied.  
Both worked at the university.  
Hiding behind folded arms, taciturn by nature,  
Tom encouraged him a little: he was a reluctant loner.

Tom clock watched more for lunches.  
The invader kept showing.  
Pete was passionate about Spanish,  
and spoke often of a Mexican friend, Antonio,  
and Mexican travel. Tom was learning piano.  
Pete encouraged him saying *bueno Chopin*, as he gave Tom -  
a score.

It emerged that Antonio was Pete's lover.  
Pete had left his family for him.  
Depth grew between Tom and Pete.  
Pete implored Tom, *why do you hate yourself?*  
Curious about Antonio,  
Tom agreed to a night out with them both.

Antonio was Tom's age, handsome, and had dancing feet.  
His smile was infectious. After much drink he mimed a Tango,  
then kissed Tom, French style, in the street.  
Tom wasn't gay, but Antonio's flamboyance,  
a need for acceptance and the drink,  
allowed it to happen a second too long.

Eventually Pete and Antonio parted.  
*Antonio wasn't gay, it was just his way of getting by,*  
Pete said, whilst pulling his impressive wage slip,  
casually, out of his equally rich,  
jacket inner pocket. Tom  
was nonchalant.

Tom was invited out for a meal.  
The romantic candles and dim lights  
made him canvass for people's gazes.  
Back at Pete's house, Tom curled up, drunk,  
in front of the gas fire, Z shaped,  
and was gently moulded to by a larger Z.

Pete and a suitcase ended up in student accommodation.  
Tom visited after another night drinking.  
With twenty pints between them  
they arrived at the halls. Joy -  
there was a piano. Tom played his Bartok  
and simplified Chopin.

Pete marveled at Tom's grade three pieces, asking,  
*how can you play?*  
In his twin room he revealed his interest  
in Tom's groin, and reached out to touch it.  
Tom recoiled and sternly frowned. Pete chortled.  
Now depressed; Tom had unwittingly led Pete on.

Knowing where Pete worked offered Tom some safety,  
he also added, *I'm not gay,*  
and found his way home to his mother.  
Pete and Tom met once more: late at night in the Ducie.  
Tom wasn't expecting Pete, but he reported  
about his worse job. He'd carried over his problem: him.  
As for the pair, their depth had gone.

31/1/11 - 4/12/16

## Droplets

I'm lying with no light on staring acute angled,  
out of the window to sunless sky, chin on chest, reminiscing.  
Rain trails attempt to accelerate, colliding,  
taking my gaze away from a wintering tree, seen  
fifty thousand times. I think of Rebekah.

Days are like Ireland. My stomach tells the time.  
So I learn guitar, play piano, write verse but rarely rhyme.

Enforced idleness in my job conditioned me to let go.  
Thankfully the high scale backbiters rowed away,  
leaving me floating on driftwood in this Gulf Stream,  
optimistic that I'll find a part-timer's wage.

Hypomaniac use of credit passed.  
It's shreds in the waste bin's system.

My wheelchair-using wife teaches Liszt.  
She used to sing Strauss' Four Last Songs.  
Amikacin saved her life but killed her pitch.  
Clare counsels when lithium fails; I'm *chariot* propulsion.  
I push well, but I'd hate to have had the calf  
that I rear-ended in the shopping centre.

We're physical and mental demics respectively:  
Yin and Yang. It's a good job we're not  
parents.

2/2/11

## **“NoEmotion”**

It's not something I'd heard previously,  
like one huge Shakespearian metaphor.  
I don't get it,  
but that makes it deep; “NoEmotion.”

A century old on YouTube, and passed  
the century of subscribers.  
He's wildfire. He'll hit a contract  
with his slick music beats; “NoEmotion.”

Rapid changing graphics and dance complete the show.  
His images betray a passive interest in guns.  
Watch those hands: a manic three, two, one.  
Don't ask who he is; “NoEmotion.”

Wearing a black hoodie,  
he looks like he's from the Ghetto.  
He wears a gold mask just revealing pupils,  
removing it there's another.  
One day the world will know, till then don't ask,  
“NoEmotion, yeah; NoEmotion, yeah; NoEmotion,  
NoEmotion.”

6/2/11 - 10/4/13

## **The Lion, the Slob and the Pigeon**

Is the owl a symbol of wisdom? Perhaps that should be the lion?  
It lies on its side in the sun, whilst the ladies hunt,  
for prey to amble to.

We drive mechanised beasts three hundred yards,  
to hunt in suburban shops. Why burn food walking,  
to save Earth? It's already dead.

Pigeons circle aimlessly. Are they burning food to keep warm?  
I can't believe something so dumb seeks pleasure;  
do they?

10/2/11

### **I give to you**

I've much to learn,  
but would like to share  
a potpourri to ponder,  
ignore, or confirm me  
delinquent or odd.

Try to wake-up at least once,  
in a warm double bed with a stranger.  
Reach for a cigarette, if you smoke,  
smoke it, then kiss gently, spare words  
and leave.

Taste Arabia once, maybe twice.  
Barter for basics to sustain you one day.  
Budget, it's the Arabs' way to provide a meal.  
If you partake, buy hashish at the price of educated OXO.  
Don't smuggle it. Never gamble more than you're prepared to  
lose.

Get to know your parents.  
You won't always have the chance.  
Make decisions, otherwise you'll end up like me:  
in the flow. Take heart though, death is the ultimate leveller.  
We all converge at the narrow gate.

Consider hints. Look at what becomes of others,  
they're your biggest clues.  
Take them or leave them,  
I give to you  
these words.

12/2/11

### **Precious**

(1)

He attempted befriending in the RotorAct club;  
drunkenly explaining back-propagation neural networks,  
smiling and inflecting.  
After propositioning the chairperson, she took him home.  
Her phone rang and she snogged him whilst listening.  
They got into bed. She had an out of date durex  
twelve pack.  
They used three, safely.  
In the morning he smoked, kissed her cheek and left.  
The thought of sharing intimately  
was precious.

(2)

A meal in Morocco was precious. Two natives,  
who asked little for accommodation in a fishing village,  
offered his friend and himself a free feast.  
The meal was his most sociable ever.  
The ate from the same bowl with hands.  
It was a fish delicacy in which he ate the brain.  
Afterwards they smoked hashish, at a fraction  
of the home price, then rested and digested the food.  
He'd never smuggle. He's learned never to gamble  
more than he's prepared to lose; for love's sake.



(3)

He didn't know his precious dad, who was aging.  
So he rang regularly, and his dad would be brief.  
He persisted for years, before realising, that like himself  
dad was quiet and awkward, too. Not liking trivia,  
he learned his dad's humour,  
and still rings today.

---

Memories like brush strokes on his canvas of life,  
build into a precious oil and shape his personality.

13/2/11

### **The Jumper**

Half a man stood on a bridge, hands balancing a torso.  
People passed till early evening  
beneath his snapshot of contentment.

A fisherman fifty yards down the canal path,  
fishing deep, saw oddity in this man's statuesque  
presence, and decided to pack his gear.

*You OK?* the angler inquired. The man looked down  
as if staring at an optician's ear. Car roofs and half vans  
flanked him occasionally, on this single file road above forming  
ice.

*They said "do it"* the man revealed, *"do it or it's mother."*  
*Do what?* the fisherman inquired,  
as the man became whole.

*Wait, what's the problem? I poisoned a cat* the man said.  
*The voices made me. Never mind,*  
*please; get back down* he begged, staring.

A Community Support Officer happened by, and the man's legs  
were Jenga games. The CSO said *it's nippy today*,  
as a wagon climbed the bridge and the man became void.

14/2/11

### **Andy**

I told you I loved you  
like a brother.  
You were scared, I reassured you  
with hand on shoulder, it wasn't "gay."

We grew up late, still struggling,  
through soft drugs and drink.  
To you Sundance, I was your Butch.  
It didn't have to end. We could have been Ant and Dec.

Vivid memories keep coming back to me;  
Tel Aviv beach 6am; Amsterdam, in a haze I guess,  
Hartoft Street, York, a Leeds Casino and a hundred quid  
blown.

I'm all out of mates now, my state's  
whittled them away, with a blade as cold as the tongue  
that told me, I'd lost the art of conversation.  
Where is love? I wore my heart on my sleeve for you.

Jobs, hope and faith are chaff. Charity's my investment account.  
In case I hit a 404 on the web of life, I dish a bit out.  
Change for a cuppa, a yellow coin, charity boxes for shrapnel;  
tipping waitresses, if nothing's ventured no karma's gained.

We've met since those heady days; why not for life then?  
Why don't you ring once? Lord only knows. Who am I to ask?  
You have dependents now,  
but my mother got a call.

It's now your way, but I'm here for a time Andy,  
cutting like paper when I think of rejection,  
slyly staining sheets red. Take great care,  
Christ knows you need to in life.

26/2/11

### **Monologue to an old friend**

I told you I loved you like a brother.  
You were scared. I put a hand on your shoulder.  
It wasn't "gay."

We grew up late, struggling  
through soft drugs and drink.

You were Sundance. I was Butch.  
It needn't end.  
We could have been like Ant and Dec.

Vivid memories keep coming back;  
Tel Aviv beach at 6 a.m.,  
intoxicated in Amsterdam,  
and Hartoft Street  
or leaving broke from a Leeds Casino.

I'm out of mates.  
My state's whittled them away with a blade,  
like that tongue that told me  
I'd lost the art  
of conversation.

Jobs, hope and faith are chaff.  
Charity's my hearts.  
If I hit a 404 on life's web  
I might get a bit back,  
because I offer change for cuppas,  
and offer charity boxes shrapnel.  
I tip if I'm served, and I say  
without action, no karma's gained.

Why don't you ring me?  
You visited my mother.

So, it's not your way? I'm here for a time.  
Your attitude's like a paper cut:  
sly and staining.  
Look after yourself.

26/2/11 - 30/3/13 - 5/12/16

### **Writer's block**

I've run through all the people I've known,  
my holidays and heady university times.  
I think I'll just write what comes  
as I drink whiskey, feet up at 6am.

I'm listening to Bronski Beat. I don't think I'm gay.  
I just like a falsetto tone and good arrangements.  
The week starts for people today, it never ended  
for me.

Muhammad Ali looks down  
from a picture on the wall. Fists ready,  
I remember him fighting on TV,  
sharing the moment with my separated father.

I could write about the pervert who pressurised me.  
Some things are best left unsaid.  
Time to finish my whiskey; sleep till ten,  
and review this fiasco with clarity.

28/2/11

### **Benefits**

It's broad daylight,  
the fluorescent light  
is still on.  
The CD has repeated  
five times, and my feet  
are aching from resting  
on a piano bench.

Pigeons are going nowhere.  
Surprisingly, brown leaves  
still hang from the top  
of an ash tree, as it weeds  
it's way  
up a telegraph pole  
to wires.

I don't like the track  
that's just come on,  
but will survive it.  
Life on benefits;  
I'm facing  
another early  
Monday morning.

Weekends level us,  
but Monday blues  
don't include me.  
I've learned to lose myself  
in writing and music,  
but feel the null  
in their inevitable lapses.

So self-absorbed;  
I watch the cavorting of magpies  
in the trees. I always count them,  
typically numbering one, maybe three.  
I may not have much money, but at least  
I'm mine, in this world of careers,  
where I'd have more chance in crime.

28/2/11

### **Les Jes**

Les Jes terrified me,  
the way he smiled sardonically,  
twice my age.

He hung out with boys,  
in the playing fields  
down our road.

He knew I felt the vibe at ten,  
but he'd grin  
and make his presence felt.

Strange looking: he had short hair  
and tight jeans, showing his bulge,  
outside skinhead times.

I'd gravitate to Derek,  
but Les was his senior.  
Des didn't shield me from him.

One day Les Jes caught me alone,  
he said *put your hand down here*,  
squeezing his stomach in. Scared, I did.

It was big, and the sad git smiled  
then said *kiss me*. I pecked his cheek  
and have never forgotten.

28/2/11

### **Night and Day café bar**

It's gone noon and people are drinking,  
and like me on computers.

There's a piano with missing teeth. I'd like to touch it,  
but it looks like it's passed sexuality.

It's dim here. I like it that way, but the screen lights my face  
as I type away the day.

I fancy the barmaid. I'd better not read the wife this verse.  
She'd think I'm getting pathetic, in middle age.

They sell crap art here, not a chance to punt the garish gloss.  
Still, it looks trendy, adding pseudo-glam to the nighttime gigs.

The drinks are pricey so the toilets are dry docked.  
I guess young smiling barmaids keep it going.

It's my choice if I want to pay over the odds for drink.  
At least it makes it quiet mid-day so I can cogitate in peace.

28/2/11

**Divorced in a year, postcard 22 VIII 1975**

Thursday:

Everything here is very big,  
buildings, cars;  
hotel has swimming pool,  
you would enjoy a holiday here.  
We hope to visit Texas before we come home,  
may see a cowboy.  
All the police carry guns in America,  
so I'll need to be good.  
I hope you're being a good boy.  
I've told Andrew and Mummy  
I'll be home Wed/Thurs,  
since writing them it may be Saturday,  
Lots of love Daddy.

9/3/11

**Substances**

He'd like to try heroin,  
but he doesn't know  
where to score skag from.  
A prostitute would be a start.  
Cash would be his key,  
with extras  
in the offing.



From what he's read, skag  
would throw the spotlights on, and not being  
in an emotional mess, his need wouldn't be dangerous.  
He just wants to chase the dragon  
once or twice in his life  
to see what paradise has in store,  
in case he veers off the narrow gate's track.

He used to take cannabis  
until it made him psychotic.  
Alcohol hangs him over.  
His liver's getting battered.  
He's listening to music  
with 70cls of Scotch, and still able to converse.  
He should find a better meaning.

He wishes he could stop  
after a foray with H.  
He's nearly nicotine neutral,  
just taking a little snuff.  
But the smoker's trails in streets  
remind him of pleasure.  
He's primed.

9/3/11

### **Jack**

Jack owned the farm yard.  
He spent his entire working life  
shackled to a post  
by sixteen yards  
of rusty steel chain.

His job was a night-watchman,  
sounding the alarm if anything stirred.  
His office was a straw filled kennel,  
adding warmth that his matted coat  
didn't provide.

This alsatian barked like a throaty great dane,  
any time of day or night.  
But his days ended with collapsing hind legs.  
No one had loved him, and peeing on car wheels  
had been his revenge.

10/3/11

### **The folder**

Letters, cards, photographs and more,  
show my lack of impact by their scarcity.  
Two greetings from a woman loved  
are the only remembrance. She is taken.

A card from a grown up little girl,  
drenched in music over a period of twelve years,  
is all that remains, with little ink kisses.

Unable to express himself verbally, a father wrote  
of his love and devotion. The same such frankness was shown  
throughout his son's faith conversion.

The folder fills slowly,  
leading to an unwanted feeling.

What is life for? Some say God counts.  
With few friends online/altogether, the folder matters.  
It's a dossier of his life.

11/3/11

## Buses

I love buses; it's off my chest. The twenty-four  
is best, as it's faster than the rest of my routes.  
It takes me from town to projectile vomiting distance  
from home, when I go out with my mate.

The one-eight-one is a double decker,  
and I can hide at the back top like a youth.  
I no longer have a pass, so I'm not ID'd,  
and sometimes drink cans to pass time.

If drivers spot cans and you sit,  
some will turn the bus off,  
then social pressure mounts  
and you'll be waiting for the next one.

I used to visit the wife in hospital.  
I'd get the one-four-nine both ways.  
I don't drink drive, so on a bus  
I can travel with a drink.

The 77 is an education, whichever direction you take.  
It will take me home or drop me in town,  
travelling via the less salubrious parts.  
The passengers are interesting.

I remember one day on the 77 when the bell  
rang and rang. The driver came to the back of the bus  
with fumes out of his ears. *Why don't you respect me?*  
I'm a certified bus-nutter.

14/3/11

## **The summer's in doubt**

The summer's in doubt  
and I'm happiest in the sun.

Walking down Oxford Road,  
I don't see dark shades.

There are young students. I'm a sad old git;  
can't carry off the trends now.

The summer used to last forever  
now time's slipping by.

Once I drove an open top MG  
in the Cheshire countryside.

Now I fantasise how life could be,  
if I were twenty again.

The summer's in doubt,  
more so year on year.

Don't throw my smile back at me.  
I don't want to live on the margin.

I'm perplexed  
and clinging on.

14/3/11

## **Nostalgia**

The sun shone today, crocuses  
have heralded spring while daffodils are shy.

Everything is still outside,  
with no leaves to move.

I love days like this: the peace;  
a taste for what may come.

We used to drive to the beach  
and cross the sands with the dogs.

Lucy's too old now and Thomas has gone,  
but the peace makes me reflect.

We won't run into the sun again,  
but we can sit and smell the sea air.

Maybe this weekend I'll take you  
and your wheelchair, to the prom.

I could buy fish and chips.  
What counts is we're still together.

I can't forecast. It's painful. And my life  
is over half done.

Damn it why were you robbed of health,  
today made me nostalgic.

14/3/11

### **To Clare**

I've been writing about the past.  
I've been down.

I've cast grey on my small level of stature,  
through tales of drugs, drink and sex.

I may not go to church regularly now,  
but there's space for a devil on a pew.

The main thing is I know for sure  
that you love me, regardless.

You'll even put up with my pondering  
different life choices.

You simply and calmly ask me  
if I am ever content.

15/3/11

### **Sharon**

I was educated in a rough comp'.  
She went to a convent.  
I'd never heard the word Eucharist.  
Latin wasn't on the curriculum.

I had a record for drugs;  
she had The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.  
I smoked, cursed, got drunk,  
didn't work, and I played loud music.

After three years of college I ran my fingers  
through her hair. I was Steinbeck's  
Lennie Small with the softness.  
She smiled.

Then at a party, I kissed her lips for one second  
too long. She asked me to dance.  
I declined. I didn't know what else to say,  
and couldn't dance. Soon I had a palliative drink.

After college Sharon headed miles south.  
More recently I told her how I used to feel.  
That email cost me an old friend.  
Parallel lines meet at infinity.

15/3/11 - 7/12/16

## **YouTube**

“If I do something that's crap,  
I don't want pity. I want you to say,  
*That's crap*” - Julie Walters (Educating Rita.)

Don't fear to criticise me.  
I wallow in your emotion.

But how do I get more views?  
Is it the mess of my beard?  
Do my specs make me look academic?  
Should I read my poems topless?  
Without cleavage there's no point.

I do have pals, but subscription swappers  
seem to count beads.  
I subscribe with no strings.

Jokers sending friend requests,  
with ten thousand icons on their channels  
are worthless stamp collectors.

15/3/11

## Obsessions

Computers kicked it off:  
my coding assembler  
for mathematical recreations,  
and playing games.

Cannabis lasted four years.  
It was happiness in cling-film wraps,  
till anxiety manifested  
and nicotine had to do.

I had to catch up.  
I played piano  
for ten years,  
never imagining it would end.

Harder pieces like bigger hits,  
were needed month after month,  
till injury destroyed my pride,  
humbling my ambition.

Then writing took over,  
with a *Roman à clef* and verse.  
Now I fear a dry nib, and a sentence  
of television.

15/3/11 - 7/12/16



### **Please like me**

*All right? Yeah and you? Yeah;*  
*Hia; Hi;* dozens of nodding “friends”  
whose lives you don’t know.  
Please like me because I like you.  
I won’t ignore you. I know how it cuts.  
Just don’t ask me to lend you a tenner,  
because I don’t want to have to remember.  
I’d sooner give. Will a fiver do?  
Is this the ethic of reciprocity?

16/3/11

### **Poison**

My poison is cheap Scotch  
mixed with pepsimax.  
It helps keep the calories  
of an ale alternative down.

Cheap Scotch and pepsiMAX  
raise my blood pressure values  
for two days straight,  
after a bottle’s lost its last drops.

Why can’t I start to think healthily?  
I should drink tea whilst aiming finger-tips.  
At least I’m not down Gin Lane,  
or Beer Street with its protrusion of guts.

16/3/11

### **Isolation ward**

The dog’s going crazy, she doesn’t want to eat,  
and me? I’m missing you for the sixth time.

I know the hospital like the hair in the middle of my mole.  
Four hundred visits are no overestimation.

Those damned steroids make you vulnerable.  
You should live like Howard Hughes. It's partly my fault.

This time is going to be a short one.  
Take care Clare, you don't deserve this.

21/3/11

### **Life's in spring**

The 44<sup>th</sup> summer is approaching  
and life's in spring.  
The Stalingrad of my mind has thawed.  
Cool streams trickle.

I sit drinking pepsi and smoking JPS Blue  
on Oldham Street, Manchester;  
wondering if the girls are as nice inside as out.  
They can't have a bigger heart than Clare.

I'm a yellow laced lighthouse,  
with my eight "holer" Docs and RayBans,  
but the fog of my beard and gut is thick.  
I don't get a glance.

Young men talk across the way,  
above. I'd love a city centre second home.  
I could steal company from the street,  
relaxing on my balcony. Commandment ten sucks.

25/3/11

## **Oldham Street**

I sit drinking pepsi, smoking JPS Blue  
on Oldham Street, Manchester;  
wondering if the girls are as nice inside as out.  
They can't have a bigger heart than my wife.

I'm a yellow laced lighthouse  
with my eight holer Docs and RayBans,  
but the fog of my beard and gut is thick.  
I don't get a glance.

Young men relax high across the way.  
I'd love a city centre second home.  
I could steal company from the street.  
Commandment ten sucks.

25/3/11

## **Isolation**

From across the croft  
I hear a dog.  
Birds sing love songs, and children play  
with indistinct voices.  
A breeze inches blossom;  
silent as a sycamore seed.

At sixty yards from a main road  
I hear cars,  
making me a small part.  
My world is Clare, me  
and Lucy the dog:  
a family.

Funny I haven't ventured  
to let such sounds in before.  
Isolation had become my norm.  
Clare hears little through her aids.

I've often longed for travel and materials;  
but to share what others hear  
on a peaceful Sunday  
makes my hankerings vanish.  
I open the window today.

27/3/11 - 7/12/16

## 60/40 against

She had 24/7 care, wired to a fortune  
of kit, as she rested in diamorphine bliss.  
The machines monitored vital functions,  
and gave her seventy percent oxygen  
through a hole they'd cut in her trachea.  
She'd never sing the same again.  
Her blood vessels were a battle site  
where a navy of bacteria tried to close  
her system down. Dr Alec coolly prescribed,  
even when dialysis replaced her kidneys.  
Her partner had been told to prepare for the worst  
and visited her three times a day.  
He even spoke to her comatose presentment,  
but prayer was his only recourse.  
An attempt at resuscitation lead to her eyeballs  
showing no sign of intelligence, rotating.  
Her spinal fluids were tested for cloudiness,  
and her partner wept. She came round  
on the second attempt, but six more months  
of fighting were needed. After rejecting the final drug -  
possibility,  
she triumphed. Though partially deaf now, she would live.  
They'd recited psalm 121 every night.  
And to end this nightmare, they wed.

30/3/11

## **Confirmation**

Front set candles  
burned on Saturday,  
as night people  
took regular seats.  
The priest ate first,  
then beckoned forward the faithful prospect,  
schooled about Lourdes, but short on prayers.  
After repeating holy words  
then cupping Christ:  
God,  
he gnawed flesh with three hundred  
stood behind. Their claps humbled,  
as the new Catholic  
bowed his head,  
then raised a shy pope-like hand  
and turned aback.

After mass people took that hand,  
thus validating him to imply he was found.

31/3/11 - 7/12/16

## **Opus Dei**

I spoke to God today for the first time  
in months. I started by apologising  
for not being in touch, then thanked him  
for helping me hang in down here.  
*I said, I know you won't send me an email,  
but can we agree that if the bus is on time today,  
it must surely be down to you,  
because the First bus company operates  
on a basis of wasting our time,  
whereas you would ostensibly save it; Amen.*

The bus came one minute early.  
There was something strange  
about the driver today: his joviality.  
I thought he'd smoked "wacky-backy"  
as I sat staring out of the window.  
He took the wrong route despite mutterings  
from the whole bus. Veering back,  
we arrived in town four minutes late.  
It seems the Devil had tapped my line.  
Hallelujah, if there's a devil there must be a god.

31/3/11

### **Spring?**

What has happened to the spring?  
The sun that put confidence  
in daffodils, has hidden behind a sheet  
of grey, and the breeze unsettles.

Where once girls revealed curves  
now coats are all they offer.  
Puddles persist in pavements  
and roads.

Moods are affected subconsciously,  
as smiles down the street have turned to flatness,  
bluntly hitting you  
with each face seen.

The March taste of summer looks over.  
April is unwilling. This summer  
is likely to be a letdown, and personally  
our passports are impractical.

The tables weren't outside the bar today.  
We sat with no lights on inside.  
Oh to live in California, where the sun  
even seduces smiles from the sad.

1/4/11

### **Do not be sad mother**

... rest, and in your dreams  
think of nice things. For life wasn't meant to hurt so,  
though a life without any pain can't be living.

Feed the blackbird currants and don't scorn  
the starlings. God's creatures all bring a sense  
of what really matters: song and playfulness.

So sleep and enter your garden; tend the roses  
and harvest herbs. Bring that peace  
into your day of sorries. It's over.

Accept that it's like last year's blossom.  
Give your garden life. I understand your departure.  
Three dozen years is too long to regret.

1/4/11

### **Risperidone**

Those extra two milligrams have done it.  
You've got your husband back.  
He's tired at night, and can't manage  
on three hours' sleep. He's no longer high.



No more irritability and indiscretions,  
no more spending and rushing about,  
you always said you preferred him low to high.  
You've got the perfect medium.

1/4/11

### **A Sketch by George Russell**

Storm clouds menace above distant hills.  
A tiny, make-believe house resists.  
His wife prepares herself, dressed only  
in lace pants and a bra.  
She is oblivious to darkening skies.  
Her top half is illuminated as she brushes  
her hair. And a pearl earring can be seen  
in a mirror.  
Ghost-like curtains separate her  
from the moors.  
He sits in the corner  
sketching her beautiful figure  
before kissing her neck,  
and decorating it with pearls.

7/4/11

### **Brothers preparing to wax lyrical**

“Authentic conversation  
needs to return.  
It's getting late,”  
his words limped.

“Night time is looming,”  
the poet replied with a blush.  
“A third of life has passed  
since sharing feelings.  
The rest could fleet  
with separation.”

“Let’s open up,”  
their consciences said,  
but their souls muted.

They realised life  
had hardened their hearts.  
Their destiny was to go different ways,  
like their dad and uncle  
before them.

7/4/11 - 26/7/13

### **Irritant with compound eyes**

There’s nothing worse  
than a bluebottle in a room.  
The constant high sawtooth  
of its see-through sails  
grates till it stops, and the hunt is on.  
It must be one newspaper blow,  
or its brain won’t take chance for longer.  
A proportionate jet fighter,  
it hugs your head.  
Night time is worse. The minefield  
of the window doesn’t attract.  
Ah-ha, fly spray; nice if we had some.  
It’d be dead.

9/4/11

## **Homeless?**

I'm not going to ask you where you're from  
or what your name is, as a pavement cools  
your bum and a wall props up your back.  
The dirt on your face tells me enough.  
I call myself a Christian so shouldn't judge  
when I consider giving you a fiver.  
I say *take great care* and hand it over.  
Maybe you do buy drugs, that's your choice.  
I know what it's like to crave, not least people.  
Loneliness is a state of mind. I've been there.  
You stand up, hug me then leave, quickly,  
and I walk away trying not to think I've been kind.

10/4/11

## **Blackpool**

The tide is coming in  
stirring the murk of sediment  
below fluffy clouds  
of water.

Sunlight bounces off the time-lapsed like images  
of a sky,  
and an elasticity holds in vastness.  
Blackpool in spring warms to get ready.

We've longed for our day out here  
to break the monotony of suburbia.  
Rain daggers fall on Manchester; here diamonds  
pinprick the blue sheet that climbs to the precipice.

Summer will bring thousands;  
honest Northerners. We'll be back.  
We'll sit again eating fish and chips,  
dreaming beyond the edge to slow Ireland.

12/4/11

### **Hepatitis**

It's Wednesday, my hand shakes a tea cup.  
I'm tired and my body aches.  
Ten hours spent drinking on Monday  
was a mistake.  
Yesterday was a wipeout. Now I owe my friend  
fifty pounds, as if I hadn't spent enough.  
It seems we can't just meet over coffees.  
I'm having a liver scan soon, no doubt  
inflamed more after Monday.  
I can't do this. I'm no longer twenty.  
My grandfather died early through drink,  
and I'm headed that way.  
Gluttony tries to warn fools.

13/4/11

## **Forgiveness**

Love holds no record  
of right or wrong.  
How can it be felt  
when the head masks the heart?  
If icy waters fill your veins,  
how can it be felt within,  
in the spaces where no anger boils?  
Where the head rules, can there be love?  
Forgiving unconditionally  
makes us trust that we're loving, human  
and part of life's symphony.

14/4/11

## **Boggart Hole Clough**

Hidden, north-east of a patchwork estate,  
fed by speed-bump roads,  
the peaceful clough  
emerged for us.

An oasis of dog-controlled greenery, it's a thousand pounds  
for leaving a turd.  
Children play fearlessly,  
and lovers embrace in the sun.

Dandelions and daisies decorate the grass.  
Birds sing in the sun. A menacing  
black and white cat scouts for trophies,  
all purrs and clean coat; and animal instincts.

The woods hide much, but two magpies materialise,  
and are soon joined by a carefree pigeon.  
The balance of joy is not upset  
as they fork the field.

The race for leaves is on. Some trees have finished already,  
others look lifeless, left out. The summer will come and renew  
them.

Blossom is out early,  
and embellishes the grass verge, the natural seasons have  
changed.

Bees are buzzing busily.  
Fresh energy abounds.  
I remember travelling here as a boy with a metal detector,  
now I hold it dear as a man seeking peace.

16/4/11

### **Loneliness**

It's a plague that even lives  
in privileged families.  
Let's hope Kate's Okay.

It's a disease, in every city,  
they've written songs about it.  
But it's a paradox of population density.

It's a wall so unscalable  
that few bother.  
It's easiest to walk passed while people lie.

It's a seed sown in youth  
that landed on unfertile soil.  
It needs a gardener to re-pot its beauty.

18/4/11

## **Designated smoking area**

In my transient obscurity  
I watch you, as the thicket  
dictates my course.  
I hide, then zoom  
across a field of dry earth.  
I fear your foot  
in my forest of green;  
you're a giant,  
you could end my life.  
What would put such a thought  
in your head, as you put your life  
on pause with nicotine?  
My world is littered  
with huge cylinders of cork,  
four minutes to you,  
before going back in the pub.  
Will you know  
you were scrutinised?

18/4/11

## King pin

Today I had a good thought.  
It was just the one in a sea  
of self-pity. I thought I'd be united  
on Kate and William's special day.  
I live in a left-wing area,  
no street parties are likely to be on.  
But I invested hope in the marriage.  
It's a step towards good.  
The beauty's all around.  
I've been so hidden by my own fears; of life.  
The Royal Wedding can't happen elsewhere,  
so we should rejoice and sing praises.  
This time the couple will last the course,  
to restore pride within the monarchy,  
and for subjects themselves.

20/4/11



## **National pride**

Today I had a good thought.  
It was just one amongst pity.  
I thought I'd be united  
on Kate and William's special day.  
I live in a left wing area.  
No street parties are likely to be on.  
But I invested hope in the marriage.  
It's a step towards good,  
with beauty around.  
I've been so hidden by my anxieties.  
The Royal Wedding can't happen elsewhere.  
We should rejoice and sing praises.  
This time the couple will last.  
They're in Elizabeth's mold,  
and a living memory of Diana too;  
restoring pride in our royals.  
One day they'll rule the loyal.

20/4/11 - 20/4/13

## **Educating Pigeons**

The window is open,  
so Glenn Gould's Bach emanates.  
It's a fugue from book one.  
High volume  
is bastardising its beauty.  
A man with a dog walks passed,  
surprised. It is 6a.m.  
Two pigeons land on the garden wall.  
They're taken in by the counterpoint,  
and nod heads in canon with one another.  
They appear to get the point.  
Had the music been Heavy-Rock,  
the man would have assumed  
the culprit was a power-waker,  
preparing for a day of ambitions.  
But Glenn (another eccentric)  
can only mean one thing:  
this riser is trying to educate  
pigeons.

23/4/11

## **Moooo**

Calcium trees feeding saplings  
in fields of magic mushrooms,  
are dumb to an unprecedented  
level, yet their fruit is rich,  
and their nature is notable.

Quarter of a ton of lean meat,  
their fruit saves them from fillet,  
rump and rib-eye.  
They're dairy cattle in a field  
where hippies go and pick.

In India they're holy. In America  
a saying reminds us of so much,  
even though they're bred for burgers,  
and fields are formed from forests.  
Let cows be, by fertilising ground

where liberty caps grow. Then everyone  
is happy, except people  
standing in pats.  
Cows should be milked,  
not butchered for beef.

23/4/11

### **To Bill**

Imagine what it was like  
hearing Bill Evans, with heroin swollen hands,  
grace the keyboard at the Village Vanguard.

Who would he have become  
if he hadn't died of indulgence  
in an era before mine? But he's my idol.

Would he still be playing Alfie and Nardis?  
Would he have embraced  
ever new technology?

Bill why did you have to enter that scene,  
with dealers threatening to break your hands,  
and friends carrying the financial can?

I've got fifty of your records and a sketch  
of you comping. If you'd have lived till eighty,  
I might have seen you play.

11/5/11

## **Pride revisited**

Father is getting on, and his ambition  
for me has waned.

I wanted to make him proud,  
but it's passed, I'm over forty  
and jobless.

He helped to make me who I am,  
along with those infant school  
playtime sanctions; later, smoking in local woods,  
and eventually taking drugs,  
on a deprived council estate.

The pride I inherited from him  
is my ball and chain. I didn't  
combine it with his bluntness.  
Can't he find pride in me now,  
just for hanging in here with no shield?

12/5/11

## **Tyrannosaurus rex**

Give me a beer any day to a conversation with dad.  
He makes no effort, and substitutes bluntness  
for humour: he's a dinosaur,  
and a simile for pride. He can't get it into his head  
that I'm mentally ill, and wants me to try and fail  
again. The work scenario has rejected me,  
that's why I write these poems that don't rhyme.  
Dad's not read a jot about my problems,  
he can't see a fracture so where's the pain?  
He just wants to tell his friends I'm doing well.  
Fuck them dad, what about me?  
It's 1am; he did it again yesterday.  
One day it will be up to him to ring.

20/5/11

## **Tyrannosaurus rex revisited**

He said, “Give me a beer any day to a conversation with him. He makes no effort, and substitutes bluntness for humour: he’s a dinosaur and a model of pride.

He can’t get it into his head that I’m ill, and wants me to try; failing again. The work scenario has rejected me. He’s not educated in minds. He can’t see a break so where’s - the pain?

He just wants to tell his friends I’m doing well. Fuck them, I matter more. It’s 1a.m., he did it again yesterday. One day dad’s phone will cease to ring.”

20/5/11 - 3/5/13

## **The Sunshine room**

Bright yellow wallpaper cocoons my soul-side,  
in this room of extravagances and a loving toil.  
Not just one piano adorns the walls.  
A Bechstein takes space.  
Ten years spent learning the keys  
have suffered waste, through an injury down to pride.  
Stagnation now rules over cantabile tones.

I listen to jazz, classical or pop here.  
Each song sparks a memory,  
and I scan my seventeen art works, bonding.  
My two efforts are dark, moody snaps.

I drink excessively, and smoke, in this room,  
my disabled, levelling wife can't reach.  
We called it "The Sunshine room."  
It's a den where I hide to create.  
Where I'm happiest by writing  
or playing tunes; like a bed-less, child's bedroom.

Green ash trees  
are out of the window again.  
I've seen them tens of thousands of times.  
I wish they were felled to show blue.  
It's life, time; patience: longing to be clear  
and wiser than others;  
perhaps offering help in verse?

2/6/11 - 9/12/16

### **The Empress**

Life is beginning  
to tighten around me.  
My reprises are music, drink and sleep.  
Freedom is fleeting dreams,  
those dreams I've always been adept at.  
Life scares me. Sometimes I'm numb,  
maybe it's risperidone?

Dad said *some say Hell is on Earth.*  
He'd found it and was engulfed.  
With a brave face, he showed me  
for as long as he could, that life was easy.  
I was never ready for this world  
and crash landed, doomed  
like a rudderless glider.

It's been a while since then,  
and I'm occupied with verse  
while others slog. It's my reality,  
created for my paranoid self.  
My friend doesn't ring. My wife  
is much my senior. One day I may be alone,  
too mistrusting to remarry.

The tarot reader speaks of good after July,  
and she draws my wife:  
favourably. February rang true.  
My bread buys hope but my faith  
can deceive me.  
For now I give myself to Clare,  
"The Empress."

26/6/11

### **Nice dream, but**

there I go again make-believing.  
This time Sharon  
is suddenly and harmlessly in my life.  
She's twenty years younger,  
when I thought I loved her. I feel *Déjà vu*.  
When did I pen that before?

Sharon will be going teaching and life completing.  
I'll go to hospital with my wife, and wonder what-ifs.  
I care. I'm Clare's legs. She's diazepam  
for me, as we drift randomly.

27/6/11 - 10/4/13 - 9/12/16

## **A portrait of Clare**

She fingers 108 beads, sitting on her wheelchair.  
Babaji's Kriya yoga provides her  
with practical spirituality.  
Where once the Rosary was her devotion,  
her trust has travelled east.

I drink beer, facing her, poisoning my blood  
with unconsecrated ethanol, and hiding,  
for what will be another morning malaise.  
Her faith in mantras is unwavering: a belief  
that we will be provided for.

We attempt conversation surrounded by dialogue.  
I fade into practical white-noise,  
and her aids cannot separate me.  
So we sit like an old couple,  
and I begin to write - "A portrait of Clare."

She is kind and undeserving of her ailments,  
my soul mate for the last eighteen years.  
Her modesty never cracks, and her charity is strong.  
We're so different in some ways, but we bond.  
Time has sealed us with amber drops of tenderness.

5/7/11

## **The magpie's commentary**

One for sorrow, *it's the solitude of unity.*  
Two for joy, *it's the bond of uncomplicated union.*

Three for a girl, *it's the curves of women.*  
Four for a boy, *it's an angular antithesis.*



Five for silver, *it's a meagre decimalised shilling.*  
Six for gold, *it's a teardrop earring.*

Seven for a secret never to be told, *it's a handle of a tea cup*  
*with contents read.*

Eight for a wish, *it's a standing sign, a plea for infinite*  
*happiness.*

Nine for a kiss, *it's a coiled, striking cobra.*

Ten for a bird that must not be missed, *and who can miss*  
*a chattering magpie?*

7/7/11

## **Sign of things to come**

Natural light invaded frosted glass,  
dimming as his watery cocoon cooled,  
so gradual, he didn't feel the chill, or notice  
the goosebumps on his skin.  
The bubble-bath had expired  
so his knees rose from the depth,  
and his ears sank below water level.  
He was in a huge conch shell  
almost hearing his heart.  
He imagined the cavorting of seals  
as he swished his feet. Alone in the house,  
he felt something was wrong with him,  
but he hadn't matured to an answer.  
So he cut himself off from his world  
in a tub, warmest if he didn't move.  
He imagined he was in the womb, given a second attempt.  
The rest of the student house was out living.  
He didn't socialise, he didn't have chat,  
so he waited for a drunken return to his computer.  
After ninety minutes his skin was pickable.  
Then he chose to dry, dress and make a cup of tea.  
No one asked him what he'd done.  
He was born again.

