

Tony Holkham

LYRICS

© Tony Holkham 1970-2004

THESE LYRICS ARE FOR SALE (SEE BELOW)

THIS IS A .PDF FILE

YOU CAN DOWNLOAD* IT OR
SEARCH IT FOR WORDS OR PHRASES

**written permission is required to copy or publish*

ALL SUBJECTS

adults, children, humour, drama, love and life

FOR SALE

Each of the lyrics below is for sale in one of three ways:

[1] Permission to use (5% royalty payable) – just £1 per lyric

[2] Royalty-free – 3p (£0.03) per word

[3] Royalty-free + all rights waived – 5p (£0.05) per word

Contact me at tonyholkham@gmail.com

**If you don't find what you're looking for, why not ask me to
write something for you?**

THE LANGUAGE OF OUR EYES

I came from the ocean, you came from the sands,
So understanding.
Butterflies in the silence, heartbeats in our hands -
Where are they landing?

It's not easy to explain to you,
But do I really need to?
When you touched me, why was I surprised -
After all, I knew the language of our eyes.

Our lives intertwined. Now I'm in your light
Love is not frightening.
Touch me in the dawning, hold me in the night,
Our sky is brightening.

By the Water, your sighing asked me then
And with my eyes open
I said "I love you", gently harmonised
With the language of our eyes.

You hold all my futures, and in just one glance
I'll take my chances.
This is our beginning, and what your love implants
Your wisdom enhances.

Meet me gently, when the tide is right
At the dawn or midnight.
I say this proudly (knowing that you're wise)
In the language of our eyes.

I WAS THE PIPER

I was the piper, I called the tune,
I piped my dreams away.
I was the one who asked for the moon,
Too soon came the break of day.

Knowing you loved me was not enough,
Knowing you cared was too much.
No time to handle the smooth with the rough,
My destiny called like a witch.

The nights are restless, my body is cold
The hurt and despair stab like knives.
I will not know the reason when I am old
And the world looks to other lives.

I was the piper, I called the tune,
My pipe-dreams are over and done,
I lifted my head and called for the moon,
But my eye sees the morning sun,
And another new life has begun.

DREAMING OF YOU

Lost hours never recaptured,
Swirling minds and eyes enraptured,
Pictures clear, like real life seeming
When you're sitting dreaming.

Dreaming of some other's dreams,
Planning plans or scheming schemes,
Life's impossibles come true,
Me, dreaming of you.

Dramatic sequences before you,
Fairy Princesses adore you,
Love affairs on summer days,
Wandering in a maze.

Dreaming of some other's dreams,
Planning plans or scheming schemes,
Life's impossibles come true,
Me, dreaming of you.

Dreaming is the one thing we could never do without,
Lost in some dim by-way leading from life's roundabout,
Dreaming of the happy moments anxious to recall,
We re-live the best moments of all.

Dreaming of some other's dreams,
Planning plans or scheming schemes,
Life's impossibles come true,
Me, dreaming of you.

IN SEARCH OF YOU

In the sparkle of the morning dew
I see your footprints small upon the grass;
You passed by here some time ago -
I must away to follow. Yes!
The sun awakes to melt the dew
But I don't know which way to go.

But through my brain there waves a wand
Of many brilliant hues;
It sways, it rocks, it points, I go
The way it bids in search of you.

Your splendour hangs in shrouds, and wafts
In silk-like chains among the trees;
Your love defies all earthly laws -
You come and go, and love and please.

I WAIT

I wait for you to speak for many days,
To speak to me of what I want to hear,
To say the words that warm like sunshine rays,
But all the time I tingle with the fear
That you will say it not while there is time,
That you will let it pass without a thought,
You know, I know that it would be a crime
Not to say the words you really ought.

Now time is slipping by before we know,
The more we wait the mistier the words,
Until finally they leave the mind and go,
Immortalised by the singing of the birds.

TRAIN OF THOUGHT

The train screaming in the far,
The quiet strumming of my guitar,
The wailing of the approaching squad car,
These are just sounds we hear.

Sounds we don't hear trouble me,
The things I see which I don't see,
The things I say aren't said by me,
They are just things I hear.

I often cry alone at night,
Sometimes I dare not turn out the light,
It seldom is I feel all right,
These things I cannot fight.

Sometimes I think that I am tough,
And I'll pull through, however rough,
But I can never call my bluff,
For I have had enough.

THE TIME OF YEAR

Don't ask me why the leaves are turning brown,
Don't ask me why the meadows look so drear,
Don't ask me why I wear a frown,
It's just the time of year.

Don't ask me why the ground is white with snow,
Or why the leaves are on the ground,
Don't ask me why 'cause I don't know,
Leave me be, I'll come round.

Don't ask me why the fields are green just now,
Don't ask me why the sun is warm and bright,
Or why the leaves are strewn from twig to bough,
I'll be all right.

Don't ask me why the sky is blue and clear,
Or why the wavering heat distorts the air,
Don't ask me why I sit and stare,
It's just the time of year.

RAIN

The rain is calling coward at me
Through the window pane,
As I sit and stare and wonder if
You will come back again,
Like you did the time before this
And the time before that night,
So I sit here waiting hopefully
To see if I am right.

I fall asleep in tiredness
And dream my troubled fears,
And the rain still falls through in my head
In the form of worried tears.

WHY?

Why does my heart keep on wasting away,
When that look in your eyes is of love, so you say,
But I have not been able, for many a day,
To return it, or even to smile.

Every time that you speak in a voice that is quiet;
Of a gentler nature than mine, I, in spite
Of the tenderness, feel my heart starting to bite
With the anger welling inside.

I must turn from your face, from your smile, from your eyes,
And swallow the sourness beginning to rise
From my throat, and would beg you to heed the cries
That you cannot begin to hear.

I turn back to tell you the way that I feel,
But instead I spit out the words that aren't real,
And that puts me back on an even keel
As you go with tears in your eyes.

SOMEONE LIKE YOU

I'll make you laugh, I'll make you cry,
I'll never ask the reason why,
I'll sing a song, I'll wait too long
Without admitting I am wrong.

I'll think up schemes although it seems,
That I will waste my life in dreams,
But I will not, for I have got
Someone like you who means a lot.

I'll make you laugh, I'll make you cry,
I'll never ask the reason why,
I'll sing a song, I'll wait too long
Without admitting I am wrong.

THE TIME TRAVELLER

Do you bring glad tidings from a far off place,
News to benefit all people, regardless of race?
Do you bring us useful tools, and knowledge that we lack?
If you do not bring these things, then why have you come back?

I return to be among my people, for my life soon ends,
For I have seen too much of time, too many different trends.
I have travelled long and hard, and no more will I roam,
For I will lay my head right here, among my friends, at home.

TOMORROW

Midnight is nigh upon us,
Tomorrow is drawing near,
Wherever I go tomorrow,
I hope you will be there.

Tomorrow is a new day,
We will cover new ground,
Wherever I go tomorrow,
I hope you'll be around.

What the future brings is hidden,
And I have been doing my sums,
I add two and two together,
And tomorrow never comes.
Midnight is gone and past us,
And it is still today,
I will go where life leads me,
If you are going my way.

