

ON
MICROWAVES
AND OTHER POEMS

WRITTEN BY
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BETWEEN THE YEARS
MMXII AND MMXVI

DESIGNED
AND TYPESET
M. M. X X. VI.
BY THE POET

A house without books is like a
city without flowers; there are no
quiet gardens of reflection, and no
roots to grow strong in the sun-
shine and in the rain.

IF I COULD PLAY THE BASSOON

POEM • I

I T was the lofty maytime
With a haughty chance of June
When I wandered in the daytime
Playing jokes with my bassoon.

I saw old Mable at the shop
And played from near a plant,
The rising note made people stop
And flee 'the elephant'.

I wandered past some molehills
And played an honest track
The moles all as they quickly fled
Cried 'Run, Ground Force is back!'

A battleship, I stepped upon
And played a great commotion,
The sailors, fearing something wrong,
All jumped into the ocean.

I saw the town's new volcano,
But I was interrupted,
Because as I began to play
It roared, and then erupted!

POEM • I

L'Envoi

And sat in hell, Old Nick did say
He liked the way I japed,
To startle him I went to play,
He ran, and I escaped.

A TRIP TO CHICHESTER

POEM • II

ON Sunday after half past two
I went to town as people do
To 'take the air' and 'chase the geese'
And buy myself a bright blue fleece.
And getting there in healthy time
I thought I'd hear the church clock chime.
Those noble bells clucked loudly when
I realised it was just a hen,
And climbing to inspect the spire
I found it made of chicken wire.
I thought it was a little much
To fit the church inside a hutch.
The highstreet was knee-high with straw
Which seemed a quite tremendous flaw,
I thought "How will the cars get through" –
There was no parking space, it's true,
For shops - there was not space for one
Which might explain why there were none.
And even the electric lights
Illuminated farmyard sights.
It seemed that on my way to town
I'd had my map held upside down,
And being lost, I had instead
Locked myself inside a shed.

THE water was quiet and winter was red:
We'd all gone out hunting and killed uncle Fred,
He liked dressing up and his eyesight's not great
And he gave us a start after turning up late;
Since out he came jumping, confusing the scene,
Still wearing his rabbit ears from Halloween.
Oh what a commotion, you would not believe,
Aunt Mable was crying so she had to leave.
We covered the mess up and buried the gun,
Fred's been cremated, and dad's on the run.

AN EPIGRAM

POEM · IV

I wrote some poems on my phone -
A right mistake, I should have known -
Since without charge I left it on
The phone turned off, and now they're gone.

POEM · V

ANOTHER EPIGRAM

I met a lass at the bar last night
She asked why I was sober
I drunk some more to get me right
Said hi, and then fell over.

YET ANOTHER EPIGRAM

POEM · VI

TO sing in the rain is not that much fun
I'd rather have practiced it under the sun
But since I can't carry a tune anyway
Quite soon I had scared all the raindrops away.

POEM · VII

THERE ARE STILL MORE EPIGRAMS

ONE night I went fishing on a bright red bus
I took a rod and anchor
It was pulled along by an octopus
'Till I opened a window, and sank her.

THIS IS THE LAST EPIGRAM

POEM · VIII

THERE was a phonebox in the sky
So I called the police and asked them why
They told me "Oh, it was built for Jack,
"He climbed up his beanstalk and couldn't get back."

O H microwave upon the floor
Who guards the sink-side cupboard door,
Why do you sit so neat and proud
Within your torn-up-package shroud?

What heart have you to bear such zeal
For such a piece of moulded steel;
What triumphs do you long to suit
To pride amongst your cardboard loot.

Oh microwave, who put you there?
Who gave you such a box to wear?
You are so small.. and upside down,
But do you dream a golden crown?

Do you think of some great throne,
Of places you could call your own?
Do you dream of kingdoms high,
And one true name that rules the sky?

'Oh Microwave!' you wish they'd cheer,
With beaming grin from ear to ear,
And with a better voice than ours
You'd love and hate with all your powers:

Not sixty watts, but sixty gems;
With rubies scattered at your hems,
Your gown of silver, not of card,
And actions named by bard and bard!