13/7/11

## **Grass snake**

It's floating in a stream.  
Is it well? It doesn't fear me.

Yellow necked with diamonds of green,  
it looks ok. I'll land it.

Neither feigning dead nor stinking,  
it doesn't object to capture.

I take it to mum, and soon I'm met  
by a death squad of kitty cats clambering.

*Put it back* she says, with no curiosity.  
The snake appears to be smiling.

So I have no new pet, and return it to its spot.  
Then its disappearance mimics its discovery.

13/7/11

### **York revisited**

The younger brother rode down the alleyway, with little width -  
to return. Stars pinpricked night's hood, and increasing distance  
dimmed the road's glow, towards a potential toll point.  
A Nike rested on graffiti that suggested love and hate mingle.  
Ironically, "Tracey 4 John" was toed.

Three youths silently waited. He shouldn't have blurted  
*fucking move*, which they did, but his brother followed.  
*Come on!* Whilst big enough to bang heads together,  
his brother didn't want to command.

Violence to the elder, and one wheel buckling,  
only ended when *leave him alone, he's my brother*,  
was emoted by the younger's vandal. A final kick  
to his brother's chin, guaranteed the sibling some guilt.

They continued silently on foot, pushing bikes, arriving late  
at friends and discussing with them, but not alone.

17/07/11 - 9/12/16

## **On ESA**

On a “George and Mildred” viewing afternoon,  
he remembers having just three channels.  
It’s funny yesterday’s news isn’t available now.  
He walks like he’s on chemotherapy.  
He lacks adrenaline since stress left;  
the fall guy with a false farewell,  
confirmed by a silent phone.  
Cash becomes fat on his belly, bum and liver.  
Tar insidiously coats his lungs.  
His allure is proportional to the size of his useful wardrobe.  
He’ll jog before he reaches XXL.

21/7/11

## **Islands**

She feels awkward because she doesn’t talk  
to other mothers in the playground.  
She thinks they think she’s odd,  
not the mothering kind.  
It cuts, but she can’t tolerate the children’s cries  
for the swings, roundabout, and slide.

She lets her husband get on with it,  
and do what he has to do.  
She wants a lover.  
She’s a size 16 and used to be a 10.  
She’s a facade, a housewife,  
trapped in family bidding.

On Thursdays she goes to night-school.  
She doesn’t actually like embroidery;  
it’s independence.  
The class has a male, but she wants  
a MAN.

Her husband should know her,  
but he's too self-absorbed.  
She's him in a skirt.  
He doesn't talk to barbers,  
and has to change them regularly.

He has poor sex, so he jacks off with magazines.  
He's 16 stone and out of shape. Who would he turn on?  
He paints a glaze, and lives a robotic life.

He has one friend who never rings him up.  
They drink.  
It doesn't register that with his wife,  
they're so fucking  
alone.

22/7/11

### **After a year**

The first sign was forgetting to genuflect.  
Wondering if anyone had seen the slip,  
he sat forgetting to kneel and pray.  
He never really knew the words to mass, he was a convert.  
So he tried to follow one moment behind.  
He knew the Lord's Prayer from school.  
Problem was he sometimes ran on, *forever and ever amen*.  
He should have been to confession.  
He thought the priest couldn't tell.  
But the gospel was the Prodigal son, and he felt welcomed,  
taking his host as if it were his due.

23/7/11

## Penile insanity

She strutted in a mini-skirt and high-heels.  
Her purpose was clear in this area of town.

She smiled on eye contact. He said *how much in a room?*  
Her scrawniness was like that narrow line of morality,  
that putters were tempted to cross.

Setting off by taxi and pursued by a cyclist “friend,”  
he thought *no problem*.

They silently ascended in the tower block lift.  
Her mind must have been on a fix. He buzzed.

She was an orifice, he was a fool. He sat,  
uninterested, wondering why he took these chances.

She removed crumpled paper from her b-cup bra.  
Two men entered. Thankfully, he was dressed.  
*Who are you?* Calmly, he said *I'm with her*.  
*Well this is my flat. He has credit cards*, the lady said.

Then a pause stretched with tension.  
He offered to leave. At the door, five imaginary ones  
were offered for a fiver.  
He considered it rent then left.

Outside, in shock, he couldn't find the lift.  
The tenant emerged and offered to get his twenty, but failed.  
He'd risked too much, by lacking street wisdom,

but did gain “what if” thoughts.

29/7/11 - 9/12/16

## **Distractions**

We used to talk.  
Everybody thinks, and feels pain and joy.  
We role played with ActionMen,  
until you got too old and I searched for new friends.  
You embarked on an obsession with electronics.

You came home from college. I checked your tobacco tin  
then had my first joint. I nearly puked.

We spoke of mum,  
and her bittersweet exit.  
You drank too much.  
You wanted the lot.

Now you're dry, but you don't ring.  
We're both alone: a writer and a spark.

31/7/11 - 3/5/13

## **Same boat**

We used to talk, damn it.  
Something must be going on in your mind,  
everybody thinks and feels pain or joy.  
We played with teddies and Action Men  
as kids, till the age gap  
left me searching out new friends.  
I stole dope off you, my first spliff.  
Didn't know you heated hash.  
You showed me, I vomited.  
We spoke of mum,  
and her bittersweet split.  
Let it go and ring us some time,  
it cuts but there's still love.

7/11 - 31/7/11

## **Procrastination**

Brass slowly reacting with air:  
the life giver, is sapped of charisma.  
Breath by breath, time can place the unwary  
in a chasm. The only light is lust for living.  
Polish that brass and see your soul emerge,  
your life is too short to stare aimlessly.  
Projects started, like collected brasses,  
are good intentions but toil.  
Your all or nothing attitude, swapping about,  
makes you a Jack-of-all-trades. Settle on one  
or attract procrastination. Will anything  
worthwhile get done?

2/8/11

## **Bella**

Every time I want her I'm excited.  
I'm a December the 24th child.  
Then these words in my stomach's ear  
start to travel up my spine.  
*You're buying into 10,000 walks,  
vets' bills and a truck load of tripe.*  
But Lucy is very old in dog years,  
and life would be quiet without a pet.

Dogs smile to greet you  
like perpetual children.  
They teach lessons in love,  
never holding a grudge.



Can Bella ever fill the paw prints,  
of a life of presence made;  
under the grand piano, on the door mat,  
and never away when the microwave pings?  
But nowhere are those trails more marked  
than in December's white backyard.

4/8/11

### **A newcomer arrives**

“Thank you everybody for coming tonight.  
We've got Paul with us, he's feeling like many of us did; do;  
wondering whether he could be helped,  
wondering if he shared this problem.  
So please make him feel welcome and let's open the meeting.”

(A relaxed pause passes).

“I'm John and I'm an alcoholic.  
It's been three years since I've had a drink.

Coming here Paul is the first step to recovery from this illness.  
You may take stuff on board, you may go away and think well -  
I'm not like them.  
However you feel at the end of the night, remember we're here -  
for you.

I started to think something was wrong  
when I was unable to leave a six pack unfinished.  
I'd have to get a taxi to the 24/7 and buy more.  
Then I decided to save money by driving myself,  
I lost my licence. All I seemed to care about was beer.  
I started to drink first thing in the morning when I had a can left  
over,  
after being drunk the night before: my hair of the dog.  
I couldn't understand my wife leaving a half inch of wine in the  
bottom of her glass.  
I was made redundant, but continued to spend fifteen pounds a  
day on drink.  
Thinking whiskey was more cost effective I drank that; neat.  
I blacked out often and threw up some mornings.  
Dawn worried about me and I promised not to drink.  
But I started drinking in secret, making excuses  
to go into town where I could be alone.  
Even walking to the corner shop  
had me quickly necking a can on the way home.  
I took the dogs for more walks, drinking whiskey on the fields.  
The crunch came when I drove my car drunk, whilst banned.  
I got a ban of five years.  
My job prospects looked poor. I didn't even look after my  
personal hygiene,  
and Dawn threatened to leave me.  
That's when I came to the fellowship for help.”

“Thank you John.”

(A brief silence fills the room).

“Hello, my name's Linda, I'm an alcoholic ...”

5/8/11

## “Frank”

If time steals life, indulgence  
is catalytic.  
Amy burned like phosphorus.

Green, brown then bare;  
nature’s sober giants remind us of life’s course.  
Her flesh and cursed blood were recalled to Earth.

A Barn owl flies on an oil  
on my wall.  
Moonlight creates a shadow of a yew tree.  
A mouse takes its chances.

We’re all mice.  
Some have more moonlight.  
Others hide in runs.

I finish another drink, listening to “Frank,”  
asking myself; what claws grasped Amy?  
I wonder with regret why she ever lit her flare.

10/8/11 - 8/4/13

## **Strangers passing in the night**

I look out for you in your bus shelter, as I drive home  
from the hospital to my empty house.  
It's been six months, and I've seen you sitting there  
wet or fine, light or dusk.  
Churches are locked and society frowns upon loners in pubs.  
I call you "The Little Man," because you're child-like.  
You drink Vimto and Pepsi and carry a bag for your empties.  
I burn rubber in my anonymous Vauxhall,  
you walk hunched in your anorak.  
We're not so dissimilar. Your parents are gone.  
I have a similar risk with my wife.  
We live in this small community where fast food  
has ousted the butcher and green-grocer.  
You're tired of fast television.  
Your longevity has earned you occasional conversations.  
Some days you look sad and I want to talk too,  
but people don't really talk to strangers passing in the night.

19/8/11

## Letter to a lifer

Phil,

I hope this letter finds you well.  
There's no easy way to say this,  
so I'll just blurt it right out.  
You know you always said  
I should find somebody else?  
His name is "Mark." I think you'd like him.  
He's so selfless and loves the kids.  
He doesn't, can't, love them like you do,  
but it's killing them that you're gone  
for so long, and me too.  
I know why you did it and will always stand by you,  
but we're all in a sentence.  
Mark is the same age as me and he has a good job.  
I know this isn't going to help much,  
but he supports United.  
Forgive me. I'd like a divorce.

All my love,  
Rosie xx

22/8/11

## A bipolar's writer's block

It's happened again, the mists are forming.  
A numbness like Novocain fills thoughts.  
It seems this room has been stripped  
of inspiring energy: a dull cell.

Feeling lowest without activity, cigarettes  
give life amidst the boredom, and sap it.  
But only a high and its creative explosion thereof  
can bring to an end this writer's block.      30/8/11 - 10/4/13

## **Revenge of the mutant camels**

I've had dreams like this before:  
dead bodies in high-vis vests  
caught in plant machinery.  
Can you imagine it, semi stiff arms pointing  
from dirty JCBs? I'll STOP right there.  
I'm sorry, I don't write about roses  
and springtime, new born lambs and love.  
I blame it on television and video games,  
ZAP, K-POW. Revenge of the Mutant Camels  
was my 8-bit, pixelated, eighties diffuser of angst.  
When I was a lad we had no Duke Nukem 3D  
in a million colours. We lived with sixteen.  
But I dreamed in rainbows, like I do today,  
and that gets me back to dumper yellow;  
recurring, waking me in the night with a challenge.  
It's not real. Carnage in the quarry is my wraith.

10/9/11

## **Two score years and three**

It's like when that first cane  
twats your sweating palm. It's a bad trip kicking in.  
It's a realization, that what you thought was white,  
was bleached and actually jet denial.  
It's a flash through your mind, a sudden nocturnal awakening.  
You're wet, and it happens again. It has that oldest odour,  
like Farley's rusks: sweet fear?  
Can you do it all again?  
It's pulling you to one side. You have one hand on the wheel.  
This has been your modus operandi.  
Forever autumn; thickening cover is burying the past.  
Then that conker hits you. Waist deep, you'll drown in a dream.  
But an inescapable, logical blackness leads you to self-imposed,  
perpetual  
winter.

1/10/11

## **Ball games**

You scribble and edit yet another verse.  
Word processed correctness is your final draft.  
You've loved it like a baby and watched it grow.  
It's born of experiences, conceived of a flash,  
through your sometimes buzzing,  
other times anaesthetised head.  
Maybe the formulaic magic is in place?  
Walking to the postbox with an SAE enclosed -  
Send Any Encouragement -  
you invest hope. A good month passes, then  
your familiar return envelope arrives.  
As you walk towards it, you see a bouncing roulette ball.  
Is it red, or black? An acceptance letter would be bliss,  
but its pig bellied form tells you before opening,  
that your poems are back, with just an unsigned slip.  
You try another editor, with the same and other poems.  
You're throwing proverbial mud, no, Silly Putty.  
You need a catcher, but no-one's more interested in a baby  
than its mum or dad. However, game is on.

3/10/11

## **Red Admirals**

My stomach is a storm.  
It sends warnings.  
What is wrong?

Physical worry prevents me  
from grounding in the now,  
and a mental voyage of what-ifs  
ensues. I'm middle aged,  
can I really survive? I long for this minute.



I've been here so many times,  
and it still fools me till the feeling fleets.

Winter is approaching, and dark nights  
double the damnation I feel.

I live for daffodils and crocuses,  
and March sunshine days;  
new life for the forty fifth time,

but what will these fears yield?

9/10/11

### **Conker on a string**

Autumn's children fall on its decay,  
layered with another slaughtering of brown.

The youngsters' game marks time.  
They tire of its ritual in their teens.

Birds are naked and silent in trees,  
stripped of the joys of new life.

It can only whiten, but roads will hold slush.  
Young skaters will toss balls and revel.

It's the back end of the year that I dread  
every cycle,

dark nights and tight days suffocate me.  
Life is fast; worryingly so.

9/10/11

## **Parallel lines**

I'm trying to make sense of it all,  
but thoughts just float around me like dandelions.  
You know me well,  
in some ways better than I do.  
Time has bonded us. Our love is passion distilled.  
I find a mirror when we grate.  
We should harmonise, even stare  
at the same wall if need be.  
I've been dangerous,  
flagellating for my own self-made idol.  
Time seems like parallel lines. I've often wanted to hurry it,  
but the further I got down the track, the further infinity was.  
I pretended to be an extrovert. I was a goalie trying to strike,  
despite despising all loud-mouths in my life.  
That's a paradox you nailed. You helped to rewire me  
with your cool stream of calm chilling my head.  
I can pay you back now, we're in a contract for life.  
The sun will set at the convergence of the rails.

11/10/11

## **Rutting season**

In this walled and gridded enclosure:  
our beautiful prison, nature necessitates.  
Fall is blanketing once green shades,  
and is clockwork turning hormones on.

I was proud, roaring like a chainsaw,  
with a throat as dry as inner cork. I don't tussle now,  
I've collected scars and spread my seeds.  
My son seeks the top stag spot.

I'm 200 kilos in a rusting coat.  
I pose for photos whilst others fight;  
my antlers are like rings in aging oak.  
In my new found wisdom, that's the way  
I spread my seeds  
these days.

16/10/11

### **Levitation**

I spot-jogged on elasticated air pockets,  
escaping to a canopy of green.  
I looked at a multicoloured archway,  
but unlike Icarus, I kept low over space I knew.  
I was always in the same location in this dream,  
that soured with logic each time.  
Tramping faster for more buoyancy,  
and I'd descend on the thinnest of ice.  
Weeks would pass then the experience would re-emerge.  
When escaping,  
my youthful imagination jostled with physics again.  
It felt as real as parents' faultlessness.  
Now science has claimed my mind.

19/10/11

### **Up to Lou Reed**

I wake with thoughts crashing  
against my mind's breakers.  
I have an ocean of memories.  
I don't want to break the tension,  
needing to float another day.  
With furor, some days I wouldn't sleep.  
Illness is my amphetamine,  
with its iceberg consequences.

I'm drowning in reasons now,  
and my music choice reflects  
a mood shift.

23/10/11

### **Both ends**

Another long day has died,  
on the rack with nothing given;  
stretched like a funeral drum's skin  
with the possibility to yield a surprise.

In the ensuing period alone,  
facing a blackened reflection of this room,  
creativity negotiates with the need to sleep.  
When will it give?

Writers are winnowing words, artists  
are caressing their canvases; at inspiration time.  
Consciousness reigns, but eyeballs  
are reaching the curtain call.

Spikes during this storm foster the school  
of genius,  
for the few  
with latent talents.

Background music is switched off, the draft is done.  
It could be a fiasco: daft.  
Morning eyes will be the gateway  
to an uncannily critical brain.

24/10/11

## Jill Russell

With his head propped, peering in a polished table top,  
as the waitress nears, it twigs: he no longer loves his image.  
Once angular and dimpled, his cheeks look cotton balled.  
Eye-sacks plump his soul's panoramas, and grey weeds grow.  
Glancing up at her pencil waist  
his robin egg eyes risk a slow ascent of her breasts.  
She clocks him sniping under his eyebrows, and gives a  
customers' smile.

*Have you had time to decide what you want sir?*  
*Yes thanks; the usual. Call me Glenn, what's your name?*  
*Mel; sorry I can't remember your usual.*  
Glenn eyeballs her, grinning. *I have a plan.*  
*Are you in construction sir?*  
Glenn laughs. *Let's play a game; I'll give you clues?*  
*I suppose so. She balances to one side hand on waist.*  
*Okay, you find them in fields.*  
*Mushrooms? you want mushroom risotto.*  
*Good, and nice that may be, but no.*  
*Steak?*  
*You're thinking outside of the box, I like it, but no.*  
Glenn smiles.  
She says *Cornflakes?* whilst changing her balance.  
*Are you tiring, Mel?*  
*Just tell me what you want please Glenn.*  
*You need another clue. They work the surface.*  
*One more try.*  
*Okay, toad in the hole?*  
*Very good, though it was a ploughman's lunch, but I'll order -*  
*the toad.*  
*Good job Glenn, because you are the toad, and it's not -*  
*on the menu.*

*Would you like a drink with your ploughman's?  
Straight-faced Glenn asks what ales are available.  
Well I'd like to say Merrimans Old Fart, but I'm not that cruel,  
it's John Smith's or Landlord.  
You terrier, I'll have a Coke.*

25/10/11

### **Four last songs**

My gut is drumming, sending signals for reasons  
why I'm down;  
years of autumnal leaves,  
what ifs analysed with wiser eyes.

I barely know a word of German, just my name and age.  
I'm listening to Schwarzkopf sing, and in this mood  
I'm moist eyed, as emotion conveys the theme  
of death, and I'm transported by beauty.

Though I've never been a Nazi,  
and my only words sound like rank and number,  
(Ich heiÙe Michael, ich bin dreiundvierzig jahre alt),  
I smile then cross my chest.

The sun attempts to make itself known; late.  
You toss my name upstairs again,  
having made me coffee an hour ago.  
I catch it this time.

30/10/11

### **Jocy**

Her life's unfolding like expired Jus-Rol,  
barely any good memories in the base.

She hopes cars will stop, while she poses  
in headlights: suspenders and smile on show.  
Her skin is goose-bumped. She's selling  
straight or head,  
to feed her ever scarcer veins.

Several punters and she has a fix.  
Emma's in care, and she's a stoic  
while the heroin flows.

If only she hadn't let the mold grow,  
but instead baked wholesome things.  
She needn't be the street's fly-paper,  
  
as twisted as her prey.

31/10/11

### **Night out**

"Easy living" on piano seduces in the soundscape  
with the drummer's brushes pushing.  
They beckon abundant filigrees floating in the air.

People guard whiskey,  
and gin chaser collections,  
alongside hedgehog ashtrays;  
butts doused in fresh tar.

His thigh feels taps of the bassist's crotchets,  
at an andante tic-toc speed.

He could kill to hear Piaf in the mix,  
regardless of his lack of French.  
But as the audio cream on the mocha,  
any sultry vocal would do.

In the downstairs toilet a message reads,  
“Anyone dealing in drugs  
will be barred and reported to the police.”  
At twenty steps down, heels are sirens.  
He wonders how folks are caught.

The light down here shocks pupils,  
and the purity of the air revitalises.  
He’s an easel relieving himself, forearm on wall.  
Then he crouches to forcibly throw.  
This is what he calls a night out, alone in the centre of town.

1/11/11

### **The Poppy appeal**

Helen Worth passed me a poppy pin today,  
in Manchester’s St Ann’s square.  
I acted like I didn’t recognise her.  
Still, she didn’t catch my eye,  
but focused on my hand.  
People must call her Gail, ad nauseum,  
like she can’t have a real persona.

She seemed pretty serious to me,  
bad day perhaps, though she was charitable.  
She didn’t share a joke or smile.  
I guess it makes playing her role easy,  
down Granada’s Coronation Street.

2/11/11

### **Fifty seconds**

It was five to midnight,  
he’d dozed for an hour:



a baby reclining in his swivel chair.  
So he scanned his room,  
whilst catching his mental breath.

A priest's words  
flashed,  
hinting that he'd lapsed.  
His brother's doubts of him surfaced.  
Did he think he was false,  
talking for words sake?

His bladder dictated a shift,  
crystalising him from his semi-dream,  
to plod anaesthetised,  
like a lifer  
who's learned to live  
in the now.

18/11/11

### **Quid pro quo**

Brahms or Lady Gaga  
are age extremes.  
He travels with jazz blaring,  
seeking attention that lacked in youth.  
He doesn't know it. It's too deep.  
He was never loved.

He's a noisy magpie.  
What better way to gaffe  
than Facebook statuses?

Who has the addictive personality?  
Repressed alcoholism manifests online  
as a digital confessional.

20/11/11 - 26/7/13

## **Confinement**

White and green partly make up my room. It's my comfortable -  
cell  
housing toys and many pictures. Perversely, one is evening blue,  
hanging on a parking-restriction-yellow wall; nevertheless,  
suburbia's vehicles infiltrate with engines and sirens.

Another ambulance tears down the 40 zone.  
A box flashes twice.  
It's no surprise with the speeds cars drive,  
that flowers prettify lampposts.

Police car cries are as rare as jays'.  
There's no lights or tax on children's roaring bikes.  
Only two CSOs patrol this "Wild-West."  
Gangs on streets intimidate. Chip-tray dumpers  
and kebab-wrapper slobs, feed rats after their own faces.

I avoid shouting by staying in, and long for countryside.  
All that is offered are ash tree weeds, behind on the croft:  
a wasteland where children smoke, and glue-bag.  
Some have never seen

green fields full of spring's bleating lambs.

21/11/11 - 10/12/16

## **Friendship**

"Only love is real, everything else is illusion"

- Carole King.

Friendship is not a relationship that's fickle.  
It's not penning words of no substance.  
It's not drinking, putting the world to rights.  
Friendship is not playing card games stoned.  
It's not boys obsessed with computer games.  
It's not breaking up a family home,  
leaving a child starved of love and knowledge.  
Friendship is not selfish.  
It is putting someone else's feelings before your own.

Friendship is taking the rap.  
It's putting up with foibles.  
It's meeting shock with understanding.  
It's keeping on running when it's pissing down.  
It's love but not physical. That's the answer perhaps,  
love.

28/11/11

### **Treading water**

It tastes madras hot, then it's Slush-Puppy cold.  
It's a flicking blade at right-angles, scratching red.  
It gets more serious, a plan of several pillars.  
It's pills, rope or English chalk cliffs.  
It's a tube-train, a motorway bridge.  
It haunts him when he's low. He ruminates.  
When he's happy he wonders why he'd leave her.

It strikes in his gut and travels to his head.  
It doesn't rain. It pisses it down.  
He knows it will pass like before, but it scares him.  
What if insight left?

30/11/11 - 3/5/13

## Edited notes to a CPN

### **When I am well.**

Work stinks, but I accept I'm a cog.  
If someone is off with me  
it stinks for them.  
My relationship is fine. Socially  
we relax at the club.

### **When I am down.**

Doubts about Clare surface.  
My job's a life sentence.  
I carry a globe.  
My brain is dough.  
Wretchedly, I blame my parents:  
*it's not an illness.*  
At work my head flops,  
or directs my eyes at a clock.  
I sigh in this quagmire,  
taking any chance for scotch.  
Suicidal plans come at its worst;  
but I'm too kind.

## **When I am up.**

My smile radiates,  
but risking convoluted jokes  
it's often alone.  
Strangers enjoy my chat.  
There are costs.  
I confuse locals. Hobbies  
get expensive, as do tastes.  
I flirt.  
It's almost like amphetamines,  
or having the copper coloured top,  
then I crash.  
Clare tells me, I say no to more risperidone.  
The days pass faster at work, -

at least they did until I was stabbed  
in the back.

9/12/11

## **Flying the nest?**

From a window my blood is ignited,  
by the sight of fire fought out back by neighbours.  
Psychotic thoughts take over.  
This is a rite of passage.

The rain barrel is full. It's a quiz. I pass,  
by throwing a token cupful into the flames,  
generating a slow clap to which I retort:  
*Have you heard the expression "pissing on fireworks?"*

I know I don't belong at home.  
The beckoning shed carpet is the biggest clue.  
Adrenaline is way off diffused  
I don't want hints, I connect everything to all.

I'm rude again, then slowly calm,  
pondering how uncharacteristic I seem.  
I'm not on major tranquilizers,  
but soon ...

11/12/11

### **Busted**

It's not wise taking two rights  
in night's dead, when you're followed  
miles from home in a boring village.  
Lights could flash, and pockets might be emptied.

The residue in your novelty pipe  
would excite the smug copper's nose.  
Then after threatening to strip your MG,  
he'd ask, *anything else?*

With or without lies he'd employ his torch.  
There's no way he'll miss that painted tin.  
He'd feel the heat and open it in mirth.  
Dry mushrooms; *Phil, get his keys.*

So it was, in a cell, with a goosebumped search  
and confinement, a lack of a blood test, but physical  
commands: *walk this line...*, my confession to smoking  
had been wise.

As I wasn't planning a heist I agreed to prints, and soon -  
afterwards  
entertained the DS; who despite the MG, my spilling of beans  
told them I was totally green.  
As they grinned at my intoxication admittance.

The Inspector must have given his caution 99 times.  
He knew none had listened, but with university due  
he hoped I did, and acknowledged my co-operation,  
passing back my keys.

Phew, I was on the road again.

14/12/11

### **Gestapo?**

The idea's rooted  
in childhood stress,  
with support sought for years.  
(Are those that feel pain stronger?)

You bully physically, deluded,  
even taking pops at someone bigger.

It becomes ingrained, and you turn to minds,  
pressurising with hints and taunts.

Can you know how another person thinks?  
You base your assumptions on yourself.

You assume everyone's a threat,  
imagining their hostility.  
Thankfully you don't have any power.

Someone appears to reference you in third person.  
*He'd of made a good Gestapo officer.*  
Were they talking about you?

15/12/11

## **'65 MG Midget**

My body was painted  
come-to-bed red.  
My grill gobbled air  
insatiably.  
Four wire wheels  
tied me down.  
I had many a lover  
in my decades of life,  
but none more loving  
than you.  
You dressed me  
in a fresh spray,  
and re-chromed  
my most glitzy parts.  
You didn't have me  
in my prime,  
but I still had lots  
of pull.  
I was jealous  
when you left me  
for that boringly sensible  
Mini Metro.

17/12/11

## **Jesus would have walked on sand here**

Crushing sun and a melon field's road  
separated them from the checkpoint.  
A single soldier greeted them,  
with an Armalite cane,  
and unwittingly offered temptation.  
*Someone got stabbed  
in Gaza today.*



They closed ranks, walking west to the Med'.  
Tarmac vanished as more distance  
expanded from the border fence.  
Palestinians sat with robes over their knees,  
and holding water pipes.  
Some stationary cars were dust grey,  
in tune with the deafening silence,  
an irony to scabs on walls.

*Do you know this is Gaza?*  
A youth said to the weakest,  
who shyly answered, *yes*.  
Then; *someone was knifed here this morning*,  
got taken as their cue to head out,  
but Gaza was a "trophy."

19/12/11

### **Doc Martens**

You can be eight holed or fourteen,  
depending on whether you're on a cop or a skin;  
and black or ox-blood (now PC cherry red.)  
Who walks on acid, as batteries are sealed?  
Your soles resist pools of petrol and oil. Kitchen fat  
is no match to you, nor alkalis that shift it.  
You're ideal for mechanics, frying up first thing,  
and synonymous with putting boots in,  
except when florally pimped on girls feet,  
perhaps with rays of sun, and Tippex,  
and laces undone.  
You're the comfy universal footwear,  
with bouncing AirWair soles.

22/12/11

## Spring -

will come.  
We'll dash  
into the sun.  
Spring will  
come some  
time. It will  
be like May  
'87. I was  
happy then,  
before this *Déjà vu* made me think, and pain  
and lies  
came.  
Life  
is a  
dagger  
in your  
bare  
chest  
at times.

But spring will come, and bring  
sunshine, crocuses and daffodils, in that order;  
FUN.

24/12/11 - 26/7/13

## High end watch

Hypomania has severed your savings;  
low as they were.

Your man-trapped mind has landed you an IWC,  
expressing your compulsion.

Benefit claimants shouldn't buy timepieces,  
worth eight weeks of support. Your stomach's electric.  
Your head's an angst mushroom.

Cash isn't at rainbow ends,  
but your trying to claw it back,  
after it parted with macho spending.

You blew it in via two barrels:  
eBay and PayPal sites:  
trigger fingers:  
money spent.

Your wife bailed you out, destressing you,  
with a loan; till the next time  
the hypomania looms.

30/12/11

### **Dream mistress**

I made a woman.  
She lived across a golden wheat field.  
She wore shorts and a t-shirt,  
and her grey hair was a silk shawl.  
She once waved those locks  
making them irresistible to touch.

She loved music, like my wife,  
and was refined in strings.  
I introduced her to folk-rock.  
She found a child's viola book,  
I don't know why it was there.  
She was my calming friend all night long.  
I remember her here.

I loved her in my dream,  
but we didn't even kiss.

2/1/12

### **Viking burial**

They were tired of buying golden substitutes.  
Lucinda was going through fish like a sushi bar.  
Enough's enough, seeing you floating belly up  
was inspiration. You weren't flushed away.  
Your backbone was a keel and your ribs  
a rack of bulkheads. Your scales were a skin of planks,  
while your head was a figurehead with black pearl eyes.

So they fashioned you in balsa to sail at the park,  
never to be over-fed, and immune to neglect;  
parading a lipstick mouth.

Time passed. Then lighter fluid and matches  
was Lucinda's plan.

13/1/12

### **Remembering The Bongs**

Puffballs and twigs make up chalk-stick explosives  
putting pigeons in flight and disgusting blackbirds.

Dew marries the ground in a shimmering dress,  
to love for just a morning. Frog-spit wets my shins.  
At 30 I pictured a playground of delinquent frogs.

The sun is waking this microcosm.  
I'm a melting ice-dragon, firing only vapour.

Bramble razor-wire divides land.  
A poacher and his dog have compromised it.  
Bare clay is a testimony to their success.

The expanse at the brook's source  
is a draining of pastureland,  
punctured by burrows and mole hills.  
It's that lurcher's Olympic track when rabbits waft.

A skirmish of 12 bore cartridges age under an oak tree.  
I smell one for burnt gunpowder,  
then place it on a twig making a mental note.

Foxes roam these parts dead on dusk  
before badgers surface. I walk along the field's edge  
to meet the aftermath of a feather pillow fight.

It's 6am now, the most peaceful time of day, and I wish  
I was actually there.

15/1/12

### **Do not be reckless**

Do not be reckless with others' hearts,  
for you can't build new love on sorrow.

Do not tear a person's world to shreds,  
offering stability then years of sadness.

Do not be fooled into thinking another  
can offer you more than you have.

Do not give in. Feel the pain and wait.  
Your delta will subdue the torrent.

16/1/12

## Sarah

Grandma sold potatoes in a pigsty,  
in half-hundredweight sacks.  
The balance was old but spud accurate,  
give or take the counterweight's rust.

She worked the farmyard white haired,  
whilst uncle sowed and reaped.  
Fields of potatoes, oil seed rape  
and cattle-feed kept them.

She had whiskers sculptable  
into a George Michael form.  
Her beige wrinkled nylons  
didn't betray hair or veins.

She kept three dogs: a nippy jack russell,  
safest locked away; a placid,  
cloudy-eyed beagle, and Jack  
the outdoors, alert alsatian alarm.

I picture her complex scowl,  
now suggesting frustration.  
Her wise pressure cooker mind,  
had no release.

I was 21 when she passed,  
and had visited her nursing home,  
where our pupils avoided like similar magnetic poles,  
but I gradually understood.

She'd worked until her stroke at 80.  
Granddad's drinking had made her lonely.  
I'll never forget Sarah, and her time warp.  
She even had a black-and-white TV.

18/1/12 - 10/12/16

## Jazz

Velvety minor seventh flat fives,  
tropical major ninths;  
they're in the mix we call jazz.  
What turned me on to it?  
It was Chopin's creamy chromaticism  
and Debussy's pioneering dream.  
Great jazz stars also trod  
that hard, rewarding path.

So much to learn. The metronome will stop.  
I'd like to busk a tune for amiable strangers,  
on an old Chappell upright, sat on a beer-stained,  
wooden-floored pub. I'd vamp popular harmonies  
in four-four time, playing tones  
with a shoulder held high, way outside the key.  
They'd be either Bayley's to the ear, or neat whiskey chasers,  
with three slammed down on the bar.  
I'd mean it. You could also be surprised  
by my tritone substitutions, after many 2-5-1s.

I'd remember my idol Bill,  
whilst avoiding to adopt his posture.  
I'd sit straight, smile, and hope a drinking punter  
would smile too.

19/1/12 - 10/12/16

## Red top

Simon was the milkman,  
collecting cash once a week.  
Mum always asked him in to chat,  
and his smile warmed our home.  
But he'd known tragedy, losing  
a brother in flames at the turn of a car key.  
Life started working out again, afterwards.  
He'd planned a love nest. The day was set.  
His chore of early morning deliveries  
was perfect repetition with her in his life.  
It would be a small-scale society wedding.  
Then it dawned on her, she didn't want -  
small village life and a raft of kids,  
despite how well a milk float provided.  
She wouldn't marry, and left his life,  
his house and his wagon.  
He replied  
    with  
        a  
        shotgun  
        under  
        his  
        chin.

22/1/12



## **Blame it on my youth**

Thoughts distant from the future  
were a spectrum of light exiting a prism.  
White light offered clarity. I saw a rainbow,  
reds of danger that excited my heart,  
greens of lazy summer days, and blue skies -  
I'd gaze at daydreaming my life away.  
These were primary colours,  
hiding the reality of white clean living  
from my existence.

Now the colours have merged,  
I regret my patchwork past,  
but I have you to tell me  
I'm Okay, as I nurse you.  
It could be better, but blame  
it on my youth.

25/2/12

## Side-effects

I can  
sense you,  
yellow, one  
inch thick, curved.  
You're not alone,  
though the others  
are too obscure. They  
don't visualise clearly.  
I'm dozing, but I'm  
well aware of shape  
under my head, hiding.  
I'm fully clothed below  
my quilt, and carrying  
my Puma pen-knife.  
I slash your blue  
cover and white  
cotton inner bit.  
I even walk  
downstairs  
with you,  
before I  
realise  
there is  
no fruit  
in my  
pillow.

28/2/12

## **Stargazing**

I don't know where they are:  
Orion, Sirius A B and Mars.  
I just sit in my den and look  
at light, through binoculars fit  
for a ship: 25x100, heavy.

I reason that if the universe  
is practically infinite, there must be  
other life than us; maybe in spirit,  
not water dependent, and I think  
that in this world of problems,  
one day we'll evolve  
like our alien brothers,  
living harmoniously?

28/2/12

## **The programmer's first job**

Can't you sense my anguish,  
in this silence imposed by social anxiety?  
It's anxiety borne of silence that spirals.

You've entered my cell, called such,  
because it has no windows or people,  
and I'm chained to a desk.

I can't ask you to leave,  
as you're ostensibly superior,  
but intellectually, do I better you at cost?

Computers are strewn.  
They hum banshee wails,  
eventually draining spirits.

Peacefully leave me with my digital monsters,  
and precise rules, but YOU,  
do you pity or persecute?

One year was enough.  
I took alternate #1. Leaving you and hum,  
and following ME, like a stalker.

28/2/12 - 11/12/16

### **Luke?**

It wasn't a proper share of the estate,  
but you travelled, via the M62,  
from Lancashire  
to Yorkshire.

You were flush to the Adam's Apple, with a grant,  
and a fraudulent faux inheritance.

You slept till midday. Moonlight  
contracted your pupils, while you ignored  
the college opportunity's laughter.

When the money and smoke filled parties  
became drying votive candles,  
home beckoned with an offer of labour.

But what of the ring and robe?  
What of the fattened calf?  
You were dead and had returned.  
You'd squandered money,  
leading to slogging for a minor's pay:  
the price of wasting time.

Three more years  
took you to psychiatry. Your dad nearly wept as you spoke,  
because "It's not what you say. It's how you say it..."  
You had a monotone, broken-souled way.

The fattened calf was brought out in a private hospital,  
as weekday therapy and daily culinary treats.  
Your brother didn't understand.

29/2/12 - 11/12/16

### **Did Neil Armstrong wear thermals?**

I saw the Moon today at early afternoon.  
It was a cloud-like curve, hidden from all  
but seekers. The sky was summertime blue,  
and a police helicopter drowned out the sound  
of gentle jazz in my car, but raised my eyes  
to the sky.

At night the Moon was a breast, illuminated  
like a cream neon in Soho. But with my naked eyes  
I could see a cancer on it, a shadow from an impact  
too long ago to comprehend? I stared at the Moon so long  
it subtly moved in my window until it disappeared.  
I asked myself, with all that light is it hot?  
Then I thought, nonsense, Armstrong probably  
wore thermals.

1/3/12

### **Turning point**

Months were percolating by  
whilst he served drinks in an asylum.

His BSc stank of stale beer,  
then recompense jumped from a paper,  
like a single winning scratch card symbol.  
It was an ad for a Masters, with grants possible.  
So he ventured from the back pages  
towards a life story.

Meeting her on day one was fate.  
She taught his lonely instrument: piano,  
and had even sung in the hospital.  
Both of them had bought their pianos  
from the same likeable rogue.  
They talked about Beethoven, not binary logic.

There was a natural comfort between them,  
like newly washed wool. He gravitated  
like a moon to her, as he was younger  
and less worldly-wise.

He owed her his MSc emotionally,  
even a little part intellectually;  
and he eventually got back  
to life's headlines.

7/3/12

## **Inconstancy**

I blame it on her leaving  
when I was eight:  
nothing lasts. My attitude  
is so ingrained it won't scour out.  
School and college strengthened it.  
I viewed myself through a fairground mirror.  
Then someone stilled the ripples.  
To be alone is destiny,  
but before that fate I'll prove, that I stood  
by one person through everything:  
one relationship loyally served.