FLYING HIGH

I remember crying three weeks ago,
I remember saying goodbye,
Then I wrote you to come back,
But I never got a reply.

I remember dying three weeks ago,
I remember wishing you well,
I sent the letter after two days,
But if you got it, I can't tell.

I remember sighing three weeks ago,
As you boarded that non-stop train,
I expect you tore the letter up
And I'll never see you again.

I remember lying three weeks ago,
I remember it was to my friends,
I told them you'd gone to see your aunt,
Way up in the Norfolk fens.

I remember flying to Paris,
I remember that weekend in Spain,
But you told me that wasn't enough for you,
And I'd never see you again.

I remember trying to 'phone you,
To get you to make amends,
But you wouldn't so I'll settle down
To a loneliness that never ends.

THE WASTE OF WAITING

Locked in the rhythm of the endless passing days
Like vast fields of barley in some soft eternal breeze,
I wait in vain upon your scented advent in the morning,
But I fear I sit in vain until in stone I slowly freeze.

Fading hopes cascading on my ever fretful brow
Yet refusing to relinquish all my faith,
I will send a message on the wavelength of autumn
And hope that it will reach your heart come spring.

I will sit with empty heart and brood upon my doom
I will sit with patience as the mermaid with her comb
And my mind will flow towards you like the locks upon her head
In the hope that you'll remember and come home.

WHAT MANNER OF LIFE

Consider the moment when you meet love face to face,
Do you tremble at the knees,
Does your heart race?
Or do you sigh and say, Oh, not again,
Like on a summer's day
When it's pouring with rain?
Or do you shrink from the blindingness of it
As you would from a searchlight
Trying to pierce the gloom of night?
Whichever one may be the fact
It's time to feel, to be, to act.

MY LOVE

Wreathed in a thousand secrets
She walks with every movement like a picture
Gaily painted like the landscape of a dream,
Forming the question in the mind
Of every passer-by how so big a heart could fit
Into so small a frame.

She smiles at those who bow their heads
Embarrassed by the look she gives
As if all people were some half forgotten lover
And now married and for some secluded reason ashamed.

She pats the heads of dogs as if they were her truest friends,
Seeming to exchange a word or two,
Her footprints on the pavement seem to shine when she has passed.
She may be an hour late
And sometimes can forget the date completely
If there is something in the sky above
That she must honour with her concentration.
Such is my sweet love, but all thought of reprimand will end
When we will meet, and this is our first love and our last
For our love will see no end.

SUNDAY

Raise the glass of morning to your lips
And taste the freshness of the day.

Wander through the green fields of your waking moments,
Stretch your arms and gather in the misty smell of hay.

Contemplate the quiet mice of silent marching minutes
Let the day unfurl with thoughtful ease,
Forward to the mid-day tranquil time of blossomed fortune,
Bathe in the sparkling stream of your inmost thoughts
To the tune of satisfaction and the humming of the bees.

Carnivals and apples in your ever stirring feet
As they tap the happy tune of sunlight on towards the noon.

Bless the laughing daisies as they chatter to each other
While overhead the crow casts the faintest shadow
Echoed in your mind that the day might end too soon.
Thoughts are turned to yesterday in case tomorrow is remembered
When the peace of lavender-scented Sunday goes to seed,
And in our yesterdays are tales of wondrous magic
Lived, relived in cherry blossom tones, those reminiscences freed.

Let the burning embers in your eyes light up your mind
In the winking of an eye the warm ashes fall.

Swathe your thoughts in the night-scented Jasmine
Climbing with gentle purpose up the wall,
The sun must do its journey so you see it in the morn
It has died like flickering firelight on the hill
Pausing only to kiss the trees goodnight
That they not forget, like you, that a new day will be dawning
And that with light their world, and yours, will fill.

OF MEETING

By the banks of the river
I can see you waiting there,
With a smile upon your lips
And the sunlight on your hair.

There is welcome in your hands,
There is gladness in your eyes,
And a hinting on your face
Of a love that never dies.

Your voice sounds like the water
As it sings its merry song,
Of the meeting, by its banks,
Which will last all summer long.

THIS LONG

As long as the summer skies shine in your hair,
As long as the ground beneath your feet is laid with grass
And is not bare,
As long as the cool breeze blows southerly, and fair,
This long will I be there.

As long as the cotton-wool clouds avoid the sun,
As long as the hawk with eager eye does not swoop too fast
'Til day is done,
This long will your beauty my heart stun,
And we will be one.

As long as the final curtain does not fall upon me,
As long as the scene is set for two to be forever free,
As long as I can look upon you, ever lovingly,
This long I will follow thee.

WHAT DO I WANT?

I don't want to die but I don't want to live,
I don't want to take, but I sorely want to give,
But I've nothing here to give away,
I've nothing very much to say,
I wish it was another day,
I wish there was another way.

I don't want to be loved but I think that I could give it,
If there was someone's life that needed me, then I could live it,
But there's no one in the world who knows,
And no one who wants love that grows,
There's no one the time that slows
And leaves me wondering what goes.

ANOTHER LIFE

We must leave this world as we enter it -
With nothing.

We leave behind our bodies and our money
And our clothing.

We leave behind our friends and those relations
To our name, that remain.

Where though, do we go to when we go
In fire or soil?

To a life of blest redemption, or another life
Of toil?

Wherever it may be, in whatever shape or form
We go,

How long it takes, how hard it is, there's one thing
That I know,

I'd like to try some other life, not this one
Over again.

LEAVE ME BE

Go away, leave me be, can't you see my misery,
I want peace, peace and quiet, please go and leave me be.
If I can't contain my anger at the past mistakes I've made,
I would rather sit and dream of how it could have been for me.
Draw the curtains, bring the dark down, I don't ever want to see.
Close the windows, shut the air out, let me sink in self pity,
Put the fire out, lock the door and let me choose my destiny.
Don't be helpful, or exciting, leave me in the game I've played,
Let me contemplate my sadness, without adversity,
Let me die if I should want to, go away, please leave me be.

RELIEF

Sick at heart, a dying man
Will clutch at anything he can,
But sick at heart, a dying race
Cannot run to any place -
No one can survive
The catastrophe to come.

Sturdy muscles, shining armour,
Gallant knight, oh! such a charmer,
But however noble his intention
He is doomed to sure extinction.
No one will be left alive
To see a thousand rising suns,
To see a hundred warring sons,
To hear a million firing guns,
When day is done and night time falls,
When honour dies and nature calls,
The horses dead between the stalls,
The dead all shouting down the halls,
Staring out of lifeless eyes,
In disbelief or mild surprise,
To see the splitting of the skies,
To see the spinning tear that dries,
A thousand dogs, ten million flies,
Green pastures dead with strewn supplies -

It's good to see the dawning come,
The sunlight through my window stream;
It's good to know the night is done
And it was just a dream.

CRY FROM THE HEART

I've tried them all, the ways of loving,
Loving with the flesh.
But as I do, the less I feel
That I wish to enmesh
My body with another's body,
Groping in the dark,
While all the time of the true love
I yet have seen no spark.

