

FRAGMENTS

Selected Poems

E-book – PDF Edition
COMPLETE

CHRIS FLINT

Silvan House

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[E-Book – PDF Edition]

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Dedication

To Stephanie, without whose love and commitment this book would not exist.

Preface

This easy-to-read collection of poems was written over a period of six decades, and includes many different life experiences. The subjects range from love and humour, to grief and despair, and sometimes even insight and inspiration. The collection is deliberately not ordered by time, style, or subject, but rather for variety and the reader's entertainment. Perhaps if there is any unifying theme, it is a search for meaning in our everyday life experiences.

This collection of poems is very much an edited selection. The reader may rest assured (no doubt thankfully) that for every poem selected, at least six others lie 'discarded on the cutting room floor'. Here, the reader will discover no mind-numbing ten-page odes, no obscure literary allusions and no inscrutably complex wordplays. The poems are short, varying from a few lines, to little more than a page.

Many of the poems invoke universal natural images such as clouds, trees, rivers, seasons and sunrise. Some refer to specifically Australian subjects, such as the outback, small towns, gold mining, bushfires and drought. Some poems use rhyme, some just rhythm, some use neither. Some move jauntily, others have a quieter, more reflective pace. Some tell a story, others are more direct and heartfelt.

For those to whom literary issues matter, none of these poems is intended to satisfy any specific form of poetry, such as sonnet or haiku. Similarly, the author is not an adherent to any particular theory of literary criticism. The author is, of course, familiar with many poets and other literary works, and so gratefully acknowledges a range of potential influences. However, these poems are not intended to refer to, or mirror, any other writer's work.

Here, a poem is intended to engage a reader by words, just as an artist does by a picture or a sculpture. Of course, as in art, no-one responds to every creative piece. We all have far too different tastes, experiences and sympathies. So, as at an art exhibition, if any poem seems laboured or rankles in some way, just leave it behind and move to the next. Perhaps, among the many, the reader may find a few that are moving or that resonate, and so render this collection worthwhile.

Chris Flint

30 May 2023

Editor's Note:

To assist readers, each poem is numbered and there is a Table of Contents hyperlinked to the text.

FRAGMENTS

1. In the Long Gentle Minutes of a Summer Evening

In the long gentle minutes of a summer evening,
When the sunlight lingers despite the deepening shadows,
And the colours have not yet drained from the day,
When only an occasional car passes on a distant road,
And the evening meal is over and it's time to wind down and relax,
When thoughts wander to times and people elsewhere,
Then, remember me, as I do you, with a love not wholly forgotten.

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2. A Snowdrop with a Weakened Stem

Sadly, a snowdrop's stem is weakened,
And the bell bends low, almost a farewell kiss,
To the soft green, moss lawn,
But tiny dew drops sparkle in the sun's first light,
And the snowdrop's beauty is born anew.

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3. Whose Measured Tread is This I Hear?

Whose measured tread is this I hear?
Whose heavy steps right outside my door?
Fear in sudden fevered panic cries, 'Don't answer!'
It must surely be the darkest messenger, unwanted Death,
Delivering to my doorstep the mortal gift,
Wrapped in sickness and suffering, bound in pain!
But listening the steps retreat, move on,
And rushing, fearful, peering round a curtain,
I see only the familiar, disappearing figure of my old friend Time,
Walking wearily away, down the deserted streets of life.

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4. May My Words be like Raindrops

May my words dance and move lightly about,
Like raindrops on leaves in a hot summer's drought,
May my words resound and sing like a choir,
May they entice, entwine and gently inspire,
And at the end of the day may my lines hold meaning,
In words that preserve my soul's deepest dreaming.

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5. A Beetle

I heard a tiny beetle talking,
When I was out beetle stalking,
It said, as if to another,
'Pleasant day it is, good brother!'
I grinned and bent, poised to pounce,
But on its tiny legs it bounced,
And then upon its landing said:
'Not so soon shall I be dead!'
Stunned by this sly little bug,
I turned away, with just a shrug,
Yet thinking on its words to me,
I set all my other beetles free.

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6. A Cloud

A cloud blocked the sun briefly the other day,
The sun shone warm and bright, before as after,
But thinking back upon it, I am so much surer now,
That the sudden chill that made me shiver,
Was the bleak passing shadow of death.

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7. As Practised Builders

As practised builders working on a new project,
Larger and greater than any in previous experience,
We build with confidence, revise plans, modify as we go;
Then all at once we feel a tremor through the structure,
And despite experience, we hold our breath in instantaneous doubt,
Lest by some fundamental error, the whole structure should collapse.

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8. I Walk Upon a Tightrope

I walk upon a tightrope
And when e'er I take a step
I must be very careful
Lest in thoughtlessness I slip.
This tightrope is my lifeline
Each step a minute spent
Caution's not sufficient
Frugality is meant.

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9. Regret

Regret, a heartless miser, lurking deep inside,
Judging our investments for risks he won't abide,
He's quick to talk of penalties when things don't go just right,
And seeks full restitution when losses loom or might,
And yet there's worse, for then he gives a scurrilous report,
As prosecution witness in the highest court!

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10. How Many Caves

How many caves whistle and scream with wind,
Crying it seems all the louder when we go near,
And by this calling, a brave distraction to our mind and senses,
We are led to think something significant is afoot,
When in fact all we hear is the noise of intrinsic hollowness.

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11. Nine Minutes

We set out on our journey here, from very far away,
It only took nine minutes though, to travel all this way,
We were delighted you were here, greeting our arrival,
Watching as we help make food, essential for survival,
Prettier still the flowers we touch, in yellow, red and pink,
The petals shine translucent thin, the nectar insects drink,
And to our joy we see you love, all these things we've done,
And bless the sunlight we give out, as photons from the sun.

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12. City Workers

Busy ants, like city-workers, bound by rushing spell,
Recognise each daily task by time, or is it smell?
They gather food, feed the young, follow, never still,
And blindly lift and heap the dead onto a mounting hill.
Ah, but lucky ants! Untouched by human fate,
Of struggling with the torment of wanting to escape!

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13. What Distant Light is This?

What distant light is this, flickering among the furthest trees,
An eerie unsettling sight out here in this isolation and darkness?
Could it be the haunting Min-Min lights, frightening spectres of outback myth?
Or some ancient spirit, guiding long-lost souls to their ancestral home?
Perhaps the divine hand of Angels, ushering in some new Messiah?
Or yet the risen God, at last returning to take His Place,
Or is it just the battered truck of my old friend,
Struggling through the night, bringing stores?

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14. The Life Cup of the Universe

The life cup of the universe
In turn the poets grip,
Holds truth in weak solution
A fraction to each sip.

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15. I Sit and Watch the Day's End

I sit and watch the day's end creeping slowly toward the night,
In half-shades another day whispering its good-byes,
In the distance someone is burning-off, orange flames licking
 into the dusk,
Ever brighter and more mesmerising in the encroaching gloom.
I am left with one day less to journey, an opportunity slipped by,
Feeling the loss with a sinking heart, as if I too died a little on this day,
A vague disturbing awareness, wrapped in deepening shadows
 of regret,
But no sorrow for the past can hold off the dying of the colours.

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16. Every Flower

Every sunlit flower we pass, each beetle and each seed,
Every bird whose call we hear, each verdant leaf or weed,
All deserve that we should stop, to examine and to ponder,
For all speak loudly to our hearts, of life's amazing wonder.

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17. Find Peace

Take heart in the sunlight,
Be shaded by the trees,
Forget the fuss and bother,
Feel the passing breeze.

Be touched by fleeting raindrops,
Lie still on ancient sand,
Listen to the waves break,
Seek peace and understand.

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18. A Peach

In small smiles and dilated eyes,
In common understandings,
And gentle words exchanged, love blossoms.
Then, like a peach in the summer sun,
In pleasure and warmth,
Love swells, till plump and ripe.

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19. I Met You on a Mid-Day Walk

I met you on a mid-day walk,
I know you saw me too,
We almost bumped into each other,
But just before, we both paused,
I hesitating, not daring to approach too close,
You staring at me for a long and thoughtful moment,
Then, too soon, you turned and moved away,
And now our lives and their meanings,
Our heritages, strangely different,
Have passed and will not meet again;
But, for a second, how close we came, you and I,
I walking in a rainforest – too humanly frail,
You lying black and red in my path – a snake.

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20. Patient Lonely Days

Patient lonely days and nights

In illness, pain, in restless delirium,

Waiting, hoping, time will gift better health.

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21. I Have Said Goodbye Too Often

I have said 'goodbye' too often
And wish not to say it again too soon,
My heart is too full of memories of good friends,
My life too far removed from their warm smiles.
Say not this whispering word, my friends,
For we are made in love to seek one another,
And how painful would be that truth,
If it meant yes, forever goodbye.

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22. Here is a Droplet

Here is a droplet of lost hope,
And here a splash of salty fear.

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23. The Ant

The ant rushes up to its dying prey,
Only to shy as it moves away.
The means of propulsion soon become clear,
An intruding ant is scavenging here,
Without hesitation the ants engage,
A primeval war, that humans still wage.
They tumble and twist on shadowy floor,
Of diminishing forest at the world's back door,
Their labours continue, nip after bite,
The loss in size means a gain in might.
At last it ends that terrible fray,
Now all three bodies lie and decay.

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24. Take Me Back

Take me back to the beginning,
And force me to live yet once again,
Would my sorrows hurt the less,
Or my joys be happier still?

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25. Love is a Clever Spirit

Love is a clever spirit, hidden in disguise,
Tempting us by words or acts to show we are unwise,
And when our slights and insults become a mighty tower,
We turn to find, to our surprise, love's unsuspected power.

The fortress of our grandest hopes tumbles to the ground,
Our wisest plans lie shattered and strewn all around,
Our foolish thoughts suffer the pain of misconception,
And deep within, by gentle touch, love changes all perception.

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26. Across the Fields

Across the fields I saw it flying freely,
Darting from grass to flower through the air,
A small bird swerving up into the waving tree-tops,
Passing close to the highest leafy green foliage,
Those stems that first sway with the coming of the wind,
Wheeling and diving, swooping and circling,
Untroubled by shadows, back into the light,
Leaving aside all the pain and the grieving,
A blessing of joy, the vitality of life.

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27. Bushfire Day

The green-blue eastern sky glows an amber warning, then changes to
crimson red,
The air, uncomfortably warm, hints at a fierce furnace to come,
The wind gusting, tugs determinedly at the flailing leaves of helpless
trees,
And the bright sun, fiery hot, rises, all but igniting a tinder-dry
landscape,
All herald an angry day, a day of exploding flames, raining
embers and choking smoke,
A deafening day of roaring wind, fire truck sirens, helicopters,
panicked calls and desperation,
A gloomy sun-darkening day, full of foreboding, fear, sacrifice,
and death.

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28. A Brooding Universe

All the while the spirit of humanity,
Calls into the gloom of a brooding Universe,
Listening in dread to a challenging silence.

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29. I Thought to Offer You a Small Gift

I thought to offer you a small gift, a gesture of my affection,
Some carefully chosen words to set you at your ease and perhaps
 warm your heart,
I thought to wrap my words in sunlight caught from the edge of
 summer leaves,
Perfume them with the fragrance of wild honeysuckle swelled on
 warm air,
That I might watch a smile cross your face from my gift's gentle touch,
I had thought to do these things, but fell to fearing you would
 reject them.

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30. Whose Steps

Whose unexpected footsteps are these behind my back?

What is that stealthy rustling in the long grass?

What are those sudden noises in the dark of night?

These things that spark our deeper fears,

Are no more than our heart's blind dread,

That our final moments are upon us.

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31. Was I a Crimson Flower

Was I a flower, heavy and crimson,
Would I be saddened by my own frail mortality,
And drooping, burdened by care, drop the sooner,
Or would I live blindly in pleasure and brief splendour?

Was I an orange flame, licking blackly and greedily
Up the length of some branch of dead wood,
Would I wonder at my own greed and feel guilty,
Or would I care too much for life and set aside all thought?
Was I a human, of any creed or colour,
Could I live a life of comfort and pleasure,
Could I greedily devour all before me,
And lost to satisfactions, contemplate nothing?

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32. Take Them Away

Take them away to a solitary place,
And let them walk all the way back,
Then shall we see what they are made of.

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33. Old Movies

Like mist evaporating from my morning coffee,
Where have all my yesterdays gone?
Who shall tell me vanished?
Rather have the dying days,
Been stored away, wrapped and preserved,
In some secret place, secure;
And, like movies recorded and filed,
They sit awaiting eventual re-run,
To show each error in the making.

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34. Rushin' Waves

Great green translucent waves, stealthily roll closer, until tilting,
toppling,
With thundering crash, commence their attack with an energetic
force of foaming white,
Black rocky shores defiant, glistening, vigilant, defend against the
overwhelming surge,
Until the cascading snowy rivulets, this time defeated, stream and
tumble backward in retreat.