Oh Microwave, how well I see,
You're just a dreaming whim like me;
So keep your kingdom, dream some more,
You ruler of the kitchen floor.

**Written in Aberystwyth, after Andy asked me why I didn't move the broken microwave off the the floor so I had space to cook. "You soft southerner, you're more likely to write a poem about it then actually do any hard work and move it!" So I did.*

THE DINNER GUESTS

THE table set and chairs arranged,
The house is quite completely changed,
Poor Alf (the dad) is running late,
His wife (that's Mary) in a state.
Three kids now all are ready for
A dinner so soon at the door.
Elizabeth is on the stairs
And shows off grace as no one bears,
Her face lit up as to impress,
All bound upon a new-bought dress.
And then young Jonathan appears,
Politeness shoved into his ears;
That he must do and he must be,
And he must act so perfectly.
The smallest of that awkward set
The nearly-seven-now Yvette,
Is dressed up as her mother chose
In really quite horrendous clothes.
And there below in hopeful poise
Their parents pack away all toys;
The house itself must now be dressed
So even it can look its best.
There's Mozart playing in the den;
A CD none shall hear again,
The sofas, cleaned, sit proud and bright,
As if they'd eat off those tonight,

A dab of polish has gone round
On every surface that is found,
The dust in every place upset
(For there was nought they could forget)
The car was cleaned and sat outside
As if that was their only pride,
The kitchen now is out of bounds;
For it's so clean it just astounds,
And Tuesday's 'artwork' in the sink
Has now been cleaned of Yvette's ink.
There's not an atom unrehearsed
For what shall through the front door burst;
Relations this time, friends perhaps?
Some more from church, or office chaps?
The phone is ringing somewhere faint
And Mary makes a loud complaint,
Now Jonathan is hiding quick
(The 'Well Lost Phone' is his best trick)
Elizabeth is quite alarmed
That by her dress not one is charmed,
And quietly the house descends
Once more into chaotic ends;
The table's knocked, some wine is spilt,
Yvette's now painting green the quilt,
And Mary now, in search alone,
Cries, "Where the hell's that bloody phone?!"
Elizabeth has changed her skirt,
And Jonathan has stained his shirt,

POEM · X

The phone at least had been retrieved,
And Mary (looking quite relieved)
Removes it slowly to her brow
To hear the soul who'd caused this row;
"Oh hello, dear. How are you? Well?
"I'm sorry, but I've got to tell,
"Arthur's ill and not quite right,
"We can't make it to yours tonight!"
The phone from duty was released
And Mary, looking slightly pleased,
Sat down beside a potted tree;
Her house was back to anarchy.

A COMPLAINT

POEM · XI

THE doctor told me I was sick -
Of course, I disagreed,
I thought I'd find a cure more quick
From other folk indeed!
I asked the vicar, he said hope
I asked him "what is that?"
But he just moaned about the pope
And his great funny hat.

I asked the milkman, he said chew -
It was not clear on what -
The cobbler said don't eat that shoe
It sure won't help a lot.
The gardener said some plants would help
"They're good and keep you thin"
But all I found was cod and kelp
Because the tide came in.

The soldiers - mathematical -
Fix headaches with a mallet
"For medicine is practical
And does not serve the palate."
And if at least a sum of four
Survive from every ten
The mallet proves a perfect cure;
They won't complain again!

POEM · XI

I travelled to the parliament
To ask them all in french
But they just had an argument
And then all quit the bench.
And while in town I asked the queen
If she could find a cure
She asked me what was wrong with me
I said "I'm not quite sure."

I walked to Bracknell roundabout
To look upon the view -
No monuments to help stood out
From there to Timbuktu,
And so I thought I'd write a rhyme
To see if that's enough
And if that doesn't help in time
I'll have an epitaph!

