

Introduction

Poetry is like a snapshot of your feelings at any particular point. This collection is split into three sections, which could be viewed as three “groups” of snapshots – when I’ve been happy, when I’ve been sad, and when I’ve been in love (this section is also unofficially split in two – failed and successful relationships). Looking back at all of these poems, I can invariably remember what (or, more often, who) they were about. People who know me well would probably be able to identify quite a few of them – there was more than one that I was reluctant to put in as it would be completely transparent to certain people. There were also some that I thought made me look rather bad, but in the end these were not only included, but even led to the title of the collection. After all, these poems only reflect how I felt at the time, not how I am permanently. And anyway, nobody’s perfect – not even me!

The title poem – “Warts and All” – is a reflection of the fact that, as poets, we bare our souls to the world – not just the parts we want people to see, but everything. Oddly enough, many people seem to connect more with the “darker” poems – perhaps it is because we become most introspective when we are in our worst moments, and thus perceive things in a sharper way. I tend to write most poetry when feeling depressed (fortunately I haven’t been depressed for a very long time now – unfortunately this means I’ve not written much poetry in that time!). It’s a strange fact about humans that they can animatedly spend hours telling you what went wrong in a disastrous holiday, while a good holiday where they had a great time is normally described in little more than a syllable. The same is often true in poetry, but there is another element to it. When you’re happy, you just feel happy, and you want to stay happy as long as possible. Conversely, when you are feeling depressed, writing poetry is a release. It’s almost as though you get rid of some of the

feelings of sadness, anger, unhappiness and suchlike by spilling it out onto the paper.

This is the third edition, I've added a couple of poems at the end in a fourth section – "Prose Poetry". These are two longer poems that tell a story, not based on any particular event that I've experienced or witnessed. The rhyme scheme and form constantly change through the poems, which may make them more challenging to read for some who aren't used to reading poetry, but I consider them among the best poems I've ever written so I wanted to include them here.

This collection is freely distributable and you are quite welcome to email it or host it on your own website if you wish. The only condition that I make is that the content is not changed in any way. Any links to either my website – www.darscom.net - where my books are sold – www.lulu.com/darscom - or where I write my reviews – www.epinions.com/user-captaind - will be very much appreciated. Please email me at daveseaman@darscom.net if you have any comments or questions.

Best wishes,

Dave Seaman

A Lighter Look at Life

We start off with a collection of lighter verse. One review of the earlier paperback format of this collection stated that it was “guaranteed to raise a smile in all but the clinically dead”. Whether that’s true or not, some of my funnier or just plain surreal poetry is on exhibition here.

While it may not be as deep as some of the other poetry, and certainly none will ever be considered classics, I feel they have their own merit. Being able to make someone smile or laugh is one of the greatest gifts you can have, and should never be underestimated. It seems odd that some of the greatest comic geniuses in history have been manic depressives.

I guess the lesson in that is, you not only need to be able to make other people laugh, but you need to have people around you who can make you laugh, too.
not only need to be able to make other people laugh, but you need to have people around you who can make you laugh, too.

That Special Place.

There is a seat in this canteen
where inspiration flows through me
and I write lucid, beautiful poetry
and prose.

Unfortunately
someone else is sitting in it.

DIGITS.

What a wonderful invention, this digital TV,
Filling the corporations' coffers, making them
rub their hands in glee.
Fifty channels now to choose from, as I am alive!
Fifty channels of worthless trash,
instead of only five.

Getting Nowhere Fast.

How to fit it all in

(as if wasting time was a sin.)

How to get up and go

(when your body says no.)

Trying to make the right move

(although what does that prove?)

Making a complete mess of your life

(well how did you know she was someone's wife?)

Doing everything wrong

(selling your soul for a song.)

Then writing a poem about it

(and finding you've run out of rhymes.)

A Lesson In Listening To Your Dad.

A little lesson from the
school of knocks,
hard knocks.

Dad said: "Watch how you drive out of there".
I said "Yeah",
thought "seen it, done it
no problemo,
easy."
Schreeeeee!

After a visit to the repair centre
I sit staring at the bill,
which stings like a leaving lover's last kiss.
And all I was going to do
was put it in for a service.

Variations on a Theme Park.

Nag nag nag,
that's all she ever does, the
child clinging to my arm.

Why she wants to go
on this particular ride baffles me;
surely someone will come to harm
on that monstrous contraption
of thrills spills and action?

The line of people edges forwards,
allowing me ample time to
contemplate the foolishness
of my giving in so quickly.

My knees begin to tremble;
surely I'm not really letting myself in for
that?!

Accelerated to 3g,
Spun through 360 degrees,
all to please this vile creature, clinging
slightly more tightly to my arm now.

Two more turns to go, me struck dumb
and my arm going numb.

We're next. The roller coaster's homing in on us
FAST.

I feel a tug on my blood-drained arm;
"Daddy, I need to go to the toilet."

"You can wait" I state, snarling through
gritted teeth,
and force us both to endure the ride
I didn't want to go on
in the first place.

Revenge.

So you're flirting with my best friend,
are you?

Well, I'll show you!

I'll flirt with your best friend, too.

So you're burning all of my pictures,
are you?

Well, I'll show you!

I'll burn all of your pictures, too.

So you're dancing with my brother,
are you?

Well, I'll show you!

I'll dance with your sister, too.

So you're dead now,
are you?

Well, I'll show you!

(The writer of this poem is now dead, too.)

Ballad of the Irate Writer and his PC.

Tap tap
Blip blip
Bash bash
Beep beep
Print print
Read read
Tear tear
Weep weep
Thump thump
Bleep bleep
Smash smash
Tinkle tinkle

Inspiration!
Type Ty
Uh oh...

Scribble scribble

Game Over.

It's causing a drain
 on my brain
My computer's a pain
 as it beats me again
Going insane
 is all I will gain.

It seems so lame
 that I lost yet another game
Seeking my moment of fame
 but it's always the same
My best efforts are lame
 and I've only myself to blame.

Staying up through the night
 just one more battle to fight
To contend with all my might
 but hindering my plight
A lack of sleep is my blight
 and I must be a real sight.

It's really quite sad
 that, although I'm not bad
I must surely be mad
 to heed that TV ad
And play homage to this fad
 of fiddling with a control pad.

Haiku of Life

Life is a journey
We hope you enjoy your trip
But please mind the gap!

Haiku to Work

My lovely workplace
Oh what a joy to be there!!!
Paradoxical

Chocoholic

It's no good, I need a chocolate break!
before I break, before I love all my
good humour, glucose-reduced induced intolerance
and begin snapping heads off and cracking instead of
snacking.

I'd become like the Incredible Hulk unless I add to my bulk
By crunching calories I crave, oh behave!
I know I'm on a diet, but I don't want to be
That good yet... I NEED CHOCOLATE!!!!!!

The Well.