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35. Did Anyone Ever Tell Us?

Did anyone ever tell us, when we were very young,
And would we have believed them, if they ever had,
That life-long friends forget us, their thoughtful feelings change,
And switch from trust and openness, to rejecting spite and blame?
Did anyone prepare us for the heart-ache this involves,
The self-recrimination, the anger, grief and pain?
For best friends are a harbour, they treasure most our best,
And sharing love's no easy thing, to cast off or suppress.

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36. Dawn

There's a high pink mist in an orange-blue sky,
And low purple clouds leak a blood-red-dye,
Dark distant hills hide in deep blue shade,
Until the gold sun rises and new colours are made,
Greens emerge and pinks turn to white
While the birds all declare the end of the night.

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37. Across the Elongated Leaves

Across the elongated leaves,
Amid their cool shades of green,
Or in the glittering sunlight under azure blue,
Rustling with each subtle breeze,
The spirit of leaves, the joy of being, dances.

The day recedes, the sunshine fades,
Flights of birds seek roost and rest,
The starry glitter lights up above,
But still, restless among the shifting leaves,
A wisp of purpose, a beautiful something, dances.

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38. Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a gift, reserved for the undeserving,
For none of us has no impact on others,
And when anger and injustice are finally let go,
The joys we once knew may join the ones we now know.

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39. The Blade of Grass

Did you notice me as you passed, tall, leaning a little,
Coloured now a golden hue, once green,
And weighed in summer by my head of seed?
In me you'll find everything there is to learn.
By my shadow and growth, our sun itself is revealed,
My angle gives geometry, and a stylish work of art,
In my maturing and dying, we see a template of the universe
From bacteria and cells, to galaxies and stars.
In my seeds, the drive of life to reproduce,
My DNA, the secret of my past, my shape, my form,
And most remarkably, in my fleeting life, passing largely unnoticed,
Am I not the epitome of every living thing?
I am proud to be a blade of grass,
I have within me all that is, however briefly,
And through me the nature of our universe is revealed!
Did you notice as you passed, how alike we are?

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40. The Thrill of Victory

The thrill of victory or scourge of defeat,
Thought is golden, muscles concrete,
Friendships moulded tested and tried,
Pain and hurt that must be denied,
Game draws out spectators aghast,
Forget discomfort, victory at last?
Seconds tick by, coach in despair,
All can feel the electrified air,
Siren sounds, fatigue overcomes,
Too few can feel the love that numbs.

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41. Grief

Perhaps the meaning of life is a function of grief?
Our visions and fears, hopes and achievements,
All seem governed by it, perceived through it,
And all are transformed in the turmoil of its wake.

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42. When the Hours of Darkness Weigh Heavily

When the hours of darkness weigh heavily upon the mind,
When a weary illness disperses gentle sleep,
When the long cold hours before the dawn draw out,
Then, the warm comfort of friends seems most distant.
But even so, the dawn must surely come,
When the song of birds welcomes the increasing light,
Nightmares flee the approaching clarity of day,
And hope rises again fresh within the soul.

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43. Dance of Evil

No flickering flames or obscene devil,
Yet nonetheless a dance of evil,
In the light for all to see,
Ego, hate and jealousy.

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44. I Too Have Walked by the Sea

I too have walked by the sea, troubled,
And know how idle seaside days,
Wash and cleanse the uneasy mind,
Drawing out the inner self,
Refreshing the tired, relieving the burdened.
And so it is that I now wish
That I was walking beside the rolling sea,
Washed in the timeless motion of its aged wisdom,
Silenced by the endless surging and crashing waves,
Yes, I would like to be there now,
Abating for a moment fraught struggles within,
Watching the foaming green restless tumult,
Or dodging frothy ripples rushing up the sand.

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45. Shall I on this Sunny Spring Afternoon

Shall I on this sunny spring afternoon,
Languish in a winter bed of doubt and despair?
Or shall I like a daffodil rising, grasp the day,
Reach up and make a difference to the world?

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46. The Truck Jolts over the Unending Ragged Road

As the truck jolts over this ragged, unending, unmade track,
Cut bare from the wilderness by the single blade of a lonely grader,
Amid the shimmering heat of this vast, crunching-underfoot, rugged,
 scrub-scape,
Where even people slowly bake to an arid, cracked exterior, like
 the land itself,
Hard on machines, the dust and grease, the pervasive smell of diesel,
Hard on inhabitants, roasting in their ramshackle, galvanised
 dwellings,
Cruel to wildlife hiding in the barren shade of never-flowing,
 stony creek-beds,
Or choking on the fine billowing dust, rising thick from axle-deep
 wheel tracks,
I am thinking of the friends I've left behind,
Those hard, dried, hurting, unyielding, philosophical people,
With whom I have worked such rich veins just below the surface,
Veins of noise and dust, water and ore, sweat and money,
 blood and feeling,
I am thinking of the trials, of work and play, drama and boredom,
The hardships shared, the numbing nights of endless booze,
The laughter of strangers, the sudden bloody violence of good friends,
The heat, the rare rains, the oppressive isolation without a break,
I have shared these things, friendship and machines,
Trees and animals, drought and despair, wide horizons
 and endless skies.
But this ancient, arid debacle of a life-scape,
Which sucks all dry and parched, is no place for me!
How could any person live forever thus, lizard-like, small, withered,
Emerging only to scuttle about in the cooling twilight,
The stub-end of each spent, burnt-out day?
So this truck is now bearing me away, roaring along this desolate
 rutted track,

Seeking out the city, seeking something more, in the crowded
intersections of humanity.

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47. To What Quiet Shaded Country Stream

To what quiet, shaded country stream
Would you wander if you were free?
With what lover would you walk,
Or with what book of poetry?
And yet we all rush blindly,
Till our worldly needs are sated,
While leaving in a foreign tongue -
Life's meaning - untranslated.

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48. The Past Emerges

The past emerges within, like spring bulbs,
Green shoots promising future blooms,
Reminding us of some long-past season of joy.

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49. Sleep

A thousand passions are relived,
Each time the anxious mind touches downy bed.
As wakeful strength recedes and frailty reigns supreme,
The impassioned, imprisoned, will-less self,
Struggles with its fantasies and fears,
Like some unthinking computer short-circuiting,
While, like an angel or a corpse, the body lies placid to the world.

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50. If I Were a Daffodil

If I was a sunlit daffodil,
Would you trample me underfoot?
If I was a golden sunset,
Would you ignore my passing glow?
If I gave a gentle smile,
Would you turn away?

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51. The Bluebell

Trudging through a paddock,
Full of clods and knee-deep straw,
I chance upon a pretty bluebell,
Like catching up-lit eyes in friendly smile,
And for a moment am sad no more.

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52. Completion and Healing

We are all a product of each love we've been given,
We all stumble and err in coping and feeling,
Yet mistakes and insights, humility and yielding,
Pave each of our paths to completion and healing.

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53. Come Closer

Here I am, over here!
Beneath that sweet smelling wattle,
You are closer, yes, come nearer!
I ache to be plucked, enjoyed,
I am all pink beneath and white on top,
And all too soon comes my time of decay,
Yes, I am ready, come closer!
You nearly have me!
Oh how I loathe to end my life
Before I have experienced
Just a little of what other mushrooms
Have known.

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54. What Disease is This

What disease is this, burning life,
Devouring the strongest heart-wood,
While on the surface sap yet flows,
With all the appearance of youth?

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55. A Deep and Dangerous Waterfall

I have just slipped and tumbled down a steep and dangerous waterfall,
A fascinating slippery height, but not the place to fall!
A crashing noisy mist-filled journey of hurt and bitter extremes,
Buffeted by strong rapids, swirled and broken on protruding rocks,
Gravely injured and in pain, I am lost to a sleepless world
 of uncertainty,
And the substance of my life lies around me, shattered
 in a thousand pieces.

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56. Death Sits on My Shoulders

Death sits on my shoulders,
Life's fiends tread behind,
Fate foots the bill of my strength of will,
And corrupted am refined.

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57. Grasslands

Across the grasslands waves of wind, gently ebb and flow,
Bending pastures back and forth, that in the sunlight glow,
Uncounted seeds in millions, ripening each day,
While golden stems keep dancing, their synchronised display.

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58. Losing Our Way

Often when travelling in the mountains,
To cross the tallest and hardest of individual peaks,
There is only one clear but difficult path,
Which we may choose, or turn and go back,
But when we journey in the plains and valleys,
Those safe but boring places of unending necessity,
A myriad of paths constantly present themselves,
And wise indeed is he or she who does not lose their way.

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59. The Full Package

Put us each in our own little decorative cardboard box,
List our weight, best features and performance expectations,
Give tips and tricks for easy use and specify a 'use-by' date,
And finally print, "After use dispose of contents responsibly".

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60. I Guess I'm Crying

I guess I'm crying for the good things
That just won't be coming anymore,
I guess I'm mourning for the lost things
That pass by unnoticed and are gone.
As our innocence in love evaporates
I weep for the fact that nothing is secure.

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61. Rivers Underground

Under the rolling green and yellow hills,
Beneath the tangled roots of grass and trees,
Below the stony beds of tumbling streams
Flow the unseen deep and twisting lives of rivers underground.
Who can idly point at a hilltop or a broken gully,
Who will say from shape of trees or shade of grass,
Who imagines who only knows babbling surface streams,
The place, the course, the depth, the power of rivers underground?
Though people often bore through rock and earth,
Exerting costly labours in their frequent search,
Their hopes and dreams mostly end in dry futility,
While metres to the left or right were rivers underground.
Yet among those people who so drill, a few have found
by luck or skill,
Just when despairing of time's waste, they're suddenly
pushed back a pace,
A gushing flood marks the course, while thundering
echoes tell the force,
Sweet or foul, they've finally found, for good or ill,
rivers underground.

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62. Hopes Rush Past Us

Hopes rush past us, like birds plummeting in flight;
Or as pink light on morning clouds fades;
Or as rain, cherished or barely noticed, disperses into the soil;
So life's opportunities whisper on a breeze, then pass.

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63. Can You Hear the Song of Stars?

Can you hear the song of stars in the depths of space,
Are you bathed in sunshine, or love a cluster's grace?
Does gravity inspire you to cherish life that's rare,
Or is your heart just lost in pain, blackness and despair?
Remember then that newborn stars are born in darkest night,
And hide within the rich remains of supernovas bright.

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64. Tinder in My Soul

My love for you grows rampant, as tinder in my soul,
Dried fuel stacked and waiting for the spark of your touch,
A small flame carelessly lit in dry summer bushland,
And all at once the entire forest is ablaze with heat and fire,
Roaring, rushing walls of flame burning and consuming all.

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65. Hunter in the Dark

Under rock and log, shrub and earth,
Buried from the heat of day,
Hiding from a casual search,
The unseen, hidden, living prey.
Ignore the buried and forgotten!
Leave the hidden, move on fast!
Eyes fixed on the not-yet-present,
Day scavengers rush headlong past.
But in the night a lonely hunter,
Seeks with senses more than sight,
Burrows under bush and stone,
Bares the prey to fatal bite.

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66. Hawk, Hawk

Hawk, hawk, flying high!
Can you see my love afar?
Hawk, hawk, in tears I cry!
Find my love by sun or star.
Hawk, hawk, in sky of blue!
Remember me to where she stays,
Hawk, hawk I ask of you!
Watch over her in parted days.

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67. Lost Innocence

How can we say that we have lost our innocence?
And if lost, how then should we obtain some more?
Is it really lost or simply buried beneath hurt and grief,
There remaining, as pure and hopeful as any child's heart?
Perhaps then we cannot hope for more, but must dig it up again,
With the shovel of hope, in the earth of pain.

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68. The Forest is Dark

The forest is dark and bleak,
The wind blows cold and gusty,
The night closing in on all sides,
The trees groaning, cracking,
Suddenly lightning crashes earthward,
A blazing branch falls upon the forest floor,
But alas, slowly the flame dies,
And darkness closes in once more.

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69. With the Dripping of the Rain

With the dripping of the rain on a cold winter's day,
When we hurry in to shelter by a warm indoor fire,
In the presence of a person whose love gives us comfort,
Then comes the feeling that in this place we belong.

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70. Dust Motes

Memories of people and places, float like dust in the air,
Once whole and real, now lost, suspended in time,
Motes drifting by, to haunt us, taunt us.
Shall these swirling particles ever come to rest?
And tomorrow, what shall survive as remnants of today?

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71. This Dull Gift

Take care not to cast aside this dull gift in plain words wrapped,
But rather keep it in a corner pocket of your warmest jacket,
Until the day grows cold and bleak with bitter futility,
That creeping darkness which invades our deepest hearts,
Then take it out and wrest it from its wrapping words,
Hold it up and watch the flame begin to burn, brightly with hope.

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72. Across a Room

Across a room your eyes glitter,
And my thoughts fire life into the air,
A hundred hungry arrows seeking marks,
And when they alight, will you notice?
And if they hit your soul, will you see?