GETTING HOME FOR MUM'S BIRTHDAY
23rd June 2016

POEM · XII

IT was a Thursday, dull and grey
(A soggy referendum day)
When I was walking down the Strand
And saw a swimming pool at hand -
I was surprised, for though quite clean,
T'was where the underground had been.

The station master, rather wet,
Gave a speech I shan't forget:
He calmly said, though unsure how,
That "Essex is aquatic now.
"For those of you who might have voted,
"We don't know where your paper's floated."

The county, high in disarray,
Was fathoms now, not miles away.
Platform four and five were clear
And had become a working pier,
While on the route to Bethnal Green
There sat a stranded submarine.

POEM · XII

Commuters, ragged from the stress,
Had donned more 'buccaneering' dress
And taken out the Cutty Sark
For 'pleasure boating' in Hyde park
(But sadly - t'was unlucky chance -
The wind had pushed them out to France.)

I think before next time it rains
We'll need a vote upon the drains,
And hopefully, though wisdom's thin,
We'll have more votes to take 'Eau' in;
What good can 'go alone' pretend
And who would vote to lose a friend?

THE elmwood on the high-hilled spar
Trembled green (as elmwoods are)
And marching on the breathless air
The treetops rustled high and fair.

Here laid once a scarlet plain:
And things done once are done again,
And when those rebel banners fly
Elmwoods still will whisper high.

When trumpeters anoint the glen
And woodlands spark with feral men,
When all these days of happy peace
Will run to nought, and, counted, cease.

Prepare your hearts, raise anthems proud,
Love peaceful times, and praise them loud:
So should this present peace e'er end
When sons look back, they'll find a friend:

When knowledge lies all toppled down
And ruin loves his stolen crown,
From out the past fresh hope will seed
And sons will find the friend they need.

THE gold-red dawn that rang with fire
Blew out from farm to wood and spire,
And through the valley hills alone
Tumbled down on moss and stone.

I trespassed on those carefree scenes,
A gleaner searching golden dreams,
Collecting dawns that rise and lay
Among the cherry tints of day.

It fell like this in years gone by,
Each sunbeam, every winter sigh,
When Arthur, Cranmer, or King James
Wandered through these peaceful lanes.

Here the Norman, sins confessed,
Stooped his way to home and rest,
Or the Roundhead, hot with wars,
Preached to others for his cause.

The quiet serf, or noble king
Crossed these paths now rich with Spring,
And by the wood or through the vale
Heard the pebble stones inhale.

The ancient breeze my carry still
The new-cut grass from Danbury Hill,
And while we gleaners pass and fade,
Each Spring sees our passed hearts remade.

POEM · XIV

IT was an age and acre distant
When learned stone was met with sword
When kings were dashed in but an instant
And royal blood enriched the sward.

When here, just where you stand, the yeoman,
Glad of heart and topped with zeal,
Flew arrows out 'gainst Viking row men,
And Saxons bloodied Norse-made steel.

The cry went up, the landers came,
There roared from hell the hate of years,
A blood-red firmament of flame
Filled with shouts and taunts and cheers.

All silent now, the grass is green;
The spring has tickled out the bloom,
And now we think, and fear to dream,
Of men whom here once met their doom.

I

I heard a magpie calling,
Calling bright and clear,
And I was up and roaming;
Glad notes upon my ear.

Tomorrow it calls after
The roads where I would tread
And I'll be there that morning
But shan't be home for bed.

I'll roam and tread in differ'nt lands
My heart will beat with pride
To know that men at home will say
'Twas for their fields I died.

And high the bugle's throat will chirp
And feet will march on stone
When morning's sun shall rise anon
And bleach the idle bone.

SINCE every lad a mother bore
Should hasten to the gates of war
And be some use as blood and bone;
As sweat and flesh before they're gone.

I'll up and go and make my name
And bring to England mighty fame,
Though fame shall never find me there
Since earth is deaf to light and air.

When fields red are charged with tears
I'll be anon to English cheers,
And while these loyal hearts decay,
I'll not be lonely 'neath the clay.