The flesh is coarse, and floods my veins
'Til I am empty yet.
And whither goeth my life's blood
To leave me here in debt?
Whither goeth sanity,
When each day I do find
That I can love but with my body
And not with my mind?

The days grow long, I see no friendly
Faces in the street.
Oh, I could love them all or one
If they but would me meet;
I could love but one of them -
For that would be a start,
For I am filled with love that strains
To surely break my heart.

LATER ON

Maybe the ball is over,
But that doesn't mean to say
That there won't be another,
Some future, sunny day.

Perhaps the time runs short;
What of life expectancy?
Life is only dreams,
And who knows what dreams will be?

Pessimism is one thing,
But you should look to the fore,
And not judge the future
From events that went before.

The sun must shine again
On everyone who lives,
So wait with patience for the day
When you receive from one who gives.

LONESOME SPIRIT

She drifts through the grounds
Like a wraith on a wave,
White muslin foaming,
To her figure enslaved,
Wafting and streaming,
Like curtains of lace,
Round her fair hair
And fresh, spring-like face.

Floating to rest like a damsel fly
Alighting on a pond, she sits there and sighs,
Dreaming of days when she wandered the lawns
With her lover beside her. Oh! Those were sweet morns.

Now she has nothing to do
All the day;
Her lover he's gone now
For many a day,
Taking her with him,
Travelling on.
She's dead now an eon,
But her ghost lingers on.

SHE MIGHT

Sitting here
depressed
because I haven't had a
letter;
I really should have
guessed,
and I should have known
better;
never will she write
and, although of that I'm sure,
I will still sit here each
night,
staring at the
floor.
Although I look a
dope,
sitting staring at the
ceiling,
while there's life there's
hope,
and I've this funny kind of
feeling
that she
might
just
write.

ONLY

Hammer it out, Beach Boys,
I'm not listening.
I can hear it, but my eyes are glistening.
Only two and a half days to go.
Valentine's day tomorrow,
Sent a card,
Not too hard to find the time.
Life is a pantomime.
Perhaps I'll laugh in a while,
Perhaps it'll snow.
I don't know.
Only two and a half days to go.
Can't think of anything else
I'd rather do
Than be with you.
Love will grow and grow.
Love can be spelt luv and,
Heavens above!
Only two and a half days to go.
God only knows what I'd be without you.
That's true, I know.
Waters flow, winds blow, flowers grow,
And only two and a half days to go.

The way you look at me sometimes
Leaves me standing,
And the way you speak and the things you say
Make me wonder when you'll be landing here.
Like the man said, penny a throw,
This Antonio
Is waiting,
Nerves a-skating,
Breath a-bating,
For only two and a half days to pass,
For only two and a half days to go.

LONG AGO

It was one of those times
When the moon and the sun
Both shone at the same time of day.
It was one of those times
When the hooting owl echoed
The scream of the gull o'er the bay.
It was one of those times
When the fox looked up
From the hole he was digging with ease
To the sound, with pricked ears,
Of the young children's calls
As they came, quick from school, thru' the trees.
It was one of those times
That I fell in love
For the seventeenth time that year,
To a girl so sweet
That when she spoke
You could hear church bells in your ear.
It was one of those times
In that long, long summer
That seemed never to end,
But would go on and on
'Til the end of time
Made the leaves of the trees all bend
And shake off their leaves
Which, twirling like parasols,
Down to the ground would descend,
To defend
The summer-softened earth
From the frost and snow
That would one day come
Then seem never to go
Like that summer, long, long ago.

FUTURE IMPERFECT

The sun may rise tomorrow, Or it may not.
Does anyone care?
Probably not.

A man may rise tomorrow, Or he may not.
Does he care?
Not a jot.

His life, a foregone conclusion,
Roughly, sharply stencilled.
On the floor, a note, hastily pencilled:
"Owing to lack of enthusiasm, tomorrow has been cancelled"

FOR SENTIMENTAL REASONS

For sentimental reasons I would rather not stay here,
For my home's in far off Yorkshire, in a village I hold dear.
There's a chestnut by the park gates that I used to stand beneath,
And a tombstone in the churchyard, where I've laid a yearly wreath.
There's an orchard by the river, where many childish hours
Have been spent in eating apples, watching mice, and picking flowers.

The telegram that yesterday protruded thro' my door,
Hardly needed to be opened to reveal the news it bore:
My last surviving relative had passed on in the night,
Leaving me some money, not a lot, but enough to see me right.
So, I'll buy a house in Yorkshire, in a village I hold dear, because
For sentimental reasons, I would rather not die here.

SHORTER DAYS

Winter comes to those surviving autumn,
Summer comes to those surviving spring,
Happiness comes to those surviving sorrow -
I wish for summer more than anything.

Heartbreak comes to those who have a heart,
Blindness comes to those who will not see,
Must the whole world lose its short, short sightedness
Before someone will look up and see me?

Darkness comes to those who spurn life's goodness,
Shelter comes to those who sing in praise,
As autumns change to winters, which themselves draw on to spring
Will I evermore see sunny, summer days?

STRANGE

Strange how many men ride down the valley to their doom,
See how the brass glints in the sun!
Listen to the jingle of the spurs, and drumming hooves,
Before the sound is drowned by the guns.

How can you describe the sound of horses rent by iron?
How can you describe a dying man?
Never mind description, just relate the deaths to glory,
Then you'll see why man disfigures man.

Strange new horses roll and squeak across the battlefield,
The drumming hooves and jingling spurs have gone,
But although the brass is covered and the transportation changed,
The dying and the killing still goes on.
And when the dead and grieving are the mothers and the babies,
It's not easy to determine who has won.

TAKE ME TO THE STARS

A curious radiance, whispering of past appeals
And future touches, emanates from she who feels
The need for contact. Obedience and steadfastness
To those who cherish the union; who dare express
The need for nearness, wisdom, wit and loving thoughts,
In short, the need for life, nature and her cohorts.

Through the mind runs consciousness of worldly things
While, high above, at peace, imagination sings,
And calls to me to come and share the different sphere
Where all things gold, and silver coins, soon disappear
Along with cold reality and sanity,
Along with jealousy and vanity.

Take me to the stars, which shine beyond
The realms of men, not waiting on a fond
Farewell, nor looking back; perhaps regret
Will chain me down to what I would forget,
But I'll be strong and when I leave I'll wave
A hand to all who rash would mankind save.

SONNET

What matter that I work from nine to five
Then, weary, come home to an evening's toil?
Some say: Be glad! Be glad to be alive!
Be glad you're here and not beneath the soil!
For is it yours, they say, to reason why?
And is it fair to prosper, while some wail?
Damn right it is, I say with angry eye
When into insignificance I pale.
A few will have success to be their bride;
A few will show the way, will be there first.
And what of other men, are they denied?
For ever doomed to hunger, doomed to thirst?
 Nay, trees that flourish feed the soil about,
 So smaller plants beneath can blossom out.

BLINDNESS

Do I cry? Do I yell!
Do I lie, do I smell?
Is it my life as well?
Thank you very much.

In the day, in the night,
You can stay, I can fight,
You can play in the light.
I can only touch.