8/3/12 - 10/4/13

## **Reflecting on my proposal to Jellicoe**

Colin Jellicoe never painted my portrait.  
Judging by his featureless cowboys  
I understand why. In fairness,  
he put me off, but I'm curious as to what would  
have emerged. Maybe  
he'd have had me wear his Stetson.  
He might have insisted on profile view.  
He's not your average painter.  
How did that Lowry song sound? ...

And he painted faceless cowboys  
and faceless horses too.

He painted faceless girls in the woods.  
He liked his greens and blues.

Now he lit the canvas with white,  
creating mystical tones;

to paint his horses and cowboys;  
faceless women too.

9/3/12 - 3/5/13

### **The deleted poem -**

- was about you and my warped perspective  
on us. Had there been an us? Manifestly  
there had, or we wouldn't have come all this way.  
Shards had never covered the floor where we live:  
shards of onslaught. So why did I write that shit,  
and leave you to feel it without seeing the dagger?  
I just feel time sometimes. It's been eighteen years  
and I only know you. Maybe if I'd have been a barfly  
things would have been different. In honesty,  
you're the best friend I've ever had,  
and I was a fool for writing that drivel.

14/3/12

### **Blip**

I bought cigarettes today  
for the first time in a year.  
Temptation wore lingerie  
and her hands followed  
the contours of her body.

The first drag is always  
like the first one ever,  
transporting me to youth in woods.

The street had spies,  
and I had to check its faces.



I promised myself  
that it was just a one off,  
brought on by the stresses  
of life. Nicotine gum  
was bought instead,  
and I chewed like Ferguson  
following  
United's fate.

I threw the pack in the bin  
and took a shivering shower.

21/3/12

### **Same old same**

Venus is fading  
like smoke  
drifting  
from a cigarette.

I'm out, looking  
down the terrace row  
that's flanked by Venus  
nightly.

Static structures cage me.  
Damn them  
and that glow  
from the chlorine polluted baths,

cathedral high. Bleached  
orange skylights  
lead to a distorted heaven,  
and Venus disguised by pigeon muck.

Across the wasteland  
windows flicker. Televisions  
are strewn like dandelion seeds  
planting their numbing attraction. Venus

is as rare as frog's teeth  
in people's minds. I look to the sky,  
chest open, then sigh as I see  
Venus yet again.

23/3/12

### **The poets**

*Flashes from the archives of oblivion.*  
-- Roy Harper

What are they trying to say  
with their words trickling  
from salivating mouths,  
tongues darting like panting dogs' ?  
These words that neither layman  
nor oracle can understand  
are their veiled, heartfelt,  
bloody minded testimony.

Hard as a nut and clever as a squirrel,  
they mask their stories away  
in barely acceptable syntax  
and choke them with concision.

They speak to Oxon alone.

3/4/12 - 8/4/13

### **Just for a couple of days -**

we had you back. You were cheeky  
and bounding round the house.

Just for a couple of days it seemed  
like nothing was wrong, like it had all  
been a bad dream.

Then the cancer in you spread  
like filth on agar-gel.  
You reverted to hunger strike.  
Steroids no longer had effect.

Your growth was like a golf ball,  
as unremitting as a hungry shark.  
I took you  
on your final trip to the vet's  
and said goodbye.

10/4/12

### **Drink driving**

You tremble  
like a scolded terrier.  
Your hands  
are unsteady on the wheel.  
You look  
in your mirror at piercing lights.  
You try  
to stop them getting close.  
You risk  
it all for cigarettes.

14/4/12 - 5/5/13

## Everything but the girl

You're there again.  
This time the period will be remembered  
with "Everything  
but the girl."

You aren't talking, and your eyes  
don't look into mine. You never  
liked needles, and your arms  
are black and blue pin cushions.

Saline and blood drip into your veins.  
Oxygen tries to infiltrate your nose,  
when you're not too confused  
to dislodge the tubes.

I think of those years ago  
when you presented like this.  
You were sent to the ICU.  
I can't take that twice.

So it's night time again.  
I'm alone with our fretting dog Lucy,  
a can of strong lager and a packet  
of cigarettes.

I sleep two till two in the bed I've not made  
for weeks. Then I drive over and hope  
to see you smile. It kills me  
thinking about this.

29/4/12

## **Relic**

I said *look mate,*  
*I'm not looking for company; Okay?*  
He was drunk and shook my hand  
forcibly then left.  
So I watched women  
and buses, and men,  
with trousers revealing underwear.  
Then I sought a third drink.  
It seemed the bar came out on the street.  
Paranoia kicked in, while I sat alone,  
smoking and drinking amongst  
these trendy youths;  
the loner in the anorak.

8/5/12

## **15th May 2012**

Butterflies haven't made it yet. Dragonflies don't hover  
over ponds. Time isn't ready for beautiful flight.

I've quit cigarettes, my lungs are repairing from 30 a day.  
My pocket is saving for summer.

Flashes of crystal rain hit my windshield, as I drive  
to hospital-visit Clare. Somewhere there is a pot of gold.

I can't predict this spring weather; it's mixed, a dawn chorus,  
a garden bird potpourri, like this poem.

15/5/12

## **There again**

That bottle of Absinthe hasn't lasted long.  
I feel engulfed in its green vapour.  
I stare for minutes numbed.

Bill Evans plays "What is there to say?"  
I don't know either because I'm missing you.  
You make my life what it is: simple but whole.

There's light, but you hide in a shadow of sepsis again.  
We're in their hands with tested faith,  
hope alive, and love is strong between us.

17/5/12

## **Tequila**

Am I high? I haven't slept for two nights.  
Usually I'm dead after one. I downed  
a bottle of absinthe last night, didn't have  
any effect bar placebo, weak 38% abv stuff.  
Tonight I'm on tequila, 38% too.  
It's one litre of the shit plus energy drink;  
Red fucking Bull on fire. Give me  
strength to last these times alone.  
I drink out of boredom; loneliness.  
If some other drug was available  
I'd probably take that; sad fuck.

19/5/12

## **Drink talk**

Am I high? I haven't slept for two nights.  
Usually I'm dead after one.  
I downed a bottle of absinthe last night,  
it didn't have any effect bar placebo:  
it was weak 38% ABV stuff.  
Tonight I'm on tequila, 38% too.  
There's one litre of it plus energy drink:  
Red flaming Bull on fire. Give me  
strength to last these times alone.  
I drink out of boredom; loneliness;  
anesthetising pain.

19/05/12 - 3/5/13

## **Early rise**

It's 6:45a.m. I hear your alarm start.  
You sleep downstairs, I sleep up.  
I'm finishing off last night's Budweiser.  
It's flat. That's how I feel. Rings emanate in the glass.  
That damned touchscreen phone is frustration.  
I try to text you.

I'm going to mass later to feed and pray.  
I should confess as it's been long since sharing,  
but I'm like the Lost Son. It'll be Okay with Christ.

My problem's semantics exploding like puffballs.  
And I need people but I can't cope: my paradox.  
I'm alone except for the dog.  
I'm going crazy.

24/5/12

## Alcoholic rainbow

As I approached, I didn't know  
if it was a topless man or woman.  
Myopia saw to that.

I got to the service hatch  
of this 24/7 petrol/liquor store.  
It was 1am and I didn't dare look.

My eyes stared  
at the customer ahead of me.  
Then it spoke to him.

*Can you spare some change?*  
He had obviously gathered enough  
for a tin of Tennent's Super.

I asked for cigarettes, exchanged money,  
then turned to my car.  
*Do you have a cigarette?*

I had no excuse,  
so I opened the pack.  
*We're ordinary, you and me.*

I agreed, looking at his drunken,  
20+ stone, bare mass with a woolly hat on.  
*I've nowhere to live, it's warm here.*

I thought he'd pass out  
if he amassed a little more change.  
Perspiration clung to his skin.

He attempted a hug. I said *give over*.  
He was harmless, but the kind of man  
you wouldn't offend.



In his simple way, he asked  
if I'd come back later. I said *no*  
and made a swift exit.

30/5/12

### **Polefield nursing home**

It's 1am. I've got four cigarettes,  
a bottle of Irish whiskey  
and our dog snoring at the end of my bed.  
A power saving light is on.  
I look at a cupboard mirror asking myself,  
*what happened to that man?*  
I'm sipping my drink, playing with whiskers  
and unable to see beyond.

I knew I'd end up alone.  
I didn't think it would be like this.  
That nursing home makes me love you more.

5/6/12

### **Anniversary**

A blank white sheet is lighting  
my face. Should I pray? Would  
Jesus mind if I smoked? I babble,  
*take care of Clare Christ. Please  
take care ...* I multitask with thoughts  
and a cigarette, then write.

You've gone in a home now.  
I've canine company and Jesus.

It was our Sugar anniversary today.  
You battled pain. Your morphine confusion  
hurt me when you said  
*would you sooner I died?*

I left unopened Love Hearts  
on your table.

13/6/12

### **Two days later**

You'd been in constant pain.  
What did you mean by *come January*  
*it'll be curtains?*

Now you are peaceful in bed on the 15th of June.  
Your eyes are cat's and your mouth  
could be a gentle air passage.

I say *Clare*. You don't respond.  
Believing morphine is numbing you,  
I deny worse.

You're meditating. I don't want to disturb you.  
Your eyes close. I deny.  
You ARE with me.

I sit sharing peace.  
The suffering is abated  
then I leave you to rest.

Passing a nurse  
I ask *is morphine doping Clare?*  
She checks you.

Three times I denied. I weep.

26/6/12

## **Chapel of rest**

Tears trickle blurring my vision.  
I open the Bible to the Lost Son.  
I always said it was the most beautiful  
parable I'd read. I relate.  
I wanted to read it to you one last time.  
You can hear me whisper.  
It will help me grieve. You're peaceful  
with your eyes sleeping  
and Mary on your chest.  
You've finally reached it:  
Samadhi.

26/6/12

## **Réquiem mass**

"I watch the Sunrise" killed me.  
It killed me when she said our psalm,  
number 121, one last time for you.  
It killed me when your Eucharist song  
that you used to sing and play as I fed,  
sweetly emanated from the choir.  
But most of all it killed me that 100 people  
filled the church for you.

Till we meet again,  
Mike.

28/6/12

## You'd gone

From nettled eyes, another tear  
edges down my cheek to a delta. I'm thinking  
of your passing; slits starring  
for moments too long.

You'd gone, you'd gone. You'd gone.

I didn't know your life had fast forwarded.

I hope our frames were happy.

With electricity your eyelids said *so long*.

Were you in a morphine daze?

I feel guilty for not alerting help immediately.

Forgive me Clare. I'm just a foolish man.

They say souls hold no grudges.

I pray.

1/7/12

## Afterwards

Friends show when it's tough. You crack your fingers,  
alone in a four bedroomed house, by the phone,  
with a cigarette in one hand and the thought  
of a bottle on the other; listening to music that reminds you -  
of her.

Lithium traps tears. You want to cry. The phone doesn't ring.

She's passed. You won't forget her, yet you want company.

You'll never meet anyone like her, who'll love you as she did.

But you want to fill the void that's eating away  
at your heart. It's too soon to start again.

9/7/12

## **Speaking for itself**

You're still with me. Everywhere  
I look around in this house  
I see you. You're in that Golem  
you bought at the fair.  
You're in your sword wielding dragon slayer print:  
your take on art.  
I see you in Humphrey, the cuddly toy  
I bought for you when we started.  
Your bizarre number of computers  
were very you.

I have few photographs,  
but they're from when you were well:  
our walks in the park, visits to my dad's,  
and you smiling as you spruced  
up a radiator with paint.  
Those were the days  
when you could still stand.

They say rheumatoid arthritis takes ten years  
off a life. You were robbed of more.

You taught me everything I know about life:  
real life: love and hardship.  
I loved you more, the more disabled you got.

25/7/12

## **Ashes to ashes**

I don't know what to say. Words form a vacuum  
about to implode into shards of slowly diluting memories.  
You've gone.

I listen to music and smoke too many cigarettes.  
The smoke sometimes stings my eyes, like the tears did  
when dad gave the blessing:

“Those who die in Grace go no further than God.  
And God is very near.  
May the road rise to meet you.  
May the wind be always on your back.  
May the rain fall softly on your fields.  
May the sun shine brightly upon your face.  
Until we meet again, may God hold you  
in the hollow of his hand.  
Amen.”

We spent 18 years bonding: inseparable.  
God gave you his last drop.  
I can't write now: it's all about you. No one cares.

We cried at the strewing when dad also said:

“O Lord support us all the day long of this troublous life,  
until the shades lengthen and the evening comes,  
the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our  
work done.  
Then Lord in thy mercy, grant Clare safe lodging,  
a holy rest, and peace at the last, through Jesus Christ our  
Lord.  
Amen.”

Grass is piercing the white cross; fighting for sunlight.  
Life goes on. That maple tree's roots slowly consume minerals  
that rain bleeds into the soil. One day, like your mother's ashes,  
yours will be gone. You'll live and die annually in leaves,  
the same colour as my weeping eyes you always loved.

18/8/12

## **Life's cabaret**

She sang. She danced. I saw you in her, before I knew you.  
I wish I could get up and pirouette with my eyes  
to heaven, and my arms taking in the joy  
of living. But I watch others, and steal excitement  
from their display.

Would you have loved me those years ago?  
Would you have spared me my loneliness?  
They say God saves his hardest tasks  
for his strongest warriors.

Clare, why did you leave me so early, so late?

19/8/12

## **A time to live, a time to say goodbye**

My eyes smart with tears that blur  
my vision as I try to read a prayer.  
It's for you. You're in the form of minerals:  
white calcite. This is my Golgotha.  
I've been visiting you daily, while wind and rain  
slowly etch their deteriorating mark.

You're going to be part of that old maple tree,  
long after the ashes have gone. The grass is dry  
under its canopy. I sit with you and meditate.  
We talked just a little, but I can feel a bond here.  
I'm reading that prayer that makes my eyes moist.  
*May the wind be always on your back* cuts me.

We all have a time. It was yours Clare.

20/8/12

## A quiet place

I lift my inch-too-long trousers as I squelch -  
over the lawn past trees and a rose bed.

A grandma is pictured at the edge  
of the spiky flowers on an imitation  
granite memorial. Simple plaques abound.

Gaudy plastic flowers form the bulk  
of the rainbow in this garden.

I assume “life is for the living.”

Then I reach it: a maple tree, the canopy of leaves  
I’ve never seen. I look down at the cross of calcite  
and other non-combustibles on the ground.

The grass is dry here and I sit cross legged.

I say a default *hi Clare*, then reminisce or tell you what’s new.

Blades have started piecing your symbol that dwarfs my seat.

They’re waiting for a lawnmower; then what?

But you’re being consumed by this mighty tree’s roots.

I recite our psalm, 121, from memory, and read  
two prayers. Then I think, can I come tomorrow?

The ground is blurring and I add a few salty drops  
to the efforts of the elements.

Lighting a cigarette, I tell you one way or the other,  
never breaking my promise.

Then I walk to our car, carefully throwing  
my extinguished stub in a rubbish bin,  
next-door to a green one full of wilted flowers.

I wipe my eyes, feeling I’ve been with you.

Till we meet again, wish me Godspeed in this life.

21/8/12 - 9/3/13



## Looking back

You hope she'll make it, and you're not ready  
to be alone like that hunter you've loved  
from childhood, hovering over motorway  
verges. Unlike the kestrel, you tire.  
You tire of this life, feeling nothing  
when others experience joy. What dark  
magic has beset your mind? Mercurial  
undercurrents plummet you to a low,  
tapered by lithium tablets. You've learned  
how to put on a false glowing face.  
*Be a Smile Millionaire*, said Yogananda.  
You've been caught off guard before,  
with teeth buried behind tight lips.  
You've practised over the years. Hey,  
that's a win, they smiled back. Is loyalty,  
faithfulness and trustworthiness, love? If so  
then you must love her very much.  
You're just scared of your damaged heart.

25/8/12

## Weeds

The sky wore an axe-man's mask;  
then crash, a sparkling steel flash hit earth  
followed by a roar of masochism,  
in the middle of August.

I long to flee  
to where the sky's more predictable,  
purer, and the people will find my 1972  
MA-1 jacket, quaint.

Twenty times I've watched sprawling ash trees turn green,  
brown, then to council-estate-revealing skeletons.

I've not flown since a Yoga trip with her,  
when I regained vices.  
Her wheelchair became a landing-gear wedge.  
My unemployment was a vacuous wallet.  
The dog with its elderly needs was and is,  
a heart-string stopping flight. She's gone. The dog binds.

One day I'll see LA  
and flaunt the English accent they love.  
One day I'll happily fantasise  
that ash trees are nice.

31/8/12

### **The tour guides**

With their short black skirts, stockings and shoulder bags,  
there's no mistaking what they're doing on Minshull Street.  
They strut. His heart accelerates as he converges.  
He struggles to decide as he fights feelings.  
The crown court's here. But it's gone midnight and these -  
vampires  
seduce. They'll suck out cash then scour for veins.  
They relieve pain of daytime nightmares. Unaware of their -  
plight,  
at 23 he wants a buzz;  
his car or theirs? They don't take a ride, their life's  
about control, but heroin deceives.

He gets in the back of their old Ford  
taking in town; then a huge carpark looms. The centre is a safe -  
lookout. The rest of the land is a cemetery. This is as black  
as that Monday, and he wonders when he'll hear his heart.  
He can't perform and declines the other girl.

He's spent twenty pounds for a tour of a gravel patch.

2/9/12

## **Mirrors**

He captured bullrushes  
against an evil sky.  
They had torment,  
swept by the westerly wind.

Those who entered his room  
never commented on his photo.  
It was heart red  
amidst greens and blues,  
replacing Robert De Niro's  
"Taxi Driver."

It was like his graveyard oil commission,  
in which he was the barn owl in flight,  
alone, surviving another day.  
Lord knows  
it's one day at a time.

Autumn's approaching.  
His bottle bin fills slower.  
Drink drew a blank,  
and no one's wiped  
his pictures' bloody tears.

3/9/12

## **Lifeline**

I lost you.  
We talked  
as if in slow  
motion  
from keys to screen.

Did you know me?  
I revealed more than you:  
too much possibly.

You helped me  
as she suffered.

This life is over,  
the new one's in limbo.

You didn't like me  
when I drank.  
I've quit.  
I signed a pact  
with an angel.

We seem solid now.  
You've got your family.  
I've  
got the piano  
and verse.  
You're my biggest fan.  
Will I lose you  
again?

3/9/12

### **HR meeting**

I listen to whales  
at the seashore.  
A fan blows cool air  
into my face. I snuggle on my bed  
with my eyes closed.

I'm asked how I relax.  
They know I play piano.  
They want more.

So I let them into my secret world,  
where seagulls and meditative pulses  
subconsciously penetrate me.  
Her mouth gapes.  
My manager  
is used to my eccentricities,  
and he'd made and given me the CD.

Both scribble notes  
in this informal interview.

I hide a smile,  
thinking about the disc:  
he printed  
"Do not play whilst driving."

4/9/12

### **Downfall**

It's Friday night. He knows no villagers.  
He's deluded into thinking everyone's out  
and happy. Most pretend,  
fueled by alcohol.

He lives with his guilty mum and stepfather,  
though he grew up with his workaholic dad.  
He can get away with excess drinking here,  
and smoking in the house.

He heads to the village to play fruit machines.  
It's a tax he pays for aloneness. He drinks  
two pints in each of four bars. Even so  
he's recognisable, and tries somewhere new.

Who wants to know a cancer?  
He's predominately dead, loathing his ungrounded self.  
He sits in the empty main bar,  
then stands, watching passing cars.

On the next day, with regulars in the snug,  
he's alone. The landlord checks on him.  
Bursting into tears, he's asked *what's the matter?*  
So he randomly cites his parents divorce.

In the snug, a quiet man says, *he doesn't say much*,  
after all the introductions had been made.  
He feels inferior, as he hasn't chatted in years.  
He braves offering a drink to Reggie, who's his age.  
The man's always alone and refuses.

He goes for another week, but self-love  
will help him to mix. It's the same at work,  
so he quits, and hospital follows.  
He's depressed.

4/9/12 - 11/12/16

### **Platt Bridge -**

was "dole-town."  
John and Mark lived  
on the second level  
of a two-story block,  
across an empty car park,  
facing Fudge's pad.  
They shut the world out.

Fudge studied racing form,  
and had a dog called Sensimilla.  
People  
dropped in occasionally.  
They played whist and hearts at John's  
to pass time.  
There wasn't much to say,  
after *alright?*  
The focus was a homemade bong.  
With a Bic, pop bottle, some BluTack and foil;  
it still wouldn't make Blue Peter.

Thomas visited,  
and drove John to Hag Fold.  
There were semis there,  
but it was still down-market.  
He'd park around the corner,  
anxiously waiting,  
as John sampled and scored.

Back at home with an ashtray,  
John would roast a Regal.  
He'd crumble dry tobacco  
and mix it with the hash,  
like bars dilute spirits with pop.  
They'd giggle.  
John would find his tongue,  
then forget what he was saying.

Mark left the flat and his sanity. Thomas studied.  
Eventually, John found a woman and a job.  
They didn't know what happened to Fudge.

5/9/12 - 11/12/16

## Lost

Steve had helped John.  
Before Steve arrived  
John just had family,  
and at 21  
he felt like a misfit.

Steve was older and gay  
and in John's naivety  
he didn't realise  
Steve fancied him.  
But he liked Steve's attention.  
He could sit in bars  
accompanied,  
fooling himself  
that he fitted.

One night Steve suggested  
that they should go to Rocky's nightclub.  
It was a gay joint  
just out of town,  
where hundreds  
hung out.

Steve and John  
worked at the university,  
with boring jobs.  
John was introduced  
to a colleague of Steve's.  
They came out at Rocky's,  
with safety in numbers.  
Steve's colleague was camp;  
at least there.



A single dancer was on the floor,  
and John went close to watch him.  
He wore shiny shoes, and a long black coat -  
held open, like wings that extended his body.  
He danced round and round  
in such mesmerising style,  
celebrating the joy of living.  
John wanted to be him.

Steve beckoned John,  
taking him downstairs  
to a sweet smelling,  
large, yet cramped basement.  
The vapour was amyl nitrite.  
The moustached multitude  
were dressed in uniform:  
tight jeans,  
black leather caps,  
black leather waistcoats  
and chains.

John got a taxi in the small hours  
to his mum's twenty miles off.  
The cabby asked him  
was he gay.  
He wasn't, so he said *no*,  
despite where he'd been.  
At home the cabby parked up,  
offering John a joint.

Rocky's vanished.  
So did John's hang-up.

7/9/12

## **Straight, lost and stepping out**

Steve helped.  
He was older and gay.  
Beforehand I had my mum.  
I didn't realise Steve fancied me,  
but liked his attention,  
which let me sit in bars accompanied.

Steve suggested  
we went to Rocky's:  
a gay joint out of town.  
You could be yourself there.

We had dull university jobs.  
At Rocky's I was introduced  
to a camp colleague of Steve's.

There was a single dancer in a bat-like coat.  
I watched him spin mesmerisingly  
and wanted to be him.

Steve beckoned me downstairs.  
The vastness smelled of poppers.  
Mustaches where pandemic; tight jeans,  
black leather caps, waistcoats  
with chains complemented,  
in a packed sheep pen,  
herded.

Drunk, I went home feeling alive.  
The cabby asked me if I was gay.  
I denied.

As I got older the depression passed.  
Rocky's, Steve and drinking  
vanished; in that order.

7/9/12 - 7/9/13

## On the nose?

From: John Docherty<[john.docherty53@gmail.com](mailto:john.docherty53@gmail.com)>  
Subject: ROTFLMAO !!!!  
Date: 8 September 2012 23:05:23 GMT+01:00  
To: [rose@rosebaby.plus.com](mailto:rose@rosebaby.plus.com)  
Reply-To: John Docherty <[john.docherty53@gmail.com](mailto:john.docherty53@gmail.com)>

Dear Rose,

Hope you've had a good day :D  
I couldn't tell you face to face,  
because your neck is so delicate  
and I wanted something in writing  
in case I appeared in COURT haha ... ha  
You know how you hate those fags? ;)  
I caught the radio tonight  
whilst emptying the ash tray -- LOL  
You could call it coincidence.  
It was more like poetic justice!  
Our numbers have come up!!!  
8, 15, 21, 26, 32 and the bonus ball 29.  
Check it .....

I'm going to buy a Lotus!  
and seeing as I've no garage,  
I'm going to build one :)

And Rose, you did buy the ticket  
didn't you???  
Rose I know you're not stupid ... ?  
I'll murder you  
if you went and bet on a nag again.  
You know what I said last time?  
Well I'm serious.  
WHY HASN'T THE PHONE RUNG?

John

8/9/12

### **RELAX 2011.mp3**

There were thousands of files on her hard-disks.  
It took three months to stumble upon it.  
I'd forgotten the waves breaking and seagulls  
calling. Clare and I said affirmations.  
It was precious. Her voice was bottled dew.  
I listened. She said -

“Money flows to us naturally and easily,  
207music is hugely successful,  
we attract many keen and reliable students,  
Mike's reputation as a good poet is growing.”

I said “Strong and healthy, getting stronger day by day.”  
She longed to absorb that sentiment.

She added “We enjoy eating healthy food,  
Mike has a comfortable part-time job  
and plenty of students.”

And perhaps the easiest to actualise, was one I recited -  
“our relationship is good. We bring out the best in each other.”

At which point I clicked on the stop icon  
and reflected fondly, remembering what we'd had:  
a life with all its problems: poor health, my unemployment,  
terrible diet, but blessed with each other.

God only had so much  
to give.

10/9/12

### Tears of amber

I can't remember  
the colour of your eyes. You  
always said you loved my green ones,  
whose colour I didn't know until you told me. Your  
eyes were closed the last time I saw them and I only note  
blue. They weren't blue or green. I want to write about  
your eyes. I recall making them cry one day. You  
wanted our relationship to continue. I left  
after dropping that bomb-shell.

Your tears killed me.

Love grew.

Time  
made  
me

happy  
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11/9/12

## **Literary blues**

Nights are smothering days.  
You're in a nest.  
A computer is on your lap,  
your feet are up,  
and you reminisce.  
Life has robbed you recently.  
Hardships expand  
your thoughts.  
You put them down, writing  
your legacy that won't be read.  
200 poems and counting - about every  
little event - are in folders.  
One day you may have life again;  
bright stories.  
Till then Godspeed.

12/9/12

## **Missed vocation**

At thirty, Ronny was almost a virtuoso, but laid bricks.  
He advertised a hall he booked. The day after the gig,  
a paper read "BRICKLAYER PLAYS TO EMPTY HALL."  
Some details were down to Ronny's mum on the night;  
between pieces by Liszt and Ravel et al.

Ronny was self-taught, and despised "didactic" teachers.  
He'd rejected music college due to a woman's smiles.

Laying bricks hardened his precious hands;  
cycling them through piano keys, and cement's shovels,  
and practicing in church halls near his jobs.

I met Ronny at Dale Pianos warehouse.  
I tuned. At seventy, Ronny didn't negotiate.

I seeded a clash by my work as he taught.  
Later, Ronny drilled a wall  
that I was working behind. I joked,  
but he said *that's the second time, I was here first.*  
He hospitalized me with an assassination.

I got to know Ronny more, after losing my driving licence.  
He took us both, after sugar-tongued Frank "asked" him.

Ronny tallied 200 women (including hookers.)  
He'd shared a house with his equally adulterous wife.

He incessantly ranted about poor driving,  
and the motorway herding instinct.

On visiting us, Ronny knocked, to save electricity.  
Our visit to "his" showed he'd become alone;  
but for pianos  
in several rooms,  
like Bechstein grands - including a 'D,'  
making him undeniably  
eccentric.

Frank had commented on a Ronny improvisation.  
He said, *he's playing Flight of the blue-arsed fly.*

He had electric runs...

I don't know if Ronny's still making music.  
I left Dale's.  
Relationships and folk,  
don't survive.

12/9/12 - 12/12/16

## Natasha's lesson

We were studying a grade one piece.  
One and a two and a three, four,  
one and a two and a three, four.  
Triplets were novel and elusive.  
Amidst the keyboard confusion,  
she caught my eyes and marked a pause.  
Clare had done similar making us bond.

She said, *I miss Clare, she was nice  
and she played well.*

There couldn't be deceit.  
She was only eight.

Dumbstruck, I replied *I miss her too.*

I sensed tears coming,  
worsening with my words -  
*it was Clare's time.*

I taugt, blurry eyed,  
then left the room and wiped my shame.  
But I only found dampness.

20/9/12



## DNA sample

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\* You \*\* stepped \*\* out \*\* as \*  
\*\* if \*\* to \*\*\* centre \*\*\* stage \*  
\* in \*\* a \*\* hairpiece \*\* fit \*\* for \*  
\* a \*\*\* monarch. \*\* You \*\* smiled \*  
\* like a staffy on a **LEAD**. I bet  
\* you never thought we'd substitute two  
\* of those dogs for a son and daughter.  
\*\* It was a laugh to you, though it excited  
\*\* me. Your hair got spoiled by medicine.  
\*\* It turned wirey, lacking oil. The wig  
\*\* didn't suit you by then,  
\*\* but we didn't really care much.  
\*\* I teased greying hair up.  
Nurses brushed it down.  
Now all I have of you  
are hairs I found  
in your laptop  
computer.

28/9/12

## Pain and other features

It studied a mirror  
seeing a face that had seen  
happier times. It was its own  
worst enemy, all seeing  
and all being seen.

It remembered the time  
it thought it looked good;  
special in a female's eyes way.  
Without feedback evidence,  
that was vain.

It screwed up like a baby's.  
A tear ran down it.  
She'd gone, so had the years.  
Memories were captured in its eyes.  
If they were too crazy, it needed to cry.

It thinks about pills now.  
Staring directly, pupils are fish egg black  
and morning small. The left corner of its mouth  
rises. It'll try another day.  
As long as it made it yesterday,

today has chance.

6/10/12

### **A poem for our somebodies**

If this life makes you crazy, reflect  
that the "craziest" man ever to walk the earth,  
was the son of God, and he's remembered forevermore.

And if this life brings you down, remember  
that that one "crazy" man loved you so much  
he died to save you.

And if this life makes you angry, relax.  
Anger is a negative emotion, hurting you  
alone.

And if anyone tells you it's over, fight  
if it's worth your heart, but run if the Sun  
is setting.

And if anyone tells you they love you,  
let them show it  
before you listen to words.

If this life makes you crazy remember  
that it made me crazy too, then I was loved  
unselfishly. I quelled my rage, fought for what I loved,  
and didn't listen to empty words.  
Finally, I found you.

6/10/12

### **Winter alone**

It's coming via shed leaves  
lying on your remnants:  
a cross of calcite and stuff.

It's coming via darkening nights  
constricting days and my chest.  
I want relaxants; nicotine, alcohol.

It's coming via memories  
of what we did last year: poems  
I wrote, your projects.

Late dawns kill me. Their choruses  
are hidden in traffic, in suburbia,  
catalysing pain.

Will I make it with the dog  
to the spring sunshine? Winter's  
no time to pass away: brollies and macs,  
brollies and macs.

Will autumn smooth me  
to its cursed neighbour, with its palette  
of golden brown?

Maybe, but I'm still alone.

16/10/12

### **Feelings -**

are good, bad or void. Which have you got?

If I tell you I'm a three, from one to ten anxious,  
do you know the turmoil I'm in?

If I'm in love do you know how I feel about her?  
Or is love as dissimilar as folk?

Words fail where feelings are concerned.  
Feelings can't be measured or described.

17/10/12

### **Elastic**

Nights are taut.  
If I had money for cigarettes  
the first one with its high  
would be smoked.

Beads run through my fingers;  
*hail Mary full of grace.*  
I slacken nights off via them.

I denied you were going. You swept away  
in a vortex of multicoloured diamond memories.  
Your slits closed and I was left  
with frames to haunt me in the small-hours.

So I pray, so God will find favour in me,  
and you and I will meet again.

3/12/12

### **Rosary**

Christ dangles  
for fashion reasons, for real,  
or in hands caressing beads.

Confessions  
of faith  
follow on from a tender kiss.

Jesus' way to pray  
precedes three virtuous *Hail Mary's*:  
for faith, hope and charity; then a *Glory be*.

The tail is complete,  
beads navigated  
blindly.

Five decades need meditation;  
with *Our Father*, ten *Hail Mary's*  
and a *Glory be* in each mystery.

Meditation is made  
all the way around.  
Meditation is power.

That was description;  
now  
let us pray ...

*Hail Holy Queen mother of mercy;  
hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope!  
To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve;  
to you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping  
in this vale of tears.....*

... plus a final prayer.

You've charged your spirit,  
because one day  
you might need some juice.

You've charged it up  
with the prayers that summarise  
the simple truths you trust.

4/1/13

### **Winter on the social**

It darkens early. Sparkling blades of silky black  
shave moods to an irritation. Until spring;  
you're sitting drinking cola on the step,  
watching folk, wondering if they're wondering,  
what the hell you're doing out here mid-week drinking cola.

2mg reduced, you should be faster in thought.  
You don't want meds. Meds mask.

Some days you snatch joy and spit it out. Some days  
it rebounds. You know winter will block that,  
swapping a smile for a frown.

It's not always been so conscious. But the mind  
is stabbing the heart. Days blend. What's worse, nights expand.

You're 40 plus and tannins around a crack.

10/1/13

### **The poet's sketch**

At half-past-two a gothic sky crowns a crap day.  
An energy saving light bulb tightens its purse.  
Sod global warming. He's childless.  
Thoughts come despite the near void  
window, in which light's a doppelganger.  
Night after night it's reality and the days  
vanish in sleep. Clothed 24/7; there's no-one  
to impress. He writes, with a ripple  
breaking the mill-pool of his mind.

It's three now. If he's lazy today  
his stubble will gesture at Christ in the vigil mass.  
He recites a rosary for calm.  
It's Diazepam:  
better than herbs.

At three-thirty the poet's working.  
Till drooping eyelids further sleep;

*fine.*

12/1/13

## **Relaxing**

Warm air rises to your cheekbone.  
The sound of gulls  
makes water splash against dreamt shins.  
You open your eyes.  
The horizon's  
an Apple Mac and fan.  
You have capacity to fantasise  
for a time.  
And you realise  
exactly seven months have gone  
since she passed.

15/1/13

## **A house in Manchester**

This is the place his love life flourished then died.  
She was divorced, guilt was bred into her. This is  
the place where pets stood in for children: two dogs, two  
parrots; appropriately named Ludwig and Wolfgang  
(there were pianos.) Six living souls in all; (*ha ha  
ha ha ha ha*; remember Sesame Street's Count?)

This place now holds himself, one dog and a push  
for Okay. This place is where they lay down,  
years before they let religion's angle on adultery  
sway them. He's slept alone for sixteen years.  
He's older, fatter: less cute. Memories are here. He sleeps  
in a warm draft. It's better than alone, cold and still.

17/1/13



## **Passing through the eye of a needle**

You've joined the Jesus Army.  
You talk in tongues for fun.  
No doubt someone will interpret,  
and lead your merry band.

You thought life was hard.  
You had nothing to leave.  
Now you've three square meals  
and people to proselytise.

You travel on their bus,  
and parade down streets.  
The Jesus Army's a cult,  
sucking up poor folk met.

17/1/13 - 3/5/13

## Red flag warns of hypomania

He's carried away in meditation,  
woes are answered; negatives cleared.

He feels good. It's working.

Then he's no longer high,  
but doesn't plummet.

He swallows  
fewer meds.

He's

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passed.

18/1/13 - 30/4/13

## **Point scoring**

Two figures are behind digital glass;  
crystalline ones and zeros. I see dark macs:  
police maybe or other officials?  
When I open the door,  
the Watchtower is produced, as if ID.  
It leads a less bizarre path to the question,  
*do you know the name of god?* I tell them *you say Jehovah*.

I accept the organ grinder's book.  
I'm curious. But I tell him I'm a Catholic,  
at which point the monkey speaks. *We used to be Catholics*.  
They want to arrange a discussion. I don't care for it.  
They leave a taste, something cooking at Kingdom Hall.  
They'll be back, so I have a plan. I need to put up this sign:

“No Jehovah's Witnesses or other sects,  
No Cold Callers, No Hawkers,  
Thank you.”

28/1/13

## **Insomnia**

It's five a.m. in TESCO's. Shelve-stackers  
are night-time heroes preparing another day's  
display. Empty boxes make assault courses  
for trollies; more to the point, THE trolley.

He wonders if the pretty Asian girl is on.  
She spoke with him just recently. He thinks  
she's a Muslim, she has dark skin  
and a beautifully pierced nose. Is he confusing  
race with religion, and stereotyping piercings?

Foolishly he buys chocolate, and treats himself  
to a chilled Starbuck's. He's supposed to be  
on the Rock 'n' Roll. He'll pay for the extravagance  
of feasting in the car-park before going home.  
He tries to remember the girl's shift, for a return.

29/1/13

### **Armadillo**

Who am I? Am I that child grown up?  
Who am I? Am I an evil man fighting his heart?  
Geese travel beautifully, but greet with open beaks.

Who am I? Now numb with life, so chilled I don't feel down.  
Who am I? Teeth smiling to be seen, dirty or not, who cares?  
Higher, like Indian moods, what of India? What of her moods?

When life's this way, you make a new self with armour,  
hiding the boy.

30/1/13

## **The trap**

Are we children?  
Haven't we grown?  
Are we all mirrors  
of our youths;  
flies caught in amber?  
We're constricted  
by the truth in our mind  
which we can't  
gloss over,  
with make up  
or loud music.  
Damn life's trap;  
most can see it  
in front of them.  
Damn the trap. In life,  
we've bought a pup.

9/2/13

## **I saw another me -**

years ago, sitting  
motionless,  
expressionless  
and content.

It was me  
in a rented house,  
the social  
provided.

I feared then,  
but I wasn't alone yet.

Now my mind's still,  
with a truth formed.  
I meditate with beads.  
Have I grown?

13/2/13

**Once -**

I loved.  
Isn't love  
what is left over  
when passion  
has flown?

Once I nursed.  
She had mummy  
legs,  
with red  
stains.

Once I cleaned.  
That's  
between her  
and me.

I clothed:  
helping to put on her coats.

I took her out, pushing my love on wheels.  
We talked. We smiled.  
We ate  
too much: for comfort.  
We shared our lives.  
We gave our lives.

16/2/13

### F3

One man's dying.  
One weeps, he doesn't want  
a bed bath.  
Another man's eating,  
one reads, one pees,  
ten sleep, one sings.

*Regrets, I've had a few,  
but then again, too few to mention.*

...

...

*And I love you so,  
the people ask me why.*

The day is punctuated with puncturing  
insulin injections, drugs, meals, brews,  
toilet trips, handovers, doctors;  
and sighs.

The third night killed him:  
throat cancer.  
I'd prayed earlier: Our Father,  
three Hail Marys and a Glory be.  
The thought counted,  
but God wanted him.