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73. A Huge Lion

A huge lion has us by the throat,
And gripping its quarry, drags us to the ground,
Then in feigned satisfaction, relaxes, releases us,
But every time we stagger, weaker to our feet,
A giant clawed paw lashes out violently,
And frailly mortal, we crash earthward once more,
Until at last we lie still in death, and the beast loses interest,
Or devours our earthly remains with a savage delight.
Harsh life, cruel lion, from whom the sole escape is death!

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74. The Window

Deep within each one of us, deeper than despair,
A window opens to a world we hardly know is there,
Through this tiny needle's eye, threaded by a prayer,
Humble souls are bathed in light, forgiveness and repair.

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75. Monday

Once again Monday morning ferrets out our peace,
And we find ourselves standing, sitting,
In car, bus or train, at desk or site.
Monday, no more rigorous than any other day,
Yet holds by its very name accumulated dislikes,
Unrelenting, undaunted by love or despair,
Monday burrows under doors and bedcovers,
And taking by the throat its unwilling victim,
Drags us to the surface to swell the bulging bag.

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76. How Lucky We Are

How lucky we are who live long enough,
To have opportunity to view with forgiveness,
Our own errors and bumbling attempts at living,
Lost and forgotten to all but ourselves.

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77. On Cool and Windy Nights

On cool and windy nights wander,
Alone among the trees and clouds,
The spirit rising and roaring in sympathy,
The turmoil of life let loose.
That the body might escape as easily,
The stresses and ties of people and places,
And that ego, greed, and unknowing,
Would split as readily as dead boughs.
That life were as free as the rush of air,
Tumbling on, participating but free,
Taking with it no memories of pain,
No old, unbending stumps of love.

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78. Newsfeed

Headlined today a greedy, spiteful tree has lashed out,
While yesterday the moon grew angry, blocking out the stars,
Shockingly, a mountain peak fell and crushed a barren hill,
While a rose has been convicted of a heartless pricking scam,
Meanwhile at the waterfall, the water continued falling,
Ending the day much lower.

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79. Under Whose Watchful Eye

Under whose watchful eye,
Under whose chastising stick,
Under whose rewards or threats,
Does the Universe persist?
In its ordered fashion flowing,
By all its laws keeps growing,
With most of life's unknowing,
Does the Universe exist!

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80. We Cannot Re-interpret Love

We cannot re-interpret love no matter how we try,
We might as well take blue from the colour of the sky;
For when love's been shared for many years, both giving and receiving,
The gold involved is not dissolved by re-thinking after leaving;
For love is more than hopes foregone or judgements false or true,
It is the power that lights the stars, a gift forever new.

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81. Fire and Water

The spirit, made of fire and water, what a mixture!

Igniting, burning, flaring, sparking, illuminating, warming!

Flooding, bursting, rushing, showering, inundating, reflecting!

To where, why, to what end?

Questions with no more sense than a futile rage!

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82. Let the Practised Hand

Let the practised hand
Grasp the firm wooden handle
Of a well-made hand-pick;
Let the person swing the implement,
Arch their back, strain their strength,
As has been done since the earliest of times;
For a full day let them try themselves,
And at the end, the tool still strong,
The task of the day complete,
Let the person survey, concur and rest.

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83. **Courage**

Lift the eyes,
Greet the day,
Come friends,
No longer stay.

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84. From Cosy Cot

From cosy cot he nimbly dives
To trump the clock he vainly strives
Off on day's frightful jaunt,
A minute late, how time does haunt,
While in the garden, right under nose,
Nature casts a dew-dropped rose.

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85. We are Born to Journey

We are born to journey, though we do not decide its start,
Nor where it will take us, or how soon it will end,
And we have small control over who we will share it with.
All we know is that all journeys end, and those with us at the time,
May not be those we expect, or even those we may have wanted.
So let us then love all the people we share our journey with,
And even when our paths part, and do not go together to the end,
Let us love and respect each other for that part we have played,
And smile forgiveness at one another's faults and failures,
For in all our journeys, we have each done our best.

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86. In My Heart Reign Little Towns

In my heart reign little towns in far-off no longer noticed places,
At once so much like each other, yet by the townsfolk made unique,
The pub, a store, a few old cars, some dilapidated houses and
 collapsing sheds,
Shattered fragments it would seem, of an older larger world now gone.
And the sardonic, bitter people, hard and strong, that's the spirit,
Alcohol energising local stories, the hilarity of past intoxication and
 passions,
How so-and-so despises that old bastard, yet saved his life the last time
 it flooded.
Left to it by the rest of us, they share a lonely life, struggling against
 a harsh environment,
Not to overcome the implacable oppressive climate, that could
 never be,
Rather, at least until the next rain, to simply exist beside it,
 in quiet serenity.

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87. Words, by Gentle Art

Words, by gentle art, search our hearts to find a gap,
Then cast their subtle webs, our weary souls to entrap.

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88. The Spring Air

The Spring air warmed and gently stirred,
Blows tenderly through the leaves and grass,
Trying not to disturb the cool shadow's secret hopes,
Yet it bears to me a message I cannot deny,
Cannot sit tranquilly by and not be moved,
Cannot hear and not start up, anxious to go on,
For the message is of your distant, undying love.

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89. Among the Blackberry and Bracken

Among the blackberries and bracken of everyday life,
We occasionally glimpse a more perfect reality,
A beautiful bulb, bursting its flower up into the world,
Unsuspecting and uncaring of its wild surrounds,
Intent only on the consummation of its beauty,
Yet being thus born, it must find courage to grow and survive,
Because bracken is strong and blackberries have thorns.

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90. Journey of Sap

Our lives are like the journey of sap,
From the stem we flow upwards,
Dividing at each bough and limb,
Finally reaching the twigs and leaves,
Which in dying drop to the earth.
Our lives are like the journey of sap,
Let us climb slowly and wisely,
And at the end drop gently.

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91. Memory

When the covers of the bed are warm and close,
And the memory of sleep yet lingers gently on the mind,
Then can we cross a thousand miles by our thoughts unaided,
To the places and the faces, visions rising from the past,
Seemingly as bright as ever, just as when we loved them last.

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92. Stars Shone as Ever

The waves murmured their age-old strain to the still night air,
The stars as ever, blinking in the night sky with an untouchable
indifference,
But for the silent figure sitting quietly on the cold heartless sand,
Human life had ceased to exist, though human kind had been
warned,
Why had they refused to heed, why such a blind, selfish response?
Extinction, the final act in the tragedy of humankind.
The end had not been another war 'to end all wars'
Had not been an invasion from the depths of space,
The end had not even been acknowledged until it was too late!
So why was he still here? With that he sprang to his feet,
If anybody had been watching, and of course, there was no-one,
He would have simply vanished, re-appearing at a far distant
destination,
Stepping into his superior's quarters, reporting what was already history,
And immediately receiving a new, but similar Final Warning
assignment.
So with all six eyes twinkling, he stepped out and vanished once more,
Only this time his destination was 'our' Earth.

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93. **Tiny Yellow Butterflies**

Tiny butterflies, yellow, chase each other,
Oblivious to the rest of the world,
In a cosmos of sunlit blue.
I lie in the grass, unheeding prickles,
Watching the tiny winged creatures,
Till my soul flitters and flutters too.

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94. Take the Little Hatchet Doubt

In the midst of life's requirements,
Between this effort and that breath,
Between the hours of sleep and movement,
Ask if all the world is really quite so neat,
As those in power would have us think.
Take the little hatchet doubt
And chip away at future hours and pre-filled days,
Strike with sharpened scepticism at the hollow trunk
Of towering materialism, ambition and false hope,
Till finally with cracks and groans, it crashes in a heap.

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95. I Lie Here Beside You

I lie here beside you in the cool morning darkness,
And listen to your sleepy regular breathing,
Slowly the sky glimmers and lightens,
Bringing a call of the morning to me.
Shall I lie on and wait till you should awaken,
Or rise to meet the golden light of day?
Stirred by the birds, I rise up and leave you,
But promise to return before you wake.

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96. Leaves Fall

The fluttering leaves fall earthward,
Their beauty lost, never seen, or recognised too late,
Come, gone, in a moment's fall from highest canopy,
To decaying earth filled with skeletal remains,
And all the hours of bursting, working, rustling and breathing,
All over in an instant, a final tumbling, dizzy flutter.

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97. A Stranger Approaches

Well met, sir!

Well met, indeed! We go the same way! You are having trouble with that load!

Well yes, but nothing that I cannot handle.

Let me help. Come, I insist, we will make shorter work of it.

Very well, I am much obliged, sir. I am a little worn out.

Well, the job is all but done. Thank you, sir.

I am pleased to be of service!

But tell me, are you not expected in some other place?

No, I am content to be here with you at this moment.

Then tell me your name, good sir, for I am indebted.

Do you not already know? Surely you recognise me?

No, you are a stranger to me, sir. But wait, yes, there is something familiar...

There! I see by your face that you recognise me!

Let us then travel together awhile.

Oh yes, I see you now! No, I will not travel with you!

I do not want to be near you! Oh monstrous deceit!

Please leave me!

But my friend, you are mistaken. I simply help those who struggle.

Come, can we not embrace as friends?

No! You lie, sir! I can see through your disguise! You are nothing less than my life-long enemy! You have ambushed me!

Alas! I would have resisted more fiercely, had you but appeared more cruel! How false is life to deceive me thus! Delivering to me in such gentle form, accursed death.

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98. A Spiritual Kitchen

Faith! Here is a spiritual kitchen,
Ingredients in marked jars,
Pain, sorrow and grief,
Baking up a recipe of joy and love.

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99. Prometheus

[In Greek mythology, Zeus was chief of all gods and father of many. Prometheus, a lesser god, defied Zeus and stole fire, giving it to humankind, for this and other acts of defiance Zeus punished him relentlessly over many ages.]

Prometheus could to enthroned Zeus

Have had these words to say:

“Mark the truth of your destiny

Mark, if fate you’ll stay!

There’ll be a man who’ll be no man,

An immortal whom you’ll kill

Your death shall be in victory,

For none shall force your will.

Your sword be true and you will find

That none shall bow but break,

And there shall cross your destiny

The dying for life’s sake.”

And thus it was and ever so,

That truths disliked shall be,

For in our minds by selfish thoughts,

We obscure what we should see!

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100. Dust and Gold

Full years of life go rushing past us,
Lavished on labour of false acquisition,
Clouding judgment, confusing dust and gold,
Building an investment in remorseful hindsight,
Superannuation for sudden old age.

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101. An Autumn Afternoon

Gently, in the cool crisp mountain air,
The still autumn afternoon passes,
Overhead, great bulbous white clouds,
Drift across the deep blue sky,
Buffeting nearby peaks and hills,
Creating intermittent sunlit streams,
Swelling and ripening falling chestnuts,
And transforming leafy shaded liquid ambers,
Into sudden mosaics of brilliant colour,
While squawking rosellas feed, and passing currawongs,
Fill the sky with their haunting musical calls.

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102. Mile upon Mile

Mile upon mile flashes past,
Driving fast to some distant place,
Time measured and lost along the way.
Rushing through resisting air,
Always seeking some further point,
Counting down the miles, impatiently.
Into what distant land do we speed?
Praying all while no mishap overtakes us,
In our prime, struck down, almost at some goal!

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103. Were We No More Than a Brown Ant Hill

Were we no more than a brown ant hill,
Serving no greater end than unsightly obstruction,
And a home for diligent stinging creatures unperceived,
Might such ants yet claim to have no less a purpose
Than the world of humankind in which we live?

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104. When I See Your Sensitive Heart

When I look upon your innocent joy,
I am filled with fear and wonder.
When I see your sensitive heart,
I am overwhelmed by compassion.
And when I glimpse your beautiful soul,
Prayers spring unbidden from my heart.

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105. There Are Some Journeys

There are some journeys in life
Which, once embarked upon, have no end,
And to help with these journeys,
There are only a few odd guidebooks,
Which, though acquired, cannot be understood,
Unless we are already out upon the road.
What is more, such journeys do not allow for our return,
For every step irrevocably changes who we are.
These are the journeys of the soul.

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106. Ghosts of Gold

The air is cold, crisp, even brittle, as the mountain stream rushing,
 burbling nearby,
The stars shining brightly, a reminder of other worlds, other places,
Sounds floating up the mountainside, peaceful and unthreatening,
Night bush noises and an occasional shout from the settling township,
Two dark forms rise against the sky, big poplars reminders of this
 hut's past,
Bush moths flutter clumsily around the naked light bulb until
 switched off,
The weathered, withered and paint-starved verandah, feels solid
 and protective.
If ghosts of old exist anywhere then surely upon this spot,
Where once raged a cacophony of people and passions, of mules
 and money, of alcohol and hope.
But the easy gold is long gone, and now the harder has gone too,
And excluding occasional tourists, only the very old or the
 optimistic come here or stay,
But the little stream still runs, chilled and noisy, full of youthful vigour,
Forgetful or forgiving of this town's past fitful fever of gold.