You can laugh, you can see,
I can feel, look at me,
You can hear, hear my plea:
"Someone for a crutch."

IV

April she comes and goes, and May as quick,
And wetly follows June to find me ailed,
And thinking of days past, when I was sick,
That into insignificance have paled.

My present sad demise is stemmed from lack
Of knowing where to go, or which route take;
Of pausing, wondering if to go back
Is unpropitious. My foundations shake.
Many things do I which slow my purpose,
And other things do I which rake my health,
They drain me like some dam across a course,
But they cannot be solved by wit or stealth.

I would not be different in my brain,
But would I had my life over again.

V TO A PRIEST

I have as much faith in men from 'out there'
As you have in the God you hold most dear;
If they are advanced, we know they care,
And therefore we have not a thing to fear.
For aeons, men have looked up at the stars
And wondered if we were the only ones,
Yet we can see those distant, lit cigars
Which are more than a hundred thousand suns.
If we are here, then why not life elsewhere?
Are we so arrogant to think that we
Alone are chosen by some mystic flair
From one of a billion galaxies?

If God exists then he is Time itself,
Not effigies which sit upon a shelf.

TWO AND A HALF

1 Whatever it is, the answer is no -
You can rant, you can rave, you can deal me a blow
You can scream, you can cry, smash a vase or a po,
But whatever it is, the answer is no!

2 Whatever it is, the answer's perhaps -
You can howl, you can plead, you can set your best traps,
You can stagger about, you can threaten collapse,
But whatever it is, the answer's perhaps!

3 Whatever it is, the answer is yes -
You have forced me to this, I am under duress,
Discipline's gone and I freely confess,
Whatever it is, the answer is yes!

4 You have broken my nerve, and my pride's had a fall
You have beaten my brow and my back's to the wall,
There's a gag in my mouth, there's no reason to laugh -
You can do what you like, now you're two and a half.

VII SECOND ATTEMPT TO DESCRIBE THE MATURITY OF MANKIND

Ancient man, like the infant, looks on high,
Wondering what it means; who made the stars.
Modern man, charting the worlds in the sky,
Wondering: when will we stand upon Mars?
Mankind grows, matures at gradual pace,
Ever struggling upward - first the steep stairs,
Then the tree, then the rugged, cold cliff face,
Then the air, gliding, flying, losing cares.
But men still fight like children, play with knives,
And they still play with matches, and get burned,
But ever outward gaze and spend their lives
Shunning the world which taught them all they learned.
 But what more natural desire than this -
 To give the nest - the Earth - a goodbye kiss?

VIII BEAUTY

Beauty, it is said, is no true story,
Just the way the light reflects in moments
Of meditation. All the sun's glory
May illuminate it, but it laments
Beauty without a human being's eye
To deem it thus. Such is the way of things.
But things themselves if seen or no by I -
The rock, the bold flower, the bird that sings
Exist, are real, and in no way are false,
Despite subjective reasons which may claim
That, as the rough is not unlike the coarse,
So beauty and truth are one and the same.
 But, though no truth in beauty is there seen,
 Beauteousness in truth there's always been.

IX AFTER SAMUEL BUTLER

Things are not what they seem, you've heard it said -
Poems, like music, should be heard, not read;
It is not talent upon which art feeds
But energy, and nothing else it needs.
Face value is dangerous, we well know,
And yet where we look is the way we go;
Our world is in numbers, our lives in fear
From the horrors we see or bad news hear,
And still we look outward for the answer,
When it's here in our breasts like slow cancer.
Things are not what they seem, so look again
At the contents, and not the price or name,
For a hen is only, to tell I beg,
An egg's way of making another egg.

X

Nothing kills dignity quicker than pain,
Nothing's more boring than leisure, to some;
In an optimist's eye, flowers like rain,
To pessimists, there's a soaking to come.
Contradictions abound in this strange world,
Progress happens without people, I know;
As the facts of life are slowly unfurled
We pay censors to read them, row by row.
In Rome, we must do as the Romans do -
We relate as we want others to see,
And all this comes back to me and to you,
When natural we want our lives to be.
So come all ye faithful, give it a try,
Bathe in a day or two's sweet honesty.

XI

Love is not blind; that lack is in our eyes.
Love sees all, knows no boundaries or skies.
Love comes to those who ask for love by name,
And only those who ask can feel its flame.
Only mankind it is who made up rules
To say that love is blind, or fit for fools;
Only people liken love to flowers,
Or blame love for the passage of the hours;
Only people say to love is divine
And love for life, with them oh yes, that's fine,
But then they say to err is human, too,
So I can't love anyone else but you.
And yet love feeds on love, that much is known,
Like crops which on last year's stubble are grown.
 So why not love as love was meant to be -
 Clean, compassionate, for all, and for free.

XII

I don't believe in heaven or in hell;
I don't expect to live after I die;
My maker was the Earth and I know well
That on my end in dust you can rely.
Now, on that pedestal of awful fact -
The truth that this one life is all we have -
I can begin to plan and then to act
Without a single need for me to brave
The abyss of despair to help my friends,
Or lend a hand to strangers in a mess.
So why do them then? Not for my own ends -
There is no God who I need to impress!
 I do them for the gratitude that knows
 The smile is ten times sweeter than the rose.

VISITORS

It was a cold, grey moon that shone
The night the strangers landed,
Touching down with stealth upon
The heath, the ship up-ended.

The air was still, the footprints deep
The heavy people printed
In the sandy paths and dunes so steep
Twixt heather, purple tinted.

Their little backpacks lifted them
And took them to the town,
And they descended quietly through
The mist, the Earth's nightgown.

Then came the sirens, thunder, screams,
And fireballs lit the sky,
And the visitors stood with open mouths,
Puzzled, wondering why.

Back to their ship they went apace
Though no pursuit could they see;
And the visitors left in haste that night
In nineteen forty-three.

It was thirty years before they returned
To see if things had changed;
They found no peace in any land,
Though round the Earth they ranged.

*** *** ***

A little beacon circles our sun,
Beyond the range of Mars;
It bleeps "These beings are dangerous:
Keep clear of the bars!"

How inadequate are words when there are feelings to impart -
For a word means this to me, and that to you -
So this story is the door through which you walk into my heart,
There to see the way I look on people who
Learn to trust and follow truth, despite derision, fear and doubt,
People learning from the old to build the new,
People knowing what is beautiful and not afraid to shout about it
Read, and see the way I look at you.

Duty first is to ensure there is a future; when that's done,
Duty second is to see that it is good;
What a person can achieve depends a deal upon the one
Who is destined to attend them on the road.
They may be flung together by some travel agent's pen,
Or some vast eternal scheme by gods unknown;
They may test each other's feelings with some careful phrases, then
They'll respond, as does the mere to pebbles thrown.

XIII

Love is a story, waiting to come true,
Waiting to give, and to receive anew,
Saying au revoir, but never adieu.

(When August hears the cuckoo's plaintive note
Or July sees the jasmine's yellow coat,
Then will I cease to love you so, he wrote.)

Love cares nothing for character, or state,
None to remote, no creed inviolate
When love's chariot flies, steered by blind fate.