I had much to sell
as you can probably tell,
before I went and fell
down this dratted well,
the bottom of which was in Hell
 or some close approximation at least;
 it was dark, and I could hear some evil Beast
 that upon my bones wanted to feast
 like so much fermented yeast
and tear my limbs apart
which would hurt, for a start;
even more than when that stupid tart
ran me over with her cart;
 she also had wares to sell, I remember
 back then, when? Last December
 before my chances a well was to dismember,
 snuffing them out like the last glowing ember
of fiscal fire
so now I'm in the mire
and will run till I tire;
my future looks dire
 and bleak
 for I am getting so weak
 as an exit I seek
 but, wait! There's a leak;
so... there must be a hole
in which to burrow like a mole
my aching limbs I cajole
to save my weary soul
 but... as I try to flee
 the last of my strength deserts me
 and the Beast is disregarding my plea,
 for it's about to have its tea.
Things were going so well
before I fell
down a well.

Escape from the Well.

I have another tale to tell,
that of getting out of the well
down which I fell.
(though only for a spell).

There was this beast which attacked me
(it mistook me for its tea, you see)
but was actually very friendly,
gave me sustenance and helped me to flee.

"From what?", I hear you ask.
I'll tell you; from a monster in a mask
who felt it was its onerous task
to squash me to the size of a small cask.

Seemingly bored, it chased me nonetheless,
starting a complicated game of chess;
the beast's strategy failing to impress.
(It stood it's ground; now it's just a mess.)

I dropped gold pieces on the floor, each one a pawn,
for the masked creature stooped to pick them up. Then at
dawn
it disappeared; later, when it chanced upon me upon the lawn
I realised I was outside the well. (And covered in frogspawn.)

I looked around at the green green grass of home, but
not for long, to do that I would have had to be a nut
of epic proportions. So I kneed the monster in the gut
and made with haste for a handy nearby hut.

The occupant was someone I'd once ripped off (she thought)
and I guess there's a lesson in that somewhere to be taught
but all the education she had in mind for me came to nought

for in the creature's claws she came to be caught.

The daemon tracked me through the town
(the population of which, for some reason, went down)
and arrived to confront me clothed in a gown
of the (late) well-known company's clown.

The ogre's appearance I will now describe;
It was ugly. It maybe would be a cruel jibe
to compare it with a Spice Girl, or similar low-life tribe
and whether it had finer qualities is impossible to ascribe

as it was trying to kill me at the time; not something that
enamours you toward a creature. Not only that, but it ate my
hat
which I had managed to preserve through all my troubles, the
bat
that tried to snatch it away, and that darned "came-back" cat.

Not that I'm bitter, mind. I like to live life with some danger,
but my life's always been threatened by a friend, not a
stranger
like this one, whose gender I cannot even ascertain; an
arranger
of strange demises. (Even worse than a money-changer!)

I finally got the better of it when I found a gun.
(So old it could have been used by Atilla the Hun!)
Suitably armed, and refreshed by a current bun
I shot the thing, and thought that the job had been done.

How wrong can you be?! When shot it multiplied
and its progeny dispersed, and following them I spied
the destination of their travels; a merchant that plied
all sorts of Chinese food that was fried.

My despair was great, I'll tell you that much;

but salvation was mine, for the weather was such
that the winds blew them all into an open rabbit hutch
which I promptly closed and barricaded. Now there's a
clutch

of the things in this cage; they cannot escape
and I threw it down the well (remember that?). Now a tape
of the Spice Girls is their torture, and for a living they scrape
on flies that fly by. It is a jolly jape

for me to imagine their agony, as their eardrums
vibrate to the inane wails and strums
of girls with less talent than gums,
hating each other and pretending to be chums.

But enough of this! For you all want to know
what I'm doing now! (Yes, you do.) Well, I'm going to go
to a land which is further away than a stone's throw,
a land where my talents can prosper and grow,
AND WHICH HAS NO WELLS IN IT! OH!!

Aspects of Creation.

Staring up at the sky,
watching the clouds go by.

Staring at those clouds,
The heaven's ethereal shrouds.

Feeling the wind on my cheek,
listening to the rushing air speak.

Feeling the sun on my face,
heat radiation stretching across space.

Listening to the rain fall down,
turning grass green from brown.

Watching the world as it speeds
around the sun, velocity perfect
for its needs.

Thinking about the Creator
of the universe;

That people believe in him not
seems so perverse.

Watching the sun go down,
as out of sight it does sink;

People still believe it exists
when they can't see it,
I think.

So why don't they believe in a maker,
when they know every loaf of bread has a baker?

The Rise, Fall And Rise Of Us

Love, eh? Just how do you describe it? A many splintered thing?

This section takes a look at some past loves, imagined loves, and finally my one true love. ☺ (Our “Love Story”, a trio of poems, appears in “The People’s Poet Anthology 2003”. The first is written by Rebecca Smith, the second a reply by myself, and the third is a collaboration of the two of us. Since 21st September 2002, Rebecca changed her surname to “Seaman”. ☺☺☺☺☺☺)

Some of my previous relationships, however, were not quite as happy. Well, let’s face it, breaking up with someone or unreturned affections make you downright miserable, don’t they? So some of my poems do reflect that. Whereas some are just too slushy and sentimental for words. (No apology given.)

If you’re romantically minded, I think you’ll enjoy this section most of all. If you’ve been unlucky in love, or the reverse, or both, I’m sure there’ll be something here you will relate to.

And in case you were wondering... yes – I can remember who each poem was about, and exactly when and why I wrote it! Not all of the subjects know about them. And that, I think, is the way I prefer it!

The fact that my relationship with Rebecca was the inspiration for so much of my more recent poetry is why this section has been loaded with most of the extra poems, which didn’t appear in the paperback edition. Some of the extra poems were actually written a long time ago, but just wouldn’t fit into the paperback. (None of the miserable poems were written recently, needless to say!...)

Although I've put the poems in a sequence which seems to follow a story, the poems were written at various times about different people, and do not appear chronologically. One point worthy of mention (IMHO) is that in the original book, this section was simply called, "The Rise and Fall of Us", and ended on a sad note. (The last poem being the rather despairing, "It's Just Not Cricket").

Personally, I've always liked happy endings, so I much prefer having the extra, happy (and, yes, I admit it – slushy) poems at the end. I'll leave you to decide what you think. (If you're like my sister, you won't enjoy the slushy ones...)

Acquittal.

When will it dawn on you,
well-meaning friend;
my happiness is not contingent
on having a girl
on my arm,
in my heart,
in my life.

Just because you have
found bliss being besotted
with someone you call
your own -
why should it be
that my perfect match
will now simply fall into my lap -
just because I want her to?

You are deluded, my friend,
if you think that to be the case.

Happiness must come
from the inside,
but to rely always on others
to make you joyful -
now, that would be to condemn
yourself to a life
of sadness, split solely by
moments of mirth
over which you have no control.

I am releasing myself from
this slavery, so that
when she who is right for me
materialises by my side,
I will take her -
to add to my life,
not to make it.

I rest my case, M'Lud.

One Day You'll Understand.

