

Each New Day a Miracle

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EACH NEW DAY A MIRACLE

Poetry by Peter Rhebergen

For most of my life I have used poetry to express my heart; I love how words can express so well our deepest thoughts. I do this because I know that the One True God cares and that He hears my voice, whether I speak of joy or grief. God is the source of every smile, and the comfort of every tear.

These poems are my praise to God for His wonder, my cries to Him for help, my reflections on all He has done and is doing for me. They are the marks of my passage through the wonderful life He has given me and have grown out of the knowledge that no one is more worthy of my devotion than God. I hope that in reading them your own walk with God will be made more sure.

Though I am pleased with all of them, these are the poems I love the best

[Across the Sea](#)
[Adventurers](#)
[Alone](#)
[Beside the Wild Water](#)
[Bottom of the Sky](#)
[Communion](#)
[Death. Does. Not. Win!](#)
[Death Is Not The Victor](#)
[During Youth Sunday](#)
[His Light Has Come Upon Us!](#)
[I Know That I Shall Never See](#)
[I Should be in a Boat](#)
[Infinity's Edge](#)
[My Hope](#)
[Oh Give to Me an Endless Sky](#)
[Our Great Loss](#)
[Out in the First Morning](#)
[Screaming Through a World](#)
[Sing, Oh Earth!](#)
[The Sower](#)
[This Disciple's Creed](#)
[time](#)
[To A Poet Some Time From Now](#)
[Today = One. More. Day.](#)
[Victus](#)

April 13-15, 2024

No Doubt

this world is very broken
no doubt

God is an amazing fixer!
no doubt!

April 12-15, 2024

I was on the phone with my bank just now
nothing important, just making an appointment
and I realized something on ending the call
I had spoken like a man who hasn't any worries
on considering this I realized something else
I don't have a single one, not a single one

April 11, 2024

Chocolate

Beth came home with chocolate the other day
she said a home isn't quite the same without it
but I think she buys it because she loves me

April 3-11, 2024

Grandma Rosy and Me

each time I watch the end of Balto
and I hear Grandma Rosy say
 "Thank you Balto,
I would've been lost without you."
(and she could have named Togo)
 I cry
 for such an open gratitude
for I myself owe such a gratitude
 for I myself have often said
 "Thank you God,
 I'd be lost without You."
(and I could name no other)

Struggles with Predestination and Free Will

on the sign outside: "all who wish to live here may come in
no matter who you are, or what you've done, you are welcome"

on the sign inside: "I knew that you would want to come in
and I've worked everything out so that you could and you would"

I grew up in a Calvinist church (Maranatha CRC), have been many years in an Arminian church (Pickering Standard Church) and currently attend a Reformed church (Westney Heights Baptist Church). Needless to say, I have struggled long with the apparent conflict between predestination (God chooses who will be saved) and free will (we choose to be saved). In my devotions this morning I came across the words below, which inspired this poem. I may finally be taking my first steps toward the very beginning of understanding.

"Before we become a Christian, it is as though we are standing outside a door that has a sign over it saying, 'Whoever wants to come in, can.' But after we go through it, we look back and see a sign over the same door saying, 'Called and chosen by God.'"

<https://www.christianity.org.uk/article/predestination-and-free-will>

March 13, 2024

On the Departure of the Uninvited Guest

and just like that, it left
the uninvited guest has left
it didn't smash any plates
it didn't scratch any tables
it didn't steal any cutlery
it just darkened the rooms
for just a little bit, and it left
it just left

thank You God, that it has left!

thank You God, that You have not!

March 12, 2024

Sadness (again)

I'm not sure if I'm the saddest person
I'm quite certain that I'm not
or even if I have sufficient reason to be sad
on a day like today
almost certainly not
yet I am and I think I do
and no matter the shovel I use
I can't dig myself out of this hole

March 12, 2024

Television

there had been a 'discussion' over the television
buttons
one said this, the other said that
but there was no point going on
and on and on
about it
the television buttons alone
had the final say

March 12, 2024

Tears

you all have something to cry about
your tears are unquestionably true
but as you weep, do remember this
do not allow pain destroy your love

March 12, 2024

Clash of Titans

no one got what they wanted that day
hope died on a bed of conflicting dreams
joy clashed against joy
both died
on all sides they died

glory stepped aside for mediocrity
still waters cloaked raging turmoil

that day continued, differently
'is' far removed from 'could have been'
tears erode the pathway

what will be, only grace or grief will tell

March 11, 2024

time

accumulates

silence

echoes

words

erupt

renown

avoids

yet

this

much

I

know

I. Am. NOT. Not. Good. Enough!

disregard

cannot

negate

ability

March 6-7, 2024

Prowler

darkness prowls in silent stealth
soft-steps around the stronghold
panther like
it slinks in the unseen shadows
it lurks in the unguarded moment
it pounces at the unkept defense
its clenching jaws, its iron teeth
would grab and tear and maul
could the dark but find a hole
allow its foul disease destroy

March 3, 2024

I pronounce plumbing as plumb*ing*
slightly emphasizing the middle "b"
my friends snicker when I do this
but I don't really care, too much,
my dad, with his Dutch accent, did
and he's gone, and saying it like that,
that silly little "b", helps me remember

February 29, 2024

Changes

Encyclopedia Britannica and World Book used to not change
you could go back and find the same fact you found years ago
Wikipedia and the Internet are not like that, not at all like that
you couldn't go back tomorrow to re-find today's found fact
much less re-find a fact you'd thought you'd found years ago
which is good, because we are not who we were years ago
which is also bad, because we have lost our solid place to stand

February 28, 2024

An Argument for Christological Possibility

should failure be impossible
what glory comes with victory
could the struggle never be lost
how brightly shines the crown

of what worth the triumph
if its loss be inconceivable
of what value the reward
if its fight were not real

February 23, 2024

the struggle goes on
but not between faith and fear
that struggle has been settled for decades
no, the struggle now is this
on the one side, personal responsibility
and on the other, divine decree

February 12-14, 2024

So tell me
how do you like your Chosen Jesus now
now that he has failed us on multiple occasions
now that he has left the 'adorable' unhealed
now that he has botched his sermon prep
now that he has let a follower die
now that he has seemed less the Son of God
and more a son of man

Do you say "It's just like Lazarus"
whom Jesus let lie four days
Four. Whole. Days.
before He came to say
"I am the resurrection and the life"
proving it by calling Lazarus out
out of the dark of his tomb
back into his sisters' embrace

Do you say "It's like the Syrophoenician woman"
whom Jesus at first ignored
yet whose daughter Jesus healed
as promised by the prophet
allowing her have the crumb
fallen from the master's table
rewarding a stranger's faith
with His good Father's gift

You're welcome to try
go ahead and try
try as very hard as you can
yet no matter how you spin it
Jesus never once turned His back
on anyone

Not even once.

Models

"Our model predicts ..."
this will happen

"Our best simulations say ..."
that will happen

"Our AI is confident that ..."
the other thing will happen

as though off-loading calculation
gives the calculator independence

as though our self created tools
give answers far above our own

as though the hammer
knew better than the hand

February 6, 2024

The Bible is Hard

The Bible is hard
some say
as though God has made dark
His gracious Gospel of Light

But that cannot be
God is not both gracious
and obscure

A grace undiscovered
is no grace at all
it is confusion and darkness
which have not grace's power

The Bible is easy
If God truly loves us
if God truly wants us to live
it must be
it has to be

The Bible only becomes hard
as it crashes upon our opinion

On reading various treatments of Hebrews 6
and the twisting that must be done to make it fit
where some would wish to squeeze it

January 7-17, 2024

my God
is not a god of whom I must make an image

my God
is the God in whose image i have been formed

my God
is not a god of random hate and fury

my God
is the God in whose love I am found secure

December 31, 2023 – January 17, 2024

After The Depression
(a meditation on Psalm 23)

*The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters.
He restores my soul;
He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You have anointed my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

the world about me clamours
THIS! THAT! THE OTHER THING!
I try not to care, yet I do
its voice is astoundingly loud
but the Lord, He is my Shepherd
I do not lack any good thing
the peace of His presence overwhelms me
my damaged soul is being made whole
His hand upholds my walk with Him
my God! how wonderful is Your Name!
I need not fear destruction
for You are with me
You have saved me
You protect me
though darkness for many years assailed
I did not fall
for You held me
safe
You held me
safe
despite the storms that raged about
in the impenetrable fortress of Your love
I did not fall!
in the cold of my darkest night
You!
and You alone!
kept me
safe

I will forever praise your glorious Name!

thank You!

oh my God!
thank You!
that I can stand today in light
is a gracious gift from You
the Father of lights
the only Light

thank You!
oh my God!
thank You!
that You, my constant Light
have saved me from the night

thank You!
oh my God!
thank You!
that Your mercy, as vast as it is
has only just begun

December 21, 2023

Even As ...

even as I celebrate His coming
I prove my endless need of Him
mud with diamond intertwines
glory struggles with depravity
unrelenting mercy overwhelms
alongside all His saints redeemed
faint echo of gloried angel choirs
I sing **ALLELUIA!** to my Saviour

December 17, 2023

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

"For unto you is born ... a Saviour!"

unto you

not only to me, but to everyone

is born

not different from me, but the same

a Saviour!

not a sinner like me, but perfect

through Whom all who believe

Will

Be

Saved!

December 5-17, 2023

dragonflies
dark, throbbing
circle gems
ruby, sapphire
bright in
glinting gleam
below

December 1, 2023

in the pictures everyone is smiling
bathed by light, golden and glowing
they show no memory of recent pain
nor the foretaste of the distant doom
in this one, beautiful, timeless moment
they smile, without a hint of concern
were they confounded by great events
were they overwhelmed by responsibility
were they burdened by a load of shame
were they fearful of finding their home
we have not been told and don't know
all we do know, the only thing we know
is that the mother loved her newborn Son
is that the father loved his fragile family
is that they were both rather astounded
by the magnificent gift they were given
and we know this, we certainly know this
that because of that Son all of mankind
could themselves have reason to smile

November 21, 2023

I have a friend who
on hearing me not appreciate Vangelis
and then, following that, Mozart himself
said to me
"You need to expand your horizons"
this same friend who also
on my defending my current horizons
so broadly eclectic as to include Rap
said to me
"You need to examine your horizons"
and yet, much of what he recommends
to me is spectacular

November 20-21, 2023

at first I thought "Behemoth!!!"
walking by the shore
upon which those roaring waves
dashed
 crashed
 thrashed
 retreated
 returned
 to assail again
that great thing that stood
unmoved
silent beneath such damp fury
as though to notice such turmoil
were unworth its stoic dignity
standing careless close beside
stalwart rampart long forsook
near kin, which restless wait
the slow, inevitable descent
into relentless wave



Utter Confusion at The Vatican

The headlines spare no punches:

"Vatican bans Catholics becoming Freemasons"

"Active membership in Freemasonry
by a member of the faithful is prohibited,
because of the irreconcilability
between Catholic doctrine and Freemasonry"

"Pope endorses same-sex civil unions"

"He added that 'pastoral charity'
requires patience and understanding
and that priests cannot become judges
'who only deny, reject and exclude.'"

on the one hand

"We reject teaching contrary to doctrine of the church"

on the other hand

"We accept teaching contrary to the word of God"

and the world sees this

and stays away

and the Church sees this

and is confused

and the Church asks

"We became what they are
why don't they come?"

and the world replies

"You're the same as us
why would we bother?"

November 15, 2023

Personal Glory

I see what you've done and think
"I could do/have done better"
fighting the urge to barge on in
usurp your celebrative "Wow!"
detour your glory into my own
but I don't
I'd like to be a better man than that
but I'm not
maybe I hope the gracious God will see
take pleasure in my faltering good
and bless
and perhaps not
but if this and nothing else
I have at least not harmed a friend

November 14, 2023

One Comment



1 comment

I know I may be naive to think this but I doubt many women if in power positions would harm babies & children & hospitals & schools, etc. I would just like to give women partnering with women a chance to run the world for a while.

1 comment

"I doubt many women in power positions would harm babies ..."

Abortion.



November 10, 2023

Harps and Clouds

do we think that God
Who breathes life into the billions who have breathed
Who speaks into being the astounding beauty of the earth
Who hangs countless planets and stars and galaxies on nothing

do we really think that God
Who speaks and it is finished
Who invites us to be in His home
Who lets us stand before His throne

do we honestly believe that God
the infinitely wonderful God
the astonishingly beautiful God
the unfathomably magnificent God

words fail me

how could any of us possibly think that
in the company of such a God
we could still be bored

November 8, 2023

sitting here, alone
in my dark little cellar
(for lack of an oven)
thinking
 of God
being
 a man
learning
 without Him
I fall

November 8, 2023 - April 20, 2024

is it real or not real
truth is undermined
reality is indistinct
imagination as real
this very next step
has no firm ground
no solid place to be

sometimes alive
is the hardest thing to be

November 2-3, 2023

Positions

some will say left, liberally
others will say right, conservatively
and others will say center, more moderately
as if each one did not deny Truth
as if it did not make certainty ambiguous
to say one thing or another is what it isn't

October 29-30, 2023

During Youth Sunday
October 29, 2023
(with assistance from N. Querido)

the Gospel of Jesus Christ
it is really quite simple

it is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God
and that He died for our sins
and that He was buried
and that He was raised on the third day
and that He saves all who believe in Him
and that He will return to claim His own
according to the Scriptures

ultimately it all comes down to this

repent

I was stained
I'm not anymore
He has made me clean!

believe

I was dead
I'm not anymore
He has made me live!

obey

I was false
I'm not anymore
He has made me His!

Hallelujah!!!

October 27, 2023

all these years and we must have been wrong
looking downward instead of looking upward
starting from the end instead of the beginning
asking "What would we do?" of the wrong day
wanting an opportunity in what's already done

Wells, Willis & Wyndham, they had good eyes
Bradbury & de Camp did not, but they had fun,
Heinlein didn't either, but he got really weird,
and don't get me going on Anderson or Varley
(maybe their name needed to start with a "W"
for the writer to write about time-travel right)
for each of them wrote like they were certain
the past is not malleable but the future sure is
a placard might guide our step into tomorrow
yet were we to show our placard to yesterday
(I won't say we will, my name starts with "R")
but if we did, and if we cared enough to look
we'd find our own footsteps in yesterday's news

October 26-27, 2023

Schrunch!

I love to be schrunching leaves in Autumn
to be setting their flaming glory to flight
walking bold through heaped up wonder
crinkling under my soles like an old memory
renewed to life in October's glorious light

it does the child in me a world of good
to recall his carefree youth, when this hill
I too quickly crest, was a far distant shade
an uncared story told by those unbelieved
by a boy in the wild exuberance of Spring

when all that mattered was the "Scrunch!"
of Autumn leaves under every carefree step

October 8-11, 2023

it is not for my joy that I hold on to Him
my salvation demands that I not let go

my joy from my salvation springs

I am to work it out with fear and trembling
lest my faithless life be cast away by God

my faith will keep me safely held

I am less concerned for my reward's glory
than I am that I attain the reward itself

my hope stands firm upon His love

it is not for my joy that I hold on to Him
I hold on to Him that He hold sure my life

September 27, 2023

A. M. G. Rota

let's be honest
I know nothing about this man
other than this

on realizing the 'error' of Hunka
he publicly apologized
he accepted full responsibility
he resigned his position

knowing this
and only this
he seems a man of honour
how sad such a man must fall
as other men, lesser men, remain

September 25-27, 2023

Mirrors

fear erupts from our newscasts
we wonder at the despair on our streets

hate explodes from our forums
we wonder at the fury on our streets

blood gushes from our displays
we wonder at the scarlet on our streets

apathy settles in our souls

...

September 24, 2023

yes, i really did feel that way
then
no, i really don't feel that way
now
it has been lifted from me
after so many years
it has been lifted from me

Hallelujah!

September 22-25, 2023

Tenement

hate does not have a room here
it has no lease, it pays no rent
it did once own a reservation
but that was cancelled long ago

though it stand at the door
 it will find no welcome smile
though it try to step inside
 it will be quickly ordered out
though it seek to make a home
 it will be no more than a thief
though it struggle against grace
 it will not overthrow mercy
though it grapple with concern
 it will not prevent compassion

Love has given us too great a Gift
 for hate to be its exchange
restoration is too great a blessing
 for hate to hold its status quo

September 21, 2023

Change

of course you can be changed
why would you be surprised
I've changed, you've changed
we've all of us been changed
all our lives we've all been changing

it's not that change is impossible
it's just that change is often hard

but that's what the Helper is for
to make change where we cannot

September 20-21, 2023

be careful who you love
it may be God you hate

Propaganda

it doesn't make any difference
no matter how often you say it
no matter how loudly you say it
it will never make any difference
repeating it as often as you can
shouting it as loudly as you can
will never, in any amount of time
accomplish anything of any good
will never, however many agree
make the lie you crave a truth

at the end, at the end of it all
after all's been said and done
all your words have made you be
is a loud and troublesome noise
all your words have made you do
is throw away any chance at life

surely, your life is far too valuable
to be given in exchange for a lie

surely, His good is so wonderful
is worth paying any price to gain

September 20, 2023

Abomination

you inhabit my morning propaganda
(I'd have said 'morning news' instead
had it shown a balanced point of view)
smiling above a clerical collar
placed untruly above emphatic pins
you speak of love, of tolerance
of the inertia of history
of accepting the inevitable
proclaiming that judgement is wrong
denying Another's love, Another's tolerance
denying Another's inertia
denying Another's inevitability
a judgement far more righteous than yours
infinitely more certain, infinitely less coloured
than the lies you carelessly espouse

how many who see your smile
how many who hear your words
how many who think you wise
will follow you to their death

September 18, 2023

you had a whole list of reasons
why we, the body of Jesus Christ
should accept you as you stand
your many sympathetic supporters
agreeing you need not change
what you are to what He would have
all deriding as hopelessly out of date
those who, like me, speak otherwise

off to the side, not even in the arena
I wondered a puzzling "What if ...?"
what if the word of your particular
were replaced by one more repellent
more universally known as wrong
like 'murder', or 'assault, or 'theft'
what if these words instead were used
in your eloquently spoken argument
replaced the sin you so closely clutch
what then would you say to us

August 23, 2023

Rain

rain falls from low grey cloud
through leaves of the Laurel
splashing upon the walkway
dancing along the brickwork
into the glory of the garden

the sound of rain surrounds me
falls as blessing upon my ear
as words of the Book before me
fall as blessing upon my soul

August 21, 2023

supplying F-16 to Ukraine
Russian officials claim
could escalate a conflict
non-Russians claim
invasion has already done

August 6-17, 2023

sitting in this place
here, amid this joy
tear replaces word

oh Lord!
how I long for You

their song caresses my soul
their joy soothes my spirit
yet tear replaces word

oh Lord!
how I long for You

oh Lord!
how I long the strength
to praise You as I must

but I am weak
Your praise falters on my lips
my muscles scarce sustain

oh Lord!
to praise You as I must
it is beyond this body's power

I try
words fail, tears fall, yet I stand
held by God, blessed by joy

July 30, 2023

Afterwards
(on the passing of Doris Snobelen)

tears will not fall for this grief
though it be a grievous loss
tears have not fallen
not have the corners of my smile
God is great, His mercy enduring
suffering has been turned to peace
tears have been turned to joy
the God of all comfort
He is my hope
this loss, this far too great a loss
will not, it can not, destroy
God is great, God is good
I will rest in Him and rejoice

July 9-September 26, 2023

Golgotha

there had been an earthquake
earlier, then darkness, then silence
so dreadful a silence, it was as if God
had given up hope, as if God
was deciding what to do, as if God
waiting for something to change
heard Jesus' cry: "It is finished!"
and declared that it was
finished
stayed His hand, cooled His wrath
allowed the planet live
allowed the planet mercy
allowed the planet hope
sealed His allowances with His promise
Life!
to all and any who would come
and even more!
by His Son's exultant triumph
by His bursting from His cold dark tomb
by His exuberant return to glorious life
He gave the planet His guarantee
its own cold dark tombs
would not forever hold

July 9, 2023

Hiding the Flashlight

I walk in darkness
monsters follow in my train
horrors tread on every side
I care not that these beasts
these horrid things and I, are one
cannot see their slavering jaws
cannot see their bloody fangs
cannot see their festering sores
I have hidden the flashlight
to not see the horrors they are
feel only their hands
urging me on

July 5-7, 2023

"your words may have saved a life"
said one, uncaring what saving lost
speaking words of false assurance
speaking falsehood as if God's truth
were false, as if their lies had power
to do what truth, denied, could not
lashing faith upon their desire's altar
sacrificing God's glorious tomorrow
for their fleeting pleasures of today
without even the thought of rescue

today dances on tomorrow's grave
'as one is' scorns 'as one could be'
rejection against redemption strains
God is not mocked, graciously waits
life's last door to settle the account

July 4, 2023

Grace

this I know

God saves by grace alone
I do not deserve it
God saves by grace alone
I could not earn it
God saves by grace alone
I would not ask it

my sole participation is this
I not remain as He found me

July 3-4, 2023

don't come crying to me, it won't help
tell God
tell God how He's the one who's confused
not you
tell God how He's the one who's mistaken
not you
tell God how He's the one who's perverse
not you
tell God how He's the one who's to blame
not you
don't tell me, it won't do you any good
tell God
then you'll be crying to the right person

but it won't do you the least bit of good
until you let God say some things to you

July 2 - September 17, 2023

how dare you decry the righteous
for upholding what you will not agree
how dare you condemn God's chosen
who will not widen what Jesus taught
how dare you call your curses down
on those holding closely to His truth
how dare you lay claim to Jesus' love
even as you hurl your hate at Him
how dare you say He will forgive
who stand unwilling to be changed
how dare you neglect so great a gift
for the selfishness of your desires
how dare you paste His holiness
upon your unrepentant depravity
how dare you by your false example
lead others careless to their doom

June 30 – July 3, 2023

I bought a book of poems
well, some were poems, others
were blasphemous ramblings unworthy print
and yet there they were
given equal time, if not more
with words of utter beauty
words bordering on the holy
which peered over our fearful fences
into that field too few of us desire
words intermingled by our depravity
two (or even more) of them to one
as if true beauty, true holiness
were things to be forsaken
for the ugly and impure

do you suppose Lazarus was as pleased
as were Mary and Martha, his sister's
tears sudden ceased in drop-jawed wonder
as he came, obedient to Jesus' "Come forth!"
out from his dank, dark mouldy tomb
into that glorious Judean afternoon
festooned by death's cold ribbon and rag
four days he'd worn them, unaware
they'd be more than temporary cover
discard again as air and blood caroused
again, his body recalled from dust, we read
of his sister's joy at resurrection's dawn
but what of he, who so short before in his
flesh had before his Redeemer rejoiced
now before His Son, breathed, again
what of he whose feet, reclaimed from death
had trod their (perhaps reluctant) way
from the very court of God, obedient came
(how many broad infinities traversed?)
to step forth from new-conquered tomb
beyond stone so recent breathless rolled
away!
to stand, alive, before his Saviour King

did he, like Paul, find Heaven poor reflect'
in all Earth's frailties and flaws, and sad
weep his lost inheritance, laid aside
that he might obey his Saviour's call
yet even so, did he, like Paul, find it joy
to lay self aside to do his Saviour's will

we are not told, know only this, that
when Jesus cried "Lazarus! Come forth!"
he came

oh! that I may obey my Lord as well

June 27, 2023

Index

every now and again
I'll add a thing to The Index
noting why I wrote what
to remember yesterday
stepping into tomorrow

June 27, 2023

Tired

I am tired
I am
so
very
tired
of forcing this smile

holding it to my face
for so long
is exhausting

and I am tired
I am
so very
very
tired

June 23, 2023

There Was A Time
(and OH!, such a time)

there was a time when Zucchini
was both a blessing and a curse
we all grew it
and we all knew we all grew it
and yet often joyful given
as often joyful received
whatever form we gave/took it
smiles overlooked both basket sides
hands eager took as hands eager gave
as quickly gone as came
yet any of my age and time will know
the quick devouring of the plate
before green became different green
before others stack beside

June 23-27, 2023

4:00 AM

it is night

(well, it is early morning, actually)

I lie awake

the world is silent

(well, it is mostly silent, actually)

breathing rustles sheets beside me

busy people rush along Kingston Road

more distantly along the four-oh-one

and in the intermediate distance

(well, the nearness of our yard, actually)

the early birds contemplate their worms

or the half-empty feeder in the back yard

or the sun, just about the burst the night

scatter its shards across a new-born day

I lie here, semi-slumbering

dreaming three hours more

between comforting sheets

easing into the breaking dawn

June 23-27, 2023

how wonderful it is (if somewhat disrespectful too)
to be so comfortable with God, one
could fall to sleep while speaking with Him
could close their eyes in conversation
to awaken yet within His arms

June 22-27, 2023

I Will Not

I will not

agree with you simply because you're a Christian
or disagree with you simply because you're not

I will not

to do so would be wrong, for all truth is God's
no matter the vessel is given to speak it

June 21, 2023

"JESUS IS BEING DELETED FROM OUR CULTURE!!!!"

a headline screamed at me this morning
as if this were this Christian's ultimate concern
but it is not, this is not my concern at all
Jesus and the teachers have told me all this
that terrors and horrors would come
that flagrant apostasies would come
that Jesus is being deleted from my culture
this is regrettable but it is not my concern at all
my culture's deletion of Jesus is my culture's choice
it is my culture's choice alone, I have no part in it
my ultimate concern is for myself, is this
am I welcoming Jesus into my life
and also this
am I revealing Jesus to my culture

Punctuations

a day was not meant to end with a period
a stopping
a break of continuity
periods are for things past
ending the "I was"s of our lives
what we once were but are no longer

for we go on, we need not stop

rather, each day semi-colons into the next
an enduring
a gift of continuation
each today has its tomorrow
connecting the "I will"s of our lives
to what we will become but are not yet

we go on, for each day is grand

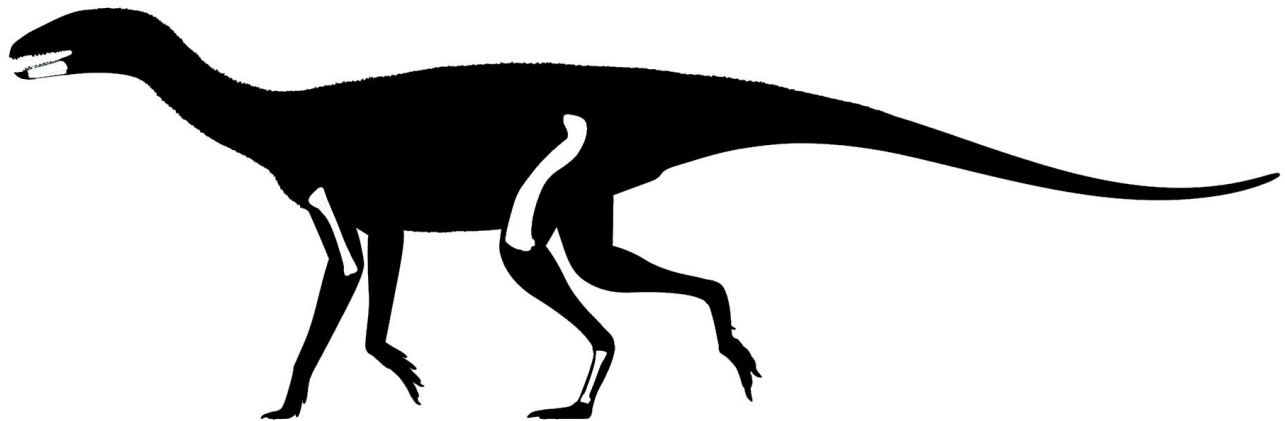
each day owns its exclamation marks
its excitements
its joy
at the glory
at the wonder
at the grandness
of simply being alive
our being able to enjoy
one more sunrise
one more sunset
one more 'all that lies between'

each day grants another opportunity
for us to be alive
to rejoice in our growing
from all that we were
through all that we are
to all that He will have us be

Inspired by a comment about semi-colons that a friend had posted to Facebook last week;
that a semi-colon is "the option to stop but the decision to keep going."

Extrapolation

they built themselves a dinosaur
from four bones and a wishful thought
created a rather impressive beast
about the size of a Border Collie
I'd have liked to have met it, but
I'm not sure they've done it right



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diodorus_scytobrachion
(the found bones are white, the extrapolation black)

June 13, 2023

I hate that thing

no

that's not right

I hate what that thing reminds me of
those words

spoken too short

spoken too soon

June 13, 2023

of all the ones on Earth I need
it is you I need the most
not any number of counsellors
not any dearly trusted friends
not any closely held love
only you, and you alone
are worthy of my need

King David – Faithful, Redeemed & Beloved of God

Before 'The Uriah Incident'

this man
this noble man
greatest of all Israel's kings
beloved of God
steadfast in faith
redeemed

After 'The Uriah Incident'

this man
this fallen man
sinful as all Israel's kings
beloved of God
steadfast in faith
redeemed

What strikes me about 'The Uriah Incident' is that David was no more a sinner and no less redeemed after he seduced Bathsheba and murdered Uriah than he had been before. As horrid as these sins were, David had as great a need for God's grace afterward as he had before. Despite his sin, his faith in God did not waver. He came to God as a sinner in need of redemption and God redeemed him.

Unlike another, who after betraying Jesus gave up hope and died,
unredeemed.

'The Uriah Incident' – 2 Samuel 11 & 12

'The Uriah Incident' – 2 Samuel 11 & 12

Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they brought destruction on the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed in Jerusalem.

Now at evening time David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance. So David sent servants and inquired about the woman. And someone said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" Then David sent messengers and had her brought, and when she came to him, he slept with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house. But the woman conceived; so she sent word and informed David, and said, "I am pregnant."

Then David sent word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." So Joab sent Uriah to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked about Joab's well-being and that of the people, and the condition of the war. Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house, and wash your feet." So Uriah left the king's house, and a gift from the king was sent after him. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. Now when they informed David, saying, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Did you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?" And Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in temporary shelters, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Should I then go to my house to eat and drink and to sleep with my wife? By your life and the life of your soul, I will not do this thing." Then David said to Uriah, "Stay here today also, and tomorrow I will let you go back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the day after. Now David summoned Uriah, and he ate and drank in his presence, and he made Uriah drunk; and in the evening Uriah went out to lie on his bed with his lord's servants, and he still did not go down to his house.

So in the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. He had written in the letter the following: "Station Uriah on the front line of the fiercest battle and pull back from him, so that he may be struck and killed." So it was as Joab kept watch on the city, that he stationed Uriah at the place where he knew there were valiant men. And the men of the city went out and fought against Joab, and some of the people among David's servants fell; and Uriah the Hittite also died. Then Joab sent a messenger and reported to David all the events of the war. He ordered the messenger, saying, "When you have finished telling all the events of the war to the king, then it shall be that if the king's wrath rises and he says to you, 'Why did you move against the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? Who struck Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Did a woman not throw an upper millstone on him from the wall so that he died at Thebez? Why did you move against the wall?'—then you shall say, 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite also died.'"

So the messenger departed and came and reported to David everything that Joab had sent him to tell. The messenger said to David, "The men prevailed against us and came out against us in the field, but we pressed them as far as the entrance of the gate. Also, the archers shot at your servants from the wall; so some of the king's servants died, and your servant Uriah the Hittite also died." Then David said to the messenger, "This is what you shall say to Joab: 'Do not let this thing displease you, for the sword devours one as well as another; fight with determination against the city and overthrow it'; and thereby

encourage him.”

Now when Uriah’s wife heard that her husband Uriah was dead, she mourned for her husband. When the time of mourning was over, David sent servants and had her brought to his house and she became his wife; then she bore him a son. But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the Lord.

Then the Lord sent Nathan to David. And he came to him and said,

“There were two men in a city, the one wealthy and the other poor. The wealthy man had a great many flocks and herds. But the poor man had nothing at all except one little ewe lamb which he bought and nurtured; and it grew up together with him and his children. It would eat scraps from him and drink from his cup and lie in his lap, and was like a daughter to him. Now a visitor came to the wealthy man, and he could not bring himself to take any animal from his own flock or his own herd, to prepare for the traveler who had come to him; so he took the poor man’s ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.”

Then David’s anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As the Lord lives, the man who has done this certainly deserves to die! So he must make restitution for the lamb four times over, since he did this thing and had no compassion.”

Nathan then said to David, “You yourself are the man! This is what the Lord, the God of Israel says: ‘It is I who anointed you as king over Israel, and it is I who rescued you from the hand of Saul. I also gave you your master’s house and put your master’s wives into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added to you many more things like these! Why have you despised the word of the Lord, by doing evil in His sight? You have struck and killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, you have taken his wife as your wife, and you have slaughtered him with the sword of the sons of Ammon. Now then, the sword shall never leave your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ This is what the Lord says: ‘Behold, I am going to raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes and give them to your companion, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. Indeed, you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and in open daylight.’” Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” And Nathan said to David, “The Lord also has allowed your sin to pass; you shall not die. However, since by this deed you have shown utter disrespect for the Lord, the child himself who is born to you shall certainly die.” Then Nathan went to his house.

Later the Lord struck the child that Uriah’s widow bore to David, so that he was very sick. David therefore pleaded with God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground. The elders of his household stood beside him in order to help him up from the ground, but he was unwilling and would not eat food with them. Then it happened on the seventh day that the child died. And David’s servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, “Behold, while the child was still alive, we spoke to him and he did not listen to us. How then can we tell him that the child is dead, since he might do himself harm?” But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead; so David said to his servants, “Is the child dead?” And they said, “He is dead.” So David got up from the ground, washed, anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the Lord and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and when he asked, they served him food, and he ate.

Then his servants said to him, "What is this thing that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive; but when the child died, you got up and ate food." And he said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows, the Lord may be gracious to me, and the child may live.' But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I am going to him, but he will not return to me."

June 8, 2023

Another World to Sing In

one day
tomorrow
the day after
years from now
who can say
the door will open
this world I love
will fade
and I will sing
before God Himself!

come that day
I want to be ready
so today
and tomorrow
for all the years
that God gives me
I will practice singing
that on that day
OH!
on that day
I
shall
SING!

June 4-7, 2023

Touchless
(Romans 1:18-32)

life does not touch them, these dead
who breathe, who walk, are corpses
forsaking God, have been forsaken
careless of His grace will not find it
wild carousing their darkened revels
will not love the High and Holy One

hope denied by violent shouted "No!"
drowns beneath deadly grasping shade
and they, careless of what could free
despise and revile it, trample it as dirt

life does not touch them, these dead
their calloused souls so long abandoned
could not care though long convinced
their revels dance within halls of death

June 2, 2023

Self-Harm

I learned something today
long suspected, now known
regarding my high self-regard

it is flimsy

it does not stand firm at all
an unthought word too quick
an ignorance of the self-evident
an absence of the expected smile

and it fails

and my body pays its toll
skin will break in restless cut
pain distracts from heartbreak
I reduce myself to meet their eye

maybe
now that I know
I can take control of it
remember that my self-worth
is not measured by another's eyes
nor is it measured by my own
but by the great I Am
who is my God
and life

June 2, 2023

Silence

"They'll listen," they say
"just talk, they'll listen."
encouraging & hopeful
have tried it
am trying now
they may listen, but
their silence is deafening

June 2, 2023

Colour

June barged in earlier this week
and colour is suddenly everywhere
crosswalks, flags, windows, clothes
it's pretty, but, overwhelming
it cannot be got away from
it expands, each day more
in your face and forceful
until One Day when all celebrate
deliberately or accidentally, by proxy
our new and colourful national pride

May 30-June 1, 2023

the BigWigs are speaking talking points

they're saying "Net Zero"
they're saying "Carbon Neutral"

and I've got to smile (though sadly)
at such optimistic naiveté
for the working of the world

that trade which raises one
holds another down as far

that the breath one breathes
cannot by another be undone

bargain or no bargain
deal or no deal
nets can't ever be zero
carbon can't ever be neutral

May 31, 2023

Virtue

I don't signal virtue, I can't, for I have none
to indicate otherwise would be a waste of time
I'm not unredeemable but I'm not innately good
my good is brought in from an outside distributor
and the only virtue I'm able to signal is His

Prompted by a visit to the My TELUS website, which took FOREVER to load, but I did get to look at their very well worded semaphore (which loaded first and prominently) for quite some time; I never did get to see my invoice, though, even though the site said it was
"LOADING ..."

May 28-30, 2023

Thank You!

all this time I've been looking at it the wrong way
though this desert is real, as real as anything gets
it's not the lonely death that I'd thought it to be
though conversation may fail and care be unfelt

yet

He has said "My grace is sufficient for you."
and it is

May 26, 2023

How to Win at Depression ([again](#))
or
How To Not Let Depression Kill You

just

keep

breathing

it's very hard
but it works

May 26, 2023

Sick Day

I'm taking a Sick Day today
my body?
it's as healthy as it's ever been
but my mind
my mind couldn't hold a thought if they paid it
and they are
so today I am being sick
maybe tomorrow I won't have to be

May 26, 2023

Pound!

pound and pound and pound and pound
and pound and pound again
and again

not that your glory is begrudged
no!
never that!

yet as your glory is revealed

pound and pound and pound and pound
and pound and pound again
and again

my poor soul into the ground

May 26, 2023

sometimes I understand that man in the gospels
whose parents had not sinned, nor had he sinned
who was as he was to display the power of God
sometimes I feel just like that man in the gospels
certain that the only reason I still breathe is God
that His great power can be shown through me

As Jesus passed by, He saw a man who had been blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him."

John 9:1-3

Forgive

after reading in an interview with Miriam Toews:

"Forgiveness is a religious construct,
a means of maintaining the status quo."

"forgive"

is such an astoundingly liberating word
relentlessly releasing the chains
would drag the offender to their doom

"forgive"

is such an astoundingly compassionate word
speaking with incredible tenderness
quietly opens the door to peace

"forgive"

is such an astoundingly powerful word
defeating the smirking specter of death
stands triumphant above horrid abyss

"forgive"

is such an astoundingly generous word
selflessly seeking another's best
allows God release what has been done

May 15-19, 2023

Code Review

coding while in a depression doesn't work
it just doesn't
oh, sure, you can write code, good code
but if your pre-push testing isn't thorough
and it won't be
then the other developers will find errors
that you'll be bug fixing all afternoon
and that will only make things worse
much, much worse
for now in addition to being in depression
you've learned that you're incompetent

May 14-15, 2023

Communion

waves caress the shore, softly
like the sound of "Amazing Grace"
from a gentle piano
and the tender voices of His saints
celebrating their redemption

We celebrated Communion this morning.
David played "Amazing Grace" softly on his piano
as the bread and the wine were being passed
and gentle voices began to sing along.
My soul felt like sand must feel
as ripples dance along it.

May 7-10, 2023

If ...

if you would let the bible speak to you
and you wouldn't speak so much to it
I would trust you more than I do today

May 4, 2023

Why?

why do you do this to me
time after time after time
why do you lift my hopes
time after time after time
only to forget your word
and that I too am fragile

and I keep letting you

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

we would not
destroy "Starry Night"
as it graces its place of honour
nor would we
destroy the developing image
as Van Gogh placed it on its canvas

we would not
destroy the "Pietà"
as it graces its place of honour
nor would we
destroy the developing sculpture
as Michelangelo released it from its stone

we would not
destroy "The Road Not Taken"
as it graces its place of honour
nor would we
destroy the developing poem
as Frost recalled a choice once made

we would not
destroy creation's pinnacle
as we grace our place of honour
nor should we
destroy the developing person
as God is knitting them together



Inspired by this incredible painting by Alicia Hawley
which [CHOICE42](#) posted on Facebook this morning

You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's
womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and
wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows
it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was
made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth;
Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book
were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet
there was not one of them.

Psalm 139:13-16

May 3, 2023

have you ever noticed how a Loon
can dive deep beneath the waves
fish down there for entire minutes
and come up hundreds of feet away
looking like it never touched a drop
like it didn't know what water was

that's how I'm like with conversation
I can be immersed in it yet untouched

May 3, 2023

there's a new kayak in my garage
beside the bike I'd bought last week
and hiking boots from a month before
and rain, and cold, and cloud outside
where these adventurers long to play

May 3, 2023

Come

come, walk the woods with me
listen to last fall's leaves
crunch
beneath our joyful soles
overstepping deadfall into glory

May 3, 2023

Sometimes

sometimes

I think I can understand why
staying becomes so very hard

sometimes

I think I can understand fear
light will not be found again

sometimes

I think I can understand hope
for a place where pain is not

sometimes

I think I can understand pain
so overwhelming it must end

sometimes

I think I can understand why
leaving becomes so very easy

sometimes

This has been (and is) a horrid stretch of days;
were it not that God holds my life ...

May 2, 2023

Response

I'm concerned about my responses
seldom about what I'm responding to
yet I'll evaluate what I said for hours
wondering, mostly, if I was too harsh
since words mostly stop after I speak
but try as I might I can't think I was
others speaking the same leave smiles
so it must not be my words but if not
what am I but beneath consideration

May 2, 2023

A Trip Downtown

on evening ride down into the city
off to Billy Bishop to fetch my daughter
home from a week in Washington D.C.
in light traffic with excellent music
good visibility under high cloud
until I came to Victoria Park
where the setting sun slid beneath the deck
and the city became GOLDEN!
as I headed down the Don Valley Parkway
I think Simple Minds was playing on the stereo
I remember enjoying "Theme For Great Cities"
as I travelled south under endless glory
off in the distance, the towers of Toronto
glowed resplendent in the early evening
gold above the green of the ravine
bright against Lake Ontario's silver grey
pouring glory into eyes ablaze with wonder
and I remember thinking "How wonderful!"
thanking God that He put on such a show
how blessed I was that it was this evening
that my daughter wanted the ride home
so I could enjoy what I would have missed

May 2, 2023

they had us right where some thought they wanted us
for the most part
willing to agree with whatever seemed reasonable
again, for the most part
that which at the time seemed the best way to care

they had us right where some thought they wanted us
they could have walked all over us, stomped, even
they could have removed every gift, forever
they could have done anything they wanted with us
they certainly had the opportunity they had the power
but they didn't
what some thought they'd do, they didn't do
they didn't do a thing some feared, and more
gave back all they took as quickly as could

May 1, 2023

Society These Days

follow the science
but if the science becomes inconvenient
follow the fashion

Tent

I had intended to start this poem like this:

I have a friend who doesn't believe in Heaven
not a stupid person, yet with all he knows, he never talks to God.
He thinks no one listens in Heaven.

inverting the first lines of "Celestial Music"
that lovely poem of Louise Glück
though sad

but

has there ever been a day I've not been surrounded
by those who love and serve The One?

no

there has not been
there has never been a day
not one single day
not even the smallest piece of one
when I've not been among the throng
praise on our tongues
joy in our hearts
redemption on our souls
dancing exultant toward His house

the storm may rage without
the sheltered find rest within

This began as a riff on Louise Glück's "Celestial Music" but I have no friends, clever or otherwise, who don't love God. My whole life long, however, I have been surrounded by those who love God as I do.

"Celestial Music" is a beautiful poem, though quite sad.

April 23, 2023

Memories of Older Days

with thanks to [Real 80s CCM](#)
for the reminder of how wonderful it was
to sit, back against the bed, and enjoy

rock was young(er) then
fresh, not yet tired out
bending the ear with
 exciting guitar riffs
 exuberant drumming
 enthusiastic lyrics
the sounds of which
to a late teen/early adult
 sitting, his back against the bed
 a flip every twenty-two minutes
 (not stacking, NEVER stacking)
on a quiet weekend afternoon
meant more than words can tell

April 21, 2023

On Being Critical of Lyricists

a poem is easier to pen than a song
there's no need to fill multiple minutes
with words and choruses and bridges
all carefully chosen to maintain a beat
all of which must work well together
you just write words until you're done
then you stop, easy-peasy

Just Look, This Proves It!



While it's true that God can even use human error to draw the lost to Himself, Christians should strive to avoid flawed arguments.

"Just look at the protein, Laminin
it's shaped just like a CROSS!
This just PROVES that God is REAL!
It just COULDN'T if He WASN'T!"

but wait

do we really need such things to prove God's reality?
a proof one sees one way another may anotherwise
each one's "Ah ha!" is by another claimed

the Bible sure isn't written like we must prove Him
it says no more than "The heavens declare His glory!"
and "What can be known of God is plainly seen."
and at no point does any Biblical scribe
do any more than assume that God already is

so Joseph, refusing 'Mrs. Potiphar'
said only "How can I sin against God?"
knowing she really knew what she denied

so Jesus in Jerusalem, so Paul in Athens
would each confirm to any doubter who asked
the truth they didn't really want to know

so no

we need not grasp at obscurities

odd perspective dependent observations
shaped like this or arranged like that
to prove to anyone that God is real
a thing's shape or arrangement is irrelevant
that the thing itself exists is sufficient
to prove God to any who care to see
for all who live already know
the reality of God cannot be denied

April 17, 2023

do you know what I like knowing?
I like knowing that on days like this
as bad as days like this can get
I can fall no further than God allows
as bad as days like this can get
His love is for me, my hand is in His
life has not left me, it is but grey

April 17, 2023

Definition: Tolerance

tolerance (noun)

the opposite of what is often found
in many social media disagreements

(see also: 'intolerance')

April 17, 2023

Calling

my kayak, my bike, my car, they call me
"Life is out there!" they cry
"This day is just waiting to be seized!" they cry
pleading that i will seize this day
hoping that i will live this life
and i
alone in my cold, dark basement
i will not hear a word they say

i cannot seize, am seized
i cannot live, am grey

April 17, 2023

Green, or Grey

it isn't always easy, being alive
at times it can be as hard as death
waiting, watching, wondering
a too often repeated "Why?"
staring uncomprehendingly at gifts
ignored, abandoned in the dust

April 13-20, 2023

glorious, scarce above horizon's glow
Orion returns to his summer home
Venus gleams near the lovely sisters
ruby Mars flames beside the spire

gems cascade this vibrant night
and far beneath, so very, very far
excitedly gasped "Oh Wow!"s flit
back-and-forth between wonderers
inter-mingling whispered fellowship
of friends unknown moments before

awe-struck, we gaze at wonders
beneath a glory beyond our grasp
apart from all yet of one source
we joyous worship The Creator

April 5-12, 2023

you said

"If this was a big box store
you could all come in."

but you said that wrong

you might better have said

"If this was a big box store,
and if you've been vaccinated,
and if you're wearing your mask,
and if you're temperature is normal,
and if you stay two meters apart,
and if you follow all the arrows,
and if you don't touch a thing,
and if you don't use cash or cheque,
a small number of you can come in,
if you leave as soon as you can."

that's what you should have said

you'd not have been perfect, but
you'd have been far more correct

April 4, 2023

My Weather 'Girl'

whenever I want to have an Astro-Session
 (I host them at my church, on occasion
 just a guy, a telescope and some friends
in the back parking lot of Westney Heights Baptist)
 I need to do a weather check before hand
but I can't see the sky from my home for the houses
 so I call up my weather-girl-in-the-sky
 (hi Mom)
ask her to look out her windows to the west
 since she's up eighty feet higher than me
she can look out over the houses blocking my view
and let me know if the clouds will do that too
 she's been a big help this year too
 (cloudiest winter since nineteen-forty)
 I'd almost gone out a time or twice
 and would have wasted the trip
 if it hadn't been for her
 thanks Mom

April 4, 2023

my father passed away some years ago
he'd been dying for quite a long time
(but then, aren't we all ... dying, that is)
he faced his end with grace and courage
 "don't do a computer trick on me" he said
(since turning a computer off, then on again
fixes ninety-five percent of computer problems)
 "if I'm going to go then let me go
 to where I'm going
 let me go
 to where I can walk again
 let me go
 to dance before His throne"
so we let him go, Mom and Ellen and I
we had no choice, really
he died in a different home than ours
one moment he's singing his favourite hymns
the next moment he says
 "I see Jesus!
 He's come to take me home!"
and died
and followed Jesus to His home
(his nurse told me this, a few days later)
how could we, still breathing, weep
so glorious a departure demands respect
demands our endless thanks to God
for giving us so great a gift as peace
when He took my father home

April 3-4, 2023

Small

I'll try not to let it get to me
how small I am
I'll hold it off at arms' length
forcing it to keep its distance
from my far too delicate soul
I'll pray, begging God to help
help me remember He is enough
and infinitely more than enough
that my smallness won't matter
would have no power to hurt me

but it does
it always does
it might always do

I remain unable to stand, but fall
endlessly grateful that I will land
on Him

March 22-23, 2023

in Degas' "The Dance Lesson"
there is a young lady standing alone
(upper right, between the windows)
hands out-spreading her skirt
gazing down as if in admiration
of the amazing beauty about to be
there are other young ladies
(more prominent, in the foreground)
but I am with this one all on her own
I cannot help but smile along
with her joy in what she was about to be



The Dance Lesson - Edgar Degas

March 22-23, 2023

were I to write poems as
Jackson Pollock made paintings
I'd be pouring out my words
helter-skelter upon the page
make my message incoherent
indecipherable to an eye
confused by the random
scatterings
of my non-random words



but what good would that be?
paint will do what words won't

March 21, 2023

On Looking for the Trees
Searching for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence

it won't work, it can't work
SETI just won't work and it just can't work
it's been looking for ET for years
but it still hasn't found God

March 18, 2023

On Clouds Floating By on a Quiet Saturday Afternoon

the weight of the water over my head
is astounding
tons and Tons and TONS of it
whitely float above me
are yet effortlessly wafted to-and-fro
on a stream so intangible as air

March 18, 2023

What Privilege Has Taught Me About Predestination

we all see them
we all 'know' them
these blessed
these favoured
these privileged
these whose golden platter
has no limit
they are our kings, our queens
our princes, our princesses
our Academy Award winners
(and losers)
those with more wealth
than debt can erase
those with more health
than life can efface

we may often say
"Why not I?"
we'll not often say
"Why them?"
but follow and adore

abundant, uncounted blessing
God so readily pours
and if pours on them
on you, on I
would not His gift of life
also graciously pour
on those He claims His own

March 17-18, 2023

Unagreed

"We will agree to disagree"

no, I won't
you are wrong
and I will not agree
to let you stay that way

"Debate is healthy and needed"

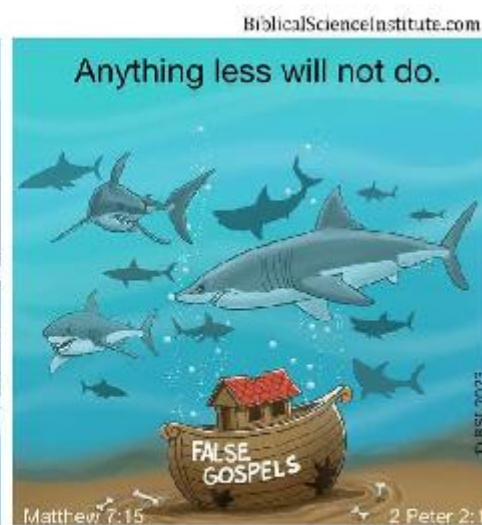
yes, it is
but of what use
is our healthy debate
to your unchangeable mind

"May the truth be revealed"

truth is known
it cannot be hidden
but eyes blinded by desire
see nothing but attractive lies

The True Gospel

READY TO REASON



But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

Galatians 1:8 NASB

so many, too many
far, far too many
claim to love truth
yet
so many, too many
far, far too many
would rather a boat than a box
and far worse
so many, too many
far, far too many
would rather think God's thoughts for Him

"Then God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth. Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch. This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. You shall make a window for the ark, and finish it to a cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark in the side of it; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.'"

Genesis 6:13-16

March 14-April 2, 2023

faith is not standing only
when everyone else stands
faith is also standing alone
when everyone else isn't

faith is not speaking only
when everyone else speaks
faith is also speaking alone
what everyone else isn't

faith is not believing only
what everyone else believes
faith is also believing alone
what everyone else doesn't

March 13, 2023

I Need a Mental Health Day

I need a Mental Health Day today
yesterday did not give me enough
or this morning gave me too much
whatever, doing things is hopeless
fog stays my hand, ability has fled
concentration slips through my ...

... what was I trying to say again?

February 23 - March 13, 2023

Ode to a Snowplow Driver

the plow came by this morning
after the drive was all blown out
I'd passed it on my way back home
turned around to clean the windrow
he would have left behind, but
after his careful back-and-forthing
there wasn't too much of one
I'd seen him push most of the snow
to the wayback of the dead-end

"Thank you, Mr. Snow Plow Driver!
You didn't just give me a safer road,
you took the time to give me a better day!"

February 22-March 13, 2022

Vincent

he was, perhaps, the greatest artist this world will ever know
even today, untarnished glory blazes in each of his creations
wherever we look, few have achieved like mastery of their craft
but yesterday, oh dark and drear yesterday, he stood forsaken
had not the faintest inkling how great the years would make him
knew full well his gift, knew too well an unrealized appreciation

and died

to be found by fame's elusive fortune after tears no longer cared

February 15, 2023

Used to Be ...

I used to be something
or dream I was
but not so much now any more
both being
and dreaming
stopped
as rubber
inevitably
touched upon a road

February 11-12, 2023

some consider our gathering together
a necessary and reasonable measure of our faith
(COVID taught us this if nothing else)
citing Hebrews ten, twenty five to prove
we who worshipped at home had slipped
were at risk of forsaking God for man
(neglecting that Hebrews, from first to last
is a letter of encouragement to stand firm
in the face of persecutions and temptations
that would drag the saved away to death)

and in Jesus' answer to the question of a scribe
He tells us that all commands hang from these two

"The foremost command is this,
'Hear, O Israel!
The Lord our God is one Lord;
and you shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your mind,
and with all your strength.'

The second is this,
'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'
There is no command greater than these."

gathering together with God's saints is glorious
a wonderful and encouraging Godly fellowship
but
if I do not love God with all that is in me
and
if I do not love my neighbour as I love myself
then
my gathering with others is of no consequence

February 8, 2023

The Support Technician's Lament

geniuses say that time exists for a reason
it keeps stuff from happening all at once

the geniuses might be wrong
it doesn't seem to be working

February 4, 2023

proponents of any Faith
when taken to its extremes
will tend toward violence
for fundamental to them
is knowing that their God
is judge of all other gods
they want an early start

February 4, 2023

On fareh malik

I'm very particular of the poets I read

poems are dangerous things
they glide past your eyes
become part of your soul
rattle around down there

change things

I must be careful of the words of poets

but poets like this one
their words are welcome

February 2, 2023

Blessed by My Lack

I'd sometimes wanted to say how I'd come from a bad place
but I didn't, so I can't
I'd sometimes wanted to say how I'd once been a terrible man
but I hadn't, so I couldn't
I'd sometimes wanted to say how I'd been saved from horrors
but I wasn't, so I couldn't
I'd sometimes wanted to say that I have a dramatic testimony
but I don't, so I can't

my brother-in-law, he noticed all these "I can't"s and "I couldn't"s
he told me I was foolishly disparaging what he could never have

I grew up within the shelter of a multitude who followed God
with parents who tirelessly encouraged me to follow God myself

my brother-in-law, he's a very smart cookie, me not so much
I'd never looked at my salvation from that direction before

my brother-in-law, he reminded me of a thing worth remembering
not to get so caught up in the drama I never got to have
that I forget about the comfort that never left my side

February 1-2, 2023

no one's equal until they're told they're equal
that's how it looks
what with all these racial-awareness months
and all these look-how-far-you've-come days

how can equality, true, universal equality
be any more than an unattainable dream
when what's different is always told first

how can the light truly shine on everyone
illuminate each one's glorious achievement
when what's different is always held before

January 31, 2023

BC

we must ask God to apologize
mustn't we?
that's what BC's coroner is doing
apologizing
that people using tainted illegal drugs
have died
shouldn't we be asking God to do the same
after all
many of us are dying because we do bad things
surely
God owes us an apology

January 29, 2023

On Anselm

like Anselm

I do not seek to understand that I may believe
unlike Anselm

I do not believe that I may understand
like Anselm

I understand because I believe

January 15-31, 2023

If You Ask God ...

if you're going to ask God to remove your addiction
you've got to be willing to let it go

and

if you're going to ask God to give you His peace
you've got to be willing to let it flow

January 15, 2023

Offence

offence came into the sanctuary today
in the form of an unremoved baseball cap
caused me momentarily forget to remember
His offence that restored this unremoved
has also restored my unpresent charity

January 12, 2023

Orthodoxy

whoever of us is right
whether it's
you
or me
he
or she
they
or we
some of us are wrong
may those of us who are
be strong and courageous
to discard our opinions
for Truth

January 11, 2023

Stepping Out

I've heard, you've heard, everyone's heard
the bright-eyed and hopeful joyous say
 "I'm stepping out in faith,
 God will see me through"
and while I don't know about you
I know that I've often wanted to ask
 "Whose voice have you heard?
 On what is your faith grounded?"
because if we haven't heard God speak
faith is less involved than wishful hope
 and any step we take
 however holy
 is not of God

January 6, 2023

Instagram

I liked one thing that made me smile
now I see a thousand things that don't

January 5, 2023

Left Behind

"It's not Biblical but it's also not church;
it's just an entertainment so I'm free to enjoy it."

I make no claim to being 'good man'
I never have, I doubt that I ever will
I am, however, a forgiven child of God
(yes, even now, as I wallow in the mud)
and I must try to be holy, for He is holy
and so I am disappointed and confused
when I see many highly respected others
cast holiness aside for the sake of a smile

December 30, 2022

my hearing, it isn't perfect
a crowded room is but a din
a cacophonic jumbling din
I hear everything, and nothing
but the laughter gets through
always laughter gets through
giving cause to my silent smile

Before

before God planted the Garden of Eden
He knew that the choice made there
would help a serpent try usurp His place

before God spoke light into darkness
He knew that Dark would rise against
the Light He would send to find the lost

before God spoke water into its place
He knew that He would calm the wave's
grasping at twelve terror stricken men

before God spoke trees into growing
He knew that we would one day craft
the tree on which we would hang His Son

before God spoke stars into glowing
He knew the one He would use to call
distant saints to kneel before their King

before God spoke fish into swimming
He knew there would be a hungry boy
willing to give his lunch to his Saviour

before God spoke birds into flying
He knew the worth we would give a sparrow
would far exceed that we gave ourselves

before God spoke beasts into grazing
He knew their blood would be our sign
restoration held a price too vast for us to pay

before God formed man from dusty Earth
He knew their hands would hang Him
as their cries would mock His death

before God proclaimed His day of rest
He knew the greater rest held in store
for all whose faith rested on His Son

before God made all that ever is or was
He knew that He would give us Christmas
that He could also give us Easter

before God made any to rule on Earth
He knew that He would make His Son
King over all that is or ever was

December 10-11, 2022

Noel – At the Funeral of a Friend

Our Lord has come

Hark! The herald angels sing
glory to the newborn King

the first noel the angels did say
was to certain poor shepherds
who ran!
excited
to see and show what God had done

Joyful, joyful we adore Thee
God of glory, Lord of love

on this noel our Father's call
was to our own very dear friend
who ran!
joyful
straight into his Saviour's arms

Oh come! Let us adore Him!
Jesus, Christ, our risen King

Joy to the world!

December 5-6, 2022

life
often takes more than I have
I will fall
short of my aspirations
yet stand
sure on God's amazing grace

There is Coming a Better Day

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us."

Matthew 1:18-23

the angel told Joseph to name Mary's son "Jesus"
for He would save His people from their sin
not from the overlordship of corrupt teachers
that they could be saved by better known law
nor from the oppression of corrupt leaders
that they could be saved by better government
He would cleanse them from their stain
that they could be saved from death
He would do it, and could, because He is God
"His people" are God's own chosen people
His name, Jesus, means "God will save"
God Himself would save His people, all people
God himself would do what man alone could not
He would be one with His people to save them

there has come a better day
Immanuel has come, God is with us
Jesus has come, God has saved us
His light has dawned on the lost and forlorn

Christ has come, all is well!

there will come a better day
Immanuel will come, God will join us
Jesus will come, God will renew us
His light will dawn on whom He calls His own

Christ will come, all is well!

November 30 - December 2, 2022

DisUnity

doctrinal disunity among the fellowship
is neither of Bible's cause nor creation's
both word and work reveal united truth
is of our own desire to hold our beliefs
despite such united teaching otherwise
those who harbour opinion as privilege
would not agree to walk a path united
though word and work constant stand

November 29, 2022

My Pup

Milo was lying on the floor, just now, sleeping
our coffee-brown buddy resting among his pack
every now and again his tail would slowly wag
no dancing paws, no half aware bark, just his tail
wagging, like a doggy's tail wags in doggish joy
yet neither he nor Beth or I know the reason why

November 29, 2022

Beach

there were rocks on the beach
and a rock among them
 walking
 shuffling
feet in splashing surf
(not fearful of the wave
 this time,
 laughing)
exulting exuberant, splashing
sun-livened gems, dancing
 leaping
 flying
free above foamy sand
bejeweled on sun-dark skin
 glistening
 carousing
rolled up slacks
crashing on toes
 teasing
 wriggling
into tide-tossed beach
among the scattered rocks

Christmas Lights



I've arranged the Christmas lights
around the edges of my house
to display His gospel of salvation

RED, for my sin
WHITE, for His cleaning
GREEN, for His life

repeating end-to-end
because this is something
I get excited about



"Come now, and let us reason together,"
says the LORD,
"Though your sins are as scarlet,
they will be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson,
they will be like wool."

Isaiah 1:18-19

I have come that they may have life,
and have it abundantly.

John 10:10



Confrontation

would Jesus have gone out of His way to confront a person
one of those lost sheep, gone astray and spreading untruth

He did go out of His way to find a person and teach them
the women at the well of Sychar could tell us all about that
how He travelled through Israel searching for His lost sheep
Nicodemus, after his night visit, could also tell us about that
how He patiently corrected a man who should have known

Jesus would not have taken the trouble to find confrontation
or look high and low for people on whom to vent His wrath

such is hardly in keeping with what is said of His character
not at all like One who went silent as a sheep to slaughter
not at all like One who did not raise His voice in the street
loving relentlessly, answering confrontation as it found Him
searching high and low, far and wide to save His lost sheep

November 28, 2022

I am at a loss
I don't know what to do
I am desperate to honour God
I despair his carelessness to God
he is very clearly wrong
he will not hear my words
he will not hear
when I speak
will God judge
if I do not speak

I long to respect he
whom God has placed over me
I long to learn of God
from one more studied than I
one is difficult
the other rare

we have many learned men
leaders of this flock
we have many wise saints
members of this flock
devout followers of His Word
do none of them speak as I

oh my God, help me
I am very foolish
oh my God, give wisdom
I long to please You

November 27, 2022

Church History

I am reading books on Church History
it is depressing
it turns out that many of our heroes
were no less human than I

I am studying Bible commentaries
it is depressing
it turns out that many of our scholars
were no more holy than I

I am sitting before learned teachers
it is depressing
it turns out that many of our leaders
are no more careful than I

November 25, 2022

as pale Moon to brilliant Sun
am I to the Christ of God
what pale glow is mine
is of Him impure reflect
as I about His center flung
cast His light to Earthen eye

November 25, 2022

Hold On to the Beauty

your bed wanted to hold you this morning
your coffee warm you, your breakfast feed you
sunlight rose in welcome, birds awoke and sang
in every way your day began simply lovely
but you, unfortunately, did not
last night's troubles, real or imagined
this morning's slights, actual or illusory
have left you with your endless wondering

but don't

just. don't.

your endless wonder is but an abyss
darkness glooms who wander there

dim your eyes to the sadness
silence your ears to the pain
to everything but the beauty
first greeted you this grand day
you breathe, you walk, you live
you own both hope and dream
admire the lovely, cherish the joy
cast scarce your passing glance
upon delusion and despair
tune away your delicate ear
from poor considered word
look upon your bright things
hear your beautiful sounds
rejoice in your constant blessings

rejoice in them

and live

November 17, 2022

Columbo

when you're watching Columbo
there's just one thing to remember
Peter Falk was first and foremost
a man who loved a good joke
like Columbo loved a cigar
just watch
his first on-screen is always funny
his fumbling for his notebook
or his pencil
or some obscure object
stashed inside his rumpled coat
or more untidy paper bag
his inevitable turn-around to ask
"Just one more question ..."

November 17, 2022

On CCB, GAC & (In)Tolerance

it frightens me how quickly hate
will taint a tolerance so hard won

November 17 - December 6, 2022

Men, We Have GOTTA Talk!

They say that one in ten of us endure some form of depression
They say that male suicide is our second leading cause of death
They say that most of us will not talk about this with anyone
They say that we're too fiercely independent to ask for help
and here, I think, is where an image of man, the stalwart hero
can impact the assessment of man, the normal human being
it's not for our independence that some of us don't talk about it
some of us have other, more human reasons for our silence

reasons like

indecision

we're not sure if the problem is real or just in our heads

concern

we worry it might be something worse than depression

futility

we'd talk about our depression but few seem to listen

loyalty

we will not tell a stranger what we cannot tell a friend

betrayal

we've talked but have seen our words turned against us

perspective

we were in bad shape yesterday but today we feel okay

kindness

we don't want to make ourselves be a burden to anyone

honour

we won't share our pain once we see the pain of others

see, we're not trying to be heroes after all, not all of us, anyhow
we have all sorts of very good, non-heroic reasons for not talking
about this thing sucking joy from our lives, or worse, destroying us

November 15, 2022

Compliance / Science

"It's not about the science,
it's about your compliance!"

bold

on a harsh-drawn graphic
jack-boot against the head
mask forced against the face
grey under darker grey
hopelessness under violence
but we've all been here before
for years we've been here
told to do this
told to do that
told to do the other thing
all the while fearing
compliance to horrors

November 13, 2022

the marquee said it large
bold lettering making bold promise
"Speaking Truth in a False World"
and in smaller letters, underneath
"Jeremiah 5; Jeremiah 6 & Isaiah 30"
knowing the world in which these men lived
knowing the message which these men spoke
I went
looking forward to learning since seeing
I went
with eyes open, so eager to see
I went
with ears open, so eager to hear
I went
eager to learn to better speak Truth
to an appallingly desperate world
I went, eager for encouragement
I left, overcome by despondency
careless teaching having failed marquee's promise
to satisfy the substance of my need
and worse, much, much worse
careless teaching unknowingly misrepresenting Truth

November 13, 2022

there was no fear of losing a poem today
this Sunday morning in church
the message and the songs did not distract
were ill disposed to inspire grand ideas
magnificence faltered ere conceived
despondency overwhelmed all hope of glory

November 12-13, 2022

I grab at reality
at life
at this world run so horribly amuck
yet unbelievably lovely
so reflective of His greater glory
my tears know not their source
I know only this
my words are insufficient
to the task I have assigned
yet are the only tool I know
with which to grab at truth

November 12, 2022

Infinity-Fi
musings on a Saturday afternoon
somehow inspired by "[Webcam the World](#)" by Heather McHugh

"How fitting"
I think
"to write such a thing today"
namesake of so distant orb
my voice, could it fly
sent off, would after years
(one-hundred-thirty-three
to be more-or-less exact)
light upon translucent sphere
whereon (or could that be in)
if dwell folk of unknown ilk
might hear but scattered bits
from one how long since dead
1/6,512,000,761,159,524,000th
of me left to puzzle out
sense from static-filled sound
yet as I type I question Google
"How far Saturn, now?"
"How large the surface of a sphere?"
"What time light would take to fly
from me to some Saturnian eye?"
the answer to that last is faster
one hour, twenty minutes, some seconds
if were there and could but see
would gaze upon this morning's Pete
setting Christmas lights upon his eave
perhaps maybe seeing 1/1th
of me to puzzle out
sense from uncomprehendable act
would see my eave-strung lights
red-green-white-green-red-white
and wonder "Why?"
what madness this pale illumination
that paler still their understanding
befuddles
were I to bold commit
this writ to Earth-bound friend
would follow ethereal path
to router thence to wire
around this planet's surface
bouncing into the sky, and back
out to my comprehending kin
(I blush at such an optimism)
but scattered signal's fainter glow
one hour, twenty minutes, some seconds

(as I enjoy my dinner perhaps)
would light upon those unexpected eyes
to incomprehensibility add symbol
multiple uncontexted datums
indecipherable
for all I think them lovely
and further out, broad eons hence
(mind quails before that distance)
even stranger eyes, could there be,
might see still fainter signal's glow
themselves to ponder, if they could
of what mind such madness
what source these scattered bits
which stars themselves have signed
append to me such luminous glow
am by stellar embrace caressed
altered beyond understanding
even I could not determine
what I (now dust) had said
they could not know, though try
if not misconstrued as random
would never know
what sense these digits made
any less those digits sent
now forty-eight years gone by

November 11, 2022

the point is
not to hate
but to love

the point is
not to endorse
but to guide

November 10-11, 2022

baptism can be confusing
some say it's an act of obedience
some say it's a symbol of new life
some say it's a sign of community
some say it follows repentance
all of these are found in the Bible
each one applies in its own context
the dying thief could not be baptized
yet would be in Paradise with Jesus
Paul said baptism was important
though he himself did not baptize
entire households were baptized
on the repentance of their heads
uncounted believers were baptized
immediately upon their salvation

the confusion seems more to follow
our craving a one size fits all solution
to a question with many answers

baptism is an important act
but not so much so as faith, and
like any other point of doctrine
once we push it out of context
there's no telling where it might go, or
where it might pause along the way

November 9, 2022

One Word

Jesus spoke of Adam, of Eve as if they'd lived
framed the surety of salvation on their union
He would have known, for He gave both breath
gave each to the other for husband and wife
gave both clothing and hope despite their fall
His word disproving each one of mankind's lies

November 8-9, 2022

Live Action posted an Instagram
a woman smiling magnificently
her smiling baby in her arms
graduating (both) from law school
regardless the circumstance
such joy was glorious to see
it made my afternoon, my day
perhaps even my week

yet why, why did so, so many
have to post their "Yeah, but ..."s
why do so, so many people
feel the need to suck the joy
from all things bright and beautiful

why can we not share in her triumph
celebrate her glory
rejoice their glorious smiles
why must we shout "Yeah, but ..."
at every happy thing?

[Live Action](#) posted a lovely photo of a young woman and her one year old daughter
graduating from Harvard Law. Both were capped and gowned and each one wore a
glorious smile. It is a beautiful photo and it made me smile.

Then I read the comments and was overwhelmed by the many "Yeah, but ..."s from people
who, instead of celebrating this wonderful thing, chose to throw dirt at it.

Why?

Or as a [King](#) once said: "Why can't we all just get along?"

November 8-11, 2022

when we carefully consider them
the theological trappings we attach to our faith
they matter very little
what we wear
how we baptize
the Bible we study
our eschatological stand
none of it really, ultimately, matters
oh sure, they're important
some of them quite so
and disagreement on any is to be resolved
but as far as our salvation goes
 they
 just
 don't
 matter
they are of no significance
in the face of Jesus' words
"Today you shall be with Me in Paradise"
to a man who had no time remaining
in which he could do anything but believe

November 6, 2022

in church this morning I had a lovely idea for a poem
it would have been marvelous, a thing of beauty
but the message and the songs were so good
I got caught up in joy and I forgot all about it
and I am sorry I did, for now neither you nor I
will ever know what it would have been about

November 4-10, 2022

sometimes
the rope ladder doesn't reach the bottom of the tower

sometimes
the knight in shining armour is wearing dented tin

sometimes
the slipper shatters on another woman's foot

sometimes
the cowboy never rides off into the sunset

sometimes
the last minute is the only minute left

sometimes
the Hail Mary pass is intercepted

sometimes
the rescue comes too late

sometimes
the bad guy wins

sometimes
we will fall

sometimes
pain

at all times God

November 4, 2022

evolution would have that we're getting better
incrementally, to be sure, but improving
affirming said fact through countless iterations
despite a sample size of statistical insignificance
we are certainly, on average
 healthier
 wealthier
but the evidence doesn't bear out the claim
for we are certainly, on average
 no wiser
to consider "merciful" murders of self-concern

we are not constantly improving
who cling relentless to our hate
we show instead our wicked soul

November 3, 2022

Dependencies

I rely on my Bible, a lot
to the exclusion of much else
the Psalms (all of them)
the words in red (all of them)
and Habakkuk (all of him, too)
but I can't read all day long
there's work to be done
household chores
gainful employment
and appointments
so I delegate my care to music
hours and hours of music
sweet calming music
they're right, you know
music soothes the savage soul
and is safer by far
than drugs
or the trust of a stranger

November 3, 2022

the phone rang just now
but I just couldn't answer
they had the right number
but I'm not a right person

November 1-2, 2022

In The Small Print

Don't forget tomorrow starts the new Facebook (aka...META) rule where they can use your photos. The deadline is today!!! I do not give Facebook or any entities associated with Facebook permission to use my pictures, information, messages or posts, both past and future. With this statement I give notice to Facebook it is strictly forbidden to disclose, copy, distribute, or take any other action against me based on this profile and/or its contents. The violation of privacy can be punished by law. NOTE: Facebook is now a public entity. All members must post a note like this. If you prefer, you can copy and paste this version. If you do not publish a statement at least once it will be tacitly allowing the use of your photos, as well as the information contained in the profile status updates. DO NOT SHARE. Copy and paste. Their new algorithm chooses the same few people - about 25 - who will read your posts. Therefore: Hold your finger down anywhere in this post and "copy" will pop up. Click "copy". Then go to your page, start a new post and put your finger anywhere in the blank field. "Paste" will pop up and click paste. This will bypass the system.

each time I read this disclaimer
on someone's Facebook
I am reminded

how quickly we forget what we all agreed to
when we signed up
that Facebook owns everything we post

how quickly we forget what we all learned
when we signed up
that Facebook uses everything we post

how quickly we forget what we all read
over and over
that "Tomorrow" has come many times

it's not the algorithm
that is silencing you
(Facebook makes its money
on our inter-relatability after all
silencing its users is counter-productive)
you, saying very little at all
have silenced yourself
the algorithm hardly knows you exist
suddenly waking up to you
on the rare instances that you speak

November 1-2, 2022

How Will I Do This?

I'm feeling miserable today
there's no reason for it
but I do

and

in a few moments I must
eat lunch with my family
and I find myself wondering
how will I do this?

and

this afternoon I must
be productively employed
and I find myself wondering
how will I do this?

and

in a few hours I must
eat dinner with an old friend
and I find myself wondering
how will I do this?

and

until I die I must
live
and I am wondering
how am I ever going to do that?

November 1-2, 2022

silence echoes
laughter snickers
after every word I say
I should just learn
to be quiet

October 31 - November 2, 2022

Say What You Want, But ...

you can say what you want about them
about any of these new poets
about Rupi Kaur
about Atticus
about Tyler Knott Gregson
about ...
any one or all of them
about their merit
about their words
about their rhythm
about ...
anything of them at all
but say what you will
whatever you will say
whether good or ill
their impact
it has been phenomenal

poetry is loud

again

October 31, 2022

The Instant We Say

the instant we say
"I don't know what to wear"
we show our 'problem' is affluence

the instant we say
"I don't know what to eat"
we show our 'problem' is abundance

the instant we say
"I don't know what to do"
we show our 'problem' is indulgence

the instant we can say
any one of these things or
any one of many other things
we show we are more fortunate
than almost anyone else alive

Submission

they tell me that Romans 13 is conditional
that Paul didn't dictate absolute submission
that it is dependent on the Godly behaviour
of the rulers under whom I have been placed
and Paul, as we all know, is highly regarded
Peter furthermore praised Paul's teachings
considered his words equivalent to Scripture
yet he proved Paul's command unconditional
commanding subjection even to unjust lords
saying the same to slaves of abusive masters
teaching peace even as he taught that courage
submission and respect toward persecutors
illuminate the believer's faithfulness to God
and give glory to He who alone is worthy

Romans 13:1-7

Every person is to be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a servant of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a servant of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Pay to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; respect to whom respect; honor to whom honor.

2 Peter 3:14-16

Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found spotless and blameless by Him, at peace, and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which there are some things that are hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

1 Peter 2:13-20

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the

punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God, that by doing right you silence the ignorance of foolish people. Act as free people, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bond-servants of God. Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are harsh. For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person endures grief when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.

October 26, 2022

Dear God

the last several days have been rough
I couldn't see that life held any joy
or that my life held any value at all
but for the Foundation beneath me
I'd rather have given up than go on
it was very hard, going on, but I did
and today I'm glad, the cloud is gone
going on is less painful, more joyful
it feels good to want to be alive again
and not believe that I'm totally rubbish
I know could not have gone on alone
You held me up, let me see Your light
I feel that now You again can love me
but I know that You've always loved me
before I ever was I know You loved me
under the cloud I knew You loved me
beyond the despair I know You love me
Your love for me is of Yourself, not of me
just by being Who You are You love me
thank You Father, for my life I thank You!

Today I emerged out of a severe depression event
It began about a week and a half ago
it
was
horrible
But today my body feels much better
my brain has stopped buzzing
I can see that there is joy in life again
And all I could do this morning
is thank God that He made it possible
for me to be here
today
to enjoy being alive
again

October 25, 2022

I'm not the man I used to be
but then, I never was

October 24-26, 2022

I didn't delete my portfolio today
though I was sorely tempted to
though I wanted to throw away
all of it, every last little bit of it
every
word I'd ever written
every
picture I'd ever taken
every
sermon I'd ever given
but I didn't throw any of it away
none of it, every last little bit of it
remains intact, all of it remains
I didn't delete my portfolio today!

I'm not then yet, Future-Pete
but I hope you appreciate this

Biblical Relativism

my pastors teach that the Bible is relative
(no, not THAT relative
they're very definite that the Bible
is greater than any other religious text
that was, or is or ever will be)
they're just not certain that the Bible
speaks with one voice
as once the Apostles knew it did
are willing to disagree
where the Bible speaks less clear
are unwilling to agree
that the Bible does not confuse

if those of God are permitted disagreement
on the foundation of our doctrine
then what of our testimony before men
if our sole point of agreement is
"Believe in Jesus Christ and you will live!"
as we show confusion on all other points
how then can our faith be displayed
as any different than any other
and how then will we reveal
the overwhelming power of God

the secret things belong to God
are not for us to understand
or force an explanation
they are for us
to accept

Too often we try to explain something of the Bible that is not yet ready to be explained or
force an explanation more in keeping with our own ideas. By doing this we cause more
harm than good.

A large problem with our theology is our unwillingness to let a question be; too often we
pull so hard at an answer that we end up straining the truth.

October 24, 2022

Feedback

the Internet is interesting, but it's not good for depression
unless by "it's not good for" one means "it promotes"
you can feel like you're at a tremendous party
you and the whole world have been invited to
but you're not, you're all alone in a tiny echo chamber
listening to it amplify the tears you're the only one to hear

After posting a series of poems about my uncle dying
with no one commenting to see how I was doing.

October 23, 2022

After the Funeral

I came home, Friday, despondent
it was not to have gone like this
it was too soon, far, far too soon
there was yet wood to be shaped
there were yet rivers to be explored
there was yet so much to be enjoyed

no, things did not go as planned
and because they did not
this would happen

I came home, Friday, despondent
it was not to have gone like this
it was too sad, far, far too sad
the words were carefully shaped
the Bible was thoughtfully explored
the message would have given comfort

no, things did not go as planned
and because they did not
this would happen

I came home, Sunday, rejoicing
it was not to have gone like that
it was better, far, far better
a poem came to be in despair
a message of hope despite tears
a praise given God out of sadness

no, things did not go as planned
and since they did not
God worked wonders

October 21, 2022

Friday, October 21, 2022

We buried my uncle today.
My aunt had asked me to say a few words at his grave.
All week I've been thinking about what to say,
how to speak words of comfort and of hope,
reading in my Bible of people who'd known grief.
People like Job, David, Peter, Paul and Jesus.
But standing next to that hole,
beside my uncle's casket,
in front of the grieving family.
I couldn't.
Reality was suddenly far too real.
All my prayers for strength faltered,
as had my prayers for healing, earlier.
The best I could do was to stammer
a tearful thank you
and some faltering words
ending with
"Death. Does. Not. Win"
and run weeping back into the crowd.

And yet, if it weren't for my tears at the graveside
"[Death. Does. Not. Win!](#)" would not have been

Death. Does. Not. Win!

I had such nice words picked out
I had been planning them all week
I was going to talk with them through
Job and David and Jesus and Peter and Paul
but when I stood there
beside that dark hole
and that horrible
wooden
box
I couldn't
I
just
couldn't
I
could
only
cry

But here
here is what I would have said
if I could have said it

Job
"I know that in my flesh I shall see God!"

David
"I shall live in the house of the Lord forever!"

Peter
"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!"

Paul
"Nothing can take us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!"

Jesus
"I am the resurrection and the life, whoever believes in Me will never die!"

for all who love Jesus
for all who will call upon His name
Death. Does. Not. Win!

Job - Job 19:26
David - Psalm 23:6
Peter - Matthew 16:16
Paul - Romans 8:29

Jesus - John 11:25-26

October 18-20, 2022

If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

Romans 12:18

if I've learned one thing during this pandemic
(other than how to wash my hands) I learned this:
too many of us who call ourselves by Christ's name
do not try very hard to live in peace with all mankind
ignore the example of our Saviour's perfect submission
stand on misread words claiming credibility for our wrath

I Have No Desire To Do This

first off, let me say this
"I am not a perfect man"
that being said let me also say this
"I am a man who is saved by grace"
and having said that let me also say this
"If I am not loyal to God, above all,
I am not loyal to Him at all"

now onward

close friends are raving about "The Chosen"
about its relatable Jesus
about the lives His followers left
about His magnificent words
I know that Jesus is relatable
He lived as a man like me
I know of lives left behind
my own has been forgiven
I know His magnificent words
resound with Truth and Love
but I cannot jump on their bandwagon
why?
my close friends don't talk too much
about "The Chosen" making Jesus say
"I am the law of Moses!"
and I have no desire to hear
words from Jesus' mouth that He couldn't say
about "The Chosen" making Jesus do
magic tricks for children
and I have no desire to see
actions from Jesus' hand that He couldn't do
about "The Chosen" making Jesus be
anyone other than He is
and I have no desire to have
Jesus become a person that He couldn't be

Jesus is God!
the holy, righteous, perfect God
the God who became Man to save me
however beautiful "The Chosen" makes Him
however lovely it makes His words
however tender His actions
I cannot stay faithful to Jesus
if I enjoy seeing Him as He is not
I risk my reward and my salvation
to see Him other than as He is
my Saviour and my God

Many believe that a person cannot judge a thing unless they have experienced it who also know that one need not drink from a sewer to learn that its contents are harmful to their health.

I have the same view toward things like "The Chosen"; questionable content is not made less harmful by being wrapped in beauty.

October 14-16, 2022

today was a horrible day
hope fell by the wayside
relented to hopelessness
miracles in short supply
tomorrow's bright hope
faltered, fell and failed

death barged in too soon

oh God! where are You?
oh God! where were You?
had You been with them
he could not have died

October 14-16, 2022

Hope(less?)

the doctors say there is no hope
their words are overwhelming
"he will die"

Jesus said to never stop praying
"even small faith will move mountains"
He told us

and there lies my conundrum

God gives the doctors their wisdom
I can trust them
I do

God makes and maintains all that is
I can trust Him
I do

on the one side
God's gifts
on the other side
God's power
in between the sides
me

desperately wondering how to pray

On October 3rd my uncle went to the hospital for a 'routine' operation on a heart valve. He had a stroke during the operation and it did not go as expected. For the last eleven days we waited, we hoped, we prayed, we begged God for a miracle even as the doctors told us there was no hope.

Conflicted, I wrote this poem this morning. This afternoon, at 2:03, he died.

I am a man with a deep and abiding faith in God, that has not changed. But today I am once again reminded that God doesn't give me everything I ask for, even though Jesus told us that even our smallest grain of faith could move mountains. And today I am once again staggered by the apparent difference between what Jesus said and what God will do.

October 14, 2022

Today

today I am depressed
no, not mentally
not today
I've been good that way for a while
I'm emotionally depressed

they say my uncle will die
possibly tomorrow
their routine procedure
did not go as planned

my office Christmas party
includes an entertainment
no Christian should see
yet is praised by many

protestors protesting
against oil and poverty
tomato souped a van Gogh
"Sunflowers", of all things

Canada's COVID emergency
is being scrutinized today
reaction seems overwrought
now that calm has returned

the Capitol Hill Protests too
are being scrutinized today
its foul-mouthed epicenter
both vilified and worshipped

two more police were slaughtered
joining far too many others
too many of us rejoicing
as too many of us grieve

"too many of us rejoicing
as too many of us grieve"
little more need be said

yet today
amid my sad and despondent gloom
I know I can, and will, rejoice

my God lives
my God saves
my God is love

my God reigns!!!

no more need be said

October 13, 2022

JatATD

"You don't like works about the Bible that don't treat it literally"
is said to me at times as though this was somehow
wrong

I can accept poetic license to a point, such as was taken in "The Miracle Maker",
or an artistic take on theology, such as was done in "It's a Wonderful Life",
(In each case there was displayed a very real respect for God.)
but some entertainments go too far just to entertain.

Should I not pay God's words infinitely higher honour
than man's weak rephrasings?

October 13, 2022

"It wasn't the water He came for, it was me"
The woman at Sychar's well

it wasn't our roads Jesus came to walk
He came so we could walk with Him

it wasn't our food Jesus came to eat
He came so we could feast with Him

it wasn't our homes Jesus came to see
He came so we could be home with Him

it wasn't our wine Jesus came to drink
He came so we could rejoice with Him

it wasn't the stable Jesus came to inhabit
He came to inhabit our humanity

it was our death Jesus came to die
He came to die so we could live with Him

October 13, 2022

In the Echo

ultimatum rose to meet threat
failed and fell
into tragic catastrophe
rose and won
restored what had once been
which reverberant echo shows false

October 10, 2022

Thanksgiving, Twenty-Two-Two

desperation surrounds me
despair searches for a door
death stands in the shadow
God is great and very good
God is my steadfast shelter
glorious is my inheritance

September 27, 2022

fear

alone inside this terrible mood
trying so desperately not to hurt
anyone

hope

wrapped within His tender care
overwhelmed by the grace to love
anyone

Written on the morning after an especially bad day
realizing that He had answered my prayers for grace
and had given me joy to replace my despair.

September 19, 2022

Poetry Prize

So-and-so has just won a prize for
their book of poems "Such-and-such"
the judges, appreciative, responded
and gave to them their highest award
alongside their enthusiastic accolades
praising the fresh, unique perspective
too few had the ability to apprehend

but there's an often subtle difference
between the fresh and unique perspective
and the overwhelmingly incomprehensible

silly judges

Questions

some think the question is
"How can a good God allow evil?"
this is the wrong question
attempts God's reduction
making of Him a combatant
straining to contain a beast
of unfathomable power
but it is not so!
it is not at all so!
the question misleads
it is a deception, a trick, a lie
the beast is defeated, has fallen
its power, before God's
is no power at all

if God were to obliterate evil
this instant
we'd do our 'best' to welcome evil back
the next

Job might say this:
the question should rather be
"Why would the holy God hold evil at bay?"
we allowed evil every freedom
why then should God say
"This far and no more!"

Zacchaeus might say this:
the question should rather be
"Why would the holy God give us back our lives?"
we allowed evil usurp our place
why then should God say
"Come to Me and live!"

our question should not be
"How can a good God allow evil?"
we made evil welcome
we gave evil room
evil lives as we allow it
our question might rather be
"How can evil not see its own futility?"

"if God were to obliterate evil
this instant
we'd do our best to welcome evil back

the next"

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Revelation 20:1-10

September 8, 2022

Error, Not Found

the browser gave me this
"404 Error
we were unable to find
what you were looking for"

but I wasn't disturbed
since 1987
others were unable to find
what they were looking for

September 8, 2022

What I Am Thinking About Today

nothing

September 7, 2022

"We must either love each other or we must die."
Lyndon Baines Johnson ~ 1964

"Being pro-life is just sinful."
Nancy Pelosi ~ 2022

one proposes that life
is preferable to dying
the other calls life a sin
if death is not a choice

Oh, the Humanity!

Logic

"For every Kia Telluride sold," they say
"two Hyundai Palisades leave the lot."
logic states that if A equals 2B
then B must also equal $\frac{1}{2}A$
or, to put it in a car dealership
"For every Hyundai Palisade sold,
half a Kia Telluride leaves the lot."

logic can be funny some times

August 27, 2022 - March 18, 2023

Andy went to the Fan Expo 'con
he decided he would go as Han
but he could have gone as Khan
(as portrayed by R. Montalban)
but he didn't, he went as Han
met a human-hobbit named Sean
a captain who rambled on and on
and two voice-givers of some elan
He's done today but he has a plan
for tomorrow he goes back again

August 14, 2022

Glory to the Maker!

these trees, these hills, these waves
how they give glory to their Maker
their sway, their flow, their tumult
how these sing praises to their Creator

and I, surrounded by these wonders
how can I not also sing praises to our God
His word, which formed these wonders
is the word which forms and fashions me
His power, which upholds these wonders
is the power which holds and sustains me

I, like these wonders, on Him depend
am nothing without His constant care
I, like these wonders, can do no more
than sing to Him my praise unending

Beth and I were on the ocean in a valley in the Cape Breton Highlands, surrounded by trees tossed by winds and hills towering above us and waves crashing on the shore. How could one NOT give glory to God when He is endlessly praised by surroundings such as these.