(Though she may never know he loves her smile,
Her eyes, and all her airs which so beguile
Him, he knows nothing can his love defile.)

Love, as we are oft reminded, is free,
But love and loving worlds apart can be.

Her eyes are like windows, her words are a song,
Her heart is the house in which you belong.
Her wit is like silver, her perception a beam
To penetrate your thoughts - of her, it would seem.

Her hands you've not touched, her arms have not held thee;
She knows nought of your love - this could be a comedy.

Her eyes are like windows, but the curtains are drawn,
And until they are opened, you will be forlorn.
May she look and take notice of one who loves true,
May she open her eyes now, and make one make two.

Vibrations

From emotions
From interaction between emotions
Cross the air
Unnoticed
Until they reach a brain
Capable of decoding them.
And when that happens,
The distance between
The source and the decoder
Diminishes
Until it is reduced
To nought.
Or someone dies.
Call it telepathy,
Sensitivity,
Perception,
Whatever.
It must be
It must be good.

XIV MUSIC OF THE SPHERE

The plink of rain into a silver pool;
The song of the thrush, clearly in the cool
Air after the storm; the chirping cricket;
The mild bee, droning in the gorse thicket.
When the day dies, and the splendid sun yields
And night, like rain, makes black pools in the fields
The owl, from a dead elm, hoots once, twice – stops,
Awaits the ghostly answer from the copse.
Far off, 'neath white cliffs, waves are restless, too,
Embroidering with white the endless blue,
Murmuring, whispering, until the dawn
Breaks to the lark, our unfailing alarm.
Hear the music of this silver sphere – Earth –
More than a hundred thousand Steinways' worth.

Those mortal gods who dash their way
Like skipping pebbles on a lake
Are coming here to take away
The cobwebs from our eyes. Awake!
Human beings, you have crawled
Upon the dust ten million years
And we have watched them all, enthralled,
Touched to laughter, moved to tears.

Press the switch, dissolve the screen,
Which kept the worst of us away,
But let the infant Earth be seen,
But not look at the waves that say
There are a million 'Earths'; all had
Their time of nurture, behind the door,
It is time to join us, though it's sad,
You are not children any more.

XV GOODBYE WATERLOO

Goodbye Waterloo, your grimy blocks tell
Of a past where men suffered living hell
To bring up the carbon that smokes so well.
Diddle diddle dee, the rhythm is set,
I can see the Post Office tower yet,
And the snake winds on with me in its gut.
It has two heads, this metallic mamba,
A face at each end, colour of amber,
One with a brain, the other in slumber.
I see rows of houses with lace-lidded eyes,
A thicket, a field, and to my surprise,
Some trees don't yet have their summer disguise.
 So Goodbye, Waterloo, with your steel thread.
 I can't stay with you - I'd rather be dead.

I SEE CONFUSION

Questions which have no
 answers
Sentences half complete
Lines which have no meaning
Theirs is true defeat
Songs which sing of madness
Things I meant to say
Were they joy or sadness?
Both fade in the day
Days which have no dawning
Nights which have no end
Promises forgotten
Which love cannot amend
These are the responses
I receive from my mind
When I proffer questions
Of the strangest kind:
Questions which have no
 answers...

XVI

Does love cure all, does love reach across fear?
I want to be loved, but won't let it near;
I want to give love, but who is to hear?
I am long gone on the road to the wise;
No knowing how far, or under what skies
It is. Or if they hear my failing cries.
I want to turn back, to know what is real
Again. To know whether what I now feel
Is enough for some sweet peace to reveal.
I am tired. Have I not journeyed enough?
Have I forsaken the smooth for the rough?
I didn't know you had to be this tough.
 Let me go back through philosophy's door;
 Let me be ordinary, ever more.

XVII

Chant Polonai opens like a flower,
Singing of spring, and yet I still despair
For, in those eyes which haunt me in each hour,
There lives more truth than I can surely bear.
Her phrases touch my heart and make me weep
And, echoing among my thoughts of love,
Are promises I know I could not keep,
And mountains I know I could not move.
I cannot turn my back on her and go;
I cannot twist her words to save the pain
That she would suffer would she ever know
The imperfection of my poor soul's reign.
 Some day she may know all this to be true:
 Some day, some dark day, when the moon is blue.

(23.9.80, inspired by Chopin's Op.74a, arr. Liszt)

Re-written 1982

Chant Polonai opens like a flower,
Singing of spring, and yet you still despair
For, in those eyes which haunt you in each hour,
There lives more truth than you can surely bear.
Her phrases touch your heart and make you weep
And, echoing among your thoughts of love,
Are promises you know you could not keep,
And mountains – those you know you could not move.
You cannot turn your back on her and go;
You cannot twist her words to save the pain
That she would suffer would she ever know
The imperfection of your poor soul's reign.
 Some day she may know all this to be true:
 Some day, some dark day, when the moon is blue.

XVIII

Somewhere in the universe is his mind
The teeming void enriching ev'ry sense
And on the Earth his body waits, some kind
Of Library, though not confined by tense,
Whereto all information is passed back,
Filed away from uneducated eyes,
Shelf on unclassified shelf, rack on rack
In both subjective and objective guise.
And who knows how this rich store may be reached -
It steadfastly refuses to hear pleas
From those with problems to be solved or breached,
For there are no wardens, no doors, no keys.
 Is he still primaeval man; just a store,
 A cache of information, nothing more?

XIX

No adolescent yearning, this my love,
No idle wager on a fancied horse
But, though I'd sail the ocean this to prove,
She will not lend me charts to set a course.
And so by subtle means (and some not so!)
I drop a string of gentle hints by word
Or gesture, hoping wildly each will go
To link with those before. But how absurd!
What idiotic games are these I play,
Balancing a life in my shaking hand? -
Risking everything on what I say
Being easy to quote, and understand?
 While soft, romantic mood may please the ear,
 Those plain words oft are what they need to hear.

XX HARTLAND

The moaning wind whipping away sadness
The heaving wave creaming along its crest
The gull screaming its thin song of madness
This is Hartland, stark and free, at its best.

But what is it, just rocks and weed and sand
And churning rollers of grey and white sea -
Is it all just for the good of mankind -

Was Hartland - Earth? - put here for you and me?
Yes. For through the earliest expression
Of life - the crawling, seething Earth was made
A nursery for people and passion -
People who lived, died, fell in love and prayed.
And when we stand here, bent by Hartland's storm,
That history around us keeps us warm.

XXI SEARCH

They came at last, came down to the tired Earth
Still spinning, a faint blue beacon of hope;
Set soft shoes upon our myriad graves,
Saw then a civilisation's stillbirth -
A race which, once stepping on the steep slope
Of war, slipped, died, heedless of love which saves.

Sad decay tells what befell thereafter.
Visions of events here in their minds burned
Nightmares which would, could, never be erased.
There had been sweet life here, yes, and laughter,
And now, nothing. How sad, they thought, and turned
Their backs, sought their ships and on their way blazed.

Perhaps they search still, out among the stars,
For others who found the way to end wars.