LAZY through the dawning lane
I hear the martial tread again,
Fife and bugle hasten high
Telling me to go to die.

Oh rise I will and march I must,
And be some use before I'm dust,
And I'll sleep sound without a care
The bravest that the grave could bear.

I climbed an oak to ask the birds
What order I should write these words,
I'd had some planned, but none were good,
Which found me walking in the wood,
And climbing up by branch and limb
I met a furball wise and grim
'What kind of rhyming scheme is best?'
(I thought I'd ask the country pest)
The cat looked up and raised a paw –
I ducked and dodged an angry claw –
'What for', said I, 'was that hard swing',
'No matter', said the feline king:
It seemed I'd accidentally
Met a lion in the tree.

THE SPRING OF REBIRTH

POEM • XX

I went walking yesternight
Under clouds of sun-flecked gold
The raging world was sunset-bright
And soaked with wild raindrops cold.

People pattered far away
Dumb beneath the royal sky
That bled the dawn-made king away
As springtide hushed a mortal sigh.

Streetlights caught the pouring gems
These relics of a toppled throne,
Like starlight lost from sweeping hems
That robed the world now all alone.

Speak not to pity this demise,
That ailing light from heaven torn,
It spells a message in these skies;
All things once lost, God sees reborn.

THE dusk lit hills were red with fire,
As day's last embers dared retire
And in between the twilight trees
The heather beat the hoar frost breeze.
I clambered rocks and trembled home,
Among the chill-wind breathing gloam,
While winter-muffled senseless things
Breathed anon, and yet were kings.

There the murky wood so proud
Gained dread silence from night's shroud;
The fox, the owl, each held their throne
That glad mankind once called their own,
And in that superstitious shade
For each a sunless crown was made.

Were wild men attuned this way
In bitter nights those years away
And did they love in ancient times
These silent things and bitter climes,
And were they kings in holy night
When Gods were Gods of things less bright?

T READ lightly, gentle reader, and heed these rock
cut remnants of happy days,
That spell out by name and date
A fireside of familiar names.
These friends in olden times
Withstood the wind and rain from behind their humble
cottage doors,
And in every eve since and further
Withstand in granite
And slumber through till doomsday roars.
Weep not for these quiet folk laid out of strife,
They have crossed to easier riverbanks now
And turf is as kind a thing to be pressed upon by
As all these turbulent motions of care filled life.
Spare a sigh, if you have sighs to spare,
And know from every corner of the world
That whatever storm-trembled-firesides and cottage
doors fall
Heaven stands resilient, distant only by a prayer.

MARCH 2016

DIMLY through the saffron gloam
I breathed a hundred scents of home;
And stepped until my well-trod track
Dismantled into nameless black.

The rain-washed road that mirrored Mars
Had filled itself with weightless stars,
And all the embers in the west
Had turned themselves to night and rest.

What dawn made gold now laid in grey,
Forgetting every wealth of day
Those trees that once were fair and green
Moped mournfully across the scene.

And silent from the heavy hills
"Into my heart an air that kills".
I trod some more beyond the day;
Tomorrow starts me far away.

And I may change - for dread or cheer,
Before I tread again round here
But shan't forget till flesh is bone
These hundred merry scents of home.

A SPRINGTIME STORM

POEM
XXIV

SANGUINE and with earthen eyes,
Cloud-faced Gods retook their skies;
These billows lashed with shapeless tongues
And tasted night through smoke black lungs.
Faceless Thunder roared his tune
Usurping hilltops from the moon,
And lightning - blades of flashing white -
Conquered true and holy night.

Houses all in high despair,
Their chimneys toppled out the air,
Tempests of torrential fire
Danced around the old church spire,
Heaven heavy with the roar
Sent billows laughing at the door
And shaking to the roof with fear
The storm rocked on with crash and cheer.

It tattered the horizon's hems
In one long vault from Teme to Thames
And as the blushing night burnt black
I heard the sky and saw it crack:
The morning brought in bleak array
No pleasing, teaming lights of day;
And every evening from the hills
We fear what God and nature wills.