I hope it gives you a buzz
making me as nervous as you do...
When we're on the phone,
every time we're alone
my heart acts like
there's little time left;
gets in as many beats as it can
in the shortest time span,
making me feel quite exhausted
after a lifetime's worth of heartbeats
were crammed into one minute.

That's how you make me feel.
Do you even know it?

Surely you must, and yet
this nervousness I feel
compels me to say none of the things
I have in mind, and
even those things I do espouse
come out completely wrong, as if
my larynx is involved
in some great conspiracy
to keep you from being able to read
the writing lining the walls of my heart.

Oh that I could give you
a Rosetta stone to my
insane ramblings,
that you could see and hear
the pure and eloquent words of love
which formulate in my heart and mind,
only to be denied access
to the outside world!

To let you into my world
is what I desire,
to let you see the fire
that drives me,
the incessant burning
that evaporates life's oceans
of problems, leaving in its wake
a sea-bed full of rare and precious
pearls, beautiful shells
and things no living being
has beheld before.

My heart contains more than you can know,
but one day it will find the courage
to come out
when I want it to most,
when I'm with you.

Changes.

I'm seeing you
as if
for the first
time

My eyes
are
opened

I cannot
understand
why
I did not
see you
before

I knew you
and yet
failed
to perceive
all that you are

Definition
has blurred

What once was
so clear
is now
hard to see

Why have
my feelings for you
changed
so much?

Are they
returned?

My heart can now
capture
the radiance that
emanates
from your soul

Is it
to be?

(Only you
can provide
the answer.)

Happy Ending.

I know she exists, hiding out there;
I know I'll find someone someday who'll care
about me the way I will her, somewhere.
I might have met her already, but life's not that fair
as to let me know I have; only to hope I can dare,
at the same time trying to avoid the snare
of a broken heart, just trying to breathe the air
of paradise. When I find her I'll take her there
and this perfect world we can share
together forever, happy with time to spare.

Could it be...?

My heart beats faster
when I see you.

Could it be love?

You look at me and
your eyes seem to sparkle.

Could it be mutual?

I see you standing at a bar,
alone.

Could it be the right time?

I see your hand,
and the ring on your wedding finger.

Could it be a mistake?

Where Do I Go From Here?

How do I take that small step
that seems a light-year away?
How can I make that split-second decision
that takes forever and a day?
When does a friendship
turn into a relationship?
When does someone to whom you're like a brother
suddenly turn out to be your dream-lover?
Why am I so confused,
feel so discarded and used,
broken and abused
like a plug that's been fused?
I feel untrue to myself,
not to mention to my friend...
A friendship so valuable,
I would die were it to end.
If I ever needed inspiration
then that time is now;
but even if it came, I know
I'd still be at a loss for words, somehow.
I think I just have to face the fact
that I'm really in a mess.
It's not the way I wanted things,
but I'll live with it. (I guess.)
I've come so far, yet lost so much ground;
I don't know what to do.
The solution is somewhere lying around...
But I never thought the problem would be you.

Waiting For You.

Boom boom
That's my heart pounding
Around the station it's resounding
I'm surprised no-one's complained yet
about the noise.

My rib-cage struggles to contain
this passionate pump
as it tries to break free
from the constraints
of the physical me.
I've never felt this nervous
Ever

So great is the power you hold
over me
that I can see my heart held
in the palm of your hand
Do with it as you will, but
please be gentle

And above all
turn up
before I lose my mind.

Dancing With Your Eyes.

Those eyes of yours set my emotions swirling
like a dervish my passions keep whirling
as around your little finger I find myself twirling.

Big brown beautiful irises penetrate my soul
capturing my heart is their goal
burrowing past my defences like a mole.

No girl has ever looked into my eyes
the way you do, wrapping up my feelings with ties
unbreakable, taking me to explore new highs.

Do you even know that I'm crazy about you,
ever since that moment when I realised I knew
seeing you made my heart do a somersault or two?

When you phoned the other night
did my broad hints give you an insight
into my plight?

My nerves you have set ablaze
but I can picture you through the haze
each and every one of my days.

Since I couldn't get the words out the other day
I can think of no other, or no better way
of getting across what I want to say

Than writing this poem, imprinting
my feelings upon this paper, losing
part of my heart in the process, hoping
the currency of love I'm minting
doesn't turn out to be
forged.

As my hand trembles writing this
I wish upon wish you feel the same way too;
yet, if it is not to be, my only fear
is that I'll lose your friendship, so
promise me this;

Our rapport, our fondness for each other
as friends will live on
through the years, the seasons,

the good times and the bad
the happy times and the sad
into
infinity.

When I started this poem, I had a rhyme-scheme,
but my emotions cannot be constrained by these bounds.
I don't know if I'll ever even have the courage to give
this poem to you, or whether it will remain
locked
inside my heart.

If so, then you will never know, or maybe
I will find a way to activate my larynx into
forming the sounds to echo my emotions.

Maybe I'll just stay forever looking,
yearning,
dancing with your eyes.

Image Revisited.

I hold your picture close to my heart,
and feel its rhythm beating through.
Your image pulses through my veins,
with each beat a memory
that drives me insane.

I see your cheeky smile jump out at me
through the limitations of mere paper, whose
chemical reactions are pale shadows of
those in my heart.

This image is a symbol of what we have,
a universe of opportunity,
a limitless horizon,
boundless joy.

A life of crazy, helpless laughter,
with you, my love, my perfect partner.
And yet this picture is fragile, vulnerable
to flame or stress, to be burnt
or torn,
rent asunder.

I hold your picture in front of my eyes,
and see your weaknesses,
your faults.
Suddenly my mind gives way to doubt and
does battle with my heart,
a bloody warfare in which neither will rest
until the other is slain,
an eventuality as far off
as the stars in the sky.
I hold your picture in front of my eyes,
uncertain
of what I'm looking at.

And yet if I could picture you
holding up my picture,
going through the same cycle
of love,
doubt
and despair;
would I think it fair?
Isn't it your faults I love
along with your good qualities,
those annoying little habits
that I miss the most
when you're not around?

I stare at your picture for moments
that last an eternity.
Your image is you;
either I take it all
or leave it,
grasp the chance of a lifetime
or waste it.

Which will it be?
Can hope and love win out
over cynical doubt?

My whole future life
hangs in the balance
of this heart.
The world as I know it
swirls around me,
my thoughts colliding
as my emotions bounce
off each other.

Why this misgiving?
Are you not all
I ever wanted from a woman?

Is it eternity I yearn for,
not another human
like me?
Your picture holds the key;
through it I view your soul,
or perhaps it is merely a mirror,
allowing me to see
my own.
I cannot say I am pleased with what I see;
Perhaps my apprehensions are really about me?

I am out of perihelion;
my orbit around you is becoming
eccentric.
Catch me if you can,
in your gravitational field
to which I will gladly yield
if I can see myself as worthy
of being your satellite.

Maybe that is what I am most
scared of;
My life
revolving
around
someone
else.
"The two
becoming
one
flesh."
Am I ready for that?
Singleness seems to suit me,
although you look good
on my arm.