XXII THE COMING

Like a traveller in time you have crossed
A gulf of centuries to become lost
And here find us, like a good ship, storm-tossed
Finds a haven amid Nature's fury.
You find us happy, at first unwary,
Then you explain (though you are full weary)
That far, far beyond those distant white clouds,
Farther even than the grey mist that shrouds
These high peaks, your people live in vast crowds,
Dwelling like ants, speaking in accents terse,
Having no time to speak like us, in verse,
No time to seek, or muse - what could be worse?
 Back to your people we fear you will go
 And tell; forgive us for what we must do...

XXIII WITHOUT YOU

Long live the night, when I can hide my head.
Banish the day; the sun shines on the dead.
In the dawn I remembered what you said.
Don't come calling for me - not any more.
To hide emotion, that's all words are for.
I lie amongst your words, here on the floor.

You may not know I'm dying here today.
I seem to you alive, typing away.
But inside, my heart is in sad decay.
No longer will I cheer the morning light;
No, nor no longer let charm strike my sight.
For I will dwell in my own darkest night.

Compared with the dread darkness of our fears,
Night is light as day; aeons short as years.

XXIV

Afternoon sunlight on a broken glass;
A raging torrent through a mountain pass;
A child asleep, fingers locked round a toy
Could it be a girl, or is it a boy?
A darkened stage relives a thousand plays;
A clock, telling the time to a blind man;
The indecision of a thousand ways -
But who on Earth can tell? Only time can.
Time is remorseless, time never ceases,
As hard as stone, as soft as lambs' fleeces
Time drips on, and the wheels of life greases,
Bringing crumbling down our edifices.
 Whatever we build, time tells it to end.
 Perhaps, while there's time, we can quarrels mend.

SUZY

The snow has almost gone now -
A tiny mound of white;
The days are growing longer
With the shortening of each night;
I look at you and love you,
And know it's going to be all right,
For the more we can express, the more we grow.

Days of dark confusion
Have held us in their grip,
They have tried to shake our faith,
Tried to make our courage slip.
But the light is growing brighter -
We can see to steer the ship
Which conveys us back to waters that we know.

The embraces of my caring
Want to wrap around your fears
And dissolve them into laughter,
Not compress them into tears,
Let the wisdom yet to be discovered
Fill up all the years
And fulfil the promises of months ago -
When we knew our love was the purest love the world
would ever know.

XXV YOU

You have opened my tired eyes to the light
Of your wisdom. You have opened my mind
Which was closed. You have guided my wild thoughts
Into reason, helped suppress those false "oughts",
Allowing my "wants" to be redefined,
Allowing me unblinker, loving sight.
Doubt not our love's victory in each test,
Our passion's energy to conquer fear;
Forgive me when I make the same mistakes -
It's my anxiety which moulds the lakes
In which I flounder, hurting her most near
Who reaches out to save the one distressed.
I trust myself; if I can trust you so,
In peace together we will older grow.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

She seemed to be offering so much by that smile -
The smile beneath the closed eyes which had called me,
And for which I had leapt the moat and fought the briars,
Shouldered rusty hinges into life, killed a thousand rats
And braved a host of sleeping ghosts in that damp castle.

And so, imagine my surprise when I bent and kissed her lips
And she awoke and with glaring eyes spat out these words:
"Oh, go away, you stupid prince; can't you see I'm trying to sleep?"

Then did all the servants wake and fall upon me angrily
And throw me in this dungeon, for they had not read the story.

ONLY WORDS WILL DO

Light comes from the sun;
The sun is light.
The fear that points a gun
Is blacker than the night.

Your love and mine can steal
Into a trance;
What palette can reveal
The way our spirits dance?

Trees are made of wood,
And woods of trees;
Who on a canvas could
Portray such thoughts as these?

Pictures are for those
Who are not true;
In love, my lover knows
Only words will do.

Two hearts, divided by an ocean,
Two minds, divided by a wish
In us a separation bound by yearning
If only we had profited by this.

To know is to forgive and rediscover
Two dreams that are the same and shall come true
When you can understand what is important
When you return to me, will I to you.

XXVI

Your face is fading with the passing days
My heart remembers, but my eyes are blind
You left me 'you' in many thousand ways -
Our lives are inextricably entwined

When you return, will you be just the same?
Or will your heart have moved at restless pace
Towards another me that will declaim
That you have dreamed when next you see my face?

You have to make a choice between two lives -
The one of comfort, but the other full
Of tenderness and love, where beauty gives
You reason to proceed towards some goal

The choice is hard; each is the steepest slope:
One down to luckless fill, one up in hope.

A MOMENT

Through a sun-drenched vineyard
The faintest tremble passed
Unnoticed by those whose daily toil
Was nearing end at last

The chattering children, homeward
Their lengthening shadows dancing
A strange light, and heavy air
Unyielding to their prancing

A cup raised here, discreet the lyre
That softly wooed a maid
A bird aloft, called by the sea,
A beggar in the road.

The world stopped for an instant
She gave a maddened roar
She spewed her inmost secrets out
And Pompeii was no more

XXVII

It was so hard to leave you there asleep;
Hard, knowing that I must my kisses keep
Until the hands upon the clock have turned
Full circle thrice and one more hour returned.

The crumpled bed I left behind still warm -
A barren seascape, tossed as in a storm,
Is captured as a sculpture, fixed by light,
A sad memorial to one more night.

I wanted you to know how much I longed
To wake you, to embrace you with the day,
To bathe you in my thoughts of hope that thronged,
To take your hands in mine and softly say:

‘The day will dawn when there’ll be no goodbyes
To punctuate the language of our eyes’.

XXVIII CIVILISATION

What kind of civilisation, this, where
We destroy what we do not understand,
Hate the systems for which we have not planned,
And parry with a sword the proffered hand?
What kind of world is this where children die
From bullets aimed by fathers of the same?
Every day I wake and wonder why
It goes on, this unbelievable game.
When the old woman told me, at the fair,
In her cracked voice, that I was stronger than
I thought, and wiser than I know, the man
In me took to his heels and ran, and ran.
And the question from which he ran was this:
Where to start to change such a world as this?

XXIX INDECISION

Like the rumpled sheets on an unmade bed,
Disordered feelings whirl round my head,
And half-remembered phrases someone said
Come back like echoes in an empty shed.
I only have to find a place to start,
Like the end of a tangled piece of string,
And then I can unravel all my heart,
And to my woven thoughts some order bring.
In truth, I know there's a greater pleasure
In wandering the maze at my leisure
Than a tedious attempt to measure
The weight of my words, for that is censure.
Two lines on a single thought is holy -
To decide not to decide is folly.

I AM A LITTLE MAD

I am a little mad, I think,
With I, a little maid
What sanity can fight such things
When will will surely fade
What purpose then is life, if life
Itself is overplayed?

I am a little mad, I think,
Into a pit I fall
And with each metre metered
I think I hear you call.
But it was just the screams of mine
Bouncing off the wall.

I am a little mad, I think,
My head is holed like any sink
And from the plughole runs my life
Which just adds to my strife.

I am a little mad, I think,
My brain outruns my pen
And when I'm left with no more ink
I have to think again
And when my thoughts run dry as well
What then? Oh God! What then?