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107. Aflame and Undaunted

Like repeatedly striking new matches on an over-used box,
Or trying to light a fire with damp newspaper,
When we surrender to the encroaching limits of old age,
We struggle to ignite the flames of our dreams.
For though our hearts may still be overflowing with aspirations,
Our inner fires may refuse to do more than smoulder,
Smothered under the fire-blankets of depression and ill-health.
So rather, let us take heart, fight suppression, and light our fires,
And once lit, rush aflame and undaunted, toward the precipice of life!

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108. Capricious Love

Such are the uncertainties of human love,
The good may turn to ill within the passage of a night,
And a season of understanding is left behind,
A mere discarded memory of better times.
Capricious lover, wise and ignorant in a moment,
Casting for love, only to discard it once caught,
Like some prize fish, undersized or hooked for sport,
And in its stead embracing the affections of a toxic puffer-fish.

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109. Imagination

Imagination, restless companion of the human soul,
In uncertainty, a plague on the prospect of peace,
Filling the mind with wild concerns, besieging us with futile anxieties;
In illness, an angry unrelenting crowd of fatal symptoms, terrorizing rest,
Creating clumsy delirium to trouble the already overburdened body;
In sleep, a visionary creator, a foolish mixer of doubt and fiction,
Or worse, the persecutor of the vulnerable undefended psyche;
But in waking health, ah! Here imagination comes into its own!
A light held high, burning brightly, showing the way,
A dammed river released, white water churning with still deeper
 currents,
A stallion set free to run and test its pace, face into the wind;
Imagination, casting aside the shackles of forbidding fears,
Freeing the spirit and hopes to fly, to be realised in an instant,
And laid before us unconstrained, our deepest desires fulfilled.

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110. How Could I

How could I who has plunged so many times,
Into the bitter brink of bleak despair,
And felt the wild unruly passions,
Tearing at the fabric of frail rationality,
How could I push, or tear, or lead you to that brink,
Whom I love no less surely than I love life itself?

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111. When the Last Soul Lies Dying

When the last wretched soul lies dying,
When the seas are black and skies a constant brown,
When plastic fills the oceans and most species are extinct,
When rain no longer brings us life, but falls as acid death,
When ice is gone and deserts spread where once great forests stood,
Will our taxes be low enough, will the shareholders rest in peace?
Will our avarice and need, for our mansions and bombs, be at last
fulfilled?
Will economic models end and investment returns be declared
sufficient?
And humans, blissfully no more, shall we be satisfied?

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112. Within this Room

Within this room, I sit you'll find,
Airing views of doubting mind,
Whilst beyond the door, though not outside,
Antagonistic tones reside.
So thus it is to reach this place,
The closest is the worst I face,
And being in this place you see,
Permits me small serenity,
As ever is the border near,
And watchful thoughts must waken here.

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113. Limestone Caves

A despairing soul, buried deep in sadness and in grief,
Lost in endless caverns carved by once-turbulent rivers,
Unable to leave dark memories behind and find a path to daylight,
Yet if an explorer stumbles on these hidden limestone caves,
How they are transformed to sparkling beauty by the light?

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114. In the Centre of the Eucalypt

In the centre of the eucalypt,
The oldest wood is dead,
And is eaten out by termites.
In the dark hollow heart of the tree,
The emptiness of its past life hides,
Lost beneath an accumulation of years.
The leaves do not speak of this hollow,
Nor the bark tell of what lies below,
Nor can another tree see its fellow's secret.
Yet the day arrives and the tree succumbs,
To wind, to water, to age, or to pitiless saw,
And by a crash or decay the truth is revealed.

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115. Sweet Waft of Smoke

Sweet is the waft of campfire smoke,
Mingled with early morning eucalypts,
Whether the air is brittle with frost,
Or laden with summer warmth.

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116. Secret Moments

When the sun first strikes my face on a misty summer morning,
At dawn when the clamour of birds fills the air;
Or later, when I pass a quiet treed lane, leading to some unseen place,
Hidden among green foliage where peace must surely be found;
Or later in the day, when dark shadows gather at the foot of
 aging pines,
And the world changes from rational day to uncertain dark;
How can I not think of you, and recognise the chance,
Which never was, may never be, and yet might have been.

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117. Are These Sad Tailings

Are these sad suspended tailings washing away in this discoloured
stream,
The opaque grey crushed remnants of our once-deep relationship?
Is this unnatural distasteful flow the sad ending of all that has gone
before?
Did we perceive so much in one another that proved to be untrue?
Did we believe such broad potential that now will never be?

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118. Good Days like Clouds

Good days like clouds float into our lives with promises to stay,
Then despite our warm reception, drift and fade away.
Who can say in advance what shapes they'll demonstrate,
Or guess the total number we might anticipate?
But will a rich man's costly wealth buy a certain form,
Or change its speed of passage, or stop a sudden storm?

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119. An Odd Creature

What an odd creature is the human soul -
Wracked by futile passions, consumed by divine longings,
It may speak of light and truth in one breath,
And the next moment, lie immobile, purposeless,
Without hope, crushed, unresponsive as a corpse!

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120. Darkness and the Helper

I am the Lord of Darkness. Who are you?

I am the Helper.

Why are you here?

To help.

How could you help me?

(No answer)

I don't need your help. Who sent you?

(No answer)

Answer me, or I shall get angry!

(A blinding flash and the Lord of Darkness falls backward.)

How dare you bring light here! Be gone! Or I shall destroy you!

I will not let you harm my kingdom - I am the Lord of Darkness.

You are lord and king of nothing.

Nothing? Rubbish! See here! My Kingdom surrounds you.

I see nothing.

Of course not, there is no light!

I am the Helper.

You cannot help me.

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121. Stormy Passions

Feelings neither come nor go, but rather swell and crash,
As great waves breaking on the rocky platforms of life,
And from these deep turbulent seas, rich harvests may be had,
Fast swimming motives and great bodied purpose may be netted,
While experienced sailors seeking rest, must learn which rocks
 are strong,
And which when alighting prove false, crumbling away in
 the raging storm.

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122. Dry-sobs Wrack Pathetic Frame

Dry-sobs wrack pathetic frame
Till mind, by tiredness rendered tame,
Is submerged, so time does reap,
The cold necessity of sleep.
For all of us who cannot cope,
We know the truth but still we hope,
And thus each day the gods must roar,
As wretched hearts for reasons claw.

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123. I Pray Don't Come Near My Head

I pray don't come near my head,
It moulds with all the tears not shed,
With blighted hopes and fears not said,
With deep infected wounds not bled,
In fact my life is almost dead.

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124. Walking Through a Paddock

Walking through a paddock freshly ploughed,
Clods stick to the feet weighing down,
Until the walker is forced to stop and clean them,
Repeating the process time and again.
The accumulated experiences of the past,
Weigh heavily upon our spirits as clay,
And we must stop, separate earth from soul, to proceed.

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125. Forbidden Loneliness

The elements rang on his frozen nerves,
Yet he saw beauty surround his motionless stance,
While the wind blew on to the sky beyond.
There was depth in that darkness,
A friend not to be feared,
For the wind blew on to the sky beyond.
Iced, gentle fingers massage
In-turned thoughts of outer façade,
Still the wind blew on to the sky beyond.
Too late to be sorry,
As he searched blank sky,
For the wind blows on, even as time.

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126. Between Lovers

Between the music and listener,
Between the bottle and the glass,
Between the light and the eye,
So between two loving souls.

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127. Ignorance

Look a void, a black nothing, full of foul odours,
The smell of blood, of pain and suffering,
Full of vanity, envy, and vicious spite,
Terror and cruelty, prejudice and violence,
And this Hell goes by the name of Ignorance,
No prince ever ruled a kingdom so vast!

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128. We Drivers of the Finite Frame

We drivers of the finite frame,
By driving well forget the rest,
We points of time in search of fame,
Forget what's in our mind is best.
But now who live this life recall,
That though our soul is mind encased,
In conscious thought we meet no wall,
So thoughtlessness is awareness waste.

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129. I Should Like to be Able to Tell You

I should like to be able to tell you
The first time I saw you each day,
'Here is your lover, a conquering hero,
With gifts I have found on the way.
Here is some moon-rock, its powers are unending,
Here are some vapours from Venus afar,
Here is red ochre and a pale Martian sunset,
And here bright plasma, from the heart of our star.'
But rather than these, my words must yet be
The plain and the simple – to you I give me.

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130. Too Easy it is to Questions Ask,

Too easy it is to questions ask,
More difficult by far to answer,
Thus is defined the poet's task,
To cure this cynic's cancer.

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131. Like an Unclimbed Mountain

Like an unclimbed mountain
The burden of our lives looms large before us
And we take each step upwards, in fear,
Lest we slip, or lest some lose boulder,
Let slip by some careless or invisible hand,
Hurtle down and cast us aside to untimely oblivion.

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132. Uncut Marble Sculpture

Hatred and pain, injustice and suffering, grief, rejection, despair,
These are the tools with which we chisel and shape, polish and perfect,
The uncut marble of our very substance, into the unique sculpture
of our lives.

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133. The Poet and the Muses

'Look' says the Muse, 'At this futile sight,
The fool below in his puny might,
He strains and wades through the muck in his head,
And dredges up slop as if I were dead!'
'Nay!' says the second, 'There are words more fit:
He is pseudo-wise, a partial wit,
His inflated self-worth bloats as it feeds,
On the warm, sweet rot that self-pity breeds.'
'A-hah!' grants the Muse, 'You're solving these matters,
Why inspiring words to the wind he scatters,
He prances and struts to an image aesthetic,
While in the harsh light of truth, he cringes pathetic.'
'How true!' frowns the other, 'now weep at the cost,
Like so many humans this poet is lost,
And despite the potential granted by you,
He's blind to the beauty that could be true.'

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134. What a Vision

What a vision must our spirits be,
Ever tearing from within at walls and roles,
At circumstance and familiarity,
To break through, to break out, to break away!

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135. Reality is an Icy Stream

Reality is an icy stream chattering and tumbling on,
Through youthful mountains, over energetic waterfalls,
Until the slopes of youthful hope are finally eroded away,
And we realise that we cannot control the course,
Deepen, dam or bend it as we may,
To the sea, the common end, it must flow.
Yet what of that fertile silt we carry in the flood of our youth,
Which settles out on the broadening river plain,
Our gift to future generations, wherein like us,
They in turn will sow their hopes and dreams,
In a brief sojourn between the mountains and the sea.

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136. Materialism

Materialism like a cold draught,
Creeping into the best insulated home,
Causes chills to the human soul,
Leaving at best a cold, at worst pneumonia.

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137. Clouds

In brilliant whites, greys and pastel mauves,
Mist or stretched, round, or in ragged changing shapes,
Clouds drift onto a field of vacant blue,
Cascades of grandeur and wild sculptured beauty,
Filling us with unattainable visions of freedom,
And drenching us with unexpected delight.

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138. The Greatest Friend of Our Foes

Who is ignorant carries within them,
The greatest friend of all their foes,
And listening to each thought arising,
Stands backward, unsteady, on a cliff-top,
Beckoned joyfully by the sea below.

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139. Children of Humans

What are the children of humans,
But particles of sand?
What are the achievements of humans,
But ripples in the deserts of time?

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140. Drought

The birds depart for better climes, or stay to die,
The withered plants are held fast by betraying cementing soil,
The animals disappear, hiding, dying, sun-baked, decaying corpses,
The streams, beds of dust and sand, the air filled with dry despair,
The people parched in hope, search the sky for the slightest change,
Seeking some small response in answer to their prayers.

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141. Love Like Mountains Fading

Love, like mountains fading into the distance,
Remains real and solid beneath our feet,
But extends slowly into the furthest future,
Fold upon mist-filled fold of lightening blue,
Hope upon less defined hope, reaching out,
Disappearing finally into an unknown world,
A place of enticing beauty, where spirits dance.

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142. Where the Firebrand Glows

Where the firebrand glows, in the darkest night,
Far beyond the reach, of any mortal sight,
Where formless black despair, puts happiness to rout,
And grief and loss combine, to cause deep inner doubt,
There shall we meet, at the cliff-top by the road,
And there will I share, the burden of your load.

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143. Bear with me Aching Spirit

Bear with me aching spirit,
Tear not your very self from being!
Something more than these may yet come:
Such sops and bribes sent to quell
The searching of the patient heart.

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144. There is an Echo at a Point

At that place where Wisdom taught
An echo in the stones I sought
Said I:
Such is life that look on it,
And all of hope is dead,
Then nothing needs protection,
Nor fear for what is said.
The echo, in its manner, replied:
Fear not if dead for in that death lies immortality,
Which while we live within this world, means invincibility.
Said I:
Then with time left, nurture the mind,
By learning from past dead,
And teach it to the living,
And hope for them instead.
Meet their eyes and let them see
That Hell far off is not,
Thus guarding for their better selves
They may fend off this rot.
The echo returned:
For what is dead can know no fear of desecration more,
And here's the source of human ills, this rotting conscious core.