July 26, 2022

Pro Life?

"Are you still pro life even if it means that the child has to be born into an abusive family?"

How can you possibly use birth into an abusive family to excuse the murder of a child?

?

?

?

?

?

Definitely!

"Are you still pro life even if it means that the child has to be born into an abusive family?"

Let us not be of the mind that another's evil could excuse an evil of our own!

!

!

!

!

!

July 23, 2022

Trouble with Fibs

I have trouble with fibs
deceptions
lies
they don't come easy to me
(though silence
silence does
but that's a different story)
so I tell YouTube
"Don't recommend channel"
instead of telling it
"Not interested"
because I am interested
very interested
which is why
I tell YouTube not to recommend it

July 12-19, 2022

On a Facebook Post

"I believe this with all my heart. Years ago we were kinder. Everybody looked out for one another. We need to go back to that. It takes us all. We must do better at looking out for each other instead of breaking each other down. I'm going to make a bet, that out of my family and friends, less than four will take the time to put this on their wall."

telling us to build each other up
then betting that few of us will
isn't this like that guy yesterday
racing through the red light
to honk at those ahead of him
having the nerve to go on green
so intent on his own rightness
he could not see his wrongness

how can they not see the hypocrisy

July 12-19, 2022

Death Shall Not Have This

death shall not have this
it cannot!
death cannot ever have this
though it struggle fierce and strong
death shall not have this

this is ours

this love
though death took you
death does not have you
God has you
and I can still love you

this is ours

this grief
though real
is by joyful hope assuaged
death cannot destroy us
has itself been destroyed

this is ours

this joy
this hope filled
God-founded joy
it is ours
it is forever ours

though death has taken you
death does not have you
death cannot have what is God's
you are who you were
my great gift of God

though death assault
though death terrible and fierce assault
it cannot have
it cannot ever have
what is God's

this is ours

we are His

July 11, 2022

They Stand On Guard

they stand on guard for me
these three
these coughing, sniffing three
they guard my health quite closely
and whether this is selfish
as I'm the only one who goes out
or whether this is noble
as they want to keep me healthy
you be your own judge
but I
I will believe the best
and smile

July 11, 2022

Isolation

we're self-isolating today
('we' is my family and I)
we're avoiding church
we're avoiding friends
we're avoiding stores
we have colds and coughs
we'd rather not share
with who may fare worse

July 10-11, 2022

"Jesus loves me, this I know"
and even if I know nothing else
there is nothing else I need to know

Reinterpreting the chorus of "All I Need to Know,"
as sung by Linda Ronstadt & Aaron Neville.

"I don't know much,
but I know I love you,
and that may be all I need to know."

July 7, 2022

Every Now and Again

every now and again
I'll know I'm a horrid poet
who's aspiration, outstripping my ability
leaves me to lie silent in its dust
(and I know
I KNOW!
I'm neither Dickinson nor Frost)
yet scrabbling here at other's words
I think the now and again might be untrue
or at least incompletely true
(for I know
I KNOW!
I'm not an Instapoet either)

June 30 – July 3, 2022

If ...

If you're a pessimist
you can imagine a horrid ending

If you're an optimist
you can imagine a happy ending

but as for me

I am neither pessimist nor optimist
I'm simply looking forward to Heaven

June 26-28, 2022

the Lord is good and I will praise Him
the Lord is merciful and I will love Him
the Lord is God and I will worship Him

He alone is worthy of my praise
He alone is worthy of my adoration
He alone is worthy of my worship

He alone is God and I will worship Him

I will worship the Lord alone and no other

June 26, 2022

Love cares not for our yesterday
Love redeems all our tomorrows
Love forgives at our very worst
Love changes for our very best

Love eagerly embraces all who come
joyfully welcomes every wayward soul
there is no sin so great nor stain so deep
Love will not happily wash it away

we are loved beyond all measure
we are loved beyond our comprehension
our understanding cannot grasp such love
His love lies beyond all human reason

though we ask Him our endless "How?"
"How could You love one like me?"
God's constant and endless answer is
"I do!"

Redrawn Walls



some would see us as wide open doors
exuberant in joyful welcome of all who
will hear the words
"All who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved!"
and be
recreated

the doors that must be opened are inside us
we are the welcome the lost need to see
we are the word of God's invitation

some would see us redraw the walls
undemanding inclusive welcome of all who
will hear the words
"All who come inside this building shall be saved!"
and be
unrepentant

the walls that must be redrawn are inside us
we are the line where sin and grace collide
we are the work of God's recreating

With his art, the artist (David Hayward) raises some interesting concerns, concerns are of utmost importance to the Christian Church, but I believe that in art such as the example above he limits himself to seeing the Church as either inclusive or non-inclusive; and this appears to be the general trend of his work.

There is, however, a third view, the view revealed in Jesus' ministry. Jesus was neither inclusive or non-inclusive; He accepted anyone who came to Him and allowed Him to change them.

The Christian Church needs to be welcoming to all (our doors need to be wide open - welcoming) but we must also evidence the miraculous redemptive power of Almighty God (our lives need to be redrawn - recreation).

God does not allow us to come to Him and remain unchanged.

June 21, 2022

For Julia
on finding "crocodile" in my crossword puzzle

there's a crocodile relaxing in my crossword
I'm puzzled, I'm not certain what I should do
it straddles sixty-two across to forty-nine down
and it just sits there, blocking a host of answers
I know how it got there but I can't move it along
this crocodile has teeth, you know,
many teeth (nine of them from least to most)
each placed all in its tidy, unmovable place
and not one of them owns an answer

June 16-19, 2022

S/He is no fool who follows God
though all their world oppose
Truth is true and Right is right
no matter man's disputing cries
God will bless, will keep the just
who's faith in Him stands strong

Generations

some will argue that missing generations
throw the whole chronology of Genesis off
how can one trust the numbers, they ask
if generations from Adam to Seth are unknown
but then they're missing the whole point
by looking for generations they miss years
whether any generations are missing or none
between Adam and Seth are 130 years
and likewise through many fathers and sons
the years make missing generations (if any)
an inconsequential idea unworthy consideration

June 6-8, 2022

Loneliness

loneliness is not silent
people think it is
but it isn't
loneliness is very loud
it screams words at you
words like
 unlikable
 unworthy
 unvalued
 uninteresting
 unheard
 unseen
loneliness shouts them loudly
hurls them at you like javelins
aimed unerringly at the heart

no, loneliness is not silent
it is not silent at all
it is very loud
it is so very loud
all you can hear is the silence
its thundering silence

June 6-8, 2022

Security

the situation there is not at all like the security I enjoy
I've been told, I've also been told that I can't understand
it's very likely true that I can't understand, and never could
even on Dad & Mom's darkest days I didn't understand
how very desperate their situation was, since mine was not
the platter spread before me was golden and never empty
no matter the surrounding security or insecurity
yet security, security is one of those intangibles
like temptation, what trips one man up another man steps over
some securities (financial and spiritual) are plainly seen
other securities (depression and loneliness) are not
what one man can step over is the chasm for another
security for all, rich and poor alike, is a too slender thread
one cut of the knife, and ...

June 3, 2022

everything tastes of grey today
sad and bland and unfulfilling
like there's a filter's been removing
 joy from the wonder of being alive
 pleasure from the beauty of the day
life is being robbed of its splendour
even Handel's trumpets taste of mourning
play slow, sad dirges into despair

even the certainty of my redemption
scarce dents this overwhelming gloom
yet it alone keeps me keeping on

how can it be that I can feel so sad
who lives amidst astounding wonder
how can it be that this is who I am
who lives the most blessed of men

June 2, 2022

I am not a good man
but then I never said I was
or nice
I'm not a nice man either
but I am a righteous man
and am made righteous
by no power of my own

thank God!

June 1, 2022

Wayne

The last I heard of you was March
seeing your reflection in an obituary
your image was sweet, which startled
you had not seemed that way before,
I prayed the Hope I'd prayed you had
had become well and truly yours

May 30-31, 2022

Bullet

A bullet
flies faster than its sound
at first
until the screams catch up

A bullet
flies for scarcest instant
and falls
into an unfathomable grief

A bullet
flies blind to good or evil
to end

May 29, 2022

We left everything behind but the paddles
the life-jackets, and the two water bottles
Oh, and the camera too
because when you're out on an adventure
you don't want to forget

May 20, 2022

what I'm happy for this afternoon
the coffee I had this morning
the three dogs I met on my walk
the fruit juice beside me
the sunlight between the clouds
the smell of the trees by Millers Creek
the Belgian Waffles I bought for tomorrow
the clerk (Rasheim) who sold them to me
the pound of the sidewalk against my feet
the music of my current play list

all in all, my opinion on today is this
today is not a bad day to be alive

May 15-20, 2022

my God created all that is when nothing was
He spoke, and light dashed across the universe
He spoke, and land thrust itself above the seas
He spoke, and plants and shrubs and trees burst into bloom
He spoke, and sun and moon and stars filled their allotted places
He spoke, and life teemed within the seas and skies
He spoke, and exuberant beasts scampered across the earth,
He breathed, and I became a living thing

This is my God
my Creator
my Master
my Saviour
my Lord

When He says "Go!"
where shall I not go?

When He says "Do!"
what shall I not do?

May 13-16, 2022

Pause

I stood inside one timeless moment
lambent Moon dancing on the lake
a breeze lazying off to somewhere else
wafting Lilac-scent of a thousand hills
through this evening with my friend
and I knew, I could not have disbelieved
had you given me countless otherwise
that time had held its tick and tock
had let me pause beyond its flow
to breathe, to know the joy of having life
to be overcome by astonishing wonder

May 13-16, 2022

my cousin posted this on Facebook just now:

"is it just me, or does it feel like the years
2020, 2021 and 2022
have been:
Written by Stephen King
Directed by Quentin Tarantino
and
Scored by Yoko Ono"

I think it's just him, it's certainly not me
for me, it feels like the years
2020, 2021 and 2022
have been:
Written by Victor Hugo
Directed by Frank Capra
and
Scored by George Frederick Handel

these years have not been all easy
too many sadnesses have filled their days
yet hope did not die beneath their onslaught

May 13-16, 2022

God IS Good

there can be no doubt that God is good
creation is too well made to contradict it
water flows, plants grow, living beings thrive
that God is and is good cannot be doubted
and if creation were to falter, crack, break
water cease, plants shrivel, living being die
that God is and is good cannot be doubted
God is good no matter our circumstance
God is good whether good or ill we know
our every tear or smile proof that He sustains

My Own Forty-Two, A Testimony

Hello, my name is Peter Rhebergen
and I'm here today by grace of God alone
the One Who began to knit me together
before my parents even knew of me

this is the day that the Lord has made
I will rejoice and be glad in it

Hello, my name is Peter Rhebergen
and I'm here today by grace of God alone
the One Who gave me parents who love Him
who loving Him knew also how to love me

this is the day that the Lord has made
I will rejoice and be glad in it

Hello, my name is Peter Rhebergen
and I'm here today by grace of God alone
the One Who astoundingly blesses me
with peace and home and food and care

this is the day that the Lord has made
I will rejoice and be glad in it

Hello, my name is Peter Rhebergen
and I'm here today by grace of God alone
the One Who keeps me from falling
no matter how I try to fall away

this is the day that the Lord has made
I will rejoice and be glad in it

Hello, my name is Peter Rhebergen
and I'm here today by grace of God alone
the One Who holds my life secure
above the darkness that leads down to death

this is the day that the Lord has made
I will rejoice and be glad in it

Hello, my name is Peter Rhebergen
and I'm here today by grace of God alone
the One Who is my perfect hope
even as uncertainty roils around me

this is the day that the Lord has made
I will rejoice and be glad in it

Hello, my name is Peter Rhebergen
and I'm here today by grace of God alone
the One Who sustains my heart
when it has fallen down within me

this is the day that the Lord has made
I will rejoice and be glad in it

Hello, my name is Peter Rhebergen
and I'm here today by grace of God alone
the One Who surrounds me with wonder
revealing His glory in all that is

this is the day that the Lord has made
I will rejoice and be glad in it

Hello, my name is Peter Rhebergen
and I'm here today by grace of God alone
the One Who rescued this lost and hopeless man
from the pit he himself has made

this is the day that the Lord has made
I will rejoice and be glad in it

Hello, my name is Peter Rhebergen
and I'm here today by grace of God alone
the One Who always cares for me
through every trial and joy of life

this is the day that the Lord has made
I will rejoice and be glad in it

Hello, my name is Peter Rhebergen
and I'm here today by grace of God alone
the One Who's Son has paid my price
and lets me call His Father "Mine!"

As the deer pants for the water brooks,
So my soul pants for You, O God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God;
When shall I come and appear before God?
My tears have been my food day and night,
While they say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"
These things I remember and I pour out my soul within me.
For I used to go along with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God,
With the voice of joy and thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival.

Why are you in despair, O my soul?

And why have you become disturbed within me?
Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him
For the help of His presence.
O my God, my soul is in despair within me;
Therefore I remember You from the land of the Jordan
And the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.
Deep calls to deep at the sound of Your waterfalls;
All Your breakers and Your waves have rolled over me.
The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime;
And His song will be with me in the night,
A prayer to the God of my life.

I will say to God my rock, "Why have You forgotten me?
Why do I go mourning [m]because of the oppression of the enemy?"
As a shattering of my bones, my adversaries revile me,
While they say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"
Why are you in despair, O my soul?
And why have you become disturbed within me?
Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him,
The help of my countenance and my God.

Psalm 42

April 24, 2022

Schindlers' Lessons

What I learned from Oskar Schindler:

Despite their failings
even a weak man is able to do great things

What I learned from Emilie Schindler:

Despite their failings
one cannot hold what another has forgiven

April 14-16, 2022

do I serve a heartless God?
a God who cannot weep
or laugh, or frown, or smile
at the acts of His little child
does God stand unmoved
unconcerned by the good or ill
carousing through my soul?

no

and again I say, No!

most definitely, NO!

I cannot believe God is not moved
does not weep
does not laugh
does not frown
does not smile
as I stumble through my life

He cannot be made lesser
by me
He cannot be made larger
by me
He will be as He ever is
despite me

but I believe
I simply must believe
He can smile
as I
like an eager pup
try to please my Master

April 15-18, 2022

it wasn't pretty, those three crosses on that stony hill
no matter how we try decorating one with purple cloths
it remains an instrument of torture, punishment, death

there would be pain, blood, screams and dreadful silence
upon that rock, as souls escaped their transient homes
silence, poured like the blood staining battered wood

silence that crept cold ground, confronted colder eyes
threw justice, with devotion, into the careless winds
joined the mocking laughter of brutal condemnation

no, the cross was not pretty, it could not have been
the evil it confronted, defeated, was more ugly by far
but the victory it bought surpasses all else in its glory

the ruler it cast down is the most horrid being ever
the One it held the glorious King over all creation

April 13, 2022

"Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool."

Isaiah 1:18

I find these words very comforting
especially today
when evil lurks outside my door
temptation stands a close companion
and holiness seems rather fleeting

I find it very reassuring to know
He will catch me
even as I fall

April 8-11, 2022

"This Easter innumerable Christians who have lived in terror of death for two years will gather to pay lip-service to a resurrection hope they have failed to apply. Without repentance, this will be nothing more than a hollow religious act and a bad testimony to the world." – Pastor Aaron Rock

you say "terror" so carelessly, so flippantly
so assuredly, as if we were all afraid to die
who dutifully followed government guidances
as though you had not even tried to see
a difference between terror and precaution
as though standing firm on your conclusion
that all who did the best they knew and could
to obey their Lord's command to love
were wrong, were utterly and hopelessly wrong
as though you had the corner on Truth
as though you held a faith so certain, so sure
you did not even need to try to understand
a faith differently lived than yours

but contrary to your words

I will go to church this Easter and rejoice
not with futile and misplaced lip service
but in the One Who died and lives for me

I will go to church this Easter and rejoice
not because these two years I have feared death
but because these many years I have known life

I will go to church this Easter and rejoice
I will rejoice because my Father loves me
He loves me simply because He is love

but contrary to your words

I will rejoice in Him not only as I am in church
I will rejoice in Him in whatever way He leads
I will rejoice in Him in every breath He gives

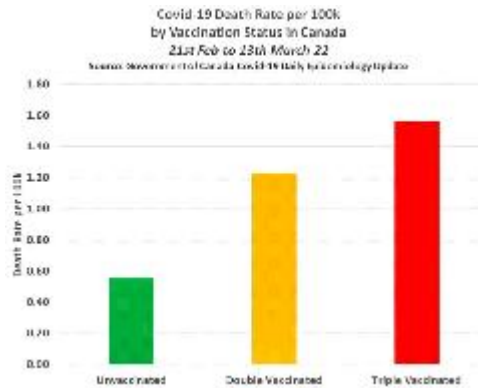
I will rejoice in God my Saviour
I will worship Him alone

April 5-6, 2022

The Problem with not Using ALL of the Data that God Gave You

"According to the gov't of Canada data, being unvaccinated seems a wise choice."

"The Canadian government ... website shows that [the vaccinated] end up with the highest risk of infection, hospitalization, and death."



the red bar looks scary
terrifying
saying more of us will die

the green bar seems nicer
reassuring
saying more of us will live

bars of both colours deceive
obfuscate
speak an incomplete truth



but wait, there's more
there are grey bars with more facts to show
the grey bars speak more truth

apparently the red bars
those show over eighty percent of us are vaccinated
and the green bars
they're the under twenty percent that are left

these additional facts reveal
the green bars' false hope
to be proportional to population
should at least be four times larger

and this
(alongside the attendant negligent attitude)
shows them to be horrifying

March 24 - April 12, 2022

every second holds another chance
quietly between its tick and its tock
endlessly holding out to us the hope
life will be better then than it is now

March 24, 2022

today
today came
today was the day
today I was giving up
I would have, too
but for two
words

I was going to, too, I was going to stop.
Today was the day I was going to quit.
No more Facebook, no more Instagram.
It had become overwhelmingly depressing.
But then Doug spoke, and Steve spoke.
Now today, and tomorrow, have hope.

March 24, 2022

You're Not Here To Be ...

you're not here to be
awesome
you're not here to be
boring

you're not here to be
famous
you're not here to be
unknown

you're not here to be
special
you're not here to be
common

you're not here to be
mighty
you're not here to be
fragile

you're here to be
yourself
all you have to be
is you

March 23, 2022

you would have thought it would have blown away
down the road with everything else
the compost bin, the garbage bag, the recycling boxes
but it didn't, it didn't, it stayed behind
it all stayed behind, like it was important or something

wind apparently can't reach inside the soul
blow the detritus out to kingdom come
fly old memories away like an untethered kite
it just freshens them up a bit, rearranges them
lets you know you have lived, are alive still

no matter how the wind blows
these things, like the clouds, stay
you'd think they would have flown away, but no
these things, like the trees, remain
bring with them new scents of freshness

March 23, 2022

Truth, Come Out!

"I keep praying the truth will come out!"

so would I, my dear
so would I ... if

if truth hadn't already been freely provided
if truth hadn't already been widely disseminated
if truth hadn't already been easily understood

so instead I pray this

I pray that truth will be found
I pray that truth will be apprehended
I pray that truth will be believed

Sola ...

Sola Scriptura!

the reformers said
Scripture alone is our highest authority
Unless, as Scripture's detractors will say,
I have something of greater value to add
and adding, make Scripture worth nothing
so I will stand on Scripture alone
upheld by God the Holy Sprit

Sola Fide!

the reformers said
Faith alone in Jesus is our salvation
Unless, as Faith's detractors will say,
I have something of greater value to add
and adding, make Faith worth nothing
so I will stand on Faith alone
upheld by God the Holy Spirit

Sola Gratia!

the reformers said
Grace alone of God can save us
Unless, as Grace's detractors will say,
I have something of greater value to add
and adding, make Grace worth nothing
so I will stand on Grace alone
upheld by God the Holy Spirit

Solus Christus!

the reformers said
Jesus alone is our Lord, Saviour and King
Unless, as Christ's detractors will say,
I have something of greater value to add
and adding, make Christ worth nothing
so I will stand on Christ alone
upheld by God the Holy Spirit

Soli Deo Gloria!

the reformers said
Glory to God alone is our goal
Unless, as God's detractors will say,
I have something of greater value to add
and adding, make God worth nothing
so I will give glory to God alone
upheld by God the Holy Spirit

March 14-15, 2022

I Cried
March 14th

I cried myself to sleep last night
or tried
to fall asleep while I was crying
but couldn't
find sleep one way or the other
until
pain drained away my strength
let me
sleep until the sudden morning
woke me
no better than the night before

I Didn't Cry
March 15th

I didn't cry at all the next night
same life
different mind, sleep came easy
despite
loneliness, isolation, depression
my pillow
softly welcomed my sleepy head
let me
sleep until the welcome morning
woke me
no worse than the night before

March 14-23, 2022

a broken dream can't lift the heart
a pulled bootstrap can't lift the smile
a word unspoken can't lift the soul

a hand unheld can't save a life

March 14, 2022

I was going to write:
"I can't stand anymore"
but then I realized this:
writing it proved I could

March 11, 2022

you might praise your God given natural immunity
you might trust Him to keep you safe from infection
you'd be right, too, to a degree
for we have been fearfully and wonderfully made
yet I'd bet you'd be happy to see your doctors masked
as you were falling asleep beneath their knife

March 11-12, 2022

It Was Worth It

there were those who have
disdained
those of us who wore
our masks

there were those who have
rebuked
those of us who took
the vaccine

I want to be angry
but I can't be
I can only think this

if my mask
has helped even one stay alive
it was worth it

if the vaccine
has helped even one stay healthy
it was worth it

it was worth
every fogged up lens
it was worth
every bandaged arm
it was worth
every look of scorn
it was worth
every word of disdain
it was worth
every day at home

it was worth it
it was all worth it
every bit of it was worth it

if only one could be helped
by the ridicule I received
that one was worth it

if only one could be saved
by the discomfort I took on
that one was worth it

they were worth every minute of it
and I would do all of it all over again

in a heartbeat, without a moment's hesitation
and I would thank and praise my God
that such a thing were even possible

March 10, 2022

Words Spoken Over My Bible this Morning

Father, thank you for this book
thank you that it explains what I see

and later

thank you that it reveals You to me
thank you that it reveals me to myself
thank you that it reveals Your love for all

March 9, 2022

sometimes I find myself wondering
if the one of me they want around
is not the me who writes the poem
but the me who tries to stay alive
after they didn't notice the words

March 9, 2022

I was not what I am
but less, so much less
for I had said "No!"

I am not what I was
but more, so much more
for I have said "Yes!"

I am not what I will be
but less, so much less
for He has not yet come

I will not be what I am
but more, so much more
for He will take me home

March 8, 2022

Pettiness

who knows how many dead in Ukraine
or injured, or fleeing, it's hard to say
how many lives have been uprooted
changed from what they were before
(this is a tough transition to get right)
my towel is yellow and blue and white
I see it, use it, several times every day
and every time it reminds me of Myira
it's petty yet I struggle for proper tears

March 8-May 10, 2022

A Poem for the End of the World

Remember
it's the end of the world
not the end of us

Be careful
it's the end of the world
big things are coming

Be watchful
it's the end of the world
false saviours will lie

Be hopeful
it's the end of the world
God will crush evil

Be certain
it's the end of the world
stand on solid ground

Be prepared
it's the end of the world
all things will be changed

Remember
it's the end of the world
not the end of us

March 7, 2022

Blind Spot

Francis was so determined the Earth needed to be old
he looked at the days and years of Genesis one and five
said the numbers don't mean what they say, but less
and stepped over the facts to maintain his confusion
yet as he looked at all the other chapters in Genesis
said the words mean exactly what they say, and more
pondering over the facts to be guided to a conclusion

needless to say, reading Scheaffer can be befuddling
if one blindly believes every word he wrote
some of them will be the best words you'll ever read
while others are not worth thinking about at all

and if one as wise as he was willing to be deceived
then what of me, what of me?

March 7, 2022

The LORD Reigns!

the LORD reigns!
from His throne in the highest Heaven
He reigns with justice and mercy
let all creation praise Him!

the LORD reigns!
above the expanse of His creation
He reigns in majesty and honour
let all creation praise Him!

the LORD reigns!
beyond all plot and scheme of man
He reigns with uncontestable power
let all creation praise Him!

the LORD reigns!
let His own rejoice in His love
to the glory of their magnificent King
let all that breathes praise Him!

March 5, 2022

I have a friend (no, wait, wrong word
I had a friend, I only know him now)
who speaks as though he speaks for
God, so high up the ladder God speaks
to him direct, like He would a prophet
or apostle or saint, condemning others
left, right and center of where he stands
but prophets, apostles and saints rarely
condemned without also speaking hope
for God is merciful as well as righteous

March 4, 2022

someone said, in evident hope
"The nation is turning back to God!"
kneeling beside stationary trucks
parked beside a static parliament

hope is hope yet at times misplaced

Hezekiah, too, could have rejoiced
Israel's enthusiastic returning to God
unaware his own son would destroy
all that had been turned back to God

March 4-5, 2022

the prophets of God said words like this
doom, despair and horrors unimaginable
will befall those who despise the LORD

in the same breath the prophets said this
those who trust in the LORD will be saved
they will be called children of the LORD

on the one hand, death; on the other, life
one's reward of condemnation or blessing
determined by one's hate or love for God

March 3-4, 2022

cruising Twitter this evening, I stumbled across this prayer
 "Oh Allah, change me until You love me."
and thought how sad it must be to live life uncertain
never knowing how you stood with the god you serve
 until it's far too late to make amends

 this is the difference!

 the unknowing is all the difference
 this is what separates my faith from any other
I do not serve a capricious god, a god whose love is earned
 a god with whom my standing is not known
 until it's far too late to make amends

 I serve God
 the one, true, holy God
 the perfect God above all gods
 whose love for me precedes my change
 whose love for me makes sure my salvation
 whose love for me is undeserved and without end

March 2-3, 2022

when you look up
if you look higher than the sky
you'll see the hand that spreads it

when you look down
if you look deeper than the soil
you'll see the hand that forms it

when you look out
if you look further than the line
you'll see the hand that draws it

when you look in
if you look closer than your heart
you'll see the hand that saves it

March 2, 2022

Michelangelo is reputed to have said
when asked how he sculpted his 'David'
"It's easy. You just chip away
all the stone that doesn't look like David."

whether this is true or hear-say
this is a fine example for the Christian

if you want to look like Jesus it's easy
you just chip away
at anything that doesn't look like Jesus

March 1-2, 2022

Liberty

when all you chase is liberty
anarchy chases at your heel
your line lies beyond my own
other's lines lie beyond yours
our law is continually pushed
beyond where it's best let be

cries for either liberty or death
usually have a single outcome
despite how sweet the interim

March 1, 2022

"Today is Not a Day for Celebrating"
A view from the other side of a friend's Facebook post

but today is a day for celebration
for today can be a day for redemption
for many Canadians today is a day for grace

today begins the end of these pandemic years
the hardest parts of which have been:
the scorn of friends and loved ones
our ridicule for being dupes
we have been vilified
we have been called names
we have been called apostates
we have had our loyalty to Canada
our very loyalty to God
questioned because of our "manipulated views"
too many thought we should be disavowed
for our obedience to mandates
for our willingness to be vaccinated
for the way we cared for our neighbours
yet what hurt most was that brothers, sisters
could look us in the eye
or across our Facebook post
and without concern for our soul
could with straight face tell us
we were condemned for our acquiescence
to the powers of God above us

yes, today can be a day for celebrating, for
today can be the day when reconciliation begins
today can be the day we allow God to heal

may God strengthen us
may God restore our community
may God bring redemption to this land

"Let no unwholesome word come out of your mouth, but if there is any good word for edification according to the need of the moment, say that, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. All bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and slander must be removed from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

Ephesians 4:29-32

March 1, 2022

I Wonder

I wonder what it's like, living in your mind
I know that, at times, my own is no joy
but yours, I don't know how you stand it
I couldn't, not with all that anger and hate
not with all that suspicion and paranoia
churning and swirling in chaotic pattern
it looks like you don't have any joy at all
none of the ample reassurances of our faith
and I don't know how you can stand at all
I couldn't, doubt, suspicion and uncertainty
all those worries about conspiracy and plot
it'd pile up, it'd put me down, it'd crush me
I can't imagine how you can stand it at all
standing all alone with your fears like that
I just know that I couldn't do it, not at all

February 23-24, 2022

Sides

I've taken a stand
though I'm not taking sides
I'm just asking a question
this question

How do they feel?

I wonder how they feel
those who've lost a love to COVID
when they see we who should love best of all
display anything but love
in our ceaseless complainings of

Conspiracy!
New World Order!
Great Reset!
Mandates!
Fascism!
Follow the Science!

whether these are true
or untrue
do we think
do we really think
that those who've lost a love to COVID
they would hear our heartless words
and by them be drawn to God?

February 22, 2022

I'm broken
You're broken
We're all broken
beyond any ability
of any self-help book
to repair ourselves
we have neither
tool nor glue
to fix us

it's hopeless

thank God
our salvation is His work
not ours

February 22, 2022

you want to think
to hope
to really believe
that it isn't
but you know
deep down
you've always known
it's you

you want to think
to hope
to really believe
you can be fixed
but you know
deep down
you've always known
you can't

February 22, 2022

did you know this?

if you ask Google why nobody cares about you
Tony Robbins (and others) will tell you reasons
why it's all your fault and what to do about it
so you'll not feel alone and uncared for anymore

what you'll be asking yourself later
(not Google, if Tony's the best it can do)
is this
I've done those things, why does nobody care still

February 22 - March 24, 2022

why would we condemn the un-Godly
that they do not govern righteously

why would we hold them to the standard
that they reject and ignore

why would we be surprised
that they rule against the love of God

and

why would we not weep
that they have not our Hope

more to the point
and
more close to home

why should we condemn the Godless man
that he does not act in a Godly way

why should we hold him to the standard
that we rejoice and adore

why should we be surprised
that he does not know the love of God

and

why should we not weep
that he has not our Hope

even more to the point
and
even closer to home

how can I reach the Godless man
that he may see the Godly way

how can I lead him to the standard
that he may rejoice and adore

how can I encourage him
that he may know the love of God

and

how can I not sing
when he has found his Hope

February 21, 2022

Show-and-Tell

I came in to show-and-tell you something
but you didn't seem to care to see-and-hear
and later, when the pain subsided, and I asked
you said I'd not been excited enough about it
and that made you show an indifferent interest
I heard where you were coming from, and saw
you believed your reasoning to be reasonable
and yet I couldn't help thinking to myself that
all you'd have to do for your own show-and-tell
to be something that I'd want to see-and-hear
would be to come to me to show it and tell it
no minimum threshold of excitement, just you

February 20 - March 13, 2022

we spoke of Jesus' values and actions
you and I the other day

predictably, the word "define" arose
as if thinking His character was unknown

also predictably, so did the word "justify"
as one thought another sought to confirm an idea

perhaps, you and I, we should be less concerned
with wondering if Jesus would have stood in Ottawa
than we should be of our standing with Him

perhaps, you and I, we should be less concerned
with the immediacy of our conclusion-jumping
than we should be with His call to be kind

February 16 - November 9, 2022

Do Your Own Research

"Please, Do Your Own Research" you say, most often
when those you say it to disagree with what you think
as if to "do our own research" could cause us agree

do you know how presumptuous your saying that sounds?
don't you think that I'm as likely to be as offended by this
as you would be if I were to say these same words to you

"Do your own research," you throw it out so casually
as if assuming I haven't already done my own research
my different opinion from yours doesn't make me wrong
nor does your different opinion from mine make you right
have you even stopped to consider that my own research
was not as narrow as you suppose, but wider than yours
or that I'm operating with a different bias than you think
or that my disagreement with you is deeper than it looks
my opinions rising from my own research are not invalid
simply because they are not opinions the same as yours
(though they may be invalid, that is not the reason why)
you should not assume I've not done my own research
when I've concluded a different opinion than your own

February 16, 2022

you may have the best side of this debate
you may have a grasp on truth all have missed
you may be truly speaking for our God
your message of love be strong and genuine
yet when you misappropriate Scripture
yet as you take actions the Bible rejects
yet as you speak slanderously of others
your message of love is weakened and diluted

February 16, 2022

Google Search Devotional

needing some inspiration
I typed
"random Bible verse of the day"
into Google this morning
and was given this

"But let all who take refuge in You be glad,
let them ever sing for joy
and may You shelter them,
that those who love Your name may exult in you."

but it seemed hardly appropriate for the mood I was in
then I glanced down at the Bible in my lap
it had fallen open to this

"My soul clings to the dust;
revive me according to Your word.
I have told of my ways, and You have answered me;
teach me Your statutes.
Make me understand the way of Your precepts,
and I will meditate on Your wonders.
My soul weeps because of grief;
strengthen me according to Your word.
Remove the false way from me,
and graciously grant me Your Law.
I have chosen the faithful way;
I have placed Your judgments before me.
I cling to Your testimonies;
Lord, do not put me to shame!
I shall run the way of Your commandments,
for You will enlarge my heart."

which I appreciated
for touching me where I needed it
later on, talking to my son about this
he said

"The first verse you were given was right after all,
God did make you glad."

On the Night He was Betrayed

Jesus, on the night He was betrayed
broke His bread, poured His wine
became Himself our Passover Lamb

He didn't complain that Herod was a tyrant
even though Herod was a tyrant

He didn't complain that the rulers were evil
even though the rulers were evil

He didn't complain that Judas deceived Him
even though Judas did deceive Him

He didn't complain that His trial was unjust
even though it was a travesty of justice

Jesus didn't complain at all, but prayed
pleading with His Father for any way out
and for the courage to do His Father's will

February 14, 2022

A Lesson in Anger
from "All Things Bright and Beautiful"

never
never before in all my life
have I seen so many people
who might possibly be right
make their points with such hate
insults flung left and right
leaders chastised, threatened
compared to Biblical despots
even God has been dragged in
the holiest One of all is abused
for the sake of selfish gain

never
never before in all my life
have I seen so much hope
so well misplaced

February 13-28, 2022

I can argue out from myself and arrive at God
it's very easy, it's not all that difficult at all
(as long as I can avoid the lies of my culture
and philosophy's ever doubtful initial states)
all I need to know to do it is know that I am here
that's it, that's all I need to know to know God is
it does not follow that God exists because I exist
just that my existing proves that God must also

looking at myself I see something far too complex
for time and chance to have agreed upon
no matter how much time or how many chances
my existence, my being, is not a happenstance
you could never throw an infinity of atoms up
and have a thing like me come down even once
not even once, no matter how often you tried
I wouldn't ever happen by accident, I just couldn't
to claim that dust and ticks and stars and tocks
had the least part in making me strains credulity
to argue that I am a glorified ape only slightly less so
for to get from ape to me is as far big a jump
as the jump from nothing at all to everything that is
or the jump from non-life to life of any form
the only jump, the only possible jump, is to God
His the only power, He the only reason for me

looking at my nature I see that the God who made me
must for the same reason as my being be a god of love
for those better parts of me must come from somewhere
again, any number of chances and any amount of time
fail, abysmally, at making anything like my personality
neither these impersonal infinities nor judgmental deities
have even the slightest capability of sharing with me
even the smallest part of a personality that doesn't exist
no, that I can love a friend, be lover to my wife
raise my children, carefully teach and feed them well
proves beyond the faintest shadow of the merest doubt
that the God who made me must be personal and loving
it cannot be any other way, there is no viable alternative
for as absolute nothing cannot beget the least of anything
so too an absolute impersonality cannot beget a mind
that thinks and cares and loves and laughs
all these must grow from God's greater source
mere time and chance and hope and wish will not do

and if, in dispute, you say "All truth is relative"
were you even right one of us must be wrong
you cannot add my truth to your lie and say "Done!"
for either thought is in deathly fight with the other

February 13, 2022

Blessed

I am a man who has been and is being
tremendously blessed

I am a man who has never not known God's
tremendous blessing

I am a man who is able to follow God because He
tremendously blesses

February 13, 2022

Freedom

James and John and Peter and Paul
and all the other early evangelists
they also preached "freedom"

Freedom from fear.
Freedom from the penalty of sin.
Freedom to be a child of God.
Freedom to have joy in all circumstances.

True freedom.

Freedom of the soul.

February 12-23, 2022

Facebook asks "What's on your mind Pete?"
assuming what's on my mind is worth a share
this question is a tempting invitation
asking me to wander into dangerous places
what's on my mind is not always good
my answer is not always worth sharing

what's on my mind? often it's
something other
than what you'd hear me say
something other
than what you'd see me write

fortunately for you, and for me
the grace of God stands between
what's on my mind, and
what my mouth and my hands
say

February 10, 2022

Are You a Christian?

"Are you a Christian?
Be prepared to tell me why.
I say this in love,
if you can't,
maybe you aren't."

I read this on a friend's Facebook page some time ago
("Hello friend!")
have been thinking about it ever since that day
I remember thinking of the presumption required
(or the careless choice of words, perhaps)
to even think to say such a thing as this
"Be prepared to tell me why."
I remember thinking "How very curious"
that I was accountable to them

as if any one of us could supplant God

February 10, 2022

Good!

I met a man on my walk today
we exchanged our "Hi"s
and when he asked me how I was
I told him "Good!"
a moment later I realized
I had meant it

Selective Interpretation

God told Noah to build an Ark
giving him explicit instructions
(three hundred cubits long, by
fifty cubits wide, by
thirty cubits high)
and Noah built it as instructed
and whenever we draw Noah's Ark
we draw it as a lovely little ship

God told Moses to build an Ark
giving him explicit instructions
(two and a half cubits long, by
one and a half cubits wide, by
one and a half cubits high)
and Moses built it as instructed
and whenever we draw Moses' Ark
we draw it as a rectangular box

and I wonder why
why do we interpret God differently
when we draw Noah's Ark
than when we draw Moses' Ark

Jerry Can Theology

I saw on Facebook the other day, this
"You can have my jerry can
when you pluck it from my cold dead fingers!"
and thought that they had said it wrong
it should have been said more like this
"You can take my jerry can, here,
would you like to take my other one too?"

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. And He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying "... You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I say to you, do not show opposition against an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other toward him also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you."

Matthew 5:1-2 ... 38-42

February 9, 2022

Democracy

this is not a democracy that you're protecting
this is a democracy that you're destroying
parking yourselves to disrupt others' lives
until higher others acquiesce to your will
you say that you're protecting democracy
but you're not, you're not doing that at all
what you're doing is demanding anarchy
complaining that you didn't get your way
striving to make your anger so obnoxious
that others, exhausted by your tears, relent

February 9, 2022

Trust

in whom will you trust, oh man
the creature
or
the Creator
the God all men will worship
this day or the last

February 9, 2022

Zacharias

I wonder how Zacharias felt, then, on the eighth day
and maybe even all those days the last nine months
silenced by Gabriel, who stood in the presence of God
watching as his neighbours spoke to him by signs
did he long to tell them "I can hear you perfectly well
it's my mouth that's been taken from me, not my ears"
we don't know if he teased them about this later on
smiling with fatherly tenderness upon the son of his old age
all we know is when he could speak again he sang to God

February 8-9, 2022

today was not an easy day
making it to now was hard
I'm not certain I'm here yet
so many things happened
so much of it mind-draining
pile on the emotional 'stuff'
and I was in no shape to be
any more than a vegetable

February 8, 2022

Respected Minds

there are many I know
who will disagree with me
I like that
it does me a world of good
to bounce my thought
off of others' thought
to test my own ideas
against others' ideas
to measure my mind
by minds I respect
whose careful reason
I can appreciate
and, as will often happen
we continue disagree
I ask myself
"Where am I wrong?"
(it's my default to think I'm the one who's wrong)
not resting in my search for truth
until I find it

February 8, 2022

What Kind of Witness

I've been watching your words for the past two years
or more
(there was some doubtful stuff before COVID too
I've not just been careful with you since the pandemic started)
every day a new argument
every day a new complaint
against mandates forcing you to wear masks
against guidelines suggesting social distancing
against governments imposing their will on us
against any who don't see things as you see things
for two whole years I've seen little more than anger
and it's given me cause to wonder
what do the unsaved see when they see you
whom God has saved
constantly complaining against these things
most will agree are best intentions to keep us alive
your angry words have made me wonder
what kind of witness do you have
who professes to follow the God of love
how do you give His love its hands
if all you ever do is rant
how do you help anyone see Him
Who is so poorly seen in you

I Weep

I weep

so much feeling
so little heart

unchained emotion
hurls unbridled words
hate eagerly shoves love
to the edge, to the abyss
mercy so far removed
its beauty is scarce remembered
trip-wire tempers explode
throw hostility, derision and disdain
on any who dare dispute
indomitable opinion
ideologically perverted witness
saves none of those who die

how many must die
how many must be destroyed
by this emotion
by these words
by this hate
by these tempers
by this corrupted testimony

what soul has ever been led to God
by hate fueled words
what soul has ever felt God's love
beneath unrelenting anger
what soul has ever seen God's mercy
in upraised threatening fist

what soul can even know God's freedom
when tangled in chains of hate

February 7, 2022

Sick. Of. It!
(a rant)

I'm sick of it
I don't mind saying so
I'm just sick of it
it's been a long time
I get that
I live here too
it's getting stale
stuck at home all this time
not seeing smiles all this time
not shaking hands all this time
not hugging people all this time
but you people
you people who so insult
our leaders
our authorities
our police
calling them
"Brown Shirts!"
"Nazis!"
"Fascists!"
"Waffen SS!"
"Communists!"
you have no idea
you haven't any clue at all
you have completely evaded history
its lessons have eluded you
what's happening may be bad
it may be getting worse
or it may end
tomorrow
but either way
what we have now
is nowhere near
it's not anywhere close
to any of those evils
it's so far removed
it's not even a shadow
not even a hint
of the fear
in the thirties

I'm sick of it!
I tell you
I'm just sick of it!

there are larger issues at stake

than your rights
things more deserving your tears
than your freedoms
before you mourn their loss
however poorly perceived
fight for these
fight for your neighbour
fight for those
who have no water
who have no home
who will not see life

your endless complaints
over losing your rights
over losing your freedoms
are mindbogglingly selfish
are absolutely ludicrous
they carry not a feather's weight
if you have not wept for these
if you have not fought for these
if you have not prayed for these
who have never enjoyed
who have no hope to enjoy
what you
so foolishly
claim was lost

it's one thing to see this
in the lives of others
to whom God is a stranger
but you
you are God's own children
He is no stranger to you
you should know better
how can you so easily forsake
the example of our Saviour

your selfishness is unbelievable
it is appalling

and I'm sick of it!

February 6, 2022

I did not want to go skiing
I did not want to go at all
yesterday
was carried along on the wave
of Beth and Andy's enthusiasm
it was cold and I was warm
and my books were calling me
so was the poem I'd set aside
to finish at a quiet moment
and it's so hard to try to even
want to leave the house
some days
that even when we got there
boots toed into the skis
pleasure was not at all nearby
delight was distantly remote
and joy a determined stranger

I did not want to go skiing
I did not want to go at all
yesterday
even though I'd brought my camera
I told them I'd not be using it
mind and body in no shape for joy
but after far too short a time
I noticed the trees
covered in this week's snow
stood far too lovely to ignore
I noticed the sun
ablaze on a field of perfect blue
touched the snow like gems
and the camera, reluctantly
found its way out of its bag
and my smile, reluctantly
found its way onto my face

no
I did not want to go skiing
I did not want to go at all
but that was yesterday

February 6, 2022

Grace

not one thing
not one thing of all I possess
is of my own

every thing
every thing of all I possess
is of Your hand

oh my God
oh my great good God
thank you

thank you for Your grace
on which my life is found

thank you for Your hands
by which my life is blessed

thank you for Your love
in which my life is saved

February 5-7, 2022

we may speak the words of truth
our opinions be perfectly reasoned
our understanding be as the sages'
but our proofs at times are abysmal
are careless mis-truths too appalling
for any consideration beyond rebuke

what place have lies and deceptions
within the speech of the righteous

Both "[Lies](#)" and "Truth Unblemished" were written in response to comments I've seen posted about the recent Trucker's Convoys protesting our various levels of governments' reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic. I have Christian friends and acquaintances who are vocal in their support of the convoys and their opposition to government mandates and others who are vocal in their opposition to these. Both will at times cite proofs in support of their opinions that are, at best, questionable and, at worst, unrighteous. Whatever side we find ourselves on of any debate we find ourselves in there is no place in the Christian's argument for deception. Truth does not need a lie to support it.

Lies!

you can see the most doubtful things on social media viewpoints as diverse as a shotgun blast at long range likewise missing the target more often than hitting it "it's a free country" they say "believe what you wish" true enough, and sometimes beliefs may even be right but even so, truth does not need to be supported by lie

Both "Lies" and "[Truth Unblemished](#)" were written in response to comments I've seen posted about the recent Trucker's Convoys protesting our various levels of governments' reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic. I have Christian friends and acquaintances who are vocal in their support of the convoys and their opposition to government mandates and others who are vocal in their opposition to these. Both will at times cite proofs in support of their opinions that are, at best, questionable and, at worst, unrighteous. Whatever side we find ourselves on of any debate we find ourselves in there is no place in the Christian's argument for deception. Truth does not need a lie to support it.

February 3, 2022

Pastor Aaron Rock Said This ...

"Ottawa belongs to all Canadians. If you live in the capital city you have the unique privilege of sharing this city with the rest of Canada. Don't tell protesters to 'Go Home' - it's our city too."

he did
he really did
he said it in a post

reading it yesterday
I stood astounded
I was unbelieving
I asked myself

"How?"

how can one of God's
speak words like this
what love lives in him
that he can so callously
speak to his neighbour

Ottawa may be our nation's capital but that does not give non-resident Canadians any right beyond the right to refer to Federal locations within the city as "Ours;" the city itself belongs to its residents. It must belong to them or they are hostages in their own homes.

February 3, 2022

dude, seriously?
you can say such things?
how can you not see?

February 2, 2022

Jesus is not a Tee-shirt logo
He doesn't belong on your sweater
or on your favourite pair of jeans
He's not a design for your purse
nor is He a catchy bumper sticker
or the punch of your clever line
He is God, our Creator, our Saviour
we do Him grave injustice to do else
than offer Him our highest respect

February 2, 2022

On the Raising of Lazarus

Many of the Jews saw what He had done and believed,
but some went to tell the Pharisees what He had done.

John 11:45-46

imagine being there

imagine seeing Jesus call Lazarus from Death
Jesus, Mary, Martha, and others stand
the stone cold and uncaring before them
tears flow
Jesus speaks
His voice rings with authority
the stone is moved at His command
and Lazarus
LAZARUS!!!
he steps out from the tomb
he'd been put in four days before
out into the broad light of day the once dead man
WALKS!
tears quick turned to cries of joy

imagine being there

imagine being so moved by His power
so overwhelmed by His glory and majesty

imagine being there

imagine seeing Death flee at His command
just as quickly as blindness fled
or water turned so easily into wine

imagine being there

imagine standing face-to-face with the Son of God
and your best choice is to be a tattletale

just imagine

February 1, 2022

I'm not often mistaken for the Oracle of Delphi
for in order to be thought wise
I'd also have to be heard, but then
I'm not often mistaken for E. F. Hutton either

February 1, 2022

Thoughts on Thoughts on a Facebook Post

even the simplest search for
Christian
and
Protest
reveals a universality of opinion
am I alone?
am I the only one?
in opposition to the opinion of my own
is there no other?
is there no other seeing as I see?
Moses is positioned against Pharaoh
as are Shiphrah and Puah
Ezekiel, Isaiah and Jeremiah
against Israel and other nations
Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
against Nebuchadnezzar
Daniel against Darius
Jesus against the Sanhedrin
even Paul
escaping Damascus
or Peter
escaping prison
both escaping certain death
all are brought forward as examples
to show us how we can oppose our rulers
yet stand faithfully with God

and again
I can't see it
I just can't see it
I am blind to what others see so clearly
I cannot see in their examples
I am ignorant of the proof of their opinions
I see Abraham, having been promised Canaan
not reaching out to grasp it for himself
but living in his tents in the Promised Land
I see David, having been promised Israel
not reaching out to grasp it for himself
but sparing his king's life at every chance
I see Jesus, being in the form of God
not reaching out to grasp Godhood for Himself
but taking on the form of a servant

I ask God for wisdom
I plead with Him for understanding
I beg Him for a reason, any reason
to do more than to love my neighbour

to do more than to seek justice
to do more than to humbly walk with Him
and it never comes
it just never comes
not so much as a whisper
speaks correction to my ear
I can do no more than believe
that my understanding is not false
(either that
or I am deaf to His answer
I am blind to His light
I am ignorant of His truth
and I may as well not live)

for as much as I study
my Bible
for as much as I try to understand
their opinion
for as much as I try to change my mind
to adopt their point of view
I can't do it
I just can't do it
I simply cannot do it
I can see nothing more in their Biblical examples
than people who were faithful to God
in every circumstance of life
who chose to serve God
in their every breath
who stood against the whims of man
not to protest against man, but
to stand faithful to God
who stood against the laws of rulers
not to rebel against rulers, but
to stand in obedience to God
who stood steadfast and true
against the torrent of mannish whim

I can see no more that people
who's sole desire in life
was not to overthrow kings
was not to replace authorities
was not to establish dominions, but
was to live in obedience to The King

Franco Bitts has an interesting take on whether or not Christian should protest [here](#)

January 30 - February 6, 2022

"thank you for your integrity and courage"
someone says of another
in support of an idea of much debated merit
but on the other side stands another other
in certain possession of integrity and courage
uncertain the other others are aware of either

Those on either side of any debate may both
have "integrity and courage;" what is also
needed is the wisdom to ensure that one's
integrity and courage are in the right place

January 28-30, 2022

God's Blessing, God's Forgiveness

they may be doing what you approve
you may really enjoy knowing they do it
but your approval doesn't default as God's
nor does it follow that your blessing is also His
He does not bless simply because you, or I, approve
we live as we can bless as He blesses

they may be doing what you despise
you may even condemn them for doing it
but your sentencing doesn't default as God's
nor does it follow that your judgement is also His
He does not condemn simply because you, or I, despise
we live as we forgive as He forgives

I wrote this poem on seeing the various reactions to the "Freedom Convoy" that made it to Ottawa this past weekend; I have friends, brothers and sisters on either side of the road. Some will bless those in the convoy for standing up for freedom and human rights. Some will condemn those in the convoy for their reprehensible words and actions. Both speak as though God will bless and condemn right along with them. But that's not how it works. God does not bless a thing simply because we're pleased with it, nor does God condemn a thing simply because we despise it. God blesses and condemns on His own measure, not ours. We are to follow His lead, not He ours. By doing His will we live.

Graceless and Godless

a Dr. Macarthur sermon was pulled yesterday
YouTube's community standards were offended
hate speech and all that, despite it's being truth
but now my brothers and sisters are crying foul
loudly criticizing YouTube for being what it is
absent from God and therefore devoid of grace
which leads me to wonder why should we expect
the graceless and Godless to act any other way
but gracelessly and Godlessly, as if with no hope
which is what they have, no hope, despite smiles
affirming equality and tolerance for all concerned
(despite their tolerance being a frail construction)
but life does not end with equality and tolerance
but with separation: pain and tear or love and joy
should we, who have hope, condemn the hopeless
should not we, who have hope, instead rejoice that
He who gives hope can more easily be seen in us

January 18-19, 2022

Nicodemus really should have known, that night, alone with Jesus what Jesus really meant when He said "You must be born again." He must have known, no more puzzled than he wasn't before what Jesus meant when He said "The wind blows where it wishes, you hear it but you can't see it, so are all who are born of the Spirit." He had to have known, for as Jesus said, he was of Israel's teachers, he could not have not known at least some of what Jesus was saying. Man's rebirth through God's immortal Spirit permeates the Scripture. for Jeremiah knew, and Ezekiel and King David and even King Saul (just before he became King, on his way home from meeting Samuel) and Samuel and Moses and Joseph and Abraham, each of them knew that for one to be born of the Spirit is to relinquish one's self to God is to allow His creating in them a softened heart, fully attuned to Him. But even if he didn't know, even if the Scripture spoke nothing to him, that night, alone with Jesus, Nicodemus had the best of all teachers.

January 15, 2022

The Weight of Cuteness

the weight of Milo's cuteness
holds my son to our couch
the gravity of Andy's warmth
holds our pup to where he lies
one will not move, even for
interesting sounds in the Kitchen
the other cannot move, even though
he's significantly more large

January 15-16, 2022

I do not know, precisely
how the things came to be
when God told them, "Be!"

I do not know, precisely
how the things happened
when God told them, "Now!"

His voice may have thundered across the nothing
even His irrevocable whisper would have been sufficient
for the accomplishment of His purpose

His eyes may have glinted with delight that He would do
what no other in all creation could ever hope to do
even if given thirteen-point-eight billion years

sufficient for me to know this
all things are as He speaks them
all things happen as He wills them

sufficient for me to know this
He is love and without fault
beyond this I need no more

January 12, 2022

why a person who's name's on a marquee
should speak words more important to me
than before, when no one knew their name
 baffles me
do marquees grant wisdom alongside fame
grant them now know things we cannot see
how is one wiser by a name on a marquee

January 12, 2022

this place, it is not a good place
it's too dark, too sad, too alone
it is not at all a good place to be
the only good that one could say
about this not very good place is
how well it reveals one's reliance
on God Who is at all times good
this alone may be its redemption

January 12, 2022

Fool

I am constantly, continually, fooled
the way seems so solid, so secure
yet turns to dust beneath my step
crumbles to undependable fragility
just as I begin to trust my life to it
I am catapulted into the maelstrom
I am tossed and tumbled into trouble
unsure of any certain stable ground
on which I can be sure I will stand

January 7, 2022

Refraction

this morning, for an instant
for just the briefest time
the end table was blue
not its habitual grey
I couldn't tell if it was
a refraction of light
or
a refraction of reality
but it's grey again, so
whatever it was, I'm home

January 2-July26, 2022

another Sunday, another service
in tears again as men I cannot trust
presume to tell what the Bible says
whose favoured thoughts, careless,
interpose themselves between me
and the Truth for which I hunger

I am in tears, these men cannot do it
cannot teach God's life-giving Truth
and leave God's words plainly stand
but must add to His their glib overlay
obscure His gold by their lead veneer
hide Truth beneath their doubtful garnish

and I find myself in a difficult place
I long to honour He Who made me
I want to respect the men before me
I must obey the word of the God I love
and allow them officiate my obedience
pray His love redeem their carelessness

January 4-7, 2022

all these words
that so casually say
You deserve to be ...
they contradict all I know
I don't deserve at all
it's either wages or
an amazing gift

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23

December 31, 2021

standing at the cusp of this new year
one step shy of the fresh and the new
hopefully anticipating this countdown
to midnight's bold inaugural strokes
will sweep aside the dust of the old
forgetful for the moment that it is I
I who carry the shadows of my past
who will cross that unworn threshold
bring into the new year all that I was
to be formed into what I will become

December 30-31, 2021

Monarch Testimony

the fact that a Monarch Butterfly can
start a journey to a place it will never see
nor its children, nor even its grandchildren
yet they continue this generational odyssey
year after year after year after year always
from the same beginning, to the same end
is just part of my assurance that God is

December 29, 2021

Crosswalk

at the crosswalk
being a pedestrian
I had the right of way
but the car was coming
though the driver saw me
(their little wave showed it)
so I paused, let them go first
sure
I gave up my right of way
but
my body remains intact
and
I think that's a win

This could easily have been a poem discussing
the lack of regard some drivers seem to have
for people on sidewalks that they must cross.
Whose urgent need to be THERE right NOW
pre-empts any consideration of public safety.
But once I started it didn't turn out that way.

Trap

her poetry may not be as good
as the world tries to think it is
but I can say nothing

but even if I could, I couldn't
for she is a woman
and I am not

but even if I could, I couldn't
for she is of colour
and I am not

but even if I could, I couldn't
for she is a young person
and I am not

but even if I could, I couldn't
for she is a laureate
and I am not

but even if I could, I couldn't
for she is in a trap
and I am not

December 24, 2021

Reflections on Christmas Blessings

As I write these words
I am at home safe and warm
Christmas trinkets adorn our tree
glittering gifts abundant below
my body is healthy, enjoying rest
from clearing last night's snow

As I write these words
my wife perfects tomorrow's feast
my children are safe in their rooms
playing or working at whatever it is
they do the day before Christmas
happy sounds fill this home

As I write these words
deadly infections devastate the planet
deadly floods devastate Malaysia
deadly storms devastate the Philippines
deadly fires devastate Osaka
deadly neighbours devastate communities

As I write these words
I and mine ponder tomorrow's bounty
others and theirs weep for their loss
I and mine know overwhelming blessing
others and theirs endure lives destroyed
dear God in Heaven, how can this be?

December 26, 2021

Ron

my first thought was
"No more hugs"
and I was sad

my next thought was
how your smile glorified so many Sundays
I can't remember them all

I can remember only this
you were my blessing
the smile when mine went missing

I thank our God for you
I thank our God for the gift of knowing you
I thank our God we could share this life
I thank our God we will share the next

I will miss you

In fond remembrance of my friend Ron Paul,
who passed away earlier this week.
He was everyone's friend really,
and always greeted everyone with
his glorious smile and a friendly hug.

December 22, 2021

Distracted from Glory

I got so caught up in the details of Jesus' birth
I forgot to remember His coming was a miracle
was to save a man like me, so easily distracted
his Saviour could lie buried under Christmas wrap

December 21-22, 2021

God-given Rights

inconceivably pursued up the Cliffs of Insanity
Inigo Montoya said "You keep using that word,
I do not think it means what you think it means."

but I digress

many brothers and sisters misuse another word
decrying the theft of their God-given rights
by powers neither God nor themselves

as if God has given us any rights beyond these:

the right to enjoy Him and His many gifts
the right to become His beloved child
the right to obey and honour Him
the right to suffer for His glory
the right to inherit His life

not one of these can ever be stolen from us
man can take only what man has given
what God has given no man can ever take

and I regress

they keep using that word
I do not think it means what they think it means

December 20, 2021

a poetry prompt this evening
"When the saddest songs play"
no more than eight lines
okay, so here goes ...

When the saddest songs play
though I weep I will not despair
sadness will not overwhelm
I am held by the greatest joy

Rhetoric

A quarter-after-three

I was wide-eyed and ready-to-go

Four-oh-five

I wanted to get this day a-movin'

Twenty-two-past-five

I couldn't stay in bed any longer

Seven, waking to ringing alarms

I wonder why I'm so exhausted

yet why I'm so much less depressed

than was the more rested me

this week's very dark Monday

December 14-15, 2021

I Am Not A Good Man

I am not a good man
I prove it all the time
to my dissatisfaction

when I'm alone
when I'm not

when I'm doing
when I'm not

when I'm awake
when I'm not

when I'm home
when I'm not

when I'm [*insert anything here*]
when I'm not

I am not nor can I be
a good man
evil corrupts my being

I am and will forever be
a grateful man
that Jesus has my back

December 13, 2021

TSO Messiah

we may not get to go to the TSO on Friday
it depends on how fast Omicron is moving
this concert's been on hold for two years
(Dan and Kim gifted it to us in 2019)
and for a while I was concerned we'd lose it
but TSO gave us a rain-check for Messiah
and we're supposed to be going on Friday
as I said, it depends on COVID Omicron
and how fast it's moving through Toronto
but I don't care about losing it any more
it's only money and I already know Him
the Messiah of whom we would've sung
I know Him, I love Him, I have His gift
so I don't care about losing a little ticket
others in my community have lost more

December 13, 2021

Poetic License

they said it was poetry
thus excusing their disbelief
poetry being dis-factual

how must silent lovers weep
for words suddenly lost
unable to speak their hearts

December 13, 2021

Christmas

Christmas has been sneaking in around the edges
in this our two thousand twenty first year of grace
it didn't need to and it shouldn't have had to
but it did, and it has been, but it's still mostly unseen
it's not because they've been trying to keep it out
it's more because they've not been welcoming it in
to be sure, the Advent candles and wreath were put up
along with the weekly families with their artistic words
words prepared for them from another's hand
words which consequently felt odd and fell false
but the carols have been absent, the messages bare
like a Christmas tree at the side of a January road
and I am sad, for I long to sing "Joy to the World!"

December 10-12, 2021

Snowflake

I am continually astounded
that a season so bleak as winter
could own so beautiful a transience
as this diamond glorious on my glove

December 10, 2021

Winter

but I was born for August
I protest
yet winter does not care
winter is not intimidated
by my warm wolly socks
Beth knit and gave to me
she knows I enjoy the cold
as only a summer lover would
winter shows no concern
for my fleecy leather gloves
Beth bought at a craft sale
to care for my frozen hands
winter needs no consolation
for these pleasant reminders
that despite my body's chill
my heart is loved, is warm

December 10, 2021

At the Bottom of it all, God

I really don't know what it's like
I sometimes think I do, but I don't
I really don't have an idea at all
I think I feel often overwhelmed
when uncomprehended sadnesses
cast long dark shadows on my soul
yet they pass and in my right mind
I can't say anything about them
and I really know my life is too grand
to lose myself upon a sea of tears
joy does not fleet, if unseen, is not
made less real for its unseeing
I know, I know beyond remotest doubt
this life I live owns another's envy
love, home, warmth, food, toil
constant unconsidered blessings
and firm beneath the bottom of it all
my reliable unyielding foundation
my hope, my life, my endless joy
God alone!

December 9, 2021

Truth

such talk there is today of truth
her truth, his truth, your truth, my truth
as truth were a thing self-invented
rose on its own of words self-spoke
as truth were a thing we could make
though all we're really good at making
is a thing far less wonderful than truth

December 9, 2021

Space

Captain Kirk went into space
long before William Shatner did
and years beyond ten minutes
yet his second voyage
had me much more excited
than did his first, it gave me joy
to see a hero realize his dreams

December 6, 2021

Stan Lynn, a Remembrance

We talked about you this morning
Fred and I, in the parking lot
after worship was done with being church
had again become part of being alive
Fred said how a good trombone always
sounded better beside a good trumpet
we paused there, for a moment, thinking
how good your trumpet must be sounding now
and how glorious must be your smile
up there, jamming with God's angels
praising He whom you loved while you were with us
with neither tear nor pain to mute or hinder
what your Earthly form so longed to do

December 4, 2021

I've never thrown a tantrum
that didn't become a boomerang
flung flying from sudden release

whoop-whoop-whooping out
to its target

whoop-whoop-whooping back
to its victim

November 24-26, 2021

they call it "Black Friday" because
that's the day the books are balanced
the day that debt will be redeemed

red to black

eleven months of red ink
suddenly flow in vibrant black
shopkeepers and clerks relieved
the burden they bear has been lifted
for now

black to red

a lifetime of black deeds
overwhelmed by flowing red
everyone who believes relieved
their unbearable burden is removed
forever

November 25, 2021

Ignorance

I feel, but I don't know its truth,
that my words are largely ignored
need heed no conversational reply
nor shy receive any gracious cheer
unless spoken in another's voice
which then flow as Heaven spoke

Habakkuk said it best, when he said:

Though the fig tree should not blossom
and there be no fruit on the vines,
though the yield of the olive should fail
and the fields produce no food,
though the flock should be cut off from the fold
and there be no cattle in the stalls,

yet I will exult in the LORD,
I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.

The Lord GOD is my strength,
and He has made my feet like hinds' feet,
and makes me walk on my high places.

Habakkuk knew this to be absolutely true:

it is better to have God and lose everything
than it is to have everything and lose God
far more worthwhile to rejoice in God
than count the blessings on the table

November 25, 2021

Converfrontation

isn't it rather odd
surrounded by sun
bloom-brilliant fields
gloriously clear skies
how one tiny step
aside
can raise towers
fortify battlements
surround them around
with thorny hedge & moat
all to make one's self
unassailable

and

alone

November 24-December 12, 2021

this city intrudes on my photographs
squeezes between words in my poems
it cannot be escaped, it surrounds me
kayaking up (or down) Duffins Creek
or paused on the Millers Creek bridge
or walking along the Waterfront Trail
or looking for the stars on an evening
the presence of this city is unavoidable
its lines, its light, its hustle, its bustle
are everywhere, are not to be ignored
and I wouldn't have it any other way
so what if a streetlamp peers over trees
or a neighbour's roof becomes a skyline
or only the brightest stars dance at night
these may not be the photos Ansel took
in his travels through our wildernesses
nor are these poems that Robert wrote
in his wintry wood of diverging roads
but this city is the frame that I inhabit
it would be rude of me not to let it peek
in around the edges of my photographs
this city holds the rhythm of my step
it would be small of me not to let it in
when it stands at the gate of my words

November 24-25, 2021

NASA just launched another rocket
nothing new there, there've been thousands
except this one, DART, they're aiming at a rock
out there, to keep them from joining us down here
a test of how to defuse a future Armageddon, they say
they don't understand that Armageddon comes after the rock
and many other terrors the blind will not see
will not desire to understand
stopping the rock won't stop Armageddon from coming at all
it won't prevent even one of the preceding terrors
by that time it'll already be far too late

November 24-25, 2021

There is a boy inside the man
who can see a Tiger Moth
(he still calls it a Woolly Bear
or Fuzzy Wuzzy, it depends
on his day's fleeting whimsy)
alone, defenseless on a road
and cuddle it to its other side
the encounter another glory
in his endlessly glorious day

This man, grown around the boy
can also see the Tiger Moth
(but more stranger to whimsy
than to bare stated fact
shrinks to give it another name)
will guide it to the road's shore
in honour of their mutual God
reflecting another's glory
in his relentlessly quiet day

A raging monster lurks in both
though seeing a Tiger Moth
(he wouldn't call it anything
beyond that moment's target
of his ever-seething wrath)
would not help it cross a road
but crush it where it crawled
foul stranger to the glory
brightens his despicable day

November 19-23, 2021

My First Ocean

I still remember my first sight of an ocean
it was the Atlantic, I remember, near Alma
I remember thinking how I couldn't believe
how water that LIVED! could be so lovely

November 19, 2021

If I had known then
what I know now
I would have held you longer
so you couldn't go
to where you ended

Moral of the story:
It's never a bad thing to care
the opportunity may not come again

November 19, 2021

my friend, he greets the world with his smile
it's so honest, so glorious, so ... wonderful
he had to give it to his wife and daughter too
and that's the best part of it, his gift of joy
it's the best kind of goes-around-comes-around
my friend's smile has become perpetual motion

November 15-18, 2021

My Hope

my mind inhabits insecurity
is forever uncertain if what it knows
is best known or not known
mist swirls, obscures reality
do I really know this
or
do I really know that
or
do I know the other thing
a thing not thing at all
I don't know
and
I can't know
and
I never know
it's all so confusing
the only evaluator I own
is not at all reliable
it randomly lies at me
tells me what is, isn't
how would I know?
tells me what isn't, is
how would I not know?
uncertainty precedes my every step
my sense of 'the real' is constantly in doubt
I cannot know where fog and fact diverge

but of this I am certain
I am no determiner of 'the real'
am but an inhabitant of it
my certainty cannot cause it
my uncertainty cannot change it
it is held by a power so far beyond me
a power so incredibly grand
so as to beggar my imagination
and knowing the certain truth
of He who holds both reality
and my fragile wand'ring mind
I know that I am safe

and of this I am even more sure
will come a grand and glorious day
when I will no longer be confused
I will both see and know 'the real'
I will be safe
from every fear and doubt
I will no longer peer through shadows

I will be whole
I will see and I will fully know
He Who held and holds me fast

November 12, 2021

some of the poems i write are too sad
to put on the web as the first to be seen
i have to wait a little while for another
more cheerful, not as hopelessly depressing
to come to life so i can put it up first

November 12, 2021

What If ... ?

what if ...

every letter I wrote were a scar
my body bleeding ink for blood

what if ...

every word I wrote were a tear
my eyes weeping words for salt

what if ...

every poem I wrote were a plea
my silent soul begging for help

November 12, 2021

Five Hundred Steps

five hundred steps is
not a lot of steps, just
a few more than would
take to go to my Mom's
place, but less than the
walk to my Mom-in-law's
they're just the difference
between a thirty-five
hundred and a four
thousand step walk
they're hardly anything
but just enough to make
a detour around my soul

November 12, 2021

Dear. God!

dear. God!
you saved my namesake once
even twice
pulled him from the stormy sea
and again
pulled him from fear's defeat
You saved him
who could not save himself
his hands were unequal to the wave
You gave him Your hand
his hope was unequal to despair
You gave him Your hope

You gave him Yourself
and You saved him

oh. my. God!
would You not also save me?

November 12, 2021

absent

they tell me it's all in my head
and I am tempted to a laugh
 (I find it far too easy to suppress)
of course it's all in my head
I think, where else could it be
 (I know this, I knew this all along)
my problem isn't where it is
my problem is where I'm not

November 10-11, 2021

just beyond the door
light and life subside
within this velvet black
silence has become bold
gems on darkness gleam
adrift on an endless night
my soul basks in wonder

November 10, 2021

Un-Followed

I used to follow you
and you, and you too
on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter
all over social media
you name it, I did it
but I stopped the other day
cold turkey (well, mostly)
I had to stop, and quick
for
whether you spoke truth
or
whether you spoke lies
either way
your relentless words
were hopeless
were merciless
were killing me

November 9, 2021

Uncertain, Fluid, Ground

have you ever had to walk
across a trampoline
unmoved by random bounce
or across a beach
drifting under receding tide
or along a snowbank
hip-deep beneath fragile crust

have you?

do you know how it feels
to step surely into uncertain ground
your feet only think they know
the certainty of their next step
stride confidently into an unknown
that bounce, or flow, or crack
makes less firm than morning mist

do you?

November 9, 2021

A Problem of My Own Making

I admit it, I was wrong
I should have known better
to have these expectations
that always only disappoint
you'd think I'd have learned
by now
that gratitude can be difficult

November 8, 2021

It's Sad, Really

today is a bad day
I am sad

I feel I am:
inconsequential
overlooked
ridiculed
alone

unreasonably so
desperate to smile
I look to the Internet
knowing others have stood
where I am
and the only help I see?
"do this"
"do that"
"do the other thing"
they may as well have said
"It's your fault"

November 8, 2021

They Couldn't Be Serious, Could They?

this is my reaction to "Caldron Pool"
which claims to be "a conservative website for:
 news
 current affairs
 cultural opinion"
which also claims to have as its namesake
"The Last Battle"
C. S. Lewis' finale to his Chronicles of Narnia
yet somehow manage to misappropriate the story
of the finding of a lion's skin by Shift and Puzzle
from Shift overwhelming Puzzle to deceive many
into the restoration of the new creation
which, metaphorically, "sums up the goals of this site:
 demonstrate the truth of Christianity over all other faiths
 highlight dangerous outcomes of rejecting Biblical truths
 illustrate how the testaments are foundational to our rights"
a noble purpose to be sure
but still, their name gives me cause to wonder
why claim yourself an arbiter of truth
yet take the name of a source of deception
even as the understanding of that source is mis-founded

October 31 - November 11, 2021

How I Felt About it Yesterday

both the best and the worst have come from you
has anyone else ever told you that?

or do you stumble across it here
on these scattered pages
or trip over it there
in my recurring emails

I am fiercely concerned that
as gifted as you are
sometimes, you couldn't get it right
even if God handed you the words

how could I say this?
yesterday and the week-yesterday before
God handed you the words
and you didn't get them right

has anyone else told you
other than me
whom you'll likely never hear
that you're too casual with the Bible?

October 29, 2021

To A Poet Some Time From Now

If my words should last
so long to greet your eye
do not smile, I beg you
do not smile
for if you see, what you see
was felt by me, was writ by me
I lived, I died, by these words
you see, they are me
are mine, are all of me
you may ever see

oh, I beg you
do not smile
condescendingly at my attempt
to write of that more far beyond
than I beyond this page
I tried, I tell you true, I did
try reveal what others hid
my grasp at that with fragile fingers
though did not hold all, did feel much
the brush of grace against these tips
that joyful danced
these words around this plane
that you, distant stranger
my brother, sister, friend
might be blessed to apprehend
the brush of grace upon your soul

oh, I beg you
do not smile
lest you smile
for joy
that I have found what I have found
and finding have been found
I have not died, I live!

oh, if you smile
I pray you smile
would shed a smile for this
that I have found, have been found
rejoice with me my finding
and, if finding too
I shall smile with you

A riff on James Elroy Flecker's "To a Poet a Thousand Years Hence" written in the hope of

meeting.

October 27, 2021

Pain & Confidence

I rarely know a day without pain
sometimes physical
sometimes emotional
sometimes both
those are hard days

even so

I've never known a day without hope
whatever pain or joy
all of it works to my good
all of it works to God's glory
each day is blessed

October 25, 2021

In Case You've Ever Wondered ...

I thought I'd tell you
just in case you'd like to know
just in case you're curious
just in case you've wondered
why I put my responses here
in a document only I will ever see
or up on my lonely little website
where hardly anyone ever goes
instead of telling you face-to-face
why I think you might have wrong ideas
or even where you're definitely wrong
or where I need to be corrected

it's because I've tried face-to-face
over and over to exhaustion
until I felt blue in the face
for getting this one consistent reply
"I don't care to consider what you're saying!"

but despite that, I still have to say these things
so I say them here
in my tiny echo chamber
where you'll likely never see

ineffective? perhaps
but at least my soul can have peace

Lamentation

it's fascinating how often the phrase "by lot"
comes up in the Bible

it was by lot that Jonah was chosen
so the sailors knew the storm came for him

it was by lot that Jesus' garment was won
the soldiers not wanting to tear it

it was by lot that the scape goat was selected
to carry Israel's sins off into the wilderness

it was by lot that the land of Canaan was divided
among the conquering tribes of Israel

but for some reason you said this last one different
left out the lot and added progressive allocation
and I've spent all day pondering over this problem:

if you can have the obviousness of Joshua wrong
can you have the subtleties of Lamentations right

it's fascinating to follow Zedekiah through the Bible

Zedekiah both respected and feared Jeremiah
imprisoned him at times, asked him God's word at others

Zedekiah fled Nebuchadnezzar with his sons and his army
only to be captured and sent off to Babylon

Zedekiah saw his sons put to death before his eyes
before Nebuchadnezzar blinded and put him in prison

Zedekiah was given God's blessing before any of this happened
was told he would die in peace and not by sword

but for some reason you said this last one different
you said God blessed Jeremiah instead of Zedekiah
and I've spent all day pondering over this problem:

if you can have the obviousness of Jeremiah wrong
can you have the subtleties of Lamentations right

After a discussion of the above with a respected pastor, I still believe that if one can miss things so obviously said then how will they not miss things less obviously said.

This Disciple's Creed

I believe in The One True God

One in being, Three in person
the Father, almighty Creator
the Son, unblemished Saviour
the Holy Spirit, comforting Guide
united in perfection
perfect in love
perfect in mercy
perfect in righteousness
united in eternity
without beginning
without end
without cause
united in infinity
all powerful
all knowing
all present

I believe in God the Father

the almighty
He is the Holy God beyond all gods
He is the Creator of heaven and earth
He is the One by Whom all others are
He is the One for Whose glory all else exists
every instant
every thing
every act
every word
every thought
He is the righteous Judge of every soul
He is the gracious Redeemer of fallen man
He is Love

I believe God the Son

Jesus Christ
God and Word of God
He through Whom all things were made
He for Whom all things are
He is our only Lord and Saviour
He is the Father's only-begotten Son
He was conceived by the Holy Spirit
He was born of the virgin Mary
He was revealed by John the Baptist
as the one true Light of man
He taught, healed, laughed and wept
He suffered the rejection of His own
He was crucified

He died
He was buried
He descended into hell
He rose from death on the third day
He was seen by many witnesses
He ascended into heaven,
He is at the right hand of God
the Father
the Almighty
our Creator
our Judge
our Redeemer
He will return to judge the living and the dead
He will reward every soul in accordance with their faith

I believe in God the Holy Spirit
He who calls us to Jesus Christ
He is our Counsellor
He is our promised Helper
interceding with groans too vast for words
He reveals the truth of Jesus Christ
to every soul who will believe
He reminds us of our Saviour's words
He confirms our salvation
He comforts our affliction
He affirms our faith
He guides our walk

I believe that the faithful are one
we are Jesus' body
His feet
His hands
His voice
we are to be faithful to His word
we are to continue His work on Earth
we are united in one communion
one common salvation
one common faith
one common life
we are every person who's Lord is God
we are to proclaim His gospel to all the earth
that all mankind may know
Jesus came
Jesus died
Jesus lives!
Jesus saves
Jesus comes

I believe that my sins are forgiven
the Holy Spirit confirms this
that though fallen I am redeemed

I have been made a child of God
by the blood of Jesus Christ
confirmed by the Holy Spirit
He has paid my debt in full
the enemy has no more claim on me
I have been made a new creation
to love Him
to follow Him
to please Him
all the days of my life

I believe that though I die yet will I live
that at Jesus' return I shall return to life
with Him I will enjoy life everlasting
in the very house of God
and there I will serve my King forever
for the glory, praise and honour of His wonderful Name

Amen and amen!

Notes on "This Disciple's Creed"

The Apostle's Creed has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. I have always loved the flow of its words and the importance of what it said; especially in the version that united us every Sunday in the Christian Reformed Church where I grew up. Parts of it troubled me though; like how the Father and the Holy Spirit were both given very little attention in relation to Jesus Christ. I was also troubled by the phrase "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church" because, while I do believe that the Church exists on Earth and is one body united by the blood of Jesus Christ, I do not believe in the Church. For many years, several decades in fact, I have wanted to write a treatment of the Apostle's Creed that dealt with these, and other, issues but was never able to write it in a way that I felt honoured God and pleased me; until last Sunday when it just came together in one sitting and, after several revisions, became what you see here. I hope you like it.

October 24, 2021

Gibraltar

and here I am, in a strait
unspeakable horror behind
adamantine rock beside
the Promised Land before

October 24, 2021

Questions

I ask questions
a lot of questions
rhetorical questions
apparently
far too many of them
it seems
I should stop asking them
I really should
but I don't know how

October 23, 2021

Water

when the water flows along your face
for the first time in, like, hours
it feels so suddenly good
feels better than the best thing, ever
you have to ask yourself
"Honestly, why did I wait so long?
The faucet and soap were here all day."

October 22, 2021

Contemptible

I won't say his name
but everyone here 'knows' him
or has heard of him
has him on one side
of their fence, or
has him on its other side
he is, to say the least
polarizing
some say he is heroic
some say he is disgusting
but however you see him
what he did three days ago
is an act beneath contempt

After a certain Ontario MPP posted to Facebook about a dozen pictures of people he says have died after being vaccinated against COVID-19, either as a direct result of the vaccination or because it exacerbated a pre-existing medical condition. He posted their photos, names, personal details and presumed their cause of death.

Without asking their families for their consent.

Regardless of if he is right or wrong, regardless of if we agree with him or not, his capitalizing on the tragedies of others to advance his own agenda is contemptible.

What he did is inexcusable.

October 21-22, 2021

The Silence

this silence
it is a very large silence
it is

higher than the Everest
of the back of a book
deeper than Mariana
of an empty day
longer than the Great Wall
of silent seconds
broader than the Gulf
of abandoned dreams

it is a very large silence
this silence
yet it cannot be seen from space

October 20, 2021

Doorbell

I have the same mind as my dog
we hear a bell and we run to the door
even though the bell's on Nero Wolfe
yet that one's in line with our own
so whenever Nero's doorbell rings
Archie (or Fritz) and Milo and I
we'll all get up to see who's calling
you'd think we'd have had it figured out
by now
that only Fritz (or Archie) had to get up
but we haven't

October 20, 2021

Stunted Conversationalist

"Hi there!"

"Hello,
how's it going?"

"It's going well, thanks,
how are you doing?"

"I'm ..."

(enter, internal monologue)

*... having a horrible day,
I feel like I'm worthless
like nothing I do matters
like no one cares if I'm alive
or dead
like I'm here to listen
but not be heard
scarcely even noticed
I wonder how he's doing
I'm lonely, so very lonely
but the only ones I can talk to
(how can I talk to anyone else?)
suggest a pill, or therapy
when all I want
is to be heard ...*

(exit, internal monologue)

"... okay,
thanks for asking."

"Great!
Well, I've got to be going,
be seeing you."

"Yup,
take care, eh!"

"Thanks,
you too."

"Will do.
See you later."

"Bye."

October 20-22, 2021

Imprecation

some brothers, some sisters
to whose words I pay careful attention,
say we must now pray imprecatory prayers
call judgement and condemnation down
from God on those opposing Him
who also oppose His own
calling on David, Paul and others
to serve as justification
but
once again, I don't see it
I just don't see it
though I have tried, I do try, I keep trying
to see how Christians must do more than pray
for those who hating God hate also who love Him
that we must also call curses down upon them
but
the best Messianic or apostolic words the Bible has
do no more than promise judgment
yet do not fail to offer hope
to those still dead

It's Different Now

take a look at the very before
foreknowledge, love, creation

take a look after the beginning
rebellion, love, redemption

take a look before the middle
wandering, love, forbearance

take a look during the middle
betrayal, love, forgiveness

take a look at the waiting
inconstancy, love, patience

take a look at the end
hatred, love, judgement

take a look at the new creation
sanctification, love, communion

October 19, 2021

I don't know if I'm dying or if I've died
all I know is a part of me that was alive
it doesn't seem to be alive anymore
whether that's me dying or just a part
it's hard to tell, it was so much of me
joy fleets, is that what death feels like?
then it feels like all of me has died, is dead
but I still breathe, still smile (on occasion)
still weep (on more than one occasion)
I still try to make alive what has died
but it wasn't me that killed it and it's hard
it isn't me that keeps it dead and it's hard
my chances of success seem rather slim
to return to life what others have ended

October 19, 2021

Be Careful

be careful of your heroes
whom you exalt is guide
beware they heroic stand
not on a foundation false
be certain of their failings
lest you fall in their deceit
take your stand too firmly
fixed on uncertain ground

Brothers and sisters of mine are making interesting points, points which at the very least are worthy of consideration, but are using sources of dubious integrity to support them. Regardless of who of us is correctly grasping God's Truth, those we use to support our claims will have some form of power over us. I wrote this, not in protest, but as a warning to be careful, for we are defined by those with whom we align ourselves.

October 18, 2021

I wrote one a short while back
on respecting those in authority
more specifically, in regard to one
a pastor standing at odds with Truth
today, on reading another's comments
I reiterate, these are to be respected
even as their teachings are suspect
holding a truth or discarding a lie
is what God calls His own to do

This is the one I wrote earlier

[To Pastor Artur Pawlowski](#)

October 8-18, 2021

time

is time real, some wonder
it is real enough, we answer
we can remember yesterday
we can dream of tomorrow
we can appreciate today
whether time is real
or is imagined
in this
m
o
m
e
n
t
afloat
on its flow
time is sufficient
is enough for us to do
all that needs to be done
is enough for us to enjoy
all that needs to be
enjoyed

This rework of [time](#) was fun to do

October 17-18, 2021

The Damascus Road

Paul, on his Damascus road, was shown
how all he knew he believed was wrong
his Messiah had come, had died, and lives
is the Word to which scripture's arrow flew
and believed, forsaking
 tradition
 oppression
 inflexible dogma
to follow God

I have also walked the Damascus road
less profoundly changed, yet corrected
was shown the rich gardens in which I grew
owned but imperfect apprehensions of the Word
and believed, forsaking
 catechisms
 floral acronyms
 inconstant doctrine
to follow God

October 15-22, 2021

The Persecuted Martyr

John and Peter, when arrested
did not lie but said straight out
"We will obey God above men"
and going out did exactly that
upheld the honour of His name

today we have Phil Hutchings
who, brought before men, said
"I will do my utmost to comply"
and went and didn't do that at all
profaned the glory of His name

October 15-21, 2021

"... but I don't have the time to go into that right now ..."

Would Jesus ever have said "I don't have the time."?

No, He made time for everyone and everything

Would Moses ever have said "I don't have the time."?

No, He had at least forty years in that desert

Would Paul ever have said "I don't have the time."?

No, his entire life was devoted to the ministry

So then why do you, in control of every word you speak
say every Sunday "But I don't have the time to go into that."?

Surely if Jesus, Moses, Paul and countless more
could yield their lives to doing the work of God
surely you could give up a few minutes of yours
surely you could take up a few minutes of ours

October 21, 2021

"Whatever"

have you ever been tempted to just say
"Whatever"?
someone goes and tells you something
and you just want to say "Whatever"
put wheels on the fact of your unconcern
with whatever it was they just told you
and to somehow by your lack of care
tell them that they do the same to you

October 14-20, 2021

violent voices rise in anger
mis-handle God just to prove a point
endorsed by countless lovers
vanity grown beyond control
they speak their lies to eager ears
Truth pleads before closed eyes
Truth stands alone, overlooked
desire, pride and self-righteous
ignorance, leave it where it cries
"Follow me and you will find life!"

October 14, 2021

Appointed to Live

questions confusing cloud
certainty oft' second-guessed
correction wrestles witness
answer follows restless "How?"

Truth will stand on its merit
steadfast whisper over shout
that errant may see and know
devotion can and will be done

October 13-December 16, 2021

Consent

COVID-19 has brought on a whole new conundrum
far beyond our fear of dying
for now vaccines are being ordered
or risk loss of job or privilege
"Second class citizenry!" they cry
 "Unfair!"
 "Unjust!"
 "Unrighteous!"
"I will not consent!" they proclaim
beneath their stolen yellow stars
yet drink water laced with fluoride
sprinkle iodized salt on their meals
drive cars both licensed and insured
to the next vociferous Freedom Rally

October 13, 2021

The Birds

"Twitter, twitter, cheep, cheep"
light and leap and flit and fleet
lovely singers on the stage
rejoice the brilliant golden sun
and the birdseed there arrayed

October 11, 2021

The Squirrel

a coiled spring with claws
jitter-jumping clockwork toy
with twitchy-duster in back
slid up our back yard fence
just now, like a rubber ball
bounced across the top of it
peered as were a hungry spy
at our fresh-filled feeder and
grasping with a pirate's paw
filled its chests with treasure

October 10, 2021

the weight of a word well placed
is incredible
the weight of a word poor chosen
is immense
the weight of words unspoken
is infinite

October 10-November 11, 2021

and then there's this other thing
that poem involved three people
one, the other one, and its writer
plus the plurality of other persons
entering its reality as they read it
who will, of course, ask questions
like

"Who was it who you introduced?"
asking the one of the other one
neglecting its writer's presence
connection, but not quite all of it

October 10, 2021

I flew my words out upon the air
where they hung for an instant
hopeful
of being caught, before they fell
to die silent beneath a careless sole

October 10, 2021

the day around me is glorious
our Asters are in full bloom
golden leaves cover the roads

and the air, oh! the air!
air so full of wonder
so indescribably rich
to breathe it is to live

they say that in depression
you'll grab hold of anything
anything that can get you
into tomorrow
this is what I grab hold of
the reflection in creation
of our Creator's beauty

October 10, 2021

I don't know from where this darkness comes
I am more often an optimist than a pessimist

I don't know why all of life is drab and grey
I am no stranger to pleasure and delight

I don't know why sadness blankets every joy
I am in every way overwhelmingly blessed

I don't know why I feel alone and overlooked
I am not without family and friendships

I don't know why I believe I have no value
I am not unimportant in my various fields

I know only that even, gripped by chill despair
I must praise Him, for I have no other choice

October 9, 2021

my bed was so wrong-sided this morning
there was no way I could get out of it
with a smile that wasn't pasted on

October 8, 2021

They Sing

I will read of these
of Robert and Emily and Rudy and Alison
as most often as I can
Others, unnamed, less most often
These shine light in my soul
like King David, and Asaph
and the Sons of Korah
of Jerusalem
It is too dark down there
those others cannot but
draw shade before the windows
block what light may be
But these
like these ancients
these can make me sing!

October 8, 2021

To A.M.

my daughter introduced me to you
just a half hour ago
I was unprepared
I'd not heard of you
before
this epiphany of meeting you

October 8, 2021

you came over
seeking solace
a shoulder's warmth
but I am broken
and I don't know how to fix ...

... this

October 7, 2021

Isn't it Funny That ... ?

isn't it funny that
a church can be tax-exempt and no one cries
but regulating its capacity is state interference

isn't it funny that
we are made to use seatbelts and life goes on
but making us wear masks takes our liberty

isn't it funny that
one can be baptized and thus considered saved
but cannot discuss governance if not a member

isn't it funny that
we can enjoy freedom bought by our warriors
but forcing actions against our will is tyranny

isn't it funny that
we can hold the Bible in the highest regard
but entertainments that don't can be praised

isn't it funny that ...