28/2/13

## **One of many?**

The man-child is the youngest  
ward member at 45.  
He hears a trigger:  
*magic mushrooms.*  
His paranoia's more like denial now,  
but he accepts  
that he could be old  
before his time.  
It's not worth the anxiety.  
God made him  
especially for something;  
even if it's just a man-child.  
Perhaps life's jigsaw  
will make him fit.

3/3/13

## **The Wall Lizard's commentary**

There's nowhere to go, except under  
a 60 watt bulb, amongst shit dust  
and flaked skin.

Why did I have to leave Italy?  
I had walls to climb, sun to sponge,  
and kin.

I'm fed on orb weavers and mealworms;  
almost starving myself to cut my life short:  
curse my tail's food reserve.

I'm peered at for two years, and objectified.  
I escape and get fast-track replaced.  
So I return in a week, caught on a curtain.



My cellmate is small and I kill him.  
Had we been dogs it would have been messy.  
But as we're dragon-like lizards, it's fantasy.

And I die alone by dehydration.

4/3/13 - 12/12/16

**My latest hobby -**

is diabetes. I inject insulin  
twice a day, being careful  
not to repeat a spot.

I'm a druggie. I take Metformin  
and Gliclazide.

I monitor my sugar levels  
electronically. That's the summit  
of it, and I record my results  
in a book.

I need to watch my diet too.  
No more sugary drinks.

I shouldn't  
get drunk or smoke.

I have doctors and nurses  
checking on me.  
I visit hospital.

I could lose my feet and sight if I bore of it.  
I'm chained to this hobby for life.

8/3/13

## **Alone**

It was like any kitchen. I guess the dead  
of night made the window an expansive mirror.  
He sat facing himself, head in hands on the table.  
A pepsiMAX bottle challenged his head for height.  
    He'd been told  
MAX, Zero, diet, no added sugar or sugar free were Okay.  
He punctured to check. Millions had his complaint.  
He'd eaten well: pork, fruit and veg. Poor diet -  
    and the anti-psychotics  
were blamed for the weight gain and subsequent type 2.  
He didn't exercise. He was too cerebral, playing word games -  
on a computer. It was poetry of a sort, but not as some knew it.  
The damned world was going on outside his house.  
    He could hear -  
frequent cars. He was alone in suburbs, but for online friends -  
    and prayer.

20/3/13

## **Baggage**

A triangle of confusion: head to heart to groin  
is leading to days, turning into weeks, into months,  
into a life without a certain woman.  
I do not fantasise. I just like her.  
Would she be my friend, despite  
my marines training rucksack? I'm not  
a politician. I don't have the chat.  
How do I skirt around the pills, my doctor,  
and my God; the missing job, the progressing years  
and receding hair? Then maybe she has baggage too.

26/3/13

## **Road to a cult**

He hasn't been socialised.  
He blew it in infant fights.  
Old lessons can't be rerun  
without pricey analysts.

Passing time surfing in a swivel chair  
he's learned to make things flow.  
But he has cares. They hurt,  
they're impossible, like love.

If loneliness, the breadline,  
and a draining faith progress;  
he may throw the towel in,  
joining the Jesus Army instead.

4/4/13

## **Polarities**

Jobless people hang out, some smoke rollups.  
A preschool boy remembers playing  
with an infant-teacher, and points at her.  
Ducks and geese foul the track around the old boating lake.  
An island, covered in trees, rises out of the water. Once  
it was a spot where Edwardians stole kisses.  
Signs stating "Do not feed the birds" abound.  
The cafe's drawing folk. Some buy birdseed.

The sun is shining.  
It's April but the wind is bitter cold.

I've not been confirmed,  
but it doesn't stop me trying to mingle indoors.  
You've got to make the first move.  
It's like anywhere,  
except perhaps Kingdom Hall.  
I'm silent and may seem rude.

There's a second lake stocked with fish. It's a guessing game:  
which fishermen are open to "catch" questions?

Those in the cafe seek comradeship. Around this lake  
solitude rules.

5/4/13

### 2-0-7

The house has a door hailing in digits  
a location along the lane.  
It's a large semi fit for five,  
and in times past  
a cellar dwelling servant.

He's alone, although that isn't his history.  
He wears a ring  
and prays at a cross of ash.

This house is a vessel of memories.  
One bedroom is slept in. Two  
hold whatnots and one holds art.  
2-0-7's too big.

He'd be better suited in a flat,  
but his dog's his Waterloo.  
She's old. His mother  
would house her in a home.

6/4/13

## **Fired**

You smiled when she told you it was over. Ironically,  
she hated silence,  
but this moved your new found tongue,  
as she sat in your 1970 Triumph Herald;  
battery drained; engine still.

She could have stood.  
It was a weighty scooter to ride.  
On a third tiring push  
Petrol fired.

It must have been your euphoria  
at being rid of her,  
because you talked all her way home.

For almost a year she'd had free petrol  
and never bought drinks. In a week  
she'd summed her loss;  
ringing with an olive branch  
you didn't accept.

7/4/13

## **Pianoforte**

I played without love,  
for fatherly admiration,  
which left as grades were gained.  
Sharing and support  
dissolved,  
after parental overtaking.

Now I've declined. I have students climb.  
Their connection can require years.  
Time chisels maturity.

"Kinderszenen" is now a reflection for one,  
who plays it with panache.  
I teach without demonstrations.  
I'm an oracle,  
not Liberace.

8/4/13 - 12/12/16

### **Heaton park**

I'm sitting on grass.  
Sun and wind  
form a differential on my face.  
Climbing the hill to get here  
was like dry aqua-aerobics.

To the right a huge Georgian hall dominates.  
To the left, acres of land  
drop back down the road to a barrier,  
blocking car access.

People walk dogs, stroll or jog.  
Crows are blown about, cawing.

There's a lake and golf course  
hidden; engulfed in vastness.

The warmth comes, it goes. A spider  
walks on my notes.

The invisible traffic is muted.  
I turn on my stomach and see a folly.  
It's like a sealed bandstand,  
whitewashed with a green copper roof.  
Daisies pierce grass. It's April.  
Giant trees as old as the park  
are barren.

The cafe beckons.  
Downhill, downstream,  
I kill peace.

15/4/13

### **The Kitchen**

She had taught pianoforte there,  
on her polished,  
black-and-white Kawai.

She'd run to the door when I arrived.  
We'd stroll around parks easily.

I moved in when her mother passed away.  
We lived poetically and musically, as dog lovers.

The stress of loss  
triggered rheumatoid arthritis.  
Her knees and right hip suffered.  
I pushed her "chariot."

We converted the music studio into a kitchen.  
We planned our own good food,  
but she couldn't stand long  
and I was a poor cook.  
Soon we knew all the Beefeater staffs' first names.

Her arteries blocked in a nursing home.  
Poor diet, obesity and steroids were to blame.  
Her heart stopped.  
I got diabetes,  
then cooked good food too late.

“Forgive me Clare for laziness,  
I know you’ll want me to cook well.  
I’m happy in the thought  
that Heaven has cures.”

17/4/13

### **Exorcised**

He said “you’re on the wagon again.  
You don’t want brain cells  
to dissolve in ethanol.  
You’re running scared.  
Lord you’re on orange juice,  
fruit and green veg.”

I said, “I’m high above bubbling froth,  
300 days dry.”  
Drink and smoke were my props.  
I’ve buried them in a shallow grave.  
It’s tardy for my gut and heart.  
My late wife won’t reap new attention.

I hope she’ll forgive me from Heaven.  
They say souls don’t hold grudges.  
Can you see the halo around my head?”

21/4/13



## Talking to a tree after summer 20-12

I miss you.  
I've come to the ashes  
to pray another rosary for you.

There's rain in the air,  
feeding this tree you're joining.

I'm sitting in our car, listening to birds  
without hurrying. I'm soaking up peace.

Daffodils are lifting me,  
but salt has stung my eyes here.

Are you listening Clare?  
This rosary will be yours.

...  
...

I've reached the second mystery  
and a cat has halted to inquire.  
Ironic that birds should sing  
then die at a crematorium.

I'm never going to be alone  
because I have faith.  
No-one can take this from us.

It's still light.  
I've nowhere better to be.  
I feel I'm with you.

21/4/13

## **Investing spiritually at the crem'**

Spotting a lone magpie,  
I think 'One for sorrow,  
Two for joy,' as I meditate  
on Sorrowful mysteries.  
Then that black cat  
I saw yesterday  
crosses my path;  
endlessly hunting  
in this cemetery/  
crematorium.

There's nobody around again.  
I whisper prayers.  
They're heard  
by Mary and Clare,  
and guarantee me  
reciprocal treatment  
at my final hour.

23/4/13

## **Beefeater**

It's Wednesday evening.  
He's drinking an Americano.  
Through a gap  
he can see the restaurant he frequents.

He was titled 'Sir' at the bar.  
He's treated well next-door too: he tips.

He's unusual: drinking coffee  
and writing poems.

He doesn't come at weekends.  
There's no seating. Short skirts  
steal his shy eye's resting places.  
Nerves from aloneness afflict him.

It's a long time since he lived for drink, and smoked,  
fighting to be served beer.  
His eyes  
used to hide his gentle nature.

He fancies a waitress,  
but emotional,  
practical and religious affairs  
don't compute.

He'll be back tomorrow for food.  
They may think he's loaded.  
He's broke. As he said,  
he quit ale and tabs. It's just as well  
when he's odd enough to reference self in 3rd person.

24/4/13

### **Life in a back pocket**

Your passing is spanned by my wallet.  
John Paul is nestled  
behind your smiling face  
cut out from your blue badge;  
two Saints in waiting.  
There's an older black-and-white photo  
from when we first met.

A tatty card off a lawn  
says 'All my love, Mike xx.'  
It explained dying roses.

A new bank card, with money  
to spread thinly, is unscratched.  
Not many notes  
thicken this German leather.  
A credit card forms a clear imprint.  
Conversely there's a receipt  
for a sold, prestigious watch.

That CSO's number's there  
that we never considered  
when it was needed,  
and a Beefeater points card  
filled to your arteries' peril.

Unison's presence reminds me  
of the days I worked, and a Cex card  
of days I sold to try and keep afloat  
with your help.

Then there's my father's two prayers,  
which made us weep  
after the strewing.

25/4/13

### **Surprised by happiness**

You're happy without analysing.  
If you drop  
you spiral for clues.  
You just want to enjoy  
your euphoria;  
your faith?

Recent sad news tested you,  
bluntly denting.  
You buried the thought  
in a place marked 'Pain.'

If blame's to be ascribed for this surprise,  
prayer causes smiles.  
There's a loving audience.

Doctors proclaim serotonin.  
That's a chicken and egg case to you.

25/4/13

### **Parenting**

He said, "if I ever have children,  
I'll treat them like adults when they're old."  
He added, "I wouldn't expect them to be perfect.  
They'd be like me: unable to cast the first stone.  
I'd try to boost their confidence, and help them fight,  
unlike my father. And I know Moses  
will interject, but I'm robbed.  
I'd not get a parenting job easily."

26/4/13

### **Monkey nuts pecking order**

The garden of remembrance  
is an animal sanctuary,  
with food from TESCO's.

Clare, you, your mother and Thomas the dog  
wait in an ash state for me. Meanwhile I visit.

The pigeons have a pulley  
from their legs  
to their heads,  
which doesn't solve the case  
of the nuts.

Magpies swoop in,  
stealing one per beak,  
bullied by a larger crow.

Two nuts in the black vice  
show off the crow's brain.  
It head-butts cases open,  
frustrating pigeons.

But only the detachment of squirrels  
dare to seek reward in the cheek-zone,  
with every detail of their bodies on display.

Their cuteness wins over,  
and for a moment I forget,  
that I'm here to meditatively talk to Clare.

27/4/13

## Public café

So I watched this dude again.  
He was staring into a cup of coffee,  
wishing he'd put  
god damned sugar in it for a change.  
More to the point,  
wishing it contained Irish whiskey  
in goats milk. His beard  
was a week too long, and he wore a coat  
on a fine spring day.  
His saving grace was a book of poetry,  
that he couldn't quite enjoy,  
through not being able to read aloud.

He wanted to make it with the barista,  
but due to his habits, his conversation  
had become limited to one of two words:  
large or medium.  
Having said that, today was different.  
He hadn't been for a while and was asked,  
where he had been. He explained,  
*I don't know*, doubling his vocabulary.  
He'd been too often earlier  
and she'd turned moody.  
In fact, he was pissed off with her.

He's got a university degree,  
but since he doesn't talk the talk, he didn't mention it  
when she mentioned hers.  
What the fuck is a graduate doing,  
with a week too long beard, in the afternoons,  
passing time supping COSTA coffee, in a home  
for dementia patients?

30/4/13

## Misfit

*It's you and me Chick*, he said  
to his geriatric dog, Lucy. The afternoon sun  
was high. Earlier he'd checked at the crematorium,  
whether he could leave something  
by Lucy's mummy's tree; one of three little jobs  
he'd done that Thursday.

He watched Lucy lick the earth  
he'd pissed on. She bored of the dry patch  
and sat on a flag making a shadow of her bum at him.

His pulse rose at the sound  
of magpie-provoked thrushes.  
How the hell  
could he work again?

His extreme cold weather flying jacket  
shielded the sun, and with his beard  
both belonged in Antarctica.

He suddenly thought about the hospital visit  
Lucy and himself made to her mummy: his wife.  
Lucy didn't "make" her, and mummy didn't make it.  
Broken, he wrote verse.

2/5/13



## Fighting the negative muse

I was happy.  
I didn't write sad verse.  
Yeah, she'd passed,  
but I spoke to her  
in the afternoons  
when time  
dripped.  
Wait, I'm risking  
moroseness.

So all three of us  
went to mass today.  
I eyeballed the priest.  
*The body of Christ.*  
I said *Amen*.  
Surely Jesus smiled:  
flower-power forerunner  
an' all.

I wake Okay.  
Down feelings collapse at night  
like sycamore seeds,  
maybe growing strong.

Don't tell the social.  
I like drinking coffee  
in a dementia home  
and saying rosaries at the crem  
after mass.

I dare to think I'm a poet at times.  
I was told I had a voice;  
must be the "Golborne-ese."  
I'm still chasing a place on Amazon,  
but who the hell  
would touch an unknown,  
with only grade four  
CSE English Lit?

7/5/13

### **Who'd go out in a second-hand Crombie in summer?**

The stairlift left.  
Grab-rails remain.  
One upstairs light is shining  
amongst a dozen rooms.

The doorbell heralds  
the postman;  
though Jehovah's Witnesses  
have surprised.

No one spoke directly  
except with that affirmation:  
*the body of Christ.*

Damn it, I wish I could afford B&H and Guinness.  
They'd punctuate these long days  
since she died.

I cared: wheelchair pushing  
and washing.

We didn't have children.  
We had dogs.  
Lucy's left; just.

I don't sleep well.  
I ruminate.  
Risperidone helps.

I'll push the craziness out,  
cancel my TV licence,  
keep rescue hens and give away eggs.  
I'll concoct illnesses  
when I need attention.

By summer I'll stand out,  
in the Crombie I bought  
from OXFAM.

12/5/13

### **The sewage works**

He was there in '82;  
sleepless that night.  
How he'd pulled himself  
back over the wire fence was neat.

With that fracture forgotten,  
they rode fateful radii again.  
The filter bed was curious,  
not very unpleasant;  
it was like your own sweat.

Crashes rang out, triggering the boys.  
Phil had struck a lie-detector-like scribbler.  
With the same plank he broke garage glass,  
and emerged  
with petrol.

They liked fire,  
and lit a railway fence,  
then tore away,  
two to a bike.

The petrol  
was soon floating down a brook,  
in impressionist curves and colours.  
Hit by a fag-butt it became Hell on Earth.

20/5/13 - 12/12/16

### **Till we meet again**

#### **Life in a swivel chair, running out of websites to view**

I'm waiting for the bubble to explode on my lips.  
I'm waiting alone for a strawberry shock.  
I'm waiting for post and emails.  
I'm waiting to feel moved in monologue.

I'm aware of time's rusty pendulum.  
I'm aware my sands of life are getting deep.  
I'm aware I'm going to be treading water.  
I'm aware memories fade.

21/5/13

### **Queen of her borders**

With white blossom  
and Amazonian green leaves,  
no one would believe  
her health,  
planted in a plastic tub  
on a concrete lawn.

She's a dwarfed tree  
unable to grow,  
miraculously  
ripening apples  
year upon year.

At fifty pounds  
she was a garden centre must.  
I've nurtured the soil  
with food.

Placed mid-garden  
behind a tall wall,  
she's never had scrumpers,  
just nature's winged mouths.

21/5/13

### **A present to remember**

We lived near a canal.  
Mum worried, saying,  
*don't play there, there's a troll.*

One Christmas  
we got Maglites.

In a long game  
of Monopoly,  
I had Mayfair and stuff;  
without cheating.  
Sis was a railways tycoon.  
We were up late.  
I dared Sis  
to look for it.

With parents in bed,  
not to be disturbed,  
we eased out.  
Sis headed off.  
She whispered,  
*I can hear something.*  
Her heart pounded.  
She beamed light.  
There it was, under the bridge  
with a woman; skirt up.  
*Hey you* it shouted.

Sis shouted *it's got someone.*  
*Tell mum.* We ran.

Mum was furious,  
and we were grounded.

21/5/13

### **On the roll of a dice**

Trying to reach the end of that rainbow  
is inversely as hopeless as suicide  
by lightning strike. Why not just count  
shooting stars? That's the question.  
You'll be prospecting praise  
to find two.

Get the abacus out. Break it.  
Bead your hair. Not even a compass  
will help you find your way in the world.  
You're a learner seeking the font  
of knowledge. Light your way with a flame.  
Magic will surprise you. Remember  
life can favour chancers.

23/5/13

## **Losing my moobs**

My pyramids of flesh:  
Cleopatra protrusions,  
have melted in the fat burning  
desert of my chest. A seeded like womb  
remains gradually birthing,  
in a trouser slackening,  
seamstress employing way.

I've lost my breasts,  
my knockers, my tits;  
boobs, nay moobs.  
Ten kilos shed,  
yippie! Arrest me  
before I strip in the street.  
I've two hairy pancakes left.

2/6/13

## **My private menagerie**

There's a wren: a fluff-ball,  
hidden, though it skirts  
like a mini Dambuster.  
Its tail is a closed fan.  
Sometimes it sits on my fence  
with grubs.  
I think there's a nest; where?  
I don't stake the back out.  
I'm happy viewing  
the suburbia surprise,  
through my window.

There's also a squirrel,  
which curiously seems alone.  
It eats bird-nuts  
after back-flexing  
aerobatics.

Robin comes too.  
I think he's found a mate,  
or maybe SHE is brooding  
and truanting.

Cats aren't seen,  
they're dog people  
around here.

7/6/13 - 12/12/16

### **Buttercups and daisies**

It's twelve months this Saturday.  
I can't see ashes on the lawn anymore.  
I speak to nature,  
echoing news through roots.  
Funnily it calms me.  
You were always an ear.

One hundred shades  
of green fight for attention,  
but I give it to this consuming  
maple tree.



How will I specify it?  
Who knows?  
With no one left  
I'll write it in law.  
My ashes will mingle  
amongst melting buttercups,  
and orchestral,  
yellow faced choristers,  
that brighten this spot  
year on year.

11/6/13

### **Time is our friend now**

We ride tandem.  
There's no pain  
from feelings  
of boredom  
and waste.

We don't  
speed.  
Necessity forces patience.

Falling sand  
through a glass neck,  
fascinates us  
as we meditate.

We live finitely,  
dying forever  
on the same rung.

We'll reunite  
when time's unreined.

19/6/13 - 26/7/13

## Emily

She's going.  
Her trimmed eyebrows  
and uplifting smile  
won't meet me  
anymore.

She's going.  
She never did  
query my ring.  
How could I say,  
oh by the way I'm no longer  
married.

She's going  
to a bank, having served coffee  
in a dementia home.  
She has energy. She's got to climb.

It doesn't make any difference,  
she was taken  
after matchmakers made.  
I did wonder for a while,  
but luck wasn't there.

She read my poems,  
but only the ones I chose.  
She still doesn't know me.

I showed her what would spare tears  
and frowns.

1/7/13

## Talking with a food technologist

We liked haggises.  
I'd microwave them.  
The steel crimped skin  
(a pierced film)  
burnt sausage-like ends.

I can't recall the veg.  
Clare cooked that.  
I do remember loving haggis.  
My stilled mind  
blanked their composition.

Chef Emily mentioned over-peppered black-puddings.  
I told her about the haggises, saying,  
*my wife and I used to have them.*  
With the poem Emily saw earlier  
she must've known I was a widower.

I wanted haggis.  
They're never single portions.  
I wanted burnt bits  
to divide with Clare,

and I think she added crisp roast potatoes.

5/7/13

## Art Deco crucifix

It was  
reminiscent  
of the Jesus  
St Augustine's  
had,

where he went at noon from work. There was always stress:  
someone to consider in his prayers. Him too: he saw filth at times.  
That's difficult to reconcile in the Catholic church.

This crucifix  
was vintage 40s,  
two inches tall,  
a nailed kid's  
Pink Panther,  
sterling silver,  
Spanish made,  
and had crossed  
the Atlantic  
twice.

It was shaped  
like this poem.  
Nightly it dug in.  
Was it pain  
for lust  
he hadn't  
confessed?

6/7/13

**7/7/13**

Andy Murray was one set up  
on that toasting afternoon.  
I enjoyed carpet, hid  
in a powered shed.

What a day for exertion on a court.  
Andy's sweaty towel and first two sets,  
made the nation Mexican wave.

I was clueless. Was he English  
or a Brit? His win made Pippa  
freak behind shades.

7/7/13 - 14/5/14 - 12/12/16

**Being a loner with an elderly dog**

Andy Murray won Wimbledon.  
It was a day of national pride.  
Lucy and I relaxed outdoors.

Clare would cut roses  
from her wheelchair.  
I could picture her bending  
over the multicoloured, shin-high wall  
that the dogs had stripped with their claws.  
Lucy's sober now.  
At 112 she just excites about apple cores.

Today smoke and laughter diffused  
across several plots. I smelled sausages.  
Lucy looked tired and flattened herself  
on the evening-cooled concrete.  
I was tired too; tired of saying I was Okay  
when I meant I'd improved:  
panics had stopped.

Andy Murray will be in the papers tomorrow.  
Good for him.

7/7/13

### **Plant life**

Flowers hold the key to time:  
when they blossom, when they die.  
The sight of flowers makes moods better.  
Smells freshen. Extracts heal.

Call the man upon the Moon.  
He'll tell you flowers are conspicuous.  
Apart from Sinai, and the like,  
they prettify nature's gardens.

From alkaloids and caffeine brews,  
practical plant life stimulates.  
Remove misery, crime and pain.  
Heroin and cocaine are nature's pests.

8/7/13

### **Seeing the truth in retrospect through wildlife videos**

I played videos.  
Foxes, and you being ignored,  
were on each one.

You loved me so much. I didn't  
deserve your gift. You loved me  
too much; drugged, rewarded?

I can't show these films.  
You mean too much.

Today I'd give you everything:  
blood, tick-tocks and looks.

8/7/13

### **Seeing the truth in retrospect**

You played videos back.  
You were busy acting,  
while filming foxes  
at the clough.

She spoke, secondary  
to your rudeness.  
She loved a lot.

She let you highlight  
your selfish bias on YouTube;  
good job you deleted.

Now she's memory.  
You're ashamed.  
Her seniority first preserved,  
then ended it.

8/7/13 - 14/5/14

## **Doodling with words on a stagnant Monday morning**

Green tongues from vegetable hydra, spew forth  
from behind the arid apple tree, with no fruit seen.  
Once red, white and blue; then red, the wall  
is psychedelic after hardened dogs' claws attacked. All  
but one rose tree flowers. Death is wooden, gloss to matt.  
Copper wires laugh at lightning, as if they'd nullify  
a strike. They host fractional wavelengths, of hams  
and radio Moscow. They skirt over a bare bird-table,  
which only dumb doves come to investigate.

It's another day on benefits, trying to fill time observing  
never changing snapshots: pictures in words, never  
rhyming, with no Monday blues. Sunday was the same.

Saturday had change, through siting elsewhere in holy  
remembrance. It's normally a static topography.  
The displacement made what's-his-name? protest.  
We've all got some Asperger's. It's a shame variety,  
makes us think.

8/7/13

## **Obsessing about unreadable foreign stamps**

I can remember her words,  
*they're only bits of paper.*  
I'd spend hard earned cash.

It's a mental disorder,  
with gum amongst the most precious  
things on Earth,  
licking it is like dissolving diamonds,  
and experts invalidate the re-gummed.



They're drugs. You need to sell them,  
else let a firing-squad be your cure.  
Accept anyone's help from this insanity.  
Even face that wall.

10/7/13

### **Semiconscious thought-stream**

Bright-yellow quivering,  
    bloody untamed mess;  
        you can't treat people  
            like that. Badges echo  
            rules you've broken.  
    Leaded glass is going to cost  
pretty gear. You don't  
    need your SONY "junk."  
        I can't remember  
            if you still had it. Last time  
        I was drinking with Sandra  
    in a dream, smoking  
and shite.  
    I can't do this:  
        walking along laughing  
            and having fun.  
        I need it to last  
    or it's down the road  
to sunshine.

13/7/13

## Hypomaniac in Manchester

I see you at a safe distance.  
Your bra is dark.  
Through white cotton  
your breasts are a perfect  
handful. You're one  
of many attractive women  
in town this summer day.

I have money  
in my wallet for a while.  
After buying Stiff Little Fingers CDs,  
I buy a book:  
"Postmodern American Poetry."

Why drink alone?  
And I'd NEED to be manic  
to read my tome in Wetherspoon's.  
So I return on the 77  
and study. After twelve poems  
I understand none. It's crap.

My "Bestie" awaits on Facebook.  
She understands me,  
putting up with my going paranoid  
and deleting her; frequently.  
I load her with poems.  
She says she loves them.  
Occasionally she's diplomatic  
and *unsure*.

We laugh. She says I'm on form tonight.  
Later I threaten to stop meds; again.  
I have to promise no. I've enjoyed  
being high today, but the chemical jacket  
must be worn. So I'm calmed.

15/7/13

## **A suitable inheritance**

It was a trait: if I had something, she wanted one:  
An Apple Mac laptop, Blackberry phone,  
Bose CD radio, fountain pen, Bach Partitas.  
But nothing stood out more,  
than a Swiss Army Knife,  
to show our bond and her foible.

It had a blade, a bulb, rulers and scissors;  
a pricking pin, tweezers and a magnifier.  
It would suit philately, but was bagged  
and forgotten. God bless Clare.  
It reminds me of her.

16/7/13

## **Spare some change for some food?**

Some beggars net £50k a year.  
I'm a neighbour turned judge.

Seeing a crutch and swollen foot, didn't deceive me.  
On returning, I said *you're better off than me*.  
He seem calmly appealing anyway,  
with his lack of anger.

The next day, police spoke to him,  
and he moved on.

Who was the good neighbour?  
Was it me to others for not encouraging him?  
Was it police for discussing legal options?  
Was it the beggar for trying to expose Christ?

Saint Paul's love had trust.  
We're brothers with the same destiny.

17/7/13

## Life in a gallery

He said, “the problem is, it’s littered.  
Without having compound eyes  
I’m sitting viewing a quarter.  
Muhammad Ali, and George Russell’s half-nude wife,  
claim most of my gaze. It’s crazy  
that I bought six acrylics, to focus a ‘friend’  
on my wallet.”

Then he paused, yawned and stretched back,  
viewing an unsigned Lowry print.  
It was an impressionistic St Mary’s.

Thirty pictures displayed traits:  
kinky, classical, moody, musical,  
religious and nature-loving.

A Geoffrey Key was absent;  
distinctive; RICH.

17/7/13

## **Rampart intrusions**

I see the faint marauder  
through a frosted glass disguise.  
Perversity compels me  
to curiously open.

I freeze, awaiting questions.  
A suit says “how you doing?”  
I’ve heard enough. They want me  
to insulate my brickwork,  
sign up for TV channels  
or join their Kingdom Hall gang.

Like private calls, it stresses.  
Damn it, my gate’s left open.

The local kids harass me  
with “knock and run” tormenting.

I’ve no space for intrusions.  
My goal is just existence.  
Sod off. My time is metered.

19/7/13 - 21/6/14

## **The existentialist**

Through “Digital” frosted glass,  
I see the marauder. A perversion  
compels me to open the door,  
and with a startled expression  
I await spiel. *Nothing to worry about.*  
*I’m from etc., etc.* I’ve heard enough,  
they all WANT something, from  
“Love Films” to wall cavity insulation.  
Jehovahs ... (no they come in pairs  
and wouldn’t say from where.)  
Some callers sell windows and doors.  
It ups pulses, like Number Withhelds.  
The glass is shut in his face. Damn  
that gate, nobody closes it. It’s a skill  
not even the postman has acquired.  
I’m becoming the odd-bod at number  
207. Kids will start to play tricks on me  
when by chance, they’ve learned  
of my weaknesses. Knock and run, and  
collecting money for nonexistent  
disabled horses; and stealing my bins,  
is a loner’s problems. I’ve no room  
for people though; without risks, there  
will be no hurt. Is existence the goal?

19/7/13

## **Chatting to a spirit in the garden**

I can’t hear you  
calling my name anymore.  
It used to be as fresh as dew  
from my breath;  
a stream  
dried up in silence now.

The panics have gone.  
I sleep nights without sudden  
sprung awakenings.

Forgive me,  
I've moved my wedding ring.  
Who would want me,  
with my unfit mind and body  
and no capacity to provide?

Lucy puzzles me.  
She didn't seem to recognise you,  
in the home where you passed.  
She's missed you before;  
on your long infections absence.  
She's only a dog.

What would we be doing  
now it's summer again,  
selling up?  
Would we live in Morocco,  
drinking gallons of mint tea in Marrakesh?  
I joke. My parents wouldn't bless that.

Incidentally, I didn't go to church today. I might  
have fallen out with them again.  
I'm trying to accept  
we all share this destiny,  
but I'm just forty-five.

We've had Robin and Jenny Wren  
nesting this year. I sit outside  
watching those parents.  
They fetch grubs.  
I wish you could see them.  
Maybe you're here  
a second ahead?

You're listening.  
For the first time  
I don't feel odd about being alone:  
hope it's Okay,  
I've got a "Bestie" on Facebook:  
like a sister you understand.

I've still got my problem with work:  
honesty. I can't present a mask,  
it leads to pain.  
Love should ALWAYS trust.  
It's not easy, when everyone  
is happy to kick sand  
in your sun-blistered face.

Robin keeps landing on the washing-line;  
a silhouette against a cloudless sky.  
Even planes leave no trace.  
He's been eighteen inches away,  
once or twice.

Robin must love.

20/7/13



## **I'd dissolve diamonds**

if I could, to restore  
your love. My life  
has left me behind now:  
a stagecoach  
with no driver, mail  
addressed but lost en route.  
My message is a silent  
floating bottle.  
What chance  
have I nowadays? Blindfold me  
and fire. I want to beach  
yesterday.

21/7/13

## **Purgatory is quite a laugh**

I was queueing. Two cashiers  
and two large ladies were laughing;  
at “feckin” what? The cashiers  
had boring jobs, and buying  
over-priced, low fat yoghurt  
is no joke. I just stood there  
wishing I could escape  
the façade. A boy assumed  
adults’ humour wasn’t for youths  
(I was young once.) Hahaha  
bloody ha, let’s make the best  
of being deprived of chairs,  
scanning barcodes all day  
and asking dumb questions,  
like “do you want a bag sir?”  
on buying two packs of gum?

Then I thought EUREKA:  
if only I could laugh.  
I'd cover up my mediocrity;  
and I pondered the lad.

21/7/13

### **Creative trapdoors**

I'm told how not to get published  
is to write poems about poetry (ARRGGHHH)  
or write Haiku (PHEW) - really? - and to write  
about reflections in shinny surfaces.  
Quick, ripple it Narcissus (OOPS.)

I'm stimulated by sounds telling me  
- "what-ing" you? - TELLING me  
in matter of fact style (WHOOOPS.)  
Sounds should form pictures;  
whirlpool innards of an ear.  
Did you see that biology sketch too?  
(PHEW) I'll tell you what you shouldn't do.  
Do you Hear it? Sure you did,  
put it under a lid (DEAR ME.)

By the way, keep your cats for you (YAAY.)

21/7/13

### **Doll on a deckchair**

She sees six darts:  
swallows or swifts,  
released pinballs  
at steeple height.

Looking up  
makes her cheap  
mascara flood.

21/7/13

**You can tell he's standing out in style -**

to repel friends; in a dark  
Gieves and Hawkes suit.  
It gives it away, wearing  
an ironed red shirt and blue silk tie,  
in 25 degrees C, plodding  
down the street. With neat hair  
and no shades to hide  
his uninterested gaze,  
he's always on foot.  
The height of the sun  
is his P45. He doesn't  
want inclusion. In autumn  
he'll don his Crombie  
with matching black  
polished brogues.

I don't know his agenda  
but he's a beacon  
in a town of fast-food,  
tattoos and hoodies.

22/7/13

**Every little helps**

Listening to Everybody's Talkin'  
I remember the NYC of "Midnight Cowboy,"  
smiling with free money at the bar.

Would you believe it, two pears cost £3.26?  
I returned and TESCO held up hands.  
Derek's mistakes caused a grin,  
so I cocked my frowning trigger.

Imagining Derek with Jon Voight's Stetson  
and Dustin Hofmann's guile, I wondered how much hay,  
scanning fruits twice, he could amass for his horse.

30/7/13

### **Food for thought**

Most people are Marmite.  
I'm not a fan.  
I need people but hate icing,  
though I quietly try to shine.

"Put your trust in God, he's all we have,"  
the man said. I need that recipe  
for a spiritual date.

I've halved tablets  
to smiling portions.  
After years of boiling water,  
I have creamy porridge.  
Food has paroled me.

2/8/13

### **Talking to a dog after cancelling a TV licence**

We could trawl truth from Genesis to Apocalypse;  
listening quietly to music CDs.  
Armed with Radio Times we could tune favourites,  
and when inspired, tinkle proverbials and bark.  
Maybe we'd progress journals. Hmmm,  
you'd struggle. Mine's a roman á clef.  
TV news torpedoed me. You licked bones.  
What's happening? Scotty beam us up.

5/8/13

### **Programmer to milkman**

Have you looked at someone's soul?  
Peered against their flowing mask;  
have you? Or have you broke  
their disguise to a flash-lit startled gaze?  
I have. I soaked up honest fear.

“Milkman” was said.  
My green eyes pinned the doctor back,  
while pink dissolved. His finger tips  
spider-legged the desk, till my broken-bottle eyes  
were convinced

he'd gaffed.

29/8/13

## **Since summer 2012**

I've got our geriatric dog confined to lino.  
I've got a DAB set tuned to Radio 2.  
I own all your cuddly toys,  
some your mother bought.  
She never liked me.  
I gave eighteen years for her home.  
Benefits pay the "leccy," while I  
waste money on stamps.  
Hiding, the album's mouth liaises with its shoulders;  
"Moi?"

31/8/13

## **Fingering beads**

Thoughts interspersed amongst a patchwork of prayers,  
things I imagine were buried,  
reveal brightly.

Dad and I had an endless rally going,  
then I realised the game:  
mutual lying.  
I betrayed my god by worshipping money.  
Yet I wasted hundreds on junk.  
Dad begrudged collection plates.

I'd like to offer shelter,  
but yes and no fail.  
The longing's a conditioning  
like conversion of pints into piss.

Then I remember the playground  
and my accommodating hush.

I finish Hail Holy Queen,  
and thoughts evaporate.

2/9/13

### **Stepping out**

Lava lit his nerves.  
It was especially  
at those times  
that he needed her.  
She's gone.  
Who'll ply lassi  
for the heat?

His personality  
was assassinated  
again.  
He was sunk, as the church  
umbilical snapped.

Where does he fit?  
Faith will return him home  
to her.

8/10/13

### **Guardian angel**

My luck: autumn hung,  
coloured like a flaccid perch  
fooled by a bloodworm. That's how I felt,  
without fight, at the mercy of the falling  
leaves and melancholy memories.

I sat in our car and pictured you.  
It's some time since you drove,  
always parking in "drive-throughs."  
I would occasionally smoke.  
Now I know how bad it smelled.  
You had much patience.

Perhaps you're in charge of electricity; LIFE;  
aiming jolts at dangling captives,  
eternally.

9/10/13

### **Softening a hardened heart**

They dwelt upstairs. His brother was a spark.  
He himself dreamed about identities.  
With dry eyes on their mum's departure,  
they retired to poster-bare rooms.

Ten years later he was loved  
but she wasn't IN love.  
He was an ocean floor creature  
fishing in murk. When she'd finished,  
his heart congealed.

In time he dated again, shackled by "yes."  
Then a meditation in a pub's snug freed him.  
She didn't want Buddha on a date.

He found his heart masseur.  
She showed him spirit through prayers,  
then Heavenly ascended leaving him pulse.

12/10/13



## **Waiting for Mass**

What a contrast.  
I'm plodding around the city,  
trying not to look at tight jeans.

I window-shop.  
Benefits provide essentials.  
My luxuries are wafers.  
I'm temporarily a member,  
despite hands reaching  
but not clenching.

So I pray a lot. If it does me no good  
I'm sure there's no bad.

I'm not through with my late wife.  
She's keeping me buoyant  
over a street place.

I'm waiting for Mass  
and transitory bliss.

19/10/13

## **Starting in autumn**

It's times like this when the clock's back,  
that the window at 5 p.m.  
holds the inverse of my room, and I analyse.  
Themes surface like WWII pufferfish mines  
and I try to pacify them.

"You can run but you can't hide."  
Damn it; who first coined that and why?  
"You reap what you sow" is the killer.  
I'm not forgiven yet.

Since losing you there's no one left  
to bounce the cerebral horse manure off.  
I need more than peace in Mass.  
I want to reveal a soul:  
to peel sweetcorn.

29/10/13

### **The barista**

She speaks English  
with an American accent.  
She's Italian.

She doesn't  
work at the front now.  
She'd give a pound over  
or ten-pence short.  
I tried to ignore it  
but said "sorry, it's just with me isn't it?"  
Her pulse rose.

She's moved to the kitchen  
where math isn't precise.  
She'll recover her teen smile.  
The black cloud will thin.

We'd make a good pair:  
my numeracy and her beauty.  
Grey is betraying me.  
I'm just "Texas Instruments."

2/11/13

## **Clouds not ready to burst are anchored**

One minute you're mentally in that car-park,  
collecting trolleys, enjoying good weather or wrapping up,  
offering help; having purpose. The next minute  
you're ruminating about consciousness: is yours normal  
or did psychedelics change it?

It's that time of year: November, when death or gold  
present like pills in Morpheus' hands. You choose void.  
You can't escape the nights, winter's dilating pupils  
and diminishing colours.

Why are you persecuted, even at the Lord's table?  
You analyse. Meds reduce your reason.

Spring will return and you'll smile; really.  
You'll SMILE without consciousness.