I am a little mad, I think,
The die is cast, but why?
Today it seems as good as any
Other day to die.
Tomorrow will not know the joy
Of one more sunlit sky.

I am a little mad, I think,
My tears well in a well

They drip in Chinese torture rooms
With wounds wound with a gel
With couplets such as these I might
Be on my way to hell.

I am a little mad, I think,
One eye sees green, the other pink,
It's more than I can do to see
What's happening to me.
But if I am a little mad,
Then I'll bid you me bury
I'll pay my fare to the old, old man
For he me o'er to ferry
To where the pear tree gives a fig
For an enematic perry
And if this is sanity, begad
I'm surely just a little mad.

XXX

No day goes by without I think of you
You are to me as one who cannot fade
It seems with each day's passing we renew
Our hopes of sharing still the road we made.

I would not find you false if, through the strain
In which we lived, you tired, and went alone
To start the road to happiness again
To find the place whereon the sun still shone.

For I am weary, too, of being drawn
Down paths which I have no desire to walk
To obstacles for which I've nought but scorn
To fences at the sight of which I baulk.

But if accompanied I travel there
It is with none but you I'd rather share.

XXXI

When I see you, can I forget the past?
The hours we shared, exposing both our souls?
Those memories of ours will surely last
Until to the equator drift the poles.
We came together in unspoken grace -
To set out on a journey, charts forsworn,
And though the tide has brought us to a place
Of shallows and of rocks, we still hold on.
What bond is it that lashes us to life
And to each other, keeping our love safe?
Is it the hope that saving winds will drive
Us to the open sea, away from grief?
I pray the journey's end is coming soon
So you and I can once again be warm.

XXXII

What madness represents this world of locks
When everything must in a safe or box
Be placed, to see that no one pinches it
To use it for their own in greed or fit
Of coveting?

Where have we gone astray,
When nothing sacred is but we must say
This thing is mine - my name is scribed upon't
In letters of uncopiable font
And rare design?

I can't believe it's true
That you would take what don't belong to you
Just simply for the reason that it's there
And not locked up, or guarded. Just take care -

While you are looking out the other way
They do not come and take your soul away.

XXXIII

Will you look up and let me see your face
And hear you say you would not harm a soul
And will you walk among the human race
And let me see that hate is not your goal?
We daily see upon our screens the fate
Of those in peril, and of those who starve
We shake our heads and blame it on the State
Who would from human flesh an empire carve.
We see that protestations are in vain
The perpetrators in their ideals hide
We hear the name of God invoked again
The power of the people's on their side.

When will you say enough - we are not blind
It's time to leave the crying to the wind.

FIRST LOVE

It was my first, this love for you
All others insignificant
It started in my heart and grew
Until I felt my whole life through
Its warmth would complement.

Two hearts aflame, each quite alone
In each enshrined a fierce desire
Can warm no more than ageless stone
And infinitely can intone
And still not make a fire.

No, they must wait upon the night
Together yet united be
And there must burn with passion bright
A glow to give the sightless sight
I have no match for thee

Would it were so, these words would not
Be poured in such explosive haste
As hammers do upon the lot
My heart's possessions so much grot
My passions so much waste

Love ebbs and flows and does its will
Like tides with pebbles on the shore
Ever changing, never still
Like dappled sunlight on our hill
Or a wandering meteor.

I know you not, yet knew you well
As through our love our stories told
Not noticing the leaves that fell
Not thinking how the time would tell
The seasons to grow cold.

I ponder on the seasons now
And wonder if our winter's breath
In giving way to spring will bow
Like Nature's meadows to the plough
Bringing life in death,

Or whether it will always sweep
Our passions down in caverns vast
And only in our troubled sleep
Let us our love's appointment keep
To find our time has passed.

Yesterday's wisdom: tomorrow's cliché
No truth seems there in any word
Sincerity has gone away
To where the night is bright as day
And silence can be heard.

Please tell me I am wrong to doubt
That we love now as we loved then
That love gives back what's taken out
That our affections, once devout
Will wrap us once again.

If you cannot, then I am done
I cannot close another door
I may not be the only one
To burn his wings on love's vast sun
Or weep upon the floor

For in the dawn when spirits slake
Their old frustrations on our thoughts
I pray the Earth my soul to take
Should I to sleep before I wake
Into her hallowed courts.

It was my first, this love for you
All others insignificant
It started in my heart and grew
I wonder now how much was true,
And how much good intent.

XXXVII NOT LOOKING BACK

Softly shifts the sand of past endeavour,
As I essay my thoughts to turn aside
Slowly from the clinging past, to sever
My false obedience to fear and pride.

Whence came she to haunt me, I know little,
And where I drove her onward, I felt less;
She was never willed to test my mettle
By offering me recall, or redress.

If the ghost is laid, it leaves a shadow
To fall upon my thoughts when I relax,
Leaving unthawed patches in each hollow
To work in silence among the cracks.
Forces that cause me to dread I follow
Will always blow the sand to fill my tracks.

THE SEVEN DEADLY VIRTUES

1. I am Good

I am punctual, practical, helpful and spick
I'm about as exciting as wood
I am opera and opulence, thankful and thick
I am Good
I am courteous, cuddly, square as a rick
I am jam, I am bread, and rice pud
I am aspirin and oestrogen, Marmite and Vick
I am Good
I am honoured to know what makes everyone tick
I am never misunderstood
I am known in the village as a bit of a dick
I am Good, I am Good, I am Good

2. I am Wise

I am smooth, I am stable, and fearlessly fair
I am always just over the next rise
I am timeless and penniless and losing my hair
I am Wise
I am just and aloof and you never know where
I am going to put all your lies
I am thought, I am pain, let the buyer beware
I am Wise
I am rational and cool, I am strong as a chair
I am frail and surrounded by sighs
I am certain, and have that unwavering stare
I'm that arrogant pillock you see everywhere
I am Wise, I am Wise, I am Wise

3. I am Free

I am sun, I am wind, not the moon or the tide
I am joy, I am spring, I am me
I am young, I am lean, I'm a bit on the side
I am Free
I am madly unfettered, and slow to decide
I am spry and elusive and twee
I am bliss, I am air, I can never be tried
I am Free
I am wild and abandoned, and never denied
I am clouds and the wild, open sea
I am open as darkness, with nothing to hide
I am lazy and crazy and chaos inside
I'm remote as a distant relation who died
I am Free, I am Free, I am Free

4. I am Love

I am kind, I am tolerant, solemn and wise
I am calm, and don't push or shove
I am passionate, gentle and bold; I'm a fool
I am Love
I am time, I am toxic, I am glistening eyes
I am hell, and then heaven above
I am tragic and wild, unbelievably cruel
I am Love
I am sulky, then wistful, eternal surprise
I'm a hand up a skirt, then in glove
I am lingerie-soft with the kick of a mule
I'm as cool as the boulder surviving the duel
I am sunlight itself, 'til I run out of fuel
I am logic's own nightmare, except as a rule
I am Love, I am Love, I am Love