... but no, it isn't funny, it isn't very funny at all
to obscure the Gospel with such contradiction

October 7, 2021

Abraham Kuyper's Spheres

that great old neo-Calvinist Abraham Kuyper pitched spheres
(no, he didn't play Baseball, he was a theologian of the first rank)
spheres of responsibility, authority and governance
some overlapping, some exclusive, and one all-encompassing
government, for instance, could have no say in faith or family
but by extension neither could have much to say in government
and that's where the rubber of my faith hits the road of my walk
if I were to govern I would have to govern as a Christian
I could neither avoid such, nor separate State from Faith
my God has ownership of all that is, there can be no sphere
where He is not, where He is not its first and foremost authority

October 7, 2021

C. S. Lewis said (and I paraphrase):

There is no neutral ground in all the universe.

Every atom, every second is claimed by God,
and all of it is counterclaimed by Satan.

Which, though absolutely true,

Satan does indeed seek to take it all,

could be misconstrued

could be seen to say God and Satan have equal claim

to what by rights is God's alone

By right of His manufacture

By right of His power

By right of His being God alone

Or, if you wish

By right of His redemptive work

They are not, they cannot be equal

The Creator so surpasses the created

as to make such comparison absurd

Satan does not, he cannot counterclaim

God owns all, Satan is but a thief

October 6-November 10, 2021

If ...

if your pastor cares
more for alliteration than accuracy
be concerned

if your pastor cares
more for performance than precision
be concerned

if your pastor cares
more for convincing than conviction
be concerned

if your pastor cares
more for hearth than Heaven
be concerned

if your pastor cares
more for showing than seeing
be concerned

if your pastor cares
more for words than Word
be concerned

if your pastor cares
for anything more than God
be concerned

be very concerned

October 5-6, 2021

On a Review of "Midnight Mass"

"... regardless of which faith is practiced, it, too, is an abstract construct.
Religion is only ever as good (or bad) as the individual [who] takes it to heart"

this writer tries to make a valid point
if all religion is abstract
a mere philosophical construct
then truth can have no ultimate
all faiths must have equal validity
their faith, our faith, all faiths
any faith that speaks, speaks truth
merit descending from its owner

except he's made an invalid point
religion is not abstract
truth must have an ultimate Truth
all faiths must have unequal validity
Jesus said He is God but Mohammed said He is not
if one is true the other cannot also be
the merit of any faith is inherent
falls from creed upon its owner

October 5, 2021

time

is time real?

some ask

time is real enough

I answer

I can remember yesterday

I can appreciate today

I can dream of tomorrow

if time is real

or unreal

this moment

adrift on its flow

time is real enough

I wrote [time](#) to make it more visually appealing

October 3, 2021 – August 24, 2022

in the long, silent corridor of years
smiles reside in soft embrace with tears
those who would ever rejoice their day
see golden sun dance where shadows lay

and beyond? who knows if unseen morrow
will hold dirge of crow or song of sparrow
what then for us but each day embrace
rejoice what more we may learn of grace

October 3, 2021

Sunday Morning
October Third

evil rages violent, untamed
tumult, trouble, terror assail
threaten to destroy

I turn my eyes upon Jesus
He is faithful, He will not fail
whom shall I fear

October 1-2, 2021

To Pastor Artur Pawlowski

Did you notice that I said 'Pastor'?
I did that on purpose, intentionally
I almost didn't, for all your words
But, whether I agree with you or no
you are a pastor and merit respect
however difficult it is for me to give
It is the reason I write these words
Even as many admire your stand,
your posture as the heroic David
opposing the evil force of oppression,
(I admit your courage is impressive)
I am troubled to reconcile your title
to your actions and to your words
For what you do belies what you are
or what you claim to be if you're not
Here, I have some examples for you:

You've been arrested for flouting law
Jesus was arrested for speaking truth

You've been released to your own life
Jesus was cut off before His time

You've been insulting the authorities
Jesus was never with an evil word

You've been rejecting those you despise
Jesus was relentless in His love

How does what you do, what you say
bless those whom you say persecute you?

How does what you do, what you say
begin to approach Jesus cry "Forgive!"?

Is it a wonder I found it hard to say 'Pastor'
when you so carelessly fail His example?

The Difference

Yesterday

saints were warned of trials
either present or to come
and were encouraged to stand

Today

saints are warned of tyranny
either present or to come
and are encouraged to rebel

the difference is stark

Yesterday

by the great good grace of God
saints endured their various trials

Today

to preserve a favoured standing
saints depower disrespected leaders

we have come too far

Yesterday

saints relied on the power of God

Today

saints rely on the power of good

September 30, 2021

Whitewashed Tomb

today is the day
it's been promised, it has come
our National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
it is a needed, a very much needed
and long overdue reminder
of the tragedies of our yesterdays
of the tragedies of our todays
and that's just the problem
as good, as important, as necessary
as this day is
unless the tragedies of our todays
become history, and soon
this very important, very crucial day
will be no more than a whitewashed tomb

September 30, 2021

Some People

some people walk this earth
and they're scarcely noticed
they're not illuminating lights
they're not triumphant horns
they're just people living life
quietly doing the will of God
in their lives' day-to-day run
seeing them it's just like God
gave them to be illustrations
to the great upon the earth
how living ought to be done
how trials ought to be borne
how joys ought to be worn
to be examples of possibility
when God calls all to account

September 29, 2021

I Fail to See It

there's a bunch of us up in arms
who protest that the vaccination passport is a hideous and Satanic infringement of our
human rights and which will lead to a two-tiered world and who knows what other horrors
if a strong stand isn't taken against it by proclaiming it as equal to Nazi segregation of the
Jews to the point even of sewing Hitler's obscene yellow star to their own sleeves and
denouncing the governments that mandate these vaccine passports as Godless and
tyrannical usurpers of God's authority and doing all in their power to remove these
governments from their positions of power and who at the same time affirm that Christians
who don't see this or who agree with the vaccine passport are not but are worse than blind
sheep and strangers to the grace of God
(I guess you know where I stand now, if you didn't already know it)
but I don't get it, I simply don't
I can see from where their discomfort comes
I mean, how dare we turn away from our services those who wish to attend
yet we owe the living a reasonable expectation of life's constancy
and Jesus Himself, on healing lepers, said
(knowing full well they had been fully healed)
"Show yourself to the leaders,
that they may confirm you are well,
that you may carry on with your life
that you may rejoin your people."
and again I say, Jesus knew!
He, the highest authority around,
Who could have given anyone the cleanest bill of health imaginable
said to those He had personally and completely healed
"Go, see the leaders
that they may certify your health."
and I wonder on knowing this
how was that not also a 'vaccination' passport?

September 29, 2021

Flame

the fire blazed in me this morning
in the middle of a Facebook exchange
hatred rose inside me hot and horrid
but for the great good grace of God
its flame would not be quenched

Arbiters of Truth

you asked me
as have others, often
(occasionally with reason?)
"Who made you the arbiter of truth?"
(tongue in cheek,
I'd like to answer "God!"
but don't
for fear of seeming sanctimonious
despite His command to test)
but
(all kidding aside
and overlooking your anger)
in asking this question
do you, do they
a) say that I am not
and could not be
an arbiter of truth
b) say that you are
and should be
the arbiter of truth
and I found a smile
alive behind my tears
I wept for our dissension
as I smiled at the irony

I would much more enjoy speaking to such people if they did not speak to me
in a way that made it seem they did not care to hear what I had to say or
evaluate the value of what I said.

In this case the person in question repeatedly encourages fellow believers to
"not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your
mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and
acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2) and "receive the word with great
eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things [are]
so" (Acts 17:11) yet who asked "who made you the arbiter of truth?" when I
asked how they could defend a pastor who flouts public safety measures; who
repeatedly refers to civil authorities as "Brown shirts," "Nazis," "Gestapo,"
"Communists," "Fascists" and "Hyenas" and who's practice of our Faith appears
not to follow the example set by Jesus, James, John, Peter and Paul.

And I wondered, how is this the proving of God's will or the testing of
another's teaching against the Bible? How does closing a door to another's
thought help us learn anything?

We Don't Understand

we don't get it, we just don't
we see our 'rights' being stripped and cry
"Persecution! It's the end of the world!"
why? because we're told we cannot gather?
or must wear masks if we do
or must be separated if we do
or must be vaccinated if we do
as if we alone were restricted
as if we alone were the target
as if we alone were suffering
have we forgotten our founders?
have we lost our faith's foundation?
have we failed to believe our Saviour?
our first brothers and sisters suffered
were persecuted, were put to death
yet loving God above themselves
withstood their hardships for His glory
in His power changed the hearts of men

Exemplars

Babylon, six centuries before Christ
a furnace, dead men beside its door
three men, no! four! together inside
the golden pillar stands forgotten
the musicians have all gone home
and on his throne, a king, amazed
his loyal stewards were preserved

yet we know of no complaint

still Babylon, still six centuries before
another man walks among the lions
his sleepless king tossing, turning
awaits the dawn and his hurried rush
hopeful God would save his favourite
the most loyal of his captive servants
and found the man alive and faithful

yet we know of no complaint

Damascus, after Christ's ascension
a man lies in the dust, knocked askew
his life suddenly dedicated to the Glory
speaking to him as he lay unseeing
yet seeing more than he'd seen before
knocked down from Pharisaical height
to rejoice in persecution to his death

yet we know of no complaint

Philippi, some years after Damascus
an inner prison is filled with praise
two men, in stocks, at midnight sing
worshipping the One, glad to suffer
for the honor, the glory, of His name
earthquake, despair then salvation!
and release in accord with the law

yet we know of no complaint

Rome, a few years later, another cell
he writes of imprisonment for faith
with the same pen, in the same cell
he asks for prayer for his ministry
that those who keep him may see
the glorious beauty of his Saviour
in hope they themselves be saved

yet we know of no complaint

Rome, again, about the same time
another man, writing of suffering
reminds his brothers to be faithful
obedient to God, and, if suffering
to suffer for doing good, not evil
warning that suffering would be
asking that it be borne with honour

yet we know of no complaint

Jerusalem, in the time of Christ
dark morning on Golgotha's hill
three men die, one man innocent
unjustly arrested, unfairly tried
unreasonably put to His death
even now, He shows only love
"Father, forgive, they don't know."

yet we know of no complaint

this world, today, amid a pandemic
love is cast aside for false liberty
rights held more closely than life
loyalty to one's king is abandoned
brethren are judged, condemned
in the mirror of self-righteousness
with anger the Gospel never knew

yet we know only complaint

how disappointed in us they must be
our exemplars, whose bold example
we tread underfoot as were rubbish
crying for our rights, our liberties
our Liberty is placed in dire danger
in pursuit of frail earthly freedoms
we risk the loss of our Saviour's joy

September 27, 2021

I Don't Care

I don't care what man says about God
so much as
I care about what God says about Himself

I don't care what direction my nation goes
so much as
I care how I'll live for God wherever it goes

I don't care about doctrinal disagreements
so much as
I care that confusion misrepresents God

I don't care what Christians choose to honour
so much as
I care we choose first to honour God

September 24, 2021

Soul

some have said "I'd sell my soul for that"
unrealizing or uncaring souls have a buyer
it's not 'that' and he doesn't give refunds
the Manufacturer will, if they stop selling
His is a full benefit, no history refund too
either way it'll be a permanent transaction

September, 23, 2021

And Not at all Like Either

I protest

I protest you Christians

I protest you Christians who claim to know
you claim to know but you don't understand
you don't understand the Bible at all
would that you were more Berean
than you are Pharisaical
would that you took more out of it
than what you put into it

our faith

it's not about rebellion
it's not about life, or liberty
or the pursuit of happiness
it's not about security
it's about sacrifice
sacrifice to God
above all
alone

September 23, 2021

Not Quite Darryl, Either

the apostle Paul might have done it
he might have gone to Tim Hortons
had they had one in ancient Rome
but I doubt he'd have gone spiteful
to thumb his nose at any Roman law
limiting how he could live his faith
I think it would have been more like
"Hey Paul, you wanna go for coffee?"
"Sure, Timothy, that's a great idea!
Here's my purse, my treat this time!"
and he'd have gone, despite the law
for coffee and donuts with his pal

September 23, 2021

Not Quite Rosa, Buddy

A reflection on an insult to Rosa Parks
and the reduction of her brave stand
to the level of a circus side-show.

"I'm choosing to sit in the restaurant against the segregation of
society that's happening Why would I give some random
stranger personal medical information? This is our Rosa Parks
moment I'm just gonna [sic] sit here, drink my coffee and
read my Bible, and hopefully there's no problem."

Darryl Mackie, at an Oshawa Tim Hortons, on being asked to
provide his vaccination status and being charged for not doing
so. Yet who on Facebook boasts of "my religious exemption to
this vaccine" to any stranger wandering by; like me, who was
curious.

one would presume
indeed
one sincerely hopes
that one who reads the Bible
would read it with more care
would read that submission,
to God and His authorities,
love, peace and humility
are the hallmarks of the faith
rather than this vain and angry
rebellion

September 21-30, 2021

How?

In Romans Paul wrote:

How will they believe if they don't hear?
How will they hear if they are not taught?
How will they teach if they are not sent?

To which we can add:

How will we send if we do not agree?
How will we agree if we do not learn?
How will we learn if we do not care?

September 21, 2021

Evil Screams Against Love's Whisper

Evil screams into my ear "you are worthless"
incessantly presents many substantial proofs
that i am no more than an insubstantial man

but Love's insistent whisper says "Be at peace"
reminds me that as I faithfully serve The God
He has called me His own, and that is enough

September 18, 2021

for these past two years of COVID
many brothers and sisters have tried
to convince their brothers and sisters
that the object of our Christian faith
was to resist tyrannical governments
yet in all my own study of the Bible
not once did I encounter even a hint
of God commanding us to resistance
to love, yes, and in large bold words
to obey Him, yes, equally emphatic
to perhaps even surrender our lives
that His will be accomplished in us
but never once to pick up any sword
but that which is His Word of Truth

September 18, 2021

Facebook tells me it's been forty-five weeks gone by since you said these words to me:

"Please do not speak to me again.

I find hypocrisy as repulsive as cowardice."

(Facebook also says it's been ninety-two since you said these words to me:

"Thanks for the encouragement Pete."

but those words merely explain these tears)

you said this, I'm looking at it now, again

trying to convince myself you were right

trying to convince myself I was wrong

but neither has worked these ten months

and today Facebook tells me another thing

someone blocked you, I heard second hand

your spokesperson speaking of the offense

which, once again, has lead me to wonder

how is it that three-hundred-three days ago

you saw my concern for you as hypocritical

but today you do not see your own hypocrisy

who silencing me, cries foul on being silenced

the vaccine is not the mark of the beast
nor are the passports or various proofs
now needed for getting into restaurants

how do I know and how can I say this?

it's easy

the mark of the beast proves allegiance
to one disputing God's supreme authority
claiming a kingship was never his to own

this vaccine?
it's even simpler

have we been told to worship a false god
no
have we been told to hate the real God
no
have we been told to deny our faith in God
no

this vaccine, as any other we've been given
in all the time before these two chaotic years
merely reduces risks to ourselves and others

that's it

no worship of a false god
no hatred for the real God
no denying our faith in God

simply care
like Jesus commanded
for ourselves and for our neighbour

One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these, on these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." The scribe said to Him, "Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that He is One, and there is no one else besides Him; and to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as himself, is much more than all burnt

offerings and sacrifices.” (Mark 12:28-34 & Matthew 22:40)

September 14, 2021

Two Years Down

for two years now
you've been telling us
we were wrong
for two years
all of you
told
all of us
we. were. wrong.

we were wrong to accept
mandated closures

we were wrong to accept
social distancing

we were wrong to accept
the wearing of masks

we were wrong to accept
forced vaccinations

we were wrong to do
what needed doing
to protect ourselves
to protect others

we were wrong
in our grasp of the Gospel

for two years you told us
in no uncertain terms
we. were. wrong.
you told us
often
that obedience to our government
had displaced obedience to our God

all of you
told
all of us
we. had. lost. faith

now
after two years
two. long. years.
of all of you
telling all of us

that we were wrong
you now assume the authority
to tell us whom to elect

for two years
you told us we were wrong
to trust the government
so death could be prevented
and horrors not come

now today
you tell us we'll be right
to trust new government
so liberty could be restored
and horrors not come

it is astounding
it is unbelievably vain
it is the height of hypocrisy
what you said then
speaks against
what you say now

if we could not trust the government during a pandemic
without sinning against God
displacing trust in Him
with trust in man

how can we trust a government now in the day-to-day
without sinning against God
displacing trust in Him
with trust in man

I posted the following on Facebook shortly after completing this poem; the comments in response were encouraging, reassuring and at times ironic.

"Over the past two years there have been some interesting arguments against the mandated COVID-19 precautions. (Social distancing; Wearing face masks; Reduced density social & worship gatherings; Vaccinations.) One is that by obeying the mandates Christians were somehow showing their lack of faith in God. I've spent many hours thinking about that and trying to make myself agree with it but I can't. God has given some things to man for him to fix. If not, then my wearing my glasses or taking my medications must also show my lack of faith in God and I don't believe they do.

What I find interesting is that many who for the past two years have told us to trust God instead of the gov't are now telling us that if we don't elect a certain party then we'll never recover our stolen liberty. I may have misunderstood, but it seems to me like they're saying that we should not trust the gov't when

it guides us through a pandemic but we should trust the gov't when it guides us to liberty.

And I wonder, how does the one trust show a lack of faith in God while the other trust does not? The God who makes us whole is also the God who makes us one and is also the God who makes us free."

September 13, 2021

Sandbox

my computer has a sandbox
several of them, in fact
places where my system, safely
can run suspect app's in isolation
while evaluating their merit
at a distance from its core

you have a sandbox too
just one, but it's not for testing
it's the place you hide my words
so they cannot touch your heart
it lets you pretend to listen
but never hear what I say

September 10, 2021

Echoes of a Grief Long Silent

it's interesting the things one can stumble over on Facebook

"What's the name of your Grade Five teacher?"

"God gave us our first baby and she's adorable!"

"I was defined by my ministry and now it's over."

that last one hit me hard today, twenty years gone by
fleeting remembrances of His work I once lived to do
His work I would have given my right arm that January
that bitterly cold January, to keep doing if He'd let me
but He didn't, that door was closed, locked and barred
and all my frantic grasping couldn't make what was, be
it left a hole, a huge and terrifying hole I couldn't fill
for most of my life I'd been a teacher ... now I wasn't
I was at the end of the road of the man I thought I was
had no sign to show how to be the man I should become
it was frightening, debilitating, a temptation into futility
even now, decades down the road, I wonder "Why me?"
"What did I do or leave undone, that God ended me?"
even more, "I took care, why do the careless remain?"
it was hard, it is hard, to stand aside as careless others
do what I would not do, teach what I would not teach
hard to hear my voice grow silent as others' grew louder
hard to come to grips with my sudden unimportance
it would have been my end did not God already hold me
it was not until many years later that I could understand
I had not come to an end, I remain the man God made me
He has placed me in a narrower and more intimate field

September 9, 2021

I am not a good man
I know too well my failings
they are far too numerous
no one could ever believe
any claim of my innocence

But God is a good God
He knows my failings well
He knows their number
He knows I am not innocent
and yet He says He loves me

How good it is to know He knows
each of my numberless failings
each task I'll do or leave undone
each futile grasp at innocence
and yet He has made me clean

oh! my great good God
whom else would I dare serve
what other god could hold me
but You alone, above all that is
Who knows my all and yet loves!

September 6, 2021

in "The Last Battle" there is a bear
who, though both stalwart and true,
dying, still said "I don't understand"
for years I've wondered about that
what didn't that bear understand
what did Lewis hope by saying this
to have us, his readers, understand

today I think I finally do understand
the bear was not confused about dying
had proved himself quite willing to die
if the cause in which he died were just
he was, after all, both stalwart and true
the bear did not understand as he died
why he must die at the hands of his own

Lewis was not prescient, but he knew man
knew his human nature, divorced of God
would prefer its passion against His reason
would present its falsehood as if were truth
would pervert God's word for selfish glory
would proclaim as both fool and unfaithful
who would whole-heartedly serve their God

The Star

they're abusing that star now
that yellow star of David
that horrid star that Hitler used
usurping for his evil purpose a beauty
millennia old before his Reich first strode
in iron tread over doomed innocence
they think, they say, they shout
that they fight this same evil
usurp for themselves that same horrid star
emblazon it likewise upon their own sleeves
claim for themselves a persecution
that was never theirs to own
show careless disregard for the millions slain
and offend those countless more who mourn
they gleefully rejoice their hardship
enthusiastically claim a loss of freedom
in the mistaken belief they endure it alone

as if this world had not evil enough of its own
that it must have yet another added on



I do not understand how some Christians are able to apply this image to themselves
and at the same time are also able to claim that they are channels of God's love.
It is reprehensible that this image is used to protest COVID-19 restrictions.

Secondary Issues

"Don't divide on secondary issues. Agreed.

Secondary issues:

- * May you eat Halal?
- * Are you pre-trib. or post-trib.?

Primary issues:

- * Disobeying Scripture: Hebrews 10:24-25 or James 2:9.

The Church needs to unite in obedience to Scripture. If you want to divide, divide from the world, [don't] try to appease [it]. Obedience to God proclaims His Kingship."

I would agree
we must not divide on secondary issues
those issues of no eternal consequence
are not to separate brothers and sisters
who have been made one in Christ

I would debate
what these secondary issues are
by which we should not be divided
"food offered to idols?" certainly
"Pre-trib. vs. Post-trib.?" never

one is a matter of freedom
and Christ has indeed made us free
to enjoy all that He has created
the other is a matter of interpretation
and as God, our God, is One
His word can own but one meaning

as you say that interpretation is secondary
your interpretation is itself being made suspect
is showing evidence of having lost its primary focus
which is to listen to God that we may better love Him

September 3-5, 2021

man's political "isms"
of any particular leaning
 whether Fascism
 or Communism
 or Socialism
 or Humanism
or any of his thoughtful kind of "isms"
he'd care to mention
 like Idealism
 or Pragmatism
 or Fatalism
 or Nihilism
or even his theological "isms"
graciously (or not) at odds with each other
 like Catholicism
 or Calvinism
 or Arminianism
 or Dispensationalism
are inconsequential
none of these "isms" matter
in the ultimate scheme of life
these "isms" just don't matter

if there's man at an "isms'" center
it's bad
that's the bare fact of the matter
the only "ism" that truly matters
isn't an "ism" at all
it is faith
faith alone in God alone
before Whom all "isms" have no power

August 30, 2021

some days, especially lately
one could feel kinship with Paul
who, as he defended his calling
heard not debate but rage

"They raised their voices and said,
'Away with such a fellow from the earth,
for he should not be allowed to live!'"

some days, ever more so now
one could feel kinship with Peter
who, as he spoke of God's salvation
saw not acclaim but bars

"Herod ... laid hands on some who belonged to the church ... to mistreat them.
And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword.
When he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also."

some days, even with brothers
one could feel kinship with David
who, as he awaited his kingdom
was condemned as a rebel

"Saul tried to pin David to the wall with the spear,
but he slipped away out of Saul's presence,
so that he stuck the spear into the wall.
And David fled and escaped that night."

some days ...
... ah, but it's become very difficult
how can two discuss truth
when one is given only hate

"Those who value self above liberty are traitors to this country.
They are betrayers of Jesus and deniers of their faith.
I pray not to meet them in a civil setting.
I pray to meet them on the field of battle
where their treachery may be rewarded."

some days, one feels dejected
that the Gospel of overwhelming love
is turned by some at every chance
into a way to revel in their hate

**"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another,
even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.
By this all men will know that you are My disciples,
if you have love for one another."**

August 28, 2021

Online

I've heard it said that debate on serious issues is difficult, especially when taking place online as a Christian, I find that an oddly held opinion when I consider that most of our theology many of the doctrines we hold most dear were lifted, in their entirety, from letters written by Christians quite a distance removed from the Christians who would be reading them and even further removed from Christians today

August 28 - September 8, 2021

"If we Christians arrive at the conclusion that giving up some personal liberties for the sake of other people's safety somehow makes us less free, then we have deeply misunderstood the cross of Jesus Christ."

Ben Cremer, Facebook, August 22, 5:50 PM

some, reading this, say
"Faithless!"

others, reading this, say
"Faithful!"

either way, someone has
misunderstood

This week I've seen both responses on Facebook. There is one group saying he is a deceiver and an enemy of the gospel. There is another group saying he preaches truth and is a blessing from God.

Someone has misunderstood.

Christians who believe that their freedom is somehow tied to what their government will or will not allow them to do seriously misunderstand what Jesus accomplished on the cross. He has made us free, we are no longer slaves to sin.

No other freedom is of any importance.

Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."

John 8:31-36

August 27-30, 2021

The Exegete

for one who claims to own a careful exegesis
you seem to miss the point awfully often
or deliberately twist it to fit into your agenda
but neither is the way of the careful exegete
who hears and is changed by the truth
than make facts speak a convenient lie

I find all our past discussions now suspect
every one of them is now put to question
the points you made so clearly and so plain
I cannot trust you did not also skew them
to fit with what you wanted me to believe
and have me own your fragile foundation

August 27-31, 2021

I'll not put my hope in any party
to rescue this teetering nation
they are no more than men
they are no more than women
are too thin a layer atop this madness
are too far removed from its bottom
yet bear in themselves its imperfections
their best work can achieve no final good

no
we are doomed
we are headed for destruction
if man is the height of our restless hope

you've used Hebrews 10:25 as your rallying cry
you've said this was God's plainly written command
you've urged us to never cease our gathering together
and said that those of us who worshipped instead online
were traitors, were apostate, were deniers of our faith
having cared more for our safety than our salvation

but you've shone your exalted hermeneutic so brightly
on one half of one statement of a much larger context
you've failed to reconcile gathering to the reason for it
we are to stimulate each other to love and good works
we are to encourage each other as our Lord's day nears
neither of which is accomplished by your condemnation

you have spoken many words for careful consideration
do not now forsake God's command to also love
do not now forsake God's command to also encourage
do not now be so narrow in your interpretation
your words of correction condemn yet offer no hope
to those, who like you, simply seek to serve our Lord

Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Hebrews 10:19-25

August 25, 2021

These aren't the facts you're looking for
they won't give credence to your claims
these facts stand un-blindly on either side
the crystal stream which together known
broadens knowledge with understanding

if I could show you where your facts are
I would, but those facts you hope to find
simply don't exist, are merely supposition
an unreliable foundation to a forlorn hope
that truth be both more and less than it is

August 24-25, 2021

Far Too Many

"Far too many aren't smart enough to know this
and it makes me sad."
you say this
as one who has been made the purveyor of all knowledge
as if those who do not think as you do are wrong by default

do you know what I find sad?
I find it sad that there are far too many like you

who own so firm a grip on their own righteousness
they cannot see what they hold in error

who shine their light so constantly toward others
they fail to illuminate their own darkness

who are so ready to correct any perceived wrong
they overlook the fault inside themselves

I was struck by all this thought this morning
after seeing your Facebook post
recalling how you lately suggested how we should vote
in the election we have on the horizon
found truth in a struggle with reconciliation
recalling also your praiseworthy stand against abortion
yet knowing that each of our major parties
advocates for Choice over Life

you, who bask in your self-righteous doctrines,
do you dare suggest I support an evil
made less so by its size

oh the humanity!

August 23, 2021

If Any Person

if any person had a
higher claim to rebel
than did my Lord Jesus
I know not who they are
Who, alone of all, was God

Who, though

tried
judged
condemned,

stood silent

Who, though

legions of angels at His call
powerful in and of Himself
guiltless as none other ever was,

stood silent

Who, though

perfect
righteous
incorruptible,

stood silent

Who, though

alone of all who ever lived
could justly and without fault
rebel, claim His own autonomy,

stood silent

and died!

that we, His creation
His opposite in every way
could stand before His God

and live

and lives!

that we, His creation
the purchase of His blood
could live with Him

forever

No Other Place to Go

"they've" been comparing us to the Jews
who, living under Hitler's iron fist
woke too late to the warming of the water
realized too late that to stay meant death
who, had they known, could have fled
could have lived long and prosperous lives
instead of being murdered in their millions
with scant regard even for their humanity

but "they're" wrong, we're not like Jews
even if we live under rulers' iron fists
even if we wake to the warming water
even if we realize that to stay means death
where on Earth could we find safety
where will our lives be long and prospered
if, as "they" say, it's a global conspiracy
no land would have regard for our humanity

and yet "they're" right, we're like Jews
if, though alive beneath rulers' iron fists
we are also awake to God's higher call
to love our enemies even to our deaths
for there is no final safety on this Earth
no hope for our long and prospered lives
our hope alone to trust the perfect care
of He Who gave His all for our humanity

August 23, 2021

I feel sorry for Paul, poor guy
beaten, tortured, shipwrecked
locked up in prisons as he was
penning his many lonely letters
bereft of good Christian fellowship
unable to meet with saints in body
prayed and met with ink instead

I feel sorry for Paul, poor guy
if only he knew as we now know
the proof of salvation's pudding
depends entirely on being together
gathering as His body in one place
and how often and loudly we decry
any who could dare say otherwise

I feel sorry for Paul, poor guy
he came so close to being saved
yet he missed the boat entirely

Yes, this poem is a hyperbole. It overemphasizes what I've heard so many say during the COVID-19 restrictions, that in obeying the restrictions on worship (Capacity limitations. Masks. Social distancing.) we are disobeying God's command to gather together (Hebrews 10:25) and in so doing are putting our trust in man rather than in God and in doing that we are putting our salvation at risk.

I chose Paul to make my point because he spent much of his later life in prison and unable to take part worship gatherings and so, by extension, was disobedient to God. But there are so many more I could have chosen, Christians unable to leave their homes, Christians in long-term care or Christians who do not even have an underground church to attend, to name just a few. Even the man crucified next to Christ, who could not possibly have attended worship, was assured of his salvation by the One Who saved him.

August 20, 2021

for many months I have been concerned
for you, for me, for this troublesome rift
(maybe earlier too, now seeing the hints)
you told me "Don't speak to me again!"
"Your agreement with his criticism hurt."
that road of accusation went both ways
you said that I was a repulsive hypocrite
you would not accept my sincere concern
both saw and knew the other way wrong
perhaps we are still wrong, it's hard to tell
with so much confusion between believers
our misunderstandings of what God wants
lead to conflicts the world should never see
we have not the grace to change our mind
but cling to the mast, firm and unyielding
I wonder if since then you've prayed for me
prayed for the soul you claim is in jeopardy
I'm not sure for you won't let me talk to you
so I don't know if you pray for my salvation
or if you've given me up as one of those lost
(from what you lately say it seems you have)
and I wish it wasn't so, that I could still speak
bounce my ideas off of you to learn or teach
as God gives us both His much needed grace

August 15-19, 2021

How Church Feels This Morning

Dawn breaks darkly
Joy finds no footing
Despair entangles routine

In Your house this morning
caressed by the voices of your saints
their praises washing over me
like the water so many years ago
and I am renewed

New dawn has broken
Joy has its foundation
Gratitude permeates duty

It feels good, very good;
thank You Father
yet again

With a great deal of gratitude to Heidi Sapiano, who introduced us to We The Kingdom's amazing "God So Loved;" and to Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour, Who makes everything worthwhile

August 11, 2021

What's it's Like
(kind of)

Tim Conway
that wonderful, funny man
in his delightfully funny sketch
of siamese elephants
mourned how
joined at their trunks
wanting desperately to trumpet
could only say
"Fnorgn!"
their triumphant bellows
stifled

it feels like that
sometimes
when I want
so desperately want
to talk about my pain
only to find myself
surrounded by stone walls
with no window, crack or door

still and yet again

August 6, 2021

Dreams

reality fails expectation
dreams grow brighter
unyielding, life persists

August 4, 2021

you are so clever
you have such knowledge
like Felix before Paul
I see and am astonished
yet, unlike him, must ask
why are you not also wise

you, who would take the spectacular
reduce it, make it mere and mundane
unlike God, Who through Jesus Christ
took what was plain and gave it glory

you, who sees holes in the Scripture
fills them with scraps of your brilliance
unlike God, Who in His revelation
leaves no question unanswered

you, who sees things that are not
calls them as though they are
unlike God, Who in the beginning
called what was not into what is

you gave me confusion to consider
God gives me a solid start to thought
you gave me a hole that never was
God gives truth that stands unblemished

August 1, 2021

Overwhelmingly Blessed

my life
has had its ups
has had its downs
has gone as hoped
has gone as feared
yet today
knowing all that was
I know I can say this

I have not known
one day without food

I have not known
one day without shelter

I have not known
one day without heat

I have not known
one day without love

I have not known
one day without hope

I have not known
one day that was not God's

Father
dear, dear Father
thank You!

August 1-4, 2021

He Is NOT Dead, Just Gone

my friend Stan Lynn died last night
(but lives, he is not no more, just gone)
he was sick and wasn't getting better
and sixteen months of COVID lockdown
it has faded the memory of unseen faces
most of what I remember of Stan is how
on Sundays he would talk of his old days
back in his old country with his band
playing at Saturday evening dances and
ever faithful, at Sunday morning worship
the same lips playing the same trumpet
but the eyes, those glorious eyes of his
alive! blazing with the joy of his salvation
God was no theory for Stan, He was real
is more real now, and his trumpet glorious!

Even though I made up the bit about Stan playing at Sunday's
worship after Saturday's dances, it fits quite well with what I
learned of Stan over the years that I knew him. He loved to play
and he loved his God.

May your trumpet ever praise our God!



Photo credit: Mike Niblett
Stan is third from the left

What's the Issue

benevolence is not the issue
nor tyranny, nor oppression
benign dictatorships or bad
nor anarchy, nor rule of law
nor what is or has ever been
nor any done or undone act
nor any benefit or detriment
not one of these is the issue
not now and not ever before
the issue is, it will always be
our own reply to good or ill

July 16, 2021

all Your wonders praise You
oh Lord
all Your wonders praise

all Your wonders praise You
 Your flowing streams
 Your mossy rocks
 Your trees that play within the wind
oh Lord
 Your sun
 Your moon
 Your stars in depth of night
all Your wonders praise

all Your wonders praise You
oh Lord
all Your wonders praise

and I, oh Lord, and I
both of mud and of Your breath
may I, as these, Your praises sing

July 1, 2021

Canada Day, 2021

a lament

this is too somber a day by far
history has revealed itself to us
as neither pretty nor unknown
it was no surprise, this sadness
our leaders had long known of it
had for years, decades, centuries
known of our nation's lost children
and have done nothing, NOTHING!
to heal the pain they knew full well
nor were held to account those
who did and enabled these horrors
whose hands wielded the shovels
hiding this our most despicable act
in nameless graves far from home
callously left alone and unmarked
for those left behind, unforgotten

July 1-9, 2021

Any 'Normal' Person

"Any normal person would ..."
but that's the problem, isn't it
any normal person wouldn't

and how can we know this?
it was those normal people
they're who brought us here

June 30, 2021

I Disagree to Disagree

some, after too long a time in discussion, will say
"We're getting nowhere, let's just agree to disagree"
giving up on going anywhere having gotten nowhere
or returning, having not gotten where they wanted
a polite admission of resignation, if not of defeat

but I will not "just agree to disagree," not ever
well, on cars and baseball and movies and such, maybe
but not on anything of any real importance
not on anything where such agreement could be fatal
I will only agree to seek Truth and stand firm upon it

June 30-July 21, 2021

Situational Hermeneutics

this pandemic, and our government's mandates to contain it
have made for some 'interesting' hermeneutical decisions
as we who love God work to reconcile faith with society

some, reading "submit to authority" in Romans
do this
others, reading "hold to account" in the same place
do that

some, reading "gather together" in Hebrews
do this
others, reading "encourage each other" in the same place
do that

some, reading "do not associate with evil" in Ephesians
do this
others, reading "walk in love" in the same place
do that

but God is One, He speaks now just as He ever has
the One True God cannot speak conflictingly true words
our multiple grasps of God's good truth but yield confusion

"To the Law and to the testimony!
If men do not speak in accordance with this word,
it is because they have no dawn."

Just Jesus!

some say that power will align against us
so?

it's not about having power's favour

some say that our rights will be infringed
so?

it's not about any abuse of our rights

some say that we will be despised citizens
so?

it's not about our status in our nation

some say that we will lose our possessions
so?

it's not about what we claim to own

some say that we will be unfairly treated
so?

it's not about how anyone treats us

some say that our lives will be in danger
so?

it's not about how well or long we live

so what if we lose it all
all of these are temporary
it's not about any of all of that
it never has been
it never will be

it's about following Jesus

it's only about following Jesus
it's always only been about Jesus
it will always only be about Jesus
nothing else will ever matter
not one other thing

June 28-29, 2021

... and another thing ...

it seems I've been talking to you a lot
most likely without your realizing it
may not be the best of my words
you might find them insulting
yet my words are of yours
by your own standard
even as your own
unrighteously
these days
in truth these
but they are mine
my many silent words
they rise from your words
my words may be unrighteous
unloving, are as mine would seem
you show hate no longer is a stranger

June 28, 2021

Bad Theology

you said these words
"These are men of God I would follow into Hell!"
you actually said these actual words
publicly, on Facebook, today
I read them just now
just an instant before
I became gob smacked
by your ignorant audacity
to couple God with Hell
as if One would lead to the other

others praise your conviction
(I read that too, often)
consider you a teacher
a staunch defender of the faith
yet I wonder
I am confused that your obvious sincerity
stands coupled to so horrid a theology

I am befuddled
that you could say
that these are men of God
whom you would follow into Hell
this of all is the lowest madness

would men of God lead to Hell?
should we of God follow such leading?
should a follower of God say such things?
if only even for a joke
what sinful jest could use
Hell as Heaven's punch-line
what should those beyond us think

we have been given Jesus Christ
God's own and only Son
alone our guide to salvation
you would much better have said:
"Jesus is the Son of God! I will follow Him into Heaven!"

June 23-25, 2021

Canada's Day, eh?

grief would have us close the door
take down the banners
repackage the fireworks
consider the first as a penance
paid for the crimes of our fathers
sad as I am such grief exists, here
where I have my home
here is more than unmarked graves
or, if I may speak more bluntly
these are not unmarked alone
our sons, our daughters have died
do die, where red Maple never flew
above the soil received their blood
which, also red, flowed free
that other's blood might not
flow beneath tyrannic grasp

here, where I have made my home
has been made my home by these
whose sacrifices we dishonour
if we can recall our fathers' sins
yet know not our fathers' glory

Crucible

Descartes may have had an idea
in that dark and lonely stove of his
stone cold cast iron doubt entombed
reason, which yet emerged triumphant

I also know stone cold cast iron doubt
dark and lonely walls have entombed
reason sought desperate for its light
to see: as I am He alone must be

There are times, too many times, when I'm tempted to doubt everything, to the point that I'm uncertain even about God, and worry that there is no foundation on which I can stand. But then I remember: Since I have these doubts I must exist; and since I must exist I must also have a cause; and God is the only cause of all the options that makes any sense at all; and since God must be my cause He must also be; and since God must be Jesus must also be; and if Jesus must be then salvation is certain.

June 21 - September 23, 2021

row me a boat upon the gentle sea
let me float with you in perfect glee
on golden wave by gleam endowed
to glory beyond frail mortal shroud

oh! sing me out where water flows
free in gently rippled rows
where care and fear far cast aside
unveil our hearts, our souls unhide

June 21, 2021

Shovel

poke a shovel in the sand
take a little dig
and another, and another, and
the sand is still mostly there
add a little dig
add another, add another, and
the hole becomes substantial

June 21, 2021

reality lies indistinct in cloudy confusion
what is indecipherable from what is not
fact and fiction in madnesses intermingle
reason is assaulted, submits to incredulity
my mind cannot see truth from falsehood
tears drown joy, it dissolves as a phantom
blown aside like a mist in the morning sun
and I, unable to determine sand from stone
weep where smiles may more honest shine

June 21, 2021 - April 12, 2022

pain, it urges me to
stop
doing, so that it will
stop
being, but duty is to
keep
serving He Who said
Go!

June 19, 2021

Too Much!

When the truth you have spoken is rejected and censored by Christian "friends" simply because it is too radical, you know your walk with God will be a lonely one.

It is too much, it is simply
too much
to see you say such words
knowing all the while that
those things of which you boast

the rejection
the censorship
the abandonment

are the works of your own hand

It is you who has rejected
It is you who has censored
It is you who has abandoned

me

to walk alone and unforgiven
for a sin uncommitted

Behind their complaint lies their assumption
they have been rejected for being radical
rather than corrected for being wrong

March 18, 2022
from June 15, 2021

There's a crow laughing in the tree outside
and a dove cooing on the house beside
the window they don't know I'm looking out
to discover what each their song's about

Perhaps they announce the coming rain
bless browning grass too long has lain
so dry beneath June's scorching sun
for birds, some say, feel what is to come

Or perhaps they sing their joy of life
and grateful voice their endless praise,
as poets say stars and sun must also do,
to God Who gives their lives their breath

And I know the rocks would sing if I did not
so I'm inclined to believe that birds do too
for though rain may come and rain may go
all creation knows that God is King alone

June 9, 2021

Useless ... Unless ...
or Regretful After the Fact

mankind does reprehensible things
amidst all our wonderful works
hide far too many unspeakably evil
uncovered and brought to light
too late for the aid of any victim

yet our memorials are enacted
our communal sympathies voiced
again, and again, and again

too late ...

of what worth our after the fact voices
if our words are not a call to action

of what worth our after the fact weeping
if our tears do not wash away this evil

of what worth our after the fact anger
if our hands continue to stand idle

useless ...

we cannot bring back those who've fallen
our remembrances of them do nothing
more than soothe our stricken consciences

unless ...

unless our words are not mere discordance
unless our tears are not mere token rivers
unless our wrath is not mere futile venting

unless we have done more than weep
we have but painted whitewashed tombs
on the foundations of ancestral failures

June 6, 2021

you'll hear many funny, crazy things

things like

"One man with God is a majority"

when actually

God is the majority all on His own

He doesn't need us to stand with Him

which is another funny, crazy thing

of the many you could hear

as if God could be at all democratic

persuaded? on occasion, perhaps

but God accede to a majority? never!

yet at His side you simply cannot lose

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring charges against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, but rather, was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or trouble, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? Just as it is written:

"For Your sake we are killed all day long;
We were regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:31-39

June 4, 2021

Worry

I've got to worry less about man
I've got to worry more about God
put my priorities where they belong
after all
man only has me eighty years or so
God has me, one way or the other
each and every day of all eternity

June 3, 2021

MSM & Social Media

"Facebook and Twitter do not like this narrative"
you say, boldly, as though it were fait accompli
while others say the same of main-stream-media
but is it true that these don't like the narrative
or is it you?

Don't Kid Yourself

(or "You Can't Select the Sex of a Blob")

you say it's all about your choice, most will agree
it's your right to do what you wish with your body
but that's just the problem, isn't it, there's a body
and the body you're doing things to isn't your own
you know it, I know it, even our leadership knows it
and prove it by voting down restrictions of any kind
even those that would ban sex-selective abortion

come on now, that has GOT to tell us something
if their sex is known then they're already a person

oh God, have mercy on us

if this were your own body how could you choose
to love a child of one sex or hate a thing of another
the baby could always and only be inevitably female
if this were your body there could be no other choice
to know a baby's sex demands its unique humanity
the idea of sex-selection is but wicked self-deception
inexcusable words excusing a despicable selfishness

if you're going to choose one over the other
you've proved you've already chosen murder

have mercy on us, oh God, for we are despicable

After reading [this article in the National Post](#) this morning

OTTAWA — A private member's bill from a Conservative MP to ban sex-selection abortions was voted down in the House of Commons on Wednesday by a margin of 248 to 82, but about two thirds of the Conservative caucus voted in favour of it.

Conservative leader Erin O'Toole voted against the bill, but 81 of 119 Conservative MPs voted in favour. The only other "yes" vote was from independent MP Derek Sloan, the former Conservative leadership candidate who was ejected from the caucus in January.

Bill C-233, put forward by Saskatchewan MP Cathay Wagantall, would have made it a crime "for a medical practitioner to perform an abortion knowing that the abortion is sought solely on the grounds of the child's genetic sex."

The bill was never likely to pass Parliament, given opposition from the

Liberals, Bloc Quebecois, NDP and Green Party, who argued the bill is effectively a stealth move to bring in abortion restrictions. But private member's bills on abortion have long been a tricky issue for Conservative leaders to stickhandle, as the party's policy is to always allow free votes on "issues of moral conscience."

When the bill first came up for debate in April, O'Toole said he opposed it but would not try to whip the vote in his caucus. "I'm pro choice and I will be voting against this private member's bill," he said.

O'Toole's management of issues such as abortion and gay rights is under close scrutiny in part because he strategically courted the social conservative wing of the party during last summer's leadership race. Although O'Toole said he was personally pro-choice, his campaign deliberately drew a distinction with his rival Peter MacKay by promising greater freedom to social conservatives in the party on abortion votes.

When Sloan and Leslyn Lewis — the two outspoken social conservatives in the leadership race — were eliminated on the ranked ballot, their support largely flowed to O'Toole and gave him the victory over MacKay.

Since being elected leader, O'Toole has changed his messaging strategy and distanced himself more clearly from social conservative positions. On Monday, he posted a video for Pride month declaring himself an ally of the LGBTQ2 community and said he would always fight against "homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia."

The horrible irony is that the Canadian government has proclaimed June to be "Pride Month" in celebration of sexual diversity and whether or not you agree with that, it can still choose, by a margin of 248 to 82, not to ban sex-selective abortion. The government may stand in firm opposition against "homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia" but it seems to have no trouble supporting sex-selective murder.

Have mercy on us, oh God, for we are despicable.

May 31, 2021

Do Something.
Just. Do. Something!

Forget about the flags at half-staff
Do something
Forget about learning to say "Never again!"
Do something
Forget about figuring out who failed their watch
Do something
Forget about the anger and the endlessly flowing tears
Do something
Forget about the saddened words and the sudden memorials
Do something
Forget about thinking it won't happen again, it will, it always does
Just. Do. Something!

Because unless we all do something, and very soon
this will happen again, and again, and again.
How many more of our family must die?
It falls to us to do something,
it's on us to finally
end this

215 unmarked graves were recently discovered at one of Canada's residential schools, a
school
where indigenous children, taken from their families, were to be assimilated into Canadian
society.

Flags on Federal buildings were immediately ordered lowered to half-staff.
Leaders immediately condemned that the residential schools even existed.
Memorials were immediately set up from one end of Canada to the other.

Mourning. Condemnation. Remembrance.

All are good. None will help.

History cannot be undone. These 215 children, and many more, are dead.

Regardless of any memorial we raise. Regardless of what our ancestors did or did not do.
It falls on us, here and now, to do everything that we can do to make sure such things do
not happen ever again.

It is ours to fix this, we must do something!

June 1, 2021

And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

Romans 1:28-32

it's too easy to see, these days
what Paul was talking about
transgression abounds, is celebrated
laws, colours, flags all encourage
what should be avoided at any cost

and his exhortation after saying this?
you who are God's, live Godly lives
for as God gives His grace freely to all
even to those who only ever see it in you
live for God as God's own, He'll do the rest

May 31 - June 29, 2021

Greg Laurie is said to have said
(something like this)

"The objective is not to
conform scripture to the changing culture
the objective is to
conform culture to the unchanging scripture"

these are noble, high calling words
affirming the constancy of God's Word
and the desperate need of our culture
to hear it, believe it and be saved by it
but these words go only so far
both going too far and not far enough
our objective is not to
use the scripture
to transform culture
but to
use the scripture to transform lives

May 31-June 8, 2021

I'm wearing out, I can't do this anymore
it's becoming difficult to keep on crying
overwhelmed by far too many sadnesses
my eyes cannot weep these endless tears
my heart is broken, it can take no more
is becoming calloused at the precipice
no human should ever have had to see
no human should ever have tried to fill

oh dear God, we are fallen still
save us

oh dear Lord God this grief is too great
my frail form cannot understand it
I cannot grasp that such pain exists
was made by those of my own blood
oh dear Lord God in Heaven, help!
may I weep with those who also weep
may we find our comfort in Your justice
may our tears find rest in Your mercy

oh dear God, may we see Your grace
help us

After yet another murderous rampage
in which four people on an evening walk
were killed, simply for being Muslim.

Oh dear God,
we need You!

May 27-30, 2021

you can say anything you wish about COVID-19
about the actions being taken against it
about the vaccines being developed to fight it
you've a mind of your own you're able to use

you can say anything you wish about COVID-19
about the effectiveness of our self-isolation
about the potential for our indoctrination
you've a mind of your own you're able to use

and even though

you can wish anything you say about COVID-19
about the time you stop repeating hear-say is
about the time I start believing your thought is
of the mind of your own you're able to use

May 26, 2021

Freedom!

I am handicapped by democracy
hemmed in by inalienable rights
constrained by a notion of liberty
at odds with the reality around me
each of which strains at a freedom
purchased at infinitely greater cost
by One of infinitely greater worth
the only freedom worth knowing
the only freedom where the chains
of Death have no more hold on me

May 22, 2021

You say I'm of a ninety-five percent
who value life more highly than The Call,
but I must ask you this
is it wrong that it's my neighbour's life I love
and loved not more than God, but loved
because God is already loved

You say I'm in need of repentance
because I have backslidden from The Call,
but I must ask you this
am I backslidden because I disagree with you
or because you think you see a sin in me
that God has already forgiven

You say I should see COVID as a filter
straining the Publican from the Pharisee
but I must ask you this
have you so little love for those who've died
you would burden our familial grief
with a less than holy God

You say the chaff is being burned
using a horrid example from a futile war
but I must ask you this
how do you save with your callous words
those you say will be burned like chaff
while God yet shows His grace?

May 21, 2021

"This man is not from God, He does not keep the Sabbath"
in the courtyard such words as these may seem righteous
coming from the leaders of the congregation as they did,
though shepherds of the flock, fallen, untrustworthy guides
who defied their position, used their shield as a sword which
ignorantly wielded, thrust vainly against the Master's hand

though such words as these may seem righteous again today
yet we are not in the courtyard but in the public square
and we are not among the leaders but of the congregation
the test of our being of God is not now, nor has it ever been
how faithful our observances of the letters of His law but
how faithfully we shine His light into the surrounding dark

May 20, 2021

a piece of my coding must be missing
a method gone, a foobar unannounced
other entities can weep crocodile tears
over what bothers me hardly a bit
I simply don't get it, I must be broken
I MUST! for I see the same comments
inhabit the same system, am running
but I seem to be ever so slightly askew
I pray the Master Programmer will help
repair my faulty code and subroutines
or insert His comments here or there
to let me know how I've gone amuck
or not, if I'm outputting a desired result

May 20, 2021

The Pillars of Evolution are crumbling
not surprising, really
since they are no more substantial
than the least coherent will-o'-wisp
that ever deceived the mind of man
leading him down the garden path
blindly past beauties of every design
to gloat in the junk heap at the back

The Pillars of Evolution are crumbling
where Darwin's Arch had stood
though Darwin is no more of this world
than the word once foolishly spoken
and as he has fallen, so with the arch
which, so futilely, once bore his name
as will The Pillars of Evolution crumble
overcome by relentless tide and wave

After reading a news article about "Darwin's Arch"
collapsing and becoming "The Pillars of Evolution."

May 20, 2021

"Leave off with the angry comments,"
they say
"You're on the wrong side of history,"
they claim
this may be true, history may forget me
but God won't forget me, not ever
so His is the side I'll be standing on

May 17, 2021

Fury, Love & Confusion

"I'm not really interested in what you have to say I do not cooperate with Gestapo I do not talk to the Nazis. You came in your uniforms like thugs. That's what you are. Brownshirts of Adolf Hitler. You are Nazi Gestapo, communists, fascists. I do not cooperate with Nazis You are not allowed here, you are not welcomed here!"

(Artur Pawlowski; The Dailywire, April 25, 2021)

"Gestapo not allowed here!"
he said

"You are not welcomed here!"
he said
standing firm
a stalwart hero to many

this is difficult

it is hard
I do not understand
nor do I know
how to reconcile his words
with Jesus' words

"Come to Me and I will give you rest"
as He opened His arms
welcoming anyone

or with Jesus' other words

"Father, forgive them!"
as they pounded their pain
into His embrace

I don't want to think that pastors such as Artur Pawlowski or Henry Hildebrandt or James Coates or Tim Stephens are preaching heresy nor that they do not fully grasp the Bible but I also, and much more so, don't want to think that Jesus was Himself a heretic or didn't fully grasp the gospel of salvation. Yet Jesus' message seems to be at odds with what these men are teaching. It's hard for one in my position to say that these four, who are far more educated than I, are wrong; but if they're not then how do I reconcile what Jesus says with what they say when what they say is so different?

May 17, 2021

Reflection

Milo stares at his reflection in the TV cabinet's glass
he seems to be trying to figure something out
we're pretty sure he knows that's not a dog in there
but he sees something that looks like a dog
so he sits and stares with an interesting look on his face

as if he's uncertain if he should be curious or concerned

Orthodoxy

even as you speak

"False teachers will attempt to deceive you"

you also speak

"It's OK for us to have differences in doctrine"

and I wonder if you even understand the irony

in one breath warning of false teachers

in your next breath falsely teaching

cohabitation of orthodoxy with disagreement

and I wonder on the orthodoxy of our faith

if differences of doctrine can be tolerated

(For example:

You believe our salvation cannot be lost

I believe it can be

Both of us cannot be right

You believe the first rider is the Anti-Christ

I believe he is not

Both of us cannot be right

You believe the enemy is not yet cast down

I believe he has been

Both of us cannot be right

Where you and I disagree

affects how you and I live

This is not doctrinal unity

it cannot be accepted)

remembering Moses, David, Isaiah, Peter, John, Paul ...

who despite their education, emotion or experience

spoke each as one of their Saviour's gospel

brooked no disagreement

enabled no dissension

believed and taught that as God is one

so must His word also be

May 14, 2021

Rage & Vanity

the nations rage
the peoples plot vanity
endlessly seeking to overthrow God
Who in the heavens laughs
Who ridicules their futile schemes
uses them to accomplish His own

and we
we who call ourselves by His name
what then of us
do we shudder at the nations' rage
do we quail before the peoples' plots
do we cower before an ineffective world
do we live in fear and trembling
of nations and peoples who have no power, or
do we have our hope in He Who saves us

Unbelievable? I Wonder ...

On Chapter 6 of the Gospel of John

"So Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever.'"

I wonder if I would have stood there, thinking

"Until now He's been wonderful

He's made a fair bit of sense

but now He sounds downright off.

'Eat My flesh?'

'Drink My blood?'

Really?"

I wonder if, on hearing this

I would have believed, or would,

like those who heard Him then,

have found His words a barrier

insurmountable, and walked away

shaking my head that such a man

such a wonderful man

could be so weird

"Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this said, 'This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?'"

I think I could have felt the same

it would have been my loss

I know that now, after Calvary,

(I can read forward to the Last Supper

from there read back to the Passover

and see that He is both Lamb and God)

but in that day, beneath that sun

hearing His so very strange words

I may not have known so much

or known enough to see in Him

the connection of Lamb and God

I would have seen a miracle maker

I would have eaten His bread

I would have been amazed as death

retreated at His command

but would His words distract me

would their strangeness offend

would I do as them

and disbelieving Him, leave

"As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore."

or would I do as Peter did
and knowing Him, stay

"Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.'"

The Importance of Exegesis

two and one is three
two and two is four
two and three are five
two and four are six
two of five are seven
two and six are eight
two and seven are nine
two and eight are ten
two and nine are eleven
two and ten are twelve

now

some could look at this and say
"That's very good,
this lesson fits right
up there with all the best"

and

some could look at this and say
"That's partly wrong,
but where it's right
makes up for all the rest"

and

some could look at this and say
"That's mostly right,
but where it's wrong
makes doubtful all the rest"

which

is why it's important
that we do exegesis well
when fact and fiction careless mix
truth becomes hard to uncover

May 9, 2021

Safety

"You will never be safe when churches are forcibly closed"
on a signboard, outside a church, during a pandemic
on the one side, those who toe the line are unbelieved
looked upon as traitors to the faith
on the other, those who overstep the line are unbelieved
looked upon as traitors to the faith
and here I stand, of opinion, yet uncertain where to step
I hear their discussions, I see their bold standing signs
and I cannot help but think to myself
"It was never about safety in the first place"

May 9, 2021

So Good

It was
so good to see you again

It was
so good to hear your voice
intertangle mine in our
gentle mess of conversation

It was
so good to talk, to listen, to disagree
to pick up almost where we dropped
our words when last we visited Mom

It was
a joy to remember that I missed you

May 9, 2021

If, Pastor, Then How?

If you cannot trust the words plainly writ
but must alter them to suit your fancy
how can you reveal the God in them made plain

If you cannot view His word above your notes
but must be sure to say what you desire
how can you teach us what we are to learn

If you cannot subordinate style to substance
but must apply awkward alliterations
how can you lead through pain or persecution

And how can I trust you if all you do is edit
how God is revealed in His word and His work

Sunday morning, after a depressing exegesis

May 8, 2021

I study the confused, the deceived, the liars
by times, to see for myself where I stand
allow myself to try to be convinced by them
to learn if my path be rock or fragile sand
let their idea assault the bastion of my faith
to unearth the thought that better stands
on God's eternal and unchanging Truth

May 8, 2021

I think I could understand you
as you weep for Coates and the Pawlowskis
I think I could respect you
as you decry those who could do such things
I think I could take your stand
as you hold the Church to its high office
I think I could be confused
as you disassociate from disagreement
I think I could be condemned
and you'd not shed a tear for my loss

May 7-9, 2021

darkness is a thing any may endure
its gloom indiscriminately scattered
inattentive of time or tide or border
after all, it is ours to die so why not
allow grey discolour before its time
the vibrance of our impermanence
resigned, endure an endless night
laid early upon our transient day
it would be easy to yield to dark
let drear gloom displace our joy

and yet

we are brave enough to live

Hophni, Phinehas ... et alia

they're all saying that his picture went wrong
that it went (accidentally) to an uncloze friend
(yet how that could happen is mind boggling)
there's talk that he was luring her, or something
(yet it may well be, given his attention calling)
and counter-talk that he didn't even know her
(yet he seems to have known her well enough)
either way it was an unfortunate turn of events
and he is now, quite appropriately, out of a job

but how could he even think it was a good idea
sending so risqué an image of himself to anyone
regardless whether they were close friend or not
and then to defend himself with such language
and claim innocence and infidelity in one breath

what of self-denial, of refusing our baser nature
what of being light in this dark and fallen world
what of God's call to be holy because He is holy

how could such a one presume to teach of God

such do not live for He for Whom others died
who burn their foul sacrifice on their evil altars
such do not yield their selves an offering to Him
who greedy and proud seek a glory all their own

with such as these at the helm it's a wonder
the Church hasn't a worse name than it does

After scandal de-thrones yet another of Hillsong's pastors

April 27, 2021

I've Tried Until I've Tired

I've tried, let me tell you I've tried
I have looked under the rocks
I have looked behind the news
I have looked over the hyperbole
and I can't see it, I tell you I just can't
nowhere in anywhere I've looked
can I find what you so easily see

I must be going mad, I tell you
completely and stark raving mad
what other reason could there be
where you see what I simply can't
no matter how hard I look for it
or how I wish myself to find it
I must be mad, absolutely mad

No matter where they look, my friends see it:
Conspiracy. Agenda. Persecution. Mayhem.
But I can't, no matter how I've tried I can't see
the things that seem to leap right out at them.
And at times I fear for my sanity ... or my faith.

April 27, 2021

help me Father
that I may know Your good

that the good I may know
I can see

that the good I can see
I will do

that the good I will do
may please You

I cannot be good alone
help me Father

April 25-27, 2021

Shaking Hands with the Devil

Kristen and Randy and Derek and Henry
one, sworn to uphold the public health
two, sworn to uphold the public good
one, sworn to uphold the word of God
each of them went to the church today
were warmly welcomed by their fellows
in spite and careless cursing of their rulers

allies are found in the strangest places
faith is founded on the strangest allies
when agreement stands in place of holiness

April 25, 2021

The Apostle Paul said I am without excuse
said that what I need to know of God can be known
simply by examining the things around me

King David of Jerusalem said the same thing
said that the heavens above declare the glory of God
by means easily understandable even to me

It is not God who is in need of proof, they say
it is I who must believe the revelation He gave
tossing aside all my various arguments for Him
as worthless things beneath my consideration
for the all surpassing joy of knowing that He Is

The Apostle Paul – Romans 1:18-20
King David of Jerusalem – Psalm 19

The reality of God is so self-evident
that trying to prove Him is ludicrous

April 20, 2021

Dear John Letter
(on Arguments; both Good and Bad)

Pastor John MacArthur (speaking against the imprisonment of Pastor James Coates and the forced closure of Grace Life Church): "... two thousand people have died through the months of COVID, eighty percent of them in senior homes. The remaining ones had some kind of co-morbidity."

In case you don't pick it up from the poem, I am aghast.

Dear John: Are you now telling me that
it's ok not to take care of our neighbour
if they're going to die anyway?
(even though we're ALL dying)

Dear John: Are you seriously saying that
we don't need to be concerned for others
if they're already in poor health?
(even though we're ALL troubled)

Dear John: Baby killers use the same words
it's ok not to let the baby live
if they're not going to live long anyway
(even though we're ALL dying)

Dear John: You sound like you're saying
it's ok to kill our unborn children
if they're going to have a troubled life
(even though we're ALL troubled)

Dear John: If the Church is to argue lockdowns
then it needs to argue better than this
if no case of COVID came from that church
(even though we can't ALL be certain)

Dear John: If the Church is to fight the enemy
then it needs to take a higher road
if it speaks God's irrefutable Truth
(even though we're ALL imperfect)

I Am A Christian!

What does that mean?

It means I am saved from condemnation
by God, my Creator
through the life, death and resurrection
of His Son, Jesus Christ
as testified and constantly upheld
by His Holy Spirit

What else does that mean?

It means that I am a witness
who, by his word and by his work
reveals God's gospel of salvation
to any who will hear and see,
as their co-conspirator in our fall
I will to the best of my ability,
stand on my faith in God,
reveal the gospel that saved me,
which can also save them,
and allow the world to respond
and determine its own path
as it sees fit to do
I will be faithful to God
That, alone of all work, is mine

What does that not mean?

It does not mean that I
condemn the world for its failure
That is for God alone
It does not mean that I
judge the world for its failure
That is for Jesus Christ alone
It does not mean that I
convict the world of its failure
That is for the Holy Spirit alone

The Church Crowd

"The church crowd who say there is no persecution
but are the very people doing the persecuting.
Instead of comfort, criticism.
Instead of solidarity, solitude.
Instead of defense, denunciation.
They are worse than Job's comforters
for they will not even sit in mourning with you!"

(from a Facebook post)

I used to be on your side
have even defended you in verse
which, oddly, slipped right by you
(is praise unnoticed still praise?)
you may not have been virtue's paragon
but you did stand for Truth
I liked that,
you were bold, inspiring
you motivated me to be a better man
you were absolutely glorious

what happened to you
that you can now say such things
that you can now do such things
as you accuse others of doing
has the fact that we disagree
removed us from the body
even as you remain?

Somehow I am reminded of Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome: "Therefore you have no excuse, you foolish person, everyone of you who passes judgment; for in that matter in which you judge someone else, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. But do you suppose this, you foolish person who passes judgment on those who practice such things, and yet does them as well, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and restraint and patience?" Romans 2:1-4

April 18, 2021

it is larger than me
so much larger
and when think on it
I die

He is larger than it
infinitely larger
and when I think on Him
I live

April 16, 2021

I Miss ...

I miss losing myself for hours in a bookstore.
I miss photographing my friend's special events.
I miss being able to share in the joys of others.
I miss the smiles on the people on the street.
I miss shaking hands with the men at church.
I miss hugging my mom and my mother-in-law.

There are a great many things that I miss but I don't miss God.
Were it not for Him, I'd have gone off the deep end a long time ago.

I am grateful.

Irony

(on a friend's response to a Facebook post)

Irony: noun

... an incongruity between an event's expected and actual results
... an event or result marked by such an incongruity

(thank you, Merriam-Webster)

like the person's comment on your Facebook post
(itself a response to that person's earlier comment)
which unintentionally supports your intended point

(thank you, Facebook Friend)

April 15-16, 2021

How Dare We!

we are God' creation
are made to be by Him
crafted by His very hands
molded into His own image
we are His workmanship
loved, even though fallen
our Master's handiwork
yet purchased to be His own
the price of our redemption
the very blood of His Son
of His one and only Son

with so great a price upon us
how dare we make our jokes
at God's very great expense

April 14-15, 2021

Our Jesus / Our Witness

your Jesus seems like a wonderful fellow
His words are the most lovely ever said
surely He's someone worth knowing well
but you seem to be not a very nice person
and if you're what it's like to follow Him
I wonder why I should want to be like you

After reading some friends' comments on Facebook

Trust

I spoke to one, years ago, of the hymns
my dad sang on his last night on Earth
they had the nerve to correct me
said Dad's hymns meant nothing
he must just have been delirious
told me they knew much better than I
that my father did not sing for joy
because he did not see Jesus coming
to take him with Him to his home

I speak to some, now, of other things
and feel much the same as I did then
when people I do not trust tell me
people I do trust cannot be trusted
since they've not done their research
they don't know we're in a conspiracy
and I think again, as I thought then
how can these know better than all
what is and is not to be believed

April 14, 2021

Going On ...

my going on, so often, is not
my going on at all, but God's
Who pulls me, crying, through
the days I'd rather not endure

and I know that this is my own pain
is not near so hard as another knows
yet this is mine and it strikes me hard
that I endure, or stand at all, declares
the power and mercy of a faithful God

The Greatest Commandment

One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?"

Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

The scribe said to Him, "Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that He is One, and there is no one else besides Him; and to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as himself, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."

Mark 12:28-34

"You shall love your neighbour as yourself"

Jesus said

not only your family or friend or congregant
but your neighbour, your actual neighbour
even if he's your enemy
even if he barricades your doors
or steals your Amazon packages
or says bad things about you

that's what Jesus said

you shall care for your neighbour
whether he is good or evil
you shall do for him the very good
you would do for yourself
you shall look out for his interests
as though you were yourself bound up in them

that's how Jesus lived

it's heartbreakingly sad that so many of us
we, who have the very best reason to love
find it so easy to despise our neighbour
see reason to belittle our neighbour
have no fear to curse our neighbour
or carelessly ignore our neighbour
because they have done or do us harm

ignoring words that Jesus also said
"Father, forgive them"
as they were putting Him to death

do we care so little for our neighbour
we allow selfishness obscure the Saviour
do we care so little we hide the salvation
God offers free to all who would believe
yet who cannot hear for all our noise
the only witness they may ever have

how will our neighbour see His love
through the blurred image of our lives
how will our neighbour walk with God
if our feet so often walk in protest
how will our neighbour hold God's hand
if our hands so often close in fists
how will our neighbour sing His praise
if our voices so often rise in anger
how will we reveal His love for them
if our love for Him so tarnished shines
how will we make disciples of all nations
if we keep His salvation to ourselves

and unlike Jesus, so much unlike Jesus
we have no concern for those around us
do not weep their desperate condition
how will they know they can be saved
or even brought to care they're dead
if we live lives that will not tell them

if we will not love our neighbour
as God would have us love them
is there still reason for God to love us

April 12, 2021

I wonder what our brothers think
our sisters
those to whom our buildings
the freedoms we take for granted
are treasures beyond price

I wonder what our brothers think
our sisters
when we cry "Persecution!"
who wear crosses on our sleeves
and put Jesus stickers on our cars

I wonder what our brothers think
our sisters
if they heard our weeping prayers
over Sunday's Swiss Chalet lunches
would they laugh at us or cry

I'm not picking on Swiss Chalet, particularly,
but on the idea of so many of us carelessly
lunching at restaurants after Sunday service.

Hardly Berean

you called yourselves "The Bereans"
announced you would study carefully
judge each idea by the word of God
change your own ideas when corrected
your "when" may well have been an "if"
or even more truthfully, an "I doubt it!"
for when a better one than you spoke
a better idea than the idea you loved
you left it to languish, ignored, uncared
unconcerned that your unhearing ears
denied the God you claimed to serve and
made you more Pharisaical than Berean

The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men.

Acts 17:10-12

April 10-11, 2021

Church is Closed but God is Close

their pews have been emptied
their doors have been closed
fences, bars and locks surround
the building where they met God
they are no longer allowed inside
around them the world protests
voices unite, rise to their defense
pray that God will have His day
will rise again to save His Church
His unfairly beleaguered Church

but are they sure they understand
are they sure who is fighting God
who's the fist raised against Him
who's the voice denies His calling
who's the hand breaks fellowship
who's the spirit that won't forgive
who's the mind that does not know
who's the callous overzealous pride
that could claim their right to meet
call them from a neighbour's care

who is it misapprehending Truth

though building has been shuttered
the Body can never be silenced
united voices joyful join in praise
worship God who's gracious hand
securely builds them soul by soul
into the glorious family of His Son
His Church has never been the walls
the doors, the pulpit or the pews
of buildings scattered upon the earth
it has always been, and it will ever be
every rescued soul, uniting in worship
to the honour and glory of their God

April 9, 2021

Opus

Mr. Holland and George Bailey
both of them
did the best that they knew how
took the surprises of their lives
with grace, dignity and honour
and, on occasion
tears, sacrifice and pain
both a parable
of the best that we can be

April 8, 2021

God

problems beset me
troubles surround me
my world is unfriendly
my faith is contested
on every single front

yet on this I can stand

God is so much better
He is so much larger
He is so much nearer
than any other thing
my imagination quails

April 8, 2021 - February 12, 2022

Pharisees

we have shared the same faith
you and I, and perhaps still do
but after our recent dialogue
I wonder about you, about me
how my simple statement could
 both bring out the best
 and bring out the worst
in each of us in that room
I weep for those beyond our faith
who have seen us say such things
 both of the best
 and of the worst
who have seen our different sides
our lack of willingness to agree
who must now be even more doubtful
that this salvation we proclaim
is even a thing to be desired

I took part in a Facebook 'discussion' that began, and chained
on-and-on-and-on, from an optimistically encouraging post about our
Christian response to COVID-19, government mandated lockdowns and the
forced closure of various churches and which rather quickly got horribly
side-tracked. Some of the comments showed more of the Pharisee than the
Disciple and I began to wonder how such 'discussions' appear to those looking
into our faith from the outside.

April 4, 2021

My Cloud of Witnesses

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

Hebrews 12:1

There are days
there are far too many days
when I wish there were no more
life has become hard
days have lost their joy
God's blessings wear like curses

Until I recall my cloud of witnesses
those I've known, those I know
whose joys seem even more transient
from whom blessing seems to have fled
who yet praise our God
despite everything

And seeing these, I too can sing
Amen! Amen! I'm alive! I'm alive!
Because He lives, I can face tomorrow!
And I know, because of Him
And I know, knowing them
not only can I face tomorrow
I can also endure today

March 10-30, 2021

Signs & Wonders

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved, but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

(Mark 16:15-18)

so when I hear Jesus say this
where does that leave me
leave everyone I know
where are the signs

where the wonders
to accompany my faith
do I, as once Capernaum
hinder God by some unbelief

or do I, again, misunderstand
fail to remember that faith
is as simple as believing
I am saved by grace

March 9, 2021

Love Your Neighbour - Love Them To Death - Or Not At All
(a satire)

love your neighbour, the brethren often say
by their words echoing the words of our God
love them as you would also love yourselves
do your utmost to uphold their well-being
day in and day out do what is best for them
don't hug them if you have the common cold
inoculate yourself, and them, against the flu
but if you might carry a bug that may kill them
then be sure to share God's gospel with them
don't allow yourself to be distant from them
for it is with your teaching you love them best
your love is best shown by telling them of God's
yours is not the concern for the silent millions
or that those ruling over us tell us not to gather
lest we be the cause of another's untimely demise
it's all a vast, one-world-order conspiracy anyway
be close, breathe their air and touch their things
give them a hug, or a handclasp of reassurance
be sure to let them know that Jesus loves them
be bold, convincing them of God's perfect love
tell them that when they die they might join Him
it doesn't matter if you stand in their dying day
that they may have lived, loved or laughed longer
had you not had the courage to love them so well
tell them of your God's unimaginable love for them
and how your presence is His love's best example
as you boldly brave this anti-Christian conspiracy
as you risk ridicule or incarceration or even worse
to share the gospel, and who knows what else

and don't forget, don't you ever once forget
that anyone who disagrees with you is wrong
and worse than wrong, the most evil of people
false-Christians standing in line with the Godless
shamelessly restricting your freedom to worship
the God of love for fear of some stupid little bug

February 21,2021-April 9, 2021

After My Neighbour Doris Died
(remembering April 5, 2020)

some will say that five
five out of ten-thousand
is too few for whom to be concerned

some will say that two
two out of one-hundred
is too few for whom to be inconvenienced

but after my neighbour Doris died
all I know is that one
one is too many to be missing

February 18, 2021

A Response to the Response to the Arrest of Pastor James Coates

"Persecution! We're being persecuted!"
it's being shouted from everywhere
from roof-tops, from street-corners, from social-media
as though it were some new thing
as though we were the first to ever feel its touch
 (however lightly)
as though our brothers and sisters
did not already know more than this
have not been being persecuted
 (really persecuted, I mean
 not this made up stuff, but actually
 ridiculed, and
 outcast, and
 beaten, and
 jailed, and
 killed
 not just told to stay home, or to
 limit their capacity, or to
 simply wear a mask, but
 actually and deliberately harmed)
as though far worse has not been being done
to our brothers, to our sisters
to the body of Christ
for all the centuries
for all the millennia
since Christ told us that to love God
since Christ told us that to love each other
were the greatest of all God's commands, and
hanging hooks for the all Law and all the Prophets

sadly

we seem overly concerned for ourselves, and
insufficiently concerned for our neighbour

and worse
much, much worse

we seem overly concerned for ourselves, and
insufficiently concerned for God

February 17, 2021

Are You Sure You're Doing 'It' Right?

You have not seen it, and
because you have not seen it you call it hyperbole

You do not understand it, and
because you do not understand you call it unfathomable

You do not know it, and
because you do not yourself know you call God a liar

Are you so intolerant that
you cannot tolerate His mystery as He has revealed it

You do not believe it, and
because you do not believe it you think it unbelievable

February 10-13, 2021

I've been told that had my life been different
if I'd grown to be a man in another land
if I'd been otherwise parentally indoctrinated
if I'd not been so abundantly blessed
I would be anything other than what I am
a white, Christian man living in Canada
but I doubt it, very much I doubt it
having always held to the core of my faith
I have seen it change and caused it change
have been undoctrinating my indoctrination
one cannot study God and hold such things
as some pastors (whom I respect) have taught
still teach, or parents, or family, or friends
I have seen my faith change, see it change yet
not toward what man would have me believe
but toward what God would have me know
ever more so moving away from false futility
toward the glorious light of God's good truth
and I know that this is not of myself alone
but is of He Who holds my hand, my life
to guide me ever on to knowing more of Him
and this I know too, that had I been born
in a much different land, to a much different life
reared by much different parents, and among
much different family, friends and living
I would still have heard and heeded His call
if I could leave what those I love hold dear
here, in this life that I am living now, I know
without any doubt, I would leave anything else
for the joy of following Him anywhere He leads

February 8-March 9, 2021

some will read Genesis one and see days
who will also see millennia
thinking God's power too small
yet cannot see His words caused all that is
to be

some will read Genesis four and see Cain
who will also see a Godless line
corrupting Seth's righteous heirs
yet cannot see that Noah, alone of all
loved God

February 7, 2021

And the Band Played On

the band played on
despite cacophonous despair
through tear
through false hope
through fleeting pleasure
through cry of creeping death
the band played on
the ship was surely going down
as pump exchanged success with water
it was undeniably going down
the band played on
to call the doomed to safety

February 6, 2021

Why?

You

You Christians

You angered Christians

Why so angry Christian

Why Christian

Why

"By this shall all men know you are My disciples,
if you have love for one another."

John 13:35

January 27, 2021

White Male Poets Society

"White male poets must be shaking in their boots,"
I've seen it recently written
"at the onslaught of us, the non-white, non-male poets."
"And they'd better be, for we are storming the bastions!"
funny, my boots are perfectly still
though white
and male
and poet
(yet not in any bastion)
I welcome the new voices
have read, and loved
Emily Dickinson
Mary Oliver
Rudy Francisco (YES!!!)
Rupi Kaur (at times)
Amanda Gorman
Atticus (at other times)
and still my boots are still
do not quiver at all
and I wonder
perhaps these speaking
presuppose a different truth
than that which I and many know
where the tower is not locked or barred
there is no tower at all
is merely folks like you and I
we, who with silent pen and desk
pour from our hearts to other's eyes

January 23, 2021

Not Equal Enough

we praise equality
decry discrimination
rightly so
to let difference define
is evil
to let unsameness separate
is evil
to hold them down for not being us
is evil

yet equality is elusive
evades our best efforts
it escapes honour's stage
even as honours peal

equality will never be equal
as long as we continue to say
of them
"They are the first ..."
... insert their difference here ...
"... to achieve this honour"
and making us sound so condescending
at their very moment of glory
it is sickening
could even be evil

how equal can we be
if we keep dragging their difference
with them to their stage

I was reading about Amanda Gorman this morning, the woman who's poem "The Hill We Climb" is receiving universal accolades, and came across this description of her as a person:

"Gorman is a Black Catholic, a member of St. Brigid Church in her hometown of Los Angeles."

That's it.

That she is black and that she is Christian.

Amanda Gorman is at this moment among the world's more famous people and all that could be said about her is that she is a "Black Catholic"? How equal can we truly be if we continue to draw attention to what might make us different?

Amanda Gorman is a person. She is a woman. She is a poet. She has greater renown than almost everyone talking about her. Her presence made more bright an already brilliant day.

That, and much, much more is what should have been said about her.

The sameness, not the difference.

That which makes us equals.

January 22, 2021 - April 30, 2021

depression

it feels like being at a party
and you're the only one not smiling
but you know you should be smiling
and you know you could be smiling
but you're not able to smile

it's not that you don't enjoy smiling
and you seem to get a kick out of it
on the odd times that you can smile
but the excitement and joy are absent
are gone the way of summer's sun

January 21, 2021

Rufus and gravity
while not on speaking terms
entirely, are very close
one constant holds the other
gladly asleep in its embrace

January 20-22, 2021

So, Now What

so, you have prophesied
said things unbelievable
convinced others your lies
were the words of God
proclaimed great victory
beneath skies of silent steel

and now, after all is done
events have disproved you
you would simply hit delete
make your words disappear
does one little key-press
make untruth go away
even now, as your beliefs
on which rest your words
are not changed and
remain unchanged

and now, after all is done
events have disproved you
you claim His faithless people
caused your words to fail
that another's fruitless prayer
made your words of no effect
even now, as your beliefs
on which rest your words
are not changed and
remain unchanged

and now, after all is done
events have disproved you
you say you knew but the part
of God's overwhelming word
that your knowledge incomplete
cannot be held to account
even now, as your beliefs
on which rest your words
are not changed and
remain unchanged

I don't get that, a prophet
should own all their words
should stand beside them
should they stand or fall

you can't just delete your words
pretend as though they never were

when God has proved you wrong

you can't just ignore your failure
pretend as though it never was
when God has proved you wrong

you can't just say God spoke false
pretend as though His word could fail
when God has proved you wrong

once uttered, forever spoken
don't become even more the fool
and protest an innocence feigned

life doesn't work like that
what we've said stays always said
can only be forgiven

afterward, looking at you
I wonder, Now what?
What will you do now?
Biblically you should stop
yet historically you have not
your lies' continued deception
mislead who know even less
than that which you profess

Inspired by (but not just) the recent spate of 'prophecies' proclaiming an ultimate electoral victory of Donald Trump over Joe Biden which, unsurprisingly, turned out to be no more than wishful thinking on the part of the 'prophet'. Some of these 'prophetic' claims were astounding in their magnificence and many of those that I have seen have since been removed or replaced by other 'prophecies'.

It must take some incredible nerve to be so often wrong and yet continue to claim to speak for God.

You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

Deuteronomy 18:21-22

If You Say ...

if you say "I love God," yet

believe abortion to be a right
or
believe adultery is not a fault
or
believe condemnation a fake
or
believe your fellow man a fool
or
believe false prophecy for truth
or
believe creation to be a myth
or
believe its God to be unholy
...

you may find your shoes uncomfortable
when comes the end of days

when comes the end of days
when you stand before His gaze
would you then as you do now
say the wicked things you say
would you then as you do now
say His mercy outweigh His wrath
having forgot the price once paid

you may find your shoes uncomfortable
when comes the end of days

as you gasp upon the words
you wish you'd never uttered
as you unbelieve your beliefs
you wish you'd never known

January 19, 2021

how this morning
this particular morning
feels
it feels like
an un-visited bird-feeder
hanging on its rusted hook
half-empty beneath a barren tree
scant feet from the Cardinals
chirping in the neighbour's yard
that's how this morning
this particular day
feels

January 18, 2021

Rubin C.

one call
one little phone call
and today is made brighter
sunshine and hope return

one call
one little phone call
and my day is turned
completely on its head

thank you
thank you for your kindness
it has meant more than worlds

Monday morning at 11:12

January 18, 2021

Easy ...

it would be so easy
so very easy
far, far too easy

knives are sharp
pills are painless
outlets are instant
cars are a rush
balconies are high
ice water numbs

far, far too easy
so very easy
to give it all away

knives are for bread
pills are for headaches
outlets are for lights
cars are for trips
balconies are for visits
water is for kayaks

far, far too easy
so very easy
to miss the joy of being alive

Monday morning at 10:30

January 17, 2021

The Day of The Lord

His day will come
it is inevitable
relentless
it will assuredly come
but not of us
not ever of us
we could no more hurry His day
than are able to hinder its coming

His day is coming
it is inevitable
relentless
it will assuredly come
and there is not a thing we can do
but praise Him

January 17, 2021

Above This Plane
(for a brave cousin)

the image is stark
monochromatic
intense and gentle

she gazes out from it
at you yet not at you
as at some unseen foe
she knows too well
has grappled too close

the image is real
life leaps out of it
subdued and exuberant

her eyes speak brightly
stare strongly, unyielding
out of one plane into three
"I am more than you see"
"So very much more"

her mouth is set firm
unfearful yet determined
her foe will know her power

her image stares resolute
defies the sentence
of one single
terrifying
word

His image reveals its hope
acknowledging its life, in all its glory
is held by His much greater hand

January 13-15, 2021

Negativity
(reflections on a white garment)

everything you say is negative
as like, saved by faith, you're sad
things aren't as bad as you want
so much so, you twist the context
making things as bad as you want
without any justification at all

things are bad, are getting worse
for us, and yet for others more
we do not bear what others bear
if must, God is both just and good
stand firm as did Job and Habakkuk
worship God while inside the storm

January 13, 2021

Beyond the Walls

inside

we sing, pray, worship

outside

we sing, pray, worship

inside

we commune, fellowship, care

outside

we commune, fellowship, care

inside

we study, learn, grow

outside

we study, learn, grow

inside

walls surround us

outside

we surround walls

inside

we walk with family

outside

we walk with mankind

January 12, 2021

Persecution Complex

we're going to be attacked, we know that
are attacked even now, if you care to look
yet all we've ever been told to do is stand
firm in the knowledge that God is great
greater than anything arrayed against us

with us are those who run toward the danger
gleeful boast an expulsion that may never come
"I may not be online, soon, sign up for email"
protesting all the while the draconian powers
above them are hard upon the Christian's trail

but that is not what we've been told to do
again, all we've been told to do is stand
firm on He Who cannot change, cannot fall
make known to all our adoration of Him
by our own reflection of His love

January 10, 2021

The Gift

I will mourn the passage of this gift
so long we've taken for our right
yet weep less for its ending
as for those whose hands destroy
what, could they believe, would save

January 10, 2021

The Life-Cycle of a Cup, no, a Mug of Coffee
(after a TED Talk I didn't view)

first, the slide of the pot
safely on its glass podium
along to the counter's edge
waiting, as a lover about to leap
into the welcome embrace of "I do"

then, the opening of its lid
memories of cups unforgotten
wafting into the pre-coffee morn'
blackness into blackness gaping
anticipation of a wonder, paused

then, the pouring of the water
into fathomless dark abyss
must make it match the line .. exactly
there, just about, almost
oh, just a little bit above, again

and the scrape of the scoop
into gloriously scented grounds
one, two, three, four, five and six
and a little bit of one for the water
enthusiasm poured carelessly quick

push the button, push it NOW!
impatience implores gurgle's drip
translucence grows delightfully dark
scent, wondrous aroma strengthens
surrounds reluctantly wakened somnolent

hand reaching for faithful mug
sugar, three scoops, and cream
at last to pour the steaming stream
nectar from fair distant land
into my three cup mug and ... ahhh!

It's ... Complicated

"If the Bible is so clear, why is it so complicated?"

the Bible isn't complicated
the Bible is the least complicated thing of anything
we bring complications in when we
decide to change the Bible to say what we want
we complicate everything else when we
do not change ourselves to be what the Bible wants

Moses did not write the law ambiguously
and
Joseph did not forgive ambiguously
and
Daniel did not interpret dreams ambiguously
and
Matthew did not quote Isaiah ambiguously
and
Jesus did not fulfill the law ambiguously
and
Luke did not report the facts ambiguously
and
Paul did not reprove the church ambiguously
and
Peter did not exhort the saints ambiguously
and
John did not reveal the end ambiguously
and
not one of these words would mean a thing
had any of them been meant for ambiguity

January 10, 2021

years ago,
it might have been in eighty-five
Canada ended its Lord's Day Act
on some doubtful claim of rights
allowing our shops to be open
at the same time as our churches
pastors asked us to boycott
not spend God's money in Godless shops
daring to open on the Lord's Day
I don't think they even noticed
 (I think even then we didn't know,
 or wanted to,
 how little difference we truly made
 back then)
and noticed even less our absence
from lunches at Swiss Chalet
and big sales at Best Buy
 (I think even now we don't know,
 or want to,
 how little difference we truly make
 right now)
witnessing our lack of witness all know
they can do whatever they want to do
and we'll go right along (if protestingly)

I never liked the idea of boycotts
they seemed too indiscriminate to suit
the gospel and my need to share it
I've always believed my duty to God
was to use my resources wisely
to His honour and glory
theirs how they used what was given

January 8-10, 2021

I suppose you could do that
wrap up your words in power
precede your grand pronouncements
with an "I decree and declare",
an "I proclaim" or an "I saw a vision"

But why, why would you speak
why would you say such things
Why name yourself a prophet
when your words contradict God's
Why give the world an empty hope
when He gives His for free

Do you truly speak the words of God
you whose words seem wishful thought
Do you not make as God's your desires,
Do you not make as God's your delusion
Do you not speak your own false hope
as from God Who gave you not a word

Does God still let you speak for Him
even now, as your words so often fail

Do you dare still speak your words for God
even now, though His words never fall

What would you gain by doing this
that could be greater than His Son

Why do you call yourself His prophet
when He would call you His child

Many prophets saw and revealed God's visions,
none but God ever says "I declare" or "I decree"
We usurp His authority using His words ourselves

January 7, 2021

that these things happen where we can see them doesn't mean these are the things
our personal witness is not required to validate God's action
God did not say "When they see these things these will be the things"
God did say "These things will be the things when I say they are the things"
not before
not after
not when you see them
not when I see them
when God says "These are the things"

whether these are the things or are not the things, God has all things in His hand

January 6-7, 2021

On Psalm 91

terror assails and tumult surrounds
fear, confusion, hate all rule their day
there is not one to whom we can run
not one who will save us from ruin
there is not one to whom we can hold
not one who is worthy of our hope

and we fall through the crack
gaping wide and ravenous
fickle saviours eroding its edge

fear gains the upper hand
confusion flees in all directions
hate fuels every empty soul

and still God reigns

beyond all fear, God reigns
above all confusion, God reigns
untouched by hate, God reigns

over all, God reigns

over me, God reigns

He is my hope
He is my certainty
He is my strong tower

between the thousand and the ten thousand
I will stand

Honourable Opponent

eighty-one years ago a battle
on the one side
Ajax, Achilles and Exeter
under Sir Henry Harwood
and on the other side
the Admiral Graf Spee
under Hans Wilhelm Langsdorff

*(did you know that in all his battles,
amid all his resounding successes
as a North Atlantic commerce raider,
he kept to the Hague Conventions
not killing any of his captive foes
but treating them with honour
despite the rule of ignoble evil)*

at the Battle of the River Plate
on the one side
Ajax, Achilles and Exeter
and Sir Henry Harwood
ultimately successful
went on to further glory
while on the other side
strategically defeated
Admiral Graf Spee was scuttled
her honourable captain sacrificed
to the ego of ignoble evil

their fame lives on above our streets
many carried the gloried names
of honourable friend
of equally honourable foe
honour, valour, courage
equally placed

only recently have we changed too far
we no longer have a street
beneath Hans Wilhelm Langsdorff's name
he is once again sacrificed
on the reputation of ignoble evil

it is a world too sad to endure
in which an honoured foe is despised
for an evil far more ignoble

We had, until recently, a Langsdorff Drive here in Ajax,
but someone was bothered that we honoured a German,
so council is changing it to something less 'offensive.'