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145. Hail the Devil's Blade Deception

Hail! The Devil's blade deception,
Death on cold sword perception,
Held by those in suffering born,
Know thy fate, learn and mourn.

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146. The Heat Shimmers

The heat shimmers across the yellow-brown landscape,
In the dry, open, sun-parched spaces nothing dares move,
Living things, whether from wisdom or fear, shelter and hide,
And yet, even so, breaking the oppressive simmering silence,
A restless something among the shade and dry leaves rustles,
Unwilling to delay for a better time to emerge, to feed and grow.

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147. What Pretty Patterns

What pretty patterns are these,
Moulded in the sand like wavelets!
They are our memories of yesterdays,
Stable in appearance, but so very fragile,
Subject to the storms and waves of time.
Tread carefully, look thoughtfully, don't grasp!
For these soft remnants are from the years gone past,
With every ridge and furrow part of a wider view,
Which cannot bite or injure, or suffer more anew:
What happier state could there be?

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148. Do Not Begrudge

Do not begrudge this small measure of love,
A glance, a touch, a hope unspoken, left unfulfilled,
An understanding shared in a world too strong,
A few hours in which happiness seemed near.

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149. The Final Arbiter

Could not one human's slightest movement,
Perhaps the deepest groan of saddest resignation,
Amid the painful suffering of the most afflicted person,
Could not this set in motion a series of events,
Events of such great magnitude and significance,
As to cause a sudden rift in all the Universe,
When the final arbiter is at last convinced,
That pity for injustice must cause it all to end.

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150. Bring Forth

Bring the broken and vulnerable to the forefront,
Bring up the lost and innocent at heart,
Bring the hopeless and disabled, the injured and the ill,
The unhappy and the lonely, the poor in spirit and in purse,
Bring up the orphaned and abandoned, the hungry and the fearful,
Bring forth the persecuted and the victims, the broken and the hurt.
And who, of all who are and have ever been, shall be left behind?

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151. Life is a Marble

Life is a marble that's swung by time,
By the thread of hope, whirled and battered,
Against a wall of mould and grime,
Till pride is dead and love is shattered.
These circular cycles our innocence catch,
With multiple fractures and unsubtle searing,
The unshielded heart is a pawn in this match,
Each false outward swing but allays our fearing.
Below the fragments pile humorously high,
And sparkling thus from the depths of the past,
They distract our attention and in this lie,
Pretend to the dizzy the contest will last.

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152. How Many Sunrises

How many sunrises does it take to melt a soul?

How many to strip away accumulated insensitivities?

How many to change a heart that does not wish to see?

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153. Dainty Toes of Daylight

When the dainty toes of daylight touch the stony floor of heaven,
And the Sun herself clambers from her warm bed,
To shiver in the cold of the approaching dawn,
When the new day begins and the old one is done,
Shall I care less for yesterday's mistakes and errors,
Or dare to forget the terror of regret?

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154. A Gentle Soul

Whose gentle soul is this?
Whose bright eyes and warm smile?
A spirit alive and open,
A sunflower, full in bloom,
Face to the sun!

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155. Absent Friends

Who is this friend who comes knocking?
No friend, nothing, just a noise!
But have I not given of myself,
And did not each take willingly?
Yet no one comes knocking, none comes!
Do they respond only when in need,
And for the rest, let it be, not theirs to care?

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156. A Field of Daisies

We run as children, playing in a field of daisies,
Gambling, frolicking, rolling in spontaneity,
But abandon the field when a shower of rain arrives.
Then later we learn, to find what we have left behind,
To this childish place we must return.

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157. Places of the Dead

Release all the wisdom now held in store,
And who shall notice the barest flood?
Let our lives' achievements by time be overgrown,
And in a few years will they not disappear altogether?
So pass quietly then, the places of the dead,
For death is the furnace for the distilling of life.

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158. A Tide of Loss

I am drowning in a fast-flowing river,
Struggling in a tide of anguish and loss,
Swirled about like a half-submerged leaf,
Jostled, held for a moment, then swept on.

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159. Hope is Dead

I stand before you as weak as water,
Although in battle my strength would slaughter,
I eat desolation that feeds my yearning,
This experience of life is distasteful learning,
A morbid wind adds chill to conviction,
That leafless bough, like love is fiction;
This is my depression but still I sink lower,
I wish I could reach my ivory tower,
My hope is dead, fool's pride remains,
So I laugh at the blood rinsing my veins,
I suppose I seem normal to those in the street,
Though my soul resounds on life's concrete,
So I stand disillusioned before our God,
Whose justice seems evil or love at a nod.

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160. A Mustard Seed of Doubt

Under the sacred crown of economic power,
The wielders of wealth traffic in human hardship,
Whilst only at the very edge of their consciousness,
The dispossessed multitudes, the smallest doubt!
Within the ugly confines of air-conditioned concrete,
A million pin-striped pushers, hooked on bonuses and power,
Consider only in the briefest moments of their least important days,
The limits of our world, a mustard seed of doubt!

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161. The Social Glance

In a room of strangers we meet and smile, eyes flash,
But what does our heart see when we look each other in the eye?
Is it warmth and trust, good faith and love?
Or is it uncertainty, distrust, suspicion and doubt?
Can we really see so much in a fleeting glance?
And where is that insight held, which permits love or suspicion,
To be weighed and distinguished in a moment?

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162. Blackness

As blackness surrounds a point of light
And quartz surrounds a speck of gold,
So futility surrounds perception of meaning,
And loneliness surrounds a moment of shared understanding.

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163. In the Still, Hot Morning Hours

In the still, hot, early morning hours,
When overcast skies diffuse the day,
Or the boisterous sun yet hides out of sight,
And the noisy rush of things to do,
Still lies dormant in yesterday's grave;
Then the memories of years gone by,
Drift into the half-unconscious mind,
Airing in the morning's half-light
Unfulfilled promises and past loves.

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164. One Two Three

One, two, three – we have heard of these things,
But we are wondering why you took us to these little people,
So full of formulae and figures,
So concerned with buying and selling, conflict and destruction!
What we asked was ‘Take us to your leaders!’
How can we hope to transmit wisdom through these tiny interpreters
Of physical laws, mathematical symbols, and financial transactions,
We came to speak the truth, but have been shown great ignorance.
Yet do not despair, we believe you could know much better than this.
Do not speak, we have seen enough!
Faith, truth, love, hope, compassion and wisdom -
These are qualities shared and understood by too few,
We mark it down and return again in two hundred thousand years.

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165. Our Ounce of Mountain

All the while we struggle on,
Poor ants, each with our ounce of mountain,
To carry across the plains of life,
Looking all too frequently only at our feet.

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166. Across the Eons of Space

Across the eons of open space,
Our hearts cast a plea for understanding,
And perhaps in some far-off galaxy,
A listening soul will hear and respond.

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167. I Shall Not Lie Down

Here I stand with waning vigour,
Wondering if it has all been worthwhile
Questioning my meagre return on life's great investment
Asking if all the aspirations and hopes were wasted?
Yet I shall not lie down to die – not yet!
I shall not pass up the baton of striving!
I will not concede to increasing age and lost choices!
There is yet the opportunity to fulfil hope.
I will live with courage until I can no longer
I will strive till striving is all that is left
I will struggle to extract life's meaning
From every last reluctant drop of time.

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168. Truth is an Elusive Fellow

Truth is an elusive fellow,
Full of vague tales of woe,
Yet press him to reveal the detail,
And happy words will often flow.

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169. The Voice

I stood on a hill and heard a voice
A horrible voice that would not stop
Ever it ran, as if silence it feared,
No peace from it, as none for it.
I tore my hair, I covered my ears,
I screamed through my tears,
Be quiet! Be silent!
The voice was me.

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170. A Bitter-centred Chocolate

Does a bitter-centred chocolate describe our aging future?

Does one unhappy bite release the juice of failure?

Or are we just reluctant to accept life's struggle's lost?

We've had our chance and blew it, and aging is the cost?

A time once was when life was clear, we moved like practised dancers,

The time once was when questions asked all had simple answers!

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171. As Water Falling

As water falling, flowing, splashing,
We're carried tumbling on, can't stop,
Life flowing over the bedrock of time.

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172. Dark Clouds of Grief

I am lost in a quagmire of sorrow,
Dark clouds of grief swirl overhead,
Hatred plagues and haunts my every step,
While night is full of unrelenting nightmares.
Shall I ever be freed from this anguish,
Or is this my lot until the end of my days?

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173. Aging

As anger is transformed by introspection,
Changing to a futile and merciless remorse,
As visions of the future slowly fade,
To blurred memories of a blighted past,
Then do our fires within grow cooler,
And aged, we are plagued with aged woes.

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174. Weak Feeble and Wind-buffed

Weak, feeble and wind-buffed,
Without form or substance,
Though we have them in our grasp,
Yet they lead us where we let them,
Bright or dark, without strength or will,
Leading us irresistibly to unseen ends,
The days of our lives.

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175. A Storm Occurs

Two independent currents of air, mere breaths, by chance collide,
Neither having intent nor secret desire, yet in that moment changed,
Empowered and impassioned, one by the other, ferocity unleashed,
And all at once, where only placid blue had been before, a storm,
The air churns and ominous distant rumbling fills with the sky,
Edged in brilliant white, steeped in shaded valleys of deep grey,
Giant cumulus columns appear, roiling and coiling, towering and
threatening,
And every passing breath and breeze is sucked into this wild intensity,
With lightning, thunder and destructive winds, a maelstrom of
natural passion.

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176. Let There be Dreams

Let there be dreams
And we suffer their destruction,
Let there be hopes
And we suffer their loss,
But let there be love
And we travel where it leads.

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177. I Had Not the Tears

I had not the tears to turn on
Nor friends as you turned to
Which left me seeming placid
Though deep beneath this lay
A writhing conscious ocean
A storm I would allay.

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178. Under the Night Sky

Under the night sky when the world's at rest,
Under the starlight by the edge of the sea,
Blessed by moonlight at its silvery best,
There may our hearts rejoice and be free.

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179. In the Quiet Moments

In the quiet moments when our minds are at rest,
Before TV, or sleep, or financial matters fill the void,
Let us ask ourselves this single question
Where shall we be when it all ends?
And if we find the answer, discover the truth,
Well, let us write it down, shout it out!
But otherwise let us be silent, sit still,
And listen quietly to the flowers in the garden.

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180. Take Heed, Sparrows

Take heed, sparrows!

Take care, children!

Rush like the stream!

Shine like the sun!

Run like the wind!

Today love is alive!

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181. One Final Meeting

In which direction does each uncertain footfall tread?
Whether by cunning or chance, guided or stumbling,
Through the fields of life's increasing uncertainty,
All lead irrevocably to the one final meeting.

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182. The Vagaries of Human Emotions

The vagaries of human emotions
Are as ripples on a pool of desert water,
Here today, soft, subtle and enchanting,
Tomorrow, gone, dried, dust, forgotten.

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183. The Gloom

What cruel fate seems to lock our memories within us,
That we cannot part from our sorrows, or relive with clarity our joys,
But must carry on with yesterday's errors, half unlearnt,
While stumbling about, abandoned in the gloom.

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184. The Old Jetty

The gulls swoop and cry over rolling grey-green waves,
An old jetty, broken, falling, slowly rotting away,
And yet still embedded deep beneath the surging waters,
The crumbling structure persists against the odds.

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185. Dragon

Smooth, winged dragon crouches, growling,
Then with a sudden rush, roaring, leaps forward,
Its long, outstretched neck bending skyward,
The two great hind feet leave the safety of the earth,
A cold wind rushes past muzzle and wings,
Low clouds softly buffet the toughened hide,
Until emerging into sunlit blue and white, all seems still,
Except this roaring, roaming beast set free in silent sanctuary.
Now the raucous beast dips its rounded snout,
Down, down it plummets, through windswept canyons
Billowing mountains of white and grey snow-shapes,
Which crowding all around, remain untouched,
Until suddenly the mists pass away and laid bare below
The tiny caged presumptions of a human town;
The creature, pelican or eagle-like, slowly circles towards its perch,
And with a bump and angry roar settles in an awkward peace.

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186. Moonrise

Night-time in crisp mountain air, an unseen stream tumbling nearby,
The hill top all aglow, brings to mind ancient pagan worship,
As the big and bright, majestic full moon slowly rises,
Finally clearing the horizon and taking its seat in the crowded
 starry sky.

Indeed, it is small wonder that this glowing ball
Has inspired such a deep reverence in aeons past,
For surely only a god could make such a grand, dramatic entrance,
To then cast its radiant light with imperious generosity,
Upon both earth and trees of this shadowed mountainside?

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187. The Breeze

When a breeze whispers through the trees,
Remember me, who once you loved,
For on a breeze, perhaps a spirit can yet move,
And perhaps, in death, I've remembered you.