POEM
XXV

ONE DAY I WANDERED

ONE day I wandered
Out of the age long day,
Beyond the hedgerows and cottage doors,
To where night had plummeted,
Whole and heavy
Under rust-tempered scarlet clouds.
Amber cushions fading from the treetops.
A scattering of quiet stars
Pale and inoffensive
Drifted beyond the grey mantle,
A firmament of sleepy ash
All quiet to the whispering hills.
The solitude and consolation of the dark,
The brambles, thick with secrets and thorns,
And the wild hillsides
Fled into the distant, visionless hue;
Waiting like stone giants
For one moment hidden from every eye.
Until day falls among tumbled hedgerows
Tottered down cottages,
Lighting again the steep of the sky,
And disturbing my perfect peace
And the dull quiet of famous night.

VERDUN, FEB. 21st 2016

POEM
XXVI

IT was the early springtime,
The woodlark charmed the east,
A sunrise spoke in earnest
To lands of man and beast.

From sickles to the Plough horse
From the summit to the grave,
Here they speak of other lads,
And each one true and brave.

True and brave are those lads still,
Though sickles rust alone,
They do not need a plough horse
In lands of earth and bone.

Those rusted tools are tended now
By us, with humble pride,
Who live beyond those forefathers
Who for our freedom died.

POEM
XXVII

THE DEVIL OF BELL HILL

HIGH in Danbury wood there stands
A kingdom of bone fingered hands
Stretched in winter's haze
Fog-lit moonlight holds the wind
Opal vapours curl and grin
A raindrop patter plays.

It's here they say in olden times
That when the church was ringing chimes
The devil stole the bell
He ran it down that hill toward
The copse where winter keeps accord
(What secrets seasons tell).

For where the frost comes down to sleep
In their depths the snowdrifts keep
A hidden secret too
For when the bell fell down that climb
It bounced and called out one last chime
Then tumbled out of view.

The devil, starting with surprise
Found the bell was twice his size
His strength no more sustained
And so he fled that ancient hill
(The one that stands so stalwart still)
But yet the bell remained.

POEM
XXVII

So now if walking Danbury wood
In winter's beauty - which you should,
You hear a distant bell
You stand where once the devil's feet
Tripped and fell at his defeat
And that's devil's knell.

And when the folk in ages old
Would tell the story I've just told
Young men would up and go
And climb their way through wood and vale
To search the truth from out the tale
They found but empty snow.

POEM
XXVIII

UNTITLED LINES

A vast synod of buildings
Gathered, high shouldered hulks of commerce,
An overture of concrete corners
And ribbons of glass
Wrapped around the skyline.
A hundred thousand square
Pearl-black eyes,
Calm but unquiet;
An unnerving display
Between the air and the machines
Churning on resolute,
The profit and memorial
Of a million hours.

The solitude of granite and steel
Never looked so self-assured.

HIGHER THAN THE SUNSET

POEM
XXIX

HIGHER than the sunset
Walls crept like
Unwelcome intruders on
The death-bed of the day
Shutting it out early
And replacing its golden swansong
With concrete

Windows at least
Like the royal children
Of that celestial king
Were gold and distant,
Bejewelling the thousand-faced
Towers of anonymity
That carved heaven
Into the property of men

Here and there
Ambition pressed
Wove all the people of this world
A grey crawling mass
Of all the happy and unhappy
And every hope in-between
In pleasant weary harmony
At the end of the day

NIGHT had crammed itself into every part
Of the wild criss-cross hill sides
And dabbed at the lakes
Filled with stars and moonlight
Across all the corners of the earth
Left weary by the age-long day.
Fleeting holy swansong
Clapped out from distant bells
And somewhere
An evening church choir
Were drowned out by the quiet
Of the distant, wandering calm
All silent and tranquil
And beyond all other things
Amidst the faded, breathless dark.
God's immeasurable heaven
Knit with branches and river water sighs
Was a summit and arcade
Studded in every alcove
With moon and star
Lofty as cathedrals are
That have stood beyond their time
And, falling past the wonder of God,
Becomes the wonder of man
A tangible asset of our age
And a memory to be lost in another.