This is not how my parents taught me to view a foe,
if they fight with honour, they are worthy of honour.

December 21, 2020

Diversity and Inclusion

diversity and inclusion
has come too far
once so necessary
now so abused
as to be pointless
its single brilliant gleam of light
once bright and hopeful on dim horizon
by ignorance has itself been dimmed
its promise as forlorn as unfulfilled
beauty's gutted standard flies
ugly over unknowing field

diversity and inclusion
has come too far
has tripped itself up
on its own intolerant pride
has become no more than
division and invective

A Night Like Any Other

it was

a night like any other
silent, deep and dark
stars glorious on a velvet black

it was

a night like any other
except tonight
a baby lay
angels sang
shepherds ran
stars proclaimed
wise men searched

it was

a night like any other
except tonight
The Saviour came
shone His light upon us
the people living in darkness

It always surprises me where inspiration starts.
Pastor Don said "a night like any other" in church
this morning; one throwaway line to highlight another.

December 20, 2020

We Three Kings

I love the line in "We Three Kings"
'King and God and Sacrifice'
for that's what He is
that's what they knew
they asked Herod of their King
they bowed before their God
they gave gifts to their Sacrifice

December 20, 2020

Max Brand saved Maxwell House
with just a pinch of salt
who knew that long unread westerns
could make this morning's coffee better

December 18-20, 2020

it could come when a bird flies
from tree to scintillating tree
it might move when the sunset
paints itself glorious in the west
may breathe as breathless as love
dancing on the voice of a friend
unsuspecting, you open your door
expecting to greet the outside, but
you walk out into a poem instead
but no! it's so much more than that
the poem walks up, hugs you, stays
makes itself a part of your very life
and you'll never be the same again

wonder is delightfully unpredictable
it could come when supper's cooking
it might sing to you during a movie
may breathe on your soul at midnight
you'll never know when it will come
but when it does, oh, when it does
welcoming it with wide open arms
is about the best thing you'll ever do
for the ride, the ride will be glorious

Net-Zero

Ottawa's making a big promise

a really, Really, REALLY **BIG**
promise that by the year twenty-fifty
the nation of Canada will be at net-zero
just thinking about it makes me giddy
the clean water, the clear skies, the ...

... the ... oh ... but ... wait ...

... if my waste begins at my first breath
wouldn't net-zero mean another's doesn't
and not just doesn't, is the opposite of me
if we have no alternative but to make waste
how does it work that the Earth does not?

December 11-13, 2020

Pain

each of us has it
a separate grief
a pain setting us apart
marking us for life
a silent tear no one hears
but God

December 7, 2020 - April 26, 2021

is this how we do Christianity now?
we are so concerned by the offence
we never care to forgive the offender
we are so worried about tomorrow
we never live as we should today
we flood our endless unbiblical diatribes
to Facebook and YouTube and Twitter
we have so badly misapprehended love
our calloused and uncaring hearts rage
pour disrespect and anger torrentially
carrying off in their flood everything
that has not been firmly nailed down

December 6, 2020

Some Times

some times a man will surprise you
you've seen his movies, well
not really
you've not seen any of his movies
they're not really your type
his humour takes you from God
but then a DAY comes along
where you see what he inspired one
to do
just one person
so wholly devoted to him
to everything that he is
you see him as you've never seen him before
you see that hiding
somewhere
below his crude exterior
lies nobility

Authority

the apostle Paul wrote this:

"Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. ... Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor."

yes
he wrote as a Roman citizen
living under Roman rule
and yes
he wrote to Roman Christians
who, living under Roman rule
had not a single human right
(such as we take for granted)
but to be executed for saying
"No! I will not worship Caesar!"
(as he would himself be killed)
had not a single human choice
(such as we take for granted)
but to be obedient to Caesar
as obedience to God allowed
showing love to their neighbour
as obedience to God demands
and no
he did not write a single word
in favour of a lesser magistrate
nor did he condone just rebellion
and yes
he wrote simply that a Christian
as they lived obedient to Caesar
in good and conscientious faith
lived also in obedience to God

In Romans 13:1-7 the apostle Paul exhorts Christians to worship God and to live in obedience to the governing authorities that God had placed above them. Men such as Nero of Rome and the Herods of Judea. Men who condoned the worship of themselves as gods. Men who were very obviously not men of God. Paul told Christians to respect these men and obey them for God had put them in place over them. Many Christians in 2020 use this passage to justify restrictions placed on corporate worship by governments hoping to reduce the spread of COVID-19; the argument being that, as Christians, our obedience to

God demands our obedience to our leaders for love of our neighbour.

Many other Christians consider that Hebrews 10:24-27 proves that, by allowing government to dictate when and how worship services are to be conducted, many Christians are committing idolatry by worshipping their government instead of God: "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries."

But Paul was not advocating blind obedience to government. Paul encouraged the Christian to obey the government, as obviously Godless as it was, simply because that government had been placed in authority by God and would itself be judged for its use of that authority. Paul himself would be put to death several years later for refusing to worship Caesar yet remained in obedience to the government by allowing its authority to determine his fate. The point is that Paul did not teach that our obedience to authority should affect our faith but that it must be subordinate to our faith.

Nor was the writer of Hebrews specifically addressing corporate worship only as we've come to practice it today. He was referring to Christians coming together to encourage and uplift each other. While he may have viewed our current form of corporate worship as an example of that, he would not have restricted himself to that example alone. The fact that the letter of Hebrews exists at all is proof that he considered 'virtual' gatherings to be valuable and beneficial to Christians in their own right and that his words are not so much an encouragement to continue to meet together as they are an admonition not to completely stop meeting together.

Furthermore, he did not only say "Don't neglect gathering together in worship services," but went on to say "Don't neglect to encourage each other to Godly living."

December 3-4, 2020

what does one do, what can one do when one's brothers and sisters seem to have 'flipped'
conversation just isn't normal anymore; debate, mercy and forgiveness go absent
and the glorious gospel seems to have become rather militant, or worse
got side-tracked by false doctrine and inadequate discernment
just what does one do in such crazy circumstance
what can one do in such crazy circumstance
but pray that God grant wisdom
to one or to the other
and to both
unity

December 3, 2020

despair
it is my companion
sometimes / often
sitting alone
small and huddled in my dark
invalidated

"Who is the better for you?"
"What good are you?"
"Why are you even here?"
"Where is your result?"
"When will you just give up?"
"How can God use you?"

it screams
taunts me with my uselessness
and yet
deep down
way below the storm
I know that this is true

despite my futility
I know God is
God always is

knowing God is sufficient
I can rest my life
safely in His care

Star of Bethlehem

some say it could have been a planetary conjunction

Jupiter, for the King
Saturn, for His beauty
Mars, for the Judge
Venus, for His Light
Mercury, for our Hope

although magnificent
but transient at best
mere hours in extent
what knew these men
what hope had they
what sightless faith
to follow in dusty years
a silent sign, yet glorious
above their hear's desire

others say a super-nova or other stellar anomaly

Clarke tried that one
trying to discredit God
showing Him capricious
callous and insensitive
setting a world aflame
to illuminate our Hope

I never liked that story
not for its hate for God
but for its immaturity
its lack of understanding
of the fight it fought

still others say it may have been a comet

such as which Constantine
believing and conquering
gained himself an empire
Jesus, believing and obeying
gained Himself a kingdom
became the First of His brothers

and yet I am uncertain
a comet, though spectacular
would be insufficiently so
to herald my Saviour's birth

even so, despite all discussion and debate

Bethlehem's True Star
shines undimmed
above all the world's dark

Twenty Seconds

we're told to wash our hands longer
about twenty seconds, the doctors say
did you know that that's almost as long
as it will take for Captain James T. Kirk
to inspire us with his opening monologue?

Space, the final frontier
these are the voyages of the starship Enterprise
its five year mission: to explore strange new worlds
to seek out new life and new civilizations
to boldly go where no man has gone before!

so each time I wash my hands these days
these strange and oft' conflicted days
I'm pretending to be Captain James T. Kirk
on my starship Enterprise exploring the new
boldly going where I have not gone before

November 29, 2020 - April 22, 2021

How Does This Reflect Christ?

as you read these words please know
I am presuming my own innocence
know too, whether that is true or not
I must have a place where I can stand
while I learn if and how I should step
but until that time I must stand here

and here
 burdened by your careless words

and here
 unblessed by your forgiveness

and here
 beneath your demand for silence

and here
 alone and concerned for salvation

I find myself asking myself how?
how do such words and acts
reflect the nature of our Saviour?

November 29-December 16, 2020

Why I Will Wear a Mask

there could well be a truth beyond my sight
there could well be a new world order there
a source of nefariousness as yet unknown
it could be hidden, just waiting in the wings
for the sheep to be made ready for shearing
it could be our masks symbolize capitulation
to its forthcoming unrighteous declarations
or it could be blessedly ignorant of its shame
seeking but the greatest good amid a horror
of unknown perhaps overwhelming consequence

but I am insufficiently wise to know more
than what those more wise than I have said
I am but wise enough to know that God
has power far greater than any other fear
I know this truth stands firm before me
"Your mask may save your neighbour's life!"
and until that day this knowledge is changed
and even after, when the evil has been revealed
I will obey God, respecting whom He empowers
I will obey God, caring for my neighbour's life

until the day their expertise infringes mine
I will defer to those who know more than I

until the day evil is no longer opportunistic
I will defer to those who seek a better world

until the day unrighteousness is revealed
I will defer to those whom God empowers

until that day and for all my days that follow
I will obey God
I will respect whom He will place above me
I will care for whom He will place beside me

November 29, 2020

I'm Not Going Back to Eden

some among my family want to return to Eden
but I don't, I don't want to go back to Eden,
though it would be lovely, its pristine innocence and all
I simply do not want to go back there, to Eden
having failed its test once, I would fail its test again
and more (or less), I have the promise of a life with God
with no test, no bar, no ... anything, between He and I
where He does not walk my world in the cool of the day
but I will live in His, in the glorious day as long as forever

November 27, 2020

A Judge Too Easy

I am, at times, a judge too easy
too soon standing on what I would not do
quickly think less what stand another takes
as polishing awards resting on the shelf
failing to remember my own settlement rests
upon the ruling of a Judge willing to forgive

What Would Jesus Do?

life can be a challenge
choice, consequential or cataclysmic
could lie in wait at any turning
the road skirt meadow or mountain
too sudden confronts Life with life
force the choosing of the choice
ever after one's companion

Jesus loves the sinner, this I prove
each time I plead "Have Mercy!"
has borne upon Himself my own pain
to share with me His life, His mercy
removing any condemnatory stain

but how far, how far His mercy
does His blessing flow while in error
to the point to bless the error's end
or does His blessing those repentant
reclaim them to His fold

He celebrated sinners, we are told
Matthew, Mark, Luke and John
pull no punches but hold Him fast
to those both despised and scorned
unreceiving grace of those forgiven
rejoicing His welcome and His care

yet He told them once and often
"I will not condemn; no longer sin."

I do not know what Jesus would do
without fail in all occasions
other than to know He would love
reach His mercy through our sin
relentless claim us from our doom
He may never bless our outcome
Who will bless us with His rescue
at each step along the way

November 26, 2020

my laughter fleets

walking by the door
I saw the fish you'd
hung there moments ago
I saw it as I left the room after
doing who knows what now
and I laughed for the first
time in all of today
it felt good as it left and
it sounded good as it began
to dance upon the air

November 26, 2020

Tired

I woke up tired this morning
too many dreams, or something
showered, dressed, went downstairs
put Rufus out, not touching the floor
and his food dish, to keep him busy
took Rufus's crate outside as well
so very careful not to bump a thing
threw all his coverings into the wash
wiped down the floor where it was
took off my socks, put on my sandals
and went outside to wash the crate
and went inside to wash the dog
and dry him and cuddle him warm
and half-an-hour later got back
to where I'd been before the mess

November 25, 2020

What Do I Not Know?

what do I not know
that I don't know I don't know

centuries past my forebears knew
regular bathing was not couth
cultured or even necessary
but I

I know I like to be clean and
will live longer because I am clean
and hopefully
am more pleasantly near for being clean

to you and I such a thing seems obvious
how could our forebears not know
what we know now and take as granted
yet what lies beyond our knowledge
to cause generations still to come
give head-shaking looks back at us
that such ignorance could exist
among those as did walk the Moon

November 22-25, 2020

I look up, from the bottom of the sky
forever starts HERE, right at my feet
in the middle of the bottom of it all
right HERE is where all the UP begins
across, around, traverse and over
are but lines scribed along this rock
(single minded long-or-latitudinal)
serving only to return me to my start
HERE at the bottom of everything
but the out, the Out, the endless OUT
rises from the grass into glorious light
where, BEYOND thin fragile sheath of air
no longer pleased to carry Earthly dust
blinding dark suspends galaxies instead

and it begins right HERE, at my feet
at the top of the bottom of everything
could they but tread some upward path
stride free to night from brilliant day
as Orion himself I would gird my belt
roam the skies where sisters clustered
dance within their blue-gauzed glory
gaze awe-struck at Megellanic cloud
untroubled stride the great empty vast
beyond Andromeda, and look back down
along the road I've wend from THERE
and feel the FOREVER, barely touched
lay hold again my wayfaring heart
soft call me out, and Out and OUT
OUT where wonders scarce imagined

wait

November 19, 2020

why me?
in pain, asking
i. am. weak.

why not you?
in love, replying
I. Am. Enough

November 19, 2020

you wouldn't believe me, I'm sure
would you? even if I told you
like I'm doing now, in these words
would you believe me when I say
I've taken your words to my heart
prayed over and pondered them
concerned I may be an apostate
as you claim is my mortal danger
I have asked God to open my eyes
that I may see whatever sin I have
whether knowing or unknowing
which you have seen and I have not
and by His hand purge it from my life
that I, as you, may live to His glory

I truly hope that you'll believe me
but I'm not certain that you will
you seem to not have understood
me when I said this 'face-to-face'
or that brushes paint on both strokes

November 19, 2020

if you were a true brother
less concerned by the issue
than captivated by the cause
you may have observed a hint
understood there was a problem
far more immediately pressing
than who was right or wrong

November 18, 2020

Ice

the ice is thin
it bends, crackles
threatens failure
disastrous tendrils
tentacle-like
dance as if alive
beneath anxious tread

to be or not to be

inquiring minds don't care
ignore pleading mercy
pile inconsiderate words
callous, careless, cold
upon perilous step
their negative weight
tempts to disaster

November 17, 2020

I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

John 17:20-22

Jesus Christ

we believe in Him and believe through their word
but we are hardly one
even where unity could be expected
we are not one
so many different messages
so many dilutions
One Saviour, too many images
how can any come to know Him from all of us

November 12, 2020 - November 18, 2021

Some Days

some days
I cannot bear
Albinoni's "Adagio"
or
Fauré's "Pavane"
I simply can't
for they are lovely
and I will cry

November 11, 2020

God saw all that He had made and proclaimed it
"Very good"

Then we all went and blew it, made it
"Very bad"

And keep on doing it despite all that God
has done, is doing, will do
to show His care for us continues, evil as we are
We've filled His wonder with evil things
which call and cling and corrupt us
to our destruction
lest our eyes stay fixed on Him

November 10, 2020

How To Win At Depression
or
How To Not Let Depression Win

before you begin
you must know that this will
Not. Be. Easy.
a worthwhile fight rarely is
there's no finish line
the enemy will not acknowledge defeat
no medal or accomplishment
will be awarded by a panel of judges
and definitely not one of participation
there will be no crowd
to loudly proclaim your victory
celebrate your triumph over this foe

but that's OK
you don't have to defeat it
defeat was never part of the deal
you just have to not let it defeat you
which, though difficult, takes just one step
just
keep
breathing
... in ... out ... in ... out ... in ...
as long as you're breathing it can't win
and even more importantly
as long as you're breathing you can't lose

now, on to the next step
be warned though, here's where it gets tough
depression wants to grab you
hold you, clutch you more closely than a lover,
but more concerned to strangle your joy
than a lover will be to enhance it
but even in its cold embrace
if you can know that joy remains
like you can know that the sun remains
even on an overcast and rainy day
you can remember that depression can only obscure
what you can know is always there
even when clouds obscure the sun
you know by the light in your window
the sun has never left
is always there, though silent
on even the darkest of days

so, go find your joy, look at it

stare at it and know
the darkness that cloaks your life
is but a phantom trying to cloud the joy
made all the more real in the finding

November 9, 2020

Put Down

a very kind friend once told me
that I shouldn't put myself down so much
that I had more to my credit than to my debit

I had no answer for her, then
but I have learned since that I am a mimic

November 9, 2020

I am not a good man
perhaps not even a nice man
or an honourable man
but I do try
very often and very sincerely
to be good and nice and honourable
and am utterly destroyed
when my mirrors reveal me to be
unchanged

November 7, 2020

Nervous

I become nervous when I'm off the planet
man-made fragility bothers me
much more than God-made impermanence
and so I trend toward heebie-jeebies
whenever I find myself in, or on anything other
than the twelve-thousand kilometers
of this spinning ball of rock

November 6, 2020

movie producers used to have overtures on front of their epics
William Wyler did, with "Ben Hur"
Robert Wise did, with "Star Trek: The Motion Picture"
even Ken Hughs did, with "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang"
all had overtures, and good overtures to boot
governments also use overtures
and negotiators on opposite table ends
all to accomplish a non-committal
yet definite lead-up to something grand
though potentially real, as yet unrealized
overtures are useful, they can

break ice between strangers
take bricks out of walls
unlatch the deadbolt of a door
chase silence from a room
begin the warming of a chill

I've heard so, anyway, but I have yet to see

November 2, 2020

Tell Me

Were you to tell me
"If you're on the Four-Twenty-Seven it's moving well"
Would that mean that since I'm not, it isn't?

Were you to tell me
"If you read an hour a night, this light bulb will last thirty years"
Would that mean that since I don't, it won't?

Were you to tell me
"If you're doing this one thing then you're doing great"
Would that mean that if I'm doing more, I'm not?

Were you to tell me
"If you're trying to prove the existence of God, you can't"
Would that mean that since I couldn't, He isn't?

The first three are mere logical conundrums
But that one, that last one is different
That last one is terrifyingly impossible start to end

First terrifying impossibility
Should I prove God when He's so abundantly obvious
If you can't believe Him, why would you believe me?

Next terrifying impossibility
Could I disprove God then I may as well be dead
If He is not then whatever is the point?

And the last terrifying impossibility
Could I prove God I may as well also be dead
If He needs me then is He not too small?

Dogma

"Most of the Reformers and the Puritans were postmillennial. Calvin, though, was an amillennial, and Dutch Calvinism, after a postmillennial start, has tended to be amillennial. Fundamentalism of the last one-hundred-fifty years has tended to be postmillennial. In light of such diverse "biblical" positions, resist the temptation to be dogmatic on this issue. Avoid the scandal of division over doctrinal nuance which is not relative to salvation."

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/the-millennium-when-is-it/>

we are often warned not to be dogmatic
and given allowance to stand in difference
as though the Bible does not, and never did
speak God's truth to His wayward creature

solely God's truth, bereft of man's conceit
that "doctrinal nuance" would excuse error
and "irrelevance" permit opinion's diversity
as if God's truth did not stand unchanged

we are better warned consider our opinion
hold what we believe before the greater light
for God's word must today, as it forever will
speak God's truth to His wayward creature

October 14, 2020

Free the Speech

"Free Speech"
it's kind of their mantra,
they'll throw it at censorship
at "The Powers That Be"
at any who threaten to silence
the voices doing the throwing
the voices so long unconsidered
the voices gaining ascendance
over what would hold them back
that vile and disgusting things
may dance before startled eyes
parading ever more normally
unrepentantly, self-protectively
silencing the voices of dissent

Freedom of Speech, hah!
Freedom of Speech is a myth
a lost and intangible dream
a hope, once dearer than life
now cast aside and forgotten

speech is only free until
one speaks against the crowd

October 14, 2020

Court of Appeals Strikes Down Ban on Dismemberment Abortion

but if they know that they're dismembering
they must also know what they're dismembering
and by their reversal of the dismemberment ban
they admit to murdering a member of the family

October 3, 2020 - March 18, 2022

in the long, silent corridor of years
smiles lay, in soft embrace with tears
golden sun dances where shadows play
along the course come to new end today

and beyond? Who knows if unseen morrow
will hold dirge of crow or song of sparrow
what then for us but to each day embrace
rejoice what we more may learn of grace

September 27, 2020

These Things

these things I have endured
me, weak as I am
I have endured these things

How? Why?

God's merciful hand upholds me
and, weak though I be
that I stand, both tribute and witness

September 20, 2020

Decisions, Decisions, Decisions

some decisions
we make must be made
before other decisions
we can make might be made
ere higher decisions
by higher authority are made
for or against our own
decision which cannot be unmade

September 20-23, 2020

R.B.G.

"The decision whether or not to bear a child is central to a woman's life, to her well-being and dignity. It is a decision she must make for herself. When the government controls that decision for her, she is being treated as less than a full adult human responsible for her own choices." Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Truth

her government has no authority
to decide on her behalf, or any woman's
whether or not she can become a mother

and also Truth

her government presumes authority
to decide on her behalf, or any woman's
whether or not she will be called a murderer

Dark Side of the Moon

we have spoken, we many men
who know not what we speak
of "the dark side of the Moon"
as though hid and dark are kin
and so eminent an informant as
Pink Floyd, once waxed lyric
of "the dark side of the Moon"
even our own, illustrious NASA
were hesitant to land their Eagle
where bulk impenetrable hulked
in silence as solid as the dark
which more intermittent spun
as Heinlein named her "harsh"

harsh she may be, and silent yet
but dark is as remote from her
as the tomatoes in my back garden
both savour cyclic night and light

diamond Moon and ripe succulence
I savour both at a pleasant walk

September 13, 2020

Afternoon

afternoon left slowly today
as if reluctant to relinquish
us
to the also slowly falling
night
as if today were a treasure
it would rather not let go

September 13-16, 2020

Kings

by way of a book on photography
oddly enough

one King said "I have a dream"

I have a dream
that this nation will rise up
that this nation will live up
to its founding father's creed

we hold these truths to be self-evident
that all men are created equal

I have a dream
that former slaves may one day
that former slave-owners may one day
together sit at the table of brotherhood

I have a dream
that my four little children may join
that your own little children may join
hands with their white brothers and sisters

I have a dream
that every valley will be exalted
that every hill will be made low
that every rough place will be made plain
that the crooked place will be made straight

that the glory of the Lord be revealed
and all flesh see it together

another King said "Why?"

people, I just want to say
can't we all get along
why can't we all get along

both Kings said this

it's wrong to let colour be our difference
when our hearts inside are all the same

If you're interested, the title of the book I was reading
is "Photographically Speaking," by David du Chemin.

September 6-9, 2020

falling, at the end of myself
beyond the limit of "I can"
I fall again upon my God
only then to see, again
He has never not been
where I could fall upon Him
only then to remember, again
His has never not been
the strength beneath my own

September 4, 2020

Barefoot

I'd lay claim to barefoot rank
for recognition, fame and fortune
all see fit to pass me by
but can't for I am far less known
than she whose feet were truly bare
far less likely see renown
subsequent my demise

September 2-3, 2020

Choice

for one

it's not using logic
or reason
or common sense
it never has
it never will

for One

if it were using logic
or reason
or common sense
it would be for God
always for God

God, Asaph, Psalm 77 ... and Me

My First Thought

In this seat I prayed a prayer
"God, please help my pastor teach!
Help him understand Your word,
and teach truth!"

My Second Thought

In my bed, as Asaph was
I moaned in my distress
sleepless, for my dismay

In this seat I prayed a prayer
"God, please help my pastor teach!
Help him understand Your word,
and teach truth!"

And saw Asaph throw off his cloak
recall God's glorious magnificence
in place of his dark despair

I prayed my prayer,
and I learned

Regardless where I am
God is faithful
as He will ever be

Psalm 77

I cry aloud to God,
aloud to God, and he will hear me.
In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord;
in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying;
my soul refuses to be comforted.
When I remember God, I moan;
when I meditate, my spirit faints.

You hold my eyelids open;
I am so troubled that I cannot speak.
I consider the days of old,
the years long ago.
I said, "Let me remember my song in the night;
let me meditate in my heart."

Then my spirit made a diligent search:
 "Will the Lord spurn forever,
 and never again be favorable?
Has his steadfast love forever ceased?
Are his promises at an end for all time?
Has God forgotten to be gracious?
Has he in anger shut up his compassion?"

Then I said, "I will appeal to this,
to the years of the right hand of the Most High."

I will remember the deeds of the Lord;
yes, I will remember your wonders of old.
 I will ponder all your work,
 and meditate on your mighty deeds.
 Your way, O God, is holy.
 What god is great like our God?
You are the God who works wonders;
you have made known your might among the peoples.
 You with your arm redeemed your people,
 the children of Jacob and Joseph.

When the waters saw you, O God,
when the waters saw you, they were afraid;
 indeed, the deep trembled.
 The clouds poured out water;
 the skies gave forth thunder;
 your arrows flashed on every side.
The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind;
 your lightnings lighted up the world;
 the earth trembled and shook.
 Your way was through the sea,
 your path through the great waters;
 yet your footprints were unseen.
 You led your people like a flock
 by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

August 30-31, 2020

'They' say one big explosion started it off
everything we see around us
or touch, or even think

'They' also say we're not its center
wherever such a thing may be
we are not where it's at

But if we're off to one side, more or less
shouldn't this red shift be seen unequally all around us
here be less than red, in places amber and in other places blue

Unless we're truly center of some stretching
as my early brethren said was true

August 23-24, 2020

I've heard it said
more often than before these days
"These are trying times,
we don't know what tomorrow holds"
I'm trying to understand these words
but I find it very difficult
for I've never once, in all my days
known what tomorrow holds
ever walking unknowing onward
as I entered the unknown tomorrow
I have always found my comfort
in the God Who is already there

August 23, 2020

there are days one must read
one simply must read
some of Agatha Christie's prose
drive from cluttered mind the dust
of lazy craftsmen unconcerned
their words have not the charm
of her whose eloquence
even now stands unsurpassed

August 17, 2020

we think of forgetting as a curse
a lost name
a misplaced reason
an ununderstood glance
all telling us we've failed
somehow
in some basic human function

but ...

what if it isn't ...

what if forgetfulness isn't just a curse

after all

would a curse kindly relieve us
the pain of a love lost
the confusion of a misplaced why
the anguish of an overlooked look
gift us the ability to go on
somehow
being human beings

what if

God takes from us our remembrance
of all but the glorious golden bits
that we may remember our frailty
our incessant need of Him
and show us our unreliable strength
that we may rely on His

August 17, 2020

so many so easily offended
it seems

odd

that such would be the case
with those so carelessly
offending

so many so carelessly offend
it seems

odd

that such would be the case
with those so easily
offended

August 2-11, 2020

I am but a sign-post saying "Yield"
"Yield to your God, and live!"
I have been placed here by the almighty God
Like Isaiah, like Habbakuk
I am but a sign-post to a stubborn and rebellious people
A people no more willing to yield
than they are willing to acknowledge their God
That they will not yield, my pain
That they will not hear, my tears
I am but a signpost; no more, no less
A sign to a sinful people
that they, on the last of days
cannot say "We did not know!"

July 28, 2020

"The fact that you can't accept that a woman has the right to determine
what happens with her body is strange, but fascinating."
(West Virginia Choice speaking to Abortion. It's a Black and White issue.)

I find it strange too
but not that, this:

that you can think a woman's
"right to determine what happens with her body"
is inseparable from a woman
choosing to determine what happens to her child's body

not only strange
but so heartbreakingly wrong

July 28-August 14, 2020

Foolish

you said something foolish on Facebook,
the other day, really, really foolish
I wanted to post you back this reply
"Don't you see how saying something this foolish
can negatively impact your credibility
when you say something far more important?"

but I realized that that argument fails:
when you say something far more important
those who think differently on that
as I think differently on this
will see you as being as foolish then
as I see you now

so now the question is not
if one is foolish and the other not
now the question is just
how can we best discern lie from truth
let each discard their own foolishness
to hold close that of utmost import

July 23-December 1, 2020

the first conversation in the Bible is God with Himself
showing that God is more than one
yet is completely One

the second conversation in the Bible is God with man
showing that man is most like God
yet incompletely God

July 22, 2020

Father!
I don't want to be here
this place is too dark
too lonely
too ... icanonlycarryonbecauseYouareholdingmeup
I guess it's not a bad thing
that I depend so much on You
but can it be a good thing
that I can't depend on others
(or that I'm not even certain
if I really can't or only think I can't)

July 19, 2020 - November 10, 2022

We'll call him John
Since we don't know the name he'll never be given
John lies aside
Silent
Perfect, almost
His mother no longer carries him
His father does not hold him
The doctor and nurses are turned aside
Called to other concerns
Their next patient
Their next challenge
Their next death
For John, you see, is dead
He lies ignored and unrated
On a cold metal table
Or a cold plastic bin
Destined for gruesome metal bin
Unwanted
Undignified
That John bears the image of God
Disregarded by all in that cold, empty room
Disregarded by all, but God
Who at this moment welcomes John home
Though prematurely
As He would welcome John's parents
Should they ever come

July 16, 2020

Parasite

"it's a parasitic clump of cells that entered my body without my consent"
do you not find it odd that after you've consented to one thing entering your body
(and presumably you were rather eager for it to enter your body at the time)
do you really think you can deny consent to what has entered your body from it
you would take your magnificent gift of life and turn it into a curse
you have a body that can nurture a child and you would it gave birth to death

July 15-29, 2020

you say I have relinquished my sovereignty
have given up my own authority
for that of the government
that I am now no more than slave, a vassal
for yielding my power to another
but I ask you to think, have I done so
I live beneath the authority and governance of man
behind whose righteous acts is always God
Whom I obey in obeying them

you say I have relinquished my sovereignty
I say I am merely a man
yielded full to his Sovereign

you say I am a coward
I say I am merely a man
obedient as righteousness allows

Fearful and Wonderful

I have been fearfully made
wonderfully knit together
ere I ever drew a breath
hidden from all but God

He molded me together
as He has molded you
as He is molding them

O LORD, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.

Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you. For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them.

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you. Oh that you would slay the wicked, O God! O men of blood, depart from me! They speak against you with malicious intent; your enemies take your name in vain! Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? I hate them with complete hatred; I count them my enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting! (Psalm 139:1-24)

so
here's what I don't get this time
another thing I can't figure out
CBC is carrying this story today
"B.C. principal's apology for blackface yearbook photo criticized by students"
followed by appropriately worded comments
from appropriately righteous students
and by a fuzzy image
of the principal (at the time the vice-principal)
in blackface
(our culture's current shame)
standing smilingly beside
another man, at that time the principal
in whiteface
(they had, apparently
agreed to dress up as each other
for Halloween that year)
they look happy

what I don't get is this
if each of them agreed
to lampoon the other
and both are happy
(which is, currently
the agreed upon basis of justification)
why is the man in blackface apologizing now
thirteen years after the fact
while the man in whiteface isn't
aren't they both ridiculing another 'race'?

June 29, 2020

I don't care if you disagree with me
I really don't, whether right or wrong
it's no obstacle for me what you believe
what I do care about, quite a bit, actually
is that you won't let me disagree with you

how will either of us learn
if one of us won't talk

it's a disturbing variant of tolerance
that can tolerate any variety of opinion
as long as every opinion is homogeneous
but brands the thinker a 'something'-phobe
for any thought regarded double-plus-ungood

how will either of us learn
if one of us is silenced

June 28-29, 2020

Diotrephes | Trophimus

are these men different or the same
would anyone really care
would they notice
if they were
mixed
up
?

June 28, 2020

On God Being Taken Lightly

we are cautious to say almost anything
to or about almost anyone these days
judgement comes crashing down
like a suddenly angered ocean
overwhelming everything in its path
Public Wrath is severe, immediate and merciless
takes no pause to question legitimacy
views forgiveness as a stranger
knows mercy as the only option it will not consider
we walk upon eggshells
as through a mine field

yet far too many of us use no such caution
in our thoughts and acts and speech
toward and about and around our God
our God! Whose wrath is just
and though deferred, far more severe
than any man could conceive
our God! Whose judgement is righteous,
which, tempered by an infinite mercy
puts the best of men to shame
why are we unafraid to belittle Him
Who is most unworthy of our joke

June 26-27, 2020

What 'She' Said

since you're a man you can't have an opinion
she said, unless, of course
you have the same opinion as me, or
you have the same opinion as seven other men
back in 'seventy-three

June 26, 2020

Not "has been"
Though He has been,
and it means well,
some may take this as to show He's stopped
being faithful
even though He never did

Not "will be"
Though He will be,
and it means well,
some may take this as to show He'll start
being faithful
when He has no need to

But "is"
He has never stopped
He has no need to start
Before our first breath, beyond our last
God was, is and will be
faithful

On The Chosen
or
On Being Less Berean Than Needed

The Chosen is getting really good reviews

(apparently even Kari Jobe likes it,
at least that's what Facebook says,
though who she is I wouldn't know
until I looked her up in Wikipedia)

and, I must admit, I have been tempted
so many are saying so much good

"production values"

"faithful"

"enlightening"

it seemed the best thing yet to follow after

The Gospel of John or The Miracle Maker

so I looked it up and learned

it isn't

it wasn't

it might not be either

from just reviewing the synopses
such background has been added
that Jesus gets lost in the clutter

For many years I have been troubled by the casual attitude many Christians have toward portrayals of Christ that are of doubtful truth; but perhaps that so many of us have such an attitude shouldn't be too great a surprise. Too many of us don't have any problem with entertainments that go against what the Bible teaches. Too many of us don't have any problem with practices that go against what the Bible teaches. Too many of us don't have any problem with teachers who do not allow the Bible to teach them. Too many of us don't have any problem with not allowing the Bible to teach us.

Too many of us are untouched and unchanged by what the Bible teaches. That so many of us can therefore praise or appreciate questionable things shouldn't be a surprise, it should be a cause for concern. And prayer.

June 22-23, 2020

this world isn't all it was meant to be
nor am I, but still it doesn't fit me well
too often bumps too hard against me
and I am made too aware of its failings
too easily to weep the wonders, where
perfection's tattered remnants shimmer
reveal again this world's imperfect dim

June 22, 2020

Behind the Scene

we watched "The Princess Bride" the other day
anticipated again each oft' spoken phrase
rejoiced the fall of the Prince and the Count
as Wesley, Buttercup and Inigo, once more
fell safe into Fezzik's steadfast arm

our unthoughtful inconsistent glee
exulting Wesley's victory
despite Dread Pirate's bloody sea

June 22, 2020

Coasting on Yesterday

I was glad yesterday happened
thanked God repeatedly that it had
it was a badly needed patch
on a long untended wound
and today
as that wound again is bruised
I thank God that yesterday was

The Exegete

you bragged before us yesterday
(there's honestly no better word)
how you were always very careful
to be studying the Bible correctly
because you must read it correctly
so that you could teach it correctly
proceeding from there to discourse
on how exegesis and isogesis [sic]
are vastly different from each other
that we must be careful discerners
so eisegesis won't put self-thought in
while exegesis pulls God-thought out

I sat, disbelievingly, before you
recalled our email exchange caused
by your three weeks ago message
how you admitted you "misspoke"
on the acts of Paul and Barnabas
I was happy to hear your admission
looked forward to mistake's redress
yet today you continue to misspeak
to all who view the record, unaware
your admitted careless speech remains

and I ponder, very long and very hard
upon the abundantly obvious eisegesis
underlying your careless spoken words

June 20, 2020

You're [Not] Alone

I've seen it said
often
(I tend to visit a lot
I mean, a LOT
of these websites)
by well-meaning strangers
"If you're going through a dark time,
remember,
you're not alone."
which, nice as it is,
may or may not be true
(I have my own opinions
on their truth or lack)
every time I see it
I wonder
"How do they know
I'm not alone?"

but

even if I'm not alone
when I go through dark times
if I call out for help
and they're dismissive
I might as well be

June 19-22, 2020

Black and White

how often do we see it happen
we're happily discussing "things"
trading ideas back and forth
and the discussion suddenly ends
as one utters these horrid words
"It's not a black and white issue"

yet it is black and white

at issue is utter black and white
otherwise why discuss it at all
all that one person has done
is tell the other they disagree
are unready to change a mind
choose to walk away from fear

yet never walk too far

June 19, 2020

What Will They Do Now?

our continental neighbours
have been quite interesting

of late

they've already been getting rid of
statues of generals
flags with crossed stars
and commemorative plaques

but now it turns out, as always was
their revered general
once owned other men
only freeing them after death

oh dear

it will be very interesting
to see what they do now

June 19, 2020

One Body?

today one of my favourite causes
emphatically against killing people before they can be born
posted that a manly man opposes
any parent's "right" to choose to murder their unborn child
receiving the inevitable response
"men have no say, it's the woman's body so it's her choice"
yet had the parents chosen life
anyone seeing the child would see they had their own body
distinct from mother and father
unique and individual by any measure anyone could choose
and thereby begs this question
how does what is her body become what is not her body?

June 18, 2020

it's hard to get off of it, once you're on it
that escalator just keeps going up & up & up
and faster, as the day progresses downward
what wouldn't have mattered a week ago
so trivial and insubstantial you could forget
eclipses life like some vast, dark shadow
and no matter how hard you try to get off
you're powerless on this stupid escalator

endlesslyrollingupandupandupand...

June 14, 2020

I did not "Accept Jesus Christ
as my personal Lord and Saviour"
I could not, would not have

that He lived, died and lives again
for me, personally, I believe
I have but yielded my life to His

I did not accept Jesus
He has conquered my soul
It is finished

June 14-15, 2020

"If you don't understand what horror
is being inflicted today on
non-binary and transgender people
let me tell you a story ..."

If you think that that's a horror
now, when you have a chance
wait until Someone you can't impeach
tells you something you always knew
when you don't

June 12-22, 2020

The Way Things Will Be

the other day I saw a video called
"How Maps Teach Racism In School"
my immediate, knee-jerk reaction was
(thinking it had misrepresented truth)
to say "That's Mercator's Projection,
that's just the way things are."

but on thinking about it more, I stopped
because that's how racism keeps going
isn't it, it thrives in the every-day
lives on in our (un-noticed) status-quos
in each of us who never stops saying
"That's just the way things are."

it's us, not the Mercator Projection map
keeps things going just the way they are
Mercator's Projection is for navigation
its bias is longitudinal, we have the choice
the latitude to navigate the way things are
to find the way that things will be

June 10, 2020

"Sometimes the noise must be made"
he said, smiling, as he entered the room

we smiled too, for noise, in his case
is not something usually not made

June 10, 2020

evil spits furious
hurls its wrath
against any joy
would bury every good
in misery and pain
as ever it can
is yet overcome
as love calls out
"let me help you"

June 5, 2020

My Last Poem

my last poem I wrote is always my best one
it's my stepping out place from where I was
to where I'll be as I write my next last poem

Who I was when I wrote it is a near memory
I haven't yet forgotten who that person was
so very close to being the person I am now

June 5, 2020

I Don't Care

I don't care
what he did before they came
I don't care
what they say they saw him do
I don't care
what stories backdrop the story
I don't care

that was before
and I just don't care
it doesn't matter

but after

once they had him
in handcuffs
on the ground
under their knee
pleading for his life
that put an end to before
they had no reason
no reason at all
to let him die
carelessly
once they had him

that he died
that those sworn
to serve and protect
did not do either for him
even as he begged for his life
is the most despicable of evils

Someday I will no longer write poems like this

June 4, 2020

This Horror Must End!

I have friends who are personally affected by all of this who have lived things I've never lived, didn't even know happened to people like me, except for one little thing didn't even know it happened in the Great White North but I learned today, talking with my Mom, that it did our shared friends endure things of which we have no idea and hearing was shocked, that friends knew such a thing and I learned today, talking with a friend, that it also did whose default words were to defend the blackened blue and hearing was shocked, that one could say such a thing and this evening I enjoy my safe and comfortable home I know that tomorrow each one of my children will be safe and I weep, knowing that other parents do not know this have no idea if these lights are the last they'll ever see or if they'll have the chance to be afraid of them again and the only reason, the very only reason, is that our skin is more different than too many evil minds can accept and all I can do is write these words no one ever reads and even if they did am not such a man as to move worlds like those on whom the world waits its bated breathing I have no power to make good what must be made good there is no switch within my reach to turn this horror off but my neighbours, my friends, my strangers, are hurting and those on whom the world waits its bated breathing who could, if they tried, change the world for the better

won't

but my neighbours, my friends, my strangers, are hurting for no other reason but that those who have the power for no other reason but that those who reach the switch won't do anything, are too frightened, or much too evil to do a thing, anything at all, to help those who, like me just want to be able to enjoy safe and comfortable homes sleep unworried that tomorrow their children will be safe who just want to live as God allows, yet who, unlike me,

can't

yet if these who can won't make things good, others must if enough of us try, maybe some of us will have the power if enough of us try, maybe some of us can reach the switch if those who can and should make things better won't do it it falls to us to end this horror, on us to make life better as

we can

June 3, 2020

'Funny' Times

it was announced on television yesterday
a respite from all the COVID-19 reports
that Mayor Tory raised the rainbow flag
inaugurating Pride Month in Toronto

I'm here, off to one side, shaking my head
Jesus gets a day, maybe three, or maybe less
this entire country celebrates its single day
yet TO Pride gets an entire month? why?

June 3, 2020

I Grew Up With This

I grew up hearing my parents
tell the stories of their lives
each one had at least two sides

it didn't even strike me odd
that though they came from Holland
they made sure I didn't hate Germans

I grew up going to a church
teaching salvation came from the Jews
through the God Who became as us

it didn't even strike me odd
that in my Dutch-Canadian community
we wouldn't believe otherwise

I grew up attending a school
where no matter who you were
you came from somewhere else

it didn't even strike me odd
that though each of us was different
the teachers treated us the same

I grew up watching Captain Kirk
Spock, McCoy, Scotty
Uhura, Chekov and Sulu

it didn't even strike me odd
that not all of them were white or male
and Roddenberry made sure it didn't matter

I grew up, was taught these lessons
was shown that each of us is precious
no matter who or what or where we are

One of the most impressive speeches I've heard was this one by Gene Roddenberry, speaking through James Kirk: "Among my people, we carry many such words as this from many lands, many worlds. Many are equally good and are as well respected. But wherever we have gone, no words have said this thing of importance in quite this way. Look at these three words written larger than the rest, with a special pride never written before or since; tall words proudly saying: 'We The People.' [This] was not written for the chiefs of kings, or the warriors, or the rich, or the powerful -- but for all the people! ... They must apply to everyone, or they mean nothing!"

June 3, 2020

We've All Lost In This

I must say this
that man, that woman, that child
that person did not need to die
They. Did. Not. Need. To. Die.
whether they were black
or white
or yellow
or olive
or whatever other colour you choose
They. Did. Not. Need. To. Die.
that they did die is evil

every one of us has lost in this
every one of us is made less by this
a world where white-on-white
or black-on-black
is understood as mere crime
but white-on-black
or black-on-white
is understood as racism
is wrong
we are all made smaller
by such colouring of our souls

I am white
yet I am more, I am human
I am no less human than you
and should I fall
like you, I will rise

I will not allow my colour
or yours
make either of us smaller
even in this world
made smaller by their deaths
Who. Did. Not. Need. To. Die.

June 1-2, 2020

Rufus sleeps all his day away, quiet
on his couch while others play
elsewhere
so unconcerned if we are there, or not
he slumbers all his day without a care

Rufus frets all his night away, alone
in his crate while others lay
elsewhere
is so concerned if we are there, or not
he paces all night long in restless care

Don't You Dare!

Don't you dare ...

show outrage at injustice
if you do not also rage
as injustice destroys too many
too many of our unborn children

for whom justice is daily lost
while we, entitled, could scarcely care
they lose

just don't you dare pretend to care
because you don't care
you don't care at all

Don't you dare ...

grieve for the lives extinguished
if you do not also weep
as slaughter destroys too many
too many of our unborn children

who by their thousands daily die
while we, alive, could scarcely care
they die

just don't you dare pretend to care
because you don't care
you don't care at all

Don't you dare ...

presume to say that God is love
if your own evades the least
as utter hate destroys too many
too many of our unborn children

who never felt a parent's love
while we, who should, could scarcely care
they weep

just don't you dare pretend to care
because you don't care
you don't care at all

May 31, 2020

Trust

I used to not say these things
despite very much wanting to
I worried that I would hurt you
by always saying these things
but at the bottom of everything
it is of nothing more than trust
if you teach small words wrong
how can I trust you on the large

so I'll begin to say these things
despite your not wanting me to
I'll not worry pain I may cause
by always saying these things
for at the bottom of everything
I love God more than I love you
and more fearing you than Him
how can I trust my own salvation

May 29, 2020

When

when i consider Your ways
oh God
i am speechless
my act
my word
my thought
are inconsequential
before the magnificence of Your glory
i am as a worm, a dog
a sparrow on the wind
alive, bright and care free
within incomprehensible wonder

Your work surrounds me

oh God
i am overwhelmed by You

Inspirations

Psalm 8 ~ David of Israel
The Psalmist ~ Lachlan Mackinnon

May 27, 2020

we don't know how
we don't know why
we don't know at all
we read the books
we hear the words
And yet
we know nothing

May 21-22, 2020

I bought a pair of a pair of shoes
several years ago in Kingston
alongside children denuding shelves
harvesting boxes to their towering joy
laughing as high as they could reach
I don't know if I was innocent
or complicit in their con/de/struction
either way, their laughter
flowed around my feet
a wild and torrential flood
warm and joyous
carried me to the door
smiling as the cashier took my money
gave me my pair of a pair of shoes
in a ginormous bag, and said
"Thank you,
are those your children?"
"No." I said
because they weren't mine
I had merely enjoyed their joy
in that store on that day I owned
but a pair of a pair of shoes
and a smile

May 20, 2020

Fear

some fear
that socialism
or worse, communism
or even worse, dictatorship
are just around the corner

others fear
COVID will be used
or worse, is orchestrated
or even worse, was originated
to purge superfluous lives

and me?
I'm just happy to be here
behind a front line of people
working to keep me alive
and that feels pretty good

Memories

this time last year we were in Paris
it was as wonderful as we had hoped
the first sight we had above ground
was of Eiffel's tower against a sunset
as golden as the time we were having
celebrating our thirtieth year in a café
sipping wine beneath its very shadow
we saw Notre Dame, from a distance
lunched and cruised along the Seine
climbed both the Pantheon and the Arc
were astounded within Sainte-Chapelle
by the love for God behind such beauty
looked out over it all from Montmartre
and we heard, no matter where we went
sirens, saw streaming police cars chase
past the buses we were sightseeing from
erupting heavily armoured (and armed)
guardians of the public's safety, smiling
gracious as we walked by, as quiet they
discussed their private concerns aside
when we left Paris we heard of entire
subway lines that had been shut down
for the fear of terrorists and bombs
and yet I don't recall feeling afraid at all
they were good at doing what they did
quiet, attentive, relaxed and self-assured
part of the scenery, for the most part
as we enjoyed both history and today

this time this year we're staying inside
don't travel much but to get groceries
for us and Mom and Doris and her crew
and then are masked and socially distant
no armoured guards surround danger
but our care-givers are wearing capes
yet even now, fear is strangely distant
though not only a subway but everything
is shut down to greater or lesser degree
we're not hiding so much as are careful
that the bug keeping us in these days
these strange, astoundingly lovely days
harms neither us nor those we love

Laughter

Jesus must have laughed
that morning in Pete's boat
He must have had a blast
having called the fish
just sitting there

waiting

for Peter's nets to drop
tease the empty sea
looking at him
at the distant James and John
His eyes alive for the joy
of creating the surprise
Peter, James and John
were about to see
of the men these men
were about to be

just waiting

for Peter to find
a sea no longer empty
leaping into his net
his empty boat redeemed
in the dawn of this glorious day

could you imagine the smile on Jesus' face
as these tired men woke up

Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the people from the boat. When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Simon answered and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets." When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break; so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!" For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they

had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men." When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

Luke 5:5-11

May 13, 2020

Gov't <- Obedience -> God

those caring for us say "Stay home!"
"An unpredictable death surrounds us!"

so I will not attend worship service
as my presence could harm another

period
full stop
end of discussion

their life is not a thing I can risk

yet if one were to tell me "Stop!"
"Don't go lest you be punished!"

I doubt my absence would remain

Before someone tells me that my brothers and sisters around the world face death in worship of our God, continuing now as did members of the early Church, and we should therefore disobey gov't restrictions on social gathering (to limit the spread of COVID-19) or we risk disobeying God's command for us to gather, they must also be able to tell me why obeying God allows me to put the life of my brother or sister at risk.

I've discussed this with several friends who say that our obeying the gov't social gathering restrictions puts us in opposition to God's command to gather, but God also commands us to care for those weaker among us and, as far as I can see, obeying these restrictions has more the appearance of the latter than it has of the former.

Sometimes, obeying God requires obeying the gov't.

May 12, 2020

my dog can't tell time so well anymore
he could do a lot better a few years ago
always leaping off the couch at ten
for his supper before going to his bed
or waiting for the mailman near noon
to bark his furry little head off over
an invasion of floor-falling envelopes
but these days the clock confounds him

it is not so bad in the evening when
at seven he starts thinking it's eight
pacing the couch end-to-end
wondering why his meal hasn't arrived

as we giggle at his worried impatience

it is more bad in the mornings when
at five he starts thinking it's eight
pacing his bed round-and-round
wondering why he hasn't been rescued

as we dream of our forsaken pillow

May 12, 2020

Check Your Sources

I know it's possible you may be right
that your view may be truer than mine
but those you use as your support
don't lend your argument any strength
reflecting poorly on you, who are no fool
yet your borrowed words, despising truth
make your own truth seem less likely true

May 12-June 25, 2020

Snake-Oil

we'll share him on social media
or send him off on an email
having been told that if we do it
by midnight we will be blessed

this is a wonder

does God really work like that
is He no more than the talisman
we hold when we want a thing
better or more than it already is

he looks so sincere

staring outward from the display
he looks like he wants to help
and would, but is this a truth that
Moses, Peter or Paul would relate

our incessant need

urging us casual yet hopeful share
blessed images of an arms-length god
gain ourselves his limited time offer;
is God a mere snake oil salesman

saying "come on down,
i'll be in town all week"

May 7-8, 2020

De-Humanized

"bun in the oven"	they are belittled
"late"	de-humanized
"bat in the cave"	no matter how it's said
"the rabbit died"	they become less than human
"up the duff"	when they are no longer child
"tin roof dusted"	neither he
"pea in the pod"	nor she
"knocked-up"	but an it
"up the spout"	just a clump of cells
"oops"	a mistake

they have been dehumanized
and they can be ended
without a concern
 like an ache
 or a pain
 or less

Normal

we inhabit a new normal these days
working from away, or not at all
sharing the fellowship of six feet apart
exchanging distant hugs with friends
all the while wondering "When?"
"When will life go back to normal?"

we long for life's return to normal
as though normal were something real
forgetting each day's normal guides
shepherds yesterday into tomorrow

Moses too had his normal sudden rent
exchanging gold for Sinai, staff and sand
yet ever true he walked with God
whether palace, desert, mount or sea
wherever normal was, he faithful walked
with The One who endlessly unchanging
causes every change lead back to Him

why then should we to yesterday cling
as today calls our tomorrow "Come!"
we need not fear the shifting sands
ever changing beneath our fragile feet
for glory waits each one who walks
as Moses did, step-by-step with God

May 5, 2020

Remembery

I don't remember much, anymore
of yesterday, a fair bit
of the day before, less
memory fades with distance
desire, or pain

I am surround by inconstant "then"s
they blend, coalesce, reform
as things that never were
or were, but made better
for that matter, worse

if man is what he remembers
I am less the man that once I was
despite my becoming more
accumulation is outpaced by loss
I am become shadow

May 4-June 14, 2020

We Didn't
(but we almost did)

we didn't watch
"Raiders of the Lost Ark"
last night, though we'd started
unrememberingly
but it didn't take long
for us to wish we hadn't
memory came running back
and by the time Indiana
all got mixed facts up
 on the Lost Ark of the title
 on God, Whom it honoured
 on the ten commands He gave
 already broken by the time
 Moses broke their stones
 how he (Indiana)
 and he (Hitler)
 misunderstood everything
 absolutely EVERYTHING!
 about what the Ark was
 about Who God is
 about the broken commands
we questioned our choice
remembering and fearing both
the horribly gruesome ending
 such casual disregard for life
the facts destroyed to entertain
 such casual disregard for truth
both unlikely changed for better
since first seen decades ago
when we were more naïve
less discerning
or careful

we stopped

life is too good to waste on harmful things

Furor

for argues against
against argues for
one must be wrong
or both, either way
both can't be right
ever struggling hands
fragile grasp Truth
but beneath all words

HUMANITY!

This virus is unlike any other. You could've had it, might have it now, and exhibit zero symptoms. You could spread it. Maybe you're young, healthy and carefree, demanding that the beaches open and challenging the narrative. We didn't want to, but we wore a mask to the grocery store to protect the vulnerable. We get your libertarian desire to live free and unconstrained by government, but this is about your fellow man. That's humanity, not tyranny.



1967; Somewhere in the First Half of the Year

sometime in the middle of nineteen-sixty-seven
Mom and Dad bought the house Beth and I
would pull them from forty-three years later
it was a big old post-and-beam farm house
on land long sectioned off to new neighbours
though one barn, unknowingly falling down
and one out-building, destined for accidental flame
remained to make the place seem less lonely
sitting there all on its own at the first corner
east of highway thirty-seven along the third
after almost a mile of mostly empty road
my brother and I thought the barn was fun
the drive-shed behind it, which had fallen down
even more so, despite Dad's threats of a belt
if he ever learned we'd risked our lives near it
(we did, once, sliding down its metal roof
but as Dad promised, we did it only once)
so we were relegated to the barn, and shed
the one where we lived imaginary adventures
and the other where we explored two floors
filled with treasure only young boys could love
left behind by those far less enlightened folk
who'd lived in and used the place before us
one of the treasures remains a treasure
I claimed it for my own, still hold it near
left behind by a forgetful high-school grad
who loved it little enough that it could be left
for me to find in the dust behind some old junk
"New Horizons", edited by Bert Case Diltz,
an anthology of what I'd never known was
up until that day I'd never read a poem
(except the Psalms of David from my Bible
to which my debt continues to appreciate)
from that day I don't know that I've stopped

April 24-25, 2020

Grief.

it clutches at our very soul
short-circuits all we were
its endless grasping despair
knocks all of life askew
leaves us by an empty hole
flooding a hopeless earth
with our unrelenting tears
clutching barren remnants
of our eviscerated joy

April 22-24, 2020

the elders have spoken
thus! and thus we believe
unconsidering God's word
for our founder's tradition
nor are we concerned
we misapprehend Truth
as we clasp futile hands
to disagreement agreed

the apostles decried schism
taught one Truth for all

we inhabit blind walls
hang our images upon them

Storm

oddly enough and despite the depressing news
this storm seems not to have touched me adversely
my head is in a better place than it's been in years
I'm seeing more of my family than at normal times
and Monday at the bank, lined up down the block
the assistant manager pulled me from the very end
as busy as she was, to help me deposit my cheques

no, though the world seems mad around me
within these walls I scarcely note the storm
and yet these bricks themselves can hardly shield
are but concrete and mortar on two-by-four frame
could not apprehend fear any more than could dust
I live within a greater wall, made by a greater Hand
than were these strengthless bits of dust and ash
though fear and worry would storm without
bright through all these days still shines the Son

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!
Let your gentle spirit be known to all men.
The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing,
but in everything by prayer and supplication
with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:4-7

"As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives,
and at the last He will take His stand on the earth.
Even after my skin is destroyed,
yet from my flesh I shall see God;
whom I myself shall behold,
and whom my eyes will see and not another.
My heart faints within me!"

Job 19:25-27

April 10, 2020-April 3, 2021

Death Is Not The Victor

it is Friday

death thinks it has won
has no more cause for fear
its Nemesis is at last entombed
behind stone and seal and guard
forlorn, blood-soaked timbers
darkly stand on silent crag
above nail and jar and spear
silent testimony to its triumph

death
it always wants the last laugh
it's Friday, but Sunday's coming

it is Saturday

death thinks it has won
stands upon this tortured stone
raises its defiant shout to God
"What will You do now?" it cries
"I've destroyed Your long laid plan!
I've murdered Your futile Son!
Your Son, Your beloved Son
lies dead! I've won, you fool! I've won!"

death
it always tries to laugh last
it's Saturday, but Sunday's coming

it is Sunday

death thought it had won
Friday night and Saturday
did not know at Sunday's dawning
behind stone and seal and guard
Life! Unconquerable LIFE!
would easy burst its futile bonds
would dance again on God's good earth
would crush underfoot His mortal foe

death
will never have the last laugh
because Sunday has come, and LIFE!

April 5, 2020

Palm Sunday, Two Thousand Twenty

Palm Sunday this year is quiet
much more so than its original
no cheering multitude greets its King
nor adoring followers line His way
Who silent yet irresistible comes
is welcomed in our disparate homes
where we, as did worshippers of old
raise suppliant palms to His mercy

March 29, 2020

The Reaper

we have no clue who he was
this man now faded into the mist
his life's echo has fallen silent
it cannot tell us any more of him
this man who did nothing more
than the daily labours of his life
we have no idea what rivers flowed
and where, beneath his yellow hat
as perhaps he was also unaware
he was joyfully observed by another
himself of Earth's most famous men



After "Wheatfield With Reaper"
by Vincent van Gogh

March 29, 2020

Lines II

--

--

March 29, 2020

Lines I

words thrown
on a plane they

may

seem random
seem unconnected
seem unrelated

yet

on being seen
may not

March 25, 2020

Bansky Said ...

Bansky has said (and probably others, too)
"You're never too young to dream BIG!"
nor can you be too old
unless the lid has closed
or the eyes have dimmed

BUT

one is also never too old
to dream young
as long as the clock ticks

DREAM!

the bigger the better

March 22-25, 2020

you know how, when they're feeling wretched, they'll say
"I feel like I got hit by a Mack Truck"?
well today, at the end of it
"I feel like I got hit by a Smart Car"
not feeling too badly
(and it's certainly NOT COVID-19)
just sufficiently unenthusiastic
to not want to do much of anything
it started this afternoon (well, yesterday, actually
but I'll start with this afternoon)
when we were at Dan and Kim's
watching videos made of children
now twenty years gone, or more
the frenetic camera
scooting place to place
wild panning, uncanny zooms
(and perhaps the Trifle and the whisky
after lunch)
combined to cause such a case of vertigo
or motion sickness
or whatever you want to call it
as I'd never had before
piling that up on top of yesterday
when I was cutting the fridge gable
down to size
inhaling dust (despite my kerchief)
that would never make it into our new kitchen
has had the conclusion that I now lie under
a Smart Car
I think it's red
but it might be yellow

March 22-25, 2020

Blue Jays sing on the feeder outside
while Music Don leads YouTube worship inside
and afterwards Pastor Don (a different Don)
will teach to us from Revelation
and unintentionally teach unintended lessons
(to me, at least)

it is a gloriously sunny day outside
but today, during COVID-19 shutdown
we welcome the Son, at home, inside

March 19, 2020

Christmas is behind us
but after it came COVID-19
terror stricken eyes
and concern for our neighbours
despite the fact of social-distancing
(better to be six feet apart, they say
than to put someone six feet under)
but in twenty five days it's Easter
not only sacrifice, but resurrection
in addition to redemption, hope
one single, glorious Light
in this world so filled with night

March 19, 2020

Hush

fear rages, cyclone like,
ravenous, devouring,
its violent, incessant roar
 assaults defiance
 batters hope
 screams futility
but still
amid chaotic madness
the quiet voice of God
 "Hush, My child,
 you've no need to fear,
 I've got you."

March 15, 2020

last Sunday we turned the clocks ahead
(one hour we won't see again
until the fall comes and we fall
back
into it)
and today, in a mid-Sunday evening
graced by a crisp late winter sky
we reap the harvest of that loss
dusk's glorious blue surrounds us
even as late as eight o'clock

spring is this week and summer is on its way

when spring has not yet fair begun
and summer yet a distant hope
we will have moved
back
into the home we rented out
for the eighteen years we were with Mom

the renovation is almost done
many good people did much hard work
(I finished the kitchen plumbing this weekend
no leaks this time
like there were when I capped the pipes)
we'll put in the drawers and shelves after
the counter comes in this week
and the next week we can move in
to a smaller house with larger windows
having worked on this move since the solstice
I anticipate its brightness
and the touch-up work to be done
before we turn the clocks
back
in the fall

March 14, 2020

COVID-19 (1)

This. Is. It.
you've been asking for it
waiting for it
all your life
now it's here
This. Is. It.
your time has come
This. Is. It.
it's finally here
your chance to reach out
make a difference
as so many, too many
are reaching in
making none

Movie

if I were a movie, which would I be?

"The Searchers"?

"It's a Wonderful Life"?

"The Best Years of Our Lives"?

"Pride and Prejudice"?

"The Princess Bride"?

why do so many things

begin with "The"?

as though this particular thing

were most particular of its things

even a movie's second final word

is "The"

like there will be no other ending

ever

so many words

and every other one is "The"

even though it means nothing

(being as generally particular as it is)

but likes being invited to the party

enough to come to almost all of them

maybe I would be "Rear Window"

March 13-14, 2020

Brave Rufus

my dog is brave, he
runs to the edge of a porch
wrapped in darkness, like him
and hardly hesitating, leaps out
into the emptiness, confident
the ground he cannot see
is waiting to catch him

March 13, 2020

On Reading Jane Kenyon

It is sad ...
... sad
to encounter a poet you like
no, love
no, 'like' is too strong a word
and 'love' the word too weak
either way, it is sad
to encounter a poet you ...
... you something between like and love
only to learn they died
far younger than you are now
and you can't help but wonder
"How did they pack so much ...
... so much experience
into so short ...
... far too short a span of years?"

"How?"

March 12, 2020

Stop-Motion

I write poems, a lot of poems
Many of them are very bad
Some of them are very good
Each of them is but a single frame
in this wonderful life of mine

March 11-12, 2020

they say that every seven years
every cell in our bodies is replaced
nothing that's there was ever there before
nothing that's been there is there any more
and I thought of you
you've been married to four renewed Petes
are now married to your fifth
I'm glad you've loved so many Petes
(I've loved just as many Beths)
our apartness and our togetherness
remaining untouched by the years
enhance this lovely permanence

they also say that we are of star dust ...

... just think of the possibilities ...

March 9, 2020

Liar

"I find it hard to tell a lie"
I've said honestly and often
 I'm not a very good man,
 but I do find it hard to lie.
 yet this morning I realized
I tell a lie every single time
someone asks me how I am
 So I don't even have that.

March 8-12, 2020

Fog

a sunny day's afternoon
footsteps pound pavement
in-sync / out / in-sync / out
splashing through an early spring
the only definable sound
our footsteps pounding pavement
stepping out into a brilliant day
far too near an unseen edge

March 6, 2020

my problems
are really rather small
if compared to
other's problems
really, they are nothing
if compared to any
other problem

but
still

they are my
problems
and large or small
either they or I
will defeat
the other

March 6, 2020

What Will be Missed

warm cuddles
first smiles, first steps, first words
complete and utter dependence
unconditional love
bicycle lessons
stupid jokes
scraped knees
a friend on the darkest day
tears
unbelievable joy
birthday cakes
messy fingers
breakfast in bed
overwhelming pride
movie nights
the fellow adventurer

as you unburden yourself of life
you unburden yourself of these as well
and the uncountably infinite more

March 4, 2020

the scale says "one-hundred-ninety-two"
but I don't believe it
I feel much more like
three-million-eight-hundred-sixty-seven-thousand-five-hundred-twelve
can't be the heavy thoughts I've been thinking all day
those made their escape to paper hours ago
must be my digestion acting up again
or that last cracker

March 4, 2020

my mind is in real a bad place
which I cannot understand
all the places my body's in
generally run from good to WOW!
how does it happen (so often)
that the outside can be glorious
while my inside writhes in sadness

March 4-9, 2020

Hope

thinking about it
about ending yourself
it is not ending yourself
it is staring down the abyss
trying to find one more reason to live
than there are reasons to die

As I stare down the abyss
I find my one reason in Him

Thank God!

March 4, 2020

'they' say that to teach someone how to swim
you just throw them in
to the deep end
they'll learn

I tried that once
by accident
at a dead-of-the-winter outing to a local pool
I mis-read the marks
and jumped right in
to an infinity of water
(no, it wasn't infinite
but it was just infinite enough
it stood so sufficiently between
me
and
air

Death considered getting up)
even on my birthday
my hands didn't move so fast
I must have splashed
water inside itself
so hard was my dog-paddle
up toward salvation
and air
where
bug-eyed and gasping
grasping the cold ceramic wall
(still bruised)
clutching it with all I had left
I avoided the colder
more permanent wall

no one noticed

and I still hadn't learned how to swim
but I did learn how not to die

Inspired by Mary Oliver's "The Swimming Lesson"
and memories of a suddenly deep swimming pool

March 4, 2020

D.M.

this cave is dark
dreary
devoid of hope
lacking joy
barren, lifeless
depressing
yet for a time
there was a noise
exuberant
enthusiastic
involving

for these too few days
you scared the monsters away

thank you

March 4, 2020

I (Can't) Remember

I remember what it used to be like
I'd like to say I do
but I don't
it never was what it used to be like
I'd like to remember
but I can't
that page is empty
its words either erased
or unwritten

March 2, 2020

I don't have many options
I'm kind of like a dry tree
the leaves havin long since

f
a
l
l
e
n

and there's really no place
for me to

go

nothing for me to

DO!

but be what

little

I am
wherever I
find

myself

b e I n g

March 2-4, 2020

Gloom

sitting here, there
or anywhere else
making excuses
trying to justify
this mood I'm in
on such a lovely day

March 2, 2020

he was a serious man
in a frivolous world
it would not change
he could not change
and so
his sadness continual
confronted its laughter

March 1, 2020

Dirge

I see myself as the dirge
or the slow sad lament
at least
or the song sung melancholic
at this concert of everybody's lives

I'm told I hear myself different
than I'm heard by those around
but still
in the absence of other sound
this is the only melody I hear

self-assessment is a poor device
it yields such deceptive evaluation
yet pride
lurks behind another's praise

I've never learned how to handle that

February 28, 2020

a pretty woman smiled at me this morning
(a very pretty woman smiles at me every morning)
 (my wife, but on this occasion)
 (it wasn't her)
we walked by each other at my mother's building
 she was going out
 I was going in
 and she smiled at me
 (this is unusual)
 (being both male and a stranger)
 (women don't usually smile at me)
 so I gave her a gentlemanly nod
 and my own "Good morning"
 in return
 it was the very least I could do
 for the smile she gave me

February 27-March 1, 2020

the day's gone all catawampus
(I learned that word from Deborah)
 (this morning)
 from waking up broken (again)
 through unrewarded snow-removal
 to too-bitter coffee
and (all) the crazy things that followed
 the day's just all catawampus

I learned that word from Deborah
 this morning

so the day hasn't been a total loss

February 27-March 1, 2020

My Hero

in the stories the hero always saves the day
riding victoriously off into the glorious sunset
amid the adorations of the cheering throng
I'm not in a story so that hope is misplaced
but I do have a Hero and my hope is in Him
He has surely saved my day, because of Him
my story will have a happy ending after all

February 26, 2020

Tears

I have trusted, in my life
good men, good women
once, twice, an infinity of times
have by these very men, women
been sadly undeceived
once, twice, an infinity of times
it's easier to forgive once, twice
than an infinity, a million, or even
Jesus' seventy times seven
bigger numbers are always hard
with all that weight they carry
yet forgiveness lightens
though nourished by tears

February 26, 2020

Purveyors of Horrible Things

these
purveyors of horrible things

those
who distribute badness
as a sower would his wheat
freely scattered
into ploughed and fertile fields

these
purveyors of horrible things

they
are not bothered in the least
the harvest will not be bread
nor does it trouble them
to never drink the wine

these
purveyors of horrible things

February 26, 2020

My Dog, Rufus

my dog, Rufus
he is slowly going blind
his hearing is gone
mostly
his smeller doesn't sniff so good
anymore
his hips have given him trouble
for years
yet no matter what he does
his tail is always
wagging

oh!
to be more like my dog
Rufus

February 24, 2020

Hate!

I'd say that hate stands there
looking for chances
for any reason at all
to do evil
but hate doesn't
It doesn't just stand, it is active
It isn't just looking, it is making
It doesn't know reason, it simply does
evil
Screaming its endless death-cry
at this gone-mad world
yearning only to destroy what is
good
Never satisfied
with what has been finished

February 15, 2020

My Friends Nicole and Laura

I wrote the poem "Choice!"
two short weeks ago
but it ended where it shouldn't
I didn't have the eyes to know
but my friends Nicole and Laura
though they don't know they do
have shown and show me still
that judgment of a person's fault
is not a fitting way to end a thing
when one has still a chance at life
so I changed it an hour or so back
added hopeful words to call to life
who have still their chance to live
as I once, and yet, have chosen life
in answer to His far greater call

February 13, 2020

Days

there are days
when one could give me a coffee
and I would scream

there are days
when one could say something nice
and I would cry

there are days
when one could bend over backwards
and I wouldn't care

there are days
there are far too many days when
I'm not in my right head

February 12-27, 2020

I Can't Believe

I can't believe you can believe

That

You can't believe I can believe

This

One (or maybe both) of us can't be
right

One (or maybe both) of us must be
wrong

Yet what we can discover of

Truth

rests on both of us wanting to
listen

February 12-13, 2020

Christie

this is the only news I remember hearing today
"Christie Blatchford died a few hours ago"
and I wept
we are less than we were yesterday
we have lost Our Great Voice
we have been reduced to

silence

February 10, 2020

The Gift

I woke up today
into the brand new day I've been given
one whole entire day
twenty-four glorious hours

ALL MINE!!!

I didn't even ask for it
(though I did expect it)
it came despite me
was already there when I opened my eyes
just standing there
waiting for me to wake up
and grab it

pretty cool, eh?

February 9, 2020

sometimes
it feels
like my soul
has gone off
on its own
and forgot
to leave me
a forwarding
address

February 9, 2020

When I Woke Up

when I woke up Saturday, a week
I didn't expect it would take this long
I didn't expect it would take all day
I didn't expect it would be at all
it just came and then it stayed
burying the glory of each new day
in drab grey melancholy
and now
a week and a day in
brief glimpses of God's lovely sun
 (fewer and farther between
 than in reality were)
punctuate this run-on sentence
with exclamations of wonder

February 6-7, 2020

What I Think/Learn/Know

What I think

based on

personal evaluation

I have a particular set of skills
acquired over many years
which I do my best to use
for God

What I've learned

based on

what I've seen

I am not worth considering
am best ignored
or made the butt
of everyone's joke

What I know

based on

outside feedback

I am pretty much
almost absolutely
one hundred percent
worthless

It's been a rough week

"Choice!"

"Choice!"

off-hand a pleasant word
hearing it
makes you think you might get to pick
of the best of what's been given
like choosing between fireplace or blanket
or both

but you hold that word like a sword
protection against all the abuses
anyone has ever hurled
against anyone else
weaponizing the word
you bind as a chain
on those whom you claim deny your right
to choose

anything but death

hypocritically denying them their own right
to choose

anything but death

for what other reason would you curse
each time someone chooses

anything but death

death tells you it's the only option
but it doesn't have to be that way
death does not have to rule over you
death does not have to be your only choice
death does not have to be your choice at all
a greater choice than death surrounds you

Life!

theirs

yours

My Poor Little Dog

Rufus likes his routine
and he lives by it joyfully
but tonight it broke
He'd been sleeping all evening
he was so desperately tired
he just wanted to go to bed
But before he goes to bed
 he's got to bound upstairs
But before he does that
 he's got to run outside
But before he does that
 he's got to perimeter check the room
But before he does that
 he's got to drink his water
But before he does that
 he's got to eat his food
But before he does that
 he's got to hear me ask
 "Rufus! Do you want to go to bed?"
Which I did, as I always do
But since he'd already eaten
 before
he'd no idea what to do
 next
He just stood by his food dish
and looked up at me in confusion
As if to say "What do I do now, Pete?"
"The routine broke and now I'm stuck."
My poor little pup
needing reassurance that a routine could break
and not also break the world
on occasion

January 30, 2020

David wrote this

"The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places
indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me."

I could write this too, for

my lines have been, and are, extremely pleasant

my heritage has been, and is, very beautiful

though my days progress into years

though some have more joy than others

I have not known one day that God has not blessed

it is as if God, in His infinite mercy

has filled a golden platter with His best gifts

the very best of all His blessings

has laid it before me and said

"Here, this is for you, enjoy!"

because of my God

the line of my life and my heritage are lovely

The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places;
Indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me.

Psalm 16:6

January 21-24, 2020

The Basic Goodness of Man Depends on the Perfect Good of God

I would not claim belief in God
essential for man to be 'good'
his 'good' too common spread
that his disbeliefs would disallow
imperfect yet echo of His glory
God's own bearers of His image
and owning either faith or doubt
each can do his own little goods
which His perfect good empowers

January 19, 2020

Song for the IT Guy

WinSxS, system managed, no deletes
Disaster rewards human interference
Abandon hope, all who enter here

January 19, 2020

It doesn't matter
All that 'stuff' you did?
It just doesn't matter
Once you say "Yes!" to Jesus
none of that stuff matters
any more, not one bit of it
It's all been washed away
Every last little speck of it
is gone!

Falling

my namesake almost drowned
once, out on a turbulent sea
his doubt overwhelming his faith
fearing more the power of the sea than
trusting the invincibility of his Friend
like him, I falter
here, in this place, now, at this time
I fall
wanting to and trying not to
I fall
all that keeps me safe away from doom
His ever invincible hand
pulling me out from this restless sea
standing me firm within His power



*"Our Refuge and Our Strength"
by Morgan Weistling*

*There are many paintings of Jesus saving Peter from the storm
but this is by far my favourite, for it shows Jesus in total control
with an unrelenting grip on the outstretched arm of His friend.*

Colourblind

someone I don't much read, anymore
recently said:

"For me, the diversity issue ... did not come up.
I would never consider diversity in matters of art.
Only quality.
It seems to me that to do otherwise would be wrong."

and created a tweet-storm

(don't-cha just love the Internet
so many opinions, so little Truth)

which I found surprising, he seems
not at all as they cry, he is
I find it also surprising
that so many honestly think
preferring the minor to the major is
not discriminatory yet
preferring the major to the minor is
discriminatory
when all he really said was:

"Quality matters, in matters of art
Preference of one, for any other reason
over another, would be wrong."

though we often disagree

(I have not read his books in years
they frighten and distract from God)

as he I believe that the best
and the best alone matters
in any matter worthy thought
choosing to fill a quota
as much a bigoted act
as choosing one's peers
if the choice belittles the best

At this week's announcements for the
Academy Awards Stephen King got into
trouble for the comment quoted above.
I don't get it, all he said was that he will
vote for quality instead of for quotas.

Aren't the Academy Awards about quality?

January 12, 2020

Another Note

and on another note ...
depression seems to fit me
like a cloak of invisibility

sometimes
it's unseen by me, even
as it skirts the edges of life
looking for a doorway
 those are my good days
 the sun shines more brightly
 I can remember I have hope

other times
it's unseen by others, even
as despair tries to smother me
under its invisible mantle
 it absolutely astounds me
 how often I can tell them
 yet no one seems to know

January 12. 2020

my dad died a few years ago
he was a good man
many came to bid farewell
and offer my family comfort
all of which we appreciated
I remember someone saying

“Don’t worry Pete,
you’ll see your dad again.”

I know this
Dad and Mom raised no fool
when comes my turn to die
I know that I’ll see Dad again
but I imagine it’ll go like this
when first I come into Heaven

“Hi Dad! It’s sure good to ...
Hey, there’s Jesus, I gotta go!”

January 10, 2020

they like to say it's all about choice
and I, to a point, I would agree
though I stop short, so far short
to allow my choice deny another
the chance to make their own

choice is ours yet is not as we think
are less free to choose than we wish
our one choice is to love, and well
love was, and is and will always be
ours to choose to either do or not

every. single. time.

January 10, 2020

once upon a time
I believed, like many, the
 pre-trib
 pre-wrath
 pre-mil
rapture of God's elect
it was so exciting to think
I'd be rising into Heaven
meet Him way up in the air
bid good-bye and fare-thee-well
to this tired old evil earth
I enjoy disaster stories and this
this would have been disaster
to end all disasters
would have been some story
 unbelievable
 filled with despair
 devoid of hope
(unless Jenkins & LaHaye were right
and those left behind could come to faith)
it was fun to contemplate
 unpredictably pilotless aircraft
 uninhabited clothing
 suddenly empty hugs
and know I'd be above it all
it was comforting too
to think I'd not have to suffer
as so many brothers and sisters
are

but I don't anymore
I've been reading the Bible
often and very carefully
I've found it to speak different
than those I used to follow
and I've changed
I can't believe ought as the Bible says
no matter how exciting man's tale
it is far too selfish to hold
for one who longs to honour God
far more than he honours himself

January 8, 2020 - August 26, 2020

Michelle Williams
at the Golden Globes

you or I do not see things as I or you do
nor should you or I
your or my life is vastly different than my or your life is
I or you should not expect you or I to see life
as I or you see life
your or my decisions are yours or mine alone
you or I alone bear consequence
of the road you or I choose to walk

but I would really like to ask you
as you grip your shiny prize
when asks the child you carry now
how will you explain your choice
to build your prize on blood
how will you prove your love
to the one you cherish now
who will someday learn
you chose not to love another

January 8-10, 2020

this is not The Millennium
it's not even close
the beast is not banished
the Kingdom is not come
we are yet hopeful
of the promise unrealized

this is more The Tribulation
it's all around us
though Beast as yet unseen
the Kingdom is in place
we are yet hopeful
even as we stand abused

January 7, 2020

I WILL NOT waste in waiting
here
upon some hopeful premise
which come or not
holds me useless
bound to fruitless dreams
and I WILL NOT become dust
here
in hope for grand adventure
but I WILL DO what I can do
here
and now
as it comes
and am able

January 7-February 14, 2020

he found he walked
from evening into darkness
trading isolation for a loneliness
wrapped within a silence
far too deep for breath
or words, even
chasm deep enough for the tears
pride would not let fall
pride,
or courage,
or something like
which held his smile
up
even as his heart
fell
into the question at the end
of too big an empty
for life to flow around
too small, far, far too small
for life to enter

weeping tears unseen
for the abundance
of absent time

and if you asked him of it
of the day he's scarce surviving
in the instant between shoe and door
he could but squeeze a weak
"Okay"
into a silence cut short by haste
could but paste band aid smiles
on the pain scornful any balm
wish you well into your way

January 7, 2020

it's unfortunate
it really is, you are
quite entertaining, a joy
to hear and observe
you really are
yet even as I smile I fear
your foundation may be awry
it seems unstable
it seems not built
as you have us build our own
it seems more found on desire
than forged from discipline
you seem less careful
than you would have us be
you really do
and it worries me

January 5, 2020

I long to write as once I wrote
on page of fluid margin
unchained by line
thought flowing free
clear and easy
from mind to expectant finger
and on through ink to words
which dance before my eye
unfettered and alive

January 3, 2020

This Lovely World

this lovely little world spins
at a rather astounding rate
we, living unfazed on its crust
travel an astonishing distance
without ever taking a step
to help

but wait
there's more

this lovely little world orbits
a far, but not too distant, star
taking us along on a journey
of over a quarter billion miles
every year back to the start
almost

but wait
there's more

this world's star with its owned worlds
blisters both with heat and speed
every tick sees sixty go
every tock sees sixty more
to some star which when we arrive
has moved

but wait
there's more

Sir Edwin's thought seems proved
though he himself less constant
this space through which we careen
in which all we know exists moves
like some endless rubber band
stretches

and yet
it's less

mote-like within such vast expanse
course both topsy and turvy
moving as hither as thither
scarce giving pause to thought
and like more precipitous plunge
unfelt

January 1-3, 2020

we think those before us do not live
do not feel life's flame as we feel it
or delight its pleasures as we delight
we think them dry and old and

dust

unlike we, so fresh and young and

lush

we think them thus and yet are wrong
do not know as those before us know
or knew, learn as they that life can but
make one wise as it is lived

December 29, 2019-January 7, 2020

How Christmas Looked This Year

how did Christmas look this year?
it looked like a race track
gifts beneath the tree
sugar cookies and
home renovations

how did Christmas look this year?
it looked like a hearth blessed
by honey, work gloves
and Christmas cards
under silent chimes

how did Christmas look this year?
it looked like candle light
a feast laden table
ornaments and
a hopeful dog

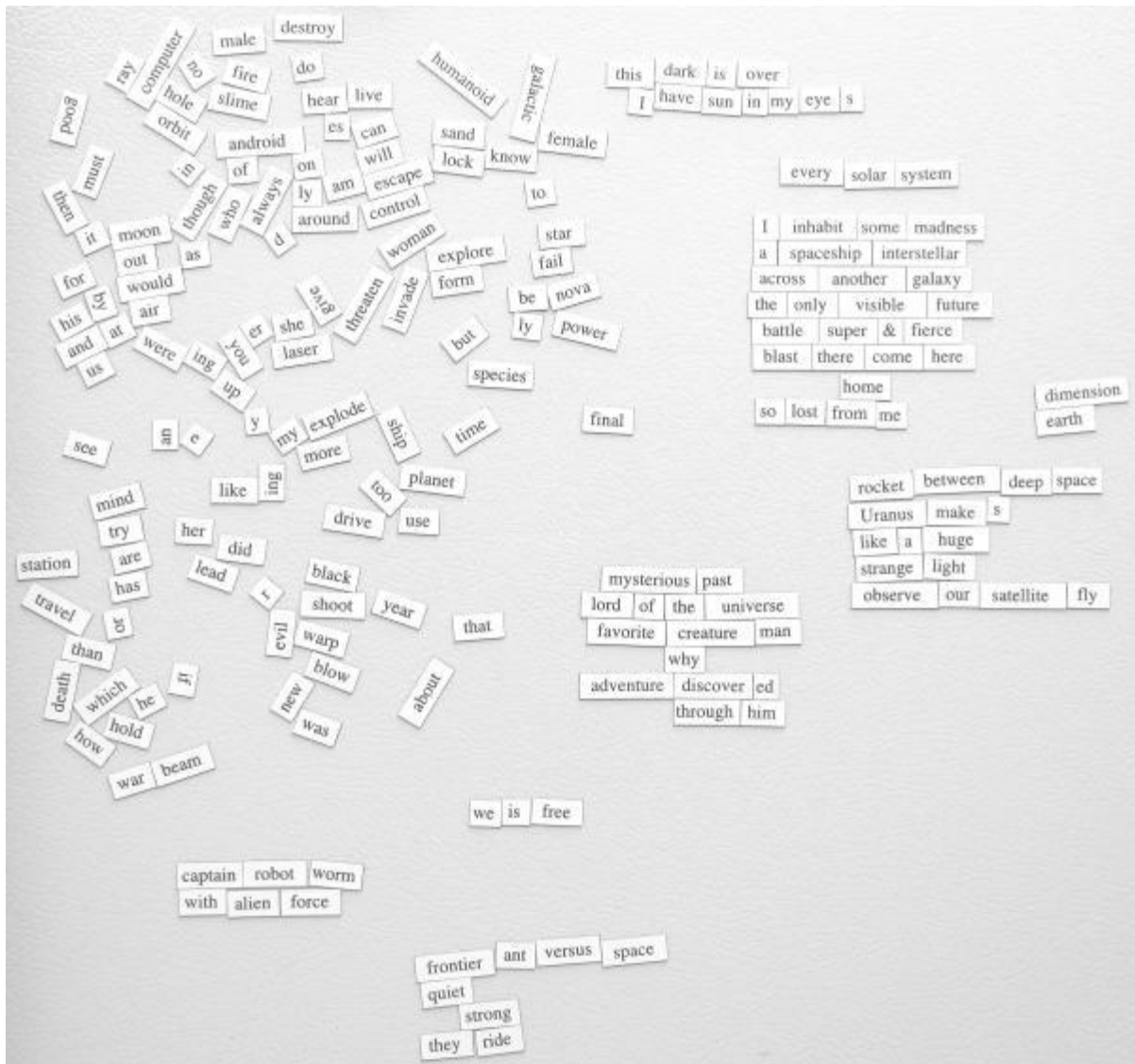
how did Christmas look this year?
it looked like smiling eyes
eager hands, and arms
sharing the warmth
of a tender hug

how did Christmas look this year?
it looked like an empty seat
hearts too soon broken
made whole in His
glorious manger

Last verse inspired by my friend John Ward
whose mother passed away Christmas Eve Day

December 25, 2019

Beth gave me a Christmas gift
a "Sci-Fi Magnetic Poetry Kit"
so far, it seems to be working



December 25, 2019

today finally stopped
enough that I could start
catching up on things
I should have done before
but didn't have the time

December 24, 2019 - August 26, 2020

in all our silent Bethlehems
asleep within their lonely darks
hope seems vainly occupied
to wait for Who has come
in comfort coddled softly warm
devoid of life, of flame, of joy
we look for spark at last ignite
the flame our fear has doused

yet we do not run as shepherds did
when by angelic host encouraged
sped their way to David's town
rejoiced to greet the Lord of hope
nor worship we as magi would
wandering far over starlit sands
past palace fair to humble home
devoted whole to new born King

December 24-26, 2019

at times the christian's message
spoke in words unthought
may be a greater wrong
than doubt's more honest truth
in the blasphemer's lie
both stand in need of mercy
one may stand more close to God
than the other

December 22, 2019-February 27, 2020

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

Revelation 22:17

we have run, run yet, precipitous
our steps flee us far from home
so far from light to desperate dark
though His glory shine all around us
we have not the eyes to see
neither have we the ears to hear
unaware, we are lost, without hope
too far from hope to know, or care
our rebellion built too great a gulf
to bridge from where we weep
forlorn, wandering our blinding dark
though our tears would fill the oceans
our doom, our one reward is death
and we do not even know we die

yet from a manger new-filled by Glory
our forsaken Father bids us "Come!"

December 20, 2019

you don't know
and you don't know
you don't know
but speak
as if you did know
what you don't know
and know more
than what we know
but you don't know
what we know
and couldn't
any more
than you don't know
what you know
as well as you think
you know what you know
and less
than what you don't know

and oh!
if only you would allow Truth
shatter your unknowing lies

and oh!
if only you would allow Light
brighten your terminal dark

and oh!
if only you would allow Love
destroy your relentless hate

and oh!
if only you would allow Life
redeem your vacant soul

and Live!

December 20, 2019

you thought I was relaxing
over here
in my dark little corner
chilling after a crazy day
(or week (or month))
but I wasn't
relaxing at all
relaxing is hard
when all you're trying to do
is live

December 20, 2019

Music

music soothes the savage soul, they say
or beast (whatever)
either way, today
being both savage soul and beast
it seems it does

December 19, 2019

since everyone is so very

LARGE

and I am so very

small

I fear I might be crushed

if I say anything at all

December 15, 2019

250,000

a quarter-million words
give or take a few
yet have they any weight
has any one of these words
these many, many words
changed anything
however small
in the slightest
has any single solitary word
done even the least bit of
good

Fruit

the Bible says a lot about fruit
that by our fruit we are known
that a good tree cannot bear bad fruit
nor can a bad one bear good
that the fruits of the Spirit are good
and that if we abide in Him
we will yield a fruitful harvest

this last was said to me again, today
and I, sadly, found I hoped I doubted
what this more learned man had said

for either my fruit is not visible
or I do not abide in Him

at all

Mary, Did You Know?