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188. My Dog

A big tabby sprang on my dog that day,
Clawed her nose and then jumped away,
The mutt took off with a terrible yelp,
Lost in pain that no friend could help.

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189. The River's Reflection

In the sun's last light, blue following fading yellow,
We rest together beside the river's reflection,
Watching two sunsets.
We see each other like the river image,
Beautiful, soft, clear and still,
But always blurred in the finest detail.

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190. Then How Does Fate Manipulate

Then how does fate manipulate
If the way by each is found?
Fate's secret is to contemplate
And mould the world around.

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191. How Shall I Say She Moved Me?

How shall I say she moved me?
Love blossoming in her heart,
Filled with an illuminating hope,
Surrendering to desire as it came.

How shall I say she moved me?
But that I could not stand aside
Her depth of spirit, her heart of love,
Too dark, too deep, hidden too long.

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192. Train Whistle

A train whistle sounds like a flash of light in the dark,
A signal, searing the mind, unlocking invisible doors,
Memories bursting in at first opportunity,
Reliving moments of unwanted despair,
Then silence, plunging all back into terrifying darkness.

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193. Life in Thirty Words

If we may be
But not love see
Then let those fear
Whose death's not near.
But if we live
And love we give
Then when we've died
Life's justified.

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194. Cicadas

The cicadas with their noisy tones communicate out loud,
And passing-by, we walk within a pulsing raucous cloud,
But who of us can interpret the rowdy noise they make,
Yet swells the heart to listen more, their meaning to partake.

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195. The Road

When the trials are over, the heartache and the asking,
The prayers, the hopes, the visions and the dreams,
What shall remain, where shall we be and who will be close?
Let us not be too impatient to cast-off friends to reach that final place,
For there is only one road and it passes through many places,
Touches many faces and creates many changes along the way,
And we are condemned to travel it but once, and not return.

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196. It Seems to Me that Fifteen Years

I forget the many days of school,
I forget some jobs I've taken,
Yet I do not forget loved ones,
Who helped my soul awaken.
It seems to me that fifteen years
As best friends in life's sharing,
Is quite a major part of self,
To bury with uncaring.
Perhaps someone of innocence,
In love, on their guitar,
Awaits to hear from older self
'I love you as you are'.

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197. Love like the Sun Rising

Love like the sun rising strikes into the soul a golden glow,
Filtering into forgotten corners with sudden warmth and colour.

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198. Here's a Little Gift of Meaning

To what strange state of greed are we evolving?
A world of egos, inequality, and treasures locked in self-storage?
Do we have time for solitude, amid all the branding and the tweeting?
Is there appetite for an unmedicated journey of the soul?
Well, here's a change, a genuine little gift of meaning, just for you,
It comes free and is ready for immediate use, no preparation required,
It doesn't require insurance, is old, but requires no upgrades,
A great investment, the more you give it away, the more it replenishes,
A tiny bit can change your world and it leaves no carbon foot-print,
Keeps you young, makes you attractive, won't give you cancer,
Comes quality guaranteed, makes you the envy of your friends, ...
Well, you impatiently ask, let's have it...
Oh wait-up! A phone message – OMG ..
My favourite celebrity game show!
The latest episode, now streaming! CU L8R! NTIM

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199. Define Hope

'Define hope!' my mind, 'With a twang of compassion!'
'Done!' say I, 'In the following fashion:
Hope is the stars in an iced night's sky,
She dwells in states that others would fly,
The bountiful sand and beauteous sea,
Which unite and lull to ecstasy,
The beauty in nature, the burdenless beast,
The sun, a sigh, the cell of yeast,
She glows like a goddess, yet counts no score,
Though we turn our backs, then return once more,
Hope is a servant who is held in awe,
With time as her boundary, she observes no law.'

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200. In a Room Thirty People

In a room, thirty people talk, chatter, gossip, coffee in hand,
But a few quiet, wait for something, an opportunity to give or share,
Then a chance exchange, a momentary spark, a bridge of
understanding,
A few seconds where one perception seems to find another,
Love finding a way through the briars to arid soil, like water trickling.

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201. Seaside Autumn Noon

Here I sit in soft sunshine, in the barely moving, warm autumn air,
I stop my work, my thoughts, and drift into a meditative stillness,
The morning sun is tending to its angled noonday height,
And the deep blue sea is still, with but a few meandering currents.
The birds too seem to share a special feeling on this sunny day,
Calling in a diversity of chimes and song, darting to and fro,
Seeking food, or love, or simply in high-spirits,
Perhaps sharing the momentary sense of embracing peace.
I sit listening to the waves' distant lazy rhythm,
And look across the green fields shimmering with brief autumn growth,
Yes, time will bring cold winter, storms and darkness,
But it is hard to imagine amid the sunshine and the scent of the
salty ocean air.

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202. An Old Ute

Early morning mist drifts among the autumn trees and roadside
eucalypts,
An empty log-truck thunders by, followed by an old ute, exhaust
billowing,
A saw-miller, tree-feller, running late, hard dangerous work,
Across the road, a field with resting sheep, white on green, one stands,
Then more, suddenly like a painting, gilt-edged wool, silhouetted
in the rising sun.

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203. Contemplation

I stand on a precipice and stare into the mist,
I tremble, shake with fear, listening to silence,
I am at once the conqueror, the poor and the oppressed,
All at once I am lost, I am found and unsure;
I stand on a precipice of understanding,
Straining to contemplate the emptiness beyond.

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204. On a Bush Track

Stumbling, I pursue a purpose, walking along a bush trail,
Often missing the track and arriving at some false end,
Or slipping from the trail into some icy river,
But always turning, scrambling back onto the path,
Without a map, seeking signs, a recognisable landmark,
Is this the way? Is this the direction I need to take?
And every now and then, when I reach a summit,
I chart my position to find in wondrous surprise,
For I'd been thinking I had hardly moved at all,
That I am beyond some feared precipice,
And the path ahead is momentarily clear to see.

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205. Prayer

Love, fill me to overflowing with liquid light
That I may spill into life
Splashing all, submerging some
In a pure undiluted stream of joy

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206. At Times an Echo may be Heard

At times an Echo may be heard,
When truth gets lost or hazy,
And thus it spoke, though soft and blurred,
To watchful guard not lazy:

Guard:

The wind is harsh, the air is cold,
Whence comes that noise so faint and old?
Stand Ho! You there, in peace reply,
Or on this night this guard you'll try.

Echo:

What meaning has this vigilance?
Our will is peace, let us advance.

Guard:

Your words seem fair and not in fear,
Come forth! Be seen this voice I hear.

And from the depths in misty light
A broken wretch crawled into sight,
A puzzled frown was on Guard's face,

Guard:

Why bring this creature to this place?

Echo:

Now recall as this you see,
An echo as a mirror be,
And though you think your power is great,
See your soul, learn your fate!

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207. Alchemy

Can we change one molecule of evil?
Or by alchemy, convert a stone to happiness?
And yet, let us raise ourselves up and act in hope,
Rather than lie grazing, maggots on the corpse of life.

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208. What If

What if there was a God, but as vain, proud, and inconsiderate,
As thoughtless, intolerant, condescending and uncaring
As sometimes all of us can be?
Then indeed the human heart would be afflicted!
Then breathing would be painful, the air itself a bitter poison,
Drinking would be torture, water an essential burning acid,
Sleeping would be without rest, each moment a vivid deadly nightmare,
And life, irony above all, would be endless, all humans immortal!

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209. Snake Bite

'Look there in the shadow by the log,
See the head, the eyes, the flicking tongue!'
'I cannot see, let me take a closer look.'
'No, you will get bitten, see even now it rears!'
'But what is in a bite from this creature,
Death, no more! Come, my strange slender friend,
Let us touch in an affinity of love.'
'There now, it has struck even as I said it would!'
'But what is this small puncture but my Death,
And what is Death, but the cell door of my prison.
Come eternal warder, let me leave now, open up I say!'
'This is nothing but delirium, shall I not bind the wound?'
'What! Tie me to my prison, fellow inmate? Away with you!
Warder! Yes, he comes, farewell!'

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210. Eyes Flash

Eyes flash full of hidden flames of desire,
Enticing reaction, stirring emotions,
Filled to the top, brimming over with love.

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211. Here is a River Darting

Here is a river darting, dancing, falling,
Churning over stones, glinting in the sunlight,
Filling all who see it with a glimpse of eternity.
For could the sunlight shining on the moving water,
Joyful in its beauty, ever be persuaded to cease its movement,
Or relinquish the enchantment of its sparkling dancing?

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212. Carnival Mirror

The images we form of everyday life may mislead us,
Because like ripples on a pool, or the errors in a carnival mirror,
We hide by shimmers, the real shape of things.
And do not the ugliest of our distortions,
Anger, hatred and resentment,
Block all clear perception, especially of ourselves?

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213. In a Rainforest

Beside a tree deep in a rain forest
A naked man sleeps lightly on a warm summer's day.
Above his head the trees grow gently,
And the clouds roll past quietly,
Beneath his body the roots grope blindly,
And in the litter a thousand beetles gnaw.
Near the man a faint rustle in the undergrowth,
A faint footfall reverberating in the floating green shade,
The trees stop growing and listen,
The munching beetles hesitate a moment.
A woman creeps forward, stands above the prostrate man,
The clouds peer down curious through the leaves,
The anxious sun spills its beams down in surprise,
The whole forest stands in breathless quiet expectation,
The man opens his eyes and stretches out his hand,
The woman lowers herself smiling to his body in loving embrace,
The trees relax and begin to whisper anew,
The roots begin to grope once more,
And the clouds smiling, move on,
And in the litter, a thousand beetles munch happily once more.

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214. Carry My Words to Land Gently

Carry my words to land gently,
Fill them with friendship and warmth,
Let understanding heal past sadness,
And my heart accept sorrow with grace,
Let no thoughtlessness burn into anger,
But let love glow clear in the dark,
Like moonlight shining on water,
Or the beauty of stars in the night.

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215. Lovers

In the soft hours of dawn
Let our bodies unite with each other,
And with the sun's gentle rising,
May our embrace form a new day.

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216. The Soul is a Mystery

The soul is a mystery, beyond understanding,
Where did it come from, who knows its landing?
Called on a journey toward love unsuspected,
Its moulded and fired by events unexpected,
A drop in an ocean, a star in the night,
A mystery of love, a paradox of light.

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217. Each Morning Whispers

Night suffers the dawn's insistence,
Only for its promises of better things,
For each morning whispers new hope,
A kaleidoscope of dreams to come.

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218. Bird Song

The late afternoon's grey drizzle overhangs
A preoccupied city made of manufactured truths,
Where are the birds' evening songs?
Where the currawong, where the kookaburra?
Where the evening calls wafting through branches,
Unnoticed, unsought, lost messages, foreign language?

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219. The Hot Still Nights

In the hot still nights of summer,
When pain and illness shepherd sleep away,
The soul sits in watch over the sleeping world,
And a dark silence hangs heavy in every shadow.

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220. I am that I am

I am a tree, a cone or nut,
I am a house, a home or hut,
I am the wind, wild and free,
I am the river, cloud and sea,
I am the stars in blackest sky,
I am the sparkle in an eye,
I am the earth, the ice and flame,
I am all love, the joy and pain,
I am that is, and I am that I am,
Do you really hope to change my plan?

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221. How Tiring are the Hours of Waiting

How tiring are the dark hours of waiting, hoping!
How long and lonely are the times of need!
Yet quietly and without haste, love dawns,
Coming with all the splendour of the rising sun.

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222. The Writer

My pen is a match set to paper as to dry grass,
And only fatigue, that strong, heavy, drumming rain,
Can quench the fire once the page is lit,
Leaving billowing clouds of smoke,
Great dense drafts of energy released,
Burnt anger, dispersing on the wind.

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223. The Friend

Though despairing shadows pull you apart,
Or the past stabs pain deep in your heart,
Though grief and confusion, conflict and doubt,
Surge through your life like a tide rushing out,
Yet I stand by you, and should you inquire,
My love remains with you, to warm and inspire.

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224. Where is Life

Frozen crystals compressed in the hand,
Foot-prints, chasms in the snow,
Brilliant sunshine blinding eyes,
Where is life beneath this cold?
Warm eyes friendly laughing,
Mortal beauty full of desire,
Embracing passion, pounding hearts,
Where is life amid this heat?
Solitude echoes of times forgotten,
Empty darkness full of despair,
A moment's peace stills the torment,
Here is life within the soul.

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225. Whose Patient Sunset

Whose patient sunset do I steal?
Whose silent beauty do I invade?
Whose ancient Earth do I persecute?
I whose life is but a fleeting shadow,
Here and gone before tomorrow's sunrise.

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226. The Appointment

Who shall dress and walk with me?
Who shall step the metres out?
Who shall watch the passing hours,
When the long-foreseen appointment comes?