When other nights with other skies
Shall breath in their own way
And be gone.

POEM · XXX

POEM
XXXI

THE NEW YEAR, JANUARY 2015

THE tune of tunes was rung on high
And clattered all about the sky,
From tattered hedgerows, winter worn,
To graves that frosty tears did mourn.

It rang the hoarfrost from the eves
Un-smothered by the summer leaves;
And with December on its bier
It welcomed in the grand New Year.

The knolls of England will run green
In all these days that have not been;
The winter winds will fast blow out
And summer songs will ring about.

From branch to branch the bloom will stretch
That love-struck lads will dare to fetch,
And autumn turn the woods to gold
To gild the year as it grows old,

What times await that lie unseen -
In two-thousand and then fifteen!
And when those days are all dried up,
When empty lies that brim-full cup:

Such memories, I pray, are kind
When future days are left behind;
And then, perhaps, upon this vain
I'll write some lines like these again.

POEM
XXXI

POEM
XXXII

THE LITANY

I saw King Arthur yesternight;
Tall he stood amidst his train
Of opals, pearls, and jewels all bright,
The wealth of heroes past, long slain.
And here about this wealth-gilt garb;
Hems of ev'ry gemstone nam'd,
Rose the sword, the mace, the barb,
As came his swordsmen hist'ry fam'd.

A litany of heralds high
Claimed the summit of the sky;
Angelic crews of ten and ten
Sent to test the world of men,
And raise those souls that lie.

There came Old Cromwell to their cause,
Thick with blood he wish'd undone,
And his breth'ren in their scores
Of men who's aims deeds had outrun.
Then Charles arose beside his prince,
The Bonny and Pretender too;
And all the kings that suffer'd since
And people that 'the people' slew.

A litany etc.

There roll'd from Tyburn heads and more
Of noblemen undone by pride,
Who live'd their cause by English shore
And upon their hope had died.
There was Raleigh all aboard
A ship of some long sunken fleet;
Bearing his encrusted sword
Done with cutting Spanish meat.

POEM
XXXII

A litany etc.

Then Boudicca, her health betray'd,
Stoop'd aloft her bloodless smile,
And step by step her horses neigh'd
And hunger'd for another mile.
Now high from out the moors there came
Treading low with crunch of steel
The legionnaires of Roman fame,
Crushed beneath Britannia's heel.

A litany etc.

POEM
XXXII

At last the Dukes, and Earls, and more;
The Knights, and Lords drew up in state,
As every soul that sought out war
Crawl'd out from hell in seething hate.
Pandemonium was rais'd;
That capital of Milton's blood,
Where once entomb'd and lost they laz'd,
They pour'd as rats who fear a flood.

A litany etc.

Now Milton came himself indeed;
That bloody pen the poets fame,
And more from out the earth were freed;
Of infamous and famous name.
A sonnet of the sober grave
And tombstones penn'd in misty rhyme,
Were brought as mother nature's king -
Old 'Death' had lost his hold on time.

A litany etc.

That throne - Saint Pauls - rose up in black,
That cripp'l'd heart from out the blaze,
A sign of every sign we lack;
"The end has come, repent your ways."
And even More came out to look
With Hundreds crushed beneath the tread
Of holy feet that bore the crook
That changed the words of God they read.

A litany etc.

That litany! Oh chant be done
And let's forget our judgements wrong;
A war with pasts cannot be won,
We ask to hear forgiving song.
We may have damned the right and well,
Condemned so much without a thought,
But listen, 'tis one truth to tell;
Forgiveness through hard work is bought.

A litany etc.

POEM
XXXII

POEM
XXXII

I pray forgiveness may be ours;
From high you angels and your God,
From out those fine immortal towers
To us down here on dreary sod.
May all our tears, our laughs and song,
May our gifts, our hopes and deeds,
Sow on things old Time proved wrong
Our very own forgiving seeds.