So is that what it's all

about?

A reluctance to say

"I do"

when my heart says

"Well I'm not sure,
really".

Will I drown

if I dive in

at the deep end,

or will I learn to swim

properly,

for the first time

in my life?

"?"

Do you want me?
Your mouth says yes
but your eyes say no.

What says your heart?

Do you need me?
I gave you a lift
two days ago.

I suppose that's a start.

Do you love me?
You say that you do, and
I hope that it's true, so

Why are we apart?

The Emotional Response To Wasted Effort.

And why?
Why do I bother, when
I know you don't like me?
What's the point of this
baffling devotion,
an unwanted emotion,
that leads me down
paths which lead nowhere,

Taking me to places
that do not exist?
Only in my mind do I dwell
in abodes made of the fantasy
that you are mine, for
now and all time.

No reason is there to this rhyme.
I must confess,
it causes me distress
but where can I turn,
and what can I do?

The only cure is you,
but the mending of my malady
is forever snatched
from my grasp.

I'm breathing my last gasp,
but you do not seem to care
whether well or badly I fare;
maybe to you I'm a spare tyre,
to keep out of sight and mind
until your ego needs a boost.

I cannot live thus.
Make me yours, or make me free.

But don't leave me all at sea.

The Answer.

To be
or not to be
- That was the question,
for us...
The answer being;
And when they were up they were up,
And when they were down they were down,
And when they'd finally broken up:
Did they know if they were up or down?
Alas, poor us,
we never really got to know each other well.
Was it noble of us,
or was it all in the mind?
Could it have been merely the slings and arrows
of outrageous fortune?
Do we not make our own fortune?
If so, was the destruction
of our foetal treasure
in these earthen vessels
of our own making?
Did we make it through the ides of March
only to succumb to the pressures of April?
I do not have a kingdom
and have no need of a horse,
but if there was a chance for us to be together again
I'd jump at it, of course.
Of course?
Yet how can I be so sure?
Am I so sure?
Was it without good reason that we parted,
our own personalities conspiring,
mine, and
et tu?
Did you, lady, protest too much

and acted I just the same?
Was our relationship concluded,
or did we lose the game?
Wherefore art thou so similar to me,
so alike as to drive me mad?
And I am also unto you;
t'would be funny, if not so sad.
The answer, do you want to know?
'Tis far, and yet so near...
The answer, my love, if that you be
- I've really no idea.

Image of a Heartbeat.

Sometimes I can see you, in my dreams
At least, that's the way it always seems
Looking from afar I see your face
Gazing down at me from outer space
Sometimes I shout out the question, "Why?"
But you never answer, only sigh
Our love, you said; it could never last
Our love, I said; a thing of the past
What of the future, your eyes say now
I know what you mean, but don't know how
Could we ever be back together
Be it through fair or stormy weather
Could be make our relationship work
And not still drive each other berserk?
Would we walk that road to a wedding
Or is that something we're still dreading?
Small flickers that grew into a flame
Are what my feelings for you became
My love stills burns brightly, like the sun
Still I believe, you're the only one
Was I kidding myself when I said
The concerns that came into my head?
That I thought we'd be better as friends
Individually reach our own ends
Were you equally blind to agree
To the reasons that came out of me?
"What happens now?" Say your eyes again
Anguish in your eyes mirrors my pain
One of two options, my heart replies;
Either we die, or we reach for the skies
Maybe we've reached the end of our road
Or maybe just come to a crossroad
To choose a direction we must dare
Risk exposing our hearts to a tear
For our dreams to be real and to stay
Or just hope that they'll all go away

The Awful Truth.

The awful truth is;

We couldn't take each other's
highs.

We didn't make each other happy;

Even down that phone-line

I could see it

in your eyes

(or in my mind's eye).

Too individual to be together,

too strong as two

to be as one.

The sad fact is

we were no good for each other,

we'd never make it.

We were too similar

for our combined good.

Maybe in the future

we'll be able to complement each other,

though in the past

we never could.

Why do I hold on to this feeling

that we can make it work someday?

How long will I keep hold of this

till I move on,

yes, move away?

I don't know if I can face you now,

though we said we'd always be friends.

I watch the telephone some nights,

that thing in the hall

which never rings.

If I don't phone you, you never will me

on that I can depend;

and what use is a relationship

when I've thrown myself in the deep end

and you remain in the shallow?
Commitment we didn't want to give
though to a large extent I did;
but you never gave more
than you could afford to lose.
Funny; you're the one who's foolish with money
but in love it was I
who lost the most,
spending more
than my balance showed.
The overdraft repayment on a broken heart
is a bitter one to pay;
but I'll get my money back
I know I will one day.
And now, the end, and what do I say?
I know not, I'm lost for words.
But maybe in my heart at dawn you could hear
the sound of a solitary bird.
Awakening what was once asleep
and dreary, out of touch;
a new day, a new way, a new love maybe?
But will I ever find someone again
who I care about as much?
I don't mean to make you feel guilty;
it was mutual when we broke up,
and it could be you feel the same way
as me now...
Possibly I'll never know
and maybe neither will you,
but there's always that final
tantalising chance...
That our love will turn out to be true.

Don't Ask.

I warn you now
before you start,
you may not like the answer
to the question you're about
to ask.

Don't ask me how I feel now.

I don't know.

I don't know.

Breaking up was easy,
so happy we were:
the feeling was mutual;
it wasn't going to work.

Next day was fine,
or better than fine maybe;
until the evening.

In the evening I cried.

Yes, I cried;

was it over you?

Or what could have been

(and yet could not?)

Next morning I cried again
though my sorrow lasted but briefly
to be replaced by happiness
(I think - or was it resignation?)

I can't tell you how I feel now.

I don't know.

I really don't know.

It wouldn't have worked out between us;

it was the wrong time.

That I know.

But are we the right people,
just not at the right time?

Even if I walk down the isle with someone else
part of me will still feel it should have been you
and not another.

Somehow I can't shake the feeling
that we'll end up together again.

More ready, more prepared, more stable

but us, together.
Does this mean I'm not
moving on?

I'm not sure if you'll ever see this poem
but maybe, just maybe
I won't need it.
Perhaps I'll forget you
(apart from our friendship)
which I will always treasure.

I look at the mirror
and don't know who I am any more;
I look at the phone
and just want to ring you,
open up my heart to you
but it's too late now.

When I said it wasn't working,
that I didn't see any point in going on
did I mean it?

Did I really mean it?
I wonder.

And still do.
Tonight I cried again.

Why can't I feel like I did
that night,
when breaking up seemed the most wonderful thing
we ever did?

Will I ever feel that way again?
Maybe I'll find out.
Only time will tell
what the future holds for me,
for you.

Part of me hopes,
and part of me believes;
what lies ahead
will see us walking down that isle.

If not, then I hope my future wife
never sees this poem!