5/11/13

## The introvert

His batteries mirror the colour in his face  
as he hears monologues.

All day he hides from folk, yet his mind  
urges ironic interactions.

The phone-line shields.  
“NUMBER WITHHELD”s are out.

Even his dishonest, brainwashing TV  
is replaced with radio-waves.

He’s occasionally vocal in the corner shop  
and afterwards it’s awkward.

People have hurt him for his quietness.  
So he preempts pain with an anorak and jeans.

Some refer to him directly in third person.  
He’s gravitating to childhood ways.

5/11/13

XXXXXXX

## **Bullet?**

You're lost.

You don't know

if right means right,

or left. You can't tell black

from white. She said, she

loved you. Was it from the heart

or head? Foolishly, you've been

sincere, assuming others were too.

You stopped projecting. You said,

“dishonest actions have costs.

Words are cheap.” People work

for their Heavenly room. Can

they decorate with love, or faith and

hope? You said, “It's too late Chick,

forgive me. I'll follow you.” You

no longer cast your psyche out. You

need to melt into religion, moulding

into self, and putting the safety catch on.

5/11/13

## **The leper -**

has tried to clamber  
walls of taboo today.  
Over one,  
he faced a frowning portcullis  
  
shielding hope.

He restored her composure  
by dissolving candour  
banally, despite  
his gravity of heart.

Elsewhere, asked was he Okay,  
society forbade him  
to say, “actually  
I’m dog rough,”  
and he bought lunch  
that others would crave,  
and he ate in warmth.

11/11/13

## **Phantom**

You’ll never know  
if she’s saying  
“forgive us ... as we forgive ...”

Her number’s a gnosis.  
You reached a clinch.  
You turned.  
Her stare impaled you.

16/11/13 - 23/4/14

## **Ibbeth Peril**

You have a lento sostenuto on repeat.  
You're a dry stalagmite staring  
at a tear. She's calling shots  
that should gel like a shuffle. You  
were sealed by Christ's prayer.  
Now you write, with wistful music  
to hijack your heart. You were "Besties,"  
but I feel that tear  
isn't going  
to bridge rock.

20/11/13

## **Monologue to a photograph**

Just for a day we were the happiest  
we'd ever been and we would be.

Just for a day we were the stars  
of the show. Everything was on hold.

Just for a day it all connected,  
like adding the final puzzle piece.

Just for a day scores were settled.  
Families joined for our sakes.

Just for a day we were photogenic  
and our fingers dazzled.

Just for a day we'd been together  
twelve years and four full months.

Just for a day we were unmarried  
then joined because we wed.

Then for six happy years I wheeled you.  
You were mental balm.

Every day I miss your love.  
My prayers send hugs.

21/11/13

### **Hell has heroes**

Matthew 18:3 “And he said: Truly I tell you,  
unless you change and become like little children,  
you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

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Despite the sticks and stones and stuff; words in 3rd person  
hurt him. So he varnished them with denial.

“He’s ruined his career.

He’s a rogue and a vagabond.

He’s a bizarre combination.”

He couldn’t help but wear the “one size fits all” caps,  
and self-fulfilling prophecies grew like ash trees,  
that his imagination scaled.

Now he remembers childhood: Ticky-1-2-3  
and convenient doc-leaves  
nulling pain.

22/11/13

### **Paranoid preamble per se**

I knew a man who believed in black rights.  
He wouldn’t drive his car: it had black tires.

28/11/13



## **Guardian angel from the car park**

I'd spin spy-holes in the window's mist,  
oblivious to your words: 108 mantras per set.  
My leg would bed the steering-wheel,  
whilst stars woke foxes.  
Police torches pierced smoke and shocked youths.  
Hatchback assault courses lost to backseat love,  
cooling before dawn's dogs came.

Nowadays I pray rosaries with your picture.  
You avoid lighthouses: navigating me through pain.

20/12/13

## **Chav Christmas**

It's a battle; a "leccy" surge at night.  
From December the first,  
the estate's projectors  
light the Moon's canvas.  
On an eco-warrior's house, an arrow  
reads "DITTO" to kilowatts next-door.  
They're the only one's  
not stashing next year's trackies  
under a premature tree.  
At midnight, advent calendars synchronise.

The people are oblivious in space.  
"Hubbly-Bubbly" pipes transport them,  
serenaded with Slade's song  
crackling, in a deepening groove.

22/12/13

## **Train-spotter's tarot**

Matching blue jeans, Crocs and an anorak  
were a white flag. His trousers and jacket  
had been insistent at distance,  
but shattered silently, chipped by wrong impressions:  
unobliging mirrors. A beard  
hid his youthfulness, and he'd aged  
by Gieves and Hawkes.  
Army and navy store attire broke shackles,  
with nylon and a US wool crown. Some still said sir,  
admiring modesty. Deceit  
sold in OXFAM,  
cementing the Fool's journey.

4/1/14

## **Affect and the Chocolate Factory**

Last month he was aiming for marathon gold,  
now it's duration. The mirrors have dulled. Silver  
is rare in his town. Like Charlie's grandpa Joe,  
he's waiting for a jolt to take him to the factory.

Headlights trespass. Stillness  
in the house rushes blood,  
and a dog's fading odour chops onions.  
As day retires he feels more comfortable alone.  
Sodium lights the corner of his eye, dissolving Mars.

JAWS menaced beside his bed in his youth.  
Subconsciously he daren't dangle  
whilst fishing for the 70s and 80s. "Life"  
is electric. He's on a computer like his inner child.

The glass elevator though; it never comes true.

10/1/14

## Threatening family breakup

She's precious but my lead is sick.  
Wax speaks though spotlights fool.  
You can plaster-cast fractures  
but disappointment doesn't mould the same.  
You've got to watch the Russians  
the inner dolls crave.  
First fiddle's not cracking.  
Youth mirrors his mill-pool face.  
I'm half my age, born in a time-machine.  
She's fast-tracked.  
She'd hang men for ancient crimes.  
But that's why she's precious:  
her cardiac words.  
We were AC now direct,  
but my baggage is concrete boots.  
Hope the ocean remains a bow  
in the grip of the sky,  
because sand can vanish  
whilst the curtain wants to rise.

13/1/14

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### Rough original notes

I'm fond of a woman, but my confident voice is out of action and unable to communicate.  
False voices can't speak in limelight as they [melt] fail.  
You can attempt to fix a failing situation [probably have to guess at marriage based on the title and what follows] but disappointment can't be mended to its earlier state.  
You've got to watch the children [little Russian dolls, safe in mums protection] the smallest crave.  
The husband is strong, when children look at him they mimic his frown-less face.  
I've not grown up and she's mature.  
She'd introduce capital punishment for murder and rape, etc.  
That's why she is precious because she speaks her mind from the heart.  
We had an on off relationship like alternating current but then it smoothed like direct current.  
I have history that is weighting me down like concrete boots.  
I hope the world, represented by the ocean, doesn't menace and stays at the far horizon, because if it comes in I'll be in trouble with my baggage [of concrete boots.]  
My confidence wants to return to tell her how I feel [lead actor emerging recovered from the curtain.]

## Sex

Call me a prude,  
but I was fooled.  
I've grown to realise  
that the Catholics were right.

It's the biggest distraction  
considering it's a tiny fraction of life.  
Yet it occupies fools in all walks.

I bought jackets, parted hair,  
sculpted stubble.  
I told the world I was shallow.

Good folk fell by.  
Potential friends are now sparser.

Fashion's to blame.  
The Amish aren't stupid.

Some people never latch on.

15/1/14 - 2/5/14

## That's twice I've cried today

It killed me, the Chris Rice I mean.  
He played Chopin's Db nocturne  
like his love could only be expressed once,  
and his entire happiness depended on it.  
His gossamer touch made profound,  
respectful love to the keys, and I knew  
his heart had been broken relentlessly.

Then I realised; we really have no-one,  
because even those closest to us turn away,  
for what? A lousy thousand pounds, and the friends  
we think we have; well that's what made me cry.

16/1/14

### **Amidst depression**

I'm not incarcerated, but there's nowhere better  
than my bedroom to go. I smashed  
the egg-timer. Sand no longer torments me,  
and I listen to the sad chamber music  
of Kenneth Leighton repeatedly.

I keep thinking that I must be bad,  
because why otherwise would I spend  
every day alone, listening to music  
and confusing people online with mood-swings?  
When I look back at my life I don't remember  
ever acting out of pure love.  
I always got my reward. As such,  
I'm reaping what I've sown. Hell is on Earth.

I've convinced myself that everybody's alone,  
only people just haven't realised it.  
We live lies. The sooner we realise this truth,  
the sooner we can become our true selves.

My god has betrayed me. I'm in the jungle,  
and those who perish, rot to the ground.  
Carbon recycles, but as for souls  
it's the biggest fallacy of all, a bigger trap  
than thinking sex is for anything but procreation.

I'd like to believe again, but this time  
I know I'm bad. Even the priests' expressions tell me.  
That's made it really close in on me.  
I must be strong though:  
I'm still here.

18/1/14

## The road home from Damascus

John 4:8 - Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

He'd believed in God  
and an afterlife.  
He could meet folk again.  
Then it dawned on him  
that everyone has an agenda  
and doesn't act out of pure "love" alone.  
People want,  
giving while receiving their rewards.  
Everyone is proud.  
He'd been betrayed  
and realised that this "love"  
did not exist. It followed  
that God must be a delusion,  
making him think,  
as he was alone and wretched,  
helplessly watching people starve  
and die slaughtered,  
that maybe Earth is Hell.  
Some of us twig this,  
whilst others pretend forever.  
He wanted to pretend  
but sought the truth.  
Had the few saints out of the billions  
been the only approximation to "love?"  
He wondered if he had become bad from birth,  
like baptism was another joke,  
or if he choose to be bad later?  
He amazed at what people felt  
when deluding about "love."  
If the truth be known,  
he'd never felt anything but a glimmer  
his entire life.

18/1/14

## Nirvana?

If God exists,  
Catholics have it.  
When we say God is love,  
we mean GOD is love.  
Love doesn't extend to humans  
to share among themselves.  
GOD IS ALL WE HAVE,  
and we must trust in the Lord.  
If that's too hard  
there's Buddhism.  
A whole Catholic congregation  
and priests have potential to reject.  
They deceive you  
with a shake and a smile,  
you're manipulated  
with the thought  
of treasure accumulated in Heaven,  
despite the motives for self.  
Confusion enters  
and no outreach will net drifters.  
But if God exists,  
the church, honed centuries ago,  
with its bullet proof account of Christ,  
tells the story of love.

20/1/14



## **Wanted Dead and Alive**

I feel Okay. I have to. The net won't always be there.  
I know you said forever or a similar word,  
but love isn't pure. I've lost God.  
He sneaked out the back way.  
I've sent a party of thoughts out to find him.  
I might extend the search to Cornwall this summer.  
What about dogs? They don't charge for their love.  
Maybe even ash trees are God.  
That goldcrest I saw was something...

What about the tree-huggers?  
Are they embracing God?  
Have they got it?  
And I still eat meat.  
I wish you'd pretend and let me too,  
because that's all we have in this life,  
apart from nature. It's even in the intelligence  
of an ant. That's God; I think.

22/1/14

## **Truth**

I searched for it  
my entire life.  
Then I realised  
it had been there all along.

Nature asks for nothing.  
She feeds us, clothes us,  
warms us, body and heart.  
Nature must be love.  
We take advantage  
and she forgives.

I saw a robin today.  
Surely it was God  
with its characteristic trust.  
I shared moments  
in my space; its space.  
I smiled at its lack of dogma.  
I knew simplicity was divine.

23/1/14

### **I saw God today**

He had feathers and a red breast  
and crowded me for food,  
forgiving me when I gave him  
paper pellets from my mouth.  
He was neither chromatically proud  
nor humble. He was and will continue.

23/1/14 - 11/5/14

### **Mermaid Mysti**

Beneath the surface, currents drive her.  
She can't calm till she breaks the skin's tension.  
A perfect mirror is formed at the stand of the tide,  
but an aqueous fairground tempts.

Acrylic and felt-tip are metaphors:  
vivid colours, puzzles hidden in clarity.  
The obvious ones  
are rainbows of experience too.

She's precious to her family,  
and her blood is in a contract  
with Depakote. Flooded chakras  
still her spiritual tongues.

Mercurial excursions to the sea  
are fantasies, awakening her mythical self;  
her Devil,  
her God?

26/1/14

**Now if Jesus had been a tree hugger -**

he might have seen grey. Instead  
he set folk up for failure  
and ignored the silence of oak.

Trees unrelentingly let him breathe.  
Yet his Torah cited forbidden fruit.  
Squirrels got it  
and buried life alive.

Thoughts were a shield  
around Saint Paul's love,

and we rape and pillage the truth,  
for what,  
McDonalds freaking Big Macs?

If only Jesus had been a tree hugger;  
Greens would rule.

27/1/14

**Becoming a child-self**

Mine computed  
and didn't go out.

Last Christmas  
I saw a pale reflection,  
whilst watching children's magic tricks.  
Shyness charges.  
Acceptance dissolves ego.

I went full circle:  
drugs and Catholicism,  
then dogs' love exclaimed Eureka.

I smiled at bedroom reclusiveness,  
realising we're together when we're us.

28/1/14

### **Made**

Childlike, Openness,

Truth,

Nakedness,

Oneness,

Courage,

Destiny.

30/1/14

### **Being**

I'm a son.

I'm a brother.

I'm a nephew.

I'm a relative.

I'm diabetic.  
I'm bipolar.  
I'm an allergy sufferer.  
    I'm a pharmacist?

I'm a poet.  
I'm a pianist.  
I'm an art collector.  
    I'm a bohemian.

I'm a pantheist.  
I'm a Green.  
I'm a vegetarian.  
    I'm a hippy.

Most of all,  
    I am.

1/2/14

### **Solitude**

Art is the loner's opium.  
They create to live;  
living to create.  
If one distant connection  
is made through feelings;  
via visuals, music or verse;  
existence is momentarily saved.

It's a gut feeling,  
when Bach's spirituality  
no longer nulls the truth.  
Apparent isolation  
displays a swastika  
and jars with kind acts.

Vocal bloating traps barrages.  
My neighbour mirrored me,  
alone and full to vocal chords.  
Then his bins ceased to emerge.

He'd been steeped in non-permanence.

3/2/14

### **A difficult letter**

Dear Dave,

I don't know how to start  
so I'll just blurt it out. I loved you  
like a brother...

- Hmmm, leave the jugular alone.

Dear Dave,

I'm not great at writing letters  
at the best of times,  
and when I'm so marginalised  
and not given a shit of...

- Hmmm, offensive.

Dear Dave,

Would you do me a favour  
and ring me some time. I think  
we could be mates again.  
Did you see United last week? LOL  
what about that own-goal?

- No. Tangential, begging, strange.

Dear Dave,

I guess I'll make this the last letter that I write to you. It's a difference of class between us. I went to a comp and you went to a public school. We look at one another through fairground mirrors. I thought time was invested, but the shares crashed. Remember how I'd have taken the rap for you? You'll struggle to find that. Anyway, no greater love, as the Bible says. Remember me if you start to sink. Your friend,  
John

- Bingo.

4/2/14

### **The women**

I don't know what happened to us.  
We were like the sea: high then low,  
yin and yang. It was a never-ending cycle  
of springs and autumns. Fall hurt me,  
but it fed the rhythm. I feared a break:  
winter. I needed warmth,  
but naturally ice would come.  
We cycled. Summer was a myth.

Games fooled us. I guess  
you could say we reached a point  
of mutual lying: a masquerade  
without the ball. I was deluded  
to think I mattered, when you consider  
I was a phantom.

I'd even been there before; always.  
I tenuously remained. I must have liked hurting  
and pretending I'm strong.

I can see now.  
My head protects, but my heart  
is so much the boss, and tackles biting reins.

They were ALL the setting sun, only my priority  
is existence so I hide behind curtains.

9/2/14

### **God's hideaway**

You could say it's an oasis.  
It exhales life; love even,  
in the middle of an urban park.  
It feeds soliciting cars, and lungs;  
more importantly, souls.

Yorkshire is a heave away,  
and Cheshire raises eyebrows  
at the trackie bottoms of town.

Amidst the boating lake is a pupil  
sensitive to light, surrounded by blue.  
It's a photosynthesising wood:  
God's gift: God. Some people get it,  
coming from the shit and the fumes,  
smiling on passing strangers.

The geese magnetise, bathing  
in good karma, as water  
laps against the island.  
Roots are drunk in life.



I thank nature for loving  
even those who miss the point.

10/2/14

### **Talking about The Holme Diet**

“How do you do it?”

“Well it’s a kick in the ass.  
First you want a chronic illness.  
Diabetes is an excellent choice.  
Carbohydrates need lowering,  
they pile it on,  
pumping up blood-sugar,  
but the ironic icing on the cake  
is a change of religious beliefs.”

“So you’re telling me  
to change my religion  
and have a possibly life  
threatening disease?”

“In a nutshell, yes!”

“I believe in Christ.  
Who should take his place?”

“Not who. What.  
Nature is God. Nature is love,  
and to love nature back  
you’ll leave animals alone.  
Vegetarianism strips the pounds off,  
no more fatty meats. For full effect  
go Vegan, say goodbye  
to butter and cheese.”

“So in essence you’re saying  
the secret to losing weight  
is to become a pantheistic,  
diabetic vegan?”

“Simple isn’t it?”

“Why don’t you bugger off?”

“Well I’m sorry you feel that way,  
but it worked for me.  
You can always stop weighing yourself  
and avoid reflective surfaces.”

11/2/14

### **Hypomania**

This may sound bizarre.  
I feel a huge black cloud  
has lifted from my head  
for the first time in my life.

I wonder if I still need meds.  
I think I've grown up at the age of 45.  
I've had to battle with being raised  
by my dad; drugs, alcohol and spending,  
but I’ve had some successes, too: piano.

I wonder if some people  
have tried to prevent me from growing up.  
Jesus taught forgiveness.  
This might be a crazy idea, but I'm calm.  
A psychiatrist said  
I would be feeling better round now.  
I can't decide if it's the meds  
or the fact I've got my head together,  
and my perspective right.  
I need to step out. I'm 45.  
What has happened to me?

12/2/14

### **A beautiful friendship**

You've blown it. I really thought  
I needed you, then it dawned on me  
that there was no you. You  
were a phantom, and I had constructed  
a heart out of rationed messages.

I'd been taken for granted.  
Then I took stock. I wasn't  
prepared to hurt any longer.  
I realised I had a value.  
I'd been cheap. It was my own fault,  
I'd sent out wrong messages,  
shooting myself in the foot. But  
I cope alone now, with strength.  
I've overcome much harder.

You should have offered me  
the charity I gave out.

Damn it, I still think about you,  
just most of the time.

13/2/14

## Two summers ago

I wept. Life  
began to close in.  
Daylight was a veiled bride  
and nighttime was Valium.

Sleep was over fifteen  
thousand reminders  
of my foolish longings.  
I'd woke in company  
four times.

I gradually thawed.  
Life stubbornly moulds,  
dragging its own scruff.

Two summers ago  
metamorphosis began.

I mock lovers  
and religious sheep.

We're levelled,  
that's it:  
furness plumes sinking,  
seeding our arboreal continuance.

20/2/14

## **Legacy**

She was dignified and receptive.  
I kept this secret all my life.  
At times stubborn,  
she could be proud  
with a shield of lies,  
but I loved your mother  
as a friend.

You've found this poem;  
it's for you.  
Protect your heart.  
Don't waste.  
By now you'll know my kindness.  
Discover me.  
I am my verse.

22/2/14

## **Trying to find a niche**

Mass was a factory of robots  
synthesising emotions.

Brainwashed, I didn't make it  
past "hello" in England's church.

Life's a boa.  
I'm going to be the one who smells  
after wheelie-bins repeatedly hide.

Dogs smile at me.  
They're love I say.  
Voluntary walking,  
is a way of tenuously  
connecting to reactions  
that mirror mine.  
I no longer freak  
at my own frown.

Maybe the silence of Quakerism  
could dissolve me.  
I deny Christ's divinity.  
He was a prophet.  
God manifests in trees,  
like Blackley Crem's.

Each month I realise  
a little more love.

23/2/14

### **Spirals**

You spoke little.  
I gaffed.  
We skirted the sun.  
I knew we'd melt,  
sealing the letter of our fate.

We were never cast,  
because a smoke screen formed  
around the flesh our nothingness  
alluded to.

I heard it in your voice.  
That's when I first woke.  
I'm a fool. Give me the blame.  
You can say anything.

If only you had reciprocated more,  
but what was I? Excrement;  
worse, I was electronic.  
We'd never embrace.

I don't know what else to say,  
because clarity's insidious.

My beliefs liven me,  
and my loneliness stems  
from this damned rod  
I construct  
for my own back.  
That's my path.

You'll forgive me  
if I transcend diversion.

25/2/14

### **Afflictive metaphors**

I protect myself with denial.

Hope is a faulty valve. Gas is leaking.  
The turgidity is flammable. I feel  
like lighting a match. The stench  
is sulphurous.

My defense is a rose-bed, but time  
is withering scent sources away.  
Now thorns are prominent.  
I see the flower's real modus operandi,  
and contemplate the spikelet's lust.

Ironically the moods that have ruined me,  
save me, because I never focus long enough  
on truth.

There's time yet. In ten years  
when I'm alone, I may strip  
petals down to reality.

3/3/14

### **Saying goodbye without ever having met**

You didn't know it;  
your "goodnight"  
was a "so long."

I won't lie.  
I'll miss you,  
but you hurt me.  
My head won the toss.

It's pathetic, it's crazy,  
it's sad. I pissed head first  
in a storm, suspecting  
I loved you.

There were moments,  
we can't deny that.  
Fear not, your secrets are safe.



It all went wrong for me: not you:  
the fucking system.  
I didn't mould. I thought  
I'd naturally find a niche.

We passed time.  
That quote I wrote to you  
about letting go; well ...

I'm sure you're Okay.  
I wish the romantic sound  
of "au revoir"  
was physical.

3/3/14

### **Toss a coin?**

I live on my bed:  
Charlie's grandpa Joe.  
I'm Willy Wonka  
with no-one to treat.

My trust  
befriends certainties.

I flirt with thoughts of lithium:  
two strips: bingo.

I realise that nothing will change  
and I sicken with age.

Love doesn't fool me;  
denial does.  
That's good because lies  
sedate.

4/3/14

## **The whole enlightened picture**

I'm losing grip.  
Two years and this:  
we've halved,  
an orange:  
naked, irreconcilable.

The flame died,  
terminally perverting wax  
finally exhaled, through a tear  
heralding blackness.

My company's fragile.  
Lives are an impossible jigsaw.  
Is God a comic,  
or do lies warp the corners  
we try to join?  
I shouldn't risk honesty.  
The puzzle always fragments.

I might as well kiss  
completion goodbye.

19/3/14

## **There's always Dub reggae**

People have problems.  
"Big Daddy Amin"  
causes a wave  
to harmonise my body.

Seated on my bed,  
I ride a tube train.  
The pane is obsidian,  
with sodium light inclusions.  
A hood of fluorescence  
quells my self-pity.

I'm home while folk  
pretend,  
out seeking comfort  
and denying loneliness.

Like a fool I Tweet  
"It's Friday I'm in love."  
In fact everyday's Friday,  
when Monday's perpetual mañana.

There's always Dub.  
This faux-rasta  
is not alone.

12/4/14

### **Terminal draft**

I could smile, even though I reasoned  
that nothing was going to change.  
Traits were hard-coded.

Life was a Heath Robinson fashioned jigsaw.  
Minds were shielded. People  
tended their own confusions.

The first rung was always crowded.  
Mum and dad tried to help, but money  
can't really turn back the clock.  
Society's stragglers were fodder for humiliation.

I projected frowns on the faces  
of quizzical people.  
I hadn't got money to permanently seduce,  
but I realised, that that would be a practical lie.

I was no longer a Christian.  
Devils lived in churches. The left hand  
knew full well about the right.  
I needed the saints I'd pushed away.

The days were sixteen hours too long.  
I was robbed of dreams, lying awake.

Art had been morphine,  
but my tolerance grew.  
I couldn't share my honesty.  
I was too fucking honest,  
that's it in one.  
I was too honest for this bullshit.  
It just didn't work out.

Forgive me.

14/4/14

### **Over the moors**

It was a day to remember: seismic activity  
way off the fault. I was a Vietnam vet'  
infiltrating "libtards." The weather kissed my ass.

In Todmorden Fine Arts "humility" won approval  
by insisting he had money. He was invited upstairs  
to a private collection.

Oils teased. They were a wallpaper of honesty.  
Loyalty was barefaced porn: landscapes  
and world-weary faces: loose images:  
haziness trying to patronise,  
pleas for understanding.  
They offered a path and perversion.  
They were a virgin's lure.

Next stop was Hebden Bridge, to hear, feed  
and forage. Senses risked ravishment,  
and figurative chemicals would find a vein.

“Ten pence” caused magnetism to a flea market entry box.  
This was more of a social. The closest thing to sex  
was a scowling Dirty Dancing DVD, and a 70s  
chrome manicure set.

The pub was rich, grey beards and sandals flocked.  
Children enjoyed liberty. Magazines  
manipulate mothers, who encourage  
moans.

The recital was organic. Noses were rubbed  
often. My cheeks were comforted by sound  
that begged that I wasn't alone.

Over the moors I returned with the Smiths,  
singing out loud, almost dancing with the steering wheel.  
Adrenaline was six litres of petrol, three ten pound notes  
and heart breaking genuineness.

14/4/14

## **You have a job**

I smile and joke.  
She says, “Are you having your egg?”  
Nothing changes.  
I ponder.  
Damn it, listen.  
You approximate normality.  
That’s what you’re paid for.  
The barm cakes  
are just a badge differentiating you  
from misfits.  
Don’t you think I don’t know  
how to lie?  
My seclusion tests you.

Elsewhere baristas,  
newsagents of propaganda  
and checkout folk, interface  
with my transiency.  
I entertain.  
Ask for a job though  
and my face doesn’t fit.

23/4/14

## **Mourning**

Her memory was wick. Then pfft,  
you woke and realised it had been three days.  
It shocked you at first that she could evaporate.

You’d made a point of saying a rosary every Saturday,  
at the crematorium where you said goodbye. It’s your religion.  
You don’t know what it’s for, other than rekindling.

It took eighteen months to end daily remembrance.  
She was often quoted. It's Okay that your guilt  
has been pacified. You sold her Fender guitar.  
She lives in your verse.

What kills most is Strauss.  
She sang his final Last Song.

23/4/14

### **Hermit**

Time breaks smiles  
on milestone photographs.  
22 carat happiness is nibbled.  
Damn protracted familiarity.

Everywhere it's the same.  
The masquerade denies human hurt.

If abstractionists painted days  
he could hide in idiosyncrasy,  
but realist's transparency  
is grit in his shoe.

Everyone's confusions are waves out of phase.  
This madness averages to perfect tedium.  
Society calls these comfort-zones normality.

The longer he stares at polaroid smiles,  
the deeper his disdain.  
Masks are temporary fantasies.

23/4/14

## **Sarcasm**

Yellow and purple flora  
herald the brightening of affect.  
A sunshine carpet divides the carriageways;  
ahh, England in spring,  
when life promises  
and doesn't exit unseen.

Summer dress turns heads.  
Hearts excite  
at mid-afternoon.

Lucid words iron foreheads,  
oops, complexity's coming on.

Ray-Bans are out.  
Sunset is tempting car hoods down.  
Next stop summer, life is good.

Feathers clothe cheeping chicks.  
Temptation flirts, inches above knees.

25/4/14

## **What it is**

I'll write  
To make purpose.

Ironic states aren't fun when they're  
Stoic reality.

She has gone. I  
Have adapted existentially.  
I think life is lived  
Thoughtlessly adrift.

25/4/14



## Transition

### Day one

Waking early, the first thing is to see  
if I'm Facebooked or Tweeted.  
I've got that newfangled Internet Addiction Disorder.  
I don't work, so I drink coffee then walk.  
I say hello to everybody.  
Those who don't catch my eye haven't realised,  
that we're all navigating this confusion called self.  
The sooner we sense commonality,  
the sooner we smile.

### Day two

This is like day one, only I can't afford Costa.  
The boating lake woman thinks my pepsi is beer.  
I say, "I'm a tee-total nonsmoker."  
Her husband asks if I'm a virgin. The remainder  
is spent enjoying music and surfing the web.  
I "meet" this new online poet.  
I'm happy.

### Day three

I visit town. Despite being broke,  
I buy a box-set of AC/DC and listen all day.  
I get excited and spam Facebook with track names.  
My neighbours "rock" through a thin wall.

In the morning it clicks.  
I haven't thought about her for three days.  
I realise with guilt, then acceptance,  
that I've stopped mourning.  
I recognise, that I've mourned  
for the past eighteen months.

28/4/14

## Extreme café impressions

I don't get how people don't see pretension  
is worth pounds.

It wasn't until I'd got in that I thought,  
"it'll be Okay ..."

Fred Perry and Ralph Lauren  
had shares.

Table service and an entrance greeting  
feed extortion.

Hiring robots, maximises punters' perceived self-importance,  
drawing designer dress. Sadism and masochism abound.

The coffee is good. At two quid an "Americano"  
(I call it filter coffee) it should be.

85p at the park; they talk. They treat me good.  
It's not the warm drink, but the warm smile.

Standing out in my M-65, army cap, TESCO bag, beard and -  
jeans,  
I look like a hobo. It's character.

If they were down the JobCentre they'd learn to smile.  
People don't see the shit.

We all hurt. At some point we get ill. We lose parents.  
We might have to rebuild identities. We are betrayed.

I supped the dregs: there'll be no more.  
Did I confirm my own biases?

2/5/14

## Town

High heels and skirt skirting  
her bum, leather jacket on,  
she's advertising lies.  
No wonder men forget shopping needs.

T-shirts proudly reveal tattoos:  
the usual curly-wurlies  
and barbed wire bicep badges.

I wear sandals. Nike and Adidas  
steal sweat this spring sizzler.

A couple emerge  
with the Daily Mirror.  
Clarkson and Peaches  
snigger.

Doc Martens, exotic piercings  
and pseudo sophistication  
rape impressionable  
young lefties.

I feel sick: sick of hype.  
I want to throttle the pope  
for failing. Drop dead gorgeous  
lipstick lesbians with cleavage  
in hysterics, seduce me for three seconds.  
I frown as we pass.

I look like a Vietnam vet:  
"Travis Bickle." With my chin up  
I'm mistaken for a proud prude.

Later I startle at 2a.m.  
having foolishly thought about life.

3/5/14

## The story of my life

Did I mention confusion?

It chokes  
weeding its way  
through the garden.

Summertime got shorter every year.  
That was when the fruit  
was most throttled.

It took a while to realise  
that everything was seasonal.  
Pain wasn't permanent.

It was too late though.  
I'd hidden.

Confusion was multiplied  
by the sexual imperative.  
What was left  
after all the best years had rotted  
was recursive fertiliser.

So did I tell you about confusion?

It embraced me after 45 years.  
We signed a pact.  
I sat at the head  
at the Mad Hatter's tea party,  
realising that my concept of normal,  
was the same as everybody else's:

madness.

9/5/14

## **Innocent liaisons**

Jimmy Savile, Rolf Harris,  
Stuart “fucking” Hall; they’ve stripped us  
of credibility. Candour now is bunco.

Innocent liaisons on social media  
can be dangerous beginnings.  
Mothers vet the lot.

People who don’t even masturbate  
are automatically feared. Whatever happened  
to chastity? It’s not so bloody queer.

People are tired of judgement.  
Trust is prehistoric. “Paedos” are social terrorists;  
worst nightmares of them all.

Bomb scares on Facebook;  
lock your daughters up.  
Sex is the biggest scam.

With innocent liaisons  
of loners on networks,  
society’s getting more insular.

12/5/14

## **Carpet-bombing Twitter at 2a.m.**

Sleep is elusive. His bed is his abode.  
Even if she was still there, he’d sleep alone.  
So he wants to connect by spreading horse shit  
on the internet.

He pipes on about isolation.  
It's hardening his habit.  
He doesn't think he'll fill  
his bed.

He spews psychology on Twitter,  
and is followed by a Californian  
forensic doctor with a website.  
He thinks he's real.

He gets one "Like" for many Tweets;  
no comments. He doesn't give a monkey's.  
He wakes and meditates for hours,  
on his singly occupied double bed.

13/5/14

### **With this ring ...**

I took it off today:  
the ring that I proudly wore  
for eight years.  
I had to write this poem  
to mark the time  
that my message faded.  
I date writing.

I don't know if the woman  
in the café has a BF.  
I think I'm BS.  
I'll talk in the hope that she's  
curious.  
What about my baggage?

I've taken it off whilst writing.  
It's strange.  
I'll put it with hers.  
They'll sleep.

I could've waited till exactly two years had passed,  
but that would be  
clinical.

14/5/14

### **Night & Day**

I'm being massively me,  
sitting writing  
a poem in Night & Day.  
I feel drawn to a barmaid.  
She smiles. She wrote  
the name of a singer I mentioned  
on a creased beer mat.  
I hope she digs him.

She learned I was jobless.  
She knows I don't smoke or touch beer  
and I eat vegetarian breakfasts.  
I talk when I can; wondering.

I've got baggage, maybe she has too.  
She could be engaged.

People like my verse and piano.  
I'm bohemian.

Why don't I drown her in art?

14/5/14

## Self-inflicted hospital visits

Alcohol, lithium,  
energy drinks,  
put you on wards;  
for toast and porridge.

Acute alcoholic poisoning  
is always an excess.  
Moderation isn't something  
you're blessed with.

Diabetic sugar binges,  
comas can be had.  
What the hell's with Relentless,  
and puking flavoured milk?

Cordon bleu out of the house;  
excessive consumption  
presents emergency dining;  
plastic forks.

Mood disorders and drugs aren't safe.  
Two strips of lithium  
could be a coroner case.  
A little is a holiday.

Weekends in Crumpsall  
are boring as hell,  
after psychotropic drugs.  
Poor Michael Jackson,

he over reserved.

18/5/14



## **Degrees of engagement**

I think you are nice.  
I'm on a mission  
to find out your name.  
I told a Facebook friend  
I didn't know it,  
but I could picture your smile.

Did you get down to the library?  
Can we go  
for a coffee, maybe cake?

Oh, you have a boyfriend.  
He's a lucky man.

19/5/14

## **Menstruating Mona Lisa**

Carina Ubeda's a bloody cunt catalogue.  
Five years of vagina stained Paños, highlights  
monthly headaches, mood-swings,  
PMT.

Theoretically everything is art.  
She had tampon and pad allergies,  
so stuffed snot-rag absorbers intimately,  
hoarding five years of blood.

Cage composed silence. Rothko abstracted.  
Everything has to be done.  
Apples dangle representing ovulation.  
This was potential life.

People sniff these disinfected stains,  
perverts are “on the rag” connoisseurs.  
Carina’s flow was shame.  
Her periods were for-fucking-ever.

If people twigged she was stressfully heavy,  
she felt an ugly bitch.  
She’s exorcised that delusion with expression,  
stretching bounds of normality, throttling taboo.

21/5/14

### **Bizarre metaphors**

You were tired: a toothpaste tube longing  
to live in the bin, squeezed of every last  
remaining essence of identity. You wanted  
blood to flow to feed your brain’s hunger.

Walls sentenced, whilst life pulsed outside.  
If only you weren’t a leper, a soul-mate  
with curves, heart and a predilection for honesty,  
might paint naked implication of your hurt:

your protracted adolescence and carrion personality.  
It’s Okay though. If you can find a Barbie doll  
with natural tits and foundation disdain, you’re sorted.  
Perverts parade the mall, blinded by gloss. Poisoned

by hype, you need to focus. Apply for an allotment.  
It’s a stretch away: your purpose. Then dominoes  
sprint. People procreate, teach, steal. Don’t think,  
we’re all confused. Go out, get a new tube.

30/5/14

## This is where he lives

He extracts details from the China-man  
in the takeaway,  
who'll show happy jpegs of a new girl  
one day.

The Thai/Malaysian venture  
is going down.  
Extra cars round his gaff  
have headed to town.

He fed a tramp one day.  
The twat never recognises him.  
A smile would be nice.  
They're both on the margin.

He's lived here for twenty years,  
nodding at a bachelor who once spoke.  
He waxed lyrical about Rachmaninov.  
That single's a super bloke.

Repeat offenders risk a grand  
for leaving dog shite.  
It's a feckin minefield  
for people returning at night.

He doesn't know what happened  
to untaxed, unhelmeted, tear-arsers.  
Maybe Dibble coerced leads,  
from yobbos outside the bookmaker's.

Billy's Okay swearing  
after selling extortionate Coke.  
He used to sell him Jameson's  
when he drank and tabs were smoked.

He's felt like crying in the bakery.  
They only talk when he's high.  
His moods confuse.  
When he's low no-one tries.

The benefits mother of six  
murders a twenty deck every day.  
Sky's available. Keep your noses out.  
Everyone here has their way.

31/5/14

### **Monday morning meetings**

Social media apps are ready.  
A four mile mission  
through urban scenery, diesel,  
lead-free fumes and litter  
beckons.

You're no different to the grey bearded man,  
with pen and Daily Mail in hand; head down,  
bum on bench and time an abstract concept.  
You're looking at a mirror,  
but silver's aged. What did Hesse say?  
'Wisdom cannot be imparted?'

It's time to talk.  
Your contemporaries earn for kids  
and Mercedes Benz' sake.  
You smile at strangers. A black  
woman beams as if available.  
She's Okay, but possibly  
Christian.

Some well-dressed bum  
claims he's been out all night.  
His scarred head looks peppered with six shot.  
"Can you phone for me?"  
You unload 47p in his clean palm;  
... weirdo.

In the bar you display verbal skills  
that ought to land you a job, but she works.  
She frowns for a while, till you've had your one to one  
foreplay. Her mate can cook veg. You ask if he's up  
to a breakfast. That charm's extra egg and toast.  
All the while pictures upload.

At twenty you thought people thought about you.  
At forty you didn't give a shit.  
If you make it to sixty you'll realise,  
that in people's view, you were the shit you never gave.

2/6/14

### **Same scenery, same scenario**

We're stuck on the corner of Broadway  
and my street. Boringly you never avert  
your stare. It's worst at night. Sodium  
floats like a slumped head in a noose;  
life expired in circumstances. You  
snigger for each day you remind me  
of my locale: corner of Broadway out  
of town. The trendy folk are younger,  
in frigging Chorlton. Sometimes  
I briefly stare back with a blank mind.  
Time nulls. You're easily turned on;  
haha; sorry.

I singly occupy my bed. Nothing personal,  
but the kink in your neck isn't fatal enough.  
You're my company and I hate  
your loyalty. I could easily find  
a new lamppost  
elsewhere.

4/6/14

### **Relocating to Wetherspoons**

I am in dialog seas,  
cornered unobtrusively,  
observing, feeling a part.  
Smiles can level impression.  
We're beer and other poison.

Seduction tires, in faithless  
masquerades, where flirts purvey  
the manager's daily bread.  
Fair-play, parochialism,  
and candour, null derision.