"Mary," some will ask, "did you know"
and I
imagine Mary's responding
"Yes, I knew
Perhaps not the details
Perhaps not how He would be
Whom Gabriel said He would be
or every detail of my own deliverance
But I was told, and I know beyond doubt
when I kiss my baby I kiss the face of God!"
and I
knowing the words she sang to Elizabeth
mere months before her Messiah's birth
I know she knew her Son as God Himself

December 9-13, 2019

White Island

is this humanity's bottom
our absolutely lowest point
the dregs of our filthy barrel
although I hope it is
I sincerely believe it isn't
and long for a better bottom
where instead of our depravity
we land upon God's grace

on the CBC site this afternoon
"New Zealand volcano eruption
5 dead, 8 unaccounted for"
and in the comments section
also unaccounted for
jokes

this world
this cruel and heartless world
that these will laugh as death
eviscerates another's heart
that these uncaring souls
will dance on unsettled graves

but perhaps
unknowing
they too have died

Hope

here, in this now but not yet,
it is difficultly easy to hope
holding on to what we'll be given
knowing the promised tomorrow
however distant, is ours today
our hands, unjustly uncertain,
tremble at their responsibility
careful not to drop, dent or ding
this most precious of any gift

we have it now, it is in our hands
His promise yet to be received

we who have walked in darkness
we have seen His great light
we are no longer without hope
our captivity is at an end
His dawn has risen upon us
He has cast aside our hopeless dark
He makes us free, even as
we walk among our broken chains

After my friend Nicole gave her
testimony during morning worship.

I have a new hero on my list.

December 8, 2019

sometimes we just don't know
we have no idea of the darkness
we've lived under it for so long
it feels like how things should be
even if it's how they shouldn't be
it feels so normal to squint at life
see the world as it really isn't
we just don't know, have no idea
that life can be more than dark

December 7, 2019

The Beautiful Things
(the list is endless)

when I feel like this I don't want to
I am not meant to live that life
so I try to find the beautiful things
 (though difficult, is possible
 the imprint of the Master's hand
 cannot be unnoticed)
remind myself that life is lovely
is yet a truly magnificent gift
despite too sudden absent joy

December 7, 2019

the Ajax Public Library
has an astonishing number of books
by an astounding number of people
discussing and affected by depression
as from a multitude of knives
each talking about this curse like they are

a poet
a clinician
a lover
a friend
a parent

a victim

a survivor

so many books
revealing so much pain
raw
like a steak
no one cared to bar-b-que

and I
but a junior member of this club
read and wonder why

why does this ... thing
that joins so many together
make loneliness so real

why does this ... thing
which every breath defeats
make defeat seem so near

December 4-7, 2019

No power of Hell can e'er destroy
nor force of Earth remove
 though try
the soul who on God relies
to clean from deathly grime

He will love though all Hell accuse
as unworthy His desire
 unmoved
He against all Earth will stand
to seek and save His own

December 1-23, 2019

The Other Side of Paradise

Captain James T. Kirk once said
"Man wasn't meant for Paradise.
None of us.
He stagnates if he has no ambition,
no desire to be more than he is."

Captain Kirk was wrong
we were made for Paradise
and when God welcomes us Home
we will there become
who we were meant to be

but Kirk was also right
we were made to do things
and when God welcomes us Home
we will there continue
our work begun on Earth

November 29-30, 2019

Mercy!

despair, dark and heavy
my cloak drags me down
it pulls me away from life
holds me along the path
my own thirty pieces pave
whether good intent or evil
my end would be the same

I die
beneath the incredible weight
of sin

comfort, bright and easy
God has raised me up
leads me to abundant life
guides me along the path
His own sacrifice has made
for no other cause but love
my end has been redeemed

I live
upon the incredible love
of God

Written for my friend Nicole, among many others.
God's mercy so vastly overwhelms our sin that we
have no need to fear Him for anything we've done.

November 23, 2019

Beautiful Day

finally
no
at last!
my smile is no longer reluctant
nor pushed to the surface of my face
by an undercurrent of despair
unwilling to show itself directly
it grows, unforced
beneath joyful eyes
my Most Special One
setting free the laughter
far too long restrained by
far too many "Why?"s

November 17, 2019 - June 10, 2020

Assurance

Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

John 10:25-30

my pastors believe these verses prove
one's salvation cannot be un-gotten
many of my peers also believe this
throughout most of my church
into my entire denomination

yet the pronouns say otherwise
that though God will not push
nor could any enemy remove
the righteous from His hand
their leap is not disallowed

I think Ezekiel might agree

"When I say to the righteous he will surely live, and he so trusts in his righteousness that he commits iniquity, none of his righteous deeds will be remembered; but in that same iniquity of his which he has committed he will die. But when I say to the wicked, 'You will surely die,' and he turns from his sin and practices justice and righteousness, if a wicked man restores a pledge, pays back what he has taken by robbery, walks by the statutes which ensure life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of his sins that he has committed will be remembered against him. He has practiced justice and righteousness; he shall surely live."

Ezekiel 33:13-16

Jesus says, and also Paul
with their every exhortation
in persevering over temptation
we are not merely enduring trials
we fight to not be overcome by them

and going back to John's words
we know that we will stand
only as we stand on Him

November 13-14, 2019

Remembering the Eleventh

no, this is not about Remembrance Day
but about what happened to me on that day
driving home in the snow-burdened traffic
blinking lights illuminating my dashboard
warning beeps pleading for my attention
no radio, no rear defrost, no ... anything
but a sudden need to merge right, to exit
this highway before it becomes my home
hazardously placed, lightless in the dark
forcing my way into unwelcoming spaces
praying, HARD, that this dying vehicle
makes it, doesn't die here, on the highway
God answering even my first-world prayer
"Kennedy Road, Next Right" beckoning
like it's the smile of a long lost friend
beeping and blinking my fragile Journey
is prayed to a staggering stop at the light
my options all too suddenly reduce to one
to limp through the green to a parking spot
beneath a lamp such as Tumnus never saw
despite the snow falling gentle around me
no White Witch here, merely Ohm's Law
but I am safe, neither stalled on the highway
nor cold and alone in an unconcerned dark
I am warm and inside Chapters, by a window
waiting for CAA to take me home to Ajax

November 13, 2019

An Incident at Shopper's

overheard
while at check-out number one
paying for my coffee and cream
and the garage's box of cookies
 "Hey, you're back!
 And look at you,
 all bright and shiny!"
pretty cool way to start a day
how could anything go bad
after a welcome like that?

November 9-11, 2019

The Other Side

and sometimes the hand does help
reaches you before you go down
for the last time
pulls you from the deep's embrace
sets you firmly back on solid ground
and the difference is magnificent
like how Rilian must have felt, undeceived
the Lady of the Green Kirtle vanquished
Underland yielding to the Dancing Lawn
he emerges from darkness into joy
sees and lives what he'd been missing

November 8, 2019

The Gloom

he looked like a man
he talked like a man
he walked like a man
but he was not a man
he was a Gloom, and he
wasn't even a large Gloom
just an indifferently sized
Gloom of indistinct murk and
even though the Gloom did all
you would expect a man to do
you could tell he was a Gloom
and not really a man
because everywhere he went
their conversation changed

November 8, 2019

if I should flame across the sky
meteor-quick through air's abyss
gloriously ablaze as my demise
cast gentle glow on lover's sighs
and soft illumed their tender bliss
would that not be the way to die

November 7-8, 2019

you can give in to it
succumb
like it wants you to
it'd be so easy too
its pull is relentless
is more insistent than Earth
giving in would be as simple
as letting go of everything
letting everything grab on
carry you downstream with it
but what
I ask you, what
would be the fun in that
to go with the flow is fine
on roller-coasters
and lazy-river-rides
but this is LIFE!
is best lived when we
Salmon-like
struggle against the torrent
to our triumph
ere we end

November 7, 2019

once
several times
a thousand times more
I took an infinity of steps
put my foot down
on reliability
trusted my dependence
to surety
and fell through
what was never there

imagine my (recurring) surprise

November 7, 2019

Worries

I might worry too much
I don't think I do, really
but I might, but
even if I did
worry too much
wouldn't you worry too
not knowing if what worried you more
was
their not asking you why your day was bad
or
your not knowing how to answer if they did

November 7, 2019

Eagerness

go right ahead, they say
I'll come and be with you
I'll hold your hand during
and help you celebrate after
you did what you're doing

pretty encouraging, eh?
ain't it wonderful to live
with ready help so near?

such help as I cannot give
so far distant I can no more
than weep my endless tears
as they eagerly encourage
murder of a pre-born person

pretty discouraging, eh?
ain't it terrifying to live
where evil lies so near?

November 7, 2019

Brutal Day

be so careful, lad
of your brutal day
or become so sad
you brood all day

November 7, 2019

Who'd Have Known?

so it was sugar all along
who'd have guessed
my favourite sweetener
that glorious enhancer
of French Toast and Coffee
could be the very thing
to make me more sour

November 6, 2019

In the Deep Dark Blue

"Deep sea vents had ideal conditions for origin of life"
the words are simple yet audacious
eye-catchingly stir the imagination
after reading them I wonder
if it was the case that we began down there
where it's warm and toasty
and food simply floated right by
what on Earth are we doing up here
where we have to work and buy and cook and clean
just to survive in an unpleasant cold
what in the world were we thinking?

November 5, 2019 - September 22, 2022

Photographer

I am a photographer
why?
the world is a lovely place
I take pictures of what's beautiful
there
to keep it
here
right in front of my eyes
so I remember

November 5, 2019

Worship

sometimes all my worship comes down to this
and only this

"God, be merciful to me!"

November 4, 2019-March 6, 2020

The Disciple's Message
(on Paul and the church)

He may not have said
what you might have said
were you the one to say it
Does it matter?

At least he said it
and that matters

He may have used words
you might not have used
were you the one to use them
Does it matter?

At least he used them
and that matters

He may have shown passion
you might not have shown
were you the one to show it
Does it matter?

At least he showed it
and that matters

He may have done things
you might not have done
were you the one to do them
Does it matter?

At least he did them
and that matters

What he said and did before you
whether believer or deceived
whether treasured or taunted
that matters very much

He raised his voice against the night
and spoke God's truth unfearing

He may have given you discomfort
He may have trodden your delicacy
But did you see the point he was making
instead of how he made it
Or were your senses too offended
to shed a tear for what made him weep

and weep for that which breaks God's heart

Would to God that you could see
Would to God you would understand
Evil prances bold before your eyes
this worlds sees, rejoices, welcomes
what you claim to hate yet do not stop
Satan flaunts his will yet you sit by
as death consumes forsaken lives

Life dies within the very place
where your silence acquiesces

He might not say
what you are saying
now, in venomous displeasure
Does it matter?

Yes! It matters!
For God's sake, care!
Care more for the death before you
than for your offended sense!

Live!

It Used To Be Safer

this world is not a safe place
it used to be safer
but not so much any more

it used to be
you could wander into any library
innocently pick up almost any book
from almost any shelf
and know you were in for a good read
but not so much any more

it used to be
that convenience store magazine racks
weren't so blatantly dangerous
you could look at cover of stars
without ever having to avoid starlets
but not so much any more

it used to be
that a wedding ring meant something
told others they'd be safe near you
told you you'd be safe near them
told your love they'd be safe, always
but not so much any more

it used to be
driving on the highway wouldn't almost kill you
with stolen rights of way
careless speed
and nonsensical lane changes
but not so much any more

it used to be
the food you ate would be good for you
you could trust its label
be confident in its freshness
and believe its preparers had your health at heart
but not so much any more

it used to be
you could turn on your television
and father knew best
you could leave it to Beaver
hear Ricky's "I love Lucy"
and John Boy's "Good night Daddy"
but not so much any more

it used to be
that evil was hidden
in darkened rooms
behind locked doors
and did not proudly roam the streets
but not so much any more

this world used to be a safer place
but not so much any more

November 2, 2019

'Zuckered'

Welcome to Facebook
where everyone
absolutely everyone
can say whatever they want
Because ... Free Speech Baby!

Except you
You're not welcome
and you can't say anything
You're banned!
Because ... You Save Babies!

Everyone has free speech here
except you
you've been 'Zuckered'

After my friend, Laura Klassen,
was banned from Facebook for
three days because she outed
a fake baby registry attempting
to siphon resources from the
mothers really needing them.

There are despicable people in this world.

November 1, 2019

Destruction

they tell me not to destroy my body
but why should they care that I destroy it
who's careless word destroys my soul

November 1, 2019

if someone would ask
"What's wrong?"
I'd tell them
"Nothing!"

there's Nothing wrong with me
just Nothing
so much Nothing
it's everywhere

if I look for a smile
I find
Nothing

if I look for joy
I find
Nothing

if I look for a hand
I find
Nothing

if I look for help
I find
Nothing

no matter where I look
inside or outside
I always find
Nothing

Drowning

The water is very deep out here
Calm, but the under-tow, oh man!
It wants you. It grabs you. It pulls
you down, to where the dark waits
You fight, but you know it's futile
Death is lurking there, ravenously
and you don't want to die alone
unremembered in the horrible dark
So you fight and you struggle and
you desperately reach for the light
Light is where life is, and you flail
like a madman to reach even a bit
of it and you make it to the light
and you gasp, sucking the light in
trying your hardest just to be alive
again. You see a hand, you clutch
at it, you hope and learn too late it
isn't a rescue as it holds you down
pushes you back to where the light
becomes dim and life so very scary

October 30, 2019

it's worse on these days
when loneliness becomes
far too close a companion
the pain too overwhelming
life fights just to carry on
so desperate for a remedy
healing tries to be found
in very frightening places
temptation allures becomes
hard as adamant, too hard
to even want to try to fight
its tender promises beckon
obscuring greater horrors
dragging down into death
how loud these horrors cry
yet draw me nearer You

October 30, 2019

I don't know how to stop this
I can see it coming
I even have an idea where it comes from
and I always hope it that will miss me
walk right by me this time
let me enjoy the light in life
not live under this depressing gloom
but it doesn't walk right by me this time
it never does, I don't know why I would think
it would miss me, it never misses
it's as true as William's arrow
it always finds its target
unlike William's bow, however
it's aiming at my soul
and though I always see it coming
I have not the mind to run away

October 30, 2019

you know
for I've told you
of this enduring pain
you have heard
my silent plea
you have seen it
come
and go
and come again
and you know
(I think)
that the best cure
the very best cure
is to be my friend
have the care to ask
let me talk of it
let me talk of me

I am beside you
so close to feeling well
my fleeting smile so near
I can almost grab on to it
and be safe

so close

I am so very close
to feeling better
but you never

ask

you are so close
so very near
but you don't even

try

October 29, 2019

Science ... Hmph!

'science' has proclaimed
"Jane Doe is the most beautiful woman on Earth!"
oddly
she looks nothing like you
nothing at all like you
'science' has got it wrong
again

October 28, 2019-January 7, 2020

I'm an adherent
at least
that's what they tell me
I am
not a member
an adherent
a brother who is
yet isn't
really

their hurdle is that I think
my confession of Christ is sufficient
for full fellowship
and they think it isn't
they tell me I'll need to sign their form
before they'll let me be fully of them
this is more than I think needful to do
or am unable to do
or am unwilling to do, even

but I have a wonder
so very large a wonder
if they think my confession of Christ
is insufficient
for them
if they think my signing their paper
binds my more truly
to them
than my commitment to my Saviour
already binds me
to God
do they even understand who I am
and if not me
then what of this faith we share

could their faith be certain
or dim and foggy path
from which scattered truth
picked and chosen
is glued to thought already owned
without necessarily regarding His Truth

and I have another wonder
an absolutely huge wonder
an almost as large as life wonder
which is
if I think this, and
if they think that
both of us cannot be right

who of us then stands best
adheres most closely to His voice
amid the tumult of other calls

is being of them
on such terms
(confusion, at best
deception, at worst)
what I need to be
what I should even desire

who do I become
if I argue or agree
with them
more importantly
would I still
be with God

October 27-November 7, 2019

If One Could Ask

if one could ask
straight-faced
"Could The Holocaust ever happen again?"
gazing horror-struck
on vile monuments of yesterday's despicable evil
their eyes crookedly avert
our own street corners
our own back alleys
our own public squares
our own Auschwitzes, Treblinkas and Chelmnos
today
where victors over atrocities
too horrifying to describe perform
far more
of their own
far worse
on their own

all the more horrifying
for our silent acquiescence

October 27, 2019

should two, three, four or more
agree to disagree
can those who hear know truth
with so many voices
speaking so many different words
all smiling at each other
how can we know which of them
if any of them, is right
is an opinion so smilingly tolerant
of debate worth believing

October 26, 2019

tears fall
parallel with gold
natural yet un-nature
they fall from pain
to glory!

October 26, 2019

I read of poets praised and wondered
why?
his words/her words encompassed all
the world was and should not be
their fame has outshone their years
writing of sordid, paltry trifles
less crucial than selfishness
neither as enduring as pettiness
mere words of mere ... reaction
with no thought but self behind
who were these
who wrote such ... things
and should I care
if their response to their world
was more or less honest than
is mine to my own

I read their words and still I wonder
why?

October 25, 2019-March 12, 2020

When I Stand ...

when whatever comes
comes whenever it may
after this inconstant now
I will need a place to stand
more solid than this place
more substantial than this planet
more permanent than this creation
if I am to have any hope
that what will be will not end
as what now is will end

October 24-27, 2019

A Beautiful Grief

(after Sherri Baskie)

Emptiness

No more "Just wait till I tell you ..."
the ever guiding hand is no more
Christmas, Easter and birthdays
will never be the same
again
Life has confronted Death
Eyes are overwhelmed by grief

Redemption

No more "If only ..." or "I can't ..."
the ever present dark is no more
Each day owns its fullest joy
absent any tear or pain
forever
Death is overcome by Life
Eyes close, and behold Glory!

"Tonight I said goodbye to my mom.
Tonight I held her hand one last time and kissed her goodbye.
Tonight a piece of my heart broke and my tears flowed.
Tonight she is with dad, she has wanted to see him for so long.
Tonight she opened her eyes and looked into the face of her Saviour.
Tonight I am sad for our family.
Tonight my mom is having the time of her life."

Sherri Baskie

(paraphrased from her eulogy for her Mom)

One Every Five Minutes

one hundred thousand babies
will be killed
this year

One Hundred Thousand

just think about that for a while
or even better
don't
don't stop thinking about it
ever

one hundred thousand babies
BABIES!
will be killed
this year

one hundred thousand babies
our own dear and little ones
 they
 will
 be
 murdered
this year
and the next year
and the next year after that
every year one hundred thousand babies
will be slaughtered
 they
 will
 be
 murdered
within their safest of all homes
by those who should have cared

eight thousand, three hundred thirty three
murdered
every month
 before their own could be complete

nineteen hundred twenty three
murdered
every week
 before their forty could be counted

two hundred seventy three
murdered

every single day
who will never see a dawn

eleven every hour
hour after hour after hour
it may not seem like that many
yet every five minutes
another baby

dies

This past Saturday CHOICE42 held a fundraiser
at our church. On the lawn surrounding the church
were 10,000 of these pink and blue flags, each
one representing 10 babies who would be aborted.

This year.

In Canada this year 100,000 children
will be killed before they have a chance to breathe.



October 23, 2019

So Tell Me ...

someone once told me abortion
has to be and stay legal, why?
in case the mother's life is at risk
yes! this is monstrously believed
they want to kill the unborn child
because birth may kill the mother

that seems too poorly thought
if the living child could seem a risk
how could the dead child not
pose as much or greater danger
whether dead or alive the child
must somehow leave the womb

but this is absurd, it beggars thought
I cannot make my mind surround it
it is inconceivable that we kill the child
that we may spare the mother's life
in what horrific circumstance could a
mother's life demand her baby's death

October 22, 2019

Aftermath

well, it's over
forty days of
 argument
 accusation
 confusion
has led us here
merely to more of the same
adversarial politicking
we-said/they-said
discontextual soundbites
seeking to sway thought
 attacking
 denying
 confounding
trying for an advantage
over the opponent

like small children
fighting for the biggest piece
of a pie they didn't make

whichever one may win
the pie is still devoured

Empty

the great city lies silent
from the Rouge to Credit
from the Lake to the Belt
not a person can be seen
in the towers on Yonge
not a light has been burning
the breeze carries no joy
from the parks of West Hill
Ontario Place and Cherry Beach
have no footprints, no laughter
in Yorkdale and at the Eaton
no cash register sounds a sale
at the square of Nathan Phillips
neither diner nor lover is found
this city of four millions is dead
not a breath of life to be heard
is devoid of any soul, it is empty
has become ever more desolated
since nineteen hundred sixty nine

Since 1969 when abortion became legal in Canada, over 4,000,000 unborn children have been murdered. Canada is killing its children at the rate of 10,000 per month. To put this another way, here in Canada, since 1969, we have killed the equivalent of everyone in the Greater Toronto Area.

Everyone!

October 20, 2019

I May Have No Voice

"They all seem crooked, and I don't want to be crooked."

I'm trying to decide which way
I'll vote in this election. and I,
I have no easy answer. The Left,
it terrifies me. The Progressives,
they make the Left seem tame.
And the Right? Well the Right
so seldom bravely stands, what
man could vote for them. To not
vote at all seems to be preferable
over having to choose one that is
the lesser of far too many bad
choices. Left to choose between
those who do evil and those who
won't end it, I'm pretty much left
speechless

October 19-November 7, 2019

Late Spring, Nineteen-Ninety-Nine

excitement, joy, hope
anticipating early July
lethargy, fear, hope
enduring late spring
the bodies on the sofa
our overriding concern
every other thing
is sent to back burners
is put on hold
is emphatically

Stopped!

that bodies on the sofa rise
lay, crawl, walk, run
the floors, the lawn
roam this world in joy
rejoice God's great gift
His most wonderful treasure

Life!

October 18, 2019

Alone

they tell me I don't stand alone
when I say I feel I do
they tell me they've got my back

so why do I still feel forsaken

they tell me these and other things
when I come to them for help
things I think they think are comfort

so why do wounds seem not to heal

oh God! You are my only thread
on days like this I could not go on
did I not believe that You Are

I stand alone on You

oh God! You must be, please
do not not be
if You are not I have no hope

I may as well give up

end this hopeless tortured life
yield my soul to that emptiness
if You are not must be all that is

why avoid the abyss any longer

I have no hope if You are not
this triumph over pain is senseless
one madness overcome by another

if You are not I cannot be

if there is no You in all this here
I live as hopeless as when I die
today's dark but eternity's prelude

oh God! oh please God, be!

October 18, 2019

I 'love' it when 'they' correct me
it just warms my heart's cockles
to know they think truth important
enough to risk damaging my soul

October 18-November 7, 2019

Sick Day

I need to call in sick today
I just can't do life any more
I'm drowning in the everyday
I don't even want to fake it
I don't want to handle traffic
I don't want to drive this desk
I don't want to answer emails
I don't want to endure silence

yet here I am
at work
again
trying to be alive
just managing to breathe

October 17, 2019

I am surviving beside you
looking at infinite Whispers
reading other people's screams
trying to silence my own
battle is raging
my life hangs in the balance
scant feet removed
from my isolation
so close to me
you cannot hear
the tumult
or clamour of my war

October 17, 2019 - November 4, 2020

Vine

conversation swirls
delightful sound fills this room
thought and thought entwine
word and word intersperse
fellowship leaps
flits as bird from limb to limb
within sun filled sky
word's ebb and flow
thought's give and take
kaleidoscopic
brilliantly lovely

off to the side
becoming distant from my
attempt at contribution
trying to remove myself
while faster, louder words
squash or steal or sweep aside
a flood of words
strangling my own
before fully grown
push me ever further
into the dark

October 16, 2019

Hypocrisy!

"Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau today acknowledged the Conservatives could win Monday's election — and accused the party of winning support by running one of the 'dirtiest, nastiest' election campaigns in Canadian history He also was asked to defend his own party's campaign tactics. A recent tweet from senior [Liberal] campaign adviser Gerry Butts used a photo of Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer shaking hands with a construction worker [*"Well, this is subtle. Sometimes a yellow vest is just a yellow vest?"* (Twitter)] to try to tie Scheer to the "yellow vest" movement 'I think Conservatives need to continue to be called out for the nasty negative campaign that they are running, because Canadians deserve better,' he said." (CBC News ~ October 16, 2019)

well he should know, shouldn't he
about dirty, nasty and divisive
the mud don't sling very far
throw it hard it splatters
you start to look alike
and he's also right
Canadians do deserve better

telling the same bold-faced
lie
now in twenty-nineteen
makes it no less of a
lie
than when he and the party
told the same bold-faced
lie
back in twenty-fifteen

lies
mistruths
obfuscations
surround this man
his aides and their party
they are not to be trusted
I'm not trying to take sides, and
I'm not even sure I have a voice, and
the alternatives may not be perfect, but
this group simply cannot be trusted

October 12, 2019

Joker

"I must say the Christian part of me was having a fit throughout the movie, due to extremely graphic violence, stabbing, shooting, blood, everything you can imagine."

From a positive "Joker" review at ChristianAnswers.net

you say, as if of two natures,
"... the Christian part of me ..."
as though one part of you
is God's
and another part of you
is not
 (but you'd be wrong
 there is no Christian part of you
 there is only just all of you
 whether all Christian or all not)
and, being of two natures, are able
to enjoy good as you condemn evil
in what must be seen as either one

to own such dispassionate doubleness
to say on one side "I am God's"
and on the other "I am not God's"
as though the God's part had no care
on what the not God's part enjoyed
I had not known that this could be

I had not known there could be both a Christian part
and an un-Christian part to the same soul
had always believed, and still do believe
being a Christian is either all or nothing
of who a person is
but of a Christian's maturity
your doubleness speaks silent volumes

October 10, 2019

Two Wheels and a Motor

I am told, and told often
to watch for motorcycles
(those noisy mosquitoes
weaving traffic together)
though I do, upon hearing
I quickly become anxious
but I am careful to watch
even though I mostly see
those who drive for death

October 10-13, 2019

"It's not your body,
it's not your choice!"

harsh words on hard canvas
loud upheld before the world
screaming their ugly message
shouting their unrelenting hate
demand their self-denial's choice
to destroy a body not their own

"No human owns the right
to end the life of another!"

reason has no way to speak
with hate that cries for death
is bogged by Pain and Fury
it has no power, it cannot help
these trapped within the chains
their Hate will not release

Many in support of abortion argue that
since it's the mother's body the decision
whether or not to abort can only be the
mother's. They forget that the body that
is aborted doesn't belong to the mother,
that body belongs to another human being.

October 8-13, 2019

Oh, the Humanity!

"I continue to be and will always be fully pro-choice but I no longer feel that I can or need to say that I'm against abortion, that's not for me as a man to say."
Justin Trudeau - LPC

"I am personally pro-life but I've also made the commitment that, as leader of this party, it is my responsibility to ensure that we do not re-open this debate."
Andrew Scheer - CPC

"A man has no place in a discussion of a woman's right to choose."
Jagmeet Singh- NDP

"I agree that abortions can be as long as 24, 25, 26 weeks because at that time, the fetus is not a child. But after [this period], it's really a child."
Maxime Bernier - PPC

"I've been a feminist all my life, or at least as long as I've been conscious of being a woman ... women must have access to legal, safe abortions, whenever a woman needs one."
Elizabeth May - GPC

"God keep our land glorious and free! O Canada, we stand on guard for thee."
Chorus of the National Anthem of Canada

"God keep our land"? Seriously?
with such as these at our head
"We stand on guard"? Honestly?
with such as we who follow

how well our most respected leaders
no more than pander to our whims
how easily it falls to we who follow
that they lead where we want to go

how can we claim glory and freedom
who deny our babes these very gifts
how futile we brag to stand on guard
who have no care to guard our own

how dare we ask God for blessing
who stand devoted to destruction
"LORD, have mercy!" our better plea
and fall no further than on His grace

Circus

I leave for work in the morning
the news is horrible
I head for home in the evening
the news is as horrid

DESTRUCTION!

- Abortion
- Amber Alerts
- Bigotry
- Bullying
- Child Sacrifice
- Euthanasia
- Hate
- Ignorance
- Insult
- Kidnapping
- Murder
- Nine-One-One Complaints
- Rape
- Rebellion
- Robbery
- Sexual Perversion
- Selfishness
- Terrorism
- Violence
- War
- Xenophobia

HOPELESSNESS!

such horrors as Sodom never knew
and if that weren't bad enough
at my evening's rest, warm
in the comfort of my very own home
(or padded movie theatre seat)
any 'entertainment' I could 'need'
any 'information' I would 'want'
stands ready to at a button's push
flow unstopped into my sanctuary
charge from my un-darkened screen
into a darkness much deeper
all that is wrong with this world
splashing through this eager fountain
on to my no longer innocent eyes
unapologetic

unfiltered
unrelenting
remorseless death destroying life

Rome had nothing on us

October 1, 2019

Headline!

"NASA chief scientist predicts new rovers
will find life on Mars within two years"

so?

we found life on Mars
what would that prove?
other than this:

Hey, look!
There's life here!
On Mars!

Erikson and Columbus
on meeting men in the west
would not have discussed origin
of what use such speculation
when confronted by this fact:

We sailed here,
these must have also,
or walked, somehow.

were we to find life of any kind on Mars
or any other unearthly world
would not prove a thing
other than life has been found on Mars
or that other unearthly world
as to how it got there
or why it's still there
that is but speculation
grown full flower
from our presumptive gardens

October 1, 2019

Sitting Silent

I surround galaxies
universes carouse
amazement
illuminates my life
ideas too great for words
long for their own voice
stuff, history, life
strain to flow free
yet sequestered
behind an unopening door
long silences thick
unescaping
because never asked

Constancy
Difference
Inconstancy

The Prophet Moses

Hear, O Israel!
The LORD is our God!
The LORD is one!
Love the LORD your God with all your heart
and with all your soul
and with all your might

Joshua, first Judge of Israel

Now, therefore
fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth ...
If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD
choose yourselves today whom you will serve ...
as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD

David, King of Israel

Teach me Your statutes
Make me understand the way of Your precepts
So I will meditate on Your wonders

The Prophet Isaiah

Should not a people consult their God?
Should they consult the dead for the living?
To the law and to the testimony!
If they do not speak according to this word
it is because they have no dawn

Jesus our Messiah

O foolish men and slow of heart to believe
all that the prophets have spoken!
Was it not necessary for the Christ
to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?

The Apostle Paul

According to the grace of God which was given to me
like a wise master builder I laid a foundation
and another is building on it
But each man must be careful how he builds on it
For no man can lay a foundation other

than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

The Author of Hebrews

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers
in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,
in these last days has spoken to us in His Son ...
He is the radiance of His glory
and the exact representation of His nature.

The Apostle John

After these things I looked, and behold
a door standing open in heaven
and the first voice which I had heard said
Come up here
and I will show you what must take place
after these things

The Four Living Creatures

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God
the Almighty
Who was and Who is and Who is to come

The Twenty-Four Elders

Worthy are You, our Lord and our God
to receive glory and honor and power
for You created all things
and because of Your will
they existed and were created

Many Modern Christians

can there even be
a single way to walk
you believe this
I believe that
why bother reconcile our difference
with the constancy of the saints
together inconstant
we both believe God
we both trust Jesus
we both feel the Holy Spirit
let's just agree to disagree
there's a place in Heaven for all

September 28, 2019

Chuckle

was your chuckle worth it
did you enjoy your smile
does its echo yet dance
the corners of your mouth
were the words you wrote
as funny as you had hoped
or do you regret them now
as I do (and did (and will))
sitting here in my lonely dark
of a mind to erase them all
every word I smiling wrote
the first I've known in weeks

What was it all About?

yesterday was ... weird
leaders instructed by youth
classes emptied for climate
adults painted irresponsible

children

those who have had this world
whatever its supposed defects
handed to them on a platter
privilege chastising sacrifice

children

have clambered over the pulpit
student has usurped teacher
too willing to become student
the unknown solidifying barriers

children

in fear that the point of no return
is nearer far than has been known
emboldened by both fact and fancy
the reigns of the powerful shaken

children

given much and demanding more
ideal with idea boiling blood
would be more easily believed
were words more careful thought

September 28, 2019

You Called

this world calls me
Your call is stronger
this world claims me
Your claim is higher
this world beguiles me
Your charm is greater

at every comparison
You surpass the world

September 28-29, 2019

Rain

this is a nothing rain
a piddling small
hardly puddling
rain
don't need a raincoat in this
just a Tilly hat
and to greet with a smile
what adventure may come

Changed the layout of the last couple lines
after some readers saw what wasn't there
and didn't see what was.

September 27, 2019

Yesterday

yesterday I would not want to live again
it held far too much joy
I didn't notice

September 27, 2019

This REALLY Can't be Happening!

"Images provided to CTV News show [Bernd] Gretzinger dressed as musician Lenny Kravitz at a private costume party three years ago. Gretzinger says those at the party were dressed as celebrities, and that he went as Kravitz because the rocker is his favourite musician 'I idolize him. My life is music.'"

CTV News, Edmonton

this is absurd
it is simply absurd
that a man cannot honour his idol
without being raked over the coals
for a thing he did not do
while at a much higher level
one who did far more with less cause
enjoys the adulation of a nation

when did we all become so foolish

September 26-29, 2019

when they ask "How are you?"
but you're convinced no one cares
how can you say anything but

"I'm okay"

the larger more honest answer
is ignored, but clamours an escape
from a mind that can see none

Paraphrased from a Friend's Facebook Post

"Are you okay?"

No, I'm not okay, I'm not okay at all. I'm depressed and I feel like I'm worthless, like no one cares about me nor has a reason to care about me. I need to tell someone about it. I need someone to care, to tell me it's going to be okay, to help me to be okay. I want to tell someone all about it. But I'm worried that if I tell you, you won't care. That if I tell you you'll just say it's all in my head.

"I'm fine, thanks."

September 26, 2019

Rain(bow)

despair called me out to where the bright sun
danced between the cotton clouds all
frolicked upon an azure sky so deep
it begged the eye leave the earth
to soar infinity's blessed release
unsteady heels thump along uneven concrete
Heaven sent tears fall through moistened air
to flow graceful along the cheek
lay gentle touch upon the burdened brow
my gloom none the worse for its dampening
rejoices as can the wind, the rain, the sun
as somewhere south of my loneliness
some unknown one smiles to see a rainbow

Advice

there's all kinds of advice out there
what to do
 do this ...
 do that ...
 do the other thing ...
what not to do
 don't do this ...
 don't do that ...
 don't do the other thing ...
each bears their promise
but I've been there
I've done and not done
 this
 that
 the other thing
were all this advice at all real
 and not so utterly dependant
 on the cooperation of others
my life would be ROCKING!
but it's not
my life is more like the gravel
trodden underfoot
as other's lives carry on

September 26, 2019

Are You OK?

are you okay?
from the way you treat me
I'm not sure you are
can I help?

September 26-27, 2019

I can see sometimes
(today, for instance)
how suicide could be
considered an option
on days like this one
where just going on
feels harder than not

I've heard it's painless
this is probably untrue
no less untrue that it's
less painful than living
and oh so terribly final

September 26, 2019

I must not be a very nice person
conversation talks away from me
no one listens to me when I speak
care seems remotely unconcerned
my tears fall lonely to the ground

September 26-27, 2019

Pill

they say "Just take a pill"
it must be some amazing drug
to take the place of one who cares

September 26, 2019

Conversation

don't start a conversation or you
might find it leaves you well behind
moving on to unknown places
behind doors you've never opened

don't join a conversation or you
might find it goes on without you
left alone in well known dust
behind doors you couldn't open

September 26, 2019

Notes on a Facebook Post

I had thought to do a grand thing
but I did a dumb mistake instead
now everyone's laughing at me
and I have to say or act like it's okay
but it isn't okay, I grapple with guilt
I struggle with the phantom of
were they right or was I wrong
wondering if that dumb mistake
was rather of greater error a part
I couldn't see that everyone could
who's laughter now waters shame
growing weed-like in this garden
where everyone else grows a rose

were last night's gut punches nothing
or were they much more than nothing

for all of that this pain is no less real

September 25, 2019

I read this today:

Man is not what he thinks he is,
he is what he hides.

and began to think
I found my explanation

September 24, 2019

we met along the way
this guide who would take us
between where we were
and where we went
his brave smile gave us hope
his words called our attention
to what we might have otherwise missed
the map he followed well used
he must have thought it truthful
he could not stray from it
but as we came to know him better
we saw it wasn't always entirely honest
yet he was determined to let it stand
and often we found ourselves rushing
past the wonders beyond its edge
with insufficient time allowed
to learn of what we were missing
well enough to know if it should be missed
which we also thought was rather odd
he had the map, he knew his trail
had led many others along it
could we not have left earlier
or planned to arrive later
or held the map more closely to reality
rather than overlook what was passed by
what good is a guide who has no time
to lead where things get interesting
or who does not care
to ensure he is leading well

September 20, 2019

you know what's interesting
though incredibly and hauntingly sad?
that of all the poets who've lived
and died
with this pleasure robbing curse
I, at fifty-nine
know more years than most attain
brilliant blazing lovely light cut short
by this curse or other curse

dear God in Heaven, thank You!
thank You that though damaged
I still live!

may my life be to Your glory!

September 20-23, 2019

Joy

joy does not dance
so blithely free as once
it did, wildly leaping
limb from limb, stands
now an unknown guest
at this wake so few
attend, weeping tears
in futility

September 19-20, 2019

it's not so much I feel I've died
as that living has no feel at all
not even that life has no colour
is become pastel in place of oil
joy is known, though less robust
ephemeral more than morning mist
which danced upon a sunny breeze
bless burdened soul by gentle buss
and promise grace of greater bliss
as death that struggles so with life
must itself at last give way to LIFE!

September 19, 2019

I Am Also Sorry

given the talk of the news today
I feel I must apologize as well
for I too have been thoughtless
inappropriate in multiple younger years
though I was not one, I became one
partook the joy of vast pretense
I must admit it before comes out
take responsibility for my immaturity
back in my teenage years
I was by times a 'Greaser'
in my defense
"Happy Days" was all the rage
and we all went right along
but what of those poor Greasers
whom my insensitivity may offend
forgive me if you can
discard me if you must
(personally, I prefer forgiveness
to being discarded
the unforgiven I have no hope)
but know that today I know
what that younger me did was wrong
and I'm sorry for any and all resulting harm

September 19-23, 2019

This Can't Be Happening

"There is no context in which someone doesn't have responsibility for things they've done in the past." Justin Trudeau, to the CBC, January 2018

today the media is in an uproar
for, against, it's just gone crazy
over some old photo of some old party
where our illustrious leader goofed
or may have goofed, or didn't goof
or was merely a just bit too young
it depends
but he's apologizing for it anyhow
which is good, as far as it goes
I guess
but I don't think he needed to
(not for that, anyway)
in the context of the masquerade
he had made no fault to claim
(c'mon people!
can't we even have fun anymore?)
though theme and enthusiasm
may both have been ill considered

but it's odd

everyone's crying "Brown-face!"
"Racist!", "Insulting!" and
"Culturally inappropriate!"
in a strangely maddened response
to the image splashing everywhere
yet so few have said a single thing
about where his hands are placed
and his apparent moral hypocrisy



For most of my life I've had to consider pretended Christianity, for either gain or ridicule, as a part of living in a world where many don't understand or don't care that what they do might harm another. I am Christian, white and male and I also experience racism, albeit in a non-racist way. Saying that, what is of greater concern to me than Justin Trudeau's apparent racism is the seeming lack of concern for: 1) The questionable placement of his hands; and 2) His attempt to evade his own 'no mercy' rule.

September 18-20, 2019

Of What Value?
(Message in a Bottle)

it may be wondered, by some
why I would publish anything
of the photos I've taken
or the poems I've written
this is a legitimate wonder
I've often pondered it myself
at night
in tears
enshroud within the uncomfortable dark
to the point where I think I should accept that all is worthless
tear it all up
throw it all out
carry on with my life
almost convincing myself that this is solely for my own benefit
made thereby pointless
thinking that this time, this time I'll get rid of it
all of it
remove from this world every last bit of what's of benefit to none
but am halted in my act of destruction
by one relentlessly haunting question
what if someone lives
who unknown to me
needs to know that despite my pain
I still live

or, more close to home
what if I need to know it

September 17-18, 2019

The Sadness

the music that soothes me
is amazing

the sunshine warming me
is glorious

my life could not possibly
be better

so why do I feel tears
fall

September 17-18, 2019

Voiceless

could comfort be found here
lost in this quiet backwater
would be too far for touch
eddy's circumstantial swirls
yet tool of the higher hand
bear this one once aflame
into still and silent nothings
mediocrity quenching light
moss covered rocky shore
tempts and tricks and teases
what yearns to burn again
shine its light into the dark
illuminate where shadows lie
bearing slightly differed form
dimmed and dark and silent
owns insufficient affirmation
this swirling void escape

September 16-22, 2019

"Too Much Cheese!"

should a very good be given us
from which we have our choice
free enjoy either little or much
of the abundant joys bestowed
should our voice be heard decry
over-much of that less favoured
though sheer delight surrounds

should we frown abundant good
we display our soul ungracious
our like or dislike's highest deed
taking joy in blessings shared

September 16-17, 2019

Garbage Outside Chik Fil A

lest week I read an editorial
"Garbage falls all over Toronto
from the city's new Chik Fil A"

and thought at first
"How crazy is this world?"
that one would blame Chik Fil A
for a problem of our own

and thought secondly
"Did they pick any up?"
or do they blame Chik Fil A
for their problem left untouched

September 16, 2019

we live and living
know we also die
each instant of existence
but the
enjoyment of the gift
and the
deferment of its curse
to an ambiguous morrow

our entire lives a struggle
against an inevitable defeat

and yet
this most precious of gifts
this most incredible of all good gifts
is endangered
is in imminent threat
death stands too nearby
far too many would see it end
at their whim rather the will of God

they would end it before its time

before it's had a chance to say its excited "Hello!"
before it's had the time to say its final "Fare well!"

September 13, 2019

Red Rider

I had a little wagon once
brightly red and black, it
followed everywhere I went
as faithful as any shadow
was to trail along and play
or work, as would call the day

but

little tires spinning round
did wear themselves so thin
beneath its dented box so
scraped and tenderly abused
until one day when shadow
strayed and wagon wouldn't

follow

I had a little wagon once
has anyone seen my
wagon?

September 13, 2019

What I Would (Really) Like

were I to say aloud
that my day isn't working
or everything I touch breaks
or that I spilled my coffee
or
pretty much anything else
that says things are kind of going
wrong
for me
what I would (really) like
would be that if you hear me
(and I know you do
hear me
your grunt shows you do
hear me)
what I would
really
Really
REALLY
appreciate would be if
hearing you could also show a care
to help me get down
from this precipice
I find myself on
I'm stuck up here
alone
and in mortal danger
of falling
into the silence
that
accelerates my doom

September 13, 2019

I'm Fine ... Really

I woke up this morning
feeling ... not too bad
an improvement, of sorts
from the wild negativity
of the past several days
it felt good to feel good
I thought bad was over
but then they asked me
"How are you doing?"
and my walls went up

just kidding, actually
the walls are always there
I just reinforced them
plugged up the chinks
where light came through

this impenetrable bubble
my Fortress of Fragility
shielding me from ... IT
that THING that will eventually
hurt

September 10-12, 2019

Used to it

you'd think you would get used to it
but then you'd think again and know
you couldn't possibly get used to it
like a fist hammering against a bruise
it may increase pain yet be unnoticed
though you come to see it as normal
you know beyond doubt it isn't right

September 10, 2019

Bubble

I was almost going to say ...
"Your hate can't touch me,
I don't like me myself"
but I don't hate myself
I don't know any who do

I would better say instead ...
"Your touch can't reach me
I can't reach me myself"
it would be more correct
since feeling comes so hard

Because I really don't hate myself.
I often think that I'm worthless,
that I'm unworthy consideration,
that I own nothing of any value to
anyone, even to myself. I convince
myself that these are an accurate
assessment of who I am. But I sure
don't hate myself. Really, I don't.

Not even a little.

September 6, 2019

Blue II

"I'm not dead"

I'd been praying for you for some time now
have not seen your voice since late in May
and, having found healing through your art
was growing in concern that you had not
yet living on this world's other side
had arms too unlong to help, but prayed
begging God to do what I could not

today your voice was seen again
filled with hope and joy and thanks

oh my Father thank you!
that this one is still with us

September 6, 2019

a difference of opinion does not
connote an observance of error
if not found on more than wish
each is as arbitrary and fragile
tossed about on fickle whims
to rest upon the current fancy

August 30, 2019

An Un-Remembered Joy

it is hard, sometimes
no, actually
it is hard all the time
to share one('s) joy
with the un-remembered-ness
of another('s)

August 29-30, 2019

your words
consent to sex is not
consent to parenthood
are delusional
carry in themselves
the selfishness of a person
denying a contract already signed

August 29, 2019

Inclusivity(?)

proudly proclaiming accommodation
allowing all who have a voice to speak
take part in guiding our collective lives
yet to not include those whose voices
do not speak not in step with others
can hardly be called perfect inclusivity
has far more the sound of proclaiming
"Speak as we say or don't speak at all"
but how, I ask you, just how does this
give our cities a sustainable tomorrow
if inclusivity gives way to assimilation

After reading that the UN had suddenly cancelled
a pro-life workshop because it was non-inclusive.

August 28-31, 2019

I Don't Get It

The irrationality of evil is mind boggling
Living in this incredible world and doubting God
Is crazier than seeing a rose and doubting the garden

I don't get it
I just don't get it

we are surrounded by the loveliest of worlds
life blossoms more brightly than death
joy is given more often than pain
love has more power than hate
yet
this beauty is despised
death is worshipped
pain is everpresent
hate overwhelms
how
can such doubt exist
amid such beauty
how
is God denied

I don't get it
I just don't get it

August 13-15, 2019

barren landscape
dry, brutal, hopeless
hate has its home here
this place where death lives
on this ragged faced mountain
gives its voice to angry screams
thrown along willing throats
hurling curse and insult
laughter and scorn
upon three men
unmoving
dying

death
this hate fuelled mob's
center

they yell
they taunt
they mock
waiting for men to die
watching the weight of their sin
push them into their graves
laughing
as ebbing lives
unhide death's horrific shoal
unconcerned
their own lives ebbing

hate is rampant
on this bleak and lifeless rock
above these empty caves
it smiles joylessly
as death draws close
collects its due

at the center of hate
three men
helpless and naked
die
slowly, painfully, cruelly
anguish streaks their bodies
every ragged breath
a desperate struggle to live
even a little bit longer
life clings
with a rip-out-the-finger-nails grip
against this cliff face of hate
futility's hopeless despair

tormenting the tortured souls
slowly losing their fight

before it ends, one
staring death down
as were a thing tangible
come close enough to seize
desperately fights a foe
too quickly overcoming life
hopelessly bears a pain
too slowly finishing its task
this one begs The Man beside
to be remembered
when He enters His kingdom
(stark counterpoint to the other
who also dies
yet scorns the Life so near beside)
one desperate lunge
at a life just now seen
hoping against all odds
to land in His care
waiting
in death's tightening grip
for His answer

"Today you
will be with Me
in Paradise"

and death loses its power
has lost its hold on him
he knows His promise
though he will die
yet he will live
with Him!

victory!
Life from the very jaws of death
Victory!
Love defeats relentless hate
VICTORY!

faith overcoming death
even here
where death has its home

What Did We Do?

arguments abound
tempers burn at slightest provocation
antagonism is far too easy an answer
as are hate and the washing of hands
we are confronted on all sides
by hordes who will not believe
what all know to be true
is true

and we can console ourselves
with all the "but"s, "or"s and "if"s
we want
but at the end of the days
when their last chance to change is gone
when they face the judgement
from which we have been redeemed
Hallelujah!
Thank You Father!
do we want
do we really want
that the terror on their faces
is theirs because we did not try
at all

their lives are forfeit
just as ours no longer are
Hallelujah!
Thank You Father!
the pain that is their due
is far too great
it is far too endless
is greater far
than any risk we take to save them
no cost can be too great
for the saving of even one of them
any pain we have at their hand
infinitesimally small
when compared to our rewards

My friend runs an anti-abortion, pregnancy support ministry
and today someone was bragging on her about the number
of abortions she'd have had if she were given the chance.
She brought to mind a line from a song by Randy Stonehill
that she'd have a terrible price to pay on Judgement Day.

As a Christian, looking from the outside on that kind of evil,
I wondered what her face would look like when she stood
before God on the last day of now and first day of forever.

Then I thought "What am I doing to prevent that terror?"

August 2-7, 2019

Coffee

I brewed a pot of coffee
with which to greet the day
poured full my favoured mug
and then sipped it all away

needing more than what I'd had
I poured and sipped another
the day saw and simply laughed
"Just two mugs?" it said, "Oh brother!"

July 31-August 1, 2019

I tried
once or twice
three times even
to discuss with you concerns
I had about a thing or two

I don't do that anymore

and if (big "if", that)
you were to ask me why
I could only give this
as my answer:

"What concerns me
didn't seem to concern you

What concerns me more
is that what I said didn't concern you

What concerns me even more
is that you weren't concerned that I said it"

and so I don't try anymore

why should I let you be adding
to the burden I already have
why even speak of my concerns
to he who seems unconcerned
and adds to my burden, pain

July 30, 2019

God Does Not Change!

as He was before Adam
so He is in Jesus
so He will be after the trumpet

before Adam
He was untouched by man
was as He is and as always will be

in Jesus
He is become man
our Firstborn, our Brother

after the trumpet
He will be with man
their God, forever true

though changed, foreknowing
He, unforeign to His nature
always is as He was and will be

changed, and yet unchanging
His holiness, His character, His glory
as it was, as it is, as it forever will be

July 27, 2019

Landslide

it starts small
like the tiny rock Bugs Bunny
tricked Blacque Jacques Shellacque
into pulling out of his own dam
it didn't look like it could do much
except that it made us laugh
when Jacques learned it was the trigger
that one very small thing
holding everything back
the lynch pin preventing
a much greater disaster
but by then it was too late to stop

one tiny pebble
it doesn't look like it could do much
but Blacque Jacques could tell you
the only way to find out
is after it's too late to stop

July 26, 2019

it doesn't matter who you are
when you ask "Would you like to ..."
I just want to tell you "Whatever ..."
I can't work up the smiles like before
for all the "us" things we like to do
enthusiasm has become a stranger
has been a stranger for far too long
but how can I shatter your dreams
how can I dash them against my gloom
enthusiasm may be hard to fake
it's not as hard as letting you down

July 25-26, 2019

End It. Just END IT!

"Save the baby seals!"
"End chuck-wagon races!"
"God created the animals too!"
we move worlds to save the earth
yet far too seldom give a hoot
for those of us as yet unborn

tender care for feather, fur and fin
is by cold remorseless hate subverted
when bothered by unwelcome child

dear God, we're killing Your creation
we'll think twice lest we harm a beast
but shed not a tear for the children
we discard with callous unconcern
remorseless souls pouring their blood
on our altars of convenience

dear God, we have no understanding
forgive us, save us; oh God change us
before our later becomes too late

Try

I try to connect
I really do
I say "Good morning"
and "How are you?"
and ask after your day
and all the other things
but to have a monosyllabic response
and an impassive, deafening silence
(or equally deafening autobiography)
in return
is heartbreakingly painful

sometimes I just want to scream:
"I've got a life too, you know,
and I'd like to talk about it!"

I ask you
I'll ask anyone
how do you connect with something
that isn't really there
and has no concern for you
even when it is

July 22, 2019

I met my very first "the lunar landing was faked" believer this weekend
at lunch, and I must admit, I was so taken aback
when they spoke of "conspiracy" and "coverup"
that I couldn't even think to say
"Don't you think that the Russians
would have found out and revealed the truth
if the landings were really faked?"
after all
it was their reputation to gain
as much as it was America's to lose
but thought a day or two later
that my surprise was itself surprising
after all
I've been meeting God-deniers my entire life
who claim even greater conspiracies
against infinitely greater proof
looking back on Saturday I can't think why I was so surprised
by a denier of man's reality
after being confronted so often
by men denying God's

July 21, 2019

and suddenly
as quickly as it came
it has gone
this gloom
this dark, impenetrable gloom
has been penetrated
is deflated
to pleasant abeyance
joy
while may not dance in grassy meadows
walks again beneath the sun

July 19-September 6, 2019

Mask

you can call it a
mask
you can call it a
lie
but what if it's not
either
what if it's
me
what if it's all that lets me
live
this pretend
face
I wear to hide the
truth

you can call it a
mask
you can call it a
lie

but it's just
life

July 19, 2019

Hard to be Certain

it's hard to be certain
on these dark days
of these dark days'
cause
even hard to know
if it's inside or out
 were it to feel out
 it could really be in
 or vice-versa
 there's no way to know
you can't really tell
 if it's you
 if it's them
 if it's something else
and just how do you handle a foe
you can't even get a handle on

July 18, 2019

tolerance
is just an excuse
it merely opens a door
that far worse may follow

July 17, 2019

Alone

man is felt everywhere
his presence
following un-asked-for
inescapable
distant high lonesomes
unsolitary
every place a step falls
inundated
as life were under flood
nevertheless
emptinesses surround

July 17, 2019

Worthless

they can't hurt you if you're worthless
it wouldn't even cross their minds that
their actions, expressions, words could
be the start of a carelessly caused pain
who would consider what has no value

July 17, 2019

After a While

after a while you
don't speak unless you're
spoken to
to avoid the pain
when they
don't hear you

but it doesn't help at all
when they ask and they
walk away
as your answer
hangs between

there's just no protection
for that

July 14, 2019

Your History Won't Matter Anymore

mud
it sticks to you
there's not much you can do about it
it's grimey
it's smelly
it's ugly
you try to rub it off and you only grind it in
deeper
you can't get rid of it
and no one
absolutely no one
would welcome you to their banquet
all muddy and covered in filth
like that

but
one shower
just one shower
washes it all away
every
last
bit
is gone
even the smell
down the drain
as though it had never been
the mud
just won't matter anymore

just like
your history
on being washed it
just won't matter anymore
you'll be welcome
an honoured guest
at the greatest banquet of all

I wrote this after my enthusiasm for the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission led me to Wernher von Braun, at one time a member of the Nazi party as well as the SS and the genius behind the Saturn V rocket. I learned that he had been saved in 1946 and thought "Dude! Your history doesn't matter anymore!"

July 9, 2019

as soon as you texted me, I knew
I'd miss the Purolator truck today
actually, knew a few minutes before
when Beth phoned me back home
(it seems the Bell guy wanted help
finding a new route for a new cable)
anyway, I wasn't so very surprised
to see the attempted delivery notice
this morning had just been like that
what I was surprised by though
was that Purolator wouldn't even try
calling a driver just down the road
and ask to try delivery again, today
instead of the rescheduled tomorrow

Gerry The UPS Man would have tried
twice

July 9, 2019

Revelation

I've been studying my Bible
diligently praying, thinking hard
I'm trying to change my thought
have it follow along with yours
but I can't, I simply cannot do it
The closer I try to get to you
the further away God takes me
My thought indeed is changing
but is not changing toward you
(It seems you have blessed me
In being willing to learn from you
I am more able to learn from God
And now I have the great problem
of somehow countering your lies
knowing you will not hear me)
Now I'm wondering "Now what?"
what do I do now I've changed
am changing, further from you?
What do I do, how do I do it
is doing even what God wants?

July 8-August 1, 2019

There

I'm not all there
I'm not mostly there
I'm not even sorta there
I'm just kind of enough there
to be alive

July 8, 2019

Turmoil

confusion roils
vast undercurrents
tumultuous in their course
my mind quails
cannot find ground
less uncertain
yet is storm tossed
by words unconsidered
of one respected spoken
who says such things
which must be true
yet cannot be true
all I know stands unchanged
but finds its purer course
as speaking before me, one
upends what should be

July 8, 2019

my first reaction was "Baloney!"
you must be wrong, this can't be true
a blessing to the Church! Me?
though I trust you
I doubt it!

why?

because

most Sundays I have no strength to sing
most Sundays discordance overwhelms me
most Sundays I am at odds with the words
most Sundays rebellion has the upper hand
most Sundays I see little worthy of praise
most Sundays my voice is still and silent
most Sundays I would be anywhere else

and yet you say I'm a blessing
I'd like to know what you see
because I don't see anything

July 4, 2019

Did You Ever Stop ... to Think?

did you ever stop to think
that it might just be possible
to condemn an obscene deed
and not regard its doer
as without hope themselves

do you think us so shallow
that we see this one thing
beyond God's power to save
that we have so small a sight
as to condemn without hope

when your child's returned
covered by their day's muck
do you not by saying "Wash!"
show you value who they are
above the filth they carry

how can you then chastise
we who share God's salvation
with those who need His washing
you value them beneath their sin
to not see them as He desires

July 4-August 1, 2019

Just. Breathe.

Just breathe
they say
(as though breathing weren't the hardest thing in the world)
Just breathe, you're
 strong enough
 to meet your challenges
 wise enough
 to solve your problems
 able enough
 to do what needs doing
but I'm not, the day's
 challenges
 problems
 doings
are far greater than me
 my strength
 my wisdom
 my ability
are insufficient to their task
there is not enough me
to do it all
I am worn away
by what is not me

I cannot be
 strong
 or wise
 or able
enough
to meet each day's demands

but each day I thank God
He is

July 3, 2019

it's diabolical
how it can sneak up like that
out of the blue

one moment you're enjoying bird-song, sun-filled sky
the scent of lilac on the breeze
the stream of water past your boat

the next moment
some how
it's found you

again

and you realize
it had been stalking you
all along
hiding in the broad light of day
waiting
to pounce
on this unguarded moment

You stand in His courts and say:
"The Lord will save us,"
In His very house and sing:
"Yes! Surely the Lord will save us!
Yes! We will not be harmed."

Do you not remember them?
The sawn, the torn, the beaten
Have you forgotten other saints
who suffered, who bled, who died
had as well their faith in God

You stand on unknown truth
on lies from your own desire
You do not learn, but are held
captive by your treasured thought
that careless step around His word

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, "Stand in the gate of the Lord's house and proclaim there this word and say, 'Hear the word of the Lord, all you of Judah, who enter by these gates to worship the Lord!'" Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, "Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place. Do not trust in deceptive words, saying, 'This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.' For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly practice justice between a man and his neighbor, if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods to your own ruin, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.

Behold, you are trusting in deceptive words to no avail. Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery and swear falsely, and offer sacrifices to Baal and walk after other gods that you have not known, then come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered!'—that you may do all these abominations?"

Jeremiah 7:1-10

June 26, 2019

I drank the coffee,
I did the stuff,
now I am done.

The end.

June 15, 2019

Jesus

He was different
He went to their parties
He visited their homes
maybe even laughed at their jokes
dandled their children
wept with them in their grief

He was different
He was not like we are
whose anger all too often
displaces our compassion
We are so not like Him
would He know us as His own

June 13-15, 2019

I encountered him
he whose book is lighter than air
a year or two ago
and felt myself changing
trying to do what he does
in my same-but-different way
Some
may call me
culturally inappropriate
but
I see it more as
"I didn't know you could do that!"
than
"I'm going to pretend to be that!"

I could never be him
I am not him
I have not lived his life
I merely appreciate his gift
his too rare gift
as a student before his master
would follow his master's step

Others have I also found
 He who walked the road less travelled
 She who could not stop for Death
 He who sang and danced before his God
I am not them
cannot be them
yet in some small way
I am their echo
for even here
in my wavering dark
some glimmer of their brilliance
illumes my soul

I am the better for them

In case you're wondering:

 "he whose book is lighter than air" – Rudy Francisco
 "He who walked the road less travelled" – Robert Frost
 "She who could not stop for Death" – Emily Dickinson
 "He who sang and danced before his God" – David, King of Israel

June 13, 2019

Absence of Reason

we wonder at them, those of us
who no longer of them
are no longer like them
finding their avoidance of Truth
staggeringly unreal
"were we once of same lack of mind?"
we ask
astounded we once couldn't think
as they now cannot think
amazed at the miracle of grace
that made us who now we are
pray the same miracle for them

June 12-15, 2019

DDT

we used to use DDT, that is
until we learned it killed the Eagles
Not the big ones
just the little ones
Before they could be hatched
It weakened their shells so much
they would be crushed as their parent
tried to hatch them out

Once we learned that, though
we stopped using DDT
Now the only babies we kill
are our own

We have learned, but
we have not yet learned enough

May 6, 2019

Hope!

God has said
I will never leave you
I will never forsake you
this
and this **ALONE!**
is why I am still here

This verse (Hebrews 13:5) came up in Tom Copland's
"Financial Management God's Way" course last night.
He combines excellent theology with sound guidance.

May 6, 2019

Veneer

it is very thin, this me I let you see
impossibly thin but as hard as steel
dangerously thin yet able to hide all
of me I'd rather you not encounter
a thin hollow shell of life I let you see
embracing an emptiness infinities deep
and temporary, so incredibly temporary
this thin me fleets and flits, and dies
the instant I'm out of your sight

May 5-6, 2019

My Brave Face

home

there and back again
after a long drive
without incident
emptier returning
one less voice
to hear

alone

there and back again
feeling still alone
I wear my brave face
but it falls askew, lets
tears slip through
the cracks

May 3, 2019

'Rock'

"Hello,
my name is Peter"
which
according to Jesus
means 'rock'
in truth more pebble
than mountain
by nature
unable to move
save
by a greater power

What I'm Happy to Have

the wind blew from a new north today
'Blue' and 'Storm' helped me find it
and today, instead of glorying in night
I'll take delight in this day's pleasures
and thank my God, Who always cares
for the glories He gives me to enjoy

has it made a difference? so far it has
the day is but drear, not dreadful dark
and the voice that says I'm nothing
still speaks but with insufficient force
to make this first good day of many
no less a gift given by a perfect God

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:8-9

Blue (DestinyBlue - Alice de Ste Croix) and 'Storm' (Yuumie - Wenqing Yan) both have lived with depression, depression that is much more severe than mine, and they deal with it by creating beautiful art that shows both the despair and the hope that those who live with depression know so well and so unpredictably.

Art which, unknown to them, has helped me see light.

In case either of you see this page ... Thank you!

See below for the works which inspired this poem.



"Out of the Woods" ~ by [DestinyBlue](#)



"Feel and Conquer" ~ by [Yuumei](#)

May 2, 2019

Eeyore

the more I think of it
and I do think of it
often
it is, after all, who I am
tho' not who I try to be
anyhow
the more I think of it
have I said I think of it
often?
the more I think I'm Eeyore
to everyone else's
Pooh, or Piglet, or Tigger
and the rest
greeting life
not always as enthusiastic
not always with as easy a smile
but always willing to be alive
ready to try to stand on top of
what was dragging him down
to see the world from there

May 2, 2019

Tar

life is moving confusedly
motivation is uncertain
I could not even traffic
this morning, but stayed
in one line, and stayed
behind one set of red
for an entire hour
this desk too
refuses to be driven
seems somewhat
emblematic of my life
it's moving so slowly
its wheels won't even spin
'cause there's nothing there
to even try to grab

May 2, 2019

Too Many Heroes

in the news today

“They heroically confronted the attacker
and saved countless lives; but they died.”

we have far too many heroes these days

we have far too great a need for

far too many men and women

who die, selflessly

needlessly

saving other people's lives

unnecessarily

would that carelessness be woken

to see

would that it be moved

to anger

would that it be aroused

to action

so that their heroic action

would not be needed

any more

would that something wise were done

would that our heroic men and women

could not die but live

WHEN WILL THE SENSELESS SLAUGHTER END?

May 1-2, 2019

Blue I

"I tried to die"

I stumbled over you today
and retroactively learned I
had quite often found you
in many private searchings
here and there on the 'net
but didn't know your name
I knew only you knew more
of our shared brokenness
than ever at my worst did I
learned you walked the way
I could only ever "what-if"
fell, but not quite all the way
learned too of other hands
wrapped around your own
holding closely to your life
rejecting fear, sharing hope
and thanked my God for you
that you remained with us

you are too valuable to lose

May 1-July 18, 2019

Scaryness

I wonder which
is the more
scary

not

saying anything
because they
might not
care

or

saying everything
and learning
that they
don't

May 1, 2019

could I teach myself to be foolish
not say the words just waiting
to be spoken to another's pain
say instead the masking words
the words that hide the wrong
the words that have no power
to mend what has been broken
it might help them like me more
for a while, at least, not alone
but would I be doing any favours
hiding what I know from their need

could I teach myself to be foolish
I don't know if I could or if I'd fail
and if I could would I fail as well

April 30, 2019

'they' want to find Jesus' lost tomb
they've been seeking it forever
I'm not really sure why they spend
so much time and energy on futility
He's not there anymore, it's empty, and
even if it wasn't, how'd they know it's Him
it's not like He left DNA for us to examine
or a signed note saying "Yes, this is Me"
"Ha, ha, I fooled you all; I'm still dead!"
but if they could prove it that Jesus died
stayed dead, never more saw light of day
then He is truly dead, as I, and hopeless
and maybe that's why, they have no hope
and they're so mad they try to kill mine

April 29-30, 2019

What Do I Do Now?

I don't know what to think
really, I don't
I am at a loss for words
have no idea what to do
I am a complete and utter loss
yesterday was a gobsmack
I sat my seat, astounded
to see men I'd respected
in their place still respected
give one a greater honour
than was given to our God
than was given to His word
to see that take place
and to then hear lessons
taught quick and careless
as racing against time ...

too much taken on
too little considered

it's far too much to ponder

April 25, 2019

I've been told I should see a therapist
I agree, but I'm kind of reluctant too
I'm pretty sure two ideas would come

out

the first

I should open up, talk, express myself
not hide my state of mind, or behind it
but

I would talk about it and have, in fact
only to hear those silence inducements

"Yeah but I ..." (some help, that)

"It's all in your head" (well, yeah)

"That's not real pain!" (oh, I see)

the second

I should get out more, find a friend
not be so alone as to be bottled up
but

I do go out of myself, I have, in fact
tried to be a more un-bottled man

...

...

but it doesn't seem to be working

in

I've tried to be alive but can't, I'm stuck
my mind spins, useless, for some traction
with hardly anyone near enough to push

April 25-30, 2019

I don't know if this is real
or if it's all in my head
 see that?
 that's a little joke I tell myself
 to keep the small smile I have
 pasted on
I mean if it's really real, then it
really would be all in my head and
wouldn't really be all in my head

April 25, 2019

Learning

you learn, after a while, what to look for
if you know that $X + Y = Z$, and Z is painful
then eventually you'll try to keep X away from Y
you'll start looking for situations, places or
people
where Z is an intermittently inevitable result
you'll start avoiding those situations, places or
people
you'll play your music, loudly, or
you'll read your book, emphatically, or
you'll become a poet, however good or bad
you'll beg God to show you where you're wrong
so you can change yourself and not be (as) wrong
you'll find yourself doing or becoming something
you might not really want to do or be
anything
to drown out the incessantly persistent pain
try to find a way that makes life bearable
a way to keep X and Y from each other
a way to keep the prowling Z at bay

even if it means that you stay quiet
when you'd much rather speak

even if it means that you do nothing
when you'd much rather act

even if it means that you wear a smile
when you'd much rather cry

April 19, 2019

Reality(?)

there are days when you can't trust reality
it shifts, changes, is not what you think
it was, but is different outside than in
reality is malleable, changes on a word
a tone of voice, an expression, into some
thing that isn't what you thought it was

on days like that you'd best keep quiet
begging God that you won't harm any
of those who lives will run across yours

April 18, 2019

my feelings come out, some times
when the opportunity comes up
but in such a way, a lifted eyebrow
a teasing tone of voice, a smile
you would hear the truth I say
yet not hear your pain beneath it
that pain, which of your making
becomes worse by your ignoring
so when it comes up, some times
my feelings come incompletely out

April 16, 2019

I couldn't care less for Game of Thrones
and I don't know what Harry Potter did
I have once visited Marvel's universe
and then quickly left to find my own
I wouldn't know The Bachelor from a Survivor
and have no clue what Big Brother's watching
I've stopped going on Impossible Missions
and I've left James Bond to his own devices
I only know two-thirds of Kung Fu Panda
and nothing at all of how to Kill Bill
I am confused by the hold these seem to have
on us, is not life more than thrilling enough

April 16, 2019

Forgiveness

the thing most people have about us,
the Christians they see day-to-day, is
they don't see us as the forgiving type
we don't follow The Example they know
making us no better than anyone else
and, when you get right down to it
we not any better than anyone else
but we do have the much better story
which begs this ultimate question
if our story is better than any other
why are our lives so much the same

April 15-16, 2019

Notre Dame de Paris, du Monde

I don't know if this is how Judah felt
as Nebuchadnezzar sacked their temple
took its gold and silver as his offerings
to his inferior god, or if Israel felt this way
as Shishak of Egypt earlier took his share
too soon after Solomon had prayed his prayer
probably not, my connection is much different
to this place than theirs had been to that place
but I know my heart is broken, not for God
nor for His devastated people, but for our loss
of this great testament to man's love for Him
and for my own loss, less great, more real
so soon before I would have touched it

April 14-16, 2019

it'll be another telescopeless night tonight
they'll sit parked inside and warm like us
it's been like that all winter
Orion, his dogs and The Pleiades
dancing just beyond our grasp
some nights too cold, most nights too cloudy
or with a dark glowing from some odd haze
burying Andromeda, the horse and the bears
in the scatteredness of the city lights
and now the hunter is gone below
shall not rise until another cold season
has come upon us
after the teapot and its tea
are themselves gone below the verge
where Earth ends and forever begins
perhaps that night's light will be more gracious
and we'll see up close what now we dream afar
bask that glorious glow of those distant flames

April 9, 2019

When?

"When did they build that?"
he asked, innocently
like we all had the same question

"It's always been there!"
we answered, surprised
he didn't have the same memory

needless to say the rest of our day
was a little weird

April 9-10, 2019

Transience

if Finney taught me anything
Finney taught me this
That almost every person we see
in almost every picture we admire
is dead, or soon will be
Their ephemeral joys are no more
Their deep abiding pain is gone
All of them that is to be known
is what we see was seen of them

if Finney taught me anything
Finney taught me this
That life is fragile and far too short
for otherwise wishing before we fall
into death's cold embrace
Ours to endure this brief transience
Ours to rejoice each day's pleasure
To accept our days as they come
to hold as gift ere passing on

I was reading one of my art books
when it hit me that every person in
paintings has died, has been dead
for a very long time. Yet in these
pictures they are alive, we see their
cares, their joys, a snapshot of who
they were in the eyes of the artist.

April 8, 2019

my smile is bravely huge
in front of too much in back
a dam, before a pain so great
no one is even aware of it
the dragon, locked away
roars behind its bolted door
where even if you cared
it couldn't get at you

April 8, 2019

How My Depression Works
(not always, but often)

if they do something
I'll think they're offending me
and I'll be hurt

if they do nothing
I'll think they're ignoring me
and I'll be hurt

I win either way

April 7-30, 2019

these steps
they try
yet fail
ever striving upward
yet
never leave the Earth

this Earth
though still
yet moves
ever into glory
yet
never leaving Home

April 6, 2019

why do I love God?
hard to say, really
He is so magnificent
infinity hasn't the room
to contain my every
reason to love Him
but maybe my biggest
reason to love Him
my best and most remembered
reason to love Him
is that He makes it so I am not
broken

April 5-6, 2019

I Have So Much To Tell You ...

I could tell you
of wonders grand
how the sun looks
coming up over town
the slow warming of life
at noon's approach

I could tell you
how the Cardinal's morning song
can move one's blood
better than coffee
how the Dove's coo in the evening
is the perfect lullaby

I could tell you
of the glory of Orion
the Hyades
and
the Pleiades
as they slowly
(oh!
so slowly)
parade west
and how amazingly Saturn floats
on the velvet black of night
or how you can see
the Great Red Spot
a gazillion miles away
on Jupiter
through my little 'scope

I could tell you
how nice a doggish snuggle
feels
in the evening
beside the fire
with a steaming mug of tea
of the comfort of a family
at home
at night
after a long day
too hard

I could tell you
how a poem grows
as it struggles
from thought

to paper
to joy
how I 'know'
when it's grown enough
to show someone else

I could tell you
how a paddle's splash
and the smooth glide
of hull through water
can soothe a savage soul
how the sight of salmon
leaping
light glinting from their scales
can be a thrill too great for words

I could tell you
of the sheer delight of speed
on a bicycle
racing downhill
with no security from
disaster
but the wind blowing wildly by

I could tell you
how good a Saturday is
partway through
when chores are finished
early

I could tell you
things
so many
things
so many
wonderful and glorious
things

and I would have
too
if you had
asked

April 4, 2019

who were you

I wonder
seeing your work
your one
beautiful
work
nothing else
but that one
wonderful
work

who were you
to make a thing so lovely
and just

disappear

April 4, 2019 - April 28, 2021

Good Today

after "Better Tomorrow"
by Yuumei

cloud
sculpted horizons
my frame
within their wall
is me
what I create
is also me
is partly cloud
is also partly sun
that shines
even through cloud's thick dark

it

shines



"Better Tomorrow" ~ by [Yuumei](https://www.yuumeiart.com/)

April 2-3, 2019

Forgive Others

"Forgive others,
not because they deserve forgiveness,
but because you deserve peace."

Jonathan Lockwood Huie

he's right you know, about peace
forgiving removes vendetta's chains
releases us to be ourselves, again

yet I think Jesus had another goal
greater than our own peace, in mind
when He said "Forgive others"

forgiving, I am forgiven, peace follows
letting go of their offense to me
lets God let go of my offense to Him

I don't forgive because I deserve peace
I forgive because it can't be made right
my offense is too great a debt to repay

April 2, 2019 - August 27, 2021

How Must Heaven Weep

"I hate you!"
they scream
"I hope you die!"
screamed at a stranger
to one unknown

off to one side I look on
endlessly troubled
luxuriously dispassionate

their abhorrence of Life
it is their problem
it is not mine

but I do wonder about them
how can life hold pleasure
without knowing Joy
how can they have life
without knowing Love

how must Heaven weep
that the Joy so freely given
is so callously ignored
that the Love it gives to all
is thrown aside for hate

March 29, 2019

Maybe ...

maybe ...

I'm not the poet I thought I was

maybe ...

I'm nothing that special after all

maybe ...

I'm merely the poet everyone thinks I am

maybe ...

I'm not the next best thing since Robert

maybe ...

I'm just a schmuck with a pen

March 28-August 2, 2019

Our Great Loss
A lament for our lost children
Our lives are poorer for their loss

Their toes

will never dance a new mown lawn
will never dig and play in sand
will never careless circle dirt
will never feel a sandal's thong

Their toes will never know these joys
nor will we play our part in them

Their feet

will never know ocean's cold delight
will never sprint across too-hot sand
will never try on a brand new shoe
will never follow the parental step

Their feet will never know these joys
nor will we play our part in them

Their legs

will never run the sunset down
will never romp a day with friends
will never pedal bike or board
will never race against the wind

Their legs will never know these joys
nor will we play our part in them

Their knees

will never dandle new born babe
will never balance plate and cup
will never teasing nudge a friend
will never for a question kneel

Their knees will never know these joys
nor will we play our part in them

Their hips

will never try to find the beat
will never carry belt of tools
will never bump open a door
will never sway through a crowd

Their hips will never know these joys
nor will we play our part in them

Their arms

will never comfort sobbing child
will never hug parent grown too old
will never try to block a pass
will never share a soft embrace

Their arms will never know these joys
nor will we play our part in them

Their hands

will never hold a lover close
will never cause a sigh too soft for words
will never skip rocks across a creek
will never point to aim a run

Their hands will never know these joys
nor will we play our part in them

Their hearts

will never pound at special glance
will never know the joy of rest
will never feel the pang of pain
will never leap at dear one's touch

Their hearts will never know these joys
nor will we play our part in them

Their lungs

will never know of laughter's bliss
will never breathe their fill of Spring
will never taste a campfire's smoke
will never gasp at sudden shock

Their lungs will never know these joys
nor will we play our part in them

Their shoulders

will never shrug an "I don't know"
will never carry pack on trail
will never ache from paddle's dip
will never stop to share a load

Their shoulders will never know these joys
nor will we play our part in them

Their lips

will never in private night arouse
will never greet a long-lost friend
will never wrap around a spoon
will never kiss away an ow

Their lips will never know these joys
nor will we play our part in them

Their mouths

will never speak a loving word
will never tease an ice cream cone
will never dare a flag pole's cold
will never feel a missing tooth

Their mouths will never know these joys
nor will we play our part in them

Their cheeks

will never feel the Summer sun
will never from hard labour flush
will never crease with rosy joy
will never feel a rain drop's kiss

Their cheeks will never know these joys
nor will we play our part in them

Their noses

will never above a moustache pose
will never shrink from Winter's blast
will never smell a fresh cut Rose
will never to a window press

Their noses will never know these joys
nor will we play our part in them

Their eyes

will never view a golden Fall
will never Van Gogh's art caress
will never glow in fire light
will never tear at tender word

Their eyes will never know these joys
nor will we play our part in them

Their ears

will never listen for a child's return
will never hear a word of praise
will never dangle glittering jewel
will never rejoice a dear friend's voice

Their ears will never know these joys
nor will we play our part in them

Their minds

will never win glory over math
will never craft a thought or care

will never by discussion grow
will never guess at Agatha's hints

Their minds will never know these joys
nor will we play our part in them

Their voices

will never sing at new day's dawn
will never whisper words of hope
will never tug a parent's heart
will ever scream their silent pain

Their voice forever silenced
for our silence at their deaths

Their lives

are betrayed by selfishnesses inconceivable
are forsaken by those who should best love
are destroyed with scarce a thought or care
are extinguished by death's remorseless lie

Their lives will never see their day
for all the days we just stood aside

Yet ours may be the greater loss
our lives stand forfeit as we stand by

And we, we who stand by and let this be,
may God have mercy on our souls

March 27-28, 2019

The Scream

the Scream prowled the edges of my world, yesterday
it looked through the windows, it rattled the doors
it tried to find a way in to where I was trying to live
I wanted to let it in once or twice or a thousand times
but I almost always never did; there was just too much
squeezing into a day that was barely big enough for me

This poem is not to be thought of
as an interpretation of "The Scream"
by Edvard Munch. He had his problems,
I have mine. The name was a convenience.

March 27, 2019

this place ain't as big as it used to be
growing up, I could spend all day
walking, talking, seeing, doing
meeting people or going places
it was BIG, but not big enough
I found a larger, more expansive
place to live and made it my home

years came down the road and went
I've walked and talked and saw and did
and even gone back a time or twice
that place ain't as big as it used to be
it's gotten BIGGER than it ever was
what used to take days to discover
takes several big forevers and more

March 21, 2019

the hound of SNC Lavalin
it has the House unravellin'
one half mimes a mannequin
and the rest act like a paladin
yet I bet they'd all be rather in
a less wild and woolly gatherin'

As I write this (noon) the Liberals are trying to pass their budget and the Conservatives have tabled two hundred, fifty seven motions in response. Since these motions concern the budget, they are matters of confidence and must be voted on. Voting has been going on for sixteen hours and shows no sign of stopping unless each motion has been passed or the Liberals allow Jody Wilson-Raybould to speak freely on SNC-Lavalin.

Added March 28, 2019

And now it seems that the PMO and JWR
are locked in mutual smear campaigns.

Politics. Sigh.

March 20, 2019

October Comes

having faced the facts for years
I must soon act upon my choice
must choose a choice most foul
whether one way or the other(s)
though they seem as distasteful
as they try to garb the other(s)
in what they wear themselves
my choice limited to the choice
of either the kettle or the pot
or the tiny pan off to one side
but what's this poor man to do
if all are black and I need clean
I can't choose one or the other(s)
without becoming black myself
I would not sully truth for gain
let them sell their souls alone
I can't walk with close enough
or compromise become my way

March 20, 2019

we have become so tolerant
we are unable to forgive
we are so concerned by pain
we neglect to heal its source

March 20, 2019

Speak the truth
in season and out
not in hate
not to harm
but in hope
that truth be known

Every Person Knows

every person knows
whether faithful, faithless, ignorant or learned
every person simply knows
we did not just spring up here, where we're at, we've moved around
there was child birth, children growing up
leaving "home" and making a new "home" somewhere else
because of these we are where we are now
we are where what we call "home" is now
so, when some person says
"So-and-so are being pushed out of their home land"
perhaps we should assume they already know
whether faithful, faithless, ignorant or learned
perhaps we should just assume that our migration is known
that they know that our "home" now isn't where we've always been
"home" has been transient since we first appeared on this shared ball
"home" is where we've lived so long it's no longer relevant who called it "home" before us

you know
like how we move into a new house and call it "home" right away
as though those whom we replaced had never called it theirs

"home" is a transient thing, it follows us, our hats, our hearts
"home" is where we find our joy, our peace, our quiet, our safety
that this place that is now our "home" was once an other's "home"
does not negate our own claim of "home", or make it less worthy
"home" is where we are, have been, will be, until such time we move
regretful though our leaving be, "home" will follow where we are

March 19, 2019

If You Only Knew

if you only knew
the sigh I breathe
as you leave here
would you care
would you change

March 19-20, 2019

Truth Unseen

truth is a lost art
these days of hate
unknown and rare

you are despised
for words spoken
but you were right
there is standard
and it is doubled
silence on one side
built on fear of
unknown what ifs
and avoidance of
violent retribution
outcry on the other
the velvet glove
reveals its iron fist
and you, I think
were knocked out

I'm probably obtuse
but I can't see where
you spoke untruth

If in reading this you think that I am either
a white supremacist or that I in any way
condone white supremacy, I want to let
you know you couldn't be more wrong.

I have not, I could not, and I will not
condone white supremacy in any way.

I am just a man who rejoices in Truth;
who weeps when Truth has been abused.

March 19, 2019

Yesterday
(all my troubles went so far away)

what was with yesterday
 anyway?
why did almost absolutely
 everything
conspire together to do a
 body-slam?
what was it that I'd done,
 or not done
that painted me a target
 yesterday?
and how was I healed
 at its close?

March 19, 2019

A Big Bang

I get a big bang out of the Bible
but I can't fit the Big Bang in, it's
much too hard, I'd have to change
so much of the narrative that it
wouldn't say anything important, it
wouldn't say anything of value, it
wouldn't say anything worth saying
it would just be a mass of writings
implying much more than was meant
and be utterly useless for all of that

March 18-19, 2019

he once asked if I had read
of Gilgamesh, he
the epic one of mythic tale
whose struggle with his gods
were heroic

I told him I had not read
of Gilgamesh, had
read of he who was his master
who did not battle God but walked
as with his King

Beneath the Altar

"Fifty killed in mosque attack!"
world-wide headlines scream
call our attention to the horror
of man killing man for no reason
other than hate, in and of itself

the Second Seal has been torn
violence rampages the earth
death roams free, is mourned
but in the tumult of the Fifth
we fall before a careless world

When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come!"
Another came out, a red horse. To him who sat on it was given power to take peace
from the earth, and that they should kill one another. There was given to him a great
sword.

Revelation 6:3-4

When He opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had
been killed for the Word of God, and for the testimony of the Lamb which they had.
They cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, Master, the holy and true, until you
judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" A long white robe was
given to each of them. They were told that they should rest yet for a while, until their
fellow servants and their brothers, who would also be killed even as they were, should
complete their course.

Revelation 6:9-11

We rightly mourn the bloodshed, the souls robbed too soon of life,
yet our brothers and our sisters fall unnoted, in greater number,
who now wait beneath God's altar for our blood to join their own

March 11-20, 2019

Dis/Agree

we've agreed to disagree
eyes have missed each other
so failed to search for truth
we see each opinion valid
or accept that difference
on core Truth can exist
 though Peter, Paul and Matthew
 would have us believe otherwise
"it's such a hard passage"
we say, and find ourselves
condoning our incongruities
accepting our blindnesses
confounded by conflicting views
in doubt and confusion unsure
unfirm on what truth we know
unguarded against the heresy
here, in the very courts of God

Threshold

you would have us acquiesce
to your offense, have us not
step shoes within your doors
lest we cause you pain or
heap our indignity upon
the god you serve

though you may despise my shoes
you need have no fear that these
will careful step over your threshold

yet proclaim The God a man
a prophet, of lower rank,
less certain than your own
tread careless feet upon Him
pour your indignity upon
the God who saves

though you may despise my God
you are right to fear that He
will work His will upon your threshold

Now the Philistines had taken God's ark, and they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. The Philistines took God's ark, and brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. When the people of Ashdod arose early on the next day, behold, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before Yahweh's ark. They took Dagon, and set him in his place again. When they arose early on the following morning, behold, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before Yahweh's ark; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off on the threshold. Only Dagon's torso was intact. Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any who come into Dagon's house, step on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod, to this day.

1 Samuel 5:1-5

This was written after a member of a local Christian ministry to Muslims spoke at our church and suggested that one way we could make a positive impact for the Gospel (or at least not offend them to the point that they would avoid hearing the Gospel) would be to treat the Koran with respect, just as we would our Bible. This seemed to me to be the wrong thing to do. Yes, we should show respect to the individual Muslim, but none at all to their faith; lest we suggest that it is as valid as Christianity, despite it's being of the enemy.

March 8-17, 2019

Nietzsche

"The essence of all beautiful art, all great art, is gratitude."

Friedrich Nietzsche

"God is dead."

also, Friedrich Nietzsche

but Fred
this begs the question
if God is truly dead
(or 'gods', if you will)
if our self-sufficiencies have erased
our need for Him
(or 'them', if you also will)
then whom are we thanking?

every teacher knows
not to bind their "If"
to an empty "then"

every parent knows
not to bind their "Stop"
to an unwilling "Or"

so when Jesus says
"Keep on keeping on ..."
should we disbelieve His
"... and I will not erase"?

"And to the angel of the assembly in Sardis write: "He who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars says these things: "I know your works, that you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and keep the things that remain, which you were about to throw away, for I have found no works of yours perfected before my God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If therefore you won't watch, I will come as a thief, and you won't know what hour I will come upon you. Nevertheless you have a few names in Sardis that didn't defile their garments. They will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes will be arrayed in white garments, and I will in no way blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.

Revelation 3:1-6

March 7-8, 2019

we lost too much that day
far too much
much more than we knew
so much more
than could be calculated
and made small
by the gift we were given

as it happened
it was not the happiest
of stories
though it will end very well
in truth, it should not be called
a story
at all, though in the middle of it
yet not a muddle, it feels like
a story

standing inside it
seeing it happen
with, to and around you
it is lovely
and terrifying
together

An explanation, if you would like one:

“not the happiest of stories”

Now the serpent was more subtle than any animal of the field which Yahweh God had made. He said to the woman, “Has God really said, ‘You shall not eat of any tree of the garden’?” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees of the garden, but not the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden. God has said, ‘You shall not eat of it. You shall not touch it, lest you die.’” The serpent said to the woman, “You won’t really die, for God knows that in the day you eat it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took some of its fruit, and ate; and she gave some to her husband with her, and he ate it, too. Their eyes were opened, and they both knew that they were naked. They sewed fig leaves together, and made coverings for themselves. They heard Yahweh God’s voice walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Yahweh God among the trees of the garden. Yahweh God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” The man said, “I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” God said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” Yahweh God said to the woman, “What have you done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” Yahweh God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, you are cursed above all livestock, and above every animal of the field. You shall go on your belly and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will bruise your head, and you

will bruise his heel." To the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth. In pain you will bear children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." To Adam he said, "Because you have listened to your wife's voice, and ate from the tree, about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it,' the ground is cursed for your sake. You will eat from it with much labor all the days of your life. It will yield thorns and thistles to you; and you will eat the herb of the field. By the sweat of your face will you eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For you are dust, and to dust you shall return." The man called his wife Eve because she would be the mother of all the living. Yahweh God made garments of animal skins for Adam and for his wife, and clothed them. ~ Genesis 3:1-21

"it will end very well"

I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth have passed away, and the sea is no more. I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice out of heaven saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with people, and he will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; neither will there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more. The first things have passed away." He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." He said, "Write, for these words of God are faithful and true." He said to me, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give freely to him who is thirsty from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes, I will give him these things. I will be his God, and he will be my son. But for the cowardly, unbelieving, sinners, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their part is in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." ~ Revelation 21:1-8

"in the middle of it"

All that lies between

"it is lovely"

All that is of God

"and terrifying"

All that is evil

March 5-20, 2019

Diverse, But ...

"In a democracy like ours and in a space where we value our diversity so strongly, we're allowed to have disagreements and debate. We even encourage it. This matter has generated an important discussion. How democratic institutions, specifically the federal ministry and the staff and officials that support it, conduct themselves is critical and core to all of our principles,"

PM Justin Trudeau, March 2019

"It's not for any government to legislate what happens – what a woman chooses to do with her body, and that is the bottom line ... I have made it clear that future candidates need to be completely understanding that they will be expected to vote pro-choice on any bills."