POEMS WRITTEN IN WALES, AND WRITTEN
ON LEAVING WALES

POEM
XXXIII

LINES WRITTEN IN AUTUMN, OCT. 2012

THE tunes rang out the churches
To seabirds in the sky,
Past pines and oaks and birches
To where the wheat crops lie.
Past figures walking lazy
And figures 'neath the stone,
Towards a sunset hazy
That rose up all alone.

The hills were high and humble;
They'd been too long too old,
The river's nameless mumble
Agreed with wordless cold.
And silent stayed the raindrops;
Their strength was weak and few,
They passed across those wheat crops
To beat their golden hue.

POEM
XXXIII

The shadows drifted onward,
Their number faint and free,
From pinewood to the stoneyard;
As far as one could see.
The loftiness of daytime
Before the quiet night,
The joy of mankind's playtime
When all is young and bright.

The day comes fast and blindly
And just as fast seems gone,
Like life, not always kindly;
So quick, all hope has shone.
The aged dusk soon aching
Upon the lonely sky,
Above the billows breaking
Where low the wet rocks lie.

The cold of night may beckon,
The still of sleep may call,
But on one hope we reckon;
A new day for us all.
Don't fear what comes tomorrow,
And fear not Him above;
This earth is paved with sorrow
But -
Dear Heaven's paved with love.

LINES WRITTEN IN SPRING 2013

POEM
XXXIV

THE dark beneath the greenery
Where we would one day lie
Warned cold amidst the scenery;
You too, my friend, will die.

Perhaps we'll meet again, my lad,
When our two fates are through,
Beyond the mourners deathly clad
And wasted days you'll rue.

The hawthorn may be em'rald yet;
More summers you'll see go,
But doubt it not, one fate is set;
You'll lie where sun shan't glow.

The clay on which the leaves do rot
You'll rot upon as well,
When days you know are long forgot;
And we're forgot as well.

POEM
XXXV

A STORM IN ABERYSTWYTH, NOV. 2013

FROM out the murk's eternal swell
Rang clear one note; some whistling knell,
That cut the sky from out the air
And sent my glasses God knows where.
And soaked my jeans up to the brim;
Now briny black with sea-salt trim.

Some seaweed caught about my brow;
A trophy of Poseidon's row;
While past my head an angry sprat
Flew high though ill designed for that.
And tourists, puzzled in the dark
Were swimming in the bowling park!

From Queens Hotel ten men or more
Were fishing from the thirteenth floor;
And even at the proud town hall
They gained a 'rooftop swimming pool' -
Oh what a night, but heed this line;
I'd take a coat with me next time.

THE PACE OF THE WORLD

POEM
XXXVI

THERE'S something calm in the pace of the world,
In the light of the life that has barely unfurled
To the beat of the feet that have outlived their day
And the seaside's slow symphony so far away.

There's something calm in the chime of the clock,
In the tick of the trickle that breaks down the rock,
And the sun and the shadow that break out at dawn
That pamper the picnic at noon on the lawn.

There's something calm in the ring and the rhyme
That take what we make and forget it with time,
With so much to do in the buzz and the blare
That just in an instant forget we were there.

There's something calm in the tap and the tune
That muster the busker, the band and bassoon!
That rally the lovers of music to hand
And play all the day on the silver-sunned sand.

There's something calm in the close of the eve,
As the sun bottles down in its saltwater sleeve
And the ruddy and rose are as red as the sky
Till the last of the drops have each sunk down to lie.

POEM
XXXVI

And there's something calm in the black of the night
In the shadow and hush that remains height to height,
When the wash of the sea is a beat barely there
And that tune plays so calm on the breath of the air.

FAREWELL TO WALES, SUMMER 2014

POEM
XXXVII

THE creak of the eaves casting fishing-rod shadows
The crunch of the net knit from nettles and thorn
As the shoals of the treetops breathe out in a murmur
And glint in the rose-water dawn.