Sunday; charming a waitress,  
in Grossman form:

“It's first rate.”

I radiate true statement.  
Humour is not plainspoken.  
Tomorrow I could return.

8/6/14

## **Same scenery, same scenario**

We are stuck on the corner:  
Broadway and M.L.E. You  
boringly never avert  
your stare at the witching-hour.  
Sodium floats. Its slumped skull  
is noosed and its life is tired.

You snigger for each day I'm  
reminded of my address:  
the corner of Broadway out  
of town. I should follow trend.  
Chorlton is where I could doss.  
Sometimes I stare back at you.

I have a blank mind, time nulls.  
You turn on with ease. I laugh.  
I'm practically at rest.  
It's nothing personal: kinks  
don't constrict your life enough.  
I should find a new street light.

11/6/14

## **One day when someone says "alright?" ...**

Out on a garden chair  
with a vacant house,  
I recall "lamppost verse" I wrote.  
Would someone capture me?

Twenty years are a tattoo: my future  
echoes these semis.  
One person has spoken.  
This reminds me of Platt Bridge.

Then it dawns:  
me and the bus-shelter-dweller,  
mirror, even to the pepsi.  
Heck, the 1-5-9 stops here.

Getting back, she's slim:  
the dog walker who spoke, but she's five kids.  
Perspex screens her. Hands are banned.  
"I'm fine," and other lies.

14/6/14

### **Booking a Facebook holiday**

The cyanide 15th of June  
was a second anniversary.  
Ironically, you'd forgotten  
remembrance words.  
Their reading was flooring.

You asked for support  
from a vacuous text screen:  
teenage fingers were confused.  
What the fuck were you thinking?

You wrote statuses  
to share the way you mourned.  
You pondered, not knowing  
how isolation would feel.  
Parents are time limited.



It was Father's day.  
Child separation appeared  
as a leak from Hades.  
Well punctuated Oxford English  
straightened your posture.  
Children were the blurred  
heat hazed horizon.

The next day  
in your front garden at dusk,  
you "selfied" and existed publicly:  
rebel.

It dawned that the doorbell scared you,  
and your phone was 90% mum.  
So you deactivated Facebook  
because your heart wasn't logical.

17/6/14

### **Extortionate fashions**

Tattoo, tattoo;  
I know my brain.  
I'm going to let people see it.

I'm going to make  
an irreversible decision.  
I'm going to buy personality.

Surely if I have  
curly-wurlies or barbed  
wire bicep badges,  
I'll be praised down the pub  
and considered cool.  
Ken will have transformed me.

I'll be a sheep.  
I'll post a Facebook status  
saying I NEED another tat.

It will be hard  
to go under the pin.  
I'll literally  
be a martyr.

I know my brain.  
I know my fucking brain.  
I'm going to tattoo my forehead.

You can't top that.  
I'm the daddy now.  
When I hit sixty I'll be proud.

I could have been an artist  
or a cellist, or a saint,  
but I wanted to line Ken Fleck's pockets.  
I'm fucking cool. I've got a tiger in my tank.  
Your lack of ink must be boring.

26/6/14

### **Sandra**

came into his life by surprise.  
He did not know he was looking  
for a pal. "Not a date, just mates  
hanging out together," he said.

He could not have guessed that he'd have  
attracted her through his writing.  
His heart was on both of his sleeves.  
His special madness was offered.

In time oil paintings and graphite  
might have been vivid mirroring,  
but bipolar raised depressions.  
She saw his pills by her wrist scarred.

Loyalty makes a real smile  
and exposure's harmonising.  
He spouted quotes: Hermann Hesse's  
"Wisdom cannot be imparted..."

He hoped his verse would radiate.  
Excitement could be deceiving  
even with clearest aloneness.  
He composed before the weekend.

\* \* \*

On meeting her he took surprise  
because he'd not been expecting,  
short, young, casual leather looks.  
He did not know what he wanted.

They went to the Travs' for some Coke.  
She was fair by not beer drinking,  
and they sat outside in sun rays.  
In little time he was settled.

They chatted for what seemed an age.  
After a chance old friends meeting  
they headed off to Wetherspoons.  
It was without spark, but relaxed.

She grew on him to be toothsome.  
She said it: "what are you thinking?"  
Women query that one at times,  
so his geekiness was mentioned.

“Sandra” was predestined to be  
happy.

They’d no problem bonding.  
He was meant to upload poems.  
She believed that things were fated.

4/7/14 - 17/11/14

### **Just talking**

I’ve nowhere better to be  
than forty yards  
from a climbing frame,  
slide and swings.

I’m peering through weeping  
willows, like some sort  
of paedophile. Light nights  
attract son and daddy on bikes.

I could have been a daddy  
if my chemicals didn’t imbalance.  
They don’t see  
my characterless hatchback.

I’ve no excuse for loitering  
on my jack in this lay-by.  
I’ll make a mobile call  
soon.

It would be nice to chat  
face to face with her,  
but isolation ironically  
comforts.

They're all the same:  
people. Don't you see? It's us  
and every fucker else.  
That takes the worry away.

I'm back to watching this average life.  
I write poems and walk dogs. One day  
I'd like someone to level with me  
about this playground metaphor.

8/7/14

### Carolyn

was different from Sandra.  
He knew that she was smarter.  
Maybe she would understand  
the bullshit wisdom he quotes.  
He had no time to convince  
anybody to love him.  
They either took it or not.  
"Wisdom can't be imparted."  
It was perhaps a folly.

He did not care for the Kung  
recorder. She could have it.  
There was more to life than that.

He tries to connect through verse.  
Maybe Carolyn would dig.  
He told her that it had clicked.  
What? is the golden question.  
It would sound foolish to her.  
That's the whole point of it though.  
We're all alone: totally.  
We deny it, but it frees.  
Embracement gives empathy.

It's all in his bleeding verse;  
that way he communicates.

9/7/14

### **Kath**

It was like I had known her  
for something like forever.  
I was a storyteller.

Pride was revealed in a verse.  
Sandra's my favourite one.  
I said it just came to me.

"I write poems and walk dogs,"  
I said. That's how it extends.  
They're my only LinkedIn skills.

I made her wedding thingy.  
I was with that twat, Andy.  
We didn't mingle, really.

I liked her music choices.  
They included Butterworth's  
stuff. I offered "Richard Strauss."

Kath really reached to me.  
I'm isolated. Maybe  
it builds character. She's nice.

12/7/14

### **My three words**

I could cry.  
We're all alone.

It's not fair.  
Embrace your aloneness.

Gimme a break.  
Why'd she die?

Opportunists are twats.  
I want connection.

Everyone is hurt.  
Religions are lies.

Dogs are love.  
Everything turns around.

16/7/14

### **Hiding in the corner**

Her brow feathers  
some consciousness out.  
It's love tainted:  
instincts polluted.  
It's a boy girl thing.  
They accommodate.

He surveys compulsions  
whilst accepting aloneness.  
His pen is company,  
stuffing his face with its flavours;  
documenting the "normality"  
that his social model excludes him from.

The band's shite:  
stereo sound, stereotypical stunt.  
He'd like to kill the singer,  
because he lies.  
Volume perverts,  
it's mortar.

The blokes want to fuck.  
The women want to talk.  
The landlord's satisfied,  
surveying on an end-of-bar perch;  
armed with a half  
and an antidote to smugness.

He writes one last stanza.  
Weeds are bluebell-like assassins.  
There's incense in the air,  
but the beer's unconsecrated  
and no-one offers peace.  
Everything's religion.

His mantra is "embrace your aloneness."

18/7/14

## **Julie**

I felt something historic; nostalgic  
for Julie.

She dated an older lad  
way back.

She's a grandma now.  
I'm just saying.



Julie read well in English lit.  
I sketched banana men.

I'm always one feckin step behind  
in life.

If only I was thirty without CV holes,  
I'd be on a winner.

After decades we met  
on Facebook and Twitter.

I wrote poems.  
I didn't know Julie's dad did.

Paper scraps in Malta  
were his last verse she read.

They were poignant.  
I bet Julie reads them when she feels like crying.

People find methods of coping with loss.  
Guilt can tease though.

Julie will always want contact with her dad.  
Some days it must break through.

25/7/14

## I can't ... I can ...

I can't dance.

I can't sing.

I can't cook.

I can't earn.

I can't travel.

I can't relate.

I can't date.

I can't wed.

I can't fuck

I can't breed.

I can't progress.

I can't start.

I can't part company with my past.

I can play.

I can write.

I can shite.

I can do alright if you give me a break.

I can waste.

I can taste it.

I can speak my mind when I'm high.

I can post defamatory statements about myself online.

I can destroy my reputation.

I can add to my own fucking isolation.

I can do a lot of things.

25/7/14

**I thought “Capriciousness” then “Untitled” then this**

I knew my mood had changed,  
because I visited the crematorium  
for two consecutive days.  
I’d been high for months.

She was the only one who understood.  
Many liked the ups.  
She preferred the downs.  
I wanted to be me.

I spent my ISA.  
I tried to date.  
I spread my poems  
and offered my house.

I woke.  
It was gone, pfft, just like that.  
I surveyed the battleground:  
the people I’d hurt and deceived; not least me.

It’s just another day. It’s my drama.  
I asked, “what is my essence?”  
That’s carried through.  
That’s me.

31/7/14 @ Blackley Crematorium

**Michelle -**

and I were on a fast track  
to somewhere with no return.

The only thing I’d not said,  
was there had been a someone.

We'd never met in decades,  
but did the sex-talk thingy.

I had not wanted to stain  
my new self that had been formed.

A line should be drawn under,  
my bullshit foolish past bones.

Most people have a story  
that's not told on the first day.

We'd spent mostly forever  
talking to one another.

We clicked at the first moment.  
I knew that something was right.

She'd have to teach me cooking  
and make me a left wing man.

I'd teach her verse and music.  
We'd suss out being parents.

The kid could be bipolar  
but totally amazing.

Goodness comes to folk who wait.  
Michelle took most of my life.

11/8/14

## match.com

I didn't want to end up alone.  
I thought "six months." It would work or not.  
At least when I was sixty,  
I'd not say, "I should have gone on match.com"

I took the honest tack after messaging Kate:  
a post op transgender female.  
Her candour precipitated my bipolar,  
unemployed status:  
"I write poems and walk dogs,"  
it's hardly the big time in some women's eyes.  
I'll never drive a BM-fucking-W  
or regularly holiday in the sun.

Honesty increased isolation.  
So I opted to *show* humour:  
the moustache was negotiable.

\* \* \*

I wasn't going to pass on the wink.  
Despite her profile scaring me,  
I suggested a date.  
I rang. We chatted, texted, Facebooked, all that shit.  
I thought I'd blown it by revealing my illness,  
but she was crazy as well.

\* \* \*

On meeting her I beamed.  
She appealed to my animal side.  
Dollyd74 and Holmesy just went BAM.  
I was soon scared by our wildfire.  
I had no intention of dousing it.  
A lifetime is a long time to wait.

17/8/14

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A lifetime is a long time to wait.

17/8/14

## Thalia and Melpomene

Your face has an angle  
that's intimately found,  
causing features to seduce.  
I'm privy to degrees  
whilst unknotting a lock.

Your eyes confuse:  
portals to your soul.  
They're like those bath-bombs you buy  
forming liquid chameleons:  
whirlpools.

Your nose will not be ignored.  
My kiss pacifies it.  
With money I'd seek perfection,  
but purity is infinite  
like the promise I wager.

Your lips are Chopin's sadness  
in e minor:  
a prelude ended  
in dead silence:  
a gamble with Grendel's mother.

7/9/14

## Michelle from past perspective

I chauffeured her all over  
with four small pots and her three.  
It was like job exposure.

She hummed Thin Lizzy one day.  
At that point I decided  
new mobile sounds were called for.

Dog Angel's future challenged.  
Michelle's five cats were royal.  
A meeting was no option.

Michelle changed some of my rooms,  
but yellow drainpipes cowered.  
Neutrality is boring.

I'd only fished with male friends.  
Her maggot jokes were silent.  
I did not mention fish smells.

At-Dolly-dee-seven-four  
is fit as *ouwt*, I tweeted.  
My lens captured an angle.

We had a massive secret  
that needed to go public.  
Cast iron was not offered.

Napalming's not a good tack.  
Had carpet-bombs been mentioned  
would "Hoover?" have been brought up?

Her cousin would have shot me  
if I'd caused tears to be shed.  
I was not masochistic.

You've got to embrace chances.  
They might not surface two times.  
Our start was manic wildfire.

25/9/14



## Angel

is a dog:  
disturbed  
canine, ASBO, punk.  
We love her loose wires.  
She has extra needs.  
I thought I'd stretch  
my neck out for her.

She ate my Apple Mac lead:  
sixty five quid on top of Michelle's slippers;  
anything but the Ox Blood ten hole-er Docs.

I don't get the jogger destruction gene,  
or the random furry death squad triggers.  
I think she'll require understanding.  
You can get a 'dog' MSc.

How she did the Houdini  
was a sleight of paw. She just wanted  
to tower over terriers.  
Dogs have egos too.

I pretend to eat her tripe.  
I wonder if she's smart.  
I'm the top dog, however,  
at bedtime she divides us: Gooseberry.

She has a two ton dog chain.  
With skinny jeans and leather  
I walk her looking like a CHAV.  
I don't give a monkey's what locals  
make of Angel. She has the best excuse  
for how she randomises.  
Once a stray, now a daddy's girl;  
expect the odd surprise.

25/9/14

## A nothing poem to say I love you

He said his word was tangible, not tenuous.  
Only facts would do.

He said she was loved  
and massively valued. (Yeah, he's talking about you.)

He said, "she's not that lucky" to the salesgirl  
when earrings were offered too.

He said to himself,  
"she'd understand, fuck me, phew."

He said too much one night  
and in the morning made her toast and a brew.

He said he's pretty lucky  
to have a woman and a dog, even if it does chew.

Once he wanted a gun  
and a bullet or two.

He doesn't normally rhyme.  
He thought bollocks, he'd swear and have a do.

\* \* \*

Hope you like the necklace, Michelle.  
It's 9 carat white gold with a freshwater pearl. It's for you.

It didn't cost a mint. I thought because I didn't buy the Del Boy,  
I'd buy it with the money I didn't go through.

I love you x

1/10/14

## Why not get engaged today?

He shouldn't have blurted "new woman,"  
so he figured a solitaire was due.  
He's spontaneous like that,  
a four times wed jeweller sussed one; that guy knew.

He thought about announcing it in a poem  
in next month's open mic.  
He recalled "Diamonds are Forever;"  
figuring his piano would set things up right.

He was kind of nervous  
and even fluffed a note or two,  
but after playing the piece  
he gave her the sparkler to view.

She was speechless.  
Some things just feel right.  
It was a no-brainer for him.  
The classy quarter carat was a delight.

Dollyd74 and Holmesy just went BAM,  
he said that once before.  
He's a poem writer. He shows things.  
She already had a key to the door.

They went round to the Whitegate.  
It was perhaps a little surreal,  
but after parents were all told,  
calmer anxieties made it feel

perfect. They were going to wed.

9/10/14

## Why not get engaged today?

He shouldn't have said "new woman,"  
so he figured ice was due.  
He's spontaneous like that,  
Oscar the jeweller knew.

He could announce in a verse  
in next month's open mic show.  
"Diamonds are forever"  
on piano, was more now.

He was a little nervous  
and even fluffed some playing,  
but after he had finished  
chose carbon aided saying.

She was totally speechless.  
Her face communicated.  
For him this was without doubt.  
The classy stone succeeded.

Match-dot-com Holmesy; course  
Dolly-D-Seventy-Four,  
were no longer avatars.  
They had a real humour.

They went to the Whitegate.  
It was somewhat surreal,  
but after parents heard things  
his calmer nerves made it feel

perfect; ceremony next.

12/10/14

## **Dollyd74 and Holmesy**

We would like to invite you,  
that's Michael and Dolly-Dee,  
with a syllabic poem  
wrote by the Holmes; yours truly.

He put a little rhyme there  
to make it sound popular.  
It has a syllable count,  
it helps to make it tighter.

Technicalities over,  
it's time to get to the gist.  
Will you come to our wedding?  
We'll try not to disappoint.

15/10/14

## **My life**

I have a fiancée.  
I have a dog.  
I have writing thoughts.  
I have piano technique.

I have feet that kill  
and moods.  
I have sleep;  
mostly.

I have no job.  
I have time.  
I don't do time.  
Sometimes I rhyme.

I have faith in folk.  
I have hope.  
I have love.  
I have a big share;

hope my luck holds out;  
hope I'm socially aware  
in my life,  
with a wife.

17/10/14

### **Your invitation**

You've got this invite  
because you are one  
of our odd pieces.

With timely delight,  
puzzles are near done  
with these last changes.

We waited a stint  
and bended to some  
trust to have chances.

We'll try for a chat  
and may crack a pun,  
but need arrivals.

So will ya come mate?  
It could be good fun.  
Tell us your movements?

17/10/14

## **It's that time of year ...**

Christmas is coming  
so we thought we'd send  
this MoonPig thingy.  
It means you're a star,  
and we want it known  
that our lives improve,  
when your life goes well.

We hope this season  
will bring you good health.  
We trust you'll be spoiled  
and we'll meet up soon.

Take care and have love.

Michelle and Michael;  
oh, and half a zoo!!!

25/10/14

## **Bollox**

(Me) Hope Michelle's alright.  
I'm fucked tonight.

Gone to bed earlier  
with my sore molar.

Spent obscenely today  
from my lack of pay

on a vibrant scene,  
my abstract has been

in pride of place,  
till we shifted it to a less in your face space.

Thought I'd rhyme gone one.  
I'll be kipping again soon.

I can hear Michelle's hair fan;  
better end this now, that's my plan.

See you. Should I post this shite?  
Oh what the hell, alright .....

\* \* \*

(Michelle) In bed at last.  
It's one o'clock past.

Very tired now,  
but seem to be in bed with a sow?

Dog is snoring like a train.  
So tomorrow will be one big drain :(

\* \* \*

(Me) Fair play,  
touché.

26/10/14

### **You sleep. I write this love poem**

It's six a.m. and I kiss you,  
easy as scales ripple away,  
tenderly, and diamonds say  
"I love you," and we are tighter.





I could not resist counting  
the syllables all the time.  
I said I was technical.  
This bit's sarcastic; clothes line?

So will you come to our do?  
I'll probably crack some jokes.  
Michelle will look fantastic.  
I'm the luckiest of blokes.

You are a special person,  
that is why we humbly ask  
that you get on some glad rags.  
Don't worry, it's not a masque.

We hope you like a nosh up,  
and a little sentiment.  
The venue's nice and laid-back.  
It is not a marquee tent.

This stanza's sort of random.  
It might make you lose the plot.  
Haberdashers work for Next.  
You'll like Michael's threads a lot.

The seven verses, have strict  
seven syllables per line.  
Seven days complete the week,  
rainbow seven, full, divine.

7/11/14

### **Your wedding invitation**

I thought you'd like this rhyming,  
in couplets just like pairing.

I could not resist a sum,  
to make this metre succumb

you with its words to our do.  
Michelle will be a hit view.

You are a special person.  
So we need your name down on

our guest list for the venue.  
Please choose food from the menu

and respond A.S.A.P.  
so we can work out money.

The number seven implies  
completion. That's like our tie.

10/11/14

### **Pantheist predicament**

Could you please Teresa or  
Karol Józef Wojtyła?  
Thoughts are opium in love.  
Canine purity forgives.  
That is humbling stubbornness.  
A rooted slogger breathes waste  
for our sakes. I think that's love.

12/11/14

## **The groom's speech (first idea)**

I am quite a joker,  
but underneath I'm a serious guy.  
So I wondered whether to joke  
or cry?

I thought I'd do a poem  
as if in open-mic.  
I'd get stuff out;  
sorted, it'd be right.

These stanzas dart all over,  
that's how I operate.  
match.com's worth trying.  
Thank God for our first date.

I was very lucky  
to meet Michelle Crompton.  
In truth my life has just begun.  
That's a wait I reckon.

It wasn't just a picnic.  
There was stress for us,  
but we both wanted success  
so didn't mind the fuss.

I'll try to pass my happiness  
to everyone I meet,  
but especially my gorgeous bride.  
(This is corny) I've whisked her off her feet.

Do you like my rhyming?  
It isn't easy to be publish.  
Sorry I'm diverging.  
I'm random. How was the fish?

Thank you all for coming.  
You're stuck with me for life.  
Take a consolation,  
that you're not being my wife.

I said she'd be a hit view;  
my bride, and I was right.  
We're staying overnight here  
in subtle candle light.

I've got some friends from way back,  
they help my life agree,  
with my concept of myself.  
I guess they make me, "me."

Newer friends are precious,  
they're hard to come by.  
Mine are quite eclectic.  
One thought I was a spy.

Michelle's friends in the early days,  
helped to ease my mind.  
With people like that in her life,  
I knew Michelle was kind.

My family's come along too.  
My brother's my best man.  
Families aren't picnics.  
We do the best we can.

Michelle's dad's a nice bloke.  
When he shook my hand  
I thought it had a meaning.  
Was it man to man?

The rest of Michelle's family  
are offered my friendship.  
Sometimes I'm a plonker.  
I planet travel on spaceship.

That bit got silly.  
I'm going to be banal.  
The next stanza's about fashion  
and shopping in the mall.

What about our outfits,  
do you like my slim-line suit?  
I nearly went for skinny  
and Doctor Marten boots.

You'll have to come to our home,  
all of you, anytime.  
Please don't come together though,  
that would be a swine.

I said I did the odd crack.  
I'm going to end this here.  
I think excessive pepsiMAX  
has made me pretty queer.

19/11/14

### **Non-mainstream**

He's non-mainstream.  
He's got a science degree.  
He's non-mainstream.  
He says "no-one wants me."

He's non-mainstream.  
He's got a creative CV.  
He's non-mainstream.  
He says "he's out of his tree."

He did a little stint  
as a volunteer,  
talking to outcasts  
that society deemed queer.

Once he programmed C  
and other languages,  
tied to a desk,  
eating 11 a.m. sandwiches.

He's non-mainstream.  
He plays Chopin on piano.  
He's non-mainstream.  
He missed the gate labelled narrow.

He's non-mainstream.  
They said, "strip your personality."  
He's non-mainstream.  
He's clinging to actuality.

He figured that he'd get  
the things that he deserved.  
He figured Jackie Wright  
was successful but reserved.

He's over forty years  
and never had a fake tan.  
He drinks Coca-Cola  
likes there's an alcohol ban.

He's non-mainstream.  
He's got a commando knife.  
He's non-mainstream.  
He's an enigma to his wife.

He's non-mainstream.  
He'll write poems for scores.  
He's non-mainstream.  
He wants an income for your chores.

20/11/14

### **Where do the birds go?**

Where do the birds go when they die?  
Where do the birds go from the sky?  
Where do the birds go when they die?  
Where do the birds go; pigeon pie?

Sparrow are scarce and thrushes are rare.  
Ornithologists' notepads are getting bare.  
There must be a place, but I'm unaware.  
Are birds in holes, like the grave of Voltaire?

Where do the birds go when they die?  
Where do the birds go; no bye-bye?  
Where do the birds go when they die?  
Where do the birds go? Magpies get by.

There was pancaked game in my whereabouts.  
Its soul had a chance of infiltrating a mouse.  
I shifted remains to spare the lady of the house,  
from piping out a rant about shooting red grouse.



Where do the birds go when they die?  
Where do the birds go, except on roads?  
Where do the birds go when they die?  
Where is the dead bird's humble abode?

21/11/14

### **And only because he wanted Cairo on his travel CV**

did he leave his friends picking melons near Gaza, and head to Jerusalem. He saw Jaffa Gate markets. Missing the Wailing wall was compromise. His cheap rucksack led to a cheap D.I.Y. string fix. Cairo was fifty dollars in the eighties. Though to be safe he bought cucumber and bread that night. Saving money sleeping rough, he froze with six t-shirts on.

After dawn he nearly missed the coach ride, snatching sleep whilst he crossed the Sinai. A night-time Wimpy brought him homeward, and pyramid magnets lured.

He lowered the camel or horse offering, twenty-five to five pounds, and mounted a mare. Hearing *after we go round pyramids, we go into desert and have good time*, full story eluded, even after four *good time* crescendos, he settled for sweet tea. Morning brought insistence for the museum which stamped his passport, but low funds drew him one day early to hideaway, and chicken salad scraps at Nahal Oz kibbutz.

22/11/14

## Wishing a happy Christmas?

Well friend, is it ironic  
“trims cash” is an anagram  
of Christmas? I reckon so;

all the same, happy Christmas,  
and wallow in reverence  
about godly things like trees!

23/11/14

## Happy Christmas, here's some versE

I'm using this to proclaim.  
It is taking some aplomb.  
You might figure another  
thing is going on; aha.  
There is, it is exotic.  
I should say “like a puzzle.”

To reiterate, Merry  
Christmas. I guess “Ho, Ho, Ho.”  
I'd so much like to see you,  
hopefully in short order.

You might wonder why “aha.”  
Why not call it a jewel?  
I will gift the first one who  
replies without contention,  
who shows they have a good clue  
that I offer depth and fun.  
I could send you a prezzie,  
after all it is Christmas.  
Share my enigmatic words?

26/11/14

## Seeds

I knew our whirlwind would last.  
We'd hit the epicentre.

I gained trust from your sunflower hearts  
that you always offered wearing pyjamas.

My microcosm was novel to you. Even jays  
were won; their beauty fooled.

Robin performs, but frustratingly  
his love's a tease too. Only the stillness  
of an angler can seduce him.

I'd shifted the leaves. They die to foster growth  
on the bed our randomising rescue dog fouls.

Snow is due. Your silhouette will trace  
regularly. I hope it will prosper.

Maybe you will synchronise with spring.  
Last year wrens built in the rusty alarm box  
that not even magpies could infiltrate.

Daffodils form a strong wake from crocuses.  
Monochrome days miss them, till summer's promise  
gifts beyond feeding trays.

Innocence appreciates.  
Right now the seasons are precious.

2/12/14

## **A little stream of consciousness**

You're downstairs about to make egg toasties. I figured I'd write this poem for you. I think I might have "libelled" someone, maybe? The twat had it coming; the Rebel of the North gives it as it is. I diverge; Happy Christmas. (I was giving the card a time context.)

I want to spend every Christmas of my life with you. Maybe I'm crazy, but I'm tired of being out of love. You're the one Michelle. If there's a god, he thought enough is enough when he paired us.

6/12/14

**8/12/14**

I don't care what your job is.  
Twats will be defined by roles.  
I've known you long enough now  
to know that bullshit I quote.  
You have got a good essence.  
It's clear to me whatever.  
I'd still love my feeding girl,  
cat rescuing, rarity  
that God(?) might have given me,  
whatever became of her.

Kindness is a special touch.  
I hate most aspects of life.  
“I write poems and walks dogs.”  
Hope I help my future wife.  
After all, she’s rehearsing  
to be the trouble and strife.

8/12/14

### **Magnetic poem #1**

Sit on my pole.  
Lick it,  
moan.  
Tongue my sausage.  
Finger my butt.  
Live life like  
a woman in love.

10/12/14

### **Magnetic poem #2**

I pictured summer:  
a delirious, enormous friend.  
Frantically, I rose above  
my shadow -  
crushing me to a whisper.

10/12/14

### **A Trevor Grimshaw tribute**

Night train, surging-driving-rain;  
it’s no smoke screen. Gain could come  
if market ploys manifest.

Iron bar; someone's guitar;  
always smoke, there's graphite smoke.  
Captured carbon coughs control.

Church towers, northern powers,  
mills; smoke stained smudges are truth,  
with lone rails, tails: paradox.

B & H? Bells? Something tells  
me, that death and class-divide  
ironically embrace.

16/12/14

### **Michelle and Michael's update**

Four months made their future sealed.  
Choices were like amber drops.  
Each one was a tenderness  
after an initial time.

Clear consciousness was entry  
to their past's: reality.  
Michelle was always autumn.  
She wanted hibernation.

Michael was wet sun colours:  
complete, but for default luck.  
They both wanted happiness.  
Reflections can become fair.

20/12/14

## My annus mirabilis

Twenty fourteen smiled at me.  
It said things would be Okay.  
I turned forty six years old.  
Maybe I developed late,  
but everyone has got fate.

Previously I felt stir.  
My optimism might fulfil:  
a “you are what you eat” thing.  
I’d wear the cap that fitted.  
Whatever would be offered.

“I write poems and walk dogs”  
became my online thingy.  
My website brought me pleasure.  
I was a cyber-spammer,  
tweeting to B. Obama.

Michelle was my online date  
whilst I walked many stray dogs.  
There was this basket; Angel,  
that I became attached to.  
My chick gave her stuff to chew.

I felt I needed more work,  
but those twats were in power.  
My match(dot)com success, brought  
deserved emotional aid.  
The year crammed in a decade.

I had said “We’re all alone”  
and “embrace your aloneness.”  
I was after a tattoo  
to share my brand of wisdom.  
I’d have to have been plain gone.

My woman's timely diamond  
would pacify potency,  
that at roundabout Christmas  
our lives had new direction.  
Next year could be a session.

20/12/14 - 21/12/14

### **Bulbs**

I said it.  
Their nature was based on that sin  
everyone denies.

Life's in the seasons.  
The pope can't be clearer,  
but it's the seasons, can't you see?

We try again. Autumn's  
a paradox.  
Dead rotting cells prepare us;

whilst winter switches off the mania,  
and gives us chance  
to forget.

Spring's always the crocuses,  
offering chances we never seize.  
It's in some people's smiles.

Last year, summer offered a wager.  
I gambled the brighter days.  
It's sun or tiresome cycles.

1/1/15



## **Emmanuel condom split**

YouPorn, PornHub, Tube8 sites,  
host Milf and Teen and Anal.

Private browse with the vid on.  
Arose yourself with fiction.

It's a lie. Men's tools are less  
in length than these stars portray.

They sell fools vacuum tubes  
to suck their maggots bigger.

Oral first and facial ends  
are on the standard menu.

If you're sick of that routine,  
forget your hand and date more.

Women had hair on their twats,  
to see view vintage porno.

Since BayWatch bush has been cut,  
but there's always exceptions.

Porn stars don't get up the duff,  
not many are Left-footers.

2/1/15

## **"Oldham street at night" - Louise**

A Mancunian artist  
painting watercolour scenes  
washes night-time randomly,  
like a dream froze in a flash.

People are approximate.  
It happens in no time. Time  
is suggested. Naimian's  
pulse reveals a tasteful hue.

A No-Entry of a sort,  
is a passage to this Manc  
metropolis and hipster  
haunt. Bohemia's a trend.

4/1/15

### **Get up, Bagpuss**

It's quiet.  
Bagpuss sleeps.  
We do, too.

We think about whether gambling  
life is worth it,  
then contemplate the pathetic stake.

There was life for a while,  
so at least there was  
life once.

Was honesty a wise tack?  
Piss it away;  
what the fuck?

Maybe the end is the start after all?  
Meanwhile, Bagpuss sleeps  
whilst electricity wakes us.

6/1/15

## **Happy Birthday to you Mum**

I hope you have a great day.  
Your looks fool people's senses,  
but on the phone you bring out  
the age card when it's handy.  
Watch out for sunshine venues  
obtained by VISA sharing.  
Sometimes the phone is fatal.

Please know that after this time,  
on this day, three score, nineteen  
years since the day of your birth,  
that I am feeling happy,  
and you should need not worry.  
Try to forget the past things.  
My life's received a blessing.

Enjoy the coming wedding,  
and wait to watch your grandchild  
turn into a romantic,  
in some form as an artist.  
Maybe they'll mirror daddy  
and be like a potpourri,  
with mummy's mix to colour.

10/1/15

## **Red Bull self-harm**

Put yourself in hospital  
with energy drinks.  
That will make the buggers  
think.

It's a strange way to go:  
drinking Relentless four packs.  
Save money.  
Lidl's a good crack.

If you mix with milk  
and throw up regularly,  
you'll dry up your kidneys  
just like me.

Apparently, you can coma  
or something like that.  
The nurses thought I was crazy:  
an unusual twat.

I thought I heard Roy Castle  
when they stated my blood sugar.  
If Norris had been alive  
I could have met a McWhirter.

Insulin injections  
slowly bring things down,  
after kidneys rehydrate  
and sanity is found.

I don't recommend  
excesses of sugar high drinks.  
Don't be crass with legal mental stimulants;  
think.

17/1/15

### **It is my worst fear**

It is not bunkum.  
We have no djinni  
to provide wishes.  
Michelle takes folio  
and might have pizza.  
I am a maker  
of points I want clear.  
Ditch peperoni.  
Stop going via  
that hut. Slap my mug.  
Just make me behave.

18/1/15 - 18/3/15

### **The groom's speech (read)**

I wrote this rhyming poem,  
cause I enter open-mic.  
Forgive me if it's corny.  
I thought it would be alright.

For starters, you are all stuck,  
with me for your total life.  
Please take a consolation  
that you're not being my wife.

It was not all laughs and stuff.  
There have been problems for us,  
but we had to have success.  
Michelle's worth masses of fuss.

I might get a slight jitter.  
It's a lack of pepsiMAX.  
I will not try to bore you  
with a massive load of facts.

I was extremely lucky  
in meeting Michelle Crompton.  
My life has just started now.  
That's quite a wait, I reckon.

My friends stretch back to year dot.  
They help my story agree,  
with thoughts I have of myself.  
They remind me that I'm me.

Michelle's friends at the outset,  
helped calm worries in my mind.  
I knew with people like that,  
I could wager she was kind.

You're looking very well dressed.  
I think I will be banal.  
The next bit's about fashion.  
We went shopping in the mall.

Michelle's stunning in that dress.  
How about my slim-line suit?  
I nearly went for skinny  
and my Doctor Marten boots.

You'll have to come to our home,  
all of you, at any time.  
Please don't come together though,  
that would be a massive swine.

Tonight, we're staying over.  
I hope Angel will survive.  
Perhaps her ears are burning.  
Dogs turn kitchens into dives.

Michelle's a mad cat woman.  
She has a tom called Herbie:  
a Norwegian forest cat,  
some sort of feline yeti.

Here's a mention near the end;  
a child's in Michelle's tummy.  
If male he might be called James.  
A lass is up to mummy.

This marriage is the second  
both of us have been into.  
Please confirm you approve it  
by giving a clap or two.

26/1/15 - 14/2/15

### **In Home Sweet Home**

Sat in Home Sweet Home,  
all fucking alone,

hipsters everywhere,  
their beards mimic bears'.

What's it all about?  
I fucking stand out.

I trade cake for a kiss  
with my Michelle: the Mrs.

I can't leave without sugar.  
I've offered my chick's number

to the server who thought  
it was nice: the present I bought.

27/1/15

## **Prosthetic penis palava**

Fancy killing your husband  
to discover his knob was unreal,  
after many nights of fucking,  
when “he” made you want to squeal.

I imagine prosthetic penises  
are really strap on knobs.  
Angelo Heddington  
thought hers was just the job.

Elizabeth Rudavsky  
had a whirlwind romance,  
with a woman tooled up  
who lead her a dance.

Escalating domestic violence  
followed a shotgun wedding,  
then Elizabeth stabbed Angelo  
and revealed why cum was lacking.

Throughout their seven month relationship,  
they had sex in the dark.  
Angelo must have had a lever  
when her penis needed to park.

The knob had to be hidden  
because an ex had set it alight.  
What a stupid fucking story  
a fucking load of shite.

A former girlfriend of Angelo  
said her mate played with her dick.  
She always had her hands  
in pockets round the plastic prick.



The violence involved gun threats  
and a metal pipe violation.  
Angelo was a head the ball.  
She had ideas beyond her station.

Elizabeth got married  
with a black eye.  
She eventually killed her husband.  
He was not a fucking guy.

28/1/15

### **Reasons why I love you**

First off, I fancy you to bits.  
I love your ample tits.

I couldn't hope to find  
someone more kind.  
You feed starlings daily  
and bird watch for the RSPB.

I knew you'd suit.  
We're both fruit  
loops of a sort.  
I ought  
to be less manic,  
but with you around I've found  
that's the spark for me.

You can see I love your personality.  
It complements my habitual-ritual-artistry,  
or something like that.  
I know I'm a twat. That could make three,  
so bugger them, hey?  
You reckon?

By this time next year, like the Trotters,  
we'll all be millionaires.  
I'm already one, with your love  
and cares.

I love you because you're a leftie,  
and Bernadette says that's not \*right\*.  
I love you because you don't convert me.  
You know I don't give a shite.

31/1/15

### **After the storm has ended**

It subsides and I survey  
what I have left behind me:  
money spent and things I've said:  
the manic chances taken:  
porno verse on rap C-Ds  
won't even scratch the surface:  
I'm marrying a mummy,  
and we're not talking Egypt.

I've got the life I wanted.  
It came all of a sudden.  
I could have spent forever  
waiting for profound promise.  
For some it's the start of life.  
I left that huge gathering.  
I have more medication.  
Will someone take my labour?

1/2/15

### **Waiting for her to get up**

She levels with her tummy  
as he contemplates sunrise.

He hopes she mentions daddy  
and the greatest form of love.

He's done with all the bullshit.  
Just give him a little art.

His heart may be long in years,  
but it's only just begun.

He's transparent: a mad fool.  
Should he barter honesty?

He writes poems and walks dogs:  
a dying romantic breed.

Fuck the mould, there's cavities.  
Eyes tire. Some are never pleased.

3/2/15

### **Michelle's Valentine poem 2015**

“Right now I ought to call her  
a lady, as that's proper.”  
Good manners can be sexy.  
I've got a clear mind to see  
features of you, Valentine.  
A young bride's took a long time  
to find, and you're stuck with me.  
Lustfully bewilder me.

6/2/15

## **Avoiding Autumn**

I said “what is my essence?”  
It was hidden verbosely.

I cooked egg, gammon and chips.  
I’ll labour for you and share.

My charm isn’t a sacrifice.  
I slog. Sometimes things aren’t nice.

I cry. Have you found it yet?  
I’m the seasons. It’s simple.

Winter cools. I hibernate.  
Good job our first date wasn’t then.

Summer says “academic,  
cause you were feeling manic.”

I hope you like crocuses,  
maybe that’s the status quo.

9/2/15

## **Arse-roads about**

He got it arse-roads about.  
Life went belly up.  
Arse-roads about;  
it was like buying a fucking pup.

You can trade insults with him.  
He’s got the brains to say fuck off.  
You can have a go.  
His respectfulness has been fucking lost.

People contemplate retirement  
as he clammers the first step.  
You have a big ladder,  
without career shite to fucking regret.

He doesn't give a damn  
about cars and holidays in the sun.  
He's got a pricey home.  
He was fucking done.

He writes in third person  
for some stupid reason.  
His last wife was a villain.  
Her acts were tantamount to fucking treason.

He rescued his dog,  
that worships him.  
He's got a loving relationship now.  
Those two make him less a fucking victim.

People study music  
from the age of five.  
He spent all his twenties  
using drink and notes to fucking survive.

He's never had a social life,  
or even one of sex.  
He's a classic misfit:  
fucking complex.