Loss

Desiring someone hopelessly out of reach
though my heart does implore and my eyes do beseech
Humiliating myself beyond all repair
and does the object of my desire even really care?
I've turned myself into a sacrifice on the wheel of life
of which each turn serves to add to my strife
We could be "just good friends"
but that would seem so perverse;
She can treat me like a brother
that would only make things worse
It's so unfair
that things should be this way
When I can't even utter
all the things I would say
Am I embittered?
I would have to answer yes,
but then
so would you be
in my sorry state.
This world is so full of spite
and hate
messing up my life
controlling my fate
each card in the losing hand
to me the game of life
does send
and now I do know,
this is surely

The End.

It's Just Not Cricket.

Giving up on the mating game;
out HBR:
Heart Before Reality.
Bailing out,
I always lost,
retired hurt.

Maybe.

How can I tell you
how I feel about you
when I don't know myself?
Why do I feel this way?
Why have I so badly lost my way?
My emotional make-up's been applied too thickly.
Is it going to be?
Is this the way it should be?
One day maybe I'll know.
Until then I'll stay mixed up, maybe
until you're really part of my life. (Maybe.)
But don't worry, one way or another
I'll survive.

(Maybe.)

When Opportunity Knocked, We Didn't Open The Door.

At first I thought you weren't good enough for me;
I know, I know, how wrong could I be?
But now that I've discovered we'd be perfect together,
I know it can't happen, not now, not ever.
Sometimes a friendship can become so strong
that to make it romantic would be to make it all wrong.
To have a friend such as you does indeed make my heart glad;
that we'll never be lovers maybe should make me feel sad.
But my emotions have run dry, no more can I feel
after time and more time have let my heart heal.
You're more than my friend, as my family you are;
you even mean more to me than my baby (my car)!
What troubles me most is, I feel I'll never find a girl
who will understand the bond between us, the way we can curl
into each others minds, understand each other's moods
and cheer each other up, a quality which eludes
other girls I've tried to like, tried to be interested in;
this craving for affection must be filled, is that such a sin?
It was all a matter of timing, that we are not, perhaps, even
engaged
to be married - but maybe for the best, that we remain uncaged
as to that form of liaison - I mean, us, husband and wife?
Somehow I can't feel I would reject that sort of life
if the chance were offered, which can never now be the case;
you already have your beloved, one whose lifelines you trace
with your fingertips, caressing his breathe as it hangs
frozen in the sky, unaware of the pangs
it causes in my heart, yet not because it's you
- it's merely that I don't have someone special too.
I'd like to meet someone like you, a similar personality,
but not know them as a friend first, from the start realise the
reality
of what might lie ahead, waiting for that wonderful time
when my heart can do more than live in the bars of a rhyme.

The Story of Our Love

When I first met you,
I wasn't all that impressed,
I confess.
(Sorry!)
For I was besotted with another,
my heart was taken.
I didn't know then
that the first sight was enough for you to know
that you had to be with me.

When I became a free agent once again,
I was scared;
scared that my first thought was of you,
scared that these new feelings might not be true.
My emotions were in such a swirl,
my words to you were a blur
and altered each time we spoke,
each time we met,
every thought of you that ran through my mind.
I was unstable, and you needed stability:
We were doomed, at that time.
And so you chose someone else...
O how it hurt!
Yet I fear you were hurt the most.

Both of us knew, I think, somewhere
deep inside our heart,
that we should be together.
But it seemed that it never now would be.

Your relationship lasted far longer than mine,
and when you were about to split up,
I even for the sake of my friendship to him as well as you

tried to keep you together!
(Do you have any idea how hard that was?!?)

We stayed friends throughout, though sometimes,
just sometimes,
I yearned to love you – the tension
was hard to bear.
(Did you feel it too?)

And then for a year you chased me by stealth,
and I ran away,
convinced that it was too late for us.
But you caught me at last and so fast
have we become inseparable!
When soon we will marry, both our lives shall be complete.
My love for you fills every femtosecond
of every day.

The reaction of our family and friends?
No shock, not even mild surprise, just:
“What took you so long?”!

Well, they say that the course of true love
smooth never runs.
Reaching the highest height
often requires clambering up
slippery slopes,
but now that we have reached the top,
we need never look down ever again.

What is Our Love?

What is our love, that so sudden has found us;
Against every hope, espied and thus bound us?
Through three years and more, fate has kept us apart;
A love that seemed lost to us, right from the start.
And now my true feelings for you are revealed;
A truth that by my lips forever was sealed.
Eaten up by passion, consumed by desire;
Hungering for your touch, my heart is on fire.
Thirsting for your kisses, my mind is ablaze;
A burning to last me for all of my days.
But flames not of torment, these were heaven-sent;
So this is what stories of true love all meant.
I know that your feelings to mine are akin;
We victors that never expected to win.
But the joy we have now, can it really last?
I feel that it can: uncertainty has past.
I love you with all my heart, body and soul,
Never on our love shall Death sound out its toll.

The Test: An Allegory.

An enchanted dream
breezes through my mind, an echo
of the past, of happier days, or maybe
the future, of joyful things to come.

But lo! What is this I spy, a creature
foul and wicked, utterly detestable
and yet

so attractive, beguiling, alluring...

But what is this?! It has a name,
emblazoned

on its forehead, and its name is this;
TEMPTATION.

I ponder this dream, and it seems to me
that TEMPTATION has taken a form,
more definite than before.

A Woman.

A woman I know.

yet I know her not. She looks deep
into my eyes, piercing me...

and I understand.

A PLOT.

A CONSPIRACY!

... to keep me from my love, my love
so sweet and true, true

in ways beyond comprehension, beyond words. But as I turn
to walk away, I find

my adversary standing, facing me, no matter
which way I turn.

Her eyes are boring into me, into

my soul, and she opens

her mouth as if to speak,

but says nothing.

So in my despair I ask,

"Who are you?"

To this she mockingly replies,

“I am a riddle,
THE riddle, if you like.
I am *all*, and yet I am *nothing*.
I am *old*, and yet I am *young*.
I am *cunning*, and yet I am *innocent*.
I am a *window*, and I am a *mirror*.”
I stood transfixed; no movement could I draw
from my limbs, which seemed bound
as if by some kind of magic,
as if the riddle had in fact been an incantation.
And in that moment I knew,
without doubt, without hesitation,
that I was trapped for all eternity by TEMPTATION,
doomed.
Unless...
yes, unless I could answer the riddle.
Long hours I stood as the cogs in my brain
turned, around and around, and I grappled with uncertainty,
with doubt,
but most of all,
unexpectedly, against my desire to give in to TEMPTATION,
to yield myself
to her every desire.
But searching my soul, and examining my love
for her who I love so, my resolve
hardened, and I turned to face the oppressor
with a heart strong
and a voice clearer than the waters of life.
I spoke the words like the Voice of Doom;
“Here is the answer to your riddle,
oh Mistress of the Dark.
THE answer, if you like.
You are *all* the desire of my eyes, yet you are *nothing* to satisfy
my heart.
You are as *old* as humanity itself, yet you tempt us from a
young age.