MP Justin Trudeau, May, 2014

you stand your gilded stage
the golden boy
you can do no wrong
making your gloried promises
of better days and sunny ways
better than who had been
before you
our diversity makes us stronger
you say
it makes Canada what it is
the envy of the world
but how can you say that
when closest to your home
you speak against yourself
you must support choice
you say
diversity exists within you
but bows before your power
and no one sees a problem

how can one have diversity
walk hand-in-hand with power
and hope to find strength

a cord of unequal strands
is insufficient to moor a ship
much less to bind a nation

March 1-3, 2019

These Words

these words, they
have a life of their own
as much as me
and perhaps more
they move my 'pen'
 (see
 I'd intended to write
 something different
 up there
 but the words
 they took over
 as so often they do)
to place them
where I'd never thought
they'd go

I sat before a man
who stood before his people
with other men as well regarded
some of whom disagreed
on Genesis
some of whom disagreed
on Revelation
all of whom agreed
from Abraham to Jesus

I sat before this man
standing before his people
with these well regarded men, saying
"We may disagree
on Genesis.
We may disagree
on Revelation.
But we are agreed
from Abraham to Jesus."

going on to say
"These men love God.
We stand as one, united.
These men are my brothers.
We follow Christ in union.
Follow our example."

I sat before this man
before these men
before these well regarded men
and wept
at thought so careless intertwined

What unity can there be
between truth and lie?

As created beings we may not enjoy a perfect grasp of Truth in this life, as we stumble around orthodoxy each of us knows some part better than another. Differences of opinion are inevitable but our differences of opinion should never be celebrated from the pulpit, as they were this morning. In 1 Corinthians 1 Paul told the believers in Corinth that they were wrong to say "I am of Paul", "I am of Apollos" and "I am of Cephas (Peter)" and that the only acceptable "I am of ..." was "I am of Christ." And Paul, Apollos and Peter were teaching essentially the same message; imagine their shock if they were to visit our churches and hear the "I am of ..."s we say today.

Toxically Masculine

it's odd, as a man, to hear
all this talk of our toxicity
as if we were, somehow
wrong
 (well, we are
 but no worse
 than any other)
needed wiping out
needed eradication
needed obliteration
as if we were, somehow
imperfect
 (well, we are
 but no more
 than any other)
yet neither I
nor any man I know
is so toxically masculine
as to cause another's harm
merely to sate their self-worth
as so many seem to think
we do
 (not because I won't see
 but because I haven't seen
 fear
 on their children's faces or
 tears
 on the face of their wife or a
 veneer
 paste upon their own face)

it is not toxic masculinity
 (or militant feminism)
we must fight
it is sin
it crouches to devour
us
and we must master
it

February 16-September 3, 2019

you who stand at the front line
who carry battle to the enemy
bear the fury of his assault
heal the carnage of his wrath
stand strong and have hope
there is a reason why you are
it is God's own reason
you are not an accident, you
were known before days' first dawn
you are because God wanted you to be
He wanted you in this place at this time

 this place here, it is God's place
 the enemy cannot take it
 this time now, it is God's time
 the enemy cannot steal it
 all of this is God's, is His alone
 the enemy cannot have it

the God you serve, He is the One
He alone is the One, He alone is God
serve Him well, in love, with faith
great will be your reward
beautiful will be His pleasure
serve Him well, serve Him faithfully
in His power and with His blessing

February 15, 2019

None of You

none of you
not one single one
of you who called
nine-one-one last night
to complain of noise
while a little girl was
dying
deserve anything
but derision
scorn
and shame

I am not allowed
to speak aloud
the words I have for you

February 15, 2019

at first I wanted to think it was an accident
that you didn't intend to harm your child
that a thing happened beyond your control
but now the police say you did it on purpose
you deliberately murdered your own child
I am a father too, I have had my days too
not once in all that time did it occur to me
to take out my frustration, pain or anger
on those who on me depend for their life
if this is true that you murdered your child
you are an unspeakably evil and cowardly bully

February 15, 2019

I Am Heartbroken

last night at around eleven
every one of our cell-phones
rang, a child had been stolen
by her father, intending harm
to himself and to his daughter
a child, his own flesh-and-blood
think about that for a moment

he meant harm to his daughter
and succeeded, she is no more
a family is bereaved, it bleeds
think about that for a moment

yet seconds after our cell-phones
rang, calls came to nine-one-one
complaining about the late hour
and inconvenience of the alarm
that roused them from their rest
think about that for a moment

a child has been stolen, is dead
and lost sleep is the problem?

think about that for a moment

On February 14, her birthday, eleven
year old Riya Rajkumar was murdered
by her own father. Police issued an
Amber Alert late that evening, which
rang all cell-phones in Ontario, telling
us of the missing child and asking us
to keep our eyes open for sign of her.

That many of us called 911 to complain
about the alarm that woke them up is
almost as heartbreaking as her death.

Ex Nihilo Nihil Fit

"What could cause the spontaneous appearance of a universe?"

Professor Stephen Hawking
"Brief Answers to the Big Questions"

Answer, Part One

"[At] the sub-atomic level, you enter a world where conjuring something out of nothing is possible. At least, for a short while. That's because, at this scale, particles such as protons behave according to the laws of nature we call quantum mechanics. And they really can appear at random, stick around for a while and then vanish again, to reappear somewhere else."

but
and it's a very big
BUT!

now that you've said
"... at the sub-atomic level ..."
you've also said
nothing wasn't really nothing

Answer, Part Two

"The laws of nature itself tell us that not only could the universe have popped into existence without any assistance, like a proton, and have required nothing in terms of energy, but also that it is possible that nothing caused the Big Bang. Nothing."

but
and it's another very big
BUT!

not only have you said
nothing wasn't really nothing
now that you've said
"... the laws of nature itself ..."
you've also said
nature existed before it was

Answer, Part Three

"It is a metaphysical principle that things which begin need a cause; it is also self-evident. All science and history would collapse if this law of cause and effect were denied Also, the universe cannot be self-caused—nothing can create itself, because until it exists, it is not in a position to cause itself."

but
and it's yet another very big
BUT!

not only have you said
nothing wasn't really nothing
not only have you also said
nature existed before it was
now that you've said
"... nothing can create itself ..."
you've also said
nothing comes from nothing

after everything you've said
your assumptions of existence
beg the question

from where did the stuff come
from which you say came
all the stuff we see

As confusing as all this may be
it makes sense to some degree
for once is said "There is no God!"
all other words seem rather odd.

February 10, 2019

there are days
long days
days too numerous to count
mind-numbing
nerve-shattering
fist-clenching
days
where I know beyond a doubt
the next day's dawn
comes by grace of God
alone

and other days
bright days
days beyond my counting
glorious
delightful
fascinating
days
where I know beyond a doubt
the next day's dawn
comes by grace of God
alone

February 10-October 30, 2019

I wonder sometimes
quite often, actually
well, almost always, really
if I truly have the handle
on this that I believe
that I think I have

so many
so very many
of every rank
or skill or passion
show that they read
the Bible
in a different way
than I read
the Bible

one of us may not be wrong
yet all of us cannot be right
but when I say I study carefully
they say the same thing back
but what of the unity of belief
defended by our fathers

where
oh where is the Divine Guide
to show the longing where we err

when
oh when will this road to Truth
be better tread by we who walk it

February 10, 2019

today, not only do I
live
I may actually enjoy
living

February 9, 2019

Spock's Smile

sometimes I am jealous
of Mr. Spock on Omicron Ceti III
stoic, determined, focused
humanity in control
possessed of all faculty
but one
until a thing outside himself
made him more than himself
and he could smile a smile
rivalling supernovae
in its brilliance

on days like this I wonder
where is my outside myself
to make me more than myself
for I want to smile
so desperately
I want to smile

February 8, 2019

Continuum

yesterday
this monster
it had me by the throat
did with me as it would
left me reeling, exhausted
terrified that this reality
might not be as it is

but not today!

today
it stalks silent beside me
seeks its opportunity to
terrorize, maim, destroy
it grasps, it claws, it
is helpless against me
its daggers draw no blood
today

yesterday is no more
tomorrow is unknown
today my hope is sure

for today

I live

February 4-7, 2019

today is a bland
dreary
confusing kind of day
loneliness stands so close
no soul has room
silence clamours so near
no song is heard
smile intermingles frown
pain transgresses joy
and I
without traction I fall
can neither grasp
nor understand
anything

February 4-18, 2019

Cameo

an artist
painting self into picture
may have a wish
or want to try
to live longer
than the three-score
and ten
is our lot
and while crickets
angels' breaths
and the tawdry toils of life
stand more prominent
call our view
to more auspicious theme
are there still
today, proof
once they were
and did
and maybe smiled
as Hitchcock would
on inserting self
into art

February 1, 2019

evil wants what evil wants
it has no need for reason
does not care, actually
for reason
would not use it
if it could
desires only that
it attack
destroy
mock
what God has made
sufficient for evil's cause
sole excuse for its acts
to be opposed to God

February 1-7, 2019

I used to think it wasn't me
that it was them
it's hard to blame yourself
for things you see others do
so I'd sit back and think "OK
it's not me, it's them"
as it turns out it'd be everyone
all of them I'd have to blame
for me and my failings, and now
I know it isn't them, it's me
I'm the problem
I'm the reason the lunchroom
goes silent
I'm the reason the commute
has no words

it's me
I know that now

and now,
what?

January 30, 2019

victims say their offender
doesn't deserve forgiveness

none of us, not a single one
deserves to be forgiven
we're too sublimely rotten
to deserve anything at all
but that's the point of it
forgiveness can't be earned
it is entirely undeserved
a gift the offended gives
to the one who harmed them

were forgiveness deserved
it would have another name

January 30 - February 18, 2019

'they' say to talk
open up about it
let those near you
know of your pain
and they'll help

but that's just a silly
hopeful wishful thought
that assumes too much
of a character unknown

I have given it a shot
have tried the talking
but the silence echoes

and my soul, my poor soul
continues to bear this pain

unassisted

January 30, 2019

sometimes it's easier
to remain silent
to not introduce
your demons
to another one
owning their own
sometimes
just being quiet
keeps the pain
inside
from growing

January 29, 2019

oh my Father!
selfishness, anger, pride
seek to overwhelm
throw me to wolves ravenous
whose hunger never abates
relentless devourers of truth
oh my Father!
this world's troubles hinder
guide me
let me be gracious
that I may be blessing
might be Your light
in this very dark place

January 25-27, 2019

Advertising Conundrum

someone advertises a thing
takes great care to shine it up
puts it 'out there'
and waits, knowing
their register will ring

someone produces a thriller
all fast and loud and violent
puts it 'out there'
and stares, surprised
at streets so sudden red

someone displays themselves to tease
tempt whom eyes may never see
puts it 'out there'
and cries "Unfair!"
when those who see demand

January 25, 2019

This Moment, Now

yesterday
was once alive
it breathes no more
has become memory

tomorrow
is barest dream
a hope whispered
with no promise to be

today
lives in my hand
flows through my now
becomes what I make it

January 24, 2019

there are times when
I feel about as needed
as my appendix
but
my doctor took it
and somehow I'm still here
so what does that mean?

January 24, 2018

My Fault

Pastor Don's been teaching communication
these past two weeks
and the next two, too
one of his themes has been how
we'll blame the other
for whatever
seeing their speck
and not
finding our plank
it gets weird, though
I have the advantage over everyone
forever, since my earliest remembering
I've been hearing that it's my fault
whatever the thing is
I was/am/will be responsible
the weight of so many years
pressing this truth upon me
so deep
that my first response was/is/will be
what did I
say, see, speak or do
wrong

January 24, 2019

Not a Good Time

it's not a good time to clean house
when you feel like this
everything is useless
you don't want any of it
except later
when it's too late
it'd be better to wait
for when things improve
so you don't risk losing
a treasure

January 21-23, 2019

Covington

why?
why do we even
say anything
about anything
that happened
out of our sight
beyond our hearing

do we think we understand
and have the audacity to think
we could actually make things better

why?
why do we even
become part of
what we aren't part of
make it our own
presume we have seen
believe we have heard

do we think we understand
and have the audacity to think
we could actually make things better

January 17, 2019

Light!

a hint
a gleam
a glimmer
a gentle beam

Light!

sword-like
pierces dark
recalling to life
what was dying

To Chris Burtch, who,
on a dark Enterprise Day,
shared and gave me light.

January 16, 2019

I sit
this tired old desk
bowed under thoughts
hijacked or ignored
failure and success
oddly accumulating
I am
devoid of ambition
of innovation, scarce
able to withstand the tide
flows in day-by-day
in tedium
I look
up to the heavens
watch brighter star
rise, its flame
my pyre, and pray
grace may fall
on me

January 15, 2019

Emptiness

un-numbered empty holes
linger where you used to be
too sudden endless nothings
silent scream your memory
yet greater for its emptiness
weeps this hole inside of me

January 15, 2019

would evil confront reason
stare it down toe-to-toe
could not gain a thing
has so forsaken God
has been itself by
God forsaken
is mindless
doomed

January 14, 2019

Mis-placed Humour

noble is your cause
tireless your struggle
lives exist, are better
and God is given glory
because of your work
but
the oddly shaped joke
you made for a smile
though between friends
seen by your enemies
works against your work

January 13-14, 2019

Amelia

Remembering a feathered friend
too soon gone

little rainbow
darting blithe
brilliant blur
friend to friend to friend
song cheerful chirped
unconcerned
such mundane things
as task or test or toil
your bright presence
flit from joy to joy
an instant here
a moment there
undarkening gloom
a twinkling in the sun
dancing on the breeze
to touch in curiosity
scintillating light
and in darker deep
sliver gleams as bright

you were such a tiny thing
but oh!
the void behind

January 10, 2019

this mad world storms
clouds drip with fear
thick obscure light
had they that power
 (they don't)
but tireless try
though time shortens
those I must trust
beneath whose care I live
untrustworthily stand
astride hate, confusion
which tsunami-like
overwhelm peace
overflow reason
rolls chaotic darkness
blinding eyes to hope
would dim what joy remains
once fear has had its way
had it that power
 (it doesn't)
yet tireless tries
though time shortens

all around me cries
I should be fearful
in doubt of my life
but I cannot condone
these fears
they have no power
cannot more than brush
upon what they vainly
would rip to shreds

have I in me this power?
this ability to withstand
terror? on my own?
no! it is not I
I have neither strength nor power
to withstand this horrid storm
my heart is insufficient pure
optimism too forlorn a hope
to stand against the monsters
constant assault my life
my better demons, demons still
to my destruction hurry

but this!

I know He on Whom my life depends

is worthy of my trust
I can be given to His care
un-succumbed to fear
the strongest storms of any pow'r
but teacup's tempest in His hand
though as cork upon the sea
as feather in the wind
I am not veered
nor am I blown
from the course before me laid
I am here and on Him stand
firm midst the storm's assault

and afterward
when all has gone but He
Whose voice first made me be
I. Will. Stand.

on Him
alone

January 8, 2019

Collusion
on "The A Word" by Choice42

you try to dress it up
cover its stench
camouflage
the ugliness of
this horrid thing
you do
make it
less repulsive
less reprehensible
more reasonable
more seemly
make it
nicer
something
the neighbours won't
run away from
weeping
when they see you
might stick around
to talk
to listen
maybe nod
their understanding
perhaps even
their agreement
to your hellish word

discreetly turn their eyes aside
to not see the blood you wear
with unjustified pride

try to hear a more pleasant sound
than these screams of death
that echo in your rooms

January 3, 2019

Today!

today!

is a brand new day
unused and fresh
hopes and dreams
overflow its brim
twenty-four hours
one-thousand
four-hundred
and forty
minutes' worth
of opportunity

who knows what
can happen

with this much time

anything!

The Fifty Percent 'Solution'

"ABORTION IS HEALTHCARE! HEALTHCARE IS A RIGHT!"

her placard screams
high above her anger

"MY BODY, MY CHOICE, NO DEBATE!"

on another's beside
also high, also angry

but only half of you
have what you call
'healthcare'
the other half of you
dies

and only half of you
have what you call
choice
the other half of you
dies

your placards angrily demand
your rights
your choice

which you would lose
could they speak

oblivious to this harsh irony

your placards angrily deny
their rights
their choice

which they would beg
could they speak

the only right you want
is the right to kill

the only choice you grant
is the choice to kill

What Would We Do?

what would we say, or not say
to the mother of our Saviour
if Gabriel came to see her now
joyful interrupting her quiet day
speaking words centuries coming
what would we say, or not say
if she dared to say he told her
she would carry the Son of God
would we believe what she said
would he whose ring she wore
sill walk, faithful, by her side
would we give him cause to leave
would we continue our welcome
when she came to our meetings
would we set tea and cookies
before her on our coffee table
discuss the wonders of our God
with eyes ablaze that we now see
what our first parents heard
would our bodies leap for joy
at being so near to our Lord
as we sipped tea with His mother

or

would we be ashamed to know her
disbelieving the words she sang
jump to horrid, evil conclusions
steal from her the joy of the life
given to her by the God we share

December 16-25, 2018

this world's ruin surrounds me
creation's wrack and wreck
its tattered crumbling rock
frail shelter for this fragile life
swaddled here in bits of cloth
I who spoke worlds into being
inhabit what has been made
the creator become creature
my power proscribed by a choice
I made long before this world
constrained within weakness
I have neither speech nor power
am weak
yet honour is being given me
I have been receiving guests
in my adopted throne room
who by their presence praise
this most lowly of all mankind
their eyes ablaze with wonder
humble spirits humbly bow
before their new born king
adore the one before them laid
wonder dancing on their faces
unconcerned to find me here
so far from that day long past
that day
we formed their first father
breathed our life into his lungs
gave to him their first mother
rejoiced to hear their song of joy
in the day that all was very good
long before their need of me
long infinities after our love
affirmed I would be the one
who would return their need
to joy
they have given me welcome
these low men of the field
stars shining in their eyes
then, excited share their news
run on feet too slow for joy
rush into my father's town
loud and joyful praising God
their cries that light had come
waking their sleeping neighbours
proclaiming to those in darkness
that their long expected hope
had come!
had come, now, at this very time

had come, here, to this very town
the promised one had come!
would live as one of them
eat and breathe and sleep
as they
ate and breathed and slept
unknowing I would also die
that they themselves may not
and live again to prove their joy
had come
creation goes on around me
tyrant realms rise to fall
grass bends to gentle breeze
lover's hands feel tender warmth
astounded voices softly whisper
and I lie, helpless, dependent
on these two, who themselves
also helpless and dependent
from us receive their breath
as frail as I have now become
we weary three take our rest
silent
beneath the glorious stars
we three spoke into their place
on a day so many days ago
to declare our glory to the Earth
remind a fallen mankind of us
give them the sign to find me
who for them will give his all
again
these stars, these two tired faces
smile peaceful down upon me
and I must learn their names again
must learn everything again
make my way on this side of glory
grow from babe to child to man
to lamb
these with whom my life is bound
whose faltering lips and shaking hands
do as best as can to please our God
they will remind me of all I know
will guard my way to all I am

Inspired by "What Child is This"
by William Chatterton Dix

December 15, 2018 - January 24, 2019

beneath the stars you lie abed
born a king, in low manger laid
your hands, helpless, grasp
her hand, whom life you gave
who's smile upon the face of God
echoes heaven's distant praise

December 10, 2018

Found on Facebook

"Eh, I'm agnostic which is what these people are. The cool thing about us is that we each have very different beliefs even though we are in the same category. I personally simply don't believe that humans CAN truly know the 'true religion' if there even is one. Basically, my belief is that I don't know and I don't believe it matters if we know. If you do, cool. I want to focus and base my morals on compassion and freedom"

"I personally
simply don't believe
humans can truly
know the 'true religion'"

me either
which is why I trust God

December 2, 2018

My Words

I am a plain, uncomplicated man
of plain, unprepossessing words
were they to achieve a fame
more lasting than their due
please don't do this to me
don't read me and say:
"What this means to me is ..."
I am far too simple a man
to have written of your thought
in place of my own
your first fast view of me
is most often correct

December 2, 2018

A Theological Discussion Never Entered Into

one hears such things
over the years
some good, some bad
some just very confusing
like this:

 "The rider on the white horse
 is the Anti-Christ"

which causes one to wonder
both

 "How did I not think of that?"

and

 "Who then are the other three?"

Leaving one with this puzzlement:

If the first rider is personalized
must not the others also be?

And if not the other three
then why alone the first?

And this other puzzlement:

If they can see this in that
what of me

who sees it not at all?

December 1-19, 2018

you dance light upon the page
words tossed effortlessly about
with casual deliberance
as though you hadn't a care
in all the big world
yet your themes belie a life
less charmed than my own
more with danger filled
and darkness too, perhaps
yet of beauty full aware
You grace these pages as a cloud
might grace a summer's sky
and I gaze, as a cotton-ball might,
upon what I'd thought to be

December 1, 2018

Christmas hats dance around the home
above glowing smiles and the cheerful
echoes of playing carols
brightness flits this grey December morn
gilds the bleaky drab of this early winter
as it gives way to the holy
is made glorious by the joy of the redeemed
celebrating anew their Saviour's birth

November 28-30, 2018

you say you don't know if
faith could be found to be
any more than wishful thought
but search
not quite hoping
 (apparently)
to find a place
where your gratitude
 (enjoying your gift of life
 yet unknowing its source)
might land
yet stop, embarrassed,
ere your joy bear its seed
and stoop, condescending,
to proclaim faith as futile
 (if honest)
for being built on myth
 (that most might be
 does not prove all are)

but what is life if not myth
 (of sorts
 to another eye)
it has no fact but our thought
our every recollection
no more than hearsay
to an ungentle soul

November 15-17, 2018

I know of some whose lilting words
flit free the air as though were birds
with rhythm light and gentle rhyme
Dear Reader tempt to while their time
upon a pleasant poesy

where I employ much cruder means
akin the buzz-saw drone of bees
staccato burst upon one's sense
and seldom from this form relents
to pen a pleasant poesy

I could not tell you which is best
if hurried words are equal blest
as those of brilliant golden flow
or, dimmed before a greater glow
defer to pleasant poesy

November 14, 2018

"May You Live in Interesting Times"
(Ancient Chinese Curse)
(presumably)

back in '15, and again in '16, I said
the next four North American years
could prove to be quite interesting
and now, as seen from '18, they are

they must not think too highly of us
they who inhabit that fair distant land

November 13-16, 2018

even as I act I think to not
though pain with self-despair
will again their shadows rise
I continue on, as other-driven
disregard unwanted warning
race along this hazard road
t'ward a doom as certain sure
as is fraught with final death
could not change though I try
knowing well I will at its end
weep bitter outcome unavowed
yet am by some great Mercy found
and made well

November 11-13, 2018

To a Stranger Walking By

'they' tried to tell me my fidelity
could teach nothing of temptation
to one who has never experienced
the comparisons of another's charms
which is why I'm happy where I am
but this morning, in Bible Study
looking out the window at the day
I saw you walking with your dog
and knew they were wrong
know full well temptation's charm
am simply happy where I am
because I am there with the God
Who both saves and guides

November 8, 2018

I made a NASA joke at my dog's expense
tonight
he was wanting/not-wanting to come in
sniffing at the edges of the lawn
exploring where it met the walk
beside his step up into warmth
one last adventure before bed
Impatient, I called to him
"Enough with the curiosity, Rover!"
and laughed

November 8-15, 2018

Even the Best

even the best of us
those we admire
want to be like
or speak like
or act like
even these
the best of us
fail
yet are so far
so far beyond the horde
we cannot see
their fault for their glory
and are
unintentionally
misled

After encountering a few "laxities"
reading an otherwise excellent book

November 8, 2018

someone
("Hi Dr. Kroeze!")
once described The Law
as a picket fence
a barrier
against the world
not as much to protect
the within from the without
but as a clear border
standing at the demark
where within ended
and without began

and what of me,
alive in this age
of scandalous freedom
it does me good to know
it stands firm and perfect
though the dust of ages
be violent hurled against it
I stand within its bounds
and find comfort

November 8, 2018

The Quiet

it's quiet, too quiet
nothing but the hum of my computer
the buzz of my space-heater
and the rumble of the rooftop unit
even my semi-infinite playlist, is muted
submerged in this soundless drone
like a waterlogged tree
other than a uni-directional "Good Morning!"
not a word has been spoken
all day
(but those whispered to God
and those of polite assistance
or directly related to work)

I am surrounded by The Quiet
and
though I wear it overcoat-like
it fails to keep the chill at bay
amidst all this noiselessness
I ask myself,
"Did I do something wrong?"

November 7, 2018

This Road I'm On

standing here you can see it
that dark patch
back there
dark, foreboding and terrifying
it was
(they were)
yet from here
but a spot
(shadowy trail)
on the map
of where I've been

I try
but can't
but vaguely recall
how I felt
back there
I remember the horrors
the hopelessness
the fear that tomorrow
would be taken
ere it could come
but those memories
have lost their power
their talons have no claws
they cannot do more
than give me joy
I see the sunshine
feel the sunlight
today

standing here
in this stretch of light
looking back I see the dark
(those darknesses)
where I wept
hear but an echo
of my lonely cries
desperate for help
any help

I was in the black
back there
a while ago
lost
in the endless bleak
buried

by that dreadful gloom
but today
today
I walk in light
today
I wear a smile
where this road may take me
tomorrow
whether sunlight or sadness
I'll know when I arrive
but
today was
today happened
I will recall this day
this grand and glorious day
where life felt as it should
when I again need its light

November 4, 2018

Just Last Week
(on the death of a friend's mom)

just last week
we had smiled
I'd passed you on the road
and stopped to chat
sharing a moment
at your mailbox
just last week
this morning Todd announced
you had passed
into the courts of God
but all I could think
was how we had smiled
just last week

November 3, 2018 - January 29, 2019

A Sign at The Munk Debates, 2018
"The Future of Politics is Populist"

"THIS MUNK DEBATE LEGITIMIZES HATE"

But does it?

You speak of hate
as it were an evil
in and of itself
but misapprehend
the tool from its abuse

Hate is not a thing
to be legitimized
 like equality
 like tolerance
Hate is not undesirable
in and of itself
There is a hate
both good and just
 unlike your words
 correctly pointing
 other than your hope

Hate as a weapon
opposing relentless evil
 if unchecked
 would destroy
is a noble thing
Like the hate we use
with neither shame nor embarrassment
to oppose

 ... murder
 bigotry
 pedophilia
 dishonesty
 injustice
 rape
 genocide
 discrimination
 abuse
 intolerance
 gossip
 abortion
 deception
 insensitivity ...
pointed arrow-like
at our common foe

A mere difference of opinion
is inappropriate for hate
As either its source
or as its target

November 2, 2018

Iceberg

I always do
sometimes hear
I often don't

my always
their often
different
two sides
one thing

November 2, 2018

it's a late fall afternoon
I'm outside, walking, again
(my son is quite glad I do this
he says it's very good for me)
from and to my office
like I always do about now
under a sky overcast by cloud
in rain, reluctant to fall
yet drizzling against my cheek
feet shmushing leaves
the trees have let go their grip
brilliantly orange and yellow
draining their colour on the grey
of these dull concrete slabs
beneath my steps

it is odd I'm not despondent
am instead gloriously alive
first time in ever so long
I think I've really
smiled

November 1-2, 2018

But on the Eleventh

on the thirty-first
ghouls and goblins prowl
horrors fill the night
and on the first
ghostly echoes scarce gone
Poppies on lapels
for eleven straight days
commemorate heroes
whose lives bought our own
then on the twelfth
sudden replaced
by baubles and bells
adorning very steps
where imps once played tricks
on those who begged treats
Poppies languish
waiting the next year
our lapse to atone

November 1, 2018

I was irritating them
and they left

they were irritating me
and I stayed

the question is
dear reader

did I stay
before they left

or

did they leave
before I stayed

and

would it make
any difference

November 1-7, 2018

Our Golden Child

he's the golden one
chosen, this one is
doomed
to take down Empires
undo all
prior kings have done
this guy's got it all
dynastic heritage
nice hair
winning smile
lovely family
colour
woke-ness
fun socks
and strangely
nothing touches him
he is unstainable
cannot be tainted
undistracted from his cause
he has the guise of knight-hood
has not the knight's burden
nor can touch him
those evils could
and have
brought great men down
yet recoil before him
as afraid their inability
show them ineffective
betraying power
as phantom menace

October 31 - June 16, 2022

Dear God!
(We're Blaming You for Our Own Mess)
a response to XTC's "Dear God"

Dear God, hope to know You better and
I pray we help make it better down here
I know we can't completely obliterate each tear
But tell the people that they're made in Your image
Serve the hurting, give relief
'Cause we forget we're ambassadors here
They can't believe in You

Dear God, I'm sorry I fail You yet
I know that You'll hear me, make my way clear
To work with You in reducing our infinite tears
Yet all us people that You made in Your image
We keep fighting in our streets
'Cause we won't make our opinions match You
We won't believe in You

Though we caused disease, You make all new!
Though You made mankind, we would unmake You!
We're the Devil's tool!

Dear God, don't seem that we've noticed but
You came in our place and You gave us this book
And us crazy humans miss it, we don't care to look
And all the people that You made in Your image
Believe that other junk is more true
Well I know it ain't, and so do You
Dear God
I must believe You
I must believe

I must believe in Heaven, in Hell
The saints, the sinners, the devil as well
The pearly gates, the thorny crown
We blame You for letting humans down
The wars we wage, the babies we drown
Those we could free and never unbound
And it's the same the whole world 'round
The hurt we cause, evil compounds
That Father, Son and Holy Ghost
Made to appear an unholy hoax
Yes, You're 'up there'! I must believe
That You know my tears ere I grieve
If there's one Truth I MUST believe in

It's You

Dear God

It is You!

The Apostle Paul's Patent Cure

Finally, my brothers
whatever happens
remember this
 whatever is true
 whatever is honourable
 whatever is just
 whatever is pure
 whatever is lovely
 whatever is commendable
 whatever is excellent
 whatever is praise-worthy
these things are of God
think of these things
practice these things
and our God
our great God of peace
will be with you
always

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just,
whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable,
if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise,
think about these things. What you have learned and received
and heard and seen in me, practice these things,
and the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:8-9

Anger

this lovely world
it's so
angry
hate flows free
broad as a river
raging like an ocean
always. hating. something

try it
I dare you
say anything
it doesn't matter what
you say
 God is real
 or not
 the sky is blue
 or not
 coffee is best
 or not
 Solo was good
 or not
just say anything
someone, somewhere
is looking for those words
wants to hate those words
will hate you
for saying them
will make you a target
with words like knife-blades
rip. you. to. shreds
destroy you
or much
so much
worse

we have let go of love
God in His heaven
must weep for our loss

October 29, 2018

When?

when does nice become icky?
when does good become unpleasant?
when does fun become harassment?

is it
 when the outstretched hand
 does more than merely aid

is it
 when asked to show
 the normally hidden

is it
 when a helpful touch
 lingers just too long

is it
 when the eye imagines
 what lies beneath

is it
 when what is possessed
 is by another repossessed

is it
 when a smile is made
 at another's expense

I'd like to know, it may be
I've had several encounters
which I may need to forgive

Nothing

some will claim
(many, actually
too many)
that God is not needed
that all we are
that all we see
that all we know
came from nothing
which exploded
that our treasured words
"In the beginning God created
the heavens and the earth"
should actually be
"In the beginning nothing exploded
and everything came by as a result"
but if you have a nothing
you don't have anything
so in truth
these don't start with nothing
but with a something
slightly more than nothing
which serves merely to replace
the eternal, self-existent God
with eternal, self-existent stuff
both of which reside
beyond the realm of reason

Supranatural

"In the beginning ..."

Wait! What?
You can't say
"In the beginning"!
Time is infinite
has no beginning
neither has an end
There could be no
"beginning"

"... God ..."

Whoa there bucko!
There is no God
or gods either
you've abandoned Science
gone beyond
into the Supernatural
Or, as we like to say
"The Forbidden Zone"
There's only Science
there can be no
"God"

"... created ..."

Okay,
maybe you don't understand
you've got this all backwards
First!
 There. Was. No. Beginning!
Second!
 There. Is. No. God!
Third!
 If there is no beginning
 and
 if there is no God
 then
 There. Can. Be. No. Creation!
You might want to try this
instead
(now pay attention):
"At one point in time there was nothing.
"Which exploded, and made everything!"
There,
did you get that?

Nothing beyond Science
Only what we can repeat
No more than nothing,
exploding
into everything
all that you see
all that you know

So,
what do you have to say
now that I've shown you
what is truer than your
silly little Truth?

"In the beginning ..."

NO!

"... God ..."

No

"... created ..."

no

"[... breath ...]"

"The Truth is this!"

"In the beginning!"

"God created!"

"The heavens and the Earth!"

October 26, 2018

I remember him well
it was a very long time ago
but very clearly I remember
the man I was then
he smiled much more often
he was excited by anything
he could be in a crowd
and not be lonely
but
I knew him so long ago
that
I've forgotten how he felt

October 25-26, 2018

It's A Wonderful Life!

No man is a failure who still lives
(to paraphrase Clarence Odbody)

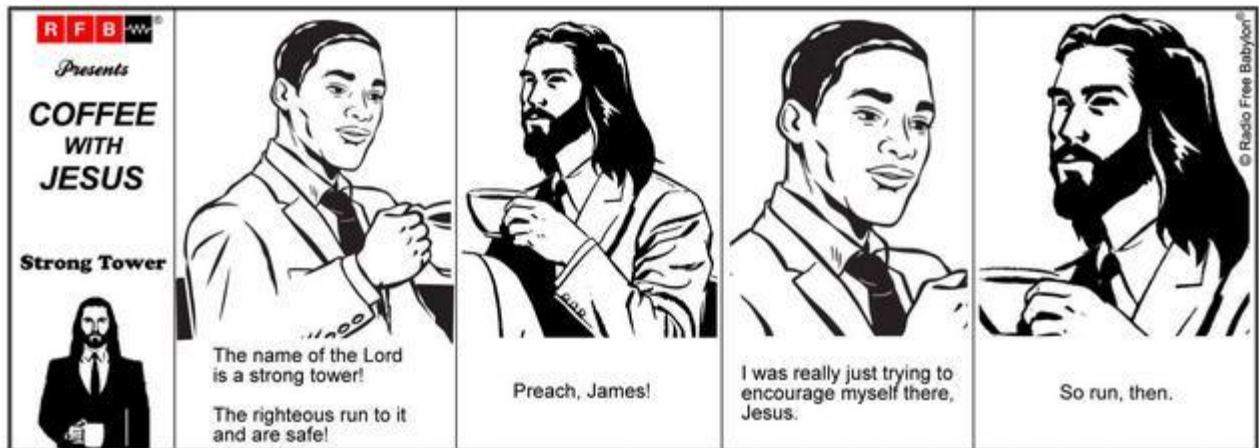
inside, we are all George Bailey
we have each our forfeit dreams
are not where we thought to be
life has taken turns unexpected
led where we may not have gone
had we more to say in the going
and yet, despite its endless twist
we work and pay and live and die
our great God saves all who ask
and for all its pain and fragile joy
life is grand and well worth living

Staggering Toward God

my body is weak and frail
the heart that drives it tired
this race so very hard to run
the struggle saps my strength
it takes all I have just to stagger
toward the One who saves me

Inspired by today's "Coffee With Jesus"
by [Radio Free Babylon](#)

At times, the best I can do is stagger toward Him



October 23-24, 2018

Khashoggi

so, let me get this straight
our leadership can forgive
outright
several billions of dollars
owed to the people of Canada
by Fiat/Chrysler and others
just, like, that
but Saudi Arabia kills a man
in cold blood
and we can't even find the courage
to cancel a contract?
because it's hard?
and Harper's fault?
really?
has it come to this
that politic's expediency
cares not at all
the shed of innocent blood
are we really so callous
as to have no compassion?

One of My Issues with Science Fiction

I'm a fan of Science Fiction
a BIG fan, been one for a LONG time
I love how a good story can take my mind
away from the hum-drum tedium of life
to a place where dreams know no limit
and all the worst parts of who we were
could be thrown on history's ash-heap
where it belongs (where, in reality,
another One had long ago consigned it)
but one problem with these stories
(among others, some equally glaring)
was the totally ridiculous sexuality which
for some obscure (or lack of) reason
not having anything to do with the story
would clothe the manly heroes
in space-armour of every description
and unclothe their female counterparts
in bits leaving nothing to be described
(I mean REALLY!?!? The man gets armour
and the woman next to him next-to-nothing
or something so nonsensically form-fitting
as to be completely impractical?
How does this even begin to make sense?)
men and women in this glorious future
doing the same work, in the same place
and yet painted entirely inequitably
this and those other problems
tended to dull much of the gloss
leaving me very glad that long ago
this One dealt more completely
with the worst of who we are

October 23, 2018

Listening

I've heard it said by some that
"Someone is always listening"
encouraging pain to speak out
find its help from those nearby
who stand and wait to serve
it would be nice to believe this
but I'm not sure that it's true
when I speak I feel unnoticed
as if my words stand unheard
before those who nearest me
could hear to serve, but don't

October 23, 2018

it takes my dog a while to recover
when he's been left too long alone
he'll follow us everywhere we go
to reassure himself we're still here
looking panicked as we near a door
when we sit he'll sit right next to us
as close as his doggy decency allows
reconnecting with the pack he loves
yet who left him all alone, once again
a sad little puppy, worried and forlorn
but with no words to speak his need
or to tell us how we did him wrong

some days I think I know
just how he must feel

October 22, 2018

It. Is. Hard!

it is hard on these days
to even get out of bed
and then, to go further
shower, pray, breakfast
prepare to go and drive
my toilsome way to work
and try to do something
when my mind just wants
to curl around its wounds
and cry
I will tell you, It. Is. Hard!

Seasonal

and here we are, again
on the cusp of another
Halloween's tricks and treats
their joy as children prepare
for their eve' of delicious fear
dreaming big costume dreams
dreaming bigger treat dreams
is palpable
surpassed by Christmas alone
or perhaps a special birthday
and shops run amok amuck
with their own celebrations
costumes, treats and ideas
of varying gruesomenesses
litter the shelves where once
Thanksgiving was arrayed
where soon Christmas' joy
will have its glorious day

my peers take their own share
in October's annual festivity
indulge their own excitements
dream their own sweet dreams
unconcerned by consequence
or the rightness of this fun

but off to one side I wonder
can we whom God has saved
celebrate this ugliest of all days
have we the freedom to defile
His throne with these horrors
what reason could we give Him
that would justify or redeem
our diluting His perfect holiness
with the evil He could never love

October 22, 2018

my cry is silent
though loud

my plea unseen
though plain

I am dying
surrounded
and all alone

October 22, 2018

My Quiet Pool

exuberant life surrounds
this dark and lonely pool
green and lush and lovely
joyous pleasure echoes in
my slowly drowning ears
all alone in my silent dark
the ripples of my struggle
lap upon the distant verge
to silent die beneath its joy
unnoticed and untouched

October 18, 2018

my initial, knee-jerk reaction
is to reply
"Yeah? Well, you're stupid!"
like that would win you over
or help you to see my point
may have some validity too

so I pause, pray and ponder

I pause
let my angered ire subside
so that what I do
whatever I do
will cause you no harm

I pray
let my own desires withdraw
so that what I do
whatever I do
will be as God's man

I ponder
let my mind consider us
so that what I do
whatever I do
will honour our years

and then, hopefully
I will respond to you
in wisdom both Godly and kind

October 17, 2018

Broken

we are all broken
each one of us is
in shattered pieces
we were made to be
something more
than what we are

October 17, 2018 - October 13, 2019

The Gap

"Where science fails spiritualism takes over"

Hardly!

God is more than what we don't yet know
God's wisdom fills every nook and cranny
He is The One Source of all our knowledge
He is The One Hope for all our ignorance
He does not grow small as man grows large
He does not change whether we know or not
He is not the final recourse when reason fails
He is alone the foundation of all that's known
our very thought of Him exists because He is
our every hunger for an answer points His way

October 17, 2018

Dream!

"Remember to look up at the stars
and not down at your feet."

Stephen Hawking
"Brief Answers to Big Questions"

despite his failings
which at their heart
were as mine are
(with one difference)
a man who can say
"look up at the stars"
who could dream big
from his body's trap
is an inspiring man

October 16, 2018

Stephen Hawking's Big Question

"Do I have faith?" he writes in Brief Answers to the Big Questions. "We are each free to believe what we want, and it's my view that the simplest explanation is that there is no God. No one created the universe, and no one directs our fate."

Hawking goes on to say that this realization made him decide belief in an afterlife was just "wishful thinking" and that "when we die, we return to dust."

Gael Fashingbauer Cooper - c|net
October 16, 2018 5:56 PM PDT

so much I wish to ask you now
much more than before when
you dabbled merely in science
but now that you philosophise
I'd really like to ask you how you could know
"There is no God"
when if you could not see to prove Him to be
how could you unseeing prove Him not to be

and even more I'd like to ask you now
if you still think God is a wishful thought

Peter Rhebergen's Big Answer

all that exists contends that He is
before the beginning, after the end
His glory, power and majesty evident
in every single thing, great or greater
His being less in doubt than our own
His the life from which ours descends

October 16-22, 2018

Not Alone

"Depression is often lurking in the shadows. When you are depressed, most often you think that you are worthless. The worse the depression, the more you feel this way. Fortunately, you are not alone!"

Norm Cohen
PsychCentral website

it is both
a comfort and a terror
that this my madness
is not mine alone

it is a comfort
to wander in company

it is a terror
how this road can turn

October 16, 2018

that day was a little crazy
too many hour's drive
too much stress
too high up
to jump
or not
to jump
no question
still my answer
was too hard found
my mind crazy as the day

Looking back on [this day](#).

October 16, 2018

Hints ...

the hints were there all along
well, more than hints, really
he did actually talk about it
but still
that he did it was a surprise
can you hold us responsible
for not knowing he'd jump?

October 15, 2018

Conversation with the Delivery Man

"Are you this guy?"

"Nope, I'm the other guy,
you had a 50% chance, though."

"Shoot!
I suck at 50% chances."

"So do I.
That's why I'm a Christian;
it's a 100% chance."

"That's for sure!
Have a nice day."

October 14, 2018

Ode to the Pink Pimpernel

with thanks to:

Baroness Orczy & Sir Percy Blakeney
Laura Klassen & Choice42

They see her here, they see her there
Those Choicers see her everywhere
Here on a tablet, there on a cell
Our brave, life-saving Pimpernel

October 13, 2018

Weakness

it takes me so long to recover from your slight
I'll be crying hours after the deed's been done
you're too close a friend for me not to care
which only makes your careless pain the more
and I try, oh how I try, not to share it back

October 12-21, 2018

Dust

the wind blows hard
today
leaves dance across the yard
quickstep
birds seemingly disinclined
to soar
struggle to stay in their roosts
above
hats struggling to stay on heads
bent down
to meet the unseen flow

and dust
such dust!
careens into corners
sandblasts the here
changes the now
into something new
something

different

who knows from where this dust has come
could be that construction site
down the street
or from that UPS truck
on some mad career of its own

but

a very significant but

this dust may have flown from
Taipei or Timbuktu
or Timiskaming
even
to tarry here
in Toronto

who knows

but

a very significant but
(again)

maybe

just maybe

this very dust is of majestic realm
caressed across the restless seas
to bless our trivial home
with mystical touch of
away
with wonder to surround us!
and grace our here
our now
with some distant there
and then

maybe
just maybe

this storied dust
is in this very here
is in this very now
is alive within our breath
is become
one with us

and if?

then oh!

what glory!

I find it interesting where inspiration flows;
this one flew in on the walk back from the
Chocolate Factory next door, after we heard
a cry and a loud crash and went to check.
Dust blew on my cheek and I wondered ...

October 11-12, 2018

Thursday - Middle Evening

it is Thursday, middle evening
up in his room Andy strums
his brand-new acoustic bass
(a lovely Denver, if you ask)
Beth and I sit below him here
together in our shared isolation
tablet and book relaxing minds
laying aside the care of the day
our puzzle, untended, for now
waits our return to its charm
(New York vacation memories
of our visit a few weeks back)
Julia walks home from her car
she left it at Active for work
(my ear attuned to her return)
Doris with her weekly friends
play their games in the kitchen
distant loves once more near
warm inhabit tender thought
familiar pleasures sweetly ring
within the happy walls of home

it is Thursday, middle evening
we in each our own way unwind
enjoying rest at this end of day

The Promise

it was The Promise that brought us here
it looked so glorious from where we stood
it touched the very best of what we were
standing at that doorway, looking through
we saw a release from chain and oppression
into joyful equality, freedom and fellowship
built on the foundation of human tolerance

the more we try to change

where is our equality
if we know only by difference
do we not still look down?

where is our freedom
if the road we walk has walls
do we not still wear chains?

where is our fellowship
if we tear each other down
do we not still divide?

where is our tolerance
if we sneer at alter-thought
do we not still hate?

the more we stay the same

it was The Promise that brought us here
but now that we're here we want another
we've done nothing more than exchange
our First Utopia for another, less winsome
our dreams die as dust, are trodden down
the bright and glorious tomorrow is come
yet looking back at what we had, we weep

October 9, 2018

Easy

seeing the news
from my armchair
warm and comfy
here in my home
behind this door
it's easy to forgive
and I can do it
without thinking

October 9, 2018

Dear Mr. Trudeau

some months ago someone falsely claimed
a hate-motivated attack on her person
a man, apparently, had tried to cut her hijab
you
the news
pretty much everyone
was all over it
firm in condemnation
of so abominable an act
"Canada is no place for hate"
I remember hearing you say

but just last week another person claimed
a hate-motivated attack on her person
a man, on video, had tried a roundhouse kick
you
the news
pretty much everyone
left it in on the ground
where this woman fell
itself an abominable act
Canada may have no place for hate
but I find your silence deafening

and I
a citizen of this land
would like to know why
why did you show
two such different responses
to these two abominable acts
raising your voice against the lie
yet
deafeningly silent for the truth

October 9, 2018

Crickets

January, 2018 – Hearsay

“He tried to cut my hijab”
outrage
vocal, instant
calls for tolerance
immediate justice
“Why can’t we all just get along?”

October, 2018 – Hearsaw

“I wanted to kick her phone”
deafening silence
resounds
untolerating
the stand against hate
“He also is loved by the Father; pray”

Deathwalker

they walk hand-in-hand with death
unconcerned that holocaust
following in their wake
uncaring the destruction
theirs alone the making
that lives within their lies
they kill, gladly
to the moment of birth
unheeding the endless screams
of the millions never born
too many thrown away
never given chance to plead
that they too be given breath

they walk hand-in-hand with death
they cheer, gleeful
those who march
their horrific parade
they boast, proudly
"my/her body
my/her choice"
as though the life inside
had not its own soul
had not its own body
wanted not its own choice

they walk hand-in-hand with death
they array themselves
in all their obscene might
against our least able
against our most helpless
against our silent millions
never given chance to breathe
in their mad abandon
they destroy the very lives
given them to nurture

they walk hand-in-hand with death
we are ourselves abused
we reveal their immorality
to eyes that scorn to see
we are to them
the hated mirror of their shame
we alone of all proclaim
the danger keen to claim its due
along their dash to destruction
the death awaiting this road's end

their spirit so relentless quenched
no longer able to look for hope

they walk hand-in-hand with death
the only course they know
death and lies their stock in trade
they fear not their Master
they fear Truth
they fear Light
they fear what they know
aches within their souls
lies buried far below
the darkneses of their hate

they walk hand-in-hand with death
these, the living dead
who's eyes and hands and mouths
spew violent filthy lies
fast rushing to their doom
they pause only to hate
to strike out at love
at the outstretched arms
that plead their change of heart

October 5, 2018

One of These Days

one of these days
just one of these days
(no
scratch that
I'd like it more than
just one of these days)
I'd like to be right
I'd like to say a thing
and hear them say
"Yes!"
"You're right!"
"You're absolutely right!"

it'd be a nice change
from this constant second guessing

October 4, 2018

Crossing Jordan

"[he is] also loved by the Father,
so please pray for him."

what grace
what astounding grace
to echo God's gift
to one desperately needful
how amazing an example
to forgive
at the moment of offence
to take one's spotlight
and shine it on the Father

who saves

all

even the hate filled
who need the cross

as do we

all

The title is a try at double-entendre;
"Crossing" is to be seen as a verb.

Quote by Marie-Claire Bissonnette after
being roundhouse kicked by a man who
objected to her stand against abortion.

Would we could all remember to show
to others, even those who abuse us,
the same grace God has shown us.

October 2, 2018

Fractured

just imagine
if you could
that we were all in harness together
pulling in the same direction
a team
working toward the Great Goal
what could we accomplish
that has so far evaded us
what could we do for Him
Whose patience with us
is unimaginable

September 26, 2018

Looking for Beauty

we travel far and near
we run here and there
we hurry to and fro
seeking the elusive beauty
we think lies
around every corner
or stands
on the fence's other side
or waits
behind the next open door
yet is always
far from home

we search but fail to see
that where we are
beauty is

September 24, 2018

why are we so surprised by evil
it is all around us, within us
endlessly unrelenting
in its desire to destroy
eternally untiring
in its wanton hate

we should not be surprised
that evil is
nor at what evil does
evil has no reason
knows nothing but death
feels nothing but hate

I Wonder

I wonder if God lets our murdered children
stand with Him before their faithless parents
and shows them each what would have been
had their lives been valued more than death
and let these children demand an accounting
why they never had their chance to breathe

I wonder if God lets our murdered children
safely rest within His arms, tender held
by a Father far more faithful to love them
than their own parents could ever prove
and give these children a chance to forgive
before fear and joy forever take their own

After a conversation with a friend who
operates an anti-abortion & pregnancy
help ministry, I was thinking about what
might happen if these murdered children
were to meet their 'parents' before God's
great white throne. Would He give them
time to find out why they were killed and
let them have a chance to forgive before
Heaven and Hell make their final claim.

September 22, 2018

The Sunny Day

this world can be scary
it's so big
it's so busy
even on "The Perfect Day"
it intimidates
more often than not
so many things rushing by
so many people going on
the mind, reels
looks for shelter
hides behind eyes
not quite aiming
at what they're looking at
but even like this
when they almost see
something special
 (a person in a Blue Jays cap
 or
 a parent sharing smiles with their child
 or
 a person so obviously enjoying living)
it becomes contagious
overwhelms the fear
that person is my friend
and I must
I simply MUST
greet this face I've never seen
and say "Hi,
it's been a long time,
how are you doing?"

and that's so strange
'cause I'm not like that at all

September 21, 2018

Rain

rain falls sudden, fast and hard
storm drains and ditches overflow
streams free-run the ground
and the four-oh-one slows to a crawl
cars flow down the roadway
boats on rivers newly born
close followed by rooster-tails
unconfused by this new game
dark skies fast outpace traffic
the sun behind me glows bright
shining into the murky wetness
through rush hour's (odd name) mist
colours dance the sky above me
flow with the rain drip onto the road
run from the sky to dance my car
 (My Father!
 This is amazing!)
and I am overwhelmed by glory

Driving home along the 401 this evening
a sudden torrential rain drenched everything.
But it was over by the time I'd gone half-way
and the sun came out behind me, making a
rainbow glow above Pickering and in the mist
of the cars around me. And all I could think
was: "My Father! This is so AMAZING!"

It was a lovely drive.

September 19-20, 2018

Tide

rolls along the sun-shod shore
remorseless
unconcerned of any hindrance
relentless
buries all beneath its darkness
ruthless

a beachhead stands futile
temporary respite at best
diversions have no effect
scarce momentary pause

it rolls on untroubled
by hopeful barrier
overwhelming
everything
before
it

September 15-21, 2018

Ivy Lea

it is enormous, this thing before me
immense above far restless waves
unbent beneath relentless load
I am so very small upon it
dwarfed by enormities

intangible threat inhabits sturdy reassurance
danger strolls hand-in-hand with safety
death greets life along the abyss
silent voices insistent cry
"It would be so easy"
and it would be

easy

so very easy
it wouldn't be very hard at all
emptiness calls with gravitic insistence
brilliant depths tempt surrender of steel embrace

infinity's suddenly nearer door beguiles
white knuckled, I clutch at the rail
as far from the edge as can be

Beth and I were walking along the Ivy Lea Bridge in Gananoque
on our way home from a vacation in New York (city & state);
this poem was my response to the insistent pull of the void
and my desperate clutching of the hand-rail, and walking
as far as I could possibly be from the edge of an abyss
which was relentlessly pulling me into its emptiness.
My knuckles were truly white as my desire to live
fought desperate with the void's call to death.

August 31, 2018

the interesting thing

it's 'interesting'
to visit other's pages
or groups
or chat-rooms
or even
 (gasp)
a real person
 (or more)
and see their depressions
and see how they deal
with their own selfworthlessnesses
their own selfdevaluing horrors
and see I am not really alone
after all

I find that comforting

somehow

August 31, 2018

For Charlie and Annie
and their families

this world is far too sad
is far too filled with grief
heartbreak lurks each smile
tears flow without end
what can we do with pain
but endure it
bent beneath the fearsome load
that should never have been

but we are not forlorn
not left here on our own
alone
hope does spring
is eternal
our God is gracious to save

Oh! God!
save us from this grief
throw it into the pit
from where it came
destroy it, Lord
before it destroy us

Oh! God!
save us!

The grandson/son/nephew of friends died
earlier this week. Defeated by what fights
too many of us.

Sometimes there can be words
but endless pleadings to our God.

This is one of those times.

Dear God save us!

August 29-31, 2018

Don't Look Down
(after Sarah Lemont)

don't look down
that's where the cracks are
the gaps
the ugly places
no one bothers fixing

where horrors grasp
clutch at life
overwhelming
what falls

don't look down
despair lurks that dark
haunts these
empty in-betweens
where slipping souls stumble

they prowl the dark
these dead things
destroyers of
what falls

don't look down
hope lives ever near
God walks
so close beside
darkness cannot harm you

Father of lights
God alone!
restorer of
what falls

don't look down
joy is not found there
but leaps
along each day's path
sustains the faltered step

love without end
He gives free
recovering
what falls

"So often, we get stuck on the minute details of the exact spot we are currently standing. We scrutinize everything within sight, trying to figure out precisely how evenly spaced the yellow lines are on the road and how that will affect the rest of our journey. A bump on the road can send us into a tailspin, and we question why nobody thought to fix all the flaws in our path. We find ourselves always looking down, waiting for the next crack in the pavement, the next potential threat to our happiness. It sucks the joy out of our journey, moving our focus to everything that could possibly go wrong.

Lift your eyes for just a moment and turn around. God has brought you this far. Now look across to the vast expanse you have yet to cover. He will bring you that far, too.

Perhaps you've hit a difficult point in your road. But your journey is not finished. God has so much more for you, and he is using each of these difficulties as a part of your journey, not a hindrance to it.

Take a breath, and let this long road we walk become an adventure, full of beauty and wonder and excitement. If we get caught up in the details, let them be the laughter of a child, the way the grass glistens at sunrise after the first frost, or the happiness you feel after a giant bear hug from someone you love.

Enjoy the adventure, and trust God with the destination."

Sarah Lemont, June 9, 2018, Facebook
Friend of my cousin, Bernice Lowe

August 29, 2018

It's Not Your Fault
(Yet it's Because of What You Did)

it's not your fault
my fall
my fail
both my fault
my abandoning His call
mine alone to own
no one's fault
but mine

and yet

had you not done
what you had done
sin could not have knocked
my door could not have opened
and I would not have welcomed
temptation into my home

so I ask you to be careful
I may have fanned the flame
but you provided its spark

August 28, 2018

Just Kidding :)

have you ever stopped to wonder
how much evil has been excused
by saying "Just kidding :)"
it seems people can get away with
anything
if they just say "Just kidding :)"
once they've done their damage

after tears begin to flow
river-like
to sting their way
across a life desert dry
it is too late
applying their "Just kidding :)"
like salve on a wound it can never heal
does nothing
but show that "Just kidding :)"
was never in their plan
in the first place

now I may be more thin-skinned than most
(it has been said
though I'm not certain how true it is)
but if I am
and it's known that I am
that just makes it worse

August 27-28, 2018

Box

there is a box
beside me
 (is beside me yet
 does not contain me!)

many have tried
failed, tried again
 (do they not diminish
 as they diminish me?)

to put me inside
close and tape the lid
 (it stands empty yet
 will not contain me!)

I am too vast to box
I am formed of Earth
stars dance my eyes
I am a child of The God
I outweigh all creation
the box is not made
that can contain me

August 27, 2018

most of my photos are of loneliness
I guess people in two dimensions
intimidate me as much as in three

August 26, 2018

I would never harm you
knowingly or with intent
'prefer' to own the pain
than return it to its source
I have never, not even once
mocked you to your face
or laughed in your absence
Not. Even. Once.
I will praise you to the stars
and back
I have bought your tears
with my own

when you show you don't
trust me
the ruin you make is real
and very impressive

August 26, 2018

My Smile Falls Off

my smile falls off
as quickly as I go
but how can I talk
the problem remains mine
if not important enough
to be yours

August 26-28, 2018

you may think
I don't care
that it just rolls off
like water off a duck
that no lasting
impression
has been made
but I do care
it doesn't just roll off
and,
while I will forgive,
it is impossible
to forget
what you did to me,
everything subsequent
threatens

August 25-27, 2018

he said something like
"... nobody talks about it
but everybody knows ..."
I know now
but I didn't know when
he said that something
so he was wrong
everybody did not know
and he was right
because everybody knew
who either mattered or cared

it matters and doesn't really
and now that I know
I care and don't care either

this I do know

it matters
 it is his only life
 it is of utmost importance
 that he live it well
but doesn't
 it is his life alone
 it is not an offense to me
 that he live and fail

the bell may toll for he
that also tolls for me
but his death or life
are his alone to own

August 24, 2018

Father!

Father! You have saved me
what I was, I am no more
what I am, from you alone
and I ask you, Father
that as I live this life
this life You gave me
that I may be found to honour You
may I show less care for my wrongs
than I do for their lives

August 23, 2018

Gone Solo

we had to remove him
he shot first, you know
it left an ugly taste
knowing our hero
was not as noble as our hopes
failing our aspirations
so we removed him
bounty hunters united
from Outer Rim to Coruscant
were headed our direction
for the death marks on us
for his lack of couth
despite last minute redemption
so we removed him
what else could we do?

the Millennium Falcon silent stands
above a grieving Wookiee's howls
Docking Bay 94's dry dust
blows round the futile feet
of one tired old man
and his side-kick
a whiney, shock-faced boy
hopes of glory dashed
by troopers now surrounded
while above them stars go dead
in evil Empire's rampant run
through silent screams on countless worlds
unchallenged across the skies
flaunts its power ever boldly
beyond the ken of Tatooine

'tis tragic, true
yet what else could we do
Han shot first
he should have waited
that great mis-deed
overwhelms all greater
we HAD to remove him
what else could we do?

Hail the Empire!

August 23, 2018

Vacuum

I was once
I lived
I breathed
I made history
I happened
I stopped
yet still I was

am becoming less
offensive
'they' say
deleting my honour
flawed legacy
'they' say
deleting my name
making me be
as if I never was
though I was

but I did do these things
all of them
today you are
because yesterday I was
when you make me be
as if I never was
will you not also
unmake yourself
and if not unmade
what now fills
my vacuum

August 23, 2018

Thoughts ... Prayers

they're all well and good
these touted thoughts
with their accompanying prayers
it's nice to know
there's a least that can be done
that thoughts
and prayers
find their way to need

but

what good are thoughts
when hands are missing

or

what value prayers
if to an ineffective god

do these merely serve
to sate our jaded conscience
pleased now we've done something
we need do nothing more
or do we believe
do we really believe
our thoughts offer salve
to a hurt a world away
or our prayers succeed
where we would never be

August 22, 2018

have you ever wondered

... if ...
... perhaps ...
... it could be ...

that your memory wasn't the problem

that who you are is not
beyond your own controlling
the result of some chance
cosmic ray's billiard bounce
through your memories

that who you are does not
own memories at fault
false truths manufactured
by wishful thinking or
an author's splendid dream

... what if ...

it was real

... what if ...

it was all real

the you that you are
you are today
this moment
right now
not by whim or fancy
but by firm recollection
of things forgotten by all
but you

haven't you ever wondered
if maybe it wasn't a dream
after all?

August 21, 2018

Fear & Division

as long as mankind has
a "For" opposing an "Against"
he will have fear
fear of the unknown
fear of change
(for good or for bad)
fear of self
of his neighbour
and knowing fear
he will know division
from Truth
from neighbour
from self

as long as mankind knows
his own belief, knows also
an alternative to his views
he will be afraid
he will not know
he will be uncertain

until The One beyond man says
"This. Is. Truth!"

August 21, 2018

I'd really like to sleep
soundly, to the alarm
Waking in this silence
an hour or more early
is simply for the birds

August 20, 2018

it is frighteningly odd that
those who claim our strength
grows from where we differ
have no room beside them
for any who think different

August 16, 2018

A Different Life
(for Jeannie Prinsen)

long ago you and I began
you were first, but not first
I was next, but not last
from that long ago
to a time less long ago
you and I were
and suddenly,
too suddenly, we

are not

I still leave your chair
it stands empty
will stand empty
forever, for all time
like this part of me
it waits on your return
but you won't come
can't come
God has the higher claim
I will go to you
someday
when my today
becomes the less long ago
of those now my are
leaving them who with me
share our today
to their own were
save my chair in turn
I will be with God
as you are now
and stand at His gate,
both gazing
He who saved
and waiting
those who come

August 16-18, 2018

we like to blame these things
on other things not quite near
since things do always happen
we like the cause to be remote
that other's hands might reach
where our hands have no power

August 16, 2018

sometimes I wonder if I'm a curmudgeon
they don't often smile, and apparently
neither do I, aloof in my corner, frowning
instead of everyone else not getting it
in a room filled with neighbour's praise
I stand apart with my face all grumpy
confront by untruth only I seem to care
how is it that these my brothers see
yet seeing truth mixed with greater lie
seem to neither care nor discern
what they praise is fraught with error
or, of greater horror yet, is it I who
cannot tell truth from lie, though cares

August 16, 2018

if Heaven is, Hell must also be
Paradise would be no great reward
were it not rescue from Perdition

August 15, 2018

"Expect the worst,
you'll never be disappointed"

'they' say this but the thing is
as reasonable as this sounds
it isn't true every time
as crazy as it may seem
too many of us know
disappointment can be a friend
or at least not the enemy
others make it out to be
too many of us don't know
have no idea at all, at times
what to do with the best
when it, and not the worst,
comes knocking at our door
it's an easier thing to be
disappointed in our disappointment
than be forced to welcome joy
pleasure is unfamiliar ground

August 15, 2018

Rufus

my dog greets life
eyes looking forward
happily wagging his tail
for all that comes his way
his delight at just being alive
is palpable, and
a joy to behold, and
I am jealous
I wish I could greet life
like my dog

I like living. I have sometimes been
wildly, despairingly, acutely miserable, racked with sorrow,
but through it all I still know quite certainly
that just to be alive is a grand thing.

Agatha Christie
(who could)

August 15, 2018

I am broken
life is glorious
music fills the air
blessings surround
yet
I feel endless need
I hear only tears
I know death
I am broken

August 15, 2018

there was a time
is a time
will be a time
when you have hurt
are hurting
will hurt
me
 how much?
 it doesn't matter
 pain is pain
 though its wounds
 may never bleed
and you should
know
I may never
forget
I will always
forgive

August 14-October 25, 2018

From the English Patient

I know of one who studies English
loves the language and its rule
who kindly binds up any blemish
that words may be one's perfect tool

Who at times may read my poem
and to my words add sage advice
but suborning form to legal function
o'erthrows my oddly formed device

Yet when confront by greater truth
than grammar's laws of proper usage
yields unstopped to public fancy
smiles with those whose voices rage

How odd that one to form adhering
would the higher form so swift decry
who truth abuses as I do grammar
our convenient roads to careless ply

On someone's comment on my poem
["On Vermeer's Hat"](#) that 'we' is poor
grammar and should instead be 'us'.
Who yet throws God's truth aside for
the world's deceptive words.

August 13-14, 2018

On "Vermeer's Hat"

there is a line in the book
by Timothy Brook
where he writes
"Vermeer stayed home,
and painted what he saw"
the sign of a great artist
to reveal what is seen
where their eyes are
whether at home
where their heart is
or a wanderer
to the less known
yet no less lovely
the great artists reveal
what treasure holds their heart
wherever their home
sharing what they see
with we who see it not
or different
laying their heart and eye
as gentle veneer
on that before them

August 10, 2018

when I was a kid
we had no computer
we had no pool
we had nothing
but the Lone Ranger
in serials on TV
me and my brother
we played what we saw
"Cowboys and Indians"
"Hero and Villain"
with no more thought
than to have fun
laughing the afternoon away

today there are computers
movies, news and wars
'entertainments'
of every description
and I'm worried
if still is played what is seen
and if the goal remains
an afternoon's laughter

August 10, 2018

Sometimes ...

sometimes when I
say "Wow!" you
might take some
offense
trust me you
don't need it I
just wanted to be
nice

In response to a poem I saw earlier today

July 10 - August 5, 2018

How Do We Know?

eighteen days
eighteen hope-filled days we prayed
each to our disparate god
asking for mercy, an intervention
begging thirteen lives be saved
for eighteen days
And. They. Were!

now might come the question
how do we know who's god heard?
who's god answered our pleas
"They're out!" ample validation
for each one's god being The One
wherein lies logical senselessness
for each our god excludes others'
any One will not permit any Other

so how DO we know who's god heard us
who's god gave us this blessing
who's god is worthy of our thanks
our praise and adoration

if we don't know how to know
or see beyond our blindness
how can truth be known?

The validity of one's god is proved
not
by our being given the things we want
but
by the mesh and fit of our god with reality

Looking at the ripples
doesn't prove a thing,
we've got to dive deep
to see the ripples' spring

July 9, 2018

from my office front door I can see
a hundred cars, or more, parked
resting after morning's hurdy-gurdy
as drivers, in their own offices, work
dream their own resting, after hours
perhaps with family, perhaps alone
each a chapter of a separate story
each entwined into the greater tale

July 6, 2018

Bond, James Bond

I don't watch James Bond any more
what with all the innuendo
acts rather more explicit
unbelievable carnage
death, destruction and mayhem
or the preposterous
utterly out of this world
stuff that happens on-screen
it's just not fun to watch
I'm not saying I'm perfect
(I'm far too far from that)
or that you're not perfect
(you may be closer than I)
it's just that my soul can't
watch James Bond any more
(though often it wants to try)

July 4, 2018

the other night there was a racket
beyond our home's front windows
loud yelling and clangs and bangs
of metal hitting metal very hard
looking out I could see a mail box
had been thrown to the ground
was under attack by several 'men'
with nothing better to do than to
vandalize something not their own

the police told me to let them be
they'd go away when they were tired
so I did and they did and next morning
I saw their tools scattered on the grass
the police told me I could keep them
no way to tell who's they once were
so I did and put them in my tool-box
quite happy at the surprise addition
of a hammer, a saw and a square

yet I wondered

if their worth as tools had been decreased
seeing as their source had been a crime

July 3-5, 2018

Beautiful!

"Why! It's so beautiful!"
astonished by splendour
raptured eyes gaze glowing orb
brilliant hung upon the night
yet reflecting greater glow

"Why is it so beautiful?"
but how could it not be?
consider He who made it
could any made thing do else
than show The Maker's glory

June 28, 2018

One Hundred Years from Now

one hundred years from now
who can know what will be
we may at last have touched the stars
for so long we have reached
we may have ended hunger
or hatred
or warfare
or crime
or done any of a multitude of things
who knows, one hundred years
is an awefully long time
a lot can happen while we wait
one hundred years ago
we had scarcely taken wing
were traumatized by a war
stood, reeling, beneath horrid ills
had no idea our footsteps would touch the moon
or our emissaries traverse the stars
we knew naught but what was nearest
could not hear more distant voices
nor instant reply their distant word

I don't know at all

one hundred years from now
this world could be a world of wonder
who knows what the mind of man
will conceive or his hands achieve
whether good or ill

all I know for certain is

one hundred years from now
I will be dead
and what of me will matter most
is not is that I lived
nor how long
but how

June 26, 2018

Purity

we're striving for purity
renewing the books of us
removing the harmful pages
tear them out
shred them up
as if they never were

but they were
cannot be undone

could we erase today
what we were yesterday
can we know our tomorrow

editing yesterdays to match
the todays we want to have
we lose warning of the years
today left confused and alone
anxious at tomorrow's door
unknowing where it has been

living on the thin edge of now
we have no history to guide
our step into what will be

June 26, 2018

Con conversationally Challenged

all my conversations are uni-directional
they can talk to me and I respond
pay attention, try to understand
what they're trying to say
try to show I care about what is said
but strangeness happens on the other side
words leave my mouth
travel through the space between
apparently reach their destination
but after the blank stares
or suddenly turned backs
I think something might be missing
I think my speech as good as any other's
but perhaps it isn't
maybe there's something wrong with it
makes the others pay less attention
to me
than the average human deserves
either that, or ...

...

but that other doesn't bear thought
that road would end in blackness

June 25-26, 2018

Sir Isaac & Me

Sir Isaac sat under the apple tree
why?
who knows?
maybe he just wanted to enjoy
the lovely day God gave him
maybe he wanted an apple
or a quiet place to think
I don't know
and
I'll never know
why
when he saw the apple fall
he felt the earth also rise
me?
I would have felt nothing
would have eaten the apple
thanking God for His tasty gift
and gone on with my life
but Sir Isaac?
he saw the apple fall and thought
"Aha! Gravity! Mutual attraction!"
and next thing you know
Buzz and Neil are on the Moon
and Voyagers course among the stars

and I see that I am, unlike Sir Isaac
not one who defines gravity
but one who defers to it

which makes a world of difference

June 22, 2018

"Our prime purpose in this life is to help others.
And if you can't help them, at least don't hurt them."

The Dalai Lama

my prime purpose includes
but doesn't entirely consist
of
helping
and
not hurting
others
who share this life with me
though both are good both
are
part of
yet
not all of
my life's true prime purpose
which is, to quote a prophet
to do justice
to love kindness
to walk humbly with my God
all my good and lack of harm
comes not
from my natural good nature
nor comes
from my love for fellow man
but rises
alive in my grateful love for God

"He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?"

Micah 6:8

June 15, 2018

Browsing History

my history betrays me
whether deleted or retained
I am betrayed by fact
where I've been
what I've seen
is there
where all or One may see
know me
see my secret dreams
to my praise
or shame

June 14-October 25, 2018

I should be in a boat
dry land atrophies my soul
my thoughts come hard and slow

I should be in a boat
peaceful drift the quiet swell
float free on gentle wave

I should be in a boat
deeply breathe of earth and sky
flood my mind with wonder

I should be in a boat
fade to dust my foulest mood
refresh my tired soul

I should be in a boat

I really should



June 14, 2018

so much evil
death lives around us
we are helpless

oh GOD!

You are amazing!
despite all this vileness
You are our hope!

June 14, 2018

I am not heroic
neither famous nor renowned
merely shuffle along this road
one among the countless mass
and should I one day
shuffle off this mortal coil
few would mark my lack

I am but a guy
living as well he can
trying his very best to stand
knowing that he often falls
knowing too
whether he stands or falls
he stands or falls on the grace of God

June 14, 2018

sin's
constant, unrelenting
"Yessssss ..."

must be always met

by my
more constant, more unrelenting
"NO!"

June 14, 2018

These Casual Horrors

we are by horror surrounded
darkness thrives within our light
the deadlies and their kin
no longer caring to hide
but lurching among us
in broad light of day
unashamed their depravity
stands upon our lives

and
what astounds me
is not that these horrors happen
for
"the heart of man is deceitful above all things"

no
what astounds me
is that we take these horrors so casually
they
walk careless into our daily conversations

as if they're
normal

or something

June 14, 2018

should one be lovely
and I notice
is not of itself a mistake

should my eyes linger
and I enjoy
is as certainly a mistake

and from this one
more may rise
to take me down

en garde!

June 13, 2018

well now
this was a rough day
yet a few finger-nails remain
I am still above ground
nor have I dented it
I stand battered
bruised and scarred
but standing
no thanks to me
or any other
but the One
on Whom my life depends
try as I may to leave Him
He stays
and I stand
only
because He is

June 13, 2018

some days it all comes down to this

dear God!
were it not for You
I couldn't

if I can remember this, I can go on

June 13, 2018

I am so desperate for joy
the places I try not to find it
are dark, terrible and horrifying

June 13-October 24, 2018

Wishful Thinking

"Did you know ...

... that historians generally agree that Gilgamesh
was a historical king of the Sumerian city-state of Uruk?"

Wikipedia – June 13, 2018

Gilgamesh, epic hero
doer of epic deeds
founder of epic realms
made by man immortal
in story, song and stone

did once live and breathe
walked this Earth I walk
dreamed the dreams I dream

but what of Adam, or Noah
or Abraham, or King David
who stand firm on greater fact
yet live forever doubted
by those who will not see

also lived and breathed
walked this Earth I walk
dreamed the dreams I dream
and more!
served the God I serve

June 13, 2018

yes
I should probably stay off of YouTube
Facebook
the Internet
a man such as I
is far too easily
distracted
from life
by things not
his life

yes
I should really stay off the Internet
it's a dangerous place
for one like me

I might even

June 7, 2018

out on the new-cut grass
in the shadow of Pauline's Maple
I am pointed skyward
gazing awe-struck at glory
silently arcing before my eyes
brilliant gems
lovely and grand
even in this citified night
and beyond them
stars!
galaxies beyond count

in grand anticipation
I point my telescope at the dark
and I touch ... infinity

June 6, 2018

it takes so long
for my spirit to rise
to even show an interest
in anything once was its joy
it feels like my insides have been

smothered
in molasses

no matter how hard I try to live
life takes far too long to come
just to want to do anything
is so unbearable and slow
I'm tired before I start

June 6-October 25, 2018

I Don't Know How

I don't know how
to tell you
I'm dying

it's not like I
can grab you
and scream
"I'M DYING!"
at you

it wouldn't be polite and
I don't think that would work
too well

if you can't see it
would hearing me say it
tell you I need help?

"help"

it would be so simple
just a touch
or gentle word
or a smile even
just
some little thing
to let me know you care
that inside me

I am dead

June 5, 2018

they left me here long years ago moving on
to their greener pasture, and never noticed
that I had shattered when they dropped me

or

that I've been picking up my pieces ever since

June 5, 2018

Some Times

some times all you can do is wonder
why they must take your joy
and stomp on it

June 5-6, 2018

Today = One. More. Day.

God has made this life
so abundant in love
so bursting with joy
 we need but reach out
 to enjoy His lavish gift
 clutching it
 more closely than breath
 desperately tight
 life-preserver-like
 on oceans storming dark
that
every time I learn
another one has gone
the way of their own hands
I am of two minds

I am grieved
by their loss
 to have seen His joy
 grabbed at it and missed
 is the saddest of all sadnesses

yet relieved
I still live
 I have seen another dawn
 my own darknesses
 have not won

June 5, 2018

so many years
of doubt
so many nights
of tears

what I was
I am not

what I am
I was not

too many silent others
have closed that door
but good
have left me
to stand alone
in this darkness
uncaring my tears
unconcerned my road
could not go on

May 30 - June 4, 2018

Fifteen Seconds

fifteen seconds
maybe
could be more
could be less
but for about
fifteen seconds
our lives intersected
you encountered my
photo, word or post
and something of me
was met by you
for somewhere near
fifteen seconds

and
you think you fully know
me
are able to pigeon-hole
me
or use insult to describe
me

all from the merely
fifteen seconds
where our lives touched

yet
you've scarcely known
me
have no pigeon-hole to hold
me
own no insult that can define
me

fifteen seconds
it's hardly enough time
on which to devalue my life

May 28-29, 2018

Morning, Again

you asked how I was
this first day morning
and you had me going
for a moment there
you really had me going
for one short instant
I thought you cared
honestly, I really did
but was soon set right
disillusioned, again
as you casually walked
out of my answer

May 24-25, 2018

Leave the Doorway Open

Inspired by "Come From Away"
(contains spoilers)

there's a moment in "Come From Away"
where a knock-knock joke between friends
two who have lived
what ought never have been
enters quietly
into the middle of their grief
overcomes their tears
and stands bravely
in the doorway of their hope
a tender moment shared
between sophisticates of different sorts

"Knock-knock"
"Come on in!"

they laughed
and with them
we laughed

laughter!
a suddenly open door
and hope!

so soon after
we had wept
so many years after
we had all wept

laughter!
and hope renewed!

because after you've wept
you've got to leave the doorway open

be willing to say "Come on in!"
again
allow the world to touch you
again
risk the flood of tears
again
be vulnerable to joy
again

or grief can never heal

and hope can never come
again

September 11-15, 2001
38 airliners
7,000 passengers
One amazing community

May 25, 2018

Little Stella, Again

you lie in your little pink bed
peacefully at rest
not a care on your pretty little face
safely held in the hands of a God
you don't even know yet
Who loves you with His Life
of Whom your parents will tell you
great and marvelous things
often and with joy
for this God has saved their lives
as He is saving yours



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May 18-23, 2018

Event Horizon

silent
it stands aloof
so quiet
you wouldn't know it's there
until you ran into it
and you'd know
but forget you ever did

below the line there's nothing
nothing you could do to save
no human power sufficient
could not ever
not in a zillion years
reach beyond
shine light
into that insolent dark
but the gracious hand of God
dismantle
the barrier long reinforced

yesterday?
two days ago?
perhaps
last year?
more certain
not now though
not any longer
the shell is vast
impervious
impenetrable

such hard break
from the real
light fails

yet the gracious hand of God
dismantles
light dawns anew

May 17, 2018

Years ...

it's taken years
but they did it

from my earliest memories
right up to today
almost
everyone I know
everyone I don't know
looking at me
like I'm a
small
teeny, tiny, little thing
whose thoughts
whose words
whose works
have no worth
are beneath notice
are unworthy their contempt

so long I've heard this
seen this, felt this
fought this
unrelenting assault
on me
to no avail
that I
think I could believe
they might be right

May 14-16, 2018

it seems to not be as bad for me
so many more seem to be hit worse
by this all-pervasive, ever-present dark

somehow

no matter how long this dark accuses
that I'm worthless or of no account
deep-down, beyond this anguish

I know this

one

incontrovertible

truth

God's Son came to find me
and He found me
and He saved me

even then
when I was as I was
but am no more

even now
when I'm not as I will
but as I am

May 14, 2018

On Earth

on Earth we are
(approximately)
seven-point-five billion
men, women and children
and beneath us lies
(again, approximately)
one-hundred-fifty million
square kilometers
averaging things
for the sake of argument
(once again, approximately)
fifty of us
could be filling
every square kilometer
if we all got together
to be uniformly far apart
(our cardinal neighbour
would always be distant
one-hundred-forty-two meters)
we couldn't turn around
without seeing someone
we'd never not hear
their voice
there'd always be a neighbour
to hear you call for help

which begs the question
of why I feel so alone

May 11, 2018

sometimes, I think,
God uses my depression
to save me
like today
as coming from my walk
I could not
simply COULD NOT
buy chocolate for my Moms
for Mother's Day
it was too hard to speak
no matter how friendly,
and maybe because,
the cashier would be
intimidating
and then
an hour or so after fear
a text from my son
"Dad, could you ...?"
and I bought the chocolate
for him I couldn't for me

saved again

May 11, 2018 - August 16, 2020

my Father!
I was death
You saved me
gave me Life
made me light
in this world
ever darkening

my Father!
may I live
in Your Truth
share Your Life
shine Your Light
in this world
ever darkening

May 11, 2018

Truth surrounds you
envelopes you
is the air you breathe
and yet you refuse it
do not grasp at it
do not clutch it
more closely than treasure
but deny it, challenge it
ignore, overlook and
obscure with lies
the Truth that saves
instead of sharing light
every word you speak
digs your hole more dark

May 11-17, 2018

this is so weird a place
the terrain changes without warning
solid ground becomes marsh
mountains become pits, so

unpredictably

like walking a minefield
maybe, except the explosions
don't kill but change the world
and I am lost in strangenesses

kaleidoscopic

May 11, 2018

You Wonder?

you say you wonder how I am
but I'm not certain you do
you rarely ask how I'm doing
or talk, to see where I'm at
and when you do, and I say,
the depth of your concern
seems more thin than paper
less substantial than cobwebs
I am overwhelmed by the trivial
why should it be any wonder
if and when you ask about me
my answer is short and simple
could yesterday support more?

May 9, 2018

you live your days on earth like everyone around you
loving, living and laughing, like everyone around you
yet their mirrors show something not quite the same

different

the way they treat you, talk to you, interact with you
just little, subtle hints you might be just a little off
some 'thing' they see but you don't that marks you

different

and you start to wonder what may be wrong with you
start looking for ways you're not like the rest of them
ways where you're a little off from the rest of them

different

start looking for a reason why they think you're odd
some justification for this strangeness that you feel
whenever you're surrounded by them, yet stand alone

different

not quite fitting in and not knowing why you don't
you see them speak the same, do the same, as you
yet they're loved, appreciated, accepted, made use of

different

from how you feel, how they show you how you are
and so you look for reasons to explain this off-ness
because there must be, has to be, an explanation

different

and you find them, and they make sense, yet you know
you're just digging yourself deeper, like a truck in the mud
capable of much, but stuck in a hole made larger by your

difference

May 6-7, 2018

"... the perfect stillness of the night
was thrilled by a more solemn silence.
The darkness held a presence
that was all the more felt
because it was not seen.
I could not any more have doubted
that He was there, than that I was.
Indeed, I felt myself to be, if possible,
the less real ..."

Rudolph Otto, as quoted by John Van Sloten
["The Group of Seven - Iconic Artists"](#)
New Hope Church, Calgary

less real than You
Who Is
i am
real
only as You
are Real

i could not be
did You not give me
love

i could not breathe
did You not give me
life

i could not know
did You not give me
light

less real than You
Who is
i am
real
am only real
in You

May 3-11, 2018

Where the Wind Wills

some days I feel like Mole
whatever path his friends may take
he follows, sometimes leads
yet at the bottom of it all
yearns always his comfortable hole
but give me a boat to steer
upon the open water
where I may paddle free
beneath an endless sky
and I am transformed

May 3, 2018 - May 20, 2022

my world feels upside-down
a dark infinity gapes beneath my feet
yet my head scrapes an earthen sky
it's wrong, I know
but what can I do?
even my mouth
seems to smile

May 3, 2018

Alone ...

I do a Google search
on "alone"
and all I see
are mirrors

May 3, 2018

how did I get here
black and white
in this vibrant world
monochromatic
surrounded by glory
how did it come to this
that I would be
afraid to stumble
and find only the floor
to catch my fall

May 2, 2018

the pessimist knows
this is the best
the very best
of all possible worlds
and weeps, unhappy
it was not made better

the optimist knows
this is the best
the very best
of all possible worlds
and laughs, rejoicing
it was not made horrid

May 2, 2018

I may not be of the best men
could stand among the worst men
yet my life has been claimed
by the Holy One who alone is God

and that is enough

The 'Irony' is Staggering

I saw last night on Facebook
(our dispenser of justice, morality and wisdom)
the proud proclamation
 "You will never end
 abortion,
 you will only end
 safe abortions!"
and I was astounded
I could not believe
what 'they' were saying
I could not help but ask
 "Safe for whom?"
because that's the problem
with abortions
not one of them is safe

someone always dies

For any who doubt that, from God's point of view, life begins at conception;
and perhaps earlier:

"For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them." (Psalm 139:13-16)

April 25, 2018

Little Stella

a word this morning
from your mother
many words all day
to our great God
we know He cares
for even the smallest
like you
our daily tasks halting
to beg God for life
your life
today, of all days
this week, of all weeks
too long a time to wait

and suddenly ...
... fountains flow

you are safe!

our great God!
how good He truly is!

"The next few days and weeks will be tough,
but today God's unending grace has carried
our girl through open heart surgery."

For little Stella Shuttleworth,
daughter of friends, just five months old,
after lengthy, and SUCCESSFULL! heart surgery.

Praise God this week holds some joy!

April 24, 2018

TOgether

this grief is too large for words
we try to stretch our hands around it
we struggle to grasp it
but it is ungraspable
no sane thought can hold this
no one person bear the load
this grief is too large
one alone cannot bear it
when one of us bleeds
do not all of us bleed
this grief is ours
theirs, yours, mine

ours

On the afternoon of April 23, 2018 a madman
drove a rented van along a busy Toronto sidewalk
He killed ten people and wounded dozens more.

Our city is in shock.

We cannot, of ourselves, make evil disappear;
but standing together we can ease its burden.

"The Alleged Driver ..."

how can they call him
"The alleged driver"
of the van used to murder?

he rented the van
he was seen in the van
he was seen leaving the van
he stood, begging to die, next to the van
he was stopped by courage beside the van
he brags even now of his use of the van

every fact
Every. Single. Fact.
relentless points him out
names him the killer
were justice done this hour
no one
Not. One. Single. Person.
would have any doubt
that right had been done

how can he possibly be
"The alleged driver"?

April 16-17, 2018

if I think
my word will change
his mind
and I think
his word will not
change mine
am I
wishful thinking
of him
wishful thinking
of me

or both

April 13, 2018

you speak the High Road as if you know it
have walked along it, have paid its tolls
have yourself the knowledge to guide its use
yet your actions betray your aspirations
you blame the other for the flying filth
with hands already dripping the vile stuff
as dark or darker those you would decry
you stoop to scoop what your words disdain
you speak for the road you dare not walk

Politics ... Sigh

April 13, 2018

Imagination

I have no imagination, none at all
couldn't imagine a thing if you showed me
my mind's as dry and as dusty as
old stuff cram-filling an older attic
facts? I've got them by the bucket-full
trivia? I've a nauseatingly endless stock
but of imagination neither whiff nor scent
I bring it in by bulk from outside suppliers
like Rembrandt or Hitchcock or Lewis
whose spirits, soaring where mine cannot be
fill my empty rooms with their brilliance

April 12, 2018

The Hardest Part

the hardest part, at least for me

is not the endless sadness
looming dusk-like over noon-bright
shadowing the joy of every delight

is not the absent friendships
those failing human touches
that gives you no-one to care

is not the foolish mind-set
that wants to always remember
where what is fails as should be

is not these dark walls I build
to keep out what will cause pain
if let come too close to me

my God is greater than all these
His pull up-ward outdoes their pull down-ward
He is my steadfast foundation
He is the sole reason I still live

No

the hardest part, at least for me

is knowing I cannot trust my thoughts
is knowing my mind could betray me
is knowing I cannot know if what is, is

is being forever in this uncertain fog

April 10, 2018

Nothing Special

yep, that's me
in the eyes of all
 but One
 but without Him
I am truly nothing
nothing special
contempt
consideration
stand above me
and I
laying here in dust
dead man breathing
see how things are
and weep
at could be's remove

April 8, 2018

Communion
April 8, 2018

young voices
exuberant gospel
age-old story
softly spoken
joyfully sung
loudly proclaimed

love given form

truly it is a fine thing
to worship with such as these

April 6, 2018

You Saved Me!

the days clamour ever on
life's thunders overwhelm
time flows like a torrent

though the tumult assail
yet will I never forget You
or that You saved my life

April 5, 2018 - November 8, 2019

What You Could Have Done

I sometime wonder if
God meant you to be a kite
gave me to you for your tail
and I, oh foolish man I am,
became instead the string
that bound you to the earth
held you back from the glory
I should have helped you find

how you could have soared
had I not been involved

April 5, 2018

Dancing on the Tightrope

we walk the line, and step over
skirting danger for the thrill
of stepping ever further
where rules no more apply
yet we demand the safety net
for when the boogie-man calls

March 20, 2018

Cain came to God with his offering and was angry
that God had no regard for his attempted devotion
and allowed sin crouched by his door to come inside
and make its home and have its way with him and give
excuse to love himself instead of the God he'd tried to

Isaiah's 'friends' too, tried to love God their own way
enthusiastic in their desire, less so in their approach
thinking God would be pleased by acts of devotion
that stood isolated from heart and hand and mind
and had no more power to save than a ball of dust

March 19-20, 2018

just because you
may learn how bits
as nearly light as air
can float free upon it
is never reason not
to blow a puffball
with childlike joy

March 8, 2018

I want ... no
scratch that
... I need
someone to ask me how I am
and listen

to really

Really

REALLY

listen

to me

hear the pain my words carry
see the tears that never flow
and not try to salve my hurt
with platitudes and promises
or worse
let their story interrupt mine

March 4, 2018

The Edge of Tomorrow

(after Owl City's "Verge")

woke up this morning, sun was shining
filling this mundane room with splendour
through the whole entire morning I knew
promises of hope and glory and wonder
coming home from Church after hearing
God's even greater promises of the same
I made lunch, knowing even the mundane
daily grind, can be adventure of epic story
and now, standing in the sun, on the Son
I know, this hope, this glory is but the edge
I'm standing on the very edge of tomorrow
my next step, the rest of this wonderful life

February 28, 2018

On Being Overlooked

I can't help but feel I'm a
nothing
a great big fat
nothing
but I'm not a great big fat
nothing
I'm just a wee tiny
nothing
an insignificant
nothing
a so small no-one even cares
nothing

which explains

everything

February 28, 2018

Crazy World

it's a crazy world
we've made
for ourselves
we throw
"I love you"s
like band-aids
at our other words'
wounds

and

we wonder
why the bleeding
won't stop

February 27, 2018

Gear

I wonder
if on their off hours
my watch faces get together
at their counterpart of a water cooler
and talk amongst themselves
"I'm his favourite"
"His mom gave him me"
"He has me the longest"
and if
down at the bottom
one waits, unused
and the more proud for it

February 27, 2018

will this be the new 'real'?
standing on a number larger
than the one before
(I know, it's been like this
since I began)
but now
I'm hoping the belt doesn't notice
and the shoes are strong enough
not to care

February 24-August 1, 2018

Chapters

I went to Chapters
today
I always go to Chapters
today

sometimes I am
alone
sometimes I am not
alone

always I go knowing
I will not go buy a book
maybe

but in Chapters
today
I picked up something lighter than air
and bought it
to take home and
make part of my world
I picked it up
because it was lighter than air
but the laugh that it gave me
was heavier than life
and I need that
so I held it

Picked up "Helium" by Rudy Francisco
and didn't put it back down
"Welcome" holds the line with the laugh

February 24, 2018

The Door

the door was open
as I went through
as, suddenly,
did everyone else
standing a holding pattern
I scanned faces for hers
but it was not there
nor should it have been
she had left
as did I
she was not there
as am I

January 22, 2018

we were made to be immortal
though death about us clings
our existence does not stop
as our breath, laughter or tears
our souls immortal indwell
these bodies frail as dust
and live beyond re-dusting
to which reward we chose

January 10-23, 2018

Faith ~ Hope ~ Love

Faith

yesterday is done, is forever known
its deeds unchanged, writ in stone
cannot be undone or set aside
as certain as God's "Let there be"
it is and will remain, complete

Hope

tomorrow comes, yet eternal guessed
comes slow, as castles of sand
who's one certain thing is change
as sure as God's "I do not change"
yet is and ever stands, unknown

Love

today fleets, sudden here, as sudden gone
our acts changing guess to is
uncertainty becoming certain
as unfailing as God's "I AM"
razor's edge on which we live

January 10, 2018

the wound is deep, the scar is real
I will be hiding each from others
for ever
grateful for your salve and aid
as I daily recall this forgiven pain
wondering
why you did not drop your knife
before your care was needed

November 29, 2017

Nineteen-Eighty-Four
(Plus Thirty-Three)

our history is being eradicated
edited, softened and updated
the map of the road we walked
no more points to where we were
if once we who remember forget
will we be who we are anymore
or an empty people with no past
but what we're told it shouldn't be
blankly staring at a world gone by

our reconciliation is noble on its face
our past has at times been shameful
(although some was merely context)
yet how can our progress be measured
if we can no more recall who we were

After some of Mr. Trudeau's recent acts

October 24, 2017

hope springs eternal, has said the bard
speaking true, for eyes forever seek
the brighter day, which thus illumed
this day's gloom more bravely bear
and those distant, hoped for smiles
soothe these tears that savage fall
upon the cheek as yet un-frowned
despite the fear which daily grows
that hopeful eyes no longer glow
but within their living skull lie dead
by care and toil at last o'erwhelmed
alive, yet unconcerned of tomorrow

August 22, 2017 - April 26, 2018

these waves crash upon the shore
wild and tumultuous
their glory transient
like my own, soon to still
lie quietly on this earth
to sing their Maker's praise

August 25, 2017

I Win

around me this world clamours, clangs, clashes
it's everything I can do to ignore it, it's call is so loud
sirens of all descriptions sing their tempting songs
tempt me from this garden of so many years
to walk a path more trodden, if it lies less verdant

... it calls ...

and every day, just by coming home, I win

June 29, 2017 – April 23, 2018

You Don't Really Want To Know, Do You?