There's nothing more for it,  
but to give his life away,  
to his woman and baby  
that they might have a fucking say.

11/2/15 - 14/12/16

**“Shawn is on to it”**

Shawn smiles despite everything.  
He is surely on to it,  
And wears his heart on his sleeve.  
We should honour his candour;  
Not make any allowance.

I was with Clare eighteen years.  
She was my wife the last six.

Of course it could have been more.  
No-one foretold. What a waste?

The wheelchair had not stopped us.  
Only Michelle curbed the crem’.

I know “Shawn is on to it.”  
Take Michelle: forty-six years.

12/2/15

**Michelle and Michael’s wedding thank you card**

Thank you for any measure  
that your unique part did play,  
in making things fantastic.  
It was a wonderful day.

Your presents bought a freezer,  
or your presence warmed our hearts,  
in person or by message.  
Actions have no counterparts.

If you were present or not,  
you are loved to bits by us.  
You will not be forgotten.  
Our stories combine because ...

17/2/15

### **Silly scan stanzas**

This could be corny,  
but I don't care.  
If we'd not been horny,  
it would not have been there.

We had a look  
at the babe in haze.  
We'd had a fuck  
and were in a daze.

It didn't move at first.  
Michelle queried why.  
It was our first.  
We'd been giving it a try.

When the child shifted  
it looked like a body popper.  
We were thrilled.  
We'd made a John Travolta.

Chick went for medication.  
I sat in the car.  
I had a scan examination,  
to suss if I'd gone too far.

It made me weep.  
It was my son or daughter.  
I thought, “feckin deep.”  
I could be in hot water.

I looked occupied for life,  
and was getting married the next day.  
Michelle would be my wife.  
I hoped there was no hell to play.

“I write poems and walk dogs.”  
It takes a certain humility,  
and fear of a god  
(of a sort) to recover from futility.

19/2/15

### **Revised three words**

Mania can damage.  
Sex is religious.

Faith might work.  
Hope is everything.

You need love.  
Children are strongest.

Dogs are wise.  
The masses run.

Convention doesn't matter.  
Trust is priceless.



We become naked.  
Stragglers need less.

2/3/15

**A random pepsiMAX explosion**

Can  
(ha)  
you guess  
drinks of  
PepsiMAX  
are a tax?  
You should believe  
I cannot leave  
house without the stuff.  
It is getting rough.  
The wife is up the duff.  
I thought I would drop that  
as syllables expand more,  
whilst at the end I am sure.

I  
know  
this  
verse  
is  
odd;

whatever.....

7/3/15

## **Four philosophy stanzas**

The world was mean  
because I'd been mean.  
It turned out,  
there was no doubt  
that minds were blank,  
but I had mine to thank  
that bad proliferates,  
creating paranoid states.

Do not be a bully.  
You're your own enemy.  
That's how it'll be.  
You'll never be free,  
unless you formulate  
a chance for better fate,  
by life analysis, programming bliss,  
and getting off the piss.

Do not think,  
but give a fuck  
about values.  
Avoid news.  
Follow a passion.  
Have faith, hope and compassion.  
Some call it charity.  
Lay down your actuality.

If it didn't work out  
give all you're about.  
It's the greatest love of all  
and easy after a fall.  
Bad can become good.  
What's intrinsic should  
be subjugated by the mind,  
that's what science can ultimately find.

9/3/15

### **Meg's Mother's Day card poem**

Happy Mother's day  
to the nan to be.  
I hope you are pleased  
when there's a baby.

Go have a nice time.  
Don't frown at the card.  
Yes, it is quite posh.  
I know times are hard.

Happen Ian got  
the delivery.  
You don't have a dog!  
They're calamity :)

12/3/15

### **Michelle's Mother's Day card poem**

Angel mummy here's your card.  
So far bump has made it hard.  
Your head's ached and you've thrown up.  
You're a good team with our pup.

I'm stumped as to girl or boy.  
Either one will lead to joy.  
I hope they take to an art.  
We will surely share some heart.

You'll be a fantastic mum.  
Baby bonding has begun.  
Take care of your health and rest.  
You need to be at your best.

13/3/15

### **A Facebook post**

Come and visit me.  
I'll make you a brew  
and talk with you.

I'll show you art  
and read you stuff;  
play till you'd heard enough.

Just give me a bell.  
You can get me on  
0777 185 286 ONE

Whatever .....

14/3/15

### **Wed for a month**

Blood may damn your destiny,  
wanting you the same.  
Life's a massive wager  
if you're romantically untamed.

Art's the fair gospel.  
Normal is division.  
If you dare to be yourself,  
friendships have good reason.

Don't run from anxiety,  
it can be worth the pain.  
If you never suffer  
there's no way you will gain.

14/3/15

## **Chance is a dice and THIS**

is from another life,  
but you became my wife  
so they dwell in my HOUSE.

Many belong to him.  
Maybe I'm foolish: dim.  
When I develop WILL

there'll be return to space  
in rooms around the place  
where boxes used to BE.

They represent a bet  
that I was glad we met:  
I took on CONFUSION.

They're some of our bugbears.  
We need to give more cares.  
Pickford's haunt me DAILY.

15/3/15

## **Rescue Human Beings**

You can see R-H-Bs  
with rescue dogs.  
RHBs; some even worship God.  
That deity ignores them.  
He fucks off others, too.  
Try marrying a divorcee.  
They call it adultery.

Paranoia can be had  
if you bullied at school.  
You may have been a mess,  
but karma is the rule.  
In time you'll project  
your evil childhood ways.  
Be yourself.  
Even psychos behave.

Get chemically strait-jacketed  
if you're miles adrift.  
RHBs aren't found in offices.  
At best they like night shifts.  
Some find jails or boxes.  
Many are pissed.

Educate an RHB.  
It's the answer.  
Therapy can't give freedom.  
Self can.

16/3/15

### **March twenty, twenty fifteen**

Winter came late this time.  
'ad bin 'igh,  
like Thatcher with dialect:  
no sleep.

Dinnertime looms.  
I chill with Angel:  
that rescue dog liability;  
a casualty of bipolarity.

Spring; at least when the crocuses emerge,  
is my normal lift.  
I'd done frigging loads.  
Think of lots then treble it.

Hope my vernal luck hold out,  
and this is fleeting,  
and she gets that bullshit I say:  
“what is my essence?”

We see Johnny Clarke on the morrow;  
second row back. Perhaps  
it's a good thing mania  
has passed.

I'm out with the dog any minute.  
Like I say:  
“I write poems and walk dogs,”  
only it's the one now, a maniac.

20/3/15

### **Chemical?**

He's not the same.  
He's someone else.  
Did you meet him, himself?  
He's un-self-aware.  
It's profound.  
Only essence is bound.

Has he failed  
to precipitate it?  
Is it worth it?  
What's his refinement;  
eighteen carat  
or base scrap?

He's mercurial.  
His social station  
is recurrent isolation.  
With doubts of validity,  
he hides from perfectionist,  
subtle NAZI governments.

He watches a video.  
He's socially passable,  
but unrecognisable.  
He's chemically ill,  
an isotope,  
statistically out.

22/3/15

### **Okay it's pathetic**

For one week  
I beamed easily.  
I could relate  
to standard strangers:  
the mentally well,  
that had past,  
present and future.

For one week  
I was round,  
fitting the hole,  
but life taints,  
by the taste  
I had wanted.



For one week  
I linked arms.  
It wasn't much  
to love somebody  
and create buzz.

For one week,  
should I have  
tasted life fleetingly?  
It's a poison.

For one week  
it opened eyes  
without option. Afterwards,

for every one  
week, I pretended.

Love's a cost.

30/3/15

### **What next China**

Give it away  
easy as breath.  
Life's in the trees  
don't you see that?

God smiles if you  
break his disguise.  
Honestly, air  
is everything.

Barter your life?  
Spring can surprise.  
Daffodils form  
a welcome wake.

If it did not  
work until late,  
reap the love you  
have invested.

10/4/15

### **#justsayin**

No one can help.  
No one can relate.  
The priests say “pray.  
It’s not for debate.”

At least I’m writing again  
and laying down piano notes.  
Arts are therapy:  
my religious routes.

“Mum and dad, help;”  
oh no, I’m a man.  
If only they’d solve it  
and be God if they can.

It’s hard this.  
I even considered drink.  
I’m partially pretending;  
tears and denial I think.

“I write poems and walk dogs.”  
That’s what I do.  
What do you expect  
a poem writer to do?

I’m Okay mostly,  
because I’ve got a plan.  
It could go wrong though,  
then I don’t know if I can.

The plan was hard to formulate.  
It is not for general share.  
Me and the Mrs want the best.  
Ourselves? We don’t fucking care.

12/4/15

## **Rose**

Mid-April: Mistle thrushes,  
and us two, were all grownup.  
We weren’t pro. We weren’t anti.  
It wasn’t part of this season.  
God’s a complete enigma.

We fed the chicks and a womb,  
giving to everything. I  
was Catholic; took the huff:  
some were ignoramuses.  
That left this fate unexplained.  
I did flirt with Golgotha.

16/4/15 - 14/12/16

## **The Butterfly room**

Her pulse had had promise;  
a defiant camouflage.  
It was Okay to assume  
because love's hue's a bright wash.

Michelle had fed a mummy  
empathetically: a Mistle thrush.  
Suddenly loss and logic tussled  
in the Butterfly room.

Some expected gasps.  
Online data scares.  
The truth is that Rose was too pure.  
Drops needn't wet her head.

I was tired.  
I lacked the adrenaline  
that flooded Michelle's veins,  
while time flirted with nature.

We stayed over.  
We even fought.  
Rose tattooed our memories silently.  
She'd probably prompt ink.

Later we kissed her head  
with no option.  
Some people's humility starts crusades.  
Rose was better than us.

21/4/15

### **Wednesday 29/4/15**

I played “Somewhere over the rainbow”  
to make us cry. Michelle wept the most.

My life:

I get up, I get through, I sleep.

If it was a good day it was a blessing.

If it was bad it was a curse.

I try not to think, like meditating.

I don't need yoga.

The beat of a butterfly wing a hundred years ago  
could have changed everything.

I hope it didn't all end in the still birth room  
aka “The butterfly room.”

This isn't boringly affective is it? As I say,  
“I write poems and walk dogs.”

It's not raining.

That's good.

29/4/15

### **Seeds revisited**

Spring came, and she came.

I hadn't banked on Spring.

We'd expected a summer girl.

Perhaps that witch was right  
about nature saving the day.

We could try again soon.  
Maybe we're done for though.  
It was all you wanted.  
I tried to give everything,  
yet my gifts are finite.

I'll think of five reasons  
to kill myself: FIVE reasons.  
Five has plagued me forever.  
There must be a reason;  
one, two, three, four, five.

Nothing is new: no seeds.  
The butterfly room hinted strongly.  
I don't really think; yeah.  
When I do I worry.  
My five reasons follow below.

One: Rose didn't make it.  
Two: we are all alone.  
Three: I don't fit anywhere.  
Four: nothing has worked out.  
Five: it doesn't bare saying.

2/5/15

### **Thank you... We've survived three months**

We looked through Colin's window.  
It could tempt you down below.

I nursed pints of pepsiMAX.  
Love of art's a worthwhile tax.

Perspective is abstract stuff.  
I was biggest. It's a bluff.

You paint Manchester's N-Q.  
I should know, I have a few.

Rhyming couplets can be good.  
Completion sounds as it should.

Rainbow seven, seven frames  
hang for us. It's you to blame.

That's the count of your chroma,  
delightful brush strokes; aqua?

14/5/15

### **Trying to describe something that has no analogy**

I think I called him "Teddy."  
I was about four.  
I let him sleep overnight in a hedge.

Teddy two was not teddy one.  
Effectively, teddy one's life ended  
prematurely with a choice.

That story was the closest analogy  
I could find for Rose.  
Pets were not the same.  
Teddy was almost more innate.  
Do you see that?

You love a second teddy,  
but you never forget the first.  
There's only one first teddy.  
At least that's how the metaphor goes.  
I don't know anything;  
do you?

16/5/15

## **To Michelle**

It was May.  
Was God pencilling us in for spring?  
I'd be forty-eight,  
diverted by art for three decades.

We deserved blessing.  
You, an intrinsic mother,  
would be tragic  
(more than that)  
if you weren't actively a mum.

Paradoxically,  
life was humbling complexity,  
because time had insisted simplicity  
was worth pain.

We'd stopped worrying about the system.  
Peripheral confusion melts.  
What better armour is there, than naked honesty?

I've never properly loved a woman.  
I can't imagine loving you more.  
Simple seems surreal.  
In silence or bipolarity,  
I might understand,  
a silent baby or sacred storm.

23/5/15

## **Modern modes to motherhood**

Vitamins and potions,  
buy one get one free.  
Acupuncture might work,  
or a natural remedy.



Fertility monitors dictate  
when it's best to have a go.  
God's nickname is ClearBlue.  
Charity's known as "low."

Flush deceased swimmers  
pleasantly away.  
Live ones are needed  
for a peak day.

Drink and fags are banned,  
you're a Buddhist monk.  
Ironically success  
happens to the drunk.

Anxiety to perform,  
and ovulation checks on time,  
are hardly fun after relaxing  
when we dine.

Pleas about headaches  
must be ignored,  
when the screen commands,  
it's action, don't be bored.

The dog has sixth sense,  
trying to physically divide.  
A baby's many demands  
could be a slippery slide.

It's a *Ménage à trois*.  
The wife needs constant test.  
Get her up the duff.  
eBay the digital pest.

4/6/15

### **There is an easier way**

Rose was confusion to me.  
I can accept that frankly.  
You are water-boarding pain  
on my poetic ramparts.

It is odd how paint can speak  
so confusingly, to make  
agony appear to us.  
Indirection causes mess.

I DO NOT DO FUCKING HINTS.  
I understand she is huge.  
You are hiding hurt in pride.  
Show me. We are the same side.

12/6/15

### **Joe's second-hand testament**

Nahal Oz kibbutz is close,  
via melons, to Gaza.

Is it “cool” to risk your life  
for foreign travel stories?

His first poem was obscure,  
written in past tense and true.

Thirteen years flew, till he thought  
“I will share more honesty.”

His openness  
defined him.

Confessional open-mic  
was part of his adult path.

He wrote poems  
and walked dogs.

\* \* \*

Life is a Venn diagram  
in multiple dimensions.

We strive for one boundary  
like a central unity.

It does not  
exist.

No trust  
is perfect.

There are  
no saints.

We only have one model,  
projecting it on others.

Paranoia has its roots  
in the crossed wires of childhood.

\* \* \*

Only compete  
with yourself.

Everest is locally  
known to the plain and humble.

“It is lonely at the top”  
where the Eucharist dissolves.

There our child-selves socialise,  
ultimately via sex.

We attempt, but suicide  
leads to absolute mind-sets.

Humour fleetingly connects  
like a drug the masses crave.

Denial of aloneness  
promotes control of masses.

\* \* \*

Anxiety: not knowing,  
might lead to paranoia

by ideas  
of reference.

Delusionary thinking:  
a form of bizarre logic,

is self-perpetuating  
like recursion running wild.

If you were stressed in your youth  
adulthood might feel softer.

Meditation may still minds.  
Perhaps the east is more chilled.

Self-realisation sucks.  
You can't accelerate life.

\* \* \*

Existing as someone else  
allows your exploitation.

We all end up being us,  
even if we are evil.

Obsession for more money  
generates competition.

Depression  
stems from conflicts.

Life  
has too much illusion.

It  
is biological.

Return  
to the school playground.

\* \* \*

Individuality  
is lacking with Catholics.

Sacraments control people  
producing robotic drones.

Everything is religion,  
even without a structure.

Everyone's path is  
unique.

Find your own God:  
nature? Sun?

The Bible is man's construct  
and not immune to logic.

Accept we are different  
and essentially alone.

\* \* \*

He does not walk dogs (plural)  
anymore. He knows nothing

apart from his own madness,  
that came by observation.

The world is not  
absolute.

Make an early decision  
and hope that your luck holds out.

Risk your life  
to have a life.

Accepted, there is some truth  
in the Bible. Take a chance

because everything  
is HYPE.

June - July 2015

### **A syllabic Monday verse**

You play hip piano fifths,  
that should end with suicide.  
Genocide's on Angel's mind,  
but the squirrels are outside.

Early on in bed you feared  
your selfish anxiety.  
You said, "she's feeling further,  
emotionally from me."

Your paranoia draws her  
closer to your existence.  
Moods just "are" and context fleets.  
You'll no doubt go the distance.

Are moods like a lottery?  
I wrote this verse for the crack.  
We've no option but to live.  
That bloody squirrel is back.

27/7/15

### **His bipolar disorder -**

confused facts into fictions,  
both positively and cursed,  
on a blade edge balancing:  
family life or a hearse.

Religion came, then it left.  
Aloneness put bread to test.  
She came. Once he nearly left.  
Feelings lied. Was logic best?

Thoughts seemed to be inserted  
just to fucking annoy him.  
“Take your pick of ideas,”  
he said. Play; juggle with them.

Past rage and apprehension  
were a porthole to the now.  
He just tried to run adrift:  
a bottle instructing how.

18/8/15

### **Happen the mystic's truthful**

Past relationships are gone,  
the tenuous threads of art.  
Here's a story. Draw a card.  
There might be a real part.

When I was young I shuffled.  
I thought it was the answer.  
I gravitated to trumps,  
but mostly was the joker.

Summer came and summer went.  
It went: over. Cards deceived,  
cannabis games, bridge and cheese.  
The tarot fool's journey teased.

Life may fool you when it's nice.  
Don't fear to let your nerves flood.  
Autumn can be deceptive.  
Enjoy chroma and gain blood.

30/8/15



## **We are parents regardless**

Her name was Rose Megan Holme.  
She was more significant  
than plain anything at all  
that God sent. Dilemmas tempt.

What is life? The hell is it?  
Give it away for reward?  
Some say it's the greatest love.  
Christians may ponder their good.

Rose was pure without a drop.  
How dare imperfect priests say  
that sin could delay her rest.  
In a sense she's most saintly.

She may have bonded us more  
than passions, or words spoken.  
Words offer wagers of trust.  
They say "silence is golden."

31/8/15

## **Recalling the wilderness**

Trade a decade? Trade your life.  
Head to personhood. Have choice.  
When you don't know, it can't hurt.  
Be livid later with voice.

Play piano. Learn guitar.  
Go far with isolation.  
Manic dedication helps:  
obsessional exertion.

Write verse. Nurse dogs by walking  
them all over everywhere.  
Do anything positive.  
Don't drink and smoke. Sight then dare.

Be aware that most folk act.  
They are not better than you.  
Be you. Honestly, be true.  
You are amazing. Just do.

1/9/15

### **Please, please paranoid people**

If third person references  
seem to be getting common,  
confide in a companion.  
Don't quiz when TV is on.

Ideas of reference  
do not make sense to the well.  
If you smell rot that is not  
there, maybe prepare for hell.

You are not in the paper.  
It is not about you. True,  
madly there is some logic.  
Dilute your ego, so few

will attack you. Jesus Christ  
was right. When you are anxious  
paranoia can occur,  
if your mood is obvious.

2/9/15

### **Angel is an ASBO dog**

We hope the order's lifting.  
She's got better recently.  
Anxiety was the cause.  
She has our captivity.

We let her bed down with us.  
It's fuss. Michelle sleeps lightly.  
With her back pressing on me,  
Angel prods laterally.

I can understand guarding,  
but I don't fecking want post  
shredding. A box on the wall  
will be the end of her play.

If she was a pedigree  
I wouldn't mind her food habits.  
She's a top mutt, mongrel, stray  
who thinks she deserves fine cuts.

8/9/15 - 14/12/16

### **Pessimists are protected**

If you've had a massive loss  
and life has been negative,  
then odds are there'll be more shit.  
Don't expect the chance to live.

I may have had one blessing.  
It will show up in the wash.  
You can't harm me with promise.  
Cast iron comes through great cost.

I'd like to be a daddy.  
I could help youth not slip-up.  
Your madness is my normal.  
You ought to hear my gamut.

I'm not a nut; really.  
I feel I have a wisdom.  
Dear God my wife needs blessing,  
or pessimistic function.

9/9/15

### **Rapid cycling bipolar**

Minds randomly fantasize  
when capriciousness arrives.  
Thoughts surprise; so realise  
they are fleeting mood based lies.

Angry sparks, down sparks, flashes  
of sanity; you can feel  
fucking everything, bye-bye  
balance. Your life's unreal.

Physical and mental pain  
may push you to decisions.  
Your fucking brain, your fucking  
brain; ignore heart felt reason.

Logic can be hard to grasp  
when insight's on the balance.  
Things can collapse, then you're lost.  
In life there's no cast iron.

11/9/15

## **Some biblical extractions**

Jesus Christ said, “feed my sheep:”  
the prostitutes and outcast.  
Jesus said, “if your right hand  
makes you sin, then off with it.”

Jesus told, “bring the fattened  
calf and kill it.” Vegans did  
not figure much in those times.  
Carnivores later declined.

Sacrifice is Biblical.  
Masturbation is a crime.  
If you look at womens’ boobs,  
adultery is in mind.

Anyway; Christ predicted  
on a certain night, friends would  
fall away on his account.”  
Trust family, mainly blood.

22/9/15

## **Erm, what’s up Doc?**

I have opened my heart twice,  
publicly today. I don’t  
know what else to do to fetch  
some understanding my way.

I obsess about seven.  
Sesame Street attracts me.  
Revelations is the root  
for seven-nutters: maybe?

If I read syllabic verse  
in white Y-Fronts on Facebook,  
I might get some attention,  
but I might seem like a nut.

Perhaps if there was perfect,  
socially good, easy crime.  
I could get an infamy,  
and my poems in big time.

29/9/15

### **Life choices and flashing voices**

Five minutes were all it took  
to decide to kill himself.  
He thought fuck it, then he had  
half a dose of suicide.

A transparent five minutes,  
were all it took to embrace  
that normal is mythical.  
Lives can vanish with no trace.

He spent five minutes mulling  
whether to be a father.  
He had to juggle psych drugs  
to make his penis better.

It took a straight five minutes,  
to choose marriage proposal.  
Manic depression aided,  
diamond ring cash disposal.

2/10/15 - 14/12/16

## **Osho Zen Tarot - The Fool**

Foolish visions; blind wise veils;  
cunning murk; the naive quote.  
The simple fool leads flora  
from Latin to nasal note.

Complexity moves nature  
from a heart base to the head.  
The Tree of Knowledge sniggers.  
This Fool thinks he is ahead.

Humility of knowledge  
leads the Fool to the end state.  
Life is big so truth is blessed.  
The young do not cogitate.

Without temptation, no saints  
can be formable. Ego  
and sin are answers when won:  
the complex maze of shallow.

5/10/15

## **Osho Zen Tarot - Existence**

We're part of whole existence;  
more so the more we're alive.  
Life needs living totally,  
pump blood and breaths to survive.

It's said, "Existence takes care."  
Be aware and build up trust.  
Gods, messiahs and saviours  
aren't real, so self-entrust.

How do you relate to all  
that pulses, flows and beats life?  
Light or darkness is your child.  
Don't hide, wisely choose your wife.

Trees and rivers and mountains  
are your natural abode.  
In their beauty trust is clear.  
Expand it. See what's bestowed.

6/10/15

### **Osho Zen Tarot - Inner Voice**

Existence: the inner sage,  
is not the voice of reason,  
it is inner direction  
with silent inspiration.

Vocal exchanges vanish  
when effect is applied by  
the inner silent voices,  
that busyness may deny.

When the heart sounds, ignorance  
has dissolved in strong blood-flow.  
Awareness may be eastern.  
Still minds help peacefulness grow.

Memory is invalid;  
reactions secondary.  
Inner-core response reveals  
the self's rigid honesty.

7/10/15



## **Osho Zen Tarot - Creativity**

Existence comes in shadows  
when blind perfection creates.  
Ego forbids art to flow.  
Mind stillness might give good fate.

Forced effort on a dry spell  
leads to impure ego yield.  
The possessed might take over,  
relaxed, primed, and then revealed.

Poets, painters and sculptors  
know when this moment has passed.  
Meditation in mystics  
is a current clear contrast.

When you get the paradox:  
“you are not, but you still are,”  
you meet Buddha’s nirvana.  
You are a brief avatar.

8/10/15

## **Osho Zen Tarot - The Rebel**

Fixed modes, patterns, ideas,  
of society repel,  
the rebel with his small voice  
that calmly seeks the novel.

Escapists leave the worldly  
by shunning their commitments,  
at the cost of their freedom:  
the natural agreement.

Responsibility shows,  
without being a duty.  
“Response” and “ability”  
leads to positive journey.

The past controls reaction.  
When consciousness and presence  
spark moments with awareness,  
freshness becomes the essence.

9/10/15

### **Osho Zen Tarot - No-Thingness -**

is meditative purpose,  
compassion overflowing.  
It can be a null Hades,  
not a western God’s meaning.

Buddha says there’s godliness  
in emptiness, by leaving  
pure consciousness in the void:  
a mirror not reflecting.

It’s an infinite expanse.  
“Something-ness” has an ending.  
“No-Thing” can be song, silence  
or dance. Names are limiting.

Buddha calls thought, “mind”: “the world.”  
It’s a wave of consciousness,  
a temporal flashing form:  
reality: truthfulness.

10/10/15

## **Psycho-social-theorist**

He is not pissed now. One day  
he will die before his time.  
It is logical. His shit  
is held with Quetiapine.

Do you know this fucking world  
suppresses a creator  
of honest art and passion?  
It prefers an engineer.

B-M-Fucking-Double-Us  
are what “high powered” twats choose.  
They fucking look down on you;  
throttle pressed with Grenson shoe.

The morning he buried Rose,  
he wrote verse. It is pointless  
now, if she had been purpose.  
What is life? To be childless?

11/10/15

## **Three white ribbons to die for**

You could simply say “why not?”  
It could be November rain.  
How about the hurt that’s left:  
that diagnosed mental pain?

There’s nothing of consequence  
to do to give you purpose.  
Pointlessness is a reason  
for sleeping till you’re worthless.

“Three white ribbons to die for”  
and several ways to die,  
make you wonder if people  
would miss you if you did try.

What is life? The hell is it?  
CV holes remove demand.  
There’s only faith, hope and love;  
and Quetiapine or you’re damned.

12/10/15

### **Facebook**

What we speak, and what we write,  
are oft in opposition.  
Honesty comes from the voice.  
Meaning is in expression.

Text holds lies. It is not life.  
It is approximation.  
Do not be a question mark.  
Be immediate action.

Some folk wind-up as a troll  
and some have alter-egos.  
Judging people by their text  
highlights YOUR fragile ego.

Get a life, if you dislike  
thoughts that Facebook is phony.  
Using speech is more adult:  
expression without smileys.

13/10/15

## **Osho Zen Tarot - The Lovers**

From outside, love is madness  
and blind if you don't know it.  
Lovers see core existence  
with the only able eye.

Life's journey's goal is loving,  
it's not wild neuroticism.  
Intimacy is central,  
not genital obsession.

Mutual self-exposure  
with courage and loving trust,  
revealing weaker features,  
makes inner richness robust.

You can love alone, and be  
blissful to share. Then thankful  
if it lands, and wondering  
if it returns, to truth: you.

14/10/15

### **It cannot be synthesised**

Confidence founded in light  
is unfounded. Your darkness  
collects deposits of hurt:  
investments of hopefulness.

It is said, "no pain no gain,"  
and fools build houses on sand.  
You can sail through life unscathed,  
a dope with your brain unmanned.

Some people never wake-up:  
approximating normal:  
the path of least resistance:  
herd safety they can follow.

The straightest route is shallow.  
If you divert off its road  
you cause your halo ruckus,  
you sap your heavenly food.

16/10/15

### **This winter will cripple me**

Last winter was different.  
We were engaged, and Michelle  
carried Rose, until after  
the first daffodil marvel.

Winter historically  
is a dire season for me,  
with early nights, pessimism,  
and barren weed-like ash trees.

Childhood games are miles away.  
Car crashes and heating bills,  
match with icicled hoses,  
frosty toes and default pills.

They say SAD lights are no good,  
for helping with bipolar,  
or I would have floodlighting.  
Sometimes autumn is winter.

18/10/15 - 29/10/16

## **Imagine life is fiction**

Rapid cycle and take stock,  
the thoughts not reined or likely,  
of cautious medicated  
spinning bipolarity.

Feelings poisoning your mind  
morph hourly without reason.  
Don't base any choice you make  
on that cerebral treason.

It can last for way too long.  
If insight lacks there's danger.  
Unless you grasp your mind's lies  
you'll have a strange behaviour.

Quetiapine and others,  
damp down psychotic action.  
Get levelled so you're neither  
a zombie or on section.

18/10/15

## **Elizabeth the Second -**

has the most longevity  
of any British monarch.  
You might call her a slogger.  
She's not walking in the park.

Elizabeth Regina's  
double is vagina-less.  
Naturally he's "the Third."  
Hearing him leaves you speechless.

Queens of a different kind  
congregate down Canal Street.  
It's clichéd, but "anal treet."  
It's a great gay place to meet.

At a certain age, the thoughts  
of randomers don't matter.  
We're freed from their opinions.  
Men can become crossdressers.

20/10/15

### **Pianoforte forays**

It needs dental attention:  
hygiene work on ivories.  
It's an Edwardian maze  
of woodworm's lunchtime remnants.

A black, eastern reflector,  
that's chromatically ripe,  
cuts western smoky chatter  
in the small hours of the night.

Unfairly, best pianos  
may be in football's mansions,  
they facilitate "Chopsticks:"  
pathetic absolution.

Digital examples strive  
to overtake the market.  
They're not robots with their legs,  
but make tuners redundant.

24/10/15



## **Players hide away from me**

I'm not a fucking player.  
I've never played with people.  
Women who meet me may get  
my loyalty. Check my past.

In my experience, men  
who "play," talk through their anus.  
It's sad women fall for their  
false-self's agenda of lies.

I've always strived for the truth.  
I'll give it anyone straight,  
even if it is painful.  
Don't fucking cross me, alright?

I can tear a strip off folks.  
At least one player was close.  
Be you and be very true.  
That's it. It's what you need most.

26/10/15

## **Tomorrow and yesterday**

Wisdom is a cursed surprise.  
When you end your false-selfhood  
you start another hurting,  
and different yearns for good.

What should or could have been life  
becomes clearer. Compromise  
and see the broader picture.  
Everything is at a price.

Be compassionate and share  
your empathetic nature.  
Some people never wake-up.  
Don't exploit. Try to nurture.

There could have been difference  
if a change had taken place.  
It's pointless saying what-ifs.  
You'll become a mental case.

30/10/15

### **Heaven**

I think it is energy,  
with some waves in perfect phase.  
Family and friends enhance  
amplitudes for endless days.

A forever vibration:  
not electromagnetic  
or static or musical;  
it would transcend the classic.

I would imagine sine waves,  
but perhaps combination  
of such bricks would not express,  
feelings in few dimensions.

Perhaps it is all over,  
infinitely connecting,  
endless communication,  
helpless magnetic bonding.

1/11/15

## **Pepsi addiction support**

It may be a drug habit  
or alcoholic mishaps.  
Twelve step programs are of use,  
or days spent in a rehab.

I tried hallucinogens  
to excess, many years back,  
and drank shed-loads of strong stuff:  
whiskey, Special Brew four packs.

I got clean, then pepsimax  
became my eccentric drink.  
With six litres daily habit,  
it was fair to say I didn't think.

I volunteered to help folk  
get off their substance abuse,  
but hearing Hep-C support;  
ping, I thought pop overuse.

3/11/15

## **I sometimes reflect on this**

It makes me wonder what's said  
when you wake after success,  
lying together in bed,  
ego fed, notch to impress.

It couldn't be me. Honesty,  
yes, pathetically truth,  
and something else, prevented  
me from learning ways in youth.

I could probably play now:  
I look fine, chat easily,  
it's hypothetical though.  
I don't do adultery.

Perhaps I'm that eccentric  
that sometimes I get labelled:  
the "something else" that halted  
falseness being concocted.

3/11/15

### **Real life or fantasy?**

Life begins in its good time.  
It might creep there unnoticed.  
It can become manifest  
if the past is diluted.

What a blessing to live life  
without needing to begin.  
That makes blissful ignorance.  
Be humble to avoid sin.

The past can be foundation  
or it can be a horror.  
By learning from your errors  
you make a good tomorrow.

For some it might start plural.  
Without pain it may fleet by.  
You may waste yours for normal.  
They say, "feel the fear and try."

5/11/15

## **Money, friends, and losing them**

It cannot be helped. We lay  
our cards down on the table.  
We reveal ourselves fully,  
the day we stop to fable.

You can only be yourself.  
Character is intrinsic.  
If you employ intellect  
some self may be extrinsic.

Attribution of value  
in hard monetary form  
to people that give free time,  
hurts feelings, making them torn.

We enter life and leave it  
with the exact same amount.  
Do not become too obsessed  
with your fucking bank account.

6/11/15

## **Last night he dreamt she had left -**

for elder maturity,  
sexual proficiency,  
intellectual tarnish,  
but financial solvency.

His feelings were terrorised  
by his eyes. Adult anguish:  
electric chest and gut, spark  
what drinking may extinguish.

Decisions led to actions  
which gained him serotonin,  
reducing partner friction  
at weekends while she slept in.

Morning became afternoon,  
then night, and bedtime gatecrashed.  
He tried not to make demands.  
It helped days like this get passed.

7/11/15

### **I am**

For some that is everything.  
Others strive to qualify.  
Vagueness might negate attack.  
Hence, do not identify.

Everything is tenuous.  
Even love is not perfect.  
It comes and goes with reward.  
Grave payment may be respect.

Truly we arrive and leave  
with absolute nothingness.  
Surely purpose is to make  
purposeless feel less pointless.

Perhaps honesty is brave:  
honourable naivety.  
Sod it? Release everything?  
Choose capitalist pathways?

16/11/15

## **The loneliness of choices**

Hunched over a bar, silent,  
vainly suggesting you're cool;  
you trail in fourth dimension,  
in slipstreams to a whirlpool.

The church is shut, so where else  
can you pass valid time by?  
Communication might start  
after you identify.

A simple happiness: bliss,  
may give you a connection.  
Drinking pop in a bus-stop  
is relatively action.

How easy is that? Often  
complexity's your armour.  
It can be a shield stopping  
you as a humble starter.

19/11/15

## **A letter to young Michael**

You're in the system. It's hard.  
On balance, two point five kids,  
mortgage and bright holidays,  
are less pain, but close eyelids.

When mum left so early on  
her action caused a ruckus,  
implying you were worthless.  
But you're equal, not surplus.

Don't act the goat and fall in  
with the easiest of "friends."  
Laziness can be a route  
to denial and pretend.

It's good to freely say "no."  
Opinions are respected.  
By slowly braving feelings,  
one day you'll know life's started.

25/11/15

### **I offer this solution**

Fighter planes; ego's to blame  
in a sense. The world would be  
better if human artists  
mixed colours sexually.

Monotheism should result  
in one religious story.  
Atheist extremes present  
opposite faced purity.

Worldwide travel allows mix  
and acceptance of one blood.  
Perhaps the New World Order  
will end "dragging though the mud."

Difference must begin wars.  
Monochrome palettes pursue  
black-and-white peace through balance.  
They say greens have brighter hue.

1/12/15



### **This is my Christmas card verse**

I've not hidden a puzzle:  
nothing in between the lines.  
There's rhyme and I try kindness.  
Angel wins despite "land mines!"

I'm sure there was a Jesus,  
but not via virgin birth.  
I'd ditch myrrh and keep gold gifts.  
I've no clue how much it's worth.

Anyway, happy Christmas,  
hopefully we'll meet and chat,  
but not on foxes this time,  
or a dumb subject like that.

Please be well and in the light.  
Your being here says something.  
You'll easily do next year  
in harmony. You will sing.

2/12/15

### **This morning I felt like this**

Waking, I fear the prospect  
of having to face the day.  
On my list of things to do  
is almost nothing. I pray,

or sometimes feel in that way,  
but that ended years ago.  
Perhaps I have a calling:  
some secular thing to do?

Life is feeling meaningless.  
Thinking hurts. I find no point.  
Maybe it's wrong, but children  
might give answers; "God appoint."

A little help would be good.  
Mania coloured last year,  
but this spring will be saintly;  
coloured with nature's power.

4/12/15

### **Gimme a break**

If only you could be me,  
reminiscing painfully.

When my life started to click,  
it dawned that past tries to fit

amounted to hopelessness.  
Would I always be role-less?

Would God not give me a child?  
Rose was formidable: WILD!

"Blood is thicker than water."  
She won me without chatter.

The doctors ration my pills.  
Abundance can cause evils.

\* \* \*

Comfort is a heated room.  
The future may lead to boom.

29/2/16

## **“Life 1-0-1” - The poem**

Can pure love be possible?  
Satisfaction is reward.  
Pantheism is plausible:  
all is God and we are Lord.

How can that be, when we take  
isolation as a truth?  
Groups are total delusion  
to an existential sleuth.

What is the function of life  
when children are not gifted?  
Is it to buy bigger cars:  
rewards for painful business?

For some there is no purpose,  
that alone is firm belief.  
Thinking can make us worthless.  
Mindlessness is stress relief.

25/3/16 - 18/4/16

## **I said, “What is my essence?”**

I change up and down my range.  
I do not know if you know  
who I am, now I have slumped.  
Smiles between us are now few.

If I gave you love before,  
and my loyalty and time,  
now I love you more. Stay close.  
Am I done? Are you still mine?

Fluctuating is a swine.  
People intertwine, wine, dine.  
Me? I might when I am high.  
Do you see the thread, the sign?

Will we become over, done,  
through a change you cannot stand?  
Take a stand or give commands.  
That way our bonds might withstand.

15/4/16

### **Artistic human nature**

Be aware of the quagmire  
that is creative living.  
Dispel the myth of friendship.  
We have to learn back-scratching.

Validation is not free.  
It begs reciprocation.  
How might talent overcome  
an unfair greedy nation?

In order for a breakthrough  
we need luck in random chance.  
Then after some momentum,  
our arts may lead to finance.

Whilst some people are lucky,  
it leaves other people not.  
Technique and application,  
sadly may not help a jot.

22/4/16

## **Rivers, life, fucking old wife**

I keep trying to make sense  
of it all. There is nothing  
to latch on to. White waters  
insist that I choose breathing.

Years ago there was a haze  
in my head: neuroleptics.  
They are still there, but I choose  
waters. We are all demics.

I have no map for my life.  
Eddies have often trapped me,  
like my first wife; the eighteen  
years of our atrocity.

There is no escape from flows.  
Who knows what is round the bend.  
You can pray. You can hold on.  
By habit, past shit will mend.

27/4/16

## **Why give me pills? Who is ill?**

Sahara sands; nomadic  
demands are less than concrete  
battlegrounds, where folk abound,  
in pointless bouts to deplete

the power of our other,  
equally headless, stressed-out  
brothers. Are there no mothers?  
Quetiapine gives more clout.

They call you manic. They call  
you schizophrenic or down.  
Naturally, tower blocks  
and shopping malls aren't God's plan.