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227. I Have Seen a Mountain Die

I have seen a mountain die,
Kissed the lips that made me cry,
I have seen near suicide,
Conceited spite and faithless pride,
And of history, I have read,
Feeling lives from times long dead,
But best of all for me you'll find
Is loving you in heart and mind.
I have heard musicians play,
Motors strain and laughter gay,
I have heard compressors roar,
And presses scream their pithy score,
I have felt the dark of night,
And watched the clouds that pass from sight,
And even as these things all be
Yet greater joy to hear from thee.

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228. Hey, Perhaps You've Missed Something

Hey, perhaps you've missed something!
Perhaps you got something wrong!
Yet the sun is shining, there's time to wake and be surprised.
We cannot build a life upon the mirage of denial,
Cannot construct new hope upon flawed foundations,
Nor can our hearts fully hope to love and forgive,
If we are leaking energy to buried guilt and self-rejection.
But if an error has occurred and is waiting for review,
The power exists to salve the hurt and stop the leak.
For there is yet time before the final night arrives,
And after all, what is lost by taking time to mend a flaw?

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229. Today

Who shall know what purpose they've served
Who shall achieve the dreams that they've yearned.
For there is no tomorrow, and no yesterday,
Only the moments that make up today.

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230. The Trial of Sickness

Into a trial of sickness we may descend or be unexpectedly flung,
As into a roiling ocean, struggling for breath, afflicted with pain,
Unhappy journeys of days, or years, dependent, lost to everyday life,
Then with what joy we may finally awaken to a morning of healing,
When pain subsides, the sun shines and we breathe freely once more.

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231. **Crimson Rosella**

I am a crimson rosella sky-larking high in the forest canopy,
Through the cool morning air, the bark and branches flash by,
Sunlight spills down, mottled fragments among the tree-ferns below,
I dive and dart, rise and turn, showing-off my flying skill,
Too fast to follow, a flash of colour lost among the trees.

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232. Special Moments

Now and then, a special hour occurs, unnoticed at the time,
Perhaps a happy week, a parting, or an unexpected expression of love,
And how sad we are when we discover at some later date,
The weighty significance of this moment now long gone,
When all we have left is a poignant haunting memory.

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233. Mining Life

To know ourselves is to discover
The human heart in its many colours,
And by mining deep the life within,
We will strike an endless vein of rich ore,
Which brought to the surface changes all.
The deserts begin to bloom, the frosts thaw,
And even the day itself becomes lighter
And distant views focus more clearly.

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234. The River Under the Old Log Bridge

The river, at times swollen and angry,
Flows now, reduced and quiet, slow, barely moving,
Beneath an old log bridge unrepaired, broken to rubble,
By a past flood, no longer remembered.
Ducks and water birds swim unhurriedly in a wide pool,
Diving and feeding, calling to chicks sheltering in the shallows,
Overhead shading gums sigh and whisper,
In a mild breeze whose soft movement entices rest and sleep.
Above the land, large hawks float noiseless back and forth,
Only their heads moving, seeking frogs and mice,
Birds chirping, darting, court in the grass,
Or fly simply in the joy of warm sunshine.
The day passes, a bright sun sets into a pool of gold and pink,
And we wonder if this peace-filled scene was like this,
In the long aeons before we humans came,
And once we are extinct, will it continue on unchanging?

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235. Small Crystal Screen

Here is your world, in this small crystal screen,
Here are your hopes and here are your dreams
Thumb-typed messages, scams not believed,
Pictures regretted, sent or received,
Find a new home, a car or a cattery,
Just don't run short of charge in the battery,
What a delight, this hypnotic treasure,
But whatever happened to solitude and leisure?

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236. A Storm Blows in Many Directions

An unexpected storm blows in many directions,
Affecting many lives at once,
In the midst of one person's tempest,
Those nearby are roughly blown about,
And, forced to change course, so impact yet others,
Who in turn, must ride the wind or wait it out.

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237. What If We Are Stars?

What if through discovery, tragedy and pain,
What if through the power of love and suffering,
And by our aging and our death, we enter a spiritual cocoon,
And thereby transform from our body and our birth,
Until our essence re-emerges as the conscious heart of a star!
Bursting into light amid clouds of protective gas and dust,
Short-lived, huge, dominant, brilliant blue, or long-lived, modest,
 yellow, sun-like,
Giving birth to planets and moons, to air, water and life!
Are we not all made, entangled with, the stuff of stars?
What then if our human lives are but the embryos of new stars?

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238. Acceptance

Acceptance is a bitter draft,
A poisoned chalice drained,
A toxic venom in the heart,
Till hope is spent and will is trained.

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239. Am I a Speechless Tree?

Am I a speechless tree, or inanimate stone?
Why can I not find the answer to what all life has in common?
No telescope has seen it, no quantum collider has found it,
No money has bought it, nor bomb destroyed it,
No microscope measured it, nor doctor prescribed it,
No geologist unearthed it, nor artist created it,
And yet here I am, something more than the sum of the parts!

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240. The Pattern of the Raindrops

The pattern of the raindrops falling,
Is like the love of trusted friends,
Best received in neither flood nor drought,
But sufficient to ensure our greatest growth.

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241. The Wind in the Leaves

I stood in a happy land and a great grey storm cloud grew over me,
The sun was blocked and there fell a rain of grief and sorrow,
I was drenched, my hopes betrayed, darkness was unrelenting,
So I turned my back and set out alone to find a new place.
As I wandered, the great grey cloud fell away, ever further behind me,
Until I found new paths, filled with new love and warm friendships.
So my life grew in healing, hope and new deepening fulfilment,
Until at last I climbed upon an aging hill
And looked in contentment down upon my whole life laid out.
An unexpected noise, perhaps it was the wind in leaves,
Surprised me, and turning, I chanced to look back,
Toward the far horizon to that cloud I sometimes feared to see,
And to my surprise, the sky was no longer grey but a deep azure blue,
A warm sunlit valley was filled with once familiar and beloved places,
Then to my surprise I knew the shadow that always dwelt behind me,
The one I always sought to avoid,
Was nothing more than my own shadow in the sun,
And that the land I had turned my back upon so long ago,
Was nothing less to me now than priceless,
A cherished piece of the landscape of myself.

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242. The Garden

Look, here is a hidden garden of poetry,
There the little rock pool of empathy,
Overflowing with compassion into a bed of soft laughter,
And prettiness abound! Here's a sweet shrub of winter warmth,
And an enormous tree of love giving shade to all around,
Protecting sweet scented blooms of joyful surprise.

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243. On a Rocky Shore

Stand on a rocky shore overlooking a surging sea,
Who can measure or judge the perfection of the waves,
By what criteria shall we deem them to be worthy, good or bad,
Size, shape, speed, colour, power, reach, or frothiness?
Are they not each perfect in their own subtle way?

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244. Take Me Away

Take me away to the arid lands,
Unfit for man and beast,
And set me free in some rugged place,
To fend for myself and eat of faith.
Not here! Here a hundred thousand living things,
Clog the streets and pave the way,
To long forgotten goals and empires of avarice,
Built on moving sands with corroded tools.
No, take me hence from within their grasp,
Away from people and machines, cement and smog,
And give me just a few short hours,
Of blessed wilderness and quiet humility.

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245. If the Fire is Lit Once

If the fire is lit once and dies, there is error,
If the flame catches twice and dies, there is debt.
But if the spark lights three times and dies, what hope?

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246. A Meditation

My thoughts fly on clouds
My soul dissolves transparent, yet whole
I am drifting in skies within
My insight is deeper, my love less self-centred
I am without destination,
I am changed, I am at peace.

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247. Colours and Sounds

Quietly walking in a forest of towering white-trunked gums,
The misty air hovering like smoke in sunlight, the sky, blue through
green,
The earth a palette, endless shades and tones of green and brown,
A whip-bird crack musters the darting, chiming, whistling parrots,
Calling them to the exotic orchestral performance of a lyre-bird,
The scent of wattle on the air, with fungi and damp leafy smells,
And a glimpse of distant mountains folding, glimmering with hope.

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248. As Imagination Commands

Imagination says this, and it is so!
Imagination cries tears and the world drowns,
Then at once skies clear and life is full and happy,
Imagination commands it, and so it shall be!
Imagination can fill life with meaning or despair,
Convert the Universe to a prison,
Or fit the meaning of life in a droplet.

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249. Who of Us

And who of us shall say in our defence:

We did not see, what we saw,

We could not hear, what we heard,

We did not comprehend, what we understood?

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250. Conversation Overheard

Conversation overheard outside a public telephone booth,

On a rainy evening,

'Yes, I do see your point of view...'

'Might I suggest that you should...'

'No, I don't mean to say that...'

'But that is hardly for me to judge...'

'Yes, yes, I know you are...'

'Yes, but perhaps you...'

'Yes, that is very true.'

'No, I'm sure that won't happen...'

'Good Lord, no! I didn't mean that...'

'Yes, I am quite sure you are right.'

'Very well, if you're sure...'

'All right, if you have made up your mind...'

'Right oh, then, tomorrow. Good-bye, right oh, tat-tah.'

'Good evening, sorry to keep you waiting in the rain.'

'Quite all right. Good evening to you.'

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251. Work

If work I must, then work I will,
For the death of hope breeds ruthless skill,
If work I must, then work I will,
Though my heart's in pain and my soul is ill,
If work I must, then work I will,
To the day I die, to the grave I fill.

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252. The Trials of Life Do Not Decline with Age

The trials of life do not decline with age, but rather transform,
The approach of death displacing the uncertainties of living,
With the fears of sudden illness, dementia or lingering dying.
So let us share this last journey to its end, embracing our transition,
Until the train is in the station and we face our separate call to board,
Water droplets arriving at the ocean,
Whispers drifting away on a warm breeze,
Rest from tribulation, relinquishing what was ours,
Surrendering all meaning, the soul transforming to light.

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253. The Market Stall

See you some injustice fellow?
See you hate or feelings shallow?
See you greed, the sick and homeless?
Or barbaric wars of madness?
Sour flavoured is this sickly mould,
But at the stall of Truth is sold.
See you some beauty fellow?
See you love or sunlit meadow?
See you health and happy days?
Or perhaps a lover's gaze,
All taste good, life's better half,
"All here!" cheery Truth does laugh.
Deny him not his market place,
For all that is requires his grace.

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254. Destiny

Where is my grand destiny,
That I should make this frightful journey,
Across stunted slopes of human folly,
Murdered, stranded, or worse, simply lost?

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255. The Soul Knows Neither Age nor Self-Importance

Run, jump, feel the wind rush against face and hair!
For the soul knows neither age nor self-importance,
Is not proud, vengeful, despairing or ambitious.
But is who we are and have always been,
At once young and old, joyous, and free.

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256. Flames of Love's Passion

Flames lick at logs, like love's passion in the soul,
Hunggrily devouring everything, however solid,
Turning great strength to heat and light,
Leaving all crumbling into to ashes.
Whose soul is so immeasurably vast,
To feed forever the unquenchable fiery appetite of love,
Which burns so much the stronger the greater fuel,
But in the end, dies away among the remnant embers?

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257. What Tenuous Hold

What tenuous hold the greatest among humankind
Have upon the godliest of all things, life!
What trifling connection then for the remainder of us,
Who cannot even distinguish the goods from the good!

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258. Lost Forgone Forgot

Lost, forgone, forgot!
Idle in our greatest need!
Keenest blade left unused and dull,
Clearest vision hidden in the dark,
Wisest counsel despised!
So do we treat the sensitivity of our souls.

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259. For the Briefest Instant

What happened when we spoke yesterday?
For the briefest instant truth leapt across the gap,
An electric arc - powerful, frightening, burning the air,
An instant of ozone, of sudden heat, discharging, changing,
Cauterizing the giver, the receiver, both,
Welding a connection with understanding and love.

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260. There is a Pool

There is a pool where, if we allow it, we are drawn,
And deep within its clear, cold waters lives a mystery,
A paradox of silence and revelation, of stillness and motion,
Of icy tranquillity and fiery truth,
Of ecstatic peace and mournful isolation.
How deep within the waters of this pool we plunge,
Shines within our eyes, bursts from within our hearts,
Light sparkling through crystal clear consciousness,
Waters living, flowing, overflowing from the soul.

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261. You Walk in Patient Sadness

You walk in patient sadness
But this shall pass away
For joy and depth in gladness
In time shall come and stay.

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262. Mist on a Mountain Road

Sometimes we struggle, as in a thick mist on a mountain road,
Groping to navigate the next bend, planning the next kilometre,
Yet for every stumbling step forward, we lose sight in turn,
Of precisely the same distance behind, lost to the past.
Where in the thick mist will our path lead us, we cannot tell,
What pleasures or sufferings it will bring, remain obscured,
Yet our imaginations create vivid hopes and expectations,
For our sorrow in their failure, or our relief in their eventuality.
Yet how ironic that amid all our stumbling, striving and imagining,
Were we to but look up at the very point above our heads,
We may find the mist is most thin, the sky clearing to blue,
And if we but rise up, the mist parts and the sun is shining.