Cold heaven was winter when it was around us
And laced in perfection the ice and the snow
Then came the springtime and rang out the greenwood
To the blossom of cherry and sloe.

High broke the summer and christened the hillside
With the heat and the heart of a friendlier day
And the crowd and the hubbub were singing together
That I so soon must away.

The castles of bird-song broke high in the cloudscape
The sea and the sand were a sigh on their own
As the last of swallows that had come here but shortly
Like I, to far places had flown.

POEM
XXXVIII

A COLD WALK HOME, WINTER 2014

I spent some steps, enjoyed the air -
Employed on other people's care,
I tried some verse, but words were dumb;
As better songs around did hum,
And barely light, the sky was cold -
A city sunset knows no gold.

The lamps that flickered at the blind
Betrayed another earth behind
Where hidden rooms and hidden dreams
Spluttered starlight at the seams;
And spilt it on the asphalt ground
As introverted worlds went round.

Streetlights, silent in the gloam
Lit the way to peace and home,
As humble in the endless sky
The moons companions shuffled by
And by the doorways, dark and locked,
Grim winter shadows gravely flocked.

The hooded figure of a tree
Stood out - a curiosity -
As reached towards it concrete hands
The better rulers of these lands;
But tall and straight, it kindly stood -
A stranger in a brick-built wood.

POEM
XXXVIII

These city paves, these streets and stones,
Write honest, brave, but sombre tones;
There stirs no woodlark, sighs no copse,
How cold is night when nature stops -
I miss the mountains, trees and air,
And miss the folk who knew me there.

POEM
XXXIX

THE HAPPY WEST

I wandered by the waves last night
In many a pleasant dream;
A youthful moon shone proud and bright
And I within his beam
But it was just a dream.

I felt the salt air in my heart
And breathed the winter shore.
And thought that time would never part
Those happy days before
That stand up here no more.

The happy west, the conquering sea –
These things I'll breathe again –
But there are hearts of lads like me
That pine for them in vane
And shall not come again.

Their hearts were willing long ago
But clay makes good men still:
These dancing spirits wander so
But time will cure what's ill
When I'll go west and still.

THE WEST WIND

POEM · XL

ALL cold and through the sky last night
I heard the west-wind blow,
It charmed the grey electric light
With airs I used to know.

The sea was dull, so far away;
The mountains mute and gone.
I heard the timid notes of day
From suns that once had shone.

And thought of friends that knew me right
And things that joy had borne;
That dwindled in that west-wind night
And could not stay till morn.

THE spendthrift stars, so rich in gold,
Were distant skies and dawns untold
And night's new easel, plain and bare,
Was fresh with unadventured air.

The treetops spoke unlikely tales
That rolled the hillsides out of Wales,
To breath beneath those clotted suns
A story fit for greenwood lungs.

Stretching back their ancient limbs
Their figures played beguiling hymns
While high the eaves of mem'ry raised
And, backwards facing, lonely gazed:

They told of Harry Monmouth's cause
When heaven's anvils rang with wars,
And sang about King Charles' town
Before the rebels tore him down.

They spoke in knitted oak-green tongue
Of when Paul's new built steeple rung,
And in the bloody height of doom
When it stood bright against the gloom.

They dreamt and whispered every tale
That they had glimpsed in life's long trail,
Of daring men and noble lords,
Of senators, and flames, and swords.

POEM · XLI

And I sat out all dreaming too
To sleep an age long overdue
Beneath my heaven cleared of light;
The empty and embracing night.

I saw the dawn uprooting
In the raw tin-tempered sky,
That once in other mornings
Had dawned on friends gone by.

The mountains and the distant air,
The thunder of the sea,
Were now a hundred silent things
That once stood up by me.

Here, hectic yet in peaceful awe
Of life's new merry ways,
I loved the change but missed the shore
And those calm happy days.

ONE LAST EPIGRAM; A CONCLUSION

POEM
XLIII

RECENTLY to life I came,
And soon I shall be gone again,
So to tell you in one line;
This epigram neglects to rhyme.