You are *cunning* in your entrapments, yet your appearance is that of *innocence*,
and this ensnared many, yet some few may see through this deception.
You are a *window* of opportunity, or thus it seems.
But in reality, you are merely a *mirror* of our basest desires.”
I stood in silence as TEMPTATION studied me,
Nodding slowly.

After a time she spoke softly these words:
*“You have answered well and truly, for
Only from a true heart can the answer come forth.
Unless you fall, you are safe from me. However, I say to you that
Perilous shall be your task,
And I do not promise to leave you forever, or ever entirely.
Seeking virtue, trueness and loyalty is your goal, I see.
So be it. Yet there may be few willing to aid you in this quest.”*

Then TEMPTATION vanished, yet not utterly;
A ghostly image remained, barely visible
but smiling, always smiling.
And so the dream ended, and I returned
To this world from the place I had been.

I want only to be with her, and now
I will seek to find her.
To hold her in my arms again, to kiss
her tender lips, to whisper words which
no-one else shall ever hear.
So now I will go to my love, whose name is....
ah, no, for you do not need to know that name, and I
do not need to utter it;
for it remains always
in my heart.

And now as I hld my one true love

and run my fingers through her soft, soft hair,
I think I can see TEMPTAION lurking, as a shadow,
though but for a moment.

For I say to her,

“Begone! There is no dwelling for you here, nor anywhere
for you to rest in peace.

Begone, and take your evilness with you!”

Then the shadow passed, save perhaps those that remained in
my heart.

And the only sound was of two hearts beating, two hearts
intertwined,
and at peace.

Caught Dreaming About Reality

Is it a dream,
being with you?
I ask as this feels
far too good to be true.

I'd hoped it was true,
that someday I'd feel this way;
the way you make me feel
each and every day.

And soon comes the day
when with arms open wide,
I become your husband,
and you become my bride!

And when you're my bride,
ask me how it feels.
When being with you
isn't just a dream.

The Bonds of Our Love

Your body's afar,
yet your heart is so near;
I know you love me,
so then why do I fear?
You give me so much;
anything I choose...
But I guess that means
I have much more to lose.
I love you so much,
far more than words can say;
But is it enough
to make you always stay?
Why did you choose me,
from all you could have had?
Why single me out?
How did I make you glad?
I can't quite believe
That you want me so much
My world is complete;
How I long for your touch!
Each moment precious
that we spend together.
No-one that exists
could possibly sever
the bonds of our love,
no never, no never.
The bonds of our love
will bind us forever.

Before and After

My coat was my coat
But the one you bought me is a treasure

A meal is a meal
But one cooked by you is a blessing

A kiss is a kiss
But a kiss from you is a wonderful reward

A word is a word
But when utter from you lips is sweeter than honey

Life is a gift, and always worth living
But only life with you is worth dying for

More than Words

I just can't describe how much I love you
The words haven't been created yet.
I could study all the languages that exist
And even create new ones;
But my love will remain forever beyond the ability of words
to describe.
So I can't tell you in words,
That will forever be impossible.
But I can say it by the way I look at you,
Tell you by the way I touch you,
Explain it when we kiss.
You can see it in my eyes,
Sense it I my tender caress,
Feel it when our lips meet.
Our love transcends all language,
Save only that which is spoken between our hearts.

A Darker Look at Life

There are times when life gets us down. Unhappy events, a job we hate, or just melancholia setting in, can really make us look at the world through different eyes. Sometimes we can perceive things more sharply as a result; at others, it merely clouds our judgement. Either way, it is a part of the human experience.

These poems were written when I was feeling in this darker mood. I'm hoping not to go there again, but I have to admit that it was this spell which produced some of my best poetry!

The title poem "which is actually the very last in the collection (well in the first edition it was, anyway), but I feel it's a fitting finale) wasn't written when I was feeling particularly depressed, just defensive, I think.

All it's saying, when it boils down to it, is:

"I'm only human."

Night-watchman.

Every sound magnified
to a monstrous cacophony,
Every rustle in the wind
a possible threat.

Foreboding creeping ever inwards,
upon the brain
the senses
the heart.

Chilling those who thought they had
nerves of steel.

Dawn breaks as a great friend
arriving
from a far away land,

Daylight beckoning me to its
warm embrace.

Life and Death.

The raindrop slides slowly
 down the windscreen,
 like a teardrop falling
down a cheek.

Reaching the bottom,
 it is engulfed
 and disappears from sight,
swept aside by
 merciless wiper blades,
 cut off in the prime
of its journey.

The rain continues falling,
 yet never can any individual raindrop
 be replaced.

Another tear appears,
 joining the torrent.

The Ride of My Life.

Got to get off this emotional
roller-coaster.

Can't take the G-force
of the highs

lows

and corkscrews.

I've looped-the-loop enough

times now, my body

cannot withstand any more

punishment

like this.

Too late; the bar stays down,

fixing me firmly in place,

not letting me off now

or ever.

So never mind;

I'll just sit back

and enjoy the ride.

Emotions.

The daystar rises,
light cascading
on the gently rippling sea.
The air is awoken by
sounds of airborne life,
and fish dart playfully
hither and thither,
unconcerned.

Clouds begin to form in the sky;
there's a chill in the air.
The fish suddenly become aware
of an intruding presence;
a ship, a man-made vessel
of destruction.
The birds are circling,
waiting for titbits
that may come their way;
theirs is not a world of concern
for the welfare of other,
less fortunate
creatures.

Lightening streaks across the
dark sky,
lighting up the scene of carnage
down below.
The clouds, once friendly
and fluffy
are foreboding
and menacing,
the atmosphere threatening
to explode.
Even the gannets now realize
this is not the place to be.

The hunters are indiscriminate,
merciless.

The storm seemed as if it would never
end
but now it's past.
Fish seem reluctant at first to re-appear
yet they do,
glimpsing upwards at
the birds,
their feathered fair-weather friends.
The trawler's gone
for now.
It will be back,
they all know;
but life
must go on.

Forwards?

The rain comes down today.
It erodes buildings like never before,
And its pH value has changed; is it more?
No, it's less.
And is this what they call progress?
The air seems thicker today.
Breathing disorders are on the way up,
Just like toxin levels and poisonous gases.
And is this what they call progress?
The water tastes different today.
Babies born without all the
features you'd expect.
They say it's affecting male hormones too.
Where will it end?
And is this what you think progress is?

$1+1=3$

"Unemployment figures down
again!"
Yeah, like
we believe you.
Fiddling figures, fondling formulae,
Caressing calculations until
the numbers go down
miraculously.
Just what criteria are you
using, to satisfy your
cravings
for popularity?
Inquiries and reports,
sleaze and bribes,
all covered up by your
manufactured lies.
Despite all this, you still expect
us to believe
that one plus one
really equals three?

Losing Faith in the System.

Watergate,
Camillagate,
of gates a spate;
and now of late
we've got Zippergate.

 Societies' elected leaders
 looking tarnished now they've lost their
electroplate.

A thought expressed in
just seventeen syllables:
Japanese haiku

Goalposts without nets
on pitches without players.
Goals achieved or not?