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263. When Shall Hope Break

When shall this life of night come to an end?

When shall new hope break bright above the horizon?

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264. The Purpose of a Star

Of a hundred billion stars shining nightly,
Is there yet one lit to burn unseen?
Warming no cold hands or hearts?
Is any flaming spirit sufficient to itself,
The simple burning of its fuel enough?
Might not the blaze have another purpose,
To warm a hundred souls in need,
To guide a thousand by its light,
Or bring hope to a million lost in darkness?

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265. Passion

What is this strange gentle friendship?
Softly we walk, talk, care and touch,
Peacefully embrace, passion climbing,
Then gently we walk away, without knowing,
If behind these moments lies more.

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266. A Tree on a Hill

I stand alone upon a hill, a tall and spreading tree,
My boughs and leaves, roots and bugs, all that worry me,
But when the sunlight strikes the tips of my green perception,
And daylight stirs the birds to sing a welcoming reception,
Then in earnest work begins in foliage, fruit and flower,
While shadows shrink and heat expands with every passing hour,
When all at once something stirs, at noon within my leaves,
Love arrives as pollen grains, borne upon a breeze.

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267. When It Comes to Love

In love, do we not each write our own story?
And whether our tale ends well or poorly,
Nothing is predestined,
Unless we turn our backs,
Walk away from the possible,
Close our eyes to the sensitive,
And to all that might have been!

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268. Dark Moody Lover

Dark and moody lover who stirs my very soul,
Which way to go on such wild and uncertain seas,
Sink, swim, lost or marooned forever,
Or carried across the crashing waters,
To a new dawn, sunlight breaking through the clouds?
Deep-flowing, passionate fiend, desirable friend,
Where shall we go that will not lead to our final parting,
Polluting what once was pure and untainted with despair?
Angry spirit, striving within your tumultuous world,
Who could restrain the storms or calm your troubled soul?

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269. Shattered Fragments

Under the new sky of broken days,
I struggle to collect the shattered fragments,
Pushing the pieces together in silent hope,
Wracked by fear, frustration and inadequacy.

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270. How Many Tears

How many tears will wash away the pain of separation?
How many hours or years, the sorrow and the guilt?
And now for every moment shared of intimacy and joy,
A thousand others emerge, bathed in grief and doubt.
Unhappy time, a bitter herb for healing broken lives,
We swallow reluctantly, then eagerly, seeking the effect sooner,
A slight numbing, the pain less frequent, fading confusion,
Until perhaps, one day, we will smile again and seek love anew.

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271. The Soul is a Vessel

The soul is a vessel which is either full or empty,
In its fullness, its suffices when all else lacks,
But in its emptiness, all else will not satisfy us.

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272. The Caverns of Emotions Past

What treasures are hidden deep below the surface of every day light,
Rivers and tunnels, caverns and streams, carved by water and time,
A vast forgotten labyrinth, invisible from life's surface,
Unless some brave or reckless climber chances upon a crevice,
And squeezing in, descends into the rocky earth,
There to be confronted with fearful echoes of raging torrents,
Or remnant trickling streams, vast gouged caves,
Overgrown with crystalline spears, columns and mirror-still pools,
Telling the many layered story of past torments and pleasures.
Who shall rise from these hidden streams and stalactites,
Who shall climb back to the mundanity of everyday labour,
And not report on the treasures and wonders revealed?

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273. Love, What a Fine Tool

In love what a fine tool has been created,
It slips through cracks and flaws like leaking water,
It divides, dissects and discards, bad from good,
And all in a moment penetrates to the deepest recesses of the heart.

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274. Who Are the People Who Consumerise Life

Who are the people who consumerise life?
The making, the selling, the buying, the dying?
Where is our future, our visions and dreams?
Containerized, packaged, refrigerated and sold.
Who wrapped life before we separated from apes?
Who marketed the Universe when time first began?
Who snap-froze the moon or advertised stars,
Who pretends that our lives are the consummate end?

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275. At the Centre of the Soul

At the centre of the soul a fire may be lit,
And in the burning of the soul - something new emerges,
A joy unexpected springs from the ashes of the self,
And now the fire changes, a fierce brightness begins,
The searing heat of fusion, a light that does not die,
An irradiating sun bursts into being - whose power is this within?
Whose this light that would change the world?
Burning, unquenchable, unending?

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276. They Who Chase the Setting Sun

They who chase the setting sun,
Shall ever running be,
But who awaits the breaking dawn,
A full day's light will see.

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277. Was the Sunshine Less Real

Was the sunshine less real or the sky less blue,
We might have been adrift in a daydream.
Was the air less sweet or the animals more shy,
We might have been lost in a romantic vision.
What power was it that we felt in each other?
What beauty was it that held us momentarily together?

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278. Within the Earthen Burrows

Within the earthen burrows of our lives,
Scratched from the solid circumstance of birth,
We feel secure in the familiarity of our walls,
Rushing to and fro along the dead-end tunnels,
Oblivious to an inner life, secure in self-tailored darkness.
But from each secure and known burrow,
A deadly beast may root us out,
And in the scuffling, snuffling, rude awakening,
Each comfort of the past trampled underfoot,
Who among the blind burrowers can hope to survive the light?

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279. In the Quiet Moments in Our Hearts

In the quiet moments in our hearts,
We speak in a million silent voices,
Fearful of what could become known,
Were they to escape, naked indignities.

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280. Friendship

How slight and brief the friendships people form,
And how easily then love is set aside, as some worn out commodity.

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281. What Is Missing

In the rush of daily profits,
In the noise of producing goods,
Amid the energy of public outrage,
From undying focus on the little screen,
What part of life is this gone missing?
Absent from the asphalt hurry-ways,
Absent from the social media drip feeds,
Defied by all the futile branding and digitising,
What is it, but our peace of mind?
And where, for Google has 39 steps, but no store-locator,
Can I purchase say, a kilogram or two,
Just enough to keep me going?

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282. A Blind Worm

The spirit within us, a blind worm,
Makes futile gestures to avoid the sunshine,
Wagging its angry head in defiance,
Digging down into the earth of life,
Seeking under rock or twig for a hiding place,
Wag on little, bristly blind spirit,
Burrow under stone and root alike,
For in the end a wriggling worm cannot change,
What shall be sought or brought to light.

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283. A Time Bath

Bathe in restful ease,
Let labour be forgotten,
Let moments of sweet time,
Diamonds in human wealth,
Fall around the body like a shower,
Droplets splashing, dripping in torrents,
Draining away, a luxury.

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284. Restless Sleep

What cataclysms of life occur,
Within the peaceful hours,
Thawing snowy floods once solid,
Pouring icy streams in nightmares,
Disturbing languid pools of yesterday.

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285. Frustration

Tell me! Have you not felt frustration too,
Questions about life's purpose,
Pressing on the mind, as if on veins and arteries,
Like children standing upon a garden hose,
Making the water seem near to bursting
At the source of its hurrying flow?
I am sure you must have felt this too,
After some prolonged labour in everyday living.

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286. Sudden Joy

In a lover's touch our spirits wake,
Imprisoned creatures at once set free,
From dark dungeons, brought into the sunlight,
Capering and dancing in sheer delight,
In almost disbelief that such sudden joy
Can so profoundly stir our souls.

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287. Shadows

The sun shining above our heads
Illuminates the world around us,
But creates dark shadows at our feet,
Shadows that haunt us, fight with us,
Obsess us, but never satisfy us.
Why do we choose to believe
In the shadows rather than the light?

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288. Porridge with Lumps

Mary the teenage daughter comes running into the house in terror,
'There's a great big chook as big as the house scratching at the door!
Mary's mother rushes to a window,
And her doubts leave her in horrified dismay.
Suddenly the chook begins to peck at the tiles on the roof,
Clank, clank the falling broken tiles rock the ceiling light fittings,
Bang, bang, a giant chook's beak suddenly breaks through the ceiling.
Mary and her mother run in confusion and despair,
Rush about to hide, finally choosing the pantry.
But the big chook is much too clever to miss a meal so easily,
And scratching the pantry door reveals the humans huddling within.
With a few quick pecks the big chook devours the occupants,
Then it darts off with a cluck and the flap of its flightless wings.

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289. Parenting Peace

Fulfilled or unspent vengeance and spite,
Create no beauty, and parent no peace.

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290. Let Us Walk into the Mountains

Let us walk into a mountain valley,
And by a cool and pebbly stream,
Build ourselves a small log shelter,
Plant our food and grow our needs,
And in the passing of the days,
Enjoy the sun, the air, the trees and life.

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291. Sunset

Before descending night blows out candles of the day,
And the final glow of leaves has not yet drained away,
The golden sun speaks brightly of tomorrow's best,
A flash of light and promise bursting from the west.

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292. In the Winter of Love

The memories of yesterday survive as the promises of tomorrow,
Wrapping us in a blanket of warm hope and comfort,
Amidst the bitter cold of an all too brutal world,
Where snow falls and the unloved shiver and wait,
Until finally the Spring raises up the barely warming sun,
And memories burst into blossom and the heart glows again.

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293. Slowly Growing Out of the Soil

Like branches and twigs, we slowly grow and our lives take shape,
Like trees, the passing years give strength and height,
And so too we reach ever deeper into the mysteries of life.
But what sadness there is, that the wisdom thus accrued,
Cannot help a tree to walk or a forest move.

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294. Dragonflies

Dragonflies hover before our expectant eyes,
A momentary vision of colour and delicate beauty,
An image implanted in the mind, in the soul,
But gone again, fleeting reality, never still.

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295. To Look on Death

We tend to look on death is as if looking into a well,
The dark water turning back our understanding,
But if our spirit was made of water too,
Might we not plunge beyond this present life,
Uniting with the world beyond.
Better yet to look on death, as if in a pool from underneath,
We stare up at the surface, with only the floor mirrored above,
Where if we should rise as air and float out through the surface,
We would breathe anew, find sunlit life,
And a freedom we have never known before.

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296. Love a Spring Flower

Is our love no more than a spring flower,
To be born and wither in a moment?
I would believe the world was not so cruel,
And that love once found is not so easily lost again.

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297. Writing in the Clouds

Who of us can claim to recognise,
The meaning written in the clouds,
Even when those great white masses,
Mere vapours moving high above,
Communicate by shape and shade,
For all the world below to see?
Who can claim to know their thoughts,
Interpret four billion years of change,
Or grasp a tiny part of the truth they say?

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298. Battle of Light and Dark

Upon this world I once did stand,
But darkening night did hold my land,
I mustered forces that were true,
And there we fought though darkness grew.
'How the trees do darken skies,
No fire is lit but quickly dies!'
'Look at yonder prancing foe,
How black his rage, he roars in show!'
'We strike at foes who breed with blows,
We stride the corpse and thus it grows!'
'Each mark we take and cheer we raise,
The darkness fuels a blacker blaze!'
And thus we fought for time unending,
On blackened paths, rare light descending,
'The foe retreats we break his yoke,
He trembles at the lightning stroke!'
'Yet he rallies, but hold this peak,
So crowds the dark it's hard to speak!'
Then slowly, slowly, was slow but yet,
We gained some ground though strongly met.
'Stand fast my friends nor count the hours,
Back you darkness, the field is ours!'
Patient, tried with wounds not well,
At last we won and darkness fell
And now we see this land in light,
And rare the pockets of the night.

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299. Hope Inspires

Hope inspires,
Faith ignites,
But only love
Makes day from night.

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300. The Stones of Ignorance

To the resisting stones of ignorance,
Lining the bed of freedom's rushing torrent,
Each dislodged grain of sand,
Whispers the truth to those who will listen:
Have you not heard the seaside roar?

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301. Insights

Silent messages span the gaps,
Of miles, of years, of regret,
Swifter than light, more piercing,
Caught by our dreams, wakening insights.

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302. Age and Illness Creep Up

Age and illness creep up on us,
Like weeds in the garden,
Growing in untended corners,
Not there in memory, but there now,
Suddenly! But perhaps not quick at all!
Time passing, faculties fading,
Strengths wilting, departing,
Lost, rusty, latent or never there?
Talents, no longer in waiting,
One-time potentials never realised.
The mind struggles to awaken,
Too long in self-induced slumbers,
Fuzzy thoughts dissolving in slippery uncertainty,
But now every stroke must count, every thrust tell,
It's now or never, or die in trying!

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303. Empires

Sumer, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Aztecs, Huns and so many more,
Where are your ancient kingdoms and empires today?
Does not the sun still shine on Babylon and Rome?
Are not the Greek temples and the Great Pyramids still standing?
But where the mighty Romans, ancient Egyptians, the proud Aztecs?
And where those worlds they all once knew?
Worlds, like ours, whose security they believed would last forever?

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304. Final Poem

So here we come to the final one of the poems here selected,
The stars and streams, and all between, are simply life reflected,
So take a bow, if you spent an hour, you've made it all the way,
May birds and trees, and a passing breeze, add meaning to your day.

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