Who is sick? Layers of bricks  
or genetically strange,  
expressers of consequence.  
You're on the psychotic range.

28/4/16

### **Forgetting self in night-spots**

"Confidence," "humility;"  
how ironic it can be:  
pairing mixed polarities  
as harmonic entities.

It's not obvious at first,  
but without your self-focus  
you know you're a nobody,  
and can faithfully cache lust.

What if eyes are on the verge  
of seeking an attraction?  
Apparently lies may start  
by this compulsive action.

Confident and wholesome folk  
find islandic states a boost.  
Their lower self-appraisals  
give an ease you'll not seduce.

30/4/16

## **I should be six feet under**

My success has been missing  
in ending pointless trials:  
the thoughtless modes of living,  
that end with priests' coffin nails.

Sure I've tried to top myself,  
but I haven't tried hard enough.  
Jolts of two-thirty volts fail.  
Finding more is pretty tough.

An excess of tablets failed,  
by sluggishly releasing.  
Perhaps pestles make poisons  
by their potent powdering?

Getting into hospital  
by drinking excess whiskey,  
is bad, but energy drinks?  
That is surely history.

1/5/16

## **Light and dark : the same ballpark**

Being relentlessly good,  
seeking canonisation,  
can annoy, like trash leavers  
at fast-food filling stations.

Christ made it clear that murder  
is a sin by just the thought.  
Such fantasising veers off  
his restrictive narrow path.

A mix of good and evil:  
the logical healthy state;  
honestly admitting wrongs;  
can modestly draw a mate.

Curiosity, balance  
and broadness of acceptance:  
the “one size fits all,” dissolves  
rigid polar compliance.

3/5/16

The next poem was written on the day Michelle learned of her missed miscarriage of our second child: James-Laura.

### **I’m going to paint a number seven**

There’s always been SEVEN:  
that guy at school:  
“Roy G Biv;”  
in music:  
the C-D-E-F-G-A-B  
white notes  
of the piano.

At SEVEN,  
data like 44 magnum and .303  
kept my autism interested.  
I couldn’t make pictures  
of Roald Dahl’s efforts,  
or from hard-backed “LadyBird”  
early books.



I shutdown at SEVEN.  
Middle-age began my thaw.  
Fear blocks life  
with no diversions.  
Feel it,  
penetrate,  
then hope you're "there."

Stumbling on overdose  
number three,  
lying in bed number SEVEN,  
panics and confusions  
drew nurse station clerks.  
One day they may push adoption  
choice makers.

Our second baby, James-Laura,  
died in Michelle after SEVEN weeks.  
A verbatim, "It's not good," echoed  
from an upsettingly same sounding  
sonographer.  
This can end couples quicker,  
than the gel's wiped off mum's belly.

So this is life:  
some people have luck,  
and some do not.  
There are middle aged "anxiety-virgins,"  
despite reality being spice.  
If you prefer Korma,  
leave your boss to it.

My verse, like The Bible,  
has SEVENs throughout.  
At 21 I may have tripped folk up,  
by making SEVENs  
70% lucky in algorithms.  
I later judged fruit machines  
as having higher, mirror honesty.

11/6/16

### **This is life**

You are sleeping.  
You do not want to wake.  
You shun the truth.

You have one life.  
Thieves abound.

Remember once living?  
You were a baby.  
You became a little child.

Afterwards you were fooled.  
It seemed acceptable.  
Your parents pushed you.  
They had to.

Mad people are not mad.  
They saw truth once.  
It was in part or whole.  
They understood Gnosis.  
Jesus was censored.

The true path is harder.  
Ideas cause danger.  
Your thoughts confuse.  
They may be chemically culled.  
Chlorpromazine could mean well or ill.

6/10/16

## Algorithms

Sight is by continuum.  
Even colours are a guess.  
Wellness or so called illness,  
isolates. The Cross told best.

Only psychosis can make  
additions of pairs of fruits,  
divide dirtily by twos.  
Such a sum is absolute.

Intelligence needs data,  
for fresh knowledge to emerge.  
Ideas formed from nothing,  
can mean madness: “on the verge.”

Then again, gifts from nothing,  
could reveal an Avatar:  
the Jesuses, the Einsteins,  
heard in part; taken too far ...

If we accept there is grey,  
then we must have black and white.  
Perfection is false: like time,  
nothingness is imprecise.

Some thoughts are led by flowcharts,  
in brains, as faultless machines.  
Algorithmic answers fit  
with all that’s ever been seen.

Depressive thoughts are made up  
in an isolated blue.  
Magic from manic genius  
might happen, to a high you.

Even without what they call  
“psychosis,” or plain madness,  
we should be intuitive:  
the soup: feelings: good guesses.

They say we’re born with knowledge,  
like how to tell right from wrong.  
We’re fed culture and a sex;  
life-algorithms can be strong.

2/11/16

### **The generation gap**

On a barstool, recalling smoking on buses, to Joanna,  
I suggest all workplaces, will eventually ban her habit.

By noting “no egg,”  
“VEGAN” appears on the till’s LCD.  
I make assumptions about her customer.

Words like “GAY” and “BISEXUAL,”  
are cast, from a dozen feet behind me.  
My radar’s sensitive, so I fake disinterest.

There’s a Tweed, flat-capped, and bearded young man.  
Unlike me, he doesn’t talk to the blonde and braless,  
Joanna. Age accommodates sociologically.

I mention “Bommy” night to her,  
leading to weather predictions,  
based on a wet yesterday.

It’s about mood: that common denominator.  
It’s “old-git-ish” talk, not chat-up stuff.  
Ironically, a beard aids the latter.

Dave Allen's topical on Facebook.  
With the middle-aged relating,  
hipsters ponder Reconciliations.

Returning from the basement toilets,  
I check music ads: "Margaret Glaspy, Joe Purdy."  
I guess they're no-marks. Some guy in an overcoat  
heads upstairs. He's BEARD in my peripheral vision.

He sings the Beatles: "Michelle."  
I'm wed to one. Past paranoia  
forces me to decide, if there was sound at all.

I leave. In minutes a bun is spotted.  
It decorates a young man's head.  
Then I contemplate the generation gap.  
"It's me," I accept, quickly expanding "WTF?", audibly;  
and resigning to incrementing age.

5/11/16

### **Can pi exist?**

I observe. I connect. I analyse.  
I think. I deduce. I link.  
I turn water into wine.  
It's a metaphor,  
dine on fresh thoughts;  
perhaps Creation ...  
Dine on ideas.

Think outside of the box.  
Open your mind .....  
Like I say in "Joe ..." :  
"Accepted, there is some truth  
in the Bible."  
I'm not religious.  
I'm OPEN-MINDED ...

11/11/16

### **This poem came with a rose**

I am sorry for Thursday.  
Dark nights and lack of money,  
may have brought my head-case out.  
Then again, it never hides.  
I have bought you one red rose.  
It took a little effort.  
That is nothing compared to  
  
everything, I would give you.

Xxx

11/11/16

### **A rant about me**

I am at home at 1p.m.  
It's probably Tuesday.  
  
I'm listening to "Berlin,"  
by Lou Reed. I've played and sang  
the first, title track, on keys.

Did you get what I just said?  
I'm listening to "Berlin;"  
fucking "Berlin!"

Help me out.  
Do you fucking hear me?  
No; you're busy.

That mania I had, has passed.  
Some people got off lightly.  
I don't want to fight now.  
I'm calmer. The drugs  
turned the volume down.

Do you know what?  
I did everything wrong.  
I don't belong.  
I did all the wrong fucking things.  
I write things, that people don't read.  
I play music, that people don't need.

I excite myself with the things I've done,  
but what the fucking hell, have I become?

15/11/16

### **Michelle, you wanted a poem**

I found me.  
Stay by me.  
Not everybody  
knows their unique "me."

It took  
the everlasting summers,  
from a way back,  
to become, five annual fishing trips.

There are only so many years  
in a life. I pissed away eighteen,  
with risperidone, alcohol,  
and my late fucking wife.

When I am most passionate,  
I feel I can do anything.  
I mean, I FEEL; Yes?  
I get fucking ELECTRIC ...

In our early days,  
we made Rose.  
God only knows  
if..... God only knows...

For months, mania woke me  
from our bed, in less hours  
than one hand can count,  
and shed loads were spent.

Now I say, "I change,  
up and down my range,"  
and stuff like  
"what is my essence?"

I don't think I could fall in love again.  
Is this good? "I can't possibly  
imagine another life,  
and certainly not a third wife."

I love you; #justsayin ;)

19/11/16



## **Bipolar mood disorder**

Chemicals give confidence.  
Reality is fiction.  
Mania is addictive.  
Tolerance becomes friction.

Depression flattens affect.  
Sympathetic thoughts enrage.  
Health leaves imperceptibly.  
Paranoid logics rampage.

Acquire expensive items.  
Become more personable.  
Personalities can shift.  
Cores become unchangeable.

Options include suicide.  
Lucid patients justify.  
Bipolar lasts forever;  
Godspeed discovering why ...

21/11/16

## **Beyond personality**

Polar self-assurance builds  
through the generation gap.  
A confidence in wisdom  
makes your thoughts prevent mishap.

Having a parental age  
over the years of others,  
dulls causes for niceties.  
Truths lead us not to bother.

In social situations,  
handcuffs effortlessly break.  
You offer blank expressions  
that make youngster's lures forsake.

The young get validation  
from their older, wiser folk:  
that nod for their persona,  
when they are frank: not a joke ...

26/11/16

### **Sonnet #1 - "Rose"**

Our lowly baby may have ministered,  
through subtle powers of a stigmata.  
By sharing her space, you would be humbled  
if you knew of her spina bifida.  
I once said, Rose was better than us two.  
A girl affected that way beats us all,  
but many problems led to an adieu  
to Rose, after I had made it your call.  
Death can partly lead to good or badness.  
Our pain in life is easily a strength.  
Empathy, not capitalist success,  
breaks the insistence of walls at arms-length.

Michelle and I conceived in one more year.  
Heart beats soon stopped, but just God knew its fear.

18/1/17

## **Sonnet #2 - "Michelle"**

My first wife taught piano: Bach to Jazz.  
I wasted many years with her in sleep.  
It was just like staying in Alcatraz.  
Marriage founded musically is cheap.  
I had to wait till middle age for life.  
Then I would meet my woman and my love.  
I offered Michelle chance to be my wife,  
as we were trying for a boy or lass.  
She had previously been ill-treated,  
but I would never place a hand on her.  
She can be fiery and not defeated.  
Her love of animals is exemplar.

Michelle has good humour and sexy curves,  
not a stick, but for "real" woman pervs.

19/1/17

## **Sonnet #3 - "Isolation"**

As a stranger I no longer know you,  
because I am starved of conversations.  
Isolation is easy to construe:  
talking fails to link by terse connections.  
For some they have a store and can runout.  
Whilst others link fresh thoughts to generate.  
Bodily touch alone should raise a doubt,  
if fluid brains are starved nerves escalate.  
Outside clubs and churches have a structure.  
In many ways, the sport clubs have a creed.  
I have searched four decades for another,  
to break the lonely complex in my mind.

Days like this, feel like day one, year zero.  
Make me long to be that man: YOUR HERO

20/1/17

#### **Sonnet #4 - "Suspicious social minds"**

With anxiety on display, who knows  
the details of your unshielded buttons.  
Silence is a siren and can enclose.  
Blunt words give escape as wisdom toughens.  
Delusionary things are sometimes said.  
They are often derogatory, but  
they can be bizarre; even heard as song.  
Without insight, they are not "old chestnuts."  
At worst, those closest to you lift your nerves.  
Panic forms a black cloud numbing your thoughts.  
Is this on purpose? You will never know.  
When you are paranoid, you have no trust.

We need people, but some will be a curse.  
The key is control: to think what suits us.

27/1/17

#### **Sonnet #5 - Personality -**

seems essential in our humanity.  
T-V-demeaning is insidious.  
It fools the guileless to mock honesty,  
by accepting disguises are success.  
Through YouTube, Facebook, social media,  
we join the cult to become make-believe;  
pushing figures up on Expedia,  
by the rewards from people we deceive.  
Dibnah was the steeplejack persona.  
I've not known many miners on TV,  
but those squashed fighting Margaret Thatcher,  
for rights to blacken faces honestly.

After this pointless acting, what comes next?  
Degrees outside OxBridge need ace subjects.

6/2/17

### Sonnet #6 - "Modern men"

Men are jelly if they grip an Audi;  
hundreds monthly for A to B travel.  
Then these capitalists become rowdy,  
attempting sales by their exhaust babel.  
Even women are a commodity.  
With gravity, egos are astral cores.  
Marriage is slipping, like an oddity.  
They wear caps that fit, not of "her indoors."  
What's it about? Dogs are devouring dogs.  
Hormones halt ways of logical thinking.  
Dopamine's craved through their penile orgasms.  
They leave it to mum. What's male parenting?

God's a metaphor. Gospels are valid,  
but ignored. Society seems selfish.

7/2/17

### Sonnet #7 - "A conceptual verse"

**Rose** makes me cry. I don't often read it.  
Hindsight suggests... Was she our only chance?  
**Michelle's** more upbeat, but starts with a theft.  
"Greater love has no-one," at zero romance.  
Love can briefly lead to **isolation**,  
as boundaries appear in partnerships.  
**Suspicious social minds** as foundations,  
confirm in time, that both lovers share trusts.  
Good character beats **personality**.  
The latter's skin deep and gravely pointless.  
Sheens on **modern men** in society,  
melt through honesty and love's coitus.

Love's perfect in natural history,  
but gamble with faith, hope and charity.

9/2/17

## Dopamine

Schizophrenia and bipolar,  
hate dopamine exposure:  
that existential bulldozer.

Too much fucks.  
A psychotic's luck -  
makes alcohol muck.

For some, "fit,"  
artificial, large tits  
can do it.

In the extreme  
ego-based teams,  
chemically gain esteem.

The "reward-chemical"  
is often polemical,  
even fucking endemical.

Nature's chemical high  
isn't passed by.  
You WILL try.

Even monks, spunk.  
They're religious punks,  
doubtless wanting hunks.

Be grown-up,  
and give up.  
Stop fucking up.

Resist seeking pleasure.  
Psychotics need leisure:  
creativity in measure.

Take your meds.  
Head to bed -  
when electricity's dead.

25/2/17

### **Empath**

**In youth,**  
everything was his fault:

**his tension:**  
chicken-less and eggless,

**seeding-frowns**  
in perfect mirrors,

**barefaced lying;**  
for years,

**was bypassing**  
a good tack:

**paradigm shifting.**  
One could be a fix.

12/3/17

### **Elements bitter and sweet**

(i) Love (inspired by St Paul) -

is acceptance.  
Then it's patience.  
It's sacrifice.

Love is sharing.  
It can be toil;  
certainly pain.

Love costs anxiety.  
It costs stress.  
Call it whatever; worry?

Love isn't just touch  
and excitement,  
that's dopamine.

But it is beautiful.  
And worth everything.  
Some say life is sacred,

and I'm sorry, but there is a madness,  
and you don't know.  
No-one knows:

some weird shit.  
Most just call it life.  
I call it love.

Is love life?  
Is love everything?  
Is love nothing: a delusion?

(ii) Anti-life

I said "love is life,"  
but life  
derailed,  
nailed  
down the track  
is not life.



It is a parallel line,  
or tangential decline,  
but not life.  
Remember  
accepting your lot?  
It was not life.

Life allows growth,  
right down one rail:  
a monorail.  
And love is a sail.  
It catches the wind.  
It is life.

Again, I said “love is life.”  
Mine started  
with my second  
wife,  
I had no idea how lost  
I’d been.

Do you know  
the only one you can hate  
is yourself.  
It’s a state  
where love  
has never been known.

It’s hard to stop hating,  
not least yourself.  
You may consider death,  
and give it a try.  
But look for life  
in relaxed eyes.

20/3/17

## **Michelle's 2017 Mother's Day card poem**

We lost Rose and James-Laura.  
Would I pass without your love?

I have no job or money.  
I give me to you solely.

If you climb, reach down to me.  
I am not a career man.

You wanted to be mummy.  
I tried for us, my Dolly...

Happy Mother's Day, Michelle xxx

22/3/17

## **Sonnet sans 'e' - "Actuality"**

Why not look for data in car I-Ds?  
Folk don't allow any happy grins bail.  
"Grown-ups" suck on organic coffin nails.  
Who's right and who's wrong in our human zoos.

In hollows of our guts moths disturb us.  
Minds follow in a flash to poor avail.  
You will gain to plod downtown as a snail.  
Happy drugs from within fix most poor moods.

In summary, living is without point,  
but wanting a baby for your thinking,  
might accord surviving as you'll anoint;  
but your child may spot pubs and try drinking,  
or start drugs, through a fatal drop out joint.  
Pray God will grant a Damascus saving.

30/3/17

### **Sonnet sans 'u' - "Bipolar"**

It's to do with stresses and chemicals.  
Demics appear by loads hitting excess.  
It can take a single massive distress,  
however, lesser loops gain medicals.

A gigantic meal of liberty caps,  
can precipitate a mental illness  
if ingested with total carelessness.  
Synapses fill with bio-chemicals.

Life needs to be re-planned: that only one.  
Don't give in to being ill. Create art.  
Corporate connection's over, done,  
so manically paint, play, think and write.  
It can be magic, not a restriction.  
Adaption will become a way of life.

31/3/17

### **Sonnet sans 'a' - "Suspiciousness"**

Six gherkins constituted my poison.  
I would not join scoffing the rightful two.  
My yelling in mid-sleep confuses you,  
whilst you tussle meds and how I've become.

When I'm buzzing currents, even the Sun -  
doesn't help. "Thinking outside the box" is new.  
I might condone enemies, then give dues.  
Christ shouts humility. I'd opt for guns.

But, people process complete delusions.  
We bother if our soccer club will win.  
Betting offers grids without exceptions.  
Helicopters bought pilotless begin -  
obvious psychotic signs, like visions.  
“Yes” puzzles, then you don’t know “off” from “on.”

1/4/17

### **Sonnet sans ‘o’ - “Stress”**

We can skip stress until we can’t skip stress,  
because life starts. We accelerate it -  
by expanding C-Vs, that stretch remits  
that ultimately hurt...; but cars impress.

We reach retirement. Maybe Christ might bless,  
but pleasure’s shunned as things never remit.  
It wasn’t said that life is easy; “was it?”  
Ending in rest is a luck based success.

Mental ill health’s triggered by life pressures.  
“Feel the fear,” but get life in safe balance.  
Interacting’s stressful, but it’s pleasure.  
Life’s a mirage that can lead us a dance.  
If there’s a chance, ditch the system. That’s sure.  
Life can be different if we cared less.

2/4/17

### **Sonnet sans ‘i’ - “Alcohol”**

Start to down beer, then head to harder stuff,  
perhaps vodkas or cheapest blended malts,  
but full head-case lagers become defaults:  
Kestrel Super Strength should hammer enough.



Nothing lasts,  
and that is self-fulfilling.

10/4/17

### **Sinking**

The feelings in my stomach,  
cause the torrents in my head.  
My mood slipped in the winter,  
making red admirals spread.

Have I got the coping skills -  
now my confidence has dropped?  
My wife has mentioned changes:  
I'm not that bloke she bagged.

I know my thoughts aren't real,  
because other times I'm high;  
when I pose in crazy clothes,  
like a social butterfly.

But for now, fibre-optics  
mainline feelings from my gut:  
the something is wrong untruths:  
those triggers that drive me nuts.

11/4/17

### **Not a NEXT underpants plug**

His mania bowed its head,  
like a curtain call; no less;  
like Gandhi in subtle ways.  
It said, "what is my essence?"

Some parts of us do not change.  
Our clothes of gossamer threads  
begin personalities:  
outermost fabrications.

It thought about Christ: his kecks.  
It never wore white Y-Fronts.  
“NEXT” brazened its own. It begged,  
“my essence? S’il vous plaît. Yes?”

Its eyes began to moisten.  
No-one understood. It said,  
“good character always beats  
the skin deep.” Its people frowned.

28/6/17

### **Gatecrashing**

Ignorance of the party,  
offers potentials to live.  
Bizarre paths, like drink and drugs,  
halt progress. Only love gives.

When you discover the gig:  
the party: the debacle;  
tickets aren’t automatic.  
Perhaps a distrust sparkles?

Love yourself first to find bliss.  
When you’re obvious: honest,  
you’ll be exploited and die  
in your own jail; a prophet.

Life was there all along. You  
were someone other than you:  
it was like fake I.D. You  
have time left to play true you...

29/6/17

### **Masques**

Thalia, Melpomene;  
they express human extremes.  
Neutrality safely bores,  
with compliance to our norms.

Blank emotionless faces  
debase our humanity.  
We face folk without feeling,  
by hiding anxieties.

As adults, who can we trust?  
We grow robotically.  
Life cannot be genuine:  
it is economical.

Pure trust is impossible  
without laying down your life.  
Christ had a perfect image,  
if he truly did live twice.

1/7/17

### **When the mania has passed**

I ask you if you love me.  
I ignore a queue jumper.  
I calmly leave our front space  
with its road neighbours capture.



My stomach feels my self-doubts.  
They play havoc with my brain.  
I can do it. Feelings pass,  
but manic wakes are insane.

Projects start to panic me.  
They used to be exciting.  
I still keep my diary.  
I say this stress; is “living.”

Bipolar lasts forever.  
The rhythms fool me every time.  
I ask you, “what’s my essence?”  
You don’t understand that line.

2/7/17

### **Nowhere to run**

Susan Jeffers suggested,  
that we do things anyway.  
She said that running from fears  
is travelling the wrong way.

That choice had been a problem,  
worsened by paranoia,  
rooted with anxiety  
dwelling after mania.

And it is universal,  
by broad personal degrees,  
helping it to be taboo;  
a bluff with relative ease.

Have you met Che Guevara?  
Will I tell you that you lie?  
When I say, “scale; one to ten,”  
can you answer eye to eye?

3/7/17

### **Everyone is a messiah**

A depressive realism  
is logically falsehood:  
you have to generalize,  
and bracket lives into herds.

Mood is a continuum,  
with indefinable ends.  
Infinitesimal points  
mean our aloneness transcends.

Ranges offer fuzzy sets  
with their broad understandings  
of how views of life concur,  
at any precise timing.

No two people are alike.  
We must all be messiahs.  
There is no right truthfulness.  
Question most vocalisers.

16/7/17

### **A messianic sonnet**

We are not waiting for THE Messiah,  
but A messiah. Maybe anyone  
in a New World Order could become one,  
each like ancient prophet Jeremiahs,

'but equally apart; no pariah.  
Logically, self-realisation  
can work. Capitalism will not make one  
of these avatars, therefore, a higher

thinking is called for than found within schools,  
that instill competition for EVERY  
issue. But, an illiterate saviour  
will stem from desert or plains with gruel;  
clean from evil cellphone technology.  
They will be the Anti-Pope, less grandeur.

17/7/17

### **New World Order nutshell?**

"Life is a Venn diagram  
in multiple dimensions.  
We strive for one boundary,  
like a central unity."

It's not about similarity,  
but being equally different.

Everyone's dimension  
is  
    unique,

or a self-realisation,  
bonded  
by mutual acceptance.

Race and skin externalise.  
Levelling religions are within:  
not least capitalist teachings  
rooting unquestioned paths.

What do you see in art;  
paint, passion? Do we focus the same?

Do we love differently in sex;  
both hetro and homo?

19/7/17

### **The bed thing**

Men are from Mars and women  
are from Venus. And methods  
can even lack with players:  
to mysterious fluids.

How do you please a woman?  
If confidence doesn't cut it.  
You sure won't win if angles,  
in her privates don't hit it.

A drought can be the answer.  
That gap can make her gagging.  
If cuming's irregular  
you may think you are gifting.

It's Venus and the red one.  
Women can be mysteries.  
You could exercise your wrist,  
to hold on to sanity.

24/7/17

## **It came**

Who knows how long it will last:  
calm liberating freedom;  
silently stopping conflicts.  
Does pride become tedium?

And is it not an answer  
to that aging Thatcherism:  
that legacy that festers  
making our homes a prison.

Communal life is over.  
The roads are Mad-Max movies.  
Masses shy from mindfulness,  
whilst ISIS terrorises.

Embrace it: the solution;  
not love as such: a patience  
with us all: respectfulness.  
Keep hold despite the nation.

16/8/17

## **Paranoia**

It's about managing it.  
It's fed by anxieties,  
and fuels those emotions,  
fooled by outer fallacies.

Why do you fidget with pens  
and analyse intensely?  
Game over, body language  
is mirrored with jeopardy.

Big yourself down so no-one  
cares. Don't visually dare,  
because pride and egos clash.  
Jesus Christ was correct there.

Your reaction to stresses  
needn't be cosmic mysteries.  
For other's it's physical.  
The cause may be cannabis.....

23/8/17

### **Me again**

It struck me as I stressed  
over my conversation:  
more about how I said it,  
than what I said.

My exit laughter  
seemed false,  
and I felt  
more isolated.

Approaching pedestrians  
I bowed my head.  
The floor was part  
of my world, again.

Once, isolation ironically  
freed me.  
Confidence has gone without reason.  
That unreality never existed.

That's the paradox:  
the true confidence  
is that there is no confidence.  
Ageing there's us, we just are.

29/8/17

### **Bipolar revisited**

It is about growing up.  
It is not about your genes...  
Do you utter yes for no:  
that habit built in your teens?

It is linked to chemicals,  
affected by externals.  
Can you control your anger  
by managing life stresses?

Your indecision can lead  
to increasing blood pressure.  
A square plug scenario  
can permanently matter.

That is why you drink and smoke,  
or maybe chance narcotics.  
It started with a bad choice,  
then your life turned out toxic.

2/9/17

### **My new words**

Life goes on.  
Worrying is pointless.

Confidence is chemical.  
Personalities are scams.

Follow an art.  
Shun the media.

Dress your way.  
Hype is pandemic.

Avoid feeling competitive.  
Ditch that programming.

Enjoy warm shelter.  
Count your blessings.

Religious truths exist.  
Heaven is within.

15/9/17

### **Fragments #1**

Surely purpose is to make  
“purposeless” feel less pointless.

Life stubbornly moulds,  
dragging its own scruff.

I hadn't banked on spring.  
Was God pencilling us in for spring?

Everyone's path is  
unique.

You love a second teddy,  
but you never forget the first.



If you were stressed in your youth  
adulthood might feel softer.

It's about mood: that common denominator.  
I couldn't hope to find someone more kind.

Ideas cause danger.  
The true path is harder.

Love isn't just touch and excitement, that's dopamine.  
Be grown-up, and give up.

It's my drama.  
The priests say "pray. It's not for debate."

I asked, "what is my essence?"

28/10/17

## **Fragments #2**

"It is lonely at the top"  
where the Eucharist dissolves.

He repeated the words then put hands out,  
for his first taste of Christ.

At the end of mass he remained  
and people wished him well.

If God exists,  
Catholics have it.

It leads a less bizarre path to the question,  
*do you know the name of God?* I tell them, *you say 'Jehovah.*

I'm not incarcerated, but there's nowhere better  
than my bedroom to go.

"Mum and dad, help;"  
that left this fate unexplained.

Oh no, I'm a man.  
God's a complete enigma.

It can be a null Hades,  
not a western God's meaning.

Meditation in mystics  
is a current, clear contrast.

I did flirt with Golgotha.

28/10/17

### **Fragments #3**

Daffodils form a strong wake from crocuses.  
Maybe you will synchronise with spring.

Spring's always the crocuses,  
offering chances we never seize.

I played "Somewhere over the rainbow"  
to make us cry. Michelle wept the most.

Summer dress turns heads.  
Daylight was a veiled bride.

Summer came and summer went,  
and night-time was Valium.

Everything is still outside,  
and no leaves exist to move.

It was a never-ending cycle  
of springs and autumns.

What has happened to the spring?  
Autumn can be deceptive.

It's coming via memories.  
Fall hurt me.

My mood slipped in the winter,  
making red admirals spread.

It's six a.m. and I kiss you.

28/10/17

#### **Fragments #4**

Walking down Oxford Road,  
I don dark shades.

I buy a book: "Postmodern American Poetry."  
And I'd NEED to be manic to read my tome in Wetherspoon's.

Standing in a kiosk is a man selling sweets,  
papers and pornography to passers-by.

It's clichéd, but "anal treet."  
It's a great gay place to meet.

I'm a yellow laced lighthouse -  
with my eight holer Docs and RayBans;

wondering if the girls are as nice inside as out.  
Wisely choose your wife.

Queens of a different kind  
congregate down Canal Street.

Call me a prude.  
Drop dead gorgeous lipstick lesbians

with cleavage in hysterics,  
seduce me for three seconds.

It's a feckin minefield.  
I had to wait till middle age for life.

Everyone here has their way.

31/10/17

### **Fragments #5**

Can pure love be possible?  
Everything is tenuous.

Dispel the myth of friendship.  
Am I done? Are you still mine?

Cast iron comes through great cost.  
Hunched over a bar, silent,

vainly suggesting you're cool;  
be aware that most folk act.

Jesus Christ said, "Feed my sheep."  
Sacrifice is biblical.

Pantheism is plausible.  
I thought it was the answer.

Her name was Rose Megan Holme.  
For some that is everything.

I'd like to be a daddy.  
I keep trying to make sense.

They call you manic. They call  
you schizophrenic or down.

It is easy to be slaves.  
What is life? To be childless?

Everything is at a price.

31/10/17

### **Fragments #6**

Good character beats personality.  
The latter's skin deep and gravely pointless.

Who has the addictive personality,  
assassinated again?

He's non-mainstream,  
they said, "strip your personality."

He was sunk as the umbilical  
from church snapped.

If only you weren't a leper,  
a soul-mate with curves, -

heart and a predilection for honesty;  
might paint naked implications of your hurt.

Memories like brush strokes on his canvas of life  
build into a precious oil

and shape his carrion personality.  
What better way to gaffe than Facebook?

Sheens on modern men in society,  
melt through honesty and love's coitus.

The young get validation from their older, wiser folk:  
that nod for their persona.

Personality seems essential in our humanity.

2/11/17

### **Fragments #7**

Just as you sup the dregs  
before anxiety starts;  
you don't know what  
you're here for.  
You don't know.

The mug says,  
"Keep calm and Twitter on."  
You take it to mean "tweet"  
and some hashtag.

Just as your bladder calls,  
just as ten minutes back it did;  
you're unpaid, your stress is living.

At the point that “no” means “yes,”  
you’re a whirlwind that others blow.

Just as you spin again; round and round;  
come on and let it out,  
dance, dance, dance;  
you recall Radiohead.

The indoor market’s paranoia; then you say  
you’re shit.

Just as you cry; do you stop it?

3/11/17

### **Fragments #8**

We’re all alone.  
I guess the dead

of night; made the window an expansive mirror.  
He sat facing himself, head in hands on the table.

Aloneness put bread to test.  
He didn't want to end up alone.

He thought, “six months.”  
It would work or not. Winter’s -

no time to pass away with its palette  
of golden brown;

brollies and macs,  
brollies and macs.

Denial of aloneness  
promotes control of masses.

“It is lonely at the top.”  
You can love alone,

and be blissful to share. Then thankful  
if it lands,

and wondering if it returns, to truth:  
you.

Embrace your aloneness.

9/11/17

### **Fragments #9**

Tomorrow’s dreams dissolved  
at evening:

nightmares? Night-time  
was an assassin,

despite fuel -  
his palladium ring implied.

Interest grew on Rosemary’s:  
a snowball rolling downhill:

a porn shop’s investment;  
honestly suggesting a headline...?

Whilst mornings lasted  
he should walk, for some vitamin

or other; invariably with siren hat  
and coat to match;



English gent or camo'  
to win a non-existent war:

an Iraq. Eventually,  
he would discover his Everest:

his own mission; kill demons,  
and learn, that he was always the traffic,

not stuck: held back.

18/11/17

### **Gnosis #1 - "We"**

We were brainwashed at our schools.  
We buy pointless bigger wheels.

We eat, smoke, drink, copulate.  
We are dopamine addicts.

We should compete with ourselves.  
We chase reward chemicals.

We learn "no" for our own good.  
We gain choice and real friends.

We learn that we're chemical.  
We gain noble-gas comfort.

We have always been ourselves.  
We stop turning anger in.

We're an atom of a god.  
We're infinite gods of gods.

We're fractals and energy.  
We're nothing if not spirit.

We're more like balls than bipeds.  
We know through popping mushrooms.

We'll find a messiah, BUT  
We'll have no trust to listen.

We'd pride, now it's suspicion.

20/11/17

### **Gnosis #2 - "The City pub"**

The beer's consecrated,  
but it's a levelling drink.

People flock here in the day.  
The pews give them a safe place.

I drift: an unbeliever  
not having common thinking.

The truth is spider's webbing;  
time strengthening belonging.

I only see mirages.  
The bar's a cool oasis.

They don't shun me for coming.  
It strengthens their conviction.

Regulars are mainly male.  
The whole's less than adding parts.

I think Boddington's bitter -  
traps me. The barmaids read me.

The jukebox might be progress:  
a lead to further comfort;

but an offer to play pool,  
might be a cultic practice?

I head to paranoia.

21/11/17

### **Gnosis #3 - "Silence"**

For some it as a blessing.  
Others find silence a curse.

Some need to fill it for peace.  
Some force it for their comfort.

People want to know your mind,  
and not needing to guess it.

We might be equal when still,  
like meditating; sleeping,

without judging, or making  
any type of reckoning.

Silence, ironically,  
may pacify contentions.

In silences the holy  
find connection with a god,

whilst busy minds have chaos,  
and are steeped in world affairs.

We all fall for modern ways,  
like conditioning to talk.

Common-sense will manifest  
when verbose becomes the terse.

Ignore Lipman and Hoskins.

25/11/17

### **Gnosis #4 - "Masques"**

To open conversations,  
we launch into some dangers.

Can we keep our words streaming?  
Is safety found in silence?

Anxiety is factored  
in these social equations,

and either way there is fear.  
We ought to risk the outcome.

Try not to over process  
and be a human android.

The universe is our choice:  
a gamble or aloneness?

No outcomes are a given,  
and some masks cause addiction.

Beware the poker experts.  
Why accept less emoting?

In truth, social medium  
is either God or money.

We are fooled folk are real,  
whilst offering us dangers.

Masques can split up families.

26/11/17

### **Gnosis #5 - "Balance, respect and love"**

Obsess a path to botches,  
so that imbalance stresses.

Making aspects too little,  
replacing food for tippie

makes mood become unstable.  
Next, you may ignore people.

Anxiety isolates.  
Withdrawn respect decimates -

confidence and self-esteem,  
and leads to a shame regime;

that reminder of childhood  
and those feelings of "I should;"

and wanting to satisfy.  
Should you continue to try?

Can abstraction be defined.  
Love differs in every mind.

Was Saint Paul right on this one,  
and did Corinth become won?

The only absolute of giving,  
is to give up your living

for the greater good of man.

1/12/17

### **Gnosis #6 - "The bedroom"**

Its four walls WERE the writing,  
with their hardness boring,

through familiarity  
and gaudy verbosity.

Citizens' band radio  
was a weak occasional -

friend, but his unemployment,  
brought on by mental ailment,

trumped any One-Nine breaker.  
"Drink" confounded labellers,

"smoke-free" was one less prop too.  
Then "fuck off" entered his zoo,

amongst white noise, LCDs,  
his dog hogging the fan; CHEESE.

He will get his Austrian -  
smoked. When he cared, dorian

modes, and rich chromaticism  
made life head to stoicism.

That was worth tomorrow. Wives  
and Sun win over winter.

Cold darkness depresses mood.

7/12/17

### **Gnosis #7 - "Gnosis"**

No pair view life the same way.  
That is a religious aim.

Everyone has a gnosis.  
Then that is an assertion.

You cannot share a gnosis.  
That is also assertion.

Logically, a gnosis  
cannot be validated.

Confidence negates gnosis,  
by its slowing of thinking.

Analysis is pointless.  
Mindlessness is blissfulness.

Projection of empty minds  
should remove paranoia.

Paradoxically, age  
aids living and ends it too.

Embrace your aloneness, not  
the construct of a council.

Escape your self-made prison.  
Master tyrannical thoughts.

Empty your mind to be free.....

8/12/17

### **Why John dislikes being called love**

John wasn't brought up.  
He parented himself  
when forced.  
He thought, *what a blessing  
to be nurtured.*  
(He was a master of understatement.)

He hid behind computer screens.  
Maybe that way he'd get through.  
A degree in cannabis gave few options.  
He'd be made to talk though.

He never had a "funny" adolescent time,  
rite of passage or coming of age.  
He'd always been John, a chameleon,  
but with no one to blend into now.

Some gay middle-aged guy kept meeting him  
in John's favourite Irish pub,  
and revealed his impressive wage slip.  
John was naive, not seeing sex  
factored.



John worked nearby on computers.  
He thought; *it's the job, I'll get a new one,*  
but his problem followed him.  
John was John's problem.

He drank more.  
It helped but wasn't long-term.  
A doctor  
gave him antipsychotics.  
She labelled him "paranoid schizophrenic."  
John was glad. He could avoid everyone  
by not working.  
He'd not grown up.  
How would he fill the decades?

His CV was shite,  
offering no fresh start.  
Then a course came by chance:  
computers; great, he loved fucking computers.  
An old friend did too,  
so much he killed himself.  
They'd programmed to Bob Dylan way back.

On the course he met a much older woman,  
becoming stuck to her.  
John valued other's happiness more than his own.  
He never got a medal  
despite losing 18 years.  
During that time he lost another, longer job,  
just before she died.  
They'd married. He got a house.

Whilst VERY manic he met a younger woman.  
They also married, getting engaged before she was pregnant.  
His new psychiatrist said, "God help you,"  
but they were in love.  
In his 40s he grew up.

He realised we grow at different rates.  
For some 20 is like 40, and many never grow up at all.  
He could be a 20 something's dad but didn't contemplate death.  
His pride was less and forgiveness more.  
Abandoned by his mother at eight; fuck it, he got there.

6/4/18

## **Addendum**

Since the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2018, when Michael wrote his penultimate poem, “Why John dislikes being called love”, it was nearly twenty months before he wrote his final verse. He had become a nonfiction writer instead. His “I am” book is a very good example.

Michael read both his final poems to open-mic audiences, around the time that he wrote them, but “When I changed:”, was singularly unusual, in being the only poem in years of spoken word performing, that another performer asked to be able to read one of Michael’s poems themselves.

### **When I changed:**

It happened in one moment.  
I realised my worth.  
Some people stopped liking me.  
Some people started.

Most days became valid.  
Acting out me was fun.  
I could drink alcohol sensibly.  
I became interested in humanity.

The longer I was me, the more me I was.  
Dare I say I increased in wisdom?  
My empathy rocketed.  
The plight of others could make me cry.

In part, the right wing grated.  
I gained personal rules.  
Turning a blind eye was not one.  
Further introspection was.

An adult relationship was possible.  
I'm made up I became me.  
I'm saddened some don't make it.  
It's hard, but the "before-me" bit has a name.

It's called Hell.

26/1/20

***Godspeed...***