Why I'm happy for my daughters to wear revealing dresses: Mother says she wants her girls to be proud of their bodies

you don't really want to know, do you
the thoughts I have I must now destroy
now I have seen a woman such as you
in truth, my response to you is as a man
but if you'd rather I not respond as a man
why so carefully array your body as bait

if you protest my eyes, why be their feast
if you resent my thought, why be its seed

you can't in honesty say that you're not
your selfie leaves too little of you unknown
yet leaves who you are to the imagination
you advertise, do you then despise the sale

would you see your innocence transgressed
should a man respond as his nature calls
would you say your glory had been insulted
should a man respond as his God decrees

July 25, 2017

(In)Constancy

each day I struggle with dragons
beating them into submission
weeping that I so often fail
rejoicing God's mercy remains
on me

and there they stand, uncaring
where I struggle they give way
they laugh to scorn my tears
nor do they understand this joy
I have

June 26, 2017 – July 6, 2017

The Beauty Of Life

so excruciating how lovely is life
though often seen through tears
though faithful friends and loves
oft' forsake for the brighter lights

and yet

life is lovely despite its bliss or pain
despite joys either firm or fleeting
despite other's carelessness or care
for all, my God, all moves me closer

to You

June 20, 2017

I am tempted at times to throw it all away
just run off, leave my history far behind me
take up new friends, loves, lives, adventures
and smile unfearing into the storm of days

and smile head-shaking into the dust of dreams
knowing how great a loss would be that gain
history lives, has its own reasons for being
and I, yet a part of it, rejoice again my trace

June 18-22, 2017

I crawled out of my hole, slowly
it is hard, takes a very long time
things are reflected so weirdly

The Light so far away, I thought
it would never touch me and
I wasn't sure it wanted to and
I wasn't sure I wanted it to

Still I scrabbled up to it, because
the pain of Light is so much better than
this daily death of endless tears

The stinging slap of joy, though
bitter, still the good balm craved
by my beaten-down and broken spirit
so needing hope it cannot stand

Blessed Light, painful though it be
is infinitely to be desired over
the permanence of the night

And I grasp at these fragile gleams
clutch them closely to my life
that when darkness again will fall
breathing can go on

June 17, 2017 - June 25, 2021

Days stand atop themselves
hours topsy-turvy coil
nothing known is firmly fixed
waves assault the sand

Things are not as they seem
un-done deeds are done
done deeds are un-done
I stand uncertain, confused

Life's hurdy-gurd surrounds me
I can do no more than cling to You
my God, my Only Solid Thing

June 16, 2017

I See ... Wishing I Wouldn't Also Think

I see your face emblazoned
on missing persons posters
yet my concern barely seeds
when my mind, selfish still
notices how you are lovely

...

Oh! I wish my heart as strong
as my body claims to be

June 14, 2017

Echoes

I'm not surprised, now I think about it,
that you show them slight respect
after all, you show Him even less
How will you honour the creature
if you will not honour its Creator?

June 2, 2017

this cold chamber contains me
in its damp and silent dark
mocks to scorn I who long to dance
with chains of earth about my feet

yet on that day when He returns
He will call my name and I will fly
to He whom chains will snap as thread
and dance in joy before His face

June 2, 2017

In the News Today ...

"Karla Homolka not worthy of forgiveness"

but then
none of us are
"worthy of forgiveness"
it is a gift undeserved
at best
often unrequested
at worst

"Karla Homolka did not pay her debt to society"

but then
none of us have
"paid our debt to society"
it is a debt unpayable
at best
often ununderstood
at worst

and as a society un-Christian
having long since slipped our moorings
can forgiveness even be a thing
can such a debt ever be repaid
pain lives on
its tears seldom dry
how can who we are today
not keep a watchful eye

May 29, 2017 - November 23, 2017

I'm not sure which are worse
the monsters surrounding me
or those that I surround

one can surely kill my body

bullets, rocks and fists
even words may harm
yet the pain must end
with the beating

but those others kill my soul

demons clutch and writhe
squirring any hole
a no holds barred attack
death alone will end

if one over one could choose
would choose neither terror
but cling instead to life

May 18, 2017

What Transpires

once personal freedom
is valued more than
one's personal honour
the fall has no limit

May 18, 2017

Add Another Letter

once it was that two made one
that would itself be made again
yesterday to tomorrow united
in the constancy of their today
and though remains as true
as was true when time began
so many letters now are added
ignorant confusion runs amuck
too many left out, some think
"Let's add another letter!"
yet more makes less unique
less inclusive of the fringe
"Let's add yet another letter!"
that all but one will have a say
in sad re-writing of this today

May 3, 2017

I was alive when Apollo flew
saw its flame, felt its heat
and I knew, deep in my heart
This. Was. Something. Special.
our own magnificent Thing
the Colossus of the Cape
bestriding life and dream
and in thunder uniting both

May 3, 2017

Can We Do This/That?

oh my, but the questions some christians do ask
"Can we do this?" and "Can we do that?" and
"Is this other thing something we can do now?"
as though the answers were not already there
so plainly writ, just staring them in their faces
it gives one cause to think, perhaps, an answer
is not what they're looking for, but approval
for choices already made, with a forlorn hope
to escape the death, which also so plainly writ,
stands waiting in the shadows of their denials

April 26, 2017

On Listening to James Horner's Movie Themes

by loss of one are diminished all
we seem less than once we were
though echo long survive the fall
yet hearing, shed a sorrowed tear
that treasure lost beyond recall
will no more make this life as fair

April 21, 2017

To A Friend

you try to give God honour
even fear to type His name
yet tell jokes at His expense
and I see this and I wonder
if God is honoured by this
or finds such honour crass

April 21, 2017

there is nothing, nothing at all
I feel I am a dead-man-walking
this heart is callous and bitter
cannot find joy in any pleasure
turns every good upside down
drabness back-drops everything
and yet I live, walk, talk, smile
as though a man not yet dead
afraid others may see my pain
pick up their shard of guilt yet
leave me in these broken pieces
that just want to be alive again

April 21, 2017

Were it not for God

in the beginning
before all that is
was
when nothing was of greater weight
that what was not
even nothing could not have been
were it not for God

in our sadnesses
as grief bears fleeting
smiles
when despair is of greater weight
than life itself
even life could not continue
were it not for God

in our exulting
amid our purest
joy
when gloom is fled far and distant
unremembered
even thanks would be undone
were it not for God

April 20, 2017

The Tormentor

“Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them!
But woe to you, O earth and sea,
for the devil has come down to you in great wrath,
because he knows that his time is short!”

Revelation 12:12

a thousand lashes softly wound
unnoticed midst larger trial
tiny whips each drawing blood
unseen, unheard by kindred soul
(with pain their own, as hid)
yet decrease joy, distract sight
from the glory that is promised
cause saint and sinner alike to cry
their endless heartrending “Why?”
whose answer rests upon each hope

April 19, 2017

mid-standing wild stream's torrent
stands alone a rock, securely solid
splashed yet unmoved, though wet
exuberance surrounds it unyielding
firmly set, stays its sedimentary bed
as unable to move as the flow is free

April 19, 2017

Us vs. Them

there is so much "Us"
there is so much "Them"
so much "You" or "I"

says the philosopher
"I'm pulling for you,
we're all in this together"

not "Us", not "Them"
neither "You" nor "I"
but oh!, glorious "We!"

April 19, 2017-February 21, 2020

this life so sorely needs a light
a tender ray or a gentle gleam
of light to shine and so dispel
the darkness so close surrounding
we who perish here in need of
hope

this desperate life so fair and fleet
so long assailed by darkness, fails
has insufficient strength to stand
overwhelmed, falls beside too sudden
tears, fails, dismayed, sore in need of
joy

this life so needful of a chance to
live, to spread its wings in flight
has but despair to claim its own
vainly looks to the help of faith left
dormant on the shelf, in dust, to
fail

this life could with such glory shine
could such light upon despair bestow
yet unenlightened stands aside, its
great power for good obscured, it
idles by, useless, while the garden
wilts

It is so sad to see,
God is so glorious
yet we think it small
to belittle His glory
for our own pleasure

April 17, 2017 - September 5, 2021

Once filthy,
now clean.
Once dead,
now alive.

Could anything surpass the joy
of coming to God, a sinful man, and hearing Jesus say:
"I have made you clean, go and sin no more."

April 13, 2017 - November 23, 2017

"Jesus was there too ..."

we gave you a pageant, a play, a parade
colours and eggs and crosses and crèches
all arrayed in colourful splendour for you
this truth we believe and proclaim to you
in the smiles on the faces of our children
in their tears of joy as they tear at paper
in colourful little sweets scattered in our yards
we opened our doors to you, asked you inside
we gave you coffee, cookies, tea and cakes
we even had bread and wine a cross and a tomb
spoke with tearful emotion of their part
in the dramatic tragedy that gives us life
it was beautiful, lovely, had swelling music
what reason, after seeing all that we did,
do you have to refuse so great a salvation?

Jesus was there, He was there in the pageant
right in the middle ... couldn't you see him?

After reading this Facebook post:

"[Church] kids took an Easter parade around the block,
led by the Easter Chicken and The Bunny with a few Palm Sunday colts.
Jesus was there too, you just couldn't see him."

April 11, 2017

Falling Off ...

I am not who once I was, I am
no longer who my parents love
I was something more, am now
but a shattering shadow that
un-dis-similar to those alive
has no more ability to stand
than a cardboard-cut-out man
the life that once sustained
me has gone, I am left alone
clutched against this barren
rock, uncaring if I stay or fall

April 10, 2017 - April 22, 2018

oh God be with me, today
today, when despite myself
 though every word an act of grace
 though every act a touch of love
all grates against my grain
for I am rough and ungentle
would be hammer-hard on all
did not Your Love uphold me
through the weakness that I am

March 17, 2017

The Calling

it calls, and inside this body, I respond
supposed primal urges leap at the chance
too short a time subdued to The Calling
this body burns, it yearns, it longs
that its awakened desire be satisfied
this silenced, throttled mind recoils
despairing the tug of flesh on soul

March 9, 2017

To Damascus

I'm going down to Damascus
the skies are bright and clear
I'll not trouble this road's dust
nor over-care the grimy drear

I'm going down to Damascus
ere life seem frail and worn
paused within the silent hush
where I might be re-born

I'm going down to Damascus
in hope my Lord to greet
quick to Him in worship rush
praise my God of human feet

I've come and gone from Damascus
astounded at these silent skies
snared again in tedious dust
to find Him here in life's demise

February 27, 2017

some days life will smile at you
other days you will smile at life
alone, on the floor, in the dark
of your small forsaken corner
smiling bravely, as can, at life
as exuberant fountains leaping
scarcely splash upon your soul

February 15, 2017 - April 23, 2018

Dave & Morley's Silence
(in fond memory of Stuart McLean)

This world has less joy this night
Than was when we awoke
This new silence far too deafening
For the mind to fully grasp
Your wond'rous tales of us
Can no more tell of who we are
Echoed but in forlorn memory
Are greater days now gone
This world was blessed to have you in it
Is lesser now that you are not
We long that happy gloried meeting
Where we once again may see your smile

February 10, 2017

I've a hole inside me
it has your shape
which feels less good
than if you filled it

February 10, 2017

Don't Presume to Tell Me

Don't presume to tell me what I've done,
of your bruises you think are mine
Don't presume to claim upon my soul
or lay your vast anger at my door
For I've not done what you say I've done
I have done things, many things, as evil
but I have not done that, of your blood
of the blood of your many dead brothers
I. Am. Innocent.
Do not presume to tell me otherwise
or be no better than your claim on me

February 6, 2017

it's just a small scrape
I wouldn't worry much
as things go it's much
the smallest portion
of a far greater part
it is of no importance
in life's larger scheme
that it is the smallest
of all smallest parts
need not concern you
for you see, it shrinks!

February 6, 2017

the mirror shows unfairly
blemish and perfection
draws the eye and lingers
to sign of this day's cause
an undone know-nothing
I stand midst steam and hope
vapour both and equal stand
tenuous upon fickle winds
if what I know is un-known
what is other known is truth

December 1, 2016

Praying to an Ineffective God

why do you cling so strongly to one
whose phantom ears cannot hear
whose silent voice does not speak
whose form is of your own design

you beg, you plead, you shed your tears
awaiting answers that can never come
and I wonder why do you continue
to love a god so obviously futile

November 16, 2016

Nothing At All!

Not. One. Thing!
in all this glorious world
owns innocence of choice
what God has called "Good!"
man has claimed his own
and denying glory for greed
has sullied all its charm

November 16, 2016

yesterday, a tear filled prayer
in the night, His gracious reply
so much more than I had asked
I am again overwhelmed by joy

November 15, 2016

you think it but a trivial thing
a whimsical flight of fancy free
unconcerning, so small a matter
the soul could not be touched
by this little fun your body loves

yet

what you think trivial has forgot
desire follows close on fancy's lead
each small matter of vast concern
to the soul within the wayward shell
chasing pleasure's phantom joys

November 14, 2016

Not the Biggest

it is not the biggest
by far
others' are far larger
more readily visible
more easy to see
and in seeing, help
mine is rather small
quietly hidden away
out of sight, never
out of my mind
unnoticeable

so very

small

November 14, 2016

To Maged Yacoub

Sunday morning, Church, feeling like ... like ...
a fish who's water, long stale, has changed
Conversations flow past me like a tide
Life! Ebbs and flows all around me
Companionship darts to and fro
Joy ... Warmth ... Peace ...

... Strangeness ...

Enveloped, surrounded by love
But grounded on a shoal of pain
Part of, but alien to, this vast family
And yet amidst the tossing beating waves
a slim ray of hope, a kindness shared, renews
I can keep on being alive, despite what has been

November 8, 2016

it is shown me continually
get up on a nice little roll
moving nicely right along
and suddenly a wrench is
carelessly tossed, showing
once again my true value

November 8, 2016

you laugh to scorn but are mistaken
my faith is strong, yours has shaken
free of its first and great foundation
is no longer capable of your salvation

you sneer at me, you speak to mock
though I, not you, yet walks the walk
you who now chase these fickle winds
will you laugh when Heaven He rescinds

November 7, 2016

Every Day

every day they ask me
"How are you today?"
and I tell them the lie
"I'm (*not*) fine (*at all*)"
with my fragile smile
paste upon my despair
hoping desperately it
hides this endless pain
the tears in my soul
and all the while I pray
for one to see the façade
tear it down to save me

November 7, 2016

I do not doubt, no! not for one instant
that I am fearfully and wonderfully made
that I am the handiwork of Almighty God
that I am here for His pleasure and purpose
that I am to honour Him in everything I do

but

deep down inside this broken lonely heart
I am fearful of life and wondering its pain

November 7, 2016

Not A Good Place

this is Not A Good Place To Be
I am antagonistic to everyone
who does Any Thing, whether
it is a Good Thing or a Bad Thing
even those who Try To Help
are cautionarily viewed, and,
rejected, far more often than not

November 7, 2016

off to one side
quiet
in the shadows
silent
here in the dark
dying
not wanting to
bother
those who have life

November 7, 2016

Bruised

there is a bruise on me, a large, discoloured weakness
where once I had been strong enough to carry
the weight of what they thought, who around my life
walk and live and laugh and smile; loved and adored
and it frightens me that I hurt so much that every
kindness
touches like a blade, sharply thrust into my very heart
callous twisting while all about me smile, unknowing

November 7, 2016

Last Night ...

last night I cut my wrists
both of them, in the dark
off the edge of the bed
where no one could see
that life ebbed out of me
put a blade to my throat too
just for good measure
make sure the job was done
that others had begun

though the blade was flesh
the cut went as deep
as if metal had been used
the act as real, I as dead

pleading that my Saviour
save my life, let me live

again

November 7, 2016

pieces of me lay scattered about
I can tell that they're all wrong
and have no way to put them right

November 4, 2016

death flows soft about me
its lovely form too near
far too alluring to escape
stands astride this narrow way
on which my life depends
I have not tripped nor fallen
as steps near skirt the verge
where life is held to hazard
the dance death always leads
no give-and-take, no dialog
but sudden gasping fall
relentless to destruction
if in life I am less than holy

all can be said against is "No!"
discussion fails, I am doomed
if in life I am less than holy

November 2, 2016

Alone ...

there seems, oddly, to be a balance
that I not be drawn away to fall
but stand where I've been bound
the silent dusty echoes resound
yet are no louder than elsewhere
and, though I am painfully alone
I am at least kept safely home

November 2, 2016

sometimes I wonder if I've misapprehended God

when some who should think the same way

don't

or those who could use the gifts I have

won't

it's discouraging to stand aside and not be

used

sometimes I wonder if I've got God right at all

November 1, 2016

I feel worthless
utterly and irredeemably
so worthless
all who look see nothing
scornful of
any part of me I value
made fun of
my staunch adherence
to Your truth
and my devotion to You
derided

and as wonderful as it is
being loved by You
a merely human touch
sometimes
would be marvellous

November 1, 2016

her voice, Lord, is large
though she speaks lies
misleading your people
while my own voice is tiny
though I speak the truth
to lead people to You

why, Lord, is this so
are your people to die
for their preferring the lie
when truth is ready to hand

October 31, 2016

Oh Father, this world, it cries
"Whether made this way
or made that way
I am as He made me
and that makes me okay"
using how they find themselves
to justify how they stay
after meeting You

You! The righteous Creator of all
incapable of sin
unable to do evil
without even the barest hint
of shadow or corruption
they say You made them thus
and in denying You Your glory
deny themselves Your salvation

it is not mine to hate or judge
such things are better left to You
of infinitely greater wisdom
unendingly generous mercy
purer, more relentless justice
than I could ever claim

all I know is this:
You made me to be a man
my sin is of my own cause
 (and how dare this creature
 lay his failings at Your feet
 as though You could bestow
 evil upon Your creation)
You found me in my death
You justified me to Your life!
and whatever I was before
it has been infinitely removed
from what You have made me be

and I thank You!
and I praise You!

with all my once dead soul

October 26, 2016

brakes squeal, tires scream, sliding rubber shreds
tempers flare, subside, fingers slow unclench
righteousness has taken the back-seat to practicality
red now welcomes where green once held hope
and now, waiting for this light to change, I pray
that the day begun by this careless minute's waste
will not itself be thrown away and unaware of glory

October 25, 2016

Walled In

what I say doesn't matter
nor how often that I say it
nothing gets past the walls
and those eternal crickets
hear not the vaguest echo
what incentive is there that
I should speak more loudly
or maybe speak more often
if all my words will ever see
are cold and careless stone

October 25, 2016

I am weak, these bones
are frail are failing fast
they have no strength
to bear this collapsing
heart

October 24, 2016

Is It Wrong?

(Confounded by Mercy)

is it wrong that I say "I hope he dies!"
serving as I do the Lord of mercy
seeing the lives his has destroyed
knowing a pain that will never die
owning the largest part of his curse
owning the smallest part of their pain

is it wrong that I say "I hope he dies!"
serving as I do the Lord of mercy
knowing that I once deserved only death

yet I am a man, with children in my care
and the father part of who I am cries out
"I hope this monster dies in pain unloved!"

I am at sea, tossed about and blown
askew by contrary winds and waves
that alike demand mercy and justice

but I have been confounded by mercy
have scarce escaped my own justice
can I demand what I no longer fear?
be poured upon one who knows not
the God Who died to save his life
Who also died to save mine

how can I demand he die estranged
when I myself have been saved

October 2-6, 2016

Thomson

at times it seems he almost knew
how short were his days to be
his broad strokes so bold, so bright
emphatic laid against excited canvas
as if his life were itself the brush
casting caution to fly on the winds
enthusiastic palette reveling a life
crowded full with joyful solitude
one man, in his canoe, on a lake
rejoicing the abundance of glory
bursting into a life cut short by years
whose echoes ceaselessly resound
like ripples left behind the paddle
that touch on shores as yet unseen

September 30, 2016

abandoned on this lonely shore
forlorn tears flow to a sombre sea
untouched by the carefree breeze

September 28, 2016 - April 24, 2018

I See You And ...

I see you and you're beautiful
and must fight the temptation
to see you only as a naked joy
useful only for my pleasure then
tossed aside without a care

but you are God's as I am His
and both made lovely by His love

I see you and you're richly blessed
and must fight the temptation
to see you only as a source of wealth
useful only for what I gain then
tossed aside without a care

but you are God's as I am His
and both made wealthy by His love

I see you and you're very strong
and must fight the temptation
to see you only as a source of strength
useful only to hold me up then
tossed aside without a care

but you are God's as I am His
and both made stronger by His love

I see you and you're well at peace
and must fight the temptation
to see you only as a soothing touch
useful only to still my terror then
tossed aside without a care

but you are God's as I am His
and both made quiet by His love

I see you and you're quite clever
and must fight the temptation
to see you only as a brilliant mind
useful only to give me guidance then
tossed aside without a care

but you are God's as I am His
and both made wiser by His love

September 24-26, 2016

I could not say what God has said
is either wrong or could be altered
There is no hope in doubting He
Who holds our life and future glory
What God has said we dare not unsay
we haven't strength to stay His hand
His words are clear that ours obscure
His wisdom great that ours assails
No hope have we but in Him alone
yet our hearts so constant wander
off on pathless detours from His way
in search of treasure in barren fields
we risk Death will find us weak and lone
Too far removed from His Grace
for His Mercy to remove our guilt

September 19, 2016

"... and God said ... and it was so ..."

yet man says else, and there is doubt
that now is cast upon the word of God
so vast does our wisdom seem to us
given all that we have learned since
God gave us once all-sufficient truth
much we have studied, so much learned
greatly grown beyond our fathers' ken
we are wise yet are unable to believe
we know too little, as becomes a child
far more than a child are we uncertain
though grown and should know more
than what we ourselves can determine
and must sometime come to rest on God

Who even now remains sufficient truth
and more, perfect cause and goal of life

In response to those who excuse their lies and say
"Faithful Christians interpret Scripture differently."

September 16, 2016 - April 25, 2018

Speaking as Man II
I am the Problem

inasmuch as I have done it to the LEAST
I have done it to them ALL
whether merely SKIRTING the border
or venturing DEEP into exploration
I am no less GUILTY
than the VILEST of us
my sin HANGS millstone heavy
would drag me to my DEATH
were it not for HIM

August 10, 2016 - November 24, 2018

The Red Shirt's Song
(with apology to Walt Whitman)

O Captain! my Captain! our five-year trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every test, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, this vessel boldly going;
 And o heart! heart! heart!
 O my flowing drops of red,
 I stand this deck my Captain flies,
 Surprised I am not dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
 O Captain! dear leader!
 Fresh laurels grace your head!
 My own reward that on this deck,
 I breathe and am not dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are set and still,
Of ceaseless care though now relieved, he knows yet pulse and will,
Though his ship is moor'd now safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the great white ship has come with object won;
 Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
 While I with joyful tread,
 Walk this deck my Captain flies,
 Relieved I am not dead.

July 5, 2016

I wonder

does the fire still burn that once raged free
am I still the man I yearned to be
burned by His holy flame, His will my desire
do His words still kindle my soul
stirring my passion to boldly go

or have I become what I long disdained to be
a lump. on a log. as Life goes passing me by

I wonder if I've wandered

June 28, 2016

this is not what makes me proud
that red and white give way to more
and on this day of a great land's birth
our greatest stand with depravity

yet will I take pride in this
that one and one can often meet
drink coffee, eat bread, be as friends
despite their stand in depravity

and even more of this am proud
that friendship grow and flourish strong
arise from such polluted ground
proving Grace will trump depravity

and greatest pride take I in this
that Grace bent low to rescue me
washed clean of mud and sticking slime
even as I loved depravity

June 27, 2016 - August 21, 2020

oh! give to me an endless sky, reflect on sylvan stream
with gentle dip of paddle glide, before translucent gleam
slender craft, of dream construct, midst water lilies borne
sing life's song of joy again, drink full of life's good horn

I would beneath this great blue sky, long forevers deep,
once again bow forward go before my evening sleep
where cool in simple comfort rest, sweet upon my bed
rejoice this day's blessings that so well my soul have fed

brightly flow these days of light, as gems on golden strand
joyful life leaps wild and free, uncared of slipping sand
each day dawns in matchless worth, full beyond all measure
silver cord, most lavish blessed, gift of boundless treasure

day fades too soon to falling night, life yields its gloried bliss
on shrouded shore reluctant greets death's unwelcome kiss
and leaps for joy at new day's dawn, bright by Love endowed
though I sleep, yet will I rise! oh Death be not so proud



June 16, 2016

should love grow ever cold
and exhaustion rule its favour
would that years be undone
and the fire be rekindled
stoked by urgent hands

June 16, 2016 - January 15, 2021

the soul has been devoured
hate grows wide and wild
has moved from wings to stage
is nurtured in fertile fields

too much death
too much pain
too little love

destruction without cause
blood spilled without glory
cruelty no distant stranger
wanton, senseless, endless

temples collapse
dust confuses
desolation surrounds

we on-stand this tiny ball
borne on winds of hate
our lives the spoils of war
violent and relentless

desperation's ceaseless cry
craves hope, begs relief
longs for evil's overthrow

darkness has fallen
light is shuttered
in the corners
we weep

Our very cry for hope
proof enough He lives

June 15-17, 2016

they that love their sin increase
they are blessed and well favoured
they have no love nor care for God
they do not fail, despite rebellion
but prosper though they despise their God

they that love their God decrease
they are despised and oppressed
they have true love and care for God
they do not stand, despite salvation
but are killed though they adore their God

yet how can I forsake my God
His strong good hand stands firm
His power incorruptible upholds
His own despite sin's siren song
His love has saved me, I cannot change

June 15, 2016

what's the use
why carry on
who cares
whether I live
or die

there is no one
at all concerned
that as I live
I die

June 14-21, 2016

Speaking as a Man I
I am Not the Problem

I am NOT the problem
I may be PART of the problem
but I am not the WHOLE problem
YOU are also part of the problem
in one breath demanding CHANGE
that MEN no more act as MEN
in the next breath ADVERTISING
what MEN appreciate as MEN
for ALL our sakes
be CONSIDERATE of our weakness
as YOU ask that WE be of YOURS
knowing WE are seldom SATED
YOU spread a BANQUET before US
on which WE are not allowed to FEAST

June 14, 2016 - April 24, 2018

I mourn their loss, these forty-nine the latest
of untold lives, unknown and past uncounting
their blood, spilled far too freely, is too great
our world stands at a loss for the violence
that none seem capable of overcoming
but more, by far, I mourn the loss of more
whose blood still flowing within their veins
live their lives tide-like and slowly ebb
until death remains where life once stood
living for a time but dying slow they bow
before the altar of man's own making
not knowing, nor caring, that they die
and even though their breath still flows
as they live they abuse their gift of God

June 14, 2016

the purpose of the line connecting us
with knots both secure and strong
is to help us help each other stand
this mountain on which we climb
that if either one of us would fall
the standing help the other rise
not fallen pull the other down
if you slip and fall and begin to slide
I will not budge though you pull hard
that I may restore you to your path
I beg you do the same for me
that together we made gaze in awe
the gloried vistas from its peak

June 14, 2016

Don't go blaming the Church for your pain
More cause to blame the fire for your cold
Which can only be if the fire is not
Pain is not a thing to hold and treasure
you hold tight that which kills you
Don't let its shadow excuse your own
which stands as real though sun be dimmed

The Church will not harm you but cure
it is your sole recourse for wholeness
one place of all on Earth you are made well
Don't let those whose unclaimed salvation
whose deeds give lie to all they claim
give you excuse to lose you yours
Come meet your God, let yourself be healed

June 13-14, 2016

Finding Hate - Forsaking Love

Whether they wear tassels or turbans
Whether they carry a cross or a crown
Whether they are this colour or that
Whether they like rainbows or circles
Whether they live next door or overseas

These are our neighbours who are dying
our neighbours who are being slaughtered
Our family is losing fathers and mothers
brothers and sisters, daughters and sons
Lives are ripped apart, torn and shattered
for no other reason than hate

God help us

This has got to stop, before it's too late!
This has got to stop, before it happens again!
This has got to stop, before one more life
one more member of our family is lost

Forever

This. Has. Got. To. Stop!

Now!

June 11, 2016 - September 8, 2020

each time you open your mouth
foolish words escape, and spread
into our world, sounding so wise
yet denying all that God has said
as if the commands of our Creator
are things to be discarded
should they grind against our grain

yet wood cannot deny its lathe
whose work carves pain to beauty
or complain its master knows not
how best its beauty may be found
but rest secure within the spindles
and rejoice beneath its master's hand
they love Him best who likewise sing

June 7, 2016

HELP!!!

I'm screaming it as loudly as I'm able
but no one hears
I'm standing over in this tiny corner
overlooked. ignored. forsaken ... lonely
doing all I can to stop feeling worthless
begging for someone, anyone, to help
lend a hand, share a shoulder, be near
but no one hears

I am all alone and drying up
and no one hears

June 7, 2016

sometimes Facebook hurts
as it pours the acid of other's
joy-filled lives into my wounds
my misery hates this perfection
yet continually returns to view it
as if to prove that joy can be real
by pain laid close upon my sadness

June 7, 2016

how can this soul please You?
wrapped as it is in horrors
how can You find any delight
in the small, polluted thing I am
and yet You say You love me
have made me worth Your Son

how beautiful You must be
to delight in this love for me
who can do no more than fail

June 6, 2016

Happiness

fabric wears out
wealth fades away
health is fleeting
friends sometimes fickle
fame as with fortune
is temporary at best

behind every joy
lies the shadow of fear
they will let down

happiness is not found
on earth's frail foundations
rests on knowing all is well
no matter what transpires
not on what we hold
but on Who holds us

May 30, 2016

Alternates

it can be confusing, at times
you start to think you're crazy
 (or that they might be lying
 but that's not really possible
 could they be less honourable
 than you hope you are)
so many 'things' not being quite
as you remember them to be
 (she said something different here
 he died two days earlier there
 some say you acted as you didn't
 history is just ever so slightly off)
that you can't quite be certain
of anything you might think

except that as confusing as this is
wherever you might be is home

Written in response to the death of Morley Safer,
whom history will record as having died May 19, 2016.
And yet for the two days prior I remember
remembering him dying on May 17, 2016.

May 25, 2016

Fortress (O. S.)

He is returned, he has come home
loud let the trumpets sound
unfurl his banner to the wind
let cheers of joy unhindered
for he has fought with dragons
and has returned the victor
Let them rejoice who are his

May 24, 2016-July 7, 2018

One look at the wonder around us
and time-and-chance are but a farce
we wouldn't give either one a hope
(move along, nothing to see here)
And to claim that "God guided it"
through death and pain to "Good!"
makes the Bible no less of a farce
for changing meaning with times

Hope fails too if Mohammed is true
or Joseph Smith or Mary Baker Eddy
because if they are, then Jesus isn't
They can't ALL be right, can they?

And if this life I traverse yet again
I must know it, or what's the point
of coming back as a grasshopper if
as a grasshopper I couldn't dream
of being something more than bug

Or if this circle comes to an end
then surely man of all on earth
would protest against assimilation
as being far too low a destiny
for a being so magnificent as he

I absolutely refuse to on-dwell a beast
if for no other reason than that beast
must himself on-dwell another
and he another, and another ...
(too tiring to contemplate the end)

Nor that we are but the outcome
of death, destruction and mayhem
among such gods as may care

No, it is a pointless, futile quest
to believe but as the Bible speaks
Try as I might to doubt it
of all Earth's divergent words
it fits alone this puzzled life

May 19, 2016-June 7, 2016

did You not make this earth
my foundation could not be

did You not move the wind
my breath would flow in vain

did You not craft my form
my life be less than dust

did You not still the seas
my immersion could not serve

did You not spill your blood
my own could have no life

did You not speak Your word
I am lost and without hope

May 15, 2016-September 28, 2017

The Sower

I was not to go out into the fields
today, too many "It is too ..."s stood
between me here and me there

but

the day was simply GLORIOUS!
I HAD to go out and plant
my seed before I could not

and

scattering my seed beneath
His glowing, brilliant sun
I saw on the hill with His own

the Son!

After "The Parable of the Sower"
by Abel Grimmer



April 20-29, 2016

it has been often said
 "Don't judge someone
 just because they sin
 differently than you"
judgement currently being
society's greatest sin

this itself is judgement
of the perceived sin of another
and must be also sin

would it not be better said
 "Don't judge someone
 just because they are
 different than you"
allowing good correction stand
for all in need of help

April 26, 2016

the news is depressing
and the forecasts are drear
yet life's not distressing
and I won't inhabit fear
for God remains God
and all is as He wills it
while I stand above sod
to Him I am submitted

April 26, 2016

I'm sorry
I've insulted you
You, who bear in you
the image of our God
Forgive
 that I have abused you
 and have laughed at your cost
 and done a thing not mine to do
 and ...
Please forgive me
I was wrong

I'm sorry
I've insulted You
You, Who share in us
the image of Yourself
Forgive
 that I have abused You
 and have laughed at Your hand
 and claimed a thing not mine to own
 and ...
Please forgive me
I am wrong

This isn't an apology for pointing out error
but for laughing at it, on finding it in others
and for the insult that such laughter is to God.

April 22, 2016

Psalm 76:10

"Surely the wrath of man shall praise you"

You say you do not believe in Him
but you do, you cannot deny Him

You are of His manufacture
to deny Him is to deny self
It cannot be done by those alive
All your wrath merely serves
as praise of His infinite glory

Denial of Him is not an option
there is no choice but to live or die

April 22, 2016

You couldn't be more wrong if you tried
And though you do continually try
the 'best' you can do is change the size
of your error, it's direction cannot be worse
than it already is. Walking a road you think
will lead to life but will not. You will die
And I stand beside and cannot make you see
the far better way that has taken death away

April 20, 2016 - June 7, 2016

I am neither small nor weak
yet in fear of overwhelming
you and causing you pain
I am very small and very weak

April 20, 2016

We have rebelled, are rebels still
We have turned creation upside-down
and change truth for a lie

fiction into fact
denial into devotion
guilt into glory
vice into virtue
murder into mercy
lewdness into love
hatred into hope

Yet there stands above us One
The perfect, holy One
He Who will change

our pleasure into pain
or our fear into freedom

As we desire in life
so shall we find in death

April 18, 2016-September 19, 2019

May My Small Voice Praise You!

Every word I speak
is with a small voice spoken
No vast congregation
attends my every thought
No proud accolades
cause men to line up to hear me
My power to sway many
not only has been taken
it is as has never been
Mine is a small voice speaking
Timid and subdued
But even so, my God
may the all of my smallness
be given in praise to You

April 17, 2016

you called here home long before I came on the scene
and for many years your wisdom I respected
but I am older now myself, and somewhat wiser
and I hear you speak against our foundation
that it is weak and not entirely to be trusted
that it was a product of its times and times change
and I wonder why you remain in such a place
when you doubt the truth of what holds us all

Weep / Hope

I do not weep that you are dead
for you have not yet completely died
I weep that while alive you speak death
Carelessly hinder the lost from finding life
with your words of a weak, unloving god

There is nothing, of all that is, too large
that His power cannot remove it
There is nothing, of all that is, so small
that His love would not assuage it

Why then do you say "So far!"
and limit Him His power to save?
Why then do you say "Who cares?"
and remove from Him His power to love?
Why would you condemn to death
those for whom He died and rose?

This world in darkness runs to Death
yet you would dim its only Light
You! Who have known His love!
Would you now corrupt its joy?
You! Who have felt His power!
Would you now deny its might?

Do you not feel His love that first gave you hope?
Do you not know His power that first gave you life?
Is His hand no longer strong enough to save?
Or His word so weak as to have no power?
Does your own reward seem so small
it has become unworthy of sharing whole?

On Him alone stands all our hope!

He is the God of Life!

His love is without an end!
His power is beyond our dreams!
Nothing lies beneath His care!
Nothing stands above His might!
He will love whom He will love!
He will save from death to life!

Let us not be of those who foolish change
His perfect way to please our shattered world

His way is Life!

Come, let us live it!

April 14, 2016

We bring The Good News
and are considered miserable
We preach The gospel of hope
and are told we have none
We reveal our God of love
and are called 'haters'
We alone of all on Earth know God
and are reviled and persecuted
We want nothing more than His glory
and are despised
We seek only that all know our Joy
and weep that this world has lost its Hope

February 25, 2016

When ...

there will well come a day
THAT DAY!
He will call me from my grave
BY NAME!
and I will stand before Him
AND PRAISE!

as I've never praised Him before
unbroken
unhindered
unending
in purity of heart I've only dreamed

December 8, 2015

into that silent darkness I fall
drenched by the rain that has
torn me from my security
through the long lonely dark
unnoticed, uncared, unhelped
to whatever lies waiting below
where relentless gravity pulls

me

down

December 8, 2015

Even ...

regardless how soft the brush-off
today it is sledge-hammer strong
even the very slightest of rebuffs
today is etching with acid
and causeless words, unspoken
today give voice to contempt

and the hand that does not reach
holds the coffee that I made

November 28-30, 2015

Beside the Wild Water

my feet
long to run the living water
kick-splash the tireless waves
beneath the sun drenched skies

blue so deep it sings

run wild along the sandy shore
to rest upon the grassy verge
where sea and sky and soul
are one

November 5, 2015 - April 24, 2018

Never

never be the reason for your lover's tears
without the touch of lip to heal their pain
for tears on coming to their grave unknown
take with them the lover loving you in vain

never leave your lover's tears
to trail alone along their face
but in your heart bear their pain
and love them with a gentle grace

do not permit your lover's tears
leave fire upon their soul
soft soothe for her her darkest fears
and by loving make him whole

October 19, 2015

it stands before the light
and I in its shadow stand
seeing, but unclearly
its echo upon my mind
My life spent in pursuit
of its perfect Originator

October 14, 2015 - September 26, 2016

I do not begrudge you your pain
your tears are real, I will not deny
yet each time you share your sorrow
I am heart-stabbed again

Like you, I have shares in this pain
my tears are as real as those you cry
and each time you share your sorrow
I am heart-stabbed again

September 24, 2015 - April 13, 2018

Rose left the spectacle before I came
sometime before the ball lost Joy
Hope and Faith are staying on
as is Charity, their steadfast friend
Patience tries to wait with Grace
as Prudence contemplates the door
Chastity, still longing for a friend
desperately clings to Virtue

September 14, 2015

Today!

Today is the first day of the rest of our lives
it has been said and is true that time may
span long onward from this daily prospect
this lookout where our hopes and dreams
are welcomed by what has become reality
this place where tomorrow's opportunity
is glad-handed by today's occurrences
and hope can spring eternal despite what is

yet too undeniable is the certain truth
that today is the last day of our lives

so far

September 13, 2015 - June 23, 2020

Across the Sea ...

I wish that I for Inverness
could sail upon the seas
rise upon their rolling crests
before a careless breeze

Or Shangri-La or fair Barkut
those romantic lands of lore
Enough for me to pick up root
and sail for distant shore

Leave astern my sleepless bed
shake the dreary dust of home
from restless feet and bravely tread
paths on which adventures roam

Yet often as the seas may roll
with calls to distant glory
I wonder if lives there a soul
who dreams a different story

July 17, 2015

it's kind of funny
in a tear-stained cheek
gasping for breath
kind of a way
that the world reduces to
"Right-wing Extremists"
we who walk the narrow way
simply by our not moving
as this world wishes

and my laughter weeps
not for abuses come
or the greater coming
nor that is ridiculed
the work that saved my life
but that these my fellows
have forsaken hope

May 27, 2015

is it naïve to hope?
to seek the best in all
even as hope is shattered
time and time again
on barren cliffs of self-concern
destroyed and shouted down
so often defeated it begs to die
rather than fight through layers of scar
rather than sing into resounding silence
to show its gentle grace once more

is it naïve to hope?
to see the wonder in all
knowing that all is of God
and He is a God of wonder!

NO!

hope, despite the hurt,
is God's relentless voice
silent and insistent
comfort to a world of hate

May 22, 2015

don't do them any favours
don't bother them with facts
for they struggle not for truth
but adamant deny their God
caring not at all for any truth
but only that they cause anger
distracting one from His Truth

do not give in to them for they lie
know they lie and care not they do
do not give them the time of day
in which to pour their contempt

but pray that they, as once we
may see the Truth and know

and live

May 9, 2015

We blame the maker for our dangered drive
yet we are those who drive uncaring
We blame the maker that we cannot see
yet we are those with smashed in headlamps
We blame the maker for the flattened tires
yet we are those who drive over glass
We blame the maker for every failing
yet we are those who abjectly fail

Blaming the Maker for the ruin which we cause

May 1-5, 2015

I'd pick up my pieces
fix the broken puzzle
that used to be me
but I don't know how
it's too hard to rebuild
these pieces are mixed
scattered and confused
they're so hard to find
after they've been kicked

April 27, 2015 - October 30, 2022

An Invisible Man

he is there, but he is not
someone any would see
he has no known worth
as these who laugh, play
converse, do great work

live

he too lives, and yet

dies

inside, where his heart
shrivels from a drought
of care, absence of hope
which more abundant bless
lives more worthwhile

he does not live, he dies
those around him live
he dies
though cloaked by life
he dies unnoticed and alone

April 27, 2015

most times
I know I couldn't continue
but for knowing that You are
I am so utterly worthless
I would walk into traffic
or jump off of a cliff
did I not know You are
lover of all that is, and
sad as life has come to be,
my only cause to continue.
were it not that You are
I could not even be

April 26, 2015

we do good and are good, we hope the reward
this boundless creation confirms will be ours
and are often by good blessed beyond merit
yet oft' times the hoped reward fails to realize
and we are left to lone devices, being good
for no more cause than that it pleases Him
in Whom doing Good bears its own reward

April 23, 2015

there is not glory enough for these whose blood,
freely spilled, our endless debt remains
we cannot with all our breath speak words
sufficient their sacrifice to praise
our lives, our joys, our joys
upon their tears depend

April 23, 2015

it shall not end with a whimper or a bang
but with cries of terror overwhelming
at the breaking of light on that final day
so far from midnight its dawn a surprise
mountains will crumble and valleys rise
and scattered pebbles lie futile to shield
those refusing His love from His glory
who despite themselves shall praise Him
and die, obedient to He whom they despise
bitterly wailing now even hope has died

April 13, 2015

God of all creation, LORD of all that is
You, and You alone are my King
to You alone will I bend my knee
to You alone will I bow my head
for You alone are worthy my worship

April 8, 2015 - March 3, 2021

When You Told Me ...

When you told me years ago were billions, not thousands,
that I was here by chance, not by design
I considered your words and truly pondered
Questioned if your beginning had more truth than mine
if eternal, self-existent matter were more plausible
than an eternal, self-existent God
But no matter how I tried, and still try,
I am unable to exchange Reality for nothing

When you told me He was not God but a just good man,
that He was merely prophet, not The Saviour
I considered your words and truly pondered
Questioned if your salvation had more truth than mine
if forgiveness by sacrifice were less reasonable
than the glory of self-achievement
But no matter how I tried, and still try,
I am unable to exchange Salvation for futility

When you told me the Bible isn't as we read it,
that the transcribers often missed their mark
I considered your words and truly pondered
Questioned if your reading had more truth than mine
if the words handed down were less to be trusted
than the rewordings of invention
But no matter how I tried, and still try,
I am unable to exchange Comfort for confusion

When you told me sin is not as we have been taught,
that what is thought a wrong is but misunderstood
I considered your words and truly pondered
Questioned if your gospel held more truth than mine
if love for His way were less to be valued
than making welcome the unchanged
But no matter how I tried, and still try,
I am unable to exchange Righteousness for corruption

When you told me today is all that will ever be,
that all we are ends at a tear stained hole
I considered your words and truly pondered
Questioned if your ending had more truth than mine,
if the dust we tread underfoot would be our final home
rather than God's endless golden realm
But no matter how I tried, and still try,
I am unable to exchange Life for death

When you told me all roads lead to the same destination
that the God I worship is the one you don't

I considered your words and truly pondered
Questioned if your idea of god had more truth than mine
if these many roads and their diversity of rules
were more reasonable than the narrow path
But no matter how I tried, and still try,
I am unable to exchange Truth for a lie

... et cetera ...

When you told me that faith is blind
that it must yield to reason's sight
I wondered how you saw them different
questioned whether you are sane or mad
For reason must rest on faith in Truth
our thought but builds on that which is
And I am unable to comprehend
why you would give up Hope for despair!

April 5, 2015

Never any doubt, not one question
"It is finished!"
From Earth's first dawn the promise holds
"It is finished!"
To its final glorious eve

April 3, 2015 - November 19, 2015

Not brittle, not fragile even
But broken, shattered shards
Not even swept into the trash
But trodden underfoot
And forgotten
As though this pain
Were but a phantom's breath

Yet as I weep I bleed
From wounds fresh made
And unconsidered

March 13, 2015

am I a man or an automaton
have I a choice or have I none
does my manufacture rule
determine word, act and deed
or am I free to love my God
in response to His love for me
I know that He has called me
I'd not want Him but for Him
yet once answering His call
have I some, none or all choice

March 4, 2015

where ways divide and heart tugs soul
there, though softly, is war engaged
where Truth and Lie their paths diverge
there Life and Death their conflict wage

Interchange

Highway 30 interchange is different now
than it was thirty-some odd years ago
these man's eyes see it as the child did not
age must do things to a person's memories
that, and bulldozers, shovels and snow

the restaurants are no longer there
the wounds of their removal lie hidden
their former existence merest scars
recent snow obscures, purifies pain
all that remains of the forlorn boy outside
a fading remembrance of a joke gone bad
his no-worse-than-yours filth no longer stands
between his hunger and its satisfaction
his hunger long forgotten by better meals
but how they must have laughed inside, warm
to not have noticed the leader's joke was not
a joke, but truth, to him who sat it's butt
outside, cold, alone in the late autumn chill
promising a colder and lonelier winter
how much fun they must have had, inside
to not have seen his absence, note his pain,
that even when returned, heading home again
no words were spared to soothe his fear
that those he loved he could not trust

they take scant seconds now, these memories
triggered by a bridge, a curve and an emptiness
as the man traverses his past with his today
his duty calling him east, to other's futures
what no longer stands, stand as bleak reminders
of a pain too large yet by forgiveness healed

heading west once again, homeward bound
recalling what has been, what is, what will be
faith, like snow, turns wounds to scars

life moves on

February 5, 2015

Do I Matter ... At All?

do I matter so little, is your care so small
you do not give me what is mine to own
and even more, take what is already mine
have I so little importance in your eyes
that to do, and not do, these things to me
to whom they are owed, is of little weight

January 14, 2015

Cold

the nicest thing, sometimes, about winter, is the cold
everyone thinks that the tears are from the chill air
it crosses no one's mind they're of a broken heart
and I can weep, unconcerned that care is insincere

January 14, 2015

will anyone care for me
has anyone any concern
over my broken heart
ragged and beaten
tattered and torn
hopelessly frayed
Lord! I need You!
everyone has left me
solitary and low
sundered from love

January 9, 2015

Je ne suis pas Charlie Hebdo

I will stand against terror
staunch opposing rule by fear
but I will not stand as those
lost, whose blood, still warm,
astonished nations rightly grieve

that they could laugh at fear
is courage of highest strain
bold standard for all who live
but I cannot respect their work
of pouring hate upon hatred

evil is evil, in whatever guise
whether violent drawing blood
whether violent drawing lines
neither the other's just cause
either a poor response to hate

serving hate, both gun and pen
are worthless to redeem or save
owning both the same vile lord
knowing not love, blinding eyes
to forgiveness' blessed balm

yet our every act must be in love
must be salve instead of salt
lest we serve the lord of hate
ignore the love about us thrown
consigning life to death

I will grieve for Charlie Hebdo
(as for countless nameless more)
but I will not adopt their hate
nor stoop to depths so low
that I fail to see or serve my God

rather, in all seasons, favoured or not
yield my hate to God's great love
forgiving those who seek my harm
that the love of God in Christ revealed
may by all be seen in me

Je suis racheté

December 19, 2014

Dreary Friday Before Christmas At Work

Christmas' spirit is sorely lacking here
it's had help starting but didn't catch
where bells should praise the Maker
and carols of praise be on every tongue
there dies instead a bottomless silence
separating the saved from their joy
no rough beast slouching to its birth
but already born and bearing death

December 19, 2014

have you no clue what you are not doing does
to me, who sees you not doing it and wonders
at my worth, at whether or not I am of value
to you, whom I have tried to impress in many
ways, and hoped you would sometime smile
upon me, blessing me with your care, and the
knowledge that you care, for me, but in not
doing what you are not doing you say nothing
to my value but that I have none, despite how
you may actually feel toward me in your mind
and the words I do not hear resound in pain

December 15, 2014

we are none untouched by pain
all know grief, wear its shroud
we are none unburdened
all by greater grace are blessed
we are none untouched by love

December 12, 2014

careless snow falls through indifferent cold
neither making commitment to the other
nor benefiting children who long to romp
within their white mountains in cold clean air
this erratic tail-end to this year of my Lord
the two thousand and fourteenth of grace
belies scarce hid excitement as THAT DAY!
approaches and parcels, both large and small,
gaily accumulate beneath glitter laden boughs
and even that excitement pales against HOPE!
renewed at the GLORY of our SAVIOUR born
WHO would our own garments bear and SAVE!

November 10, 2014

"Greater love has no one than this,
that someone lay down his life for his friends."

What kind of love, then, is this
that one would lay down his life
for a stranger
for one unknown,
for one as yet unborn

What men these men, these gloried men,
must have been, must always be
to put their lives at risk
even to lay down their lives
that other lives could live

How endless my gratitude
must be, must always be
as one for whom these men bled
by their sacrifice I live
These men, these gloried men

My great gift of God

November 9, 2014

this morning in church
heartbroken
far too much damage done
far too little care given
what am I to do
where am I to go
are there any with hands
and lips
who will stop the shattering
before too far comes
and I lie in broken shards
within the careless earth

October 23, 2014

dust

extending my heart
into other hands
I share my treasure

worthless

what I thought as gold
dropped to the ground
trodden underfoot
stomped on and
ground into the dirt

reviled

silently I weep
as what I valued
is made as rubbish

October 17, 2014 - March 1, 2015

I Know that I Shall Never See
(with thanks to Joyce Kilmer)

My life entire I would not see
so pure a love as on Thy tree
To You alone my worship be:
"Of all my loves my best is Thee!"

Peerless One, my King, my God, He
Who by His blood has ransomed me
Your gift has made my song to be:
"Of all my loves my best is Thee!"

To death, to grave, I owe no fee
Your gift of life has made me free
My praise to You will ever be:
"Of all my loves my best is Thee!"

I would not Thy true service flee
nor be of pain or torment free
if on my lips would cease to be:
"Of all my loves my best is Thee!"

Hard by death's door I would not plea
for one more hour of earthly glee
could at its knell my comfort be:
"Of all my loves my best is Thee!"

And when at last I walk Your lea
and praise You by Your crystal sea
my joyous psalm shall ever be:
"Of all my loves my best is Thee!"

October 17, 2014

The leaves are changing colour
as if The Seven yet breathed
Green to golden flame
Temporary iridescence
darting careless through the sky
to grace the forest floor
Such carpet as Solomon could wish
Too hurried, leave barren branch
face the cold November wind
Alone
Too long the rustling hymn replaced
by winter's dreary dirge
All too soon naught but grey
against these cold slate skies

But before they go
Oh! Before they go

Glory!

October 14, 2014

I may not know Him, all of Him
His mind far further beyond mine
than mine beyond the amoeba's
but I know that His love is for me
beyond that I need know little else

October 14, 2014

Sticks and stones
may break my bone
but words unkind
will really hurt me

October 14, 2014

Were I a spade to see would call it thus
yet for fear the sudden club could not
rather with diamond pure its pain betray
and redeem thereby its broken heart

October 8, 2014 - March 11, 2015

words may make a thing seem pure
that evil pervades; root, stem and leaf
regardless how lovely the bloom
death lies lurking behind its scent
and its garden malignant grows
amidst heads of greater worth
though at first blush less brilliant
yield a glory vastly greater

October 2, 2014

I will rejoice, for You are my God
You have called me Your very own
In the light of so vast a treasure
mere human joys must meekly bow
our failings pass to insignificance
We can but rejoice in Your salvation

October 1, 2014

Whatever's Written In Your Heart
(a lament, of sorts, for Gerry Rafferty)

oh Gerry, how I miss you
I hear your voice, now silent,
grieving at our great loss
so lovely the heart that beats no more
so peaceful the voice that has been stilled

you were of the greatest lights
blazing, sun-like, across our lives
under no shadow but your own
and every time I hear you sing

I weep

September 26, 2014

So far from joy have I fallen,
so saddened by lack of care,
so worn by endless abrasion,
were it not for grace of God
would be no reason to live
No prospect to my vision
but the underside of despair
Yet thanks to His great salvation
my soul rejoices upon its hope

September 25, 2014

Irresistible!

Nothing

Absolute and complete
absence of everything;
hardest vacuum far too
substantial
smallest atom far too
solid
energy, time, chance
missing

Sudden burst of glory
compelled to existence
everything!
powerless to resist
that Power far greater
that in willing it to be
made all be

September 19, 2014

there is a life that grows inside you
you claim it is of your body yet it is not
you and one other began what lives
by grace of God within your womb
you and one other, united, as one
began a life, by grace of God, a life!
spirit fusing body to its soul
to live, to grow, to seek its Maker
individual, dependent, helpless
needing those who hold its life
to care, to nurture, to help it grow
and though merely man I must wonder
at your crazy notion of selfness
that would have the cake and eat it

at what point does this stain upon your life
you claim your private curse
become a treasured much loved infant
you'd joyful boast to Heaven

September 19, 2014

This Heart LIVES!

so glorious a pleasure
Love's great mirror

so sublime a reflection
new life begins

so detestable how fast
sin supplants glory

her body vs. its nurture
 but at what point in time
 does 'her body' become
 another creation of God
her choice vs. his control
 but at what point in time
 does shared pleasure become
 individual possession

sin-skewed perceptions
hurling angered words
distracts far too many
from the wonder of their God

September 10, 2014

Rage

rising torrent
threatening, dark
scarce contained;
piled against piers
flotsam of distant
floods

September 10, 2014

joy fleets as summer rain
barren ground devours
insatiable thirst hoards
drought yet fond caressed
clasped close to heart

August 29, 2014 - April 13, 2015

The greatest proof of God we need,
that we do live and love and breathe;
no more required to show our fall,
but the sin we've done from first of all

May 13, 2014 - April 19, 2016

careless words and those unspoken
break a heart too far downtrodden
void of loving care and broken
walking lone and sad forgotten

would I were of eggshell made
could scarce be any weaker
so far down have i been laid
my life could be no bleaker

though smallest gleam diffuse
dark night's unfailing gloom
such light could not produce
such hope to dispel doom

cries in darkest night
fail this pain relieve
even morning bright
offers no reprieve

there is no grace
within this roil
no hope replace
this morbid coil

every breath
urgent plea
living death
void of glee

none care
for me
or dare
to see

that
die
do
I

May 11, 2014 - October 12, 2014

a Mother's love reminds
me of the perfect love of God
true and tough and unrelenting
steadfast in the longest day
champion of the smallest cause
haven in the fiercest storm
comfort in the darkest night
unflinching meeting danger
bright sun to sprouting twig
God's heart given earthly form
love unbending guiding home
those entrusted to her care

May 9, 2014

Must be Some Almighty Love for Such a Hate to be ...

so many are so eagerly offended
one need merely voice an opinion
for woodwork to explode in fury
if ever I needed evidence of God
relentless hate would be sufficient
to prove limitless love by its absence

May 8, 2014

I used to have an opinion, or two
or three, pretty sure that I still do
but so many have told me so much
at odds with what I think I know
I'm not sure what I ought to say
any more. Not that I am doubtful
of what I know I know, but others
knowing all they know they know
decry what I believe as it were false

In a world like this, where every
thought is second guessed and
regardless of its hold on truth
doubted by those with thoughts
of their own, how can truth be
found amid such noise and clamour
save from a VOICE much clearer

I used to have an opinion but I can't have them any more
was told instead to think thoughts not my own
was unable to speak words worthy other's thought
sweeter words than I had crafted always being chosen
counter debates than I had made always being praised
as what I had said and done and thought and bled
were of no greater worth than be the motivation
for the ridicule, correction and improvement of others

as if the fount from which words arose were different

May 6, 2014

I was a child as Apollo thundered to the Moon
star-eyed and wonderstruck that this could be
that I had life now, as dreams were taking flight
am star-eyed and wonderstruck to this very day
at our bold audacity to set foot to Moon dust
riding the fantastic chariot that drove us there
scarce contained tumult hurling metal skyward
sheathed in ice, rising as Phoenix from its pyre
the living dream of people of a hopeless land
silver needle plummeting through the heavens
glorious head of brilliant spear, making light of
haystacks of forlorn hopes and abandoned cares
atop pillars of flame, riding post-apocalyptic roar
for a moment relieving sadnesses of darker days
knights errant embarked upon brave new quest
apex of a vast and mighty pyramid, yet unknown
squires of endless labours rode the skies as well
in spirit join explorers of this vast new ocean
rejoicing each new step's triumph to the world
lending wing and wind tossed coat tail to all
Prometheus flies, returning flame to Olympus
whence came this dream, this gloried hope
that for the decade held us, holds us even now
the dream denying dawn despite noonday sun
and I, no longer child, hear yet upon the wind
the thunderous roar of dreams taking wing

May 5, 2014

I Feel the Undertrodden

I feel at times I am
the undertrodden
gravel on others' roads

crushed beneath
adamant sole's
relentless tread

with scant concern their
indifferent steps
destroy my soul

The Ship and The Storm

The waves with clash and clamour
beat furious against the hull
relentless pound at beam and board
seek endless to bend iron to their will
The winds so howling strong
to move mountains from their root
sing chaos through the lines
tempt strength to challenge strength
This ship, assaulted, strains
its moorage, tugs against its bond
to dance upon wilding waves
exult the wind's tumultuous song
Wind's siren-song, wave's caress
urge it slip its long-held anchor
and free carouse the open sea
Yet doom awaits that course
unescapable, swift and certain
Strongly though it ride the waves
in answer to wind's beguiling call
death below the surface waits
to shatter fragile hull on shoals
well hid behind the storm's façade
and integrity shattered, slowly die

By its anchor held, though battered
this ship will withstand the storm

April 30, 2014

Reason ... Or Lies

seldom will reason lead to truth
though a guide of greatest value
all too often imperfect understood
else all would share the same belief
doubt retreating before so obvious
a truth that all who saw would know

reason an unreliable guide to truth
not by any failure to touch reality
but that we too dimly understand
our thought has been corrupted by
lies so more appealing than truth
that reason is incompletely trusted

regardless how reason searches truth
we will never think beyond the lies
which our common Enemy proclaims
until One pure beyond deception
regenerates our befuddled thought
to ignore deceit and reason clearly

If it was truly based on fact or lie
then each of us would be Christian,
or Muslim, or Humanist, or Jew,
or Evolutionist, or Communist, or...

But because our thinking is clouded
by sin we can no more recognize truth
than we can breathe water as our air

Otherwise we'd all be Blue Jays fans and
you'd all agree that this poem is great :)

Reason must have a perfect guide
if it is to be of any lasting value

April 29, 2014 - September 29, 2016

"If you don't understand something, and the community of physicists don't understand it, that means God did it? Is that how you want to play this game? If that's how you want to invoke your evidence for God, then God is an ever-receding pocket of scientific ignorance that's getting smaller and smaller and smaller as time moves on."

Neil deGrasse Tyson

God does not take refuge in the gaps
where our knowledge shines no light
and our reason yields its way to guess

He is not afraid, He does not cower
alone, weak and fearful for His life
shrinking as His ever smaller darkness
shrinks at onslaught of our light

He is alone the foundation of truth
He is alone the source of all we know
He is alone the giver of man's reason

We solely know because He is

He enlivens all that shares life's breath
He animates all that astounds our minds
He illuminates all who will truly seek

We cannot know so well His work
to have no further thought for Him
Our knowledge will never be so vast
to be more than smallest part of His

God cowers not in darkness, is true light
for all, even who their blindness hide
in guess disguised as brilliance

April 29, 2014 - October 12, 2016

once upon a time
nothing was, and over time
became all that is

This can be believed?

Seriously!?!

In preference to this?

in the beginning
God is, and by His power
was made all that is

Astounding!

April 25, 2014

you may not enjoy hearing it from me
(and I will admit to being rough-edged)
but how can I not say what I know is true
when not to say it makes me somewhat
responsible for the doom that you face

but

let's get right down to the nitty-gritty
would you rather hear it from me, now
or from Him, later, when no choice remains?

Silence

Perhaps you are right
perhaps I could have spoken more kindly
or have spoken not at all
But she had maligned my God
 whom I so highly adore
and had misled my dear ones
 whom I so dearly love
How could I not rebut these lies
or not remain the man I am

Did you notice my words
said nothing to the slander
of her ridicule of my person
That I cared less for myself
than for my God and my dear ones
than for Truth?

Yet I continue to wonder
if more was afoot than seemed
For your rebuke was solely to me
As if I were sole instigator of this grief
As if I alone had spoken unseemly
I'd had higher faith in you
than to overlook oft' shown care
than to overlook oft' spoken praise
than to call out but one of the several
who may have spoken wrong that day
What of the one, who thinks me a fool?
What of the other, who thinks I care not?
What of the friend, spewing lies as truth
whom you rose to defend?
Why did you not rebuke them?
As you had rebuked me
As you had accused me of judging
As you had called me unloving

Why did you do this thing this way
and push me into silence

April 24, 2014 - March 11, 2015

you deride my words, as if they were mine
saying I am outmoded or out of touch
not seeing that I am the echo of a Thunder
so vast and glorious beyond me I have no choice
but to say and do as you see and hear
were I here to please you I would change
in a heartbeat in the smallest instant's part
I would not hesitate to make you smile
but I have heard the Thunder and have no choice
I must do as you see me do else I will die

April 24, 2014

I came to the river and stood by
its shore, wanting much to cross
to the glory beyond its torrent
the realm all my life had dreamed
but dared not wade or swim, too
deep the current was and fast
no man could cross and live
a boat was there, old and worn
its pilot kindly stern, his blistered
hands firm upon the oars, strong
like time itself could not weaken
his grasp on what he would hold
nor years take their toll from him
however much they passed him by
seeing me standing, frustrated, he
began to row but I told him stop
I didn't like his look, I would
cross the stream on my own or
not at all, to which he merely said
that the only way across that river
was him, I would not attain glory
without I used him and his boat
maddening me beyond reason
arrogant, judgemental fool, I
called him to his face and he
softly weeping, let me have my
way, left me to prove he was
wrong, but couldn't, no matter
how I tried the stream defeated
me, washing me up on rocks
on muddy shoals, on deserts dry
always on the shore I longed so
to escape, never once on the side
of glory and all that spurred me on
was the sight of him and his foolish
boat, rock solid in the wild torrent

waiting



we could no more restrain The God
than clay hold back its potter
He will love whom He will love
we but rejoice within His care
to stand upon His word is life
it shields us not from His truth
restricts not who would rejoice with us
but protects us from deceitful lies
the love of which will lead to death

it is not we of faith keeping men from God
but you, for whom is not enough to say
"All who call on the name of the Lord Will Be Saved!"
but add
"Come, and stay, as you are"
you would have a saviour more 'pleasant'
asking neither repentance nor sacrificial faith
having no power at all to save

that is not God you show the world
no salvation have you to offer
your father's lies fly from your lips
obscuring truth with utter hate
all who trust your words will die

April 24, 2014

Here I Stand
(a creed of sorts)

First of all I stand on God
Who lives! Always has, always will
Eternal, uncaused, alive!
Father, Son, Holy Spirit
Almighty Maker, Righteous Saviour, Blessed Helper
My Father, my Brother, my Comfort
Indivisible, individual, indisputable
I have been made by Them, like all else
Once good, now fallen
 Formed from dust and by His hand
 Steward of all He spoke
 Bright mirror of His glory
 Tarnished by death's foul promise
Once fallen, now reclaimed
 Though made His image to carry
 Insufficient for my desires
 Rebellious to the end of death
 So loved that death has died
Reclaimed and encouraged
 Once a rebel, now a son
 By His own life adopted
 Son by bond of purest blood
 Encouraged by the Voice of God
At once made, destroyed, remade and Holy
On God alone can I stand
Have eaten of other bread
Have drunk of other wine
Know them death concealed
And come again to God
In Whom alone is truth

April 23, 2014

I know how it works, have been tempted too
by seeing ones dear loved walk astray
I know the wanting to love the fallen one
warts and all, to say "God forbid that
God would forbid what this one does, that this
is wrong" and change the words to suit

I know, have struggled and struggle still
have ones dearly loved who love what God forbids
yet if God by our desires could change
how worthwhile a God would He remain
He who would not condemn a sin as sin
could not redeem the sinner's life

April 23, 2014

`nuff Said

and now I know the why
why you shot me down
why your anger flared
why your words were said
and am not surprised, really
but saddened, that one as you
should take so great a step

away

from all once held dear

you were not angry
at me
as much as you were angry
at you
for forsaking Truth to lies

all day long I've worried
feared my faith was wrong
and am relieved to find
truth and I are not strangers
and am grieved to find
truth and you have parted ways

April 22-23, 2014

I am confounded and I scream
my "God!" at the sky, longing
the answer I've never heard, my
vision so obscured by the real
the Really Real is but poorly seen
and when I think I have known
have really seen the wild beyond
am befuddled, am confounded
by voices once so truly trusted

weeping alone beneath a silent sky
I long to know if I misbelieve
and if I do, having been misled
what then can I know is true
yet is hope despite my tears
though I send my "God!" aloft to
skies both silent and solid I cannot
do else but make this cry to God
believing else would be my death

There are days when I wonder
if what I've always believed is true
Today was one of those days.
Lying in bed at night
Afraid
Uncertain of truth
Uncertain of base reality
All I can do is stare at the ceiling and ask
whether what I know is what is true
And explore the options
Just in case

But that is where I can go no further
My cry for wisdom is always to my God
Regardless all my doubt
I doubt Him infinitely less than I doubt any alternative
In Him alone is all my hope

April 18, 2014 - August 27, 2014

I will celebrate these holy days with joy
delighted that what is commemorated
took place in history as also in my life

"But they're of pagan origin," some say,
"have been renamed from a pagan start
simply to draw the masses into the fold"
pretending thus their worth reduced

I who celebrate have also pagan origin
have been reclaimed from my pagan start
I have been reborn, am pagan no more
should their pretense my own worth reduce

Yes, I will celebrate my holy days with joy
exuberant that I who once was dead
by these days' deeds will inherit Life!

April 15, 2014

it doesn't matter what you think of me
I am what I am and that's all that I am

a fallen and muddied lover of sin
whom God stooped into the mud
to save and make His very own

of what effect could be your words
with such astounding love to hold me

April 11, 2014-June 14, 2021

"We can't be certain of God"
you say, all gracious and kind
at once pompous and disdainful
as if your doubt could deny my faith
dogmatism opposing dogma
(and the humour eludes you)

but what you mean to say is
"I don't want the certainty I know"
wishing intently by your denial
to receive the blessing and yet
remain within your curse
but how can hate inherit love

you are not uncertain at all
merely terrified that lies waiting
the certain result of your hate

April 10, 2014

No Shoes in Heaven

In fond memory of Mr. Jim Flaherty
December 30, 1949 ~ April 10, 2014

there is a hole in us today
we are diminished
our nation so much smaller
than when we awoke
our beating heart is stilled
our guiding hand removed
a man of honour is no more
our nation is bereft
has lost its finest soul

oh bright sun, your glory veil
shine not on we who weep
oh clouds, obscure the sky
as we mourn our grievous loss

our loved and honoured friend
now honours brighter realms
his shoeless feet now dance
within the courts of God

At his funeral, Prime Minister Harper spoke these words:
"I don't want you to misunderstand me, I do not grieve for Jim.
I know that for Jim, the Lord has prepared a place where he
can be free from the afflictions of recent times, and in joy."

April 5, 2014

Repentance and change are not a choice,
mere add-ons to this faith at our discretion,
are integral to how we are what we are
Can they be saved who to rubbish cling,
could their false joys be welcome in glory?
May as well name the ass a lion as that,
as name the un-repentant "Children of God"
for all the good the renaming will do they
who cannot love God and stay unmoved
by that greater love that makes all clean

March 31, 2014

and we live an instant from the edge

one
single
breath

all that separates us from death
no more in control of our life
than dust is of the winds
that bear it careless in the sky
dropping into earth like us
when fails the lifting breeze

March 31, 2014

I'm not a bigot nor do I hate
but I've been given a lifeboat
and I'll do my best to fill it

March 20, 2014 - August 2, 2018

Holiness Corrupted

you try to wrap it up in fine sounding words
generously building your bridges to inclusivity
for those who'd rather we change than them
but at its heart you've capitulated to corruption
you are traitor, giving sanctuary to the enemy
your master owns the mortgage to your soul
has discarded the treasure you don't even miss
you can no more offer life than a graveyard
your words are more wishful than worthy
and yet you smile and promise a salvation
which, by denying the blood that bought it,
is no longer yours to supply

you put up barriers against the un-enlightened
grandiose walls redefining lies as truth
and laugh them to scorn who truly reborn
disdain your work as of value less than dust
who cling the Word calling them to life

when the final storms begin to break
they will stand on the truth you deny
and live where you thought love did not

March 14, 2014

He Came for Me!

He came to save me as I am
wretched, corrupt and dead
lost beyond all hope of caring

He came to save me as I am
asking only as I come to Him
I renounce for Him all my sin

He came to save me as I am
what could I do but rejoice
and yield my death to His Life

Written in response to reading some rubbish, which
even worse, was 'recommended' by a 'friend'.

March 14, 2014

He Came to Us

He came to us
a fresh breath of life
to this world long dead
walked our dusty road
lived our tired life
our smiles and tears
His very own
the dirt that grimes us
finding no home in Him

INNOCENT!

untouched by our curse
though for us cursed
unharmd by our death
though for us dying

TRIUMPHANT!

to rise again to life
both curse and death

DEFEATED!

calling us beyond our sin
to make us pure as He is pure
lost children restored
to their long forsaken Father
by their Big Brother's love

March 14, 2014

we on-dwell a spinning ball in space
speeding elliptic about its star
surrounded by rock and gas and dust
racing just as quick or more
all afloat upon nothing more than
nothing, emptiness the field we roam
yet light and wonder it all pervades
gloried distant suns beckon onward
fleeting flame and dusty nebulae call
join their voice to the silent chorus
so strongly calls our hope

March 13, 2014

Try ...

I don't know why I keep trying
certain there is no encouragement
yet I continue to pour my effort
into an exercise long proven futile
hoping that someday, someone will

care

March 6, 2014

A Facebook Poetry Collaboration with Tara Stephen and Several Others

or

The Most Fun I've Had on Facebook in a Very Long Time

or

The Longest Poem I Ever Didn't Write

Peter Rhebergen - A Winter Hiaku

Snow Snow Snow Snow Snow
No Snow No Snow No Snow No
Go Snow Go Snow Go

Heidi Zwaan S - Love it!

Jane Adema - See spot. See spot run. See spot run on green grass.

Christopher Lee Wiebe - There are flowers blooming all around me. No snow all winter. It may be more efficient to move to avoid snow than wait for climate change to turn Canada into Florida. Though Canada is the best despite the cold, ice and snow.

Katee Campbell - Out of all your poetry, this is the piece that resonates with me the most. Your juxtaposition of haiku and Dr Seuss with such a timely message. . .

Peter Rhebergen - There is remarkable resonance in the words of the doctor

Tara Coulter Stephen - Sure hope that works!

Peter Rhebergen - By the way, Katee, I had harboured hopes that at least some of my poetry would have a more profoundly spiritual resonance than the simple and childish dream of this one

Emily 'Naju' Campbell - You know Haikus don't have to rhyme, right?

Peter Rhebergen - Sigh ...

Tara Coulter Stephen - Dedicated to Peter Rhebergen because every Haiku can use a Seussian follow up.

I do not like snow
Do not like it at all.
It's still on my driveway
And half up the wall.

There is snow on the walk
And there's snow at the door

There's snow in my boots
And all over my floor

I can't see through the windows
There's snow on them too
And the snow is so deep
I can't clean the dog doo.

Peter Rhebergen - :) !

Emily 'Naju' Campbell - Can I like that twice? ^^

Cheryl Rendle - Now THAT is a poem I understand!

Ian Hugh Scott - Love it! I'm sharing this

Peter Rhebergen - For my friend, Tara Coulter Stephen, who likes snow more than I do:

Snow ...

a single flake of snow alights
to stir the heart with rare delight
and distract from autumn's fiery leaves
to thoughts of gifts wrapped under trees

a thousand flakes of snow fall down
to gently kiss the cooling ground
summer's chores must soon be done
excitement grows, there's more to come!

a million flakes of snow descend
putting dreams of summer to an end
on skis and sleds the children play
joyously live their glorious day

a billion flakes of snow pile up
bringing frantic commerce to a stop
people try to huddle warm inside
for the groundhog once again has lied

an infinity of snow around me streams
dashing hopes and plans and dreams
it is too much, it befogs my head
I've had enough! I'm going to bed

Tara Coulter Stephen - You have set a challenge!

Peter Rhebergen - And here I thought I was merely rising to yours

Tara Coulter Stephen - Always fun to write a little bit of nothing in particular to make people smile!

Rachel Ullman

It's the SAND I can't stand
It's the sand on the floor
It comes in the front hall
When I open the door

It sticks to my socks
And scratches the floor
I sweep it each day
But always there's more!

Tara Coulter Stephen

The sand just won't go
The Sand it will stay
Though Roomba rides by
It just won't go away!

Tara Coulter Stephen - Sorry Peter. Now my sister has joined in. There may be many more verses to this poem forthcoming!

Tara Coulter Stephen

The sand, and that salt!
How they plot, and I'm foiled...
That salt and that sand
How my carpet is spoiled.

The sun just won't come
The sun just won't stay
The sun that would help
It to all go away!

Joshua Lovell - Ode to snow

Peter Rhebergen

If I had my wishes
If I had my dreams
I'd kayak near fishes
On free flowing streams

Tara Coulter Stephen

But the streams are all frozen
The water turned hard
I can't get to the shed
In the back of my yard

The kayak lies dormant
The paddles are still
It's just me, my snow shovel
And a mighty wind chill

Peter Rhebergen

My tears they lie freezing
Like gems on the ground
As my friends are all teasing
'til spring comes around

But the boats are still calling
Through the wind and the chill
Though snow may be falling
Spring WILL COME STILL!

Tara Coulter Stephen

It WILL come we will say
And repeat oft and on
It WILL come and will STAY
Yet .. the snow presses on.

We're made sad by dark skies
And the clouds, and each storm
We've lost our left glove
And our mittens are torn.

We hope for the thaw
For the birds to return
We hope for the rain
And the smell of wet worm

Peter Rhebergen

I still own my left glove
But my marbles are going
Even so with my best love
I'd rather be rowing

But my snow blower growls
With sinister cheer
And all the snow howls
As it's thrown far from here

And yet I will hope for
That far brighter day
When going out the door
Won't have my nerves fray

Tara Coulter Stephen

The winter we think
It has gone on too long
The robins should come
It is time for their song

For the snow and the ice
And the wind chill to leave
For the polar vortex to
Provide a reprieve

Peter Rhebergen

Suzuki and Gore
Are huddled in igloos
And holding the door
To drown out all our boos

The Vortex and warming
Seem both inhospitable
For us they are harming
With doom so disputable

Tara Coulter Stephen

What's that...do I hear
A slow gentle drip?
Is the ice in a thaw?
Did my heart do a flip?

Peter Rhebergen

A drip, oh for a drip
The oft' hoped for melting
Would call for a trip
To the shore to go smelting

Tara Coulter Stephen

Methinks that your rhyme
Is beginning to fail
That you're trying too hard...
Missed the head of the nail.

Peter Rhebergen

Perhaps it is the cold
Has addled the brain
My verse may be old
Yet I cannot refrain

Tara Coulter Stephen

Perhaps it's the talk
Of the climate in change
It may mess with your head
Cause the rhyme to turn strange

Peter Rhebergen

Oh dear, oh my goodness
The sudden derision
It must be the sand-mess
Affects your decision

For honest and surely
I'd thought better of you
Than to razz me so purely
Over poetry true

Tara Coulter Stephen

So sorry dear friend
If you feel that I mock
I've enjoyed all our rhyme
It's more fun than just talk

Peter Rhebergen

The feelings aren't hard here
I'm not even miffed
Though word hasn't touched ear
We surely have riffed

And now awesome singer
I must call it a night
For my book it doth linger
I must taste its delight

Teresa Lam - I loved reading all that! You two are brilliant!

Tara Coulter Stephen

Had fun through the snow
And the sand and the rhyme
Enjoy your good book
And a restful night time.

Peter Rhebergen - Thank you Tara, that was a blast!

Tara Coulter Stephen - Hopefully not a blast of snow! Most welcome and thoroughly

enjoyed - Now I will have to go back to regular sentences. Good thing we don't work together. We would drive our coworkers all nuts!

March 6, 2014

Snow ...

a single flake of snow alights
to stir the heart with quick delight
distract the mind from autumn's leaves
to thoughts of gifts wrapped under trees

a thousand flakes of snow fall down
to gently kiss the cooling ground
summer's chores must soon be done
excitement grows, there's more to come!

a million flakes of snow descend
putting summer's dreaming to an end
on skis and sleds the children play
joyously live their glorious day

a billion flakes of snow pile up
bringing frantic commerce to a stop
all have locked themselves inside
for the groundhog yet again has lied

an infinity of snow around me streams
dashing hopes and plans and dreams
it is too much, it befogs my head
I've had enough! I'm going to bed

March 3, 2014

I am too small and my flesh too frail
to speak aloud what I must say

I long to sing God's praise and cannot
limited by this fragile tent I inhabit
I rejoice that our holy God loves me
and am relieved that nothing
of anything I have ever done
will ever be counted against me
Yet I cannot praise Him as these around me
it demands more of me than my flesh can bear

To praise Him is far too much for me
my adoration cannot escape my mouth
Overcome by all He has done for me
my body has no strength to sing
my words fail before they are formed
And I can but stand and worship, silent
weeping a gratitude beyond words
overwhelmed by a love beyond thought

February 26, 2014

I miss the world I dreamed to live in
when I was younger and naïve
unknowing what could and could not be
I miss that world where men were fair
hate had no play in what was said
and a man's own creed was sacred
untouchable by its deniers

I miss it, and now I live as on a leash
all thought is sacred save my own
I cannot live my faith and obey the law
they contest each other for my soul
My God no more merely denied
is to this world its laughingstock
and I, His child, am ridiculed in turn

I miss the word I dreamed to live in
and long the day of its return

How terrible this world deride
Who alone can save it from its shame

February 26, 2014

We shall not walk those distant fields
though beauty surround and glory call
These broad and tempting vistas
shall never be our home
Our first, faltering step shall be our last
walking not through pleasant meadow
nor wading fertile field and stream
But a journey dry and dangered
to deserted dust untouched by life
Our dreams short halted on impossibles
Strength failing our desire
Effort defeating our ability
As eyes gaze longing outward
our feet remain at Home

February 24, 2014

Contrary to what you may think
I do not live to condemn you
It is not why God has made me be
and is not where I find my joy
I am to reveal His mercy and His love
to you, for your redemption
as they have also been revealed
to me, for my redemption
For His salvation does us little good
if we carry our rubbish beyond the cross

February 22, 2014

I wrote a poem once (or twice) that was denounced
as bad, poorly written, derivative, terrible and
any other epithet they'd think to pound
violent into my ego's variable shell
but discussing points theological found
I was less offender than offended and stunned
by their silence kept becoming what God pronounced

February 20, 2014 -November 23, 2015

Disbelieving you are made
you think you only happened
But why then take such offence
when pain and tragedy strike
unbidden, if not unexpected
if truly you only happened
If blind chance is your maker
from where your cry for justice
when injustice takes its toll
from where even the knowing
an injustice has been done
Your very cry proof of Good
transcendent of the Evil
you unreasonably bewail
Your endless tears proving
a greater Good than evil
a greater Justice than law
a greater Guide than chance

How can a child of chance be longing
what chance can never own
And why then not relent
to the truth your longings prove
that Truth you cannot deny

And live

February 5, 2014

it is winter
my world is bleak
and white
colour has fled
to realms unknown
and I sleep
dreaming of glory

December 19, 2013

If You Don't ...

if you don't
want my Christmas ornaments in public
in the time we celebrate the day

why should you
have your wild carousing on our main street
in the time we celebrate our land

but then
fairness has never been the point
has it

December 6, 2013

"Christmas Brings Christianity Back For Me"

Elizabeth Hawksworth - Huffington Post

you forgive the Church the scars caused by your own choices
how gracious
hiding your rebellion behind a noble façade and the questions
everyone asks, yet you dis-acknowledge the answers given
dare you for one moment think that you were not hated
but rejected
as unwilling to let God change you, yet unable to change God
evicted from the rooms you long yet despise to own
to take unreasonable pride in your rejection rather than weep
your loss

December 5, 2013

I thought I would be reviled
condemned and ridiculed for
standing here where I grew
but no one noticed
no one said a word
and somehow this was worse
than what I'd feared

After publishing "[Let God Forget](#)" on my
Facebook and hearing nothing in response

November 25 – December 2, 2013

Let God Forget

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Jesus ~ Matthew 16:19

it's funny how memory works

every time I lose a hair I think of you and
how you tried to rob me of an innocence
I didn't know I had, yet somehow kept
unaware for years of what you'd tried
to do and failed, so naïve I was, and am
I was more surprised than appalled when
I saw, finally, you had not been honest
with me, alone in that room that day
(you'd told me lies, sacrificed my trust
on the vile altar to your evil desire) and
were no longer who I'd thought you were
yet knowing, I find forgiving you still easy
to do, my trust in you the only casualty
(my trust in One far greater unshaken)
my body (my mind and my soul) unharmed
praise God! and would not be destroyed
even had your theft succeeded, had you
robbed from me my innocence and done
to me that evil far greater than was done
it would still be a far smaller thing
than this amazing salvation I enjoy
and I would still forgive you and
maybe that's the reason I remember
so I can forgive you and let God forget

isn't it funny how memory works

It took me over twenty years to realize what had taken place in that room that day was that a man I trusted had taken advantage of me. Although I was unaware at the time that it had happened, a feeling of discomfort made me keep my distance from that time on.

November 21, 2013 - November 26, 2013

Elusivity

Truth is elusive, like water
or air, everywhere to hand
but try grabbing it, you can't
wrap your hands 'round more
than will touch your fingers
the whole eludes capture
intimate and unfathomed
beyond understanding
flowing through our grasp
as would water and air
when trying to grasp all
yet life depends on these
as depends on Truth and
these little bits we hold
though not the entirety are
sufficient to prove the being
of Greatness beyond our grasp
un-clearly seen, yet seen
un-wholly known, yet known
we pursue a shadow cast
by Vastness beyond our sight
until that day our fingers
will grab hold and touch all
Truth 'til then elusive stays
known only by parts
each none the less True
for being not the Whole

November 21, 2013

such a hate filled place
this world
the smallest act of good
despised
the least amount of light
one shines
at this oppressive dark
ridiculed and jeered
honesty doubted
shutters hearts
overwhelming hate
closes doors
to a kindness
all will need
some day

fuelling ever more
the hatred of all
that is good
and decent
and kind
in this amazing world

This has been a discouraging week.
On Sunday, ushering, I was told I
should smile more, and I was smiling,
Today, PM Harper gives Federal aid
to restore Lac Megantic after their
disaster and detractors sprout from
walls to call him self-serving.

I am sad.

November 18, 2013

In days of yore the hero wore
a shiny suit and rode a horse

In days today the hero may
don cargo pants and drive a mouse

November 19, 2013 – March 13, 2014

So ...

So, we've finally saved the planet
made it verdant, lush and green
by our effort reversed the damage
that we before had seen

We live in reclaimed paradise
thanks to all that we have done
thanks to our words, our works, our efforts
we have great distance come

But ...

We've not yet cured the greater harm
where our madness had its start
when the way of God and ways of man
at first began to part

What good's been done to save the world
yet leave those upon it chained
to ancient evil whose hate the curse
that left creation maimed

Of all that's made we have not saved
what will outlive a perished earth
who life abundant could recapture
had they believed its worth

We serve the Saviour of a world
for all who come He will atone
we do our fellows grave injustice
to save the world alone

November 15, 2013

I almost didn't buy Egg Nog
but did
the shelf price was wrong
two whole dollars more
than what I'd seen the register
pronounce before I wondered
that I had maybe seen things wrong
and the evidence before my eyes
belied the truth I'd thought I known
but standing firm bought two
enjoyed them greatly
and saved four dollars too!

November 13, 2013

The Flame

On the circus surrounding Mayor Rob Ford, and ourselves

we built a fire, one day
so bored of life, it seemed
a good thing to do at the time
so warm and communal too
and we basked
its comforting glow
shown but unrevealed
for a time forgetful
of our cold

and we fed it
 too much
and it grew
 too much
and became
 too much
a danger

like a guard-monster
soon more a danger
to us
than the dark outside
had been
but once a monster
outgrows its need
it stays where it wants
so with the fire
that burns what it will

disgusted
with the fire
we tried to leave
but couldn't

cold within its distracting
glow

November 13, 2013

Journey With Me, Won't You?