£ Greed £

I watch the coin \$lip
\$lowly, changing course
all the way down.

It reaches the bottom;
surely this time
it will push a fortune
my way.

It's tipped a couple over the first edge
so there's hope that it will
push more down the second,
into the collection tray
dedicated to the charity fund
of me.

No way!
All that's happened is that
the coins got pushed underneath some others
and nothing's come my way.

Oh well.
I reach into my pocket
for another coin, only to find
that I've lost a fortune
trying to win one.

Silent Screams, Faceless People.

If only we could hear them,
hear the screams and cries of the countless
voiceless victims
of humanity's
inhumanity.

Can you see the face,
the face of a frightened child
stark
against a backdrop of blood,
a background of faceless victims,
massed together
as cold statistics?

Do you feel for the child, simply because
seeing it as an individual forces us
to acknowledge the feelings
that child has?

Do we delude ourselves into thinking
the unknown masses, the faceless ones,
are somehow less human
than us?

Can we still hear evil?
Can we still see evil?

Do we still care?

The Many Faces Of A Man.

Such a kind and compassionate
man, I never imagined
he had such a spiteful side.
So generous and giving,
so bubbly and full of living
yet jealous and proud,
envious and loud
though quiet, softly spoken
and harsh
at the same time.

Changeable
to the very core of his being,
each DNA strand
attesting to a versatile, volatile personality.

Each and every human being
is just one tiny fraction of humanity.

Each person is one of many.

Each person is many in one.

Colours.

I see a sea
of colours
floating, mingling,
merging.

Then a colour
(call it blue)
decides it's a
superior hue.

Pushing to the forefront,
it tries to shove all others
out of focus, for
it believes itself King
of the colours.

I see another shade
(call it red)
rise up as if
from the dead.

The luminescences battle,
causing a garish schism.

It is a futile fight,
for fortunately
the painter attributed
equal glory
to every colour.

In the end, those hues
which tried to receive more
than their dues
only paint themselves
ugly.

Let not the picture
be spoiled,
especially for those colours
yet to be painted.

Give It Up.

The fresh air blows in through
the door, refreshing -
or at least it would be, but for the
stench of cigarette smoke
which drifts in along with it.

Passively choking from passive smoking
"Just social smoking?" -
you must be joking.

Slaving for their craving
for a habit that yellows their teeth,
fingers and lungs
(which the tar bungs),
causing smokers' cough.

And that smell
which you can tell
a mile away.

Nicotine nightmares
replacing real worries; why do
they think their problems are helped
just because they don't notice them
so much?

Producing pollution
is not the solution.

Just think of the money you'll save
if the road away from dependency you'll brave.

Think of the things you can buy
for your family, your spouse,
your kids or your house,
or even yourself
if you gave up your fifty or sixty
a day.

You can be pure and clean
(for fag filled lungs are obscene)
if you just take the plunge

to eliminate the gunge
you feed your body and mind.

So give it up, save more than a few pence;
after all, in your heart you know it makes sense.

Acting My Age.

Don't exclude me, just because
I can't do all the things
you can.

Don't ignore me, just because
I don't have all the knowledge
you posses.

Don't turn down my job application,
just because I'm not the right age.

Don't discriminate against me,
just because I'm young.

Haiku Sequence
Nature's Fight for Survival

Rainfall to a child:
Drops of water, coming from
God's watering can.

Water from the ground
Reaches leaves in the tree-tops
Nature working hard

Gnarled tree standing proud
Unbowed by wind, rain or age;
Lord of its domain.

Discarded bottles
Littering the surroundings
Blots on the landscape.

Fragile blades of grass
Trampled by human beings
Bounce back up again.

"Warts And All"

Sometimes
I let so much out of my heart
through my mouth
it scares me;
even things I'm not sure of
and hope are not true

Is that what being a poet means?

Opening up a window on
my whole personality
for anyone to see
"this is me
-unabridged"
?

Take it of
leave it,
warts and all

I may even paint myself ugly
when no-one else
sees me that way

Yet it's not my poetry
which reveals so much, it's when
I talk to my friends,
my closest confidants

I just can't seem to stop, even
when it would be prudent
to hold myself back
and leave something inside

Is this why I sometimes
feel
so empty?

Or is it what makes my life
so rich,
difficult
yet
of a depth most others
could only see through a mist, never knowing
the fullness of life,
the beauties, the perils,
the highs and lows
and everything in between?

I'm so open and honest
it scares some people
And yes, sometimes it scares me

Yet that **is** me
and always will be

Here I am;
you can take me
or leave me,
warts and all.

Prose Poetry

The Test: An Allegory.

An enchanted dream
breezes through my mind, an echo
of the past, of happier days, or maybe
the future, of joyful things to come.
But lo! What is this I espy, a creature
foul and wicked, utterly detestable
and yet
so attractive, beguiling, alluring...
But what is this?! It has a name,
emblazoned
on its forehead, and its name is this;
TEMPTATION.
I ponder this dream, and it seems to me
that TEMPTAION has taken a form,
more definite than before.
A Woman.
A woman I know.
yet I know her not. She looks deep
into my eyes, piercing me...
and I understand.
A PLOT.
A CONSPIRACY!
... to keep me from my love, my love
so sweet and true, true
in ways beyond comprehension, beyond words. But as I turn
to walk away, I find
my adversary standing, facing me, no matter
which way I turn.
Her eyes are boring into me, into
my soul, and she opens
her mouth as if to speak,
but says nothing.
So in my despair I ask,
“Who are you?”

To this she mockingly replies,
“I am a riddle,
THE riddle, if you like.
I am *all*, and yet I am *nothing*.
I am *old*, and yet I am *young*.
I am *cunning*, and yet I am *innocent*.
I am a *window*, and I am a *mirror*.”
I stood transfixed; no movement could I draw
from my limbs, which seemed bound
as if by some kind of magic,
as if the riddle had in fact been an incantation.
And in that moment I knew,
without doubt, without hesitation,
that I was trapped for all eternity by TEMPTATION,
doomed.
Unless...
yes, unless I could answer the riddle.
Long hours I stood as the cogs in my brain
turned, around and around, and I grappled with uncertainty, with
doubt,
but most of all,
unexpectedly, against my desire to give in to TEMPTATION, to
yield myself
to her every desire.
But searching my soul, and examining my love
for her who I love so, my resolve
hardened, and I turned to face the oppressor
with a heart strong
and a voice clearer than the waters of life.
I spoke the words like the Voice of Doom;
“Here is the answer to your riddle,
oh Mistress of the Dark.
THE answer, if you like.
You are *all* the desire of my eyes, yet you are *nothing* to satisfy
my heart.
You are as *old* as humanity itself, yet you tempt us from a *young*
age.
You are *cunning* in your entrapments, yet your appearance is that
of *innocence*;

and this ensnared many, yet some few may see through this deception.

You are a *window* of opportunity, or thus it seems.

But in reality, you are merely a *mirror* of our basest desires.”

I stood in silence as TEMPTATION studied me,

Nodding slowly.