5. I am Peace

I am quiet, I am silence, and swan-like and frail
I am calm as formations of geese
I am cello and yellow and vapour trail
I am Peace
I am murmuring voices and sips of real ale
I am languorous evenings in Greece
I am star of the evening and song of the whale
I am Peace
I am delicate, ethereal, tender and pale
I am pillow and willow and fleece
I am sun on the back and tide upon shale
I am spent, I am done, let fate's will prevail
I am slumber and doldrums and distant sail
I'm the gently swinging buffalo's tail
I am told it can make your virility fail
I am Peace, I am Peace, I am Peace

6. I am Sane

I am stable and tawny as old port wine
I am mortar and castles in Spain
I am able and table and rule divine
I am Sane
I am sensible, fashionable, focused and fine
I'm an old-fashioned railway train
I can call the tune or toe the line
I am Sane
I am logical, topical, tropic and twine
I am signposted in the lane
I am certain of answers I lay on the line
I am ashen and cold and covered in brine
I am not misconstrued or discovered supine
I am not sitting listening to you while you whine
I am sure that the coat you wear used to be mine

I am going outside to deliver this line
I am Sane, I am Sane, I am Sane

7. I am Right

I'm indignant and sure, and fertile and fit
I'm correct, complain as you might
I am certain, and obstinate, I am true grit
I am Right
I am bold, I am fearless, I stand where I sit
I am British and Liberal and white
I'm a member, and paid up, entitled to spit
I am Right
I am sharp as a knife, I am sparkling wit
I am ready to stand up and fight
I am willing to walk if the road is well-lit
I am glory, and whingers get right on my tit
I am anger, immodesty, bridle and bit
I am not accustomed to paying for it
I am heaven and hell, I am brave when I'm hit
I'm eternal truth, and covered in glory
I'm sure that's the right word to finish this story...
I am Right, I am Right, I am Right

1492

We are not frightened.
We are proud to have been chosen
From thousands who wanted to come.
I know we shall die, I can imagine the last moments,
But I can think of worse deaths than drowning -
The rope, the cat, the sickness...
And it will be good to see, if only for a moment
What is beyond the end of the world.
Each day we listen for the roar;
We must be very close to the edge now.
But we are not afraid.

XXXVIII TODAY

The rain is falling from the autumn sky -
This is the time when all the leaves fall down,
Carpeting the ground in red, gold and brown.
Oh why, oh why, do they all have to die?

Do they not die to grow again in spring?
Hard to explain such a mystical thing -
The wind plays its part, and cold does the rest,
Trying so hard to do its very best.

Then spring follows winter, the Earth is green,
Thousands of blossoms I have never seen,
Because I am blind and have a white stick,
I can't see the clock, but I hear it tick.

So passing seasons will pass despite me
Unaware of the fact I cannot see.

XL GRANDMA

If I have grown accustomed to your face
As Fran sketched you, yet I have not forgot
How you would smile inscrutably at me,
Willing me to read every wise thought
Ruled in those lines that tracked your age and life;
Reminding me of your many roles - wife,
Daughter, mother, grandmother and yet friend
And Friend again. Living in the long past,
Looking, with sea-grey eyes calm, to your end
Yet seeing in the future our dies cast,
You smelled of wisdom while you loved us all
From your armchair - turn right, just down the hall.

I loved you then, I could not love you more
But how I wish I'd had more time to care.

(Olive Elizabeth Briggs, 23.11.1894-27.6.1988)

XLI EARLY IN THE MORNING

Rain. Beating on the window, telling me
To go to bed. Wind. Howling at its height,
Bending trees, shaking fences, and wildly
Rattling the door, like a shivering mite.
The elements are up when I should be
Asleep. But I am up, working the night.

Love. Beating in my tight breast, telling me
To go to her. She. Tugging at my mind,
Bending will, shaking confidence, strongly
Rattling my conscience, with a sting unkind.
My emotions are up when I should be
Asleep. But I am up, feeling, but blind.

Better the bed that welcomes than the one
Which just postpones my fears e'er rise the sun

XLII MRS DE WINTER

I cannot tell the dream to go away;
I did not say to come again so soon;
I cannot live for fear of Mandalay,
Accompanied still by that chilling moon
And images of fire. Let drowning crowd
My mind instead of agonising flame,
Let me awake so I can cry out loud.
Let me implore him just to speak my name.
Dear Daphne, why did you create me thus,
When power such as his was bound to deal
Me such a hand that ruined only us
And made it certain that my dreams were real?

XLIII POETRY IS DEAD

No longer speak of dreams, nor love, nor soul
You may not rhyme nor reason, nor be free
To speak of o'er or ne'er - such words are foul
In these decades' sad, formless poetry;
To do so seems to mean impiety.

And that white dress upon a summer's day
Is turned to ash on anger's cruel flame
The smoke by winds of zeal is torn away
To where the punctuation takes the blame;
To where blank verses howl to find a name.

Some people say that poetry is dead
Now lovers watch Eastenders while they grope
For something that they lost beneath the bed -
Its dying breath, dismay, its spilled blood, hope.

XLV REALITY, POOF!

The stars shine only for me - they're not real
They may be points of light behind velvet
And everything I see and/or feel
May be just as illusory, and yet
Even if they just exist in my head
There must be some reason for that plain fact
For they would not exist if I were dead -
There would be no mind to keep them intact.

So what is reality then, you ask?
(If in fact you exist to ask me this)
It would be a fairly enormous task
Without any help or an accomplice.

In fact, it's impossible, because - damn! -
Although I think, it doesn't mean I am.

XLVI

A child might think, on going back to school,
Loaded with holiday ideas and schemes,
That Teacher had waited, alone and stern,
There at her desk, examining her rule,
Twiddling her fingers and dreaming her dreams,
Just as she was at the end of last term.
A child might think that - until it grows up
And finds that its own life is not unique,
The sadness it brings us is hard to bear,
But the cub, the cygnet, kitten and pup,
All have to realise that selfish streak,
That innocent time, that freedom from care -
Is paradise lost, gone into thin air.
Why do we have to grow up - it's not fair!

XLVIII AGINCOURT REVISITED

A cold October night, nineteen fifteen;
Shaking the ground: the enemy, unseen;
Five thousand Englishmen, marching in trance;
Scarcely knowing how - why - they came to France.

But tramping across this strange landscape, they
Live to see one more dawn, St Crispin's Day;
This tired, not so merry band of brothers,
Marching in mixed hope and fear, as others -
Their weapons as deadly, their feet as raw -
Did, to the day, five hundred years before.

Today, many will die, entombed in mud
Their names to be inscribed on stone, in blood.
But who will ask: What is the force that sealed
Our young men's fate forever to this field?

LI THE MERMAID

I thought a twilight swim would do me good.
I did not wake my love; I thought it would
Be simpler, naked, just to cross the beach
To where the lazy tide's soft lapping speech
Called out my name, it seemed, and bade me in.

The water's warmth enclosed my sleepy head,
My fingers touched the soft and sandy bed,
But then a slight caress across my face
Transported me to quite another place
Where mermaids play and fantasies begin.

Entwined, we kissed, then on her velvet swell
Of bosom spilled my seed. Now I know well
It may have been just weed that quenched me so
But 'til I die I'll never surely know.