After a time she spoke softly these words:

“ *You have answered well and truly, for
Only from a true heart can the answer come forth.
Unless you fall, you are safe from me. However, I say to
you that*

*Perilous shall be your task,
And I do not promise to leave you forever, or ever
entirely.*

*Seeking virtue, trueness and loyalty is your goal, I see.
So be it. Yet there may be few willing to aid you in this
quest.”*

Then TEMPTATION vanished, yet not utterly;

A ghostly image remained, barely visible
but smiling, always smiling.

And so the dream ended, and I returned
To this world from the place I had been.

I want only to be with her, and now

I will seek to find her.

To hold her in my arms again, to kiss
her tender lips, to whisper words which
no-one else shall ever hear.

So now I will go to my love, whose name is....

ah, no, for you do not need to know that name, and I
do not need to utter it;

for it remains always
in my heart.

And now as I hld my one true love

and run my fingers through her soft, soft hair,

I think I can see TEMPTAION lurking, as a shadow,
though but for a moment.

For I say to her,
“Begone! There is no dwelling for you here, nor anywhere
for you to rest in peace.
Begone, and take your evilness with you!”
Then the shadow passed, save perhaps those that remained in my
heart.
And the only sound was of two hearts beating, two hearts
intertwined,
and at peace.

Inside a Tormented Mind

I awoke to the sound of a silent scream from a distant dream,
Voices of the dead echoing through my head.
What had I been, and what had I seen?
What did I do, and who did I do it to?
Feelings of guilt felt as if they were inbuilt,
Like this invisible chain suffocating my brain.

Why this madness? Why this pain?
Why did I feel like I was going insane?
Who were my victims, and was I unjust?
Did I do it for vengeance, or was it for lust?
Were these sins fresh as morning dew, or old as ancient dust?
Discovery would be painful, but find out I must.

I asked the Police, but that didn't work -
They just looked at me as if I was completely berserk.
I looked in the library for a clue or a hint -
There was no ray of enlightenment there, not even a glint.
I tried asking everyone that I called a friend;
They said it was too long since I'd seen my CPN*

They all think I'm mad, that my guilt is illusionary -
They think my mind's gone, my memories delusionary.
But I know the truth, voices in my head told me I have to pay
For the evil I've done, but what evil they won't say.
I just have to go on searching, one day my answer I'll find...
And then they won't think that I'm out of my mind.

I'm on medication now, I think they call it Depot.
The voices have gone away, but the dreams still persist.
Now **I** think I'm insane, but **they** think I'm ill...
Their arguments seem persuasive, but sometimes I resist.
This feeling of guilt is too real not to be true,
Isn't it?
I wonder.

I can hear those voices again, screaming, calling me *murderer*

But of whom? How? Why?
Questions, always questions with no answers.
No wonder I'm losing my mind.

It seems like a hospital, this place that I'm in.
The dreams have now stopped, but now the nightmare begins...
All of this time I've been tormented by a lie -
And the worst of it is, I have no idea why.
They call it paranoia, but I call it affliction -
Now it's becoming something akin to addiction.
It gave my life shape, some meaning at least
Now I'm an outcast, something akin to a beast
Someone like me has no place in civilization,
Doomed to a life of condescension and frustration.
Relying on others, that's just not my style,
Though I have to put up with it for just a while.
Sometime they'll let me go with perhaps a few meds,
It won't be long now as they're desperate for beds.
When this time comes I'll be back in control
And no-one can tell me what to do, not a soul.

I go home tonight after another unproductive day,
It's a lovely bright day on the fifteenth of May.
But my nights are darker than black ever could be -
Due to the things I can almost, but never quite see.
I can hear the screams, but all is not as it seems;
The drugs are trying to fight the insidious dreams.
I haven't been attending the centre as often as I should -
I decide there and then that in the future I would.
But now I watch a fascinating scene unfold -
The image flickers in my head, it cannot get a hold.
Suddenly it disappears, in a blinding flash of light!
It leaves me rather shaken, as you can well imagine it might.
But the vision had ended, giving me one chance to flee;
Escape to the real world, where I now wanted to be.
But there must be something behind this, this guilt I was feeling
—
Something that has to be confronted before I can do any healing.

My weekly meeting with the psychologist lasted an hour
And had gone nowhere for several months.
I began to doubt.
Yet I had the feeling she was on the right lines:
I could feel something, something deep inside me...
waiting to come out.
Waiting for what? I had no idea
And nor, it seemed, did she.
But she kept on trying.
And suddenly one day, when talking about my mother,
Unaccountably
I found myself crying.
The hour had was up, but she didn't give up.
Knowing that finally, after many sessions, finally -
She was onto something.
She probed and she dug, she asked and asked more,
Ever trying to discover
The sum of my feelings.

I hadn't been the most co-operative of patients,
Bottling up my feelings and refusing to answer questions.
But there was about to be a pay-off for her patience:
The truth was about to come flooding out all in one go.

When did your mother die?

It was many years ago.

Did your father die first?

I said that this was so.

Do you have any siblings?

The answer to this was no.

Did your parents want more children?

I told her I didn't know.

How did you mother die?

In a road accident.

How did it happen?

She was catching a bus...

She tripped on the road,

The driver didn't see her.

Where were you at the time?

**I was watching TV.
The FA Cup Final.**

How do you feel about that?

**I didn't want to miss it.
I could have picked her up in the car.
But I didn't want to.
So she had to get the bus.**

That wasn't your fault. It was just coincidence.

**She died because I wanted to watch the football.
Because that was more important to me than she was.
When she had no-one else.
Dad had died, I was all she had.**

You were a good son. She loved you.

**And I didn't love her enough.
I killed her.
Oh sweet mercy, I killed her for the sake of a football match.**

You didn't kill her.

I killed her.

No, you didn't.

Feelings of grief and guilt overwhelmed you, but you didn't kill her.

How can I ever forgive myself?

*You never have. But talking about it is a good start.
When was the last time you watched a football match?*

The question flew into me like an aeroplane.
My twin towers of courage and resolve collapsed around me,
and I dissolved into tears.
My answer came after minutes, but it felt more like years:

**The FA Cup final in 1983.
The year my mum died.**

The next few months were the worst in my life
It seemed I'd never before known the meaning of trouble, or
strife.

But my psychologist and CPN helped see me through -
Old friends lost presumed forgotten gave their support too.
I couldn't forget my guilt, or entirely get over my pain;
But I knew where I'd been and couldn't go there again.

I'm still on medication, still seeing my Quack,
But I'm travelling in the right direction and I'm not turning back.
Life is a journey, and I feel I'm finally on the road...
Finally facing my fears, unburdening my load.
No more voices and dreams, I've finally awoken:
Look out world, for my chains have been broken.

* CPN = Community Psychiatric Nurse

Warts & All Poetry Collection

Copyright 2004 David Seaman

Copyright (individual poems) 1998-2003 David Seaman

Copyright (Cover Artwork) 2001 Tamar Smith

WWW.DARSCOM.NET