I'm a man on a journey
I'm going somewhere
and I won't be coming back

Why don't you come with me?

You're going anyway, come
along, we'll have a blast!

I'll meet you in tomorrow!

November 11, 2013

Haiyan

I sit here, dreaming of Christmas
while in the Philippines thousands die
and I struggle, celebrating the season
when for so many it will never come
or may come without the same joy I enjoy

no tearing of flimsy paper
no welcoming of distant loves
no shelter from the world outside

it is so vastly unfair they endure this pain
as daily I take such joy for granted
the greatest of my worries insignificant
by comparison to their fight to survive
and I ask our mutual God some questions

why such pain for them while I have little
how do I wrap my life around so great a loss
where is Your grace amidst this calamity

oh my God! grant me the sight
to not belittle You or aggrandize death
let me do justice to Your Word and these
whose lives have been shattered
even as I celebrate salvation

November 10, 2013

It Will Not Be Enough

I will wear a Poppy each November; it will not be enough
I will share in each moment of silence; it will not be enough
I will remember all that was sacrificed, it will not be enough

No matter what I do, it will never be enough
cannot ever be enough

I cannot ever, in all my life, do enough
to satisfy the debt I owe these fallen
these without whom I would not, could not be

Though eternity chase eternity, this debt outlives all time

Greater love has no man than he lay down his life
for one unknown, unable to repay, in utmost finality

If I could give them all that I am, it would not be enough

I am alive, my life stands only upon their own
as God lives, I stand eternal in their debt
All that lies in my power to do is not enough

My only recourse my un-ending, life-long
"Thank You!"

I pray the God who gave me these
my endless gratitude would make worthwhile
the price they paid that I could be

October 8, 2013

Dear God! Soon?

Oh God! You have made me
to have a share of Your glory
Me! Who is daily given to failure
I share your glory upon this world
that daily reflects your beauty
though wreathed with death

And yet I long to be with You
where You have promised I would be
and shed these chains of mediocrity
surround at last by Your joy
released of this infinite sadness
free to praise You without restraint

October 4, 2013

Were I ...

Were I a cave to own I would never hurt your head
nor let Brontosauri feast upon your fields

Rather

I would invent courtship merely to gain your love
and post T-Rexes, properly humble, to keep marauders at bay

Were I a knight errant I would not worship your honour
as others, who for your favour vainly joust

Rather

Grand paeans to your beauty would I pen
and remain near you, to ardently court your love

October 2, 2013 - November 20, 2016

exactly as I in-dwell a tent
I fight the failings of this form
about which evils clamour
to its insatiable desires
assaulted, it quakes, it quails
before relentless onslaught
of forbidden dreams
of desires falsely sated

October 1, 2013 - April 23, 2018

we too have grieved
as you
have mourned great loss
as you
have wept the long dark hours
as you

your hundreds round you gather
help you shed your tears
harsh pain shared, is less
for the moment, at least
we did not share
could not share, our grief
with those who never knew

we two have grieved
unlike you
mourned a loss unknown
unlike you
have wept the long dark hours
alone

you have met yours whom you grieve
none knew ours was near
we never held her tight
could not name her the name
we'd planned, or him
had no chance to say
"Good bye,
God speed you to your home"

we have suffered pain unknown
as the words
"You should start a family"
birthed, eyes cast downward, the hushed
"We did"

unlike you
none knew, or knows
unlike you
we grieved
and grieve
alone

September 25, 2013

Something Evil

something evil
fills you
claims you
wants you
for its own

despite the love
you will not see
so freely given
despite the pain
you cause

yet you breathe
and as you breathe
you live
and as you live
I hope

September 25, 2013

Michelle

(after a Facebook post, today)

oh that you would let God break through
where small self-concern keeps others out
that the windows of your soul could open
shine His Light on your despairing night

you have no thought that pains may end
when fickle pleasure's no more pursued
your soul, no more your body's slave, would fly!
alive! set free upon God's good grace

would that you would shout "Yes!" to Life
redeemed from the death that deceives you
which tickles your soul but offers no peace
oh that you change the race that you run

September 25, 2013

who knows when but one bright day
He shall come for me to take me home
like a long-awaited love, He will come
He will call my name and I will go
shed all this corruption and decay
discard these filthy rags I borrow
shed this skin like a threadbare suit
and rise again a new-made man
enfold within His righteousness

He will call me and I will rise
I will rise as the grave were nothing
as though earth and death were vapour
with less than vapour's strength
to hold me where I lie
He will call and I will run to join Him
no more able to resist His voice
than to dispute my being formed
no more to have this world deceive me

alive at last!

for I have been redeemed!

September 12, 2013

Always Trusting Someone

it stands strong, solid, secure
undeniable, powerful, irresistibly grand
a thing of beauty, made more lovely
in its utility, a joy forever
and one with the road before me
spanning a chasm terrifyingly deep
impassable but for this glorious bridge

and I know nothing

whose hands were those that built it
what minds conceived its design
did they care or scorn their fellow man
in building this magnificent span
was their plan to help or hinder

I know simply nothing

but that death owns every path but this
bridge that spans the gap before me
I have not the time to analyze it
have no skill to determine its worth
must proceed alone on the trust
that the builders were men of honour
who sought not my harm but good

September 10, 2013

You Say Such Things

you have said such things
I would hear your words and fear
my own were insufficient
to stand alongside yours
were mere gurgles of a babe
of one whose words were not as wise

but now

you have said such things
I could hear your words and know
my own fare none the worse
can stand alongside any
as the words of one whose feet
have travelled different paths and times

September 9, 2013

We're Not All Like That ... Or That

(a response to the "Not All Like That" movement)

we are not all like that
haters of the deed
neither loving those who do
but we're also not all like this
lovers of the deed
falsely loving those who do
we are more like this
haters of the deed
truly loving those who do
so we can all be like this
purged by Jesus' deed
of the evil that we do

If I see a danger of any form
of which I fail to warn; do I not
display my lack of love?

June 10, 2013

what do you know now that you have passed
into that which lies beyond these transient days
what do you know now that you cared not know
while you possessed the chance to know
do your words stand bold as they did in life
are they silent now that truth is known
do you stand defiant on what you knew to be true
are you even able, does that foundation remain
what do you know that you would much rather not
what did you not know that you much rather would

May 15, 2013

I Couldn't Care ...

... Less ...

I couldn't care less
what you think or say or do
it matters very little to me
is of small consequence to me
that you pervert the truth
other than to your loss
that you know God far
less well than you could

... More ...

I couldn't care more
what you think or say or do
it matters very greatly to me
is of great consequence to all
that as you pervert truth
you guide to other's loss
that they know God far
less well than they could

after all is thought or said or done
my faith will stand secure
on God alone
challenged but unshaken
by what others think or say or do

May 15, 2013

There,
but for the grace of God
go I

because

Here,
firm on the grace of God
I stand

May 15, 2013

we keep asking "Why?"

as if knowing evil's reason
makes its pardon possible

as if knowing evil's purpose
makes its deeds less hideous

as if knowing evil's nature
were the calling of our life

May 14, 2013 - November 20, 2016

this world by sadness shroud
wings tears from every joy
pain the uncared for guest
of every celebration
life begins while knowing death
however far its horrid end
the joy of each day's step
mingles deep, abiding grief

would that recompense would come

NOW!

while love still weeps its loss

dear God assuage our tears
and within Your peace enfold us

Written after hearing of the murder
of Tim Bosma; family man, Christian,
for whom we had been praying all week.

Bruce Cockburn's rocket launcher is
far too small for such a sadness.

Thank God His justice is far more satisfying.

May 5, 2013-August 12, 2019

There must be something more
beyond this dark horizon
Some 'where' that gives 'here' its meaning
Where our fragile hopes and dreams
find at last their consolation
Where treasured moments fleeting
receive the due of all their promise

For this land is depressingly unjust
its pleasures too quickly fade
before tears too numerous to count
for wounds with no lasting cure
Were justice even to be found
its triumphs too soon pass to dust
man's memory dim to nothing
lessons forgotten and unlearned

There must be something more
beyond grim dread edge of life
Some 'where' that gives 'here' its meaning
Where our remorseless sorrows
meet their perfect justice
Where our ephemeral joys
become the glory for which we long

In Sunday School, with Dr. Craig Carter,
studying from the book of Ecclesiastes and
learning about the problem of pain in life.

We have a longing for fairness, justice and
glory that can never be met in this world;
a desire so strong that it is essential that its
longings be permanently met elsewhere

May 5, 2013

It is not of myself, this gift I enjoy
Nothing that I have done or will do
Gains for me this incredible blessing
I am powerless to accomplish
The smallest, least little portion
Of all that I have gained and will gain
It is not nor has it ever been

Of me

All I have, all I ever hope to gain
Is solely through the love of God
In no other source do I find blessing
Peace, assurance of salvation
Than in His freely given love
Alone of all the things that are
His love removes the stain from my life

May 3~12, 2013

you caused me untold harm
by your careless complaint
that I had been remiss
then asking that I praise
what you and yours were not
resting your burden light
on shoulders not your own
as though care transferred
were sufficient to heal
and my faltering labours
replace the lack of yours
with no word either way
for what was done to please
whether you saw my words
cared that I spoke for you
or were aware the pain
your self concern has caused
do you not know that I
feel, bleed and weep as you

May 3-9, 2013

I continue to seek approval
from those who live life with me
encounter me and constantly appraise

as if my worth were dependent on others
as if their valuations were of any value

broken-hearted

as all I am fails to meet their standard
as all I do or try fails, is ignored as dust

forgetting their opinion means nothing
either ignorance, praise or scorn
as long as God can say of me

"Well done and welcome"

May 3, 2013

I didn't deserve you
but I got you
and I am forever grateful

May 2, 2013

should you deride my fall
as if my fall makes God a fool
and shows my faith a farce

you must not realize
my fall no more makes God a fool
than shows my faith a farce

thus fail to see that
I am the fool my fall reveals
my obstinance the farce

my fall shows all my need for God
my faith the truth of my salvation

May 2~13, 2013

you are not alive

I will not belittle you
though we do not agree
I will not ridicule you
though your faith disputes mine
I will never believe
that you are worth less than I

for I was once dead

I will walk beside you

for I have found life

Together, we will seek truth
searching near and far for it
as those who value treasure
removing all falsehood
as those who refine gold
that its beauty be revealed

in Truth we shall live

May 2, 2013

Oh Lord

the evil rule the earth
treading underfoot the holy
they profane your name
they abuse your mercy
and praise those who do like them

Oh Lord

the righteous are your children
you saved us from this very curse
we honour your name
we rely on your mercy
praising you above all else

Oh Lord look

Oh Lord hear

Oh Lord defend

for we are overwhelmed
evil men have their way with us
your children weep, your very own!
look to us, oh Lord, for we cry out
hear our cries, in your mercy save us

April 28, 2013-March 16, 2014

Bless the Lord!

with thanks to Matt Redman
and
Westney Heights Youth

Bless the Lord, O my soul
O my soul
Worship His holy name
Sing like never before
O my soul
I'll worship Your holy name

Each day of life filled with God's good blessing	The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning It's time to sing Your song again
We have no reason not to praise His name	Whatever may pass, and whatever lies before me
There is no time with God's mercy absent	
No moment where His love does not abound	Let me be singing when the evening comes

Bless the Lord, O my soul
O my soul
Worship His holy name
Sing like never before
O my soul
I'll worship Your holy name

I learned from those He gave to raise me	You're rich in love, and You're slow to anger
Faith stands strong midst the greatest trial	Your name is great, and Your heart is kind
No matter what upon me may be falling	For all Your goodness I will keep on singing
Life is filled with cause to praise You more	Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find

Bless the Lord, O my soul
O my soul
Worship His holy name
Sing like never before
O my soul
I'll worship Your holy name

On his last day here, my dad lay singing Praising our God with his dying breath And as his soul left its earthly shelter Saw Jesus come to take him to his home	And on that day when my strength is failing The end draws near and my time has come Still my soul will sing Your praise unending Ten thousand years and then forevermore
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Bless the Lord, O my soul
O my soul
Worship His holy name
Sing like never before
O my soul
I'll worship Your holy name

Westney Heights Youth led a simply awesome worship service this morning. Through this song all I could think of was Mom and Dad raising me to God, Dad singing praise to God as he died and Mom praising God for His unending grace.

Bless the Lord, O my soul!

Yes! Bless the Lord!

April 25, 2013

They Ran

(after the Boston Bombing,
on people running **toward** the devastation)

flame
shattering peace
hate
destroying life
need
moving strangers

God's messengers of peace

heroes as they ran
normal becoming noble
unknowing if another
bomb
would end their run
toward destruction
knowing only of need

God's messengers of peace

sudden heroes
ran
reclaiming lives
love
restoring hope
heal

I thank God we share a world
with heroes such as these who
drowning hate in highest love

triumph

April 25, 2013

Hope!

(after the Boston Bombing and Neil Diamond singing "Sweet Caroline" at Fenway)

Hope! It springs eternal
undefeated 'midst even darkest gloom
a ray proclaiming a better world exists
even if beyond these short days
a place where smiles can never be
disturbed by famine, fear or flame
a sign that Good will always triumph
over Godless acts of hateful men

"On Saturday, April 20, 2013, during the 8th inning of the Red Sox's baseball game against the Kansas City Royals, Neil Diamond took to the field in Fenway Park to lead the crowd in a stirring rendition of the song. Diamond's live rendition of "Caroline" sparked an enthusiastic sing-along in Fenway, as the 35,000 in attendance echoed every word and erupted into a chant of "U-S-A" at the song's conclusion. The song has rung out at sporting events across the country after the Boston Marathon bombings, in efforts to show solidarity with those affected by the tragedy. It was also played right before the start of the Hamburg Marathon in Hamburg, Germany, on Sunday, April 21, 2013, subsequent to a minute of silence, in commemoration of the Boston Marathon bombings and as a sign of solidarity against terrorism."

(Wikipedia – en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweet_Caroline – April 25, 2013)

And from Syria, this message on a picture posted to Facebook: "Boston bombings represent a sorrowful scene of what happens every day in Syria. Do accept our condolences."

The Syrian Revolution KNRC KAFRANBEL 19 4 13"

And from Boston, back to Syria, also on Facebook: "Friends in Syria, we too hope for the safety of your families and for PEACE."

Love, Boston 20 4 13"

Often, tragedy brings out the best in us.

April 22, 2013

STOP!!!

Stop taxing me to pieces
I already pay too much
for you to come hat in hand
claiming enough from your wallet
so you need more from mine

BUT!

Your folk have wasted much
we need to know you're sorry
we need an accounting
we need your solemn promise
to honour and respect our toil

Deceived by "The Force"

Yoda's decrepit,
Obi will get it,
Luke is a weenie,
and Vader's a meanie,
Oh! How Lucas deceived me!

Space battles with sound,
things odder abound,
marvels of all kind,
each boggles a quick mind.
Oh! How Lucas deceived me!

Ani's amazing
'til he starts phasing
that Sidious' charm
to unspeakable harm
Oh! How Lucas deceived me!

The Sith are intense
yet Jedi can't sense
them ere' they strike blows,
when every man knows
Oh! How Lucas deceived me!

Take Geonosis!
Grandly auspicious,
formed as a rescue,
the mission's a miscue
Oh! How Lucas deceived me!

Robots that wander
on dunes as they ponder
life as a man might
stretch credence beyond sight
Oh! How Lucas deceived me!

Since Solo shot first
he didn't fare worst;
now Greedo's expired
and can't say if he'd fired
Oh! How Lucas deceived me!

The Falcon's unique,
so speedy and sleek,
but frequently busted,
do they wisely trust it?
Oh! How Lucas deceived me!

Which general thought
ice could shield hot?
Hoth! Of all places,
to hide rebel bases!
Oh! How Lucas deceived me!

Friend Lando's a scamp
and Dagobah's damp
where starships can sink
yet fly straight from the drink
Oh! How Lucas deceived me!

Sweet Leia in metal,
that delicate petal,
strange that a Hutt should
hold dear what ol' Han would
Oh! How Lucas deceived me!

Bobba Fett's jet-pack
failed at the Sarlacc;
would he had lived past
that poorly thought gun blast
Oh! How Lucas deceived me!

Don't get me started
on Ewoks big hearted
who get in the way
and yet save the day.
Oh! How Lucas deceived me!

Death Stars are fearsome
yet Empires lose them
to renegade bands
amid countless last stands
Oh! How Lucas deceived me!

How very absurd
when Coruscant heard
of Palpatine's death
they rejoiced in one breath
Oh! How Lucas deceived me!

A Parsec is time
Some Jedi are slime
Jar-Jar is stupid
and Leia meets Cupid
Oh! How Lucas deceived me!

So farewell to Han
and insurgent band

these Star Wars I'll shirk
to go boldly with Kirk
Oh! 'Great White Bird' console me!

April 12, 2013

Conundrum

It's a conundrum
What to do when you have some
Free time on your hands

April 5, 2013

I weep for this world with
such as you standing shepherd
caring not for straight and true,
lead along the wide and false
you, of all should know, you!
misrepresent our God of love
perverting views of His perfection
with shadow of your sordid dreams

would you could see you
as God knows you to be

would those who see you
know you guide to death

January 16, 2013

we live in an age where violence is glorified
relentlessly covered in news
lovingly caressed in media
and wonder that so many die

we live in a time when sensibility is stunned
remorselessly pushed to the side
heedlessly defined as hysteria
and wonder that so many cry

we reap the harvest of our complacent desires
hearts bleeding without even knowing
hideously calloused and bruised
and wonder our eternal why

January 10, 2013 - November 20, 2016

evil hides within her pleasant form
your senses to deceive

she wraps her sin with beauty
the stalwart to deceive
beguiling with smile and form
and promises of rapture
to lure her prey to death
to lure to death the foolish
strong, her body calls to yours
with dreams of pleasures' stolen
from the lover of your life
given to her of doubtful care
momentary delight upon her false breast
displacing years of growing knowledge
arms that clutch and grasp at joy
hold you fast upon your doom

and you trade the bliss of endless life
for your death of endless pain

she will not care though you die
but search another victim
with her pleasures kill

when at the end you reap your seed
her hate will be your balm

December 31, 2012

What Days Await ...

what days await us
in this year ahead
what has God in store
that we do not know
where will He lead us
that we have not seen
what will He show us
that we will praise Him

what days await us
in this year ahead
God is not surprised
is already there
has prepared that day
to meet His purpose
that what He shows us
will cause us praise Him

November 11, 2012 - May 9, 2013

I will never forget you
My every breath a reminder
I would not be had you not lived

Thank you
With all my heart
Thank you

With every breath
Thank you

Last verse added May 9, 2013
in response to a Facebook post
and may be considered optional.
"My" was added to the second line
and may be considered essential.

September 12, 2012

One Way

this street is rough and
of late is getting worse
cannot ask if it improves
none have gone and come
all I know is to move along
take each step in turn, as
ever nearer I see the sign,

Death Ends

with hope more lies beyond

June 20, 2012

Life is simply delirious and beats every alternative but one!

Do I believe this today
after all that has happened?

Yes!

Most emphatically!

Even if their care never starts
God's care never ends

June 19, 2012

Uncle Joe moved out last night
He'd been talking about it for some time
so we weren't really that surprised
when he just up and left
but it was kind of sudden
it was so glorious a new day dawning
he couldn't wait to get on with it
and left

so quick he left his bag behind him
but he won't be needing it again
so we left it with all the others
and marked it with a stone

June 13, 2012

On Chesterton & Lewis (et. al.)

Thank you, Lord,
that you have put into this world
such men as these

Thank you more, Lord,
that you have put me into this world
to know them

Thank you even more, Lord,
that you have put your Son into this world
to save us each

May 30, 2012

"...died suddenly..."

all death is sudden
whether lingering on
or suddenly gone
ever the unwelcome guest

one moment they are
 here
the next they are not
 here
as we remain
 here

desperate to regain
a world destroyed

May 28, 2012

Suppose you ask me to adopt your favoured thought
presenting only the lovely skin, not its festered core?

Would I not be deceived by your gentle words?

Surely if part is to be accepted all must be acceptable
or you become as false to truth as you complain of me.

May 28, 2012

if I teach my child to love
one good yet deny another
I deny my child and God

if I teach my child to hate
one bad yet allow another
I deny my child and God

if I teach my child to love
or hate, each as God determines
I will raise my child to God

May 27, 2012 - March 3, 2013

Joshua at Jericho

These walls, they tower above me
erupting from this soil, impenetrable
tipped with crests and angry spears
Curses falling from those ramparts
land ineffective around my dusty feet
passing once again that scarlet cord
I've walked by twelve times before.
Looking up at the window it connects
to this dust I see hopeful faces peer
as disbelieving deliverance had come.

Before me dust is stirred beneath holy feet
the air loud with the sound of trumpets,
bright with glory beaming from gold.
Guiding us, this sound, this glory,
leads us around these walls, silent,
but for our thoughts, our pounding blood.
What those behind me were thinking
I do not know, but I, I had seen Pharaoh
felled from his place as a tree for fuel.
I, I and one other, had seen part the sea,
The Sea! walking dry within it,
followed by the army of our enemy.
We danced on the shores of freedom
as it crashed upon that panicked horde.
Free! We were free! Four Hundred years
and finally we are FREE!

And the sadness long years ago
when giants scared them off
even the three of us could not
turn this tide of fear and bore the years
for their faithless foolishness.
How many men lay beneath desert sand
whose children now here march
silently, expectantly, knowingly;
trusting God to open these walls.
Merest babes when their parents quailed
they now claim their own this land
having not seen Pharaoh humbled as a child
for whom Sinai was but a story of the aged.
These, THESE! now marched in faith
to claim the land their fathers feared.

Dust dances excited in the afternoon
reminiscent of the smoke on Sinai
as I crowded upon its flanks, Moses

facing the thundering voice of God.
He had seen God as friend sees friend
and I, I saw on his face the reflection
of the glory that gave him power.
I shared his anger at Sinai's foot
where false gold gleamed bright
amid the tumult of celebration,
palely imitating that gleam and sound
before me marching sure.
"How could they?" I recall my mind
bare days from their slavery
feet yet wet from the sea
thrilling tambourines played in joy
scarce silent, they could do this?
And, amazed, saw the mercy spare
what should have died.

Forty years among that faith
more often weak than strong
and now, today, its test
did that crucible of time
make them strong or brittle
these people that encourage me
"Be strong, and courageous."
It matters not, I and mine will go with God,
This circling of forbidding walls
mere ceremony, merely a claim
to what has been ours forever.
I alone, had God told me,
would have marched in silence
these six days past
these twelve marches past
this past march almost done.
I and I alone, had God told me,
would have knocked down these walls
with but a glare at the sin it shields
at those angry crests above me;
not fearing these insults hurled
through the air as spears in war.
They would not have touched me
for I am God's!

Would that Moses could have seen
what I am seeing now,
this last circuit almost complete
first feet almost touch first print,
finding myself gathering breath
anticipating the sole action we have
practicing the reach for my sword
ensuring it slides easy from its sheath
as we marchers have slid easy from

the sheath where God has held us.
I am ready, it matters not these others
what they will do. I and I alone
could take this place, had God told me.
And foot touches print and I smile
as the din of victory resounds
encircling these walls from before me
to behind. Faces on the ramparts gaze
confused that our cries of joyous praise
precedes the breaking of their walls
the deaths of these defenders.
Confusion turning to amazement
and to terror, as these most solid walls
in all this land of ours begin to shake
(our yells now encircling this city,
a mighty shout to God most high
our act of worship as He told us).
Our yells scarcely falter as we see
CRACKS! appear beneath those whose fear
had fueled their hate all week
staggering like men late drunk
spear cast aside, useless, for handhold
themselves useless
as these mighty walls crumbled
before a far more mighty God.

Come what may in years to come
today is a good day to live
as I and those with me turn,
running, toward the ruin of rebellion
our yells of praise continue
none can stand our rush
as we reclaim what is God's
making holy once again,
what man has debased.
Would they would remember,
as I and mine most truly will,
down the years ahead of them
that today, TODAY! God fought for us
as He had within Egypt
as He had within the sea
as He had within the desert
for forty years defending
a people no more worthy than these now dead.
Would they would remember,
as I and mine most truly will,
that he who is not for God opposes
He who brooks no foe.

May 14, 2012 - April 15, 2015

the neighbours are up in arms
all complaining that our fence
is too far beyond their reach
(still standing as it's always stood
hasn't moved a jot in all these ages
despite their ceaseless denial)
though determined to pull it to them
it stands unmoved and unchanged
yet they seek, they work, they strive
to mingle what stands within
with what lies outside its gate
but though they build new walls
the old have not been moved
and they give themselves rest
upon sureties feeble and frail

They call it a "debate" this issue of the Church accepting "revisions" to the Truth (whether of origin; morality or practice). Less a debate than an all-out assault on the fortress of God by this world. Wanting something that's never been True, and saying we are wrong for calling it a lie when all we want is for the dead to live.

May 9, 2012

You can wish all you wish
That God hadn't said what He has said
You can wish all you wish
That what you wish is real
Instead of a lie
That truth is what you want
Instead of what God has said
Go ahead and change His words
As you wish

There will come a day
You'll wish you hadn't

For so long you have reduced truth
Adjusted it to support your lie
You can no longer touch it
Having discarded it's handle

I'd say to you
"You wouldn't recognize Truth
if it condemned you."
But it will,
and you will

April 29, 2012 - April 27, 2013

you sneer at me, ridiculing
my grasp at the sky as futile
since I'm headed for the dust
will die like all man, to exist
no more

you deride my God, false fancy,
you claim, a made up escape from
a non-existent demise
a self-serving end to keep man
in fear

you mock my faith in God creating
you boast a start from nothing, less
than even hardest vacuum
almighty God reduced to time
and chance

yet I am doubtful that your faith
is as well placed as mine, at least
I have God, you have nothing,
the source and upholder of all
that is

your nothing is but slightly less
than something, real nothing is less
by far than anything that isn't
nothing to grab, no place, no where
to start

a universe

you are amazed at my faith
trusting the eternal
self-existent God
as am I at your disbelief
clinging to a hopeful
self-existent chance

April 25, 2012 - October 28, 2014

Misapprehending Wrath and Love

you do not understand
supposing wrath estranged from love
instead of closely bound

were not wrath
love could show no grace

were not love
wrath would have no force

extending upwards
your miscomprehension
toward heaven

in ignorance boldly claim
that the wrath of the Old
denies the love of the New

unknowing that within them dwells
the One Who bore God's wrath
Who also shares God's love,

wrath and love in One subsumed

despair and hope in hand depend
on Holy wrath with love suffused
and rest alone upon the Son

April 25, 2012 - September 27, 2018

"There Will be Blood..."

did you think there would be no harm
did you think there would be no pain
did you think there would be no cost

do you not know that consequence follows cause

did you think I would not be harmed
did you think I would not feel pain
did you think I would not pay

how could you not know

every insult hates me
every lie betrays me
every slight belittles me

I am despoiled by you

like Christ, I will love you
unlike Him, I lose the strength
to hold pain and forgive

God! Help me!

April 25, 2012

The Price

did you really think you would not pay
did you seriously think you would not see pain
did you think that you would not see harm

did you not know consequence follows every act

did you think that I would not be harmed
did you seriously think I would not see pain
did you really think I would not bleed

how could you

every insult, every lie
every little jab
causes damage, has a cost
consequence
results in pain

I love you
but I am losing the strength
to forgive you

God! Help me!

April 23, 2012

You stand your stolen pulpit
pontificate, yet uncertain
Your magician's words
distracting from your lies
crutching misplaced faith

If you were to ask
"Was Jesus ... "
 (insert your preferred
 personal
 cultural
 worldly ...
 misdirection here)
"... ?"

I could not be certain
you would hear my answer
You neither know the God I adore
nor have you care enough
to permit Him speech

Despite how oft' you ask the answer
 (you seek but do not want; refused
 the Answer to a need much greater)
you've already missed the point

The question is not what Jesus was
or wasn't, but Who Jesus Is

 that He lives
 proves all He is (was and will be)

We stand on nothing less secure
or fall

A University chaplain asks: "Was Jesus Gay?"
Not knowing whether to be furious or to
laugh myself silly; I wrote this poem instead.

If you have to ask a question like this at all,
then you really have no clue Who Jesus Is.

April 19, 2012

Oh, Mary

...et alia...

based on comments made at news24

God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

I John 4:16

you hate, you heap your scorn
but offer no substance
you ridicule all
who know what you believe wrong
but never prove why

yet behind you looms
he in whose chains
you slave
whose hate you serve

of far greater evil,
of far greater faith
but, already doomed,
of far less time

than you
who yet lives life

you do not prove your view
as you ridicule others
put meat on your words
give me reason beyond hate
that I should not love

April 18, 2012

Truth!

Despite proud boasts of man,
his flat denials fail,
unfit to refute God;
contrived truth cannot Truth
befoul

Neither pie in the sky
nor crutch for failing minds,
this faith is found secure
on He Whose word upholds
the world

Unique among all gods,
He is The God Who lives,
makes all things from nothing,
and intercedes on my
behalf

His love enfolds my life,
each breath His constant gift.
Beneath His grace I live,
my failing soul His Word
renews

No words can dim my faith,
I know His love is real.
Trade God for all man's lies?
Never! I cannot doubt,
He is!

April 13, 2012 - May 25, 2012

How God Sees

"I can't for the life of me imagine that God will say, 'I will punish you because you are black, you should have been white; I will punish you because you are a woman, you should have been a man; I will punish you because you are homosexual, you ought to have been heterosexual.' I can't for the life of me believe that is how God sees things."

Bishop Desmond Tutu

"Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus of Nazareth
Matthew 5:19-20

God has not said

"I will punish you
because you are coloured (or not);
because you are woman (or not)"

God has said

"I will punish you
because you are not righteous"

but yielding His Son to bear His curse
that we could adore Him forever
and raising His Son to share His life
that we could enjoy Him forever
He made His Son the atonement for our sin

being coloured (or not) with God
being woman (or not) with God
is not something to be regretted
but should be cause for joy
that God will save us as we are

His mercy will not condemn
all who love the Son
receiving His gift of love
are made anew
and live

being coloured (or not) without God
being woman (or not) without God
is not something to be applauded
but should be cause for grief
that God will curse us as we are

His justice will not absolve
all who hate the Son
refusing His gift of love
remain corrupt
and die

None of us are perfect and all of us "have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." Heaven is not for perfect people (that will be taken care of when we get there); Heaven is for forgiven people, which is something we need to be taking care of while we have this life on Earth. However, if you find yourself heaving a sigh of relief that your sins will not overwhelm your salvation, I would encourage you to let them go and hang on to Jesus instead for your salvation is threatened by whatever you knowingly love more than Jesus. Mat. 5:19-20 is both a call to repentance and a release from fear. A call to repentance from known sins and a release from fear of punishment for unknown sins. Both for salvation. Once you know, however, you become responsible.

In case you're wondering, I disagree with Bishop Tutu's quote above. God will not condemn us if we are black, white, woman or man but God will discipline us if we improperly use how we have been made. Every sin, including homosexuality, is an improper use of how we have been made.

I do not believe that I am a "homophobe." God has called us to love each other and I would not be showing love to you if, among other things, I did not reveal your sin. You would not be showing love to me if, among other things, you did not reveal my sin. If anything, I am a "sin-phobe" and I take very seriously the words: "Love the sinner, hate the sin."

April 13, 2012

Canaan

"Choose this day whom you will serve...
as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Joshua 24:15

more in common with Joshua have I
than with the Apostle Paul
this is not a new field I plough
to teach truth to those unheard
this is a field of old I inhabit
to show truth to those uncared

more in common with Isaiah have I
than with Simon Peter
I do not fashion introductions
of fallen man to perfect God
so much as I re-acquaint
a rebel to his risen Lord

Wet Paint

at my beginning, God spoke

“Let there be!”
and there was me
and He loved me

unfailing

upon this ball of dust
from which I am being formed
He the Master Craftsman
prepares His beloved work
for the goal He knew of old
had planned before time began

it matters not what stripes
our foe may lay along my back
His plan, His hand are sure
even our enemy’s worst
serves to craft me more nearly
what He planned for me to be

a prize of beauty
in which He will rejoice
whose testimony of His power
serves to show His mercy



“Wet Paint” (as I call it) was painted by Fred Asbury as a sermon illustration by Pastor Don Symons to demonstrate how even the enemy’s wreckage of God perfect plan God somehow makes part of His plan; perfect as it has been from the beginning.

Fred began the painting then, as he stepped aside, Darlene Morgan came up and painted random lines, which Fred then worked into the trees seen above.

March 30, 2012

You Ask ...

you, who I have not seen in years
you ask that I pray for you
I am at a loss as to why
how do I ask the God you forsook
a favour on your behalf

you want the best of both worlds
God's blessing without His rule

yes, I will pray for you
as you had asked
and as you had not asked
that you may yourself
obey His rule to enjoy His blessing

which He bestows freely
on the just and the unjust

After a long phone call with an old friend

February 7, 2012

you were
so wrapped up in my life
everywhere I look
I see a reminder of you

just looking into the mirror
I see the man you helped me be
who now is on his own
without the gift God gave him

oh Dad! I miss you!

February 5, 2012 - November 20, 2016

I'm Not With Miley Ray On This

too much hate in the world
that supposed stars
become detractors
as if obscurity voids opinion
or devotion to Truth

it is not unreasonable
that hate should spring
when light is shone
on its deceitfulness
on the horror of its spawn

faithfulness has its own reward
this world could never give
better the slings and arrows
for this shortened time
than all eternity

we struggle not with flesh and blood
but with the spawn of hell
the warrior's success
is not in obscure fame
but by always standing true

Miley Ray Cyrus was asked recently
what she thought of homosexual marriage.
When her positive response
was posted the outcome was violent.

Personally, I'm not with Miley Ray on this.
Be open to the truth, stand by it,
truth does not change.

But Christians who respond with violence
also deny the truth.

January 7, 2012

We Had Such Dreams ...

we had such dreams, you and I
of how life would be after the move
the joy of finally sharing life
after so long a time of not
but you moved further than thought
and less, and the joy, though more
is different
mem'ries of the dreaming days
before the gears had slipped
bring tears and pain
and gratefulness to God
that life can still be good

December 29, 2011

Where Would We Be Without You?

Where would we be today?
Had You not held our hand,
strong Helper as we fell,
the year just past would have
a vastly different end

Had not Your love upheld us
we could not be where we are

Where would we be standing?
Had You not held us close,
true Guide along our way,
the road we walk would have
a vastly different end

Had not Your love guided us
we could not stand where we are

Where would we be going?
Had You not come our way,
the Saviour from our shame,
these days we live would have
a vastly different end

Had not Your love reclaimed us
we could not go where You are

Where would we be without You?
You have filled our hearts with beauty
and we praise Your matchless Name

Commissioned by Marlene Roopsingh
for WHBC 2011 retrospective.

December 23, 2011

The Way

A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us.

C. S. Lewis

they claim equality of all ways
Mohammad as worthy as Buddha
Gandhi as worthy as Smith
all as worthy as Christ
who, if merely man,
was far worse than all
who, if Son of God,
is worthy alone

nothing more can we say

knowing that He stood
where we stand
He can only be God
or something worse

December 23, 2011

Look Deeper

you define a limit
beyond which faith may not go
"Thus far, reality" you say
believing only where proof is found

deny your Creator
worship your god of "reason"
cast revelation aside
believe only what your thought can think

but know this
there exists a realm beyond your mind
where things you won't believe

are

only seen by faith

December 21, 2011

Sledgehammer

It hits me like a sledgehammer

murderer

You did murder
The one who shared my parents,
learned of God as I

you did murder

A person is no more,
a family is forever
bereaved

by your hand

And yet
God will forgive
all who come

even you

It hits me like a sledgehammer

December 20, 2011

Hope

While there is breath,
Hope remains

One restless night fire came to claim you
You welcomed it and ran to its embrace
We went on mourning your loss
What went wrong, what happened?
Why did you not learn what others loved
Yet today, decades gone, one comfort stands

While there is breath,
Hope remains

God is faithful
As there is hope
I will pray

December 7, 2011 - January 7, 2012

Bethlehem
(after Dr. Craig Carter)

A baby cried in Bethlehem
and all creation sang
God's mighty warrior
as helpless infant born
yet Redeemer of the nations

had come

Israel's Hope had come!

God's promised King and Saviour
to Whom shepherds and scholars
would ever bend their knee

had come

this world's Hope had come!

A manger cradled Heaven's King
yet the eternal Word of God,
calls to all the earth

Come!

Our faithful King and Saviour
to Whom all will bend the knee.

will come

Our Hope will come!

December 6, 2011

apparently, this is what I am,
something beneath consideration
of importance only to God
 which is more than sufficient
but not worthy the thought
of those I love
I am betrayed, despised and humbled
at every opportunity
having no value,
with nothing of worth to offer,
save only to my King
 which is more than sufficient

November 27, 2011

I Could Not Have Lived

I could not have lived
but that you had lived,
fought, suffered and sometimes
died;
that I could have this chance.

I could not have lived
but that you had lived,
boldly risking God's best
gift;
that I could taste its joy.

October 31, 2011

As Long As ...

they don't care, and as long as
you don't care they don't care
you can't be getting hurt by
polite smiles and comments,
when you push yourself out,
then seeing the response turn away
to themselves, to others,
to something more interesting

than you

October 8, 2011

Wandering (2)

people travelling
every moment being at
the place where they are

October 7, 2011

Wandering

wandering
always we arrive
where we are

October 3, 2011

when you go out today, breathe deep
the air is full of Fall
life! is in that air, and gold
scattered through the painted leaves
wild and blowing free
breathe it, breathe it deep
it can't but do you good
the air is full of Fall
full of life and goodness
blowing in the wind

breathe

October 3, 2011

it stands firm
upon this battered landscape
 barren and wasted
 in the usurper's struggle
 death
 blowing endless in the wind
mankind's only hope
amidst despair of his own causing
unchanging
though all the age's dust
be blown against it
our one, final chance
at life

I fall before the cross
what else can I do
there is nowhere else to go

alone at the cross comes meaning
to the senselessness of life

October 3, 2011

In This World

in this world
where highest thought is second guessed
treasured words are cast aside
and selfless deeds have little worth
I will simply live
for Jesus

in this world
where tender smiles birth bitter tears
promises too frequent break
and life treads dust on noble dreams
I will simply live
for Jesus

regardless
of who does what to whom, or why
amid selfishness, pain or fear
and every unfair consequence
I will simply live
for Jesus

September 20, 2011

oh God uphold me
give me courage
dreadful men speak lies
in Your name they lie
calling what is not true
as though it were true
and I
who have struggled to serve you
each of my days
I am here
and have no voice

and wonder

Why?

September 20, 2011

Powerless

something's wrong
and I know it's wrong
but I can't fix it
haven't the tools
so I sit by
overwhelmed

something must be done
and I know it does
but I can't do it
haven't the skill
so I sit by
powerless

September 13, 2011

at this road's end there stands a door
from this path to the next
I have no fear for it is far
and its key rests in my hand

through twist and turn this road has lead
one hand I've always held
His love the light that keeps me safe
and mercy the key that gives me hope

there is no fear though far or near
that door may stand and wait
till comes the time; I will approach
and enter, holding my Saviour's hand

September 2, 2011 - July 26, 2017

Infinity's Edge

on infinity's edge I pause
upon the line dividing
forever from the abyss
naught holding me save
the difference between

travelling this verge, just denting
the depths below, scarce touching
the glory above, this plane
my course proscribes,
a single golden path

afloat between two realms apart
life proceeds its steady pace
paddle's gentle dip and splash,
footstep's daily walk,
to their harbour wend

August 23, 2011

Jack ...

"Love is better than anger
Hope is better than fear
Optimism is better than despair
So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic
and we'll change the world."

Jack Layton, August 2011

even here I agree in whole
and disagree in part
of two minds
on our most dynamic force
since Trudeau
a swath of glorious colour
adorning the blandness of our house
a man everyone knew and
whether for or foe
respected

I was never one of yours
a sideliner yet staunchly blue
but MAN! I joyed your glory
and the cause you hoped to win
I am saddened that at your peak
you lost it all
never having the chance
to enjoy your triumph

August 19, 2011

Delayed Reaction

"Next time, buy North American!"
they said, on seeing my car
while loading their LaserJet
into my Mazda.

I should just have left it there
standing on the loading dock.
left them basking, ignorant
their hypocrisy

The event in question happened about 20 years ago,
as I was loading their HP LaserJet printer, made in
Singapore, into my Mazda, made in Japan, as they
stood by and condemned my oriental wheels.

April 25, 2011

Who Cares

what do you do
when the slights of all the years
pile up on an Easter Monday morning
who's there
to say they care

I Am

where do you go
when nothing anyone does is right
when everything you try turns to rubbish
who's there
to say they'll help

I Am

April 21, 2011 - October 3, 2011

Taking the Days

I know you'll soon be going home,
that the day is nearer than we hope
but today you are here, today we can love
taking these days you remain

time is not ours to give and take
we have no charge of its speed and end
but today we have time, today we'll enjoy
taking these days you remain

none but God know tomorrow's end
nothing for us but to wait and trust
but today we have you, today we'll rejoice
taking these days you remain

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

all too sudden that day will come
yet tears show only passing grief
only today we will mourn this fearsome loss
ours are the days that endure

despite this grief our hope stands firm
on Him whose love is beyond all thought
only today we suffer pain and sorrow
ours are the days that endure

My father is sick, quite sick,
with more wrong than can be fixed.
A cold could kill him before we know.
Every day he wakes again is a gift
before we say our last good-bye.

March 9, 2011-August 9, 2019

comes the day I wake and sleep no more
when sand be done its ancient stream
my breath no longer saddened sigh
my soul to joy from sorrow rising
into holy rest free, of trial and tear
adore unchained my perfect Saviour
when falls the curtain on that final day

February 11, 2011 - May 24, 2012

... and I must go ...

now it is time for bed
yet I want to play
sleep beckons and is drawing near
yet I want to stay

I have no fear of
darkness or the night,
but miss the joy of seeing here
those who share this light

it is hard to let go
with much left undone
that now tomorrow will not hold
yet glory beckons ...

February 11, 2011

the year wound down to its close
sagging like an old fence
and we
walking through the gate
dreaming that awaiting
us
cast bright eyes forward
in joyful anticipation

February 11, 2011

Rigel burns blue
out here
and Aldebaran red
the Pleiades so close
I am among them
one small man
of the stuff of stars
and dust
lost in the wonder

of glory

the bow
the sword
the belt
are mine
and it is I
a mighty warrior of this earth
who sets the hounds
in search of game

November 11, 2010

My Redeemer Lives!

You've got to know this
it's important
I may have no other chance
I've got to make sure you know

My Redeemer Lives!

Thank God!
So shall I

But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); **because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.** For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." (Romans 10:8-11)

As I write this, my Dad is in the hospital, suffering from the effects of long term congestive heart failure. Some things he wants to tell everyone he talks to are that:

He knows that his Redeemer lives
And
that Romans 10:9-10 is true!

Anger vs. Justice

now, I'm not the brightest bulb on the string,
seldom shedding brilliant light and
sometimes seeming not to glow at all
but even to one like me it seems unjust
to arrest a man involved in war
for killing, however wrong or right,
on land he called his home,
with the charge of war crimes done
in the heat of battle

it is unjust
to call one thing
an other thing
to satisfy a need
for vengeance

it seems absurd to say this
and I'm sure I don't know it all
but how can one be charged a crime
for killing those who killed his friends
amid the heat of war, no less,
when those killed were unwelcome guests
upon his own declared and native soil
terrorists themselves, according to some views,
and as culpable as he

I tend to support this war against terrorism and believe Khadr is a terrorist and a danger. I don't believe that all that happens in the war is above the board; right and wrong belong on either side. Regardless of whether Omar Khadr is right or wrong, it looks like he has been unjustly charged and held. Especially when what has been done to him while in captivity is itself not above suspicion.

With apologies to those who have lost because of his actions, this looks more like the venting of anger on an available target than the practice of justice. Accuse him of terrorism or hate, there's enough evidence for both, but his being a war criminal seems a reach, regardless of his hate he was fighting people who were fighting him.

October 23, 2010

You ...

you laugh my words to scorn
"Doggerel" you say, and worse
and yet your anger proves
my words may have more
than arrogance
or lack of skill

one does not cuss a child
for unskilful phrases
or ridicule them
for misplaced pride
but correct them
help them learn

you
have responded
but do not correct me
and by your anger
prove the truth
only God can help you see

After posting an early revision
of "Victus" on poemhunter.com

October 22, 2010

"Russell Williams offers apology but no explanation."

Jim Rankin, Sandro Contenta: Columnists; Toronto Star

"We still don't understand the why."

Lt.-Gen. André Deschamps; Chief of Air Staff; Canadian Forces

"He cannot stand before this court and expect forgiveness.

Indeed, from a fundamental and moral perspective,
one could debate whether he's even entitled to ask for forgiveness."

Michael Edelson; Lawyer for the Defense

there are no words
no understanding
for such evil
short of The Garden
where such evil
first began

no understanding
but hate for God
for such evil
since the beginning
has no purpose
but death

no comprehension
of forgiveness' depth
that it could come
even to such a one
as this evil man
were it asked

October 19, 2010

Monster

I am at odds, writing this,
it is far too close to home
these sordid details
 no one knew
these horrific acts
 no one saw
until now
far too close to home
now all know
what is worst in man

what is in ourselves

there, but for grace of God
go all

You Fool!
You Blind And Stupid Fool!
You had it in your very hand,
LIFE!
and you let it go.

would God's mercy reach down to you
could you take it
would you dare

August 25, 2010

hope filled & bright eyed
knowing the good coming my way

could an enemy have hurt me more
than you
who by forgetting
me
call me nothing

at least the bully knows
I'm something

all I wanted
was to feel special for a single afternoon
it was a long time coming
will never come again
but hope failed, good never came

and now I weep

August 19, 2010

It's Only Me

it's probably only me
I'm so sensitive
the slightest slight
overwhelms
and I brood

needlessly, I'm sure
after all
who would willingly harm
one as harmless as I
they're all in my mind

these perceived slights
no reality
no substantive evidence
or fact supports them
but ignorance

May 14, 2010 - August 10, 2011

That's Not How ...

that's not what
you wear
alone
before a stranger's eye

you need a man
with you as with God
lest you advertise
what is not yours to sell

it is his alone
God gives you alone
to love alone

wear it behind a door
when a ring adorns your hand
that you may give
what belongs to both

Saw several women this week with skirts way too short.
Have they no idea what thoughts the man must fight
who sees them walking by?

May 14, 2010

Yes! I Will Love You Tomorrow!

(after "Will You Love Me Tomorrow?" by Carole King)

Tonight I'm yours completely,
to share our love so sweetly.
Tonight the light of love is in my eyes,
yet I will love you tomorrow!

This is a lasting treasure,
not just a moment's pleasure!
You can believe the magic of my sighs!
I will still love you tomorrow!

Tonight with words unspoken,
I pledge you are the only one.
Your heart will not be broken,
when this night meets the morning sun!

You want to know that my love
is love you can be sure of.
I've said my vow, and I'll say it again:
I will still love you tomorrow!

I've said my vow and I'll say it again:
I will still love you tomorrow!
I will still love you tomorrow!
I will still love you tomorrow!

I bought a CD today, "Live at the Troubadour,"
featuring Carole King and James Taylor.
Carole sang this song that was so sad
I just had to write something happier.

My version assumes God, a ring and a promise,
reaping fellowship and constancy.
Carol's assumes nothing but a momentary pleasure,
reaping loneliness and uncertainty.

May 2, 2010

I long for Your salvation, oh Lord
how long must I wait?

I call on Your name every hour
when shall I see Your promised aid?

You alone are my help
You alone my strength

no other help have I but You
there is no other to whom I can cry

oh Lord, come quickly to my aid
lest I die and cease Your praise

March 30, 2010

oh! bleak February
drear and bare and drab
but one bright day cannot
your sunless skies disturb

oh! drab February
grim and dark and grey
dawn and dusk but moments
interspersed by cold

oh! grey February
sharp and cold and stark
no hoped for summer's warmth
your short days will thaw

oh! stark February
bare and grey and bleak
but thirty days release
ice enshrouded chains

January 17, 2010

He Is!

because He is
I can be

He is not of this place
yet moves within it

where I have been
He is

this place is not part of Him
yet cannot be without Him

where I am now
He is

there is no place beyond Him
for anything else to be

where I will be
He is

all that is and lives and moves
is and lives and moves for Him

I can be
because He is

January 3, 2010

i am nothing
less than nothing

small
puny
insignificant

my best efforts to serve You
dust at the side of the road
cast aside and trodden underfoot
as those with greater treasure
lay it before Your throne
amid shouts of praise

and I am here
stricken dumb
at the worthlessness of my own

would that i had something of value
to join my praise to theirs
and give You glory

December 9, 2009

Perspective

got into the elevator, going down,
with a delivery cyclist
dripping head-to-toe
and asked if it had turned miserable
again

she looked at me and smiled
"Nope," she said
"It's December
and it's six degrees.
It's a beautiful day!"

driving up t'ward the 404
I saw a rainbow

she's right

December 7, 2009

None So Blind

there are some
reading sin
see beauty

no objection
discerned

no rejection
known

utmost defiance
no more than
courage

there are none so blind
as those who will not see

After reading some comments on Henley's "Invictus"
and seeing so many see no more that a beautiful poem.

Which, when you look at it, isn't so beautiful after all.

December 6, 2009 - March 12, 2024

Victus!

after "Invictus" by William Earnest Henley

"... for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost ..."

Luke 19:10

Safe in the Light that covers me,
far from the pit of Hell's black hole,
I thank the one true God that He
has conquered my rebellious soul.

Under the doom of God's pure stance
I fled and cursed His name aloud.
Yet Christ pursued, He bore my lance.
To He Who bled my head is bowed!

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
loomed once the horror of the shade;
yet God stands guardian of the years,
and death shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait His gate,
how charged with punishments His scroll,
He is the Master of my fate;
He is the Saviour of my soul.

In Sunday School this morning (Dec. 6, 2009), during his excellent series on Revelation, Don Symons used William Ernest Henley's poem, "Invictus" as an illustration of the hopelessness of a life that has rejected God. I was moved to write a poem from my own perspective as a Christian, showing the hopefulness of a life that has accepted God in response.

Through the many hours of editing the many revisions of "Victus!" that followed I have tried to joyfully portray the Christian's hope while maintaining the form and flow of Henley's original.

December 4, 2009

could one prove God?

who knows

if one can see all of creation

yet not see God

what power have mere words?

November 27, 2009

He Will Kill You

he will kill you
your guide
for he is no guide
to truth
but a demon
seeking what he can
to destroy
whether by pleasure
not his own
or by fear
all he owns
he will lead you astray
and kill you
this leader of yours
whom you follow
blind
till death opens eyes
to unspeakable horror
in the loss of all hope

November 27, 2009

my fingernails are ripping out
scratching along the wall
the weight of responsibility
drags me downward
the precipice looms

and you
so carefree up above
with your heels on my shoulder
have no clue that destruction
waits to claim its next victim

Notes on being father

November 22, 2009

So Great a Good

there was so great a good you could have said
you left unsaid

so great a cause for praise
now left unpraised

you rightly spoke our needs
revealing cause for concern
giving direction to our prayer

but we are more than need
though our need is real

we are also joy
tears share our lives with smiles
both are God's
both are ours to give to Him

November 19, 2009

I'm With Miley Ray

too much hate in the world
that supposed fans
become detractors
as if fame disallows opinion
or devotion to Truth

it is not unreasonable
that hate should spring
when light is shone
on its deceitfulness
on the horror of its spawn

faithfulness has its own reward
this world could never give
better the slings and arrows
for this shortened time
than all eternity

we struggle not with flesh and blood
but with the spawn of hell
the warrior's success
lies not in fame
but in always standing true

Miley Ray Cyrus was asked recently
what she thought of the new Twilight
movie. When her negative response
was posted the outcome was violent.

Personally, I'm with Miley Ray.
Be open to the truth, stand by it.

November 15, 2009

Come, Grow Old With Me
after John Lennon
through The Seven

they sang last night
a short engagement
celebrating a long commitment
"grow old together with me"
celebrating an invitation
given and accepted
many years gone by
and the walk that followed

and there, in the middle
you stand
the center of our joy
surrounded by friends
growing older together

you did it!
thanks to our God
you really did it!
fifty years
eighteen thousand days
each day a new "I do!"
in constant chain from the first
raising others, themselves
growing older, together
your example lives on
in the eternal place of ageless love
but last night
oh, last night,
surrounded by friends
each one wishing well
it seemed that growing old
together
was not so bad a thing
at all

November 15, 2009

Days Pass Slowly By

days pass slowly by
treasures briefly held
jewels beyond price
work their wonder
become one with life

days pass slowly by
instants run to ages
time intangible
passes through life
turns to memory

days pass slowly by
steps grow to miles
unfinished journey
by parts complete
each awaits the next

days pass slowly by
steps along the way
none but one an end
each one an instant
where eternity waits

November 10, 2009

this road has walls
each with its own mirror
each with its own reflection
a hideously distorted caricature

of me

but no doors
and oh so few windows

October 8, 2009

Lousy Sucky Stinking Day!

lousy sucky stinking day!

anger where joy is needed
so great a disappointment
over so small a problem

lousy sucky stinking day!

how can those I love most
cause such pain
and I the cause of theirs

lousy sucky stinking day!

and now alone I wrestle
wrath and disillusionment
hoping for home where this

lousy sucky stinking day!

will end

August 2, 2009

Thursday Morning
July 23

NO!

my cry echoes these empty walls

"This cannot be true!"

"This cannot be right!"

but
days later
you were there
where you should not have been
the shell of what you were
laid out
and I knew the truth

You are dead

and it is not right

but it will be well

I found out Thursday morning that my
friend Rob Greenwood had died suddenly.

He was a member of my men's group.
He was a husband of thirteen months.
He was a good man who cared and was
not afraid to show his love for God.

He will be missed.

August 2, 2009

There Will Be GLORY!

this is not the end
but a pain filled
temporary good bye
though shortly past were tears
here lies victory

our Saviour
 whom you serve
 whom I serve
has risen!
He has conquered the grave
we need not fear its chains
for they are bust

we need not weep
though you are absent from us
you are present with our King
you are THERE with HIM
in joy
where we will shortly be

no
this is not the end
though we grieve this curse
today
tomorrow
you and I, together!
we will bow before His throne
and will praise our God
without hindrance
at last!

He who saved us
will receive our praise

Amen!
come Lord Jesus!

July 26, 2009

Sunday, After All

Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God Almighty!
Who was and is and is to come.
With all creation I sing, praise to the King of Kings!
You are my everything, and I will adore You!

the rain poured down
as though our tears
were incapable of voicing
so vast a grief
but did not remain
short moments later
the sun in all its glory
shone
dispelling gloom
making radiant
the gems left on leaf and blade

sorrow may abide a time
but joy will return
evil and its curse
may cause us momentary pain
yet I will praise my God
in whom all comfort lies

Mourning Rob during Sunday service,
this came to mind. I could not speak a word
but the chorus spoke my heart.

He IS my God and I WILL adore Him!!!

"Revelation Song"
Performed by Kari Jobe
Written by Jennie Lee Riddle

July 26, 2009

All Is Well

and still my mind wants to scream
"It's not right,
it can't be true!"
we were not created to enter Heaven thus
and so is wrong, if true
you are no more
with us
and we weep
strong men
endurers of hardship
we weep
regardless your current joy
we miss our friend
not as your wife or children
will miss you
but as men miss a man well loved
respected
and treasured

you are no more
with us
but forever more
with Him
we were not created to enter Heaven thus
but we do, you have
and now there
all is well

though we mourn
we praise God
for His you were
and His you are

July 25, 2009

I don't know how to think
been bummed out since Thursday
trying to rationalize your death
with my ongoing life
and God's eternal love

I'm not sure I'm thinking right
so immersed in the loss of a friend
I'm unable to think of other's
even greater grief
and God's eternal joy

I have no words, not a thought
just weeks ago we were laughing
enjoying each other's friendship
yet now I mourn your death
in God's unflinching grip

"even when your companion dies you're glad,
you know where your companion was headed"

My companion ...

I know all will work for good
for you truly loved your God
longing that He be your children's God
that they enjoy as you
our God of all comfort

Tears may endure for the moment
but shall pass
we're glad you are with our God
yet grieve your absence here
God be with us all

As I was writing this, Andrew, who is
reading "Dangerous Journey," made this
comment in response to learning that
Christian's friend was killed by the town.

Just what I needed to hear
when I needed to hear it.

June 7, 2009

Do You ...

do you still remember me?
after nine years, do you?
I walked away from you
that cold February
walked and never looked back
grateful to have been
grateful to be
often wondering "What if...?"
but never regretful
glad to have taken my harm
with me

I often think of you
looking back through the years
see your pictures on Facebook
looking into your tomorrows
and pray that you are well
that you are making a difference
that our God is blessing you
that I can forgive
the pain
that I will never forget
those special years

But it's hard. Nine years, four months
and no one ever called. Not even once.
Beth says they didn't know how, but
even so, it hurts to be forsaken.

June 6, 2009

D-Day
65 Years Later

You can't pay in money for what they have done
Bill Mauldin

Today

I was woken by my youngest son
4:30 in the morning
"Daddy, I'm sad,
will you tell me a story?
An Andrew the Bear story?"

Today

I went out into my garden
laid some paving stone
admired a Robin
helped my teenage son
become a man

Today

I kissed my daughter's tears
helped her see the sun
enjoyed her smiling laughter
tonight, we'll all watch a movie
together

Today

I gave my love a hug
will again tonight
between I will go shopping
spending the afternoon
as I wish

Today

I could do so much
enjoy so much
live so much
because of the many
who gave so much

May 24, 2009

Facing Jericho

we have seen the power of our God
we have faced Sihon and Og
defeated them
with the strength of God upon our arms
we have crossed the Jordan
on its dry bed
and rested before Jericho
our feet on the land of God's promise
we see its walls
we hear its taunts
and we wonder
how will God accomplish His word
what new wonders will He perform

we face Jericho again today
standing on the soil God has promised
we see its giants we hear their jeers
and we cower
we have experienced His power
we have heard His voice
but instead of marching to claim God's promise
we return to embrace
what once enslaved us
fleeing Kadesh
instead of claiming Jericho

May 4, 2009

What God Sees

on one side grief
on the other glory
it's all the same gutter
with only our Redeemer
to lift us from the grime

glory and grief lay intertwined
God's mercy knows no limit
our darkest night
His shining glory
the very jaws of defeat
His greatest victory

there is no power can stop
His relentless love
it finds us where we are
meets us in our need
our only choices

"Yes,
I will stand upon Your Word"

or

"No,
I will stand on my own"

glory or grief
stand at the meeting
of His love with our need

"What God sees
in the depravity of man
is a mystery to me
His love and grace endure forever!"

Will sent an email from his daughter, seeing glory
and grief in Africa. Life will break our hearts.
Only He can heal them.

May 4, 2009

Surprise!!

"If all we have is now, then it's even more important to be awake ...
And if there's more, I'm willing to be surprised."

Wayson Choy – metronews.ca, May 4, 2009

but
what if the surprise
if there is a surprise
is not the one you want
and
what if the surprise
if there is a surprise
is not one you can change
and
what if the surprise
if there is a surprise
is one that does not end

what then

what
if there is a surprise
then this is the time
to be awake to it

now

May 4, 2009

Is it Me?

been too mad lately
too many offending me
angry at them all the time

but

is it me?
am I too sensitive
it is just possible
that this balance
has too fine an edge
and no matter how nice
they tip me
one way
or the other

or

they may be
insensitive
and I am seeing
regrettably
as things are

May 3, 2009

I inhabit this world You give me
one man
small
upon a ball of rock
floating in space
held in Your care
one man
alone
none who share this rock with me
care
none affirms what You let me share with them
as if they should
they are to Your glory
these gifts
not my own
but it hurts
to have done what I have done
and have none say "Well done!"
as if I should care
(but I do)
for what has not been said

I am here
alone
but for You
and what You think of me
I am not sure
but You love me
of that I am certain
none but You
shows concern for me
let me be satisfied
that I can serve You
regardless of opinion
let me serve You
and in that
be fulfilled
and find refuge
from my tears

May 3, 2009

you've been lied to
you will find nothing
but death
believing him

this one who promises all
owns not a single grain of sand
though he promise large
he cannot give even the least
he owns nothing but lies
alone of his invention

he has nothing to give in place of God
but death,
even this not his to give
the due of those who trust his lies

May 3, 2009

things are not as they seem
this thin veneer of living
obscures the reality of life
what shows on the surface
determined by a deeper truth

no act

however small
is done in isolation
beneath is something more
something that reveals
one's true allegiance

April 24, 2009

"Oh God! Our help in ages past."
I need you now today
too much of sin about me calls
and I am wont to fall

April 23, 2009

Running Out Of Time

"22,000 days,"
they said,
"it's not a lot, it's all you got,"
they said*,

"25,000 days"
he said
elsewhere**

both affirm
our time will run out
some moment of some day
will see our final breath
what then with us

whither what we are
no more a choice
but a result

seconds tick by to death

have you chosen well?

* Moody Blues, Long Distance Voyager
** Moses, Psalm 90

Inspired by "God Help Me" by Rebecca Saint James
from If I Had One Chance to Tell You Something

April 23, 2009

Mercy

my God, my God
You have not forsaken me
blessed be Your name
all praise to You my holy Father
only You
have sufficient mercy
to cover all my sin

yesterday's

today's

tomorrow's

only You
have open arms
to which I will run
that will hold me

every time I fail

my God, my God
You have not forsaken me
and I praise you

November 9, 2008 - May 5, 2009

Basking in You

a poem of farewell and friendship
for John Vandermeer

you apologized, smiling,
regretful
for interrupted conversation
your own popularity
halting our words
their own love for you
intruding our good byes

there was no need to
apologise
that was not why I came
you are my own true friend
I came to bask in your smile
storing you up
for your absence

I would have stood with you
delighted
just to share this time
one more moment added
to the years behind us
marking these short seconds
as precious as hours

few have I loved as you
one with whom I have no
fear
closer than a brother
dearer than a wife
what in God would I
not have done for you

I would be content
but to have seen your smile
and
silent all the while
happy in the joy of friendship
with one loving God
with all of life

knowing you knew me
and cared
what need had I for more
to see you care again for those

interrupting
glory upon glory
again

regret not the failing words
that would but blur the glow
of these final hours
it was a joy to be near you
to bless you on your way
and know that all these passing years
had never been in vain

January 20, 2009

What Now?

I deleted your songs today
didn't want to, had to
couldn't listen to you anymore
without thinking
of what you were doing
what you had done
how you'd been led astray
and stayed astray
ignoring the power of God
belittling Him in the face of your sin

I too struggle, daily, with sin
the solution is not so much
giving in as keeping on
a life-long fight against temptation
does not legitimize it
but shows the need for grace

your words, however true, before
have been perverted
and I can't enjoy anymore
the words of one who gave up hope

After learning of RB's coming out,
and the apparent joy he now feels.

How awful to give up on God,
and say that He is smaller than our sin.

How sad to give up hope in He
who promised all our ills to heal.

January 7, 2009

Created for Him

fog shrouds reality
solidity appears as shadow
dark, indistinct
unknown
senses deceived
truth lies dormant
shrouded in mystery
hidden by deception

but I revel in Him
Who has opened my eyes
Truth dispelling lie
I can SEE
Him and all that points to Him
His glory
reflected in all that is
including me

November 23, 2008

You Must Not Mourn For Me

you must not mourn for me
when I die
for I will not mourn
but dance across the final bridge
to the golden land of God
where tears and pain will end
do not mourn

you must not mourn my loves
when I die
who gave me their love
found firm upon the love of God
for they mourn but my moving
as to an other room
do not mourn

you must mourn those friends
when I die
who, doubting my hope
think my life has its end in death
not believing I live on
as they can also live
you must mourn

you must mourn for others
when they die
who've no share in Life
who, knowing neither God nor hope,
find in death an endless grief
forever lost to Life
do mourn them

you must not mourn for me
when I die
for I am redeemed
mourn those who neither know nor care
hold them close in fervent prayer
that they may share His Joy
and not mourn

November 12, 2008

Never Again

black
on red
on hearts
still beating
for the fallen
eternal reminder
of freedom's cost

may God have mercy

on the lives given
for our freedom
and on those
who forget
freedom
costs
life



November 9, 2008 - November 10, 2020

Lest We Forget

they must not be forgotten
these whose blood

whose tears

purchase our joys
who carry to their grave

honour

courage
valour
duty

horror

beyond imagining
whose lives have paid and pay again
too high a cost for what should not be

they must not be forgotten
these who live and die for other's gain,
these to whom a stranger's life
has more value than their own

we owe no honour lower
than endless praise

we owe no memory shorter
than eternity

lest we forget
and call from life again
these whose lives have borne our cost

November 7, 2008

we cannot forget them
not them
not ever
whose blood has flowed
whose tears have fallen
whose lives
were spent for ours

through their tears
we laugh
through their lives
we live
through their sacrifice
we have no lack

October 2, 2008

it's hard to soar with the eagles
when my hands are bloodstained
from clutching at the mountain
I want so much to fly
and fear the fall
 were I to release my hold
 it would be long
 and calamitous
but I see them sail
effortlessly upon the wind
their songs of joy assail my soul
 (once it had its own)
and I weep
purpose failed
direction lost
I lay huddled against this Rock
unable to do more than breathe
longing for my chance
though it never come again

even so
I will praise my God

April 15, 2008

The Gift

To Mom and Dad
in awareness of all they are

Growing up Rhebergen
seemed no different than Smith
Mom and Dad,
like all the others,
but belonging to me
Church was just what we did on Sunday
instead of work
Faith was firm, sincere,
but wasn't everyone's?
Our whole family loved God
and by extension, the world
Nothing different about us,
just two parents
raising their kids,
for decades

Then the letter
after years of rooms
filled with kids and friends
and eyes pop open
to see the gift Home was
(and is)
Steadfast faith, regardless.
Love, patience, kindness always.
Who knew the impact on us
on our friends,
even as it happened
Yet now we see
you saved our lives
you saved others' lives
The sanctuary of your home
your gift to us
and to our friends

Truly
you are the gift of God

April 15, 2008

Gibraltar

there it stands
un-movable
steadfast
mocking me
by its inertia

what I would
I fear I won't
it is too strong

the status quo

April 12, 2008

how would one eat an allegorical steak
"Nice gravy" you may say
but from whence did it come
if the steak itself is not real

upon what would the mushrooms go
and what would accompany the mashed
potatoes cannot on a plate sit
alone

at what point
do real potatoes and gravy
(and mushrooms)
connect to an imaginary steak

no
if there is gravy
with mushrooms and potatoes joined
the steak is certainly near

eat it and enjoy
as the gift of God for you

After a disturbing conversation with a
highly regarded Uncle and the question
of where literalism begins, if not from
the very beginning

April 4, 2008

The Test

yet another opportunity
thrown aside
disgust at my failure
at my ability to "follow orders"
I am no better than Hitler's pawns
casting my responsibility aside
allowing it rest on the shoulders of others

boomeranging

it cannot be avoided
but comes back to haunt
once the decision's been made
in fear of the outcome
I abdicated
and now its throne is occupied
by another

woe is me

who longing faithfulness to death
fails under smaller tests

dear God
I am unworthy you
please move my soul to greater effort
with You as my only goal

April 4, 2008

Where it's Safe

we were playing in the garden
my friends and I
and saw behind the bushes
a patch of scaly skin
indistinct in the gloom
but we knew it was a snake
whether it was a small one
that we could handle
or a large one
that could handle us
we did not know
so we went to play elsewhere
where the sun shone more brightly
and safety seemed more real

never acknowledging the Gardener
knew of the snake all along

April 3, 2008

Temptation
(an allegory of sorts)

last night I gave in to temptation
this morning I am with remorse

those two Oreos didn't look so bad
at first
and were tasty too
with that glass of milk
cold
right out of the bag

but the chips they wanted for company
didn't go down so well
or settle
too much salt
too soon after
too much sugar

(I am, after all,
forty-seven)

so the gummies
and the chocolate snacks that followed
both of them
were only to settle my nerves
until they started calling for peanuts
(unsalted, this time)
what could I do
but give in to their demands

then, finally,
just before bed
two slices of cheddar
mild
so it wouldn't bother me

but it did
it all did
with dreams
indigestion
and other things

and now
I am remorseful

my body
it pays the price

for my indiscretions

Tongue in cheek, sort of, I had a
bad munch on last night and I paid
the price for it today.

More devastating temptations also
begin with the beguiling innocence.
Likewise they are followed either by
remorse, repentance or repercussion.

March 30, 2008

Rescue of the Rebel

We shall save them
they are Ours
We have made them
We love them
they have been stolen
by the hater
they have wandered
along the path of his lies

We shall save them
as We planned

We shall show them Our love
which has always been
which is
which will always be
that those who rejoice in Our love
may again be Ours

I shall go among them
sharing their life
their aches
their pains
their joys

their curse

I shall be one of them
but still Myself
that though seeing Me
they shall see You

I shall be with You
I will pour Him upon You
I shall call You My very Own
We promised to Our friend

before all creation

I shall be with You
He will pour Me upon You
that You may be the blessing
We promised to Our friend

and so He came
to the very ones He made
taking upon Himself our form
bearing upon Himself our curse
healing with Himself our affliction
the nails that pierced His hands
the spear that pierced His side
were our own

we were to die
the wrath of God that He bore
saved us from certain death
the life He took up again
His eternal promise
that we too shall live

January 17, 2008

Monotony

monotony pounds itself against my soul
especially now
in January
drab days
cold nights
not even a bird sings to cheer my day
I am depressed
life has overwhelmed my joy
fear of tomorrow disrupts today
where is peace
where can I find comfort

January 17, 2008

I stop
snow blower roaring beside me
snow dust slowly settling at my feet

I pause
drawn to the glory of the
night in which I stand

I worship
lost in praise to their Creator
and mine

December 11, 2007

do you know I'm a Christian?

you can see it by my car
it's conservative, economical
and it has a "Jesus-fish" at the back

you can see it by my cross
simple wood on a leather cord
it's always 'round my neck

you can see it at my desk
there's a Bible on the shelf
and no cheesecake on the walls

you can see it in my words
of protest against all that's sin
and rebellious against my God

do you know I'm a Christian

I hope you do but I don't know
'cause you've never said you do
as I was passing by

Kind of a riff on the ideas brought forward in
"The Pagan's Nightmare," by Ray Blackston.
Not that he's alone, but that he did it so well.

December 11, 2007

Look Around You!

you are without excuse
who are haters of God
you deny the undeniably Real
regardless of your breath
you see sunrise and rainfall
but say "There is no God!"
you eat, you live, you laugh
but say "I am a a random thing"

open your eyes and look around you
for your own sake see what is
believe what is Real

how did you arrive
or your father or his dad
how did they know to cradle their sons
who gave their wisdom
why do you weep at their passing
if they were no more than chance

to Whom do you express your gratitude
at so great a gift as the life
of your child within your hands
or the love among your friends
why feel gratefulness at all
for what cause is joy
or the intricate flow of wind
along your skin

October 4, 2007

Job didn't hide his pain
his scars
but sat on his ash heap weeping
for all the world to see
no hidden tears were his
no soothing of wounds in a private place
just relentless faith in God

June 13, 2007

I Am Man

I am Man

I have both

my Maker's greatness

and

the Enemy's failings

and have but this life
to resolve these counter claims upon my soul

to choose between

my Maker's purchase

and

the Enemy's theft

other than this
I have no choice
merely

His honour

or

my destruction

May 3, 2007

it is a lonely road, this walking with God
dry and dusty, like a desert
it is rare for rain to fall
the sand scalding against my feet
the promised Companion so silent as to be not present
where my father's trod a verdant glade
naught but scorching sun I see
where the enthusiasm, where the joy?
why is my road so far removed from theirs?

April 8, 2007

I would let go
were there any other thing to hold onto
but there is nothing
there is no alternative
by which I may be saved

February 21, 2007

He is not just the God of Christmas
or of Easter
or of birthdays
 anniversaries
 and burials

He is the God of everyday
here with us as we live
eat our meals
 go about our day
 love and are loved

He is the God of movies and books
music and beauty
coffee and cake
 time with friends
 and joyous revelry

He is the God of first and last
cradle and casket
blood and dust
 exultant bliss
 and endless tears

He is God
and His care is for me
in every day that I live

February 18, 2007

sometimes a stranger will come to your home
will shake off the road's dust at your door
and reaffirm that God has been attentive
that He has heard your cry
and will intervene

at other times the road will keep its dust
and His voice will be small
scarcely heard above the din of its traffic
but His voice will come
in a form best suited to His glory

either way He is aware of our needs
and will intervene as He will
when He will
for our greater good
and His greater honour

February 18, 2007

I shall see His face
these frail bones, this fragile soul
shall be renewed, recreated, reliving
I shall see Him

HIM!

I shall stand before Him
unencumbered by frailty
finally able to worship Him
as I have been created to do

FREE!

without hindrance
who died that I may live
who lives that death may die
and hold no more fear for me

February 8, 2007

I am a missionary
but sometimes I am not
I fail
struggling with mediocrity
overwhelmed
I succumb to circumstance

December 18, 2006

Sarah at the Grammys

she won last night for her song
"Building a Mystery"
with that odd little line
"and a cross from a faith
that died before Jesus came"
evoking images of mighty empires
long since laid to rest
upon forgotten kings
buried deep in dust of time
leaving only scattered traces
the merest ghost of their glory, gone

as if age, somehow
inherited supremacy

and if supreme
why dead

but He can play her game
for He made the ground
upon which those faithful stood
and fell
the very air of their breath
His gift

if age, somehow
inherits supremacy
He is supreme
in and of Himself

and lives!

He's been here all along
before, during, and after
those forgotten realms
that predate His body
but not His life

He is
long times before time began
the target of all our faiths
to oppose or to adore
unchanging He remains
the Lord

He is
mystery greater than all our dreams

sufficient for all our hopes

A revision of one written after Sarah McLachlan won a Grammy for her song "Building a Mystery" February 26, 1998

EMISSARY

he stands outside these walls
do You see him

Your sun warms his shoulders
he does not care

Your breath fills his lungs
he does not know

he stands there blaspheming Your name
how could he know what he is saying
the arrogant fool
he knows nothing of You
to him You are but another hill-god
or valley-god
or wood-god
do You hear his boast
it assails these walls

I know that we have strayed
and continue
I know that You will destroy this place
but please, my God
not by this man
not at this time

let us stand

destroy him as he threatens to destroy You
let us live so we may worship Your name
show Your strength and save us
that we may give You praise

In the third year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah. And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done. He removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (it was called Nehushtan). He trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel, so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him. For he held fast to the LORD. He did not depart from following him, but kept the commandments that the LORD commanded Moses. And the LORD was with

him; wherever he went out, he prospered. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and would not serve him. He struck down the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city.

In the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it, and at the end of three years he took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. The king of Assyria carried the Israelites away to Assyria and put them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD their God but transgressed his covenant, even all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded. They neither listened nor obeyed.

In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong; withdraw from me. Whatever you impose on me I will bear." And the king of Assyria required of Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house. At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD and from the doorposts that Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid and gave it to the king of Assyria. And the king of Assyria sent the Tartan, the Rab-saris, and the Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. When they arrived, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is on the highway to the Washer's Field.

And when they called for the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder. And the Rabshakeh said to them, "Say to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: On what do you rest this trust of yours? Do you think that mere words are strategy and power for war? In whom do you now trust, that you have rebelled against me? Behold, you are trusting now in Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of any man who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him. But if you say to me, "We trust in the LORD our God," is it not he whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed, saying to Judah and to Jerusalem, "You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem"? Come now, make a wager with my master the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to set riders on them. How then can you repulse a single captain among the least of my master's servants, when you trust in Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? Moreover, is it without the LORD that I have come up against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, "Go up against this land and destroy it."'"

Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, and Shebna, and Joah, said to the Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it. Do not speak to us in the language of Judah within the hearing of the people who are on the wall." But the Rabshakeh said to them, "Has my master sent

me to speak these words to your master and to you, and not to the men sitting on the wall, who are doomed with you to eat their own dung and to drink their own urine?" Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out in a loud voice in the language of Judah: "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you out of my hand. Do not let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD by saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.' Do not listen to Hezekiah, for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make your peace with me and come out to me. Then each one of you will eat of his own vine, and each one of his own fig tree, and each one of you will drink the water of his own cistern, until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey, that you may live, and not die. And do not listen to Hezekiah when he misleads you by saying, "The LORD will deliver us." Has any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their lands out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?'" But the people were silent and answered him not a word, for the king's command was, "Do not answer him." Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn and told him the words of the Rabshakeh.

As soon as King Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and went into the house of the LORD. And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and the senior priests, covered with sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz. They said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah, This day is a day of distress, of rebuke, and of disgrace; children have come to the point of birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth. It may be that the LORD your God heard all the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to mock the living God, and will rebuke the words that the LORD your God has heard; therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left." When the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah, Isaiah said to them, "Say to your master, 'Thus says the LORD: Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have reviled me. Behold, I will put a spirit in him, so that he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land, and I will make him fall by the sword in his own land.'"

The Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah, for he heard that the king had left Lachish. Now the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Cush, "Behold, he has set out to fight against you." So he sent messengers again to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus shall you speak to Hezekiah king of Judah: 'Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, devoting them to destruction. And shall you be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them, the nations that my fathers destroyed, Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar? Where

is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, the king of Hena, or the king of Ivvah?"

Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD and spread it before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and said: "O LORD, the God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. Incline your ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. Therefore they were destroyed. So now, O LORD our God, save us, please, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O LORD, are God alone."

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Your prayer to me about Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard. This is the word that the LORD has spoken concerning him: "She despises you, she scorns you — the virgin daughter of Zion; she wags her head behind you — the daughter of Jerusalem. "Whom have you mocked and reviled? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes to the heights? Against the Holy One of Israel! By your messengers you have mocked the Lord, and you have said, 'With my many chariots I have gone up the heights of the mountains, to the far recesses of Lebanon; I felled its tallest cedars, its choicest cypresses; I entered its farthest lodging place, its most fruitful forest. I dug wells and drank foreign waters, and I dried up with the sole of my foot all the streams of Egypt.' "Have you not heard that I determined it long ago? I planned from days of old what now I bring to pass, that you should turn fortified cities into heaps of ruins, while their inhabitants, shorn of strength, are dismayed and confounded, and have become like plants of the field and like tender grass, like grass on the housetops, blighted before it is grown. "But I know your sitting down and your going out and coming in, and your raging against me. Because you have raged against me and your complacency has come into my ears, I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth, and I will turn you back on the way by which you came. "And this shall be the sign for you: this year eat what grows of itself, and in the second year what springs of the same. Then in the third year sow and reap and plant vineyards, and eat their fruit. And the surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the LORD will do this.

"Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city or shoot an arrow there, or come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares the LORD. For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David."

And that night the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in

the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went home and lived at Nineveh. And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword and escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place. (2 Kings 18:1-19:37)

December 10, 2006 - April 23, 2018

"Oops!" Q once said
playing in a slimy pool
now the slime would never have the chance
to change to something else
its opportunity having passed it by

but why would it have changed
what need did slime know
that it couldn't satisfy as slime
why would slime want to be what it wasn't
and need what wasn't there

Very loosely based on the
Star Trek – The Next Generation episode
"All Good Things"

December 7, 2006

AIJALON

5:29

tired
oh
so desperately tired
roll over
more sleep
must
have
more
sleep
please God
let me have more sleep
but can't
tossing
turning
walk down the hall
and back

5:30

in bed again and sleeping

5:48

half an hour later
refreshed

November 17, 2006

John Steinbeck, he knew
how to speak of mice and men

their leaned-on plans
tossed by circumstance
into yesterday's dustbin

he knew

a way could seem right to a man
but lead him nowhere

John Steinbeck, he didn't know
how to speak of man and God

whose plans are firm
guiding all circumstance
into regeneration

he didn't know

God would guide the steps of man
and lead him on to glory

why only the eleventh
do they not still die
do we not still live
enjoying the fruit of their labour

does peace not rest on such as they
surely we can do more than a single day
to treasure what these have bought

those bereft recall many more days
have lost more than we can say
do they not deserve a monument

we are free
yet are not free if any remain enslaved
ere their prison become our own

to you whose pain my freedom buys
there are no words for what you have done
but for what you have done and are doing
"Thank you."

In his poem "In Flanders Fields" John McCrae writes these words:

"Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high."

In a sense the battle is never won as each generation battles its own evils. Freedom is kept
by constant watch or it is lost.

Until HE returns, it will not end.
Until HE returns, those who guard
our lives at cost of their own
cannot be praised too highly.
And after HE returns,
will receive their just reward.

November 5, 2006

we came across God
suddenly
not knowing who He is

we came across Him
suddenly
and saw what He had done
 would do
and fell before Him in adoration

what else could we have done?

November 5, 2006

thank you God that I did not evolve
but was made

thank you that I bear your image
not the image of chance

thank you that my evil is mine alone
not the fault of some unknown other

thank you that though I die, yet I live
and that in you alone I am remade

November 5, 2006

boJ

Where is His grace
in the midst of these tears where does your God hide
how can you tell me "God is love"
when all around me I see pain and terror and grief

if He were really love
if He were really all powerful
if He were really all knowing

would I even have these tears

how dare you speak of love
how dare you speak of purpose

you have no heart
you have no idea

I am bereaved
what love could let this be
I am without hope
how does His purpose make this right

how could God find purpose in my pain

October 31, 2006

Elijah ~ Me

thinking of Elijah
of his wonders done in the name of God
of his ministry and faith
how God used a man such as he

what then about me?
why does my faith stagnate
why do I languish indistinguishable from dust

October 29, 2006

This is no trivial life
Heaven waits at every turn
all that comes calls us come to God

October 25, 2006

Hezekiah's Prayer
2 Kings 18:31-32

my heart says "Live!"
but my mind says "Fear the Lord!"

dear God in Heaven do You see his strength?
how am I to stand against him?
my strength is gone
 never was
my heart wants to live
but I long to serve You

my God!
I am overwhelmed and failing
be my strength lest I die
save me that Your glory may be known
and I will sing Your praise

September 28, 2006

Continuity

we are stunned by its sudden arrival
at one moment, plans are laid for tomorrow
at the next, tomorrow never comes
we are astounded by the end
shocked by so great a change
to our common joy
so abruptly
so vast an emptiness
that of infinite value has gone
its worthless husk our sole handle
by which to grasp the enormity of what has happened

what will happen

On hearing on 680 News a recording
of an ambush in the Middle East. One
moment he was alive and calmly asking
for help, the next moment he wasn't.

I think that one of the reasons why we
are so stunned by another's death, apart
from the immense loss we have suffered,
is our knowledge that our own death is
inevitable.

September 26, 2006

Everyone Does Not Know

"Everyone knows evolution is true"
Public at large

everyone does not know, most try to believe
how can anyone know a lie
a lie will tantalize with desire
to draw its victims into its lair
where they are destroyed
for there is no place to stand

a lie cannot be known
for it holds nothing that can be known
there is no truth
lies are believed because truth is despised
that which sets us free is scorned
our rescue from destruction derided
for the pleasure of denial

September 18, 2006

My Question

"Islam is not a religion of violence"
Muslim apologists the world over

"Then why does it appear so?"
Me, and many others

once again we are confronted by
flame, hatred and murder

once again displaying the truth
that violence has no place in this religion of peace

I'm so glad that they're working this hard
to set my mind at ease on this

who knows
but that I could have formed a wrong conclusion

what really irks me
is that when I speak
many then paint with that same brush
those of my faith
who have coerced
used terror, blood and death
and ask if I am not indeed

hypocritical

but I am not
for one shining admission of my faith is

"all have sinned
and fallen short of the glory of God"

men have misunderstood the TRUTH
mis-appropriated the TRUTH
refused to be set free by the TRUTH
refused to set others free with the TRUTH

these were not definers of the Christian faith
but its blemishes
our daily walk is one of love

how then can Christianity be compared to Islam
where for centuries
hatred has been its daily walk

how can the incessant shedding of blood
be compared to relentless love?

September 17, 2006

The water awaits my entry
my personal Rubicon
its surface far more than a merely placid beauty
it is the demarcation between

dying to self

and

living in Christ

and I enter to those wond'rous words

"I baptize you in the name
of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit"

and I join in His death
as He Himself has died

and I return to His life
as He Himself is alive

and find myself
a new made man

September 13, 2006

"This man receiveth sinners!"
(spoken scornfully, in disdain)

"Hallelujah!"
(spoken joyfully, in relief)

where man had failed me God proved faithful
where man had judged and closed the door
Jesus welcomed me into His home
where man had rejected me
Jesus received me
and that has made all the difference

this fact is most sure
He is still receiving sinners
would to God sinners would receive Him

Quote at beginning of poem from Luke 15:2.
Read in Charles Spurgeon's Morning & Evening

September 9, 2006

my dog lays trap-wise across my path
solicitous, he moves out of my way
when I pass by in darkness

moments after I write these words
I trip over my unmoving friend.

yet even this dog reflects Your glory
pleasing in his little way
he who has his care
taking food and pleasure from my hand
giving in return devotion

as should I
to you

Mac used to say:
"A dog can teach a man a lot about loving God"
then going on to enumerate these qualities:

Faithful. Devoted. Adventurous. Reliant. Adoring.

Sometimes I think that if we were a little more like dogs
we'd be a lot more like Christ.

July 5, 2006

Lost In ...

... Time

When am I?

Sunday.

Thank God, I thought it was Friday

... Space

Where am I?

Heaven!

Thank God!!!

Yes!!!

April 28, 2006

Trust You With My Life

"I baptize you in the name
of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"

years later a voluntary participation in death and resurrection
confirms my long ago made decision for life
and now, five weeks later I wonder "What if..."

what if...I were confronted by death today

would I grasp violently at life
struggling valiantly to remain as I am
or would I allow my life to be embraced by Life
gladly journey to that promised rest
resting in the promise made by One unchanging

would I harm or heal as death draws near

On March 26 I was baptized. This poem
is somewhat reflective of the life that has
led me to this point and my thoughts on
what being a Christian really means.

As the poem states, this baptism was
not the result of a sudden conversion
but a decision to voluntarily participate
in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

I have been a Christian all of my life
but had only been baptized as a baby.

This time, it was my decision.

April 27, 2006

We Die Together

on the deaths of Sgt. 1st Class John Thomas Stone (USA) and Pte. Rob Costall (Canada)

we die together, ours and theirs
brothers separated by a mere imaginary line
scribed across this vast continent
whose blood released
to free a foreign land
erases even that distinction
more alike than different
heroes who knew the risk
and took it
that strangers might have a share
in their freedom

"no greater love exists
that one should lay down his life
for an other"

April 24, 2006

Like the Air

it concerns me,
I, not knowing Your wonder daily,
fear I do not know You at all
tales of glory told by others
bring to me tears of grief

"How can they know You
and I not know?"

if I were saved as they,
would I not know as they?

"How can they feel You
and I stand unmoved?"

if I were saved as they,
would I not feel as they?

wanting to scream into the empty sky

"If I am Yours why do I feel so alone?"

yet fearful that I will prove untrue,

You created all things,
and through Your will they exist and were created. (Rev. 4:11)

I am not alone even though I feel it
for You are like the air

which unappreciated for its constancy
none the less exists and sustains

You are always there, essential to my life
Your wonder in my daily breath
Your life the surety of my own

and I will praise You

April 23, 2006

where does one go when
footsteps followed all of one's life
come to an end

what does one do when
hands that upheld all of one's life
let go

how does one stand when
the foundations on which he stands
crumble

April 13, 2006

God! Help me!
Sin crouches, waiting to devour
it lurks, wanting me
it tugs, it pulls, it yanks
ceaselessly
I try to fight
I want to give in
my feet turn back far too often

God! Help me!
Sin is stronger than I
it knows where I live
my mind desires its snare
my soul desires You
I am torn
in need of wholeness
oh my God, HELP!

You who makes all things new
Who forgives me from the "no matter what"
preserve me lest I fail
forgive me if I do

I am weak and fall upon Your strength

April 4, 2006

Might As Well Laugh

might as well laugh
I would, were it not so tragic
so great a target for ridicule
is difficult to ignore
one could have a field day
were one so inclined
it would be fighting
an unarmed man

yet he has weapons as well
scorn and slander among them
all too successful
though their source be a lie

A LIE! We are silenced by a lie!

for who would believe
that thought to be comic
or without integrity

might as well laugh
I would, were it not so tragic
that the TRUTH is ridiculed
while a lie is believed
and those who could live
are shackled to death
unwilling to know
Who would set them free

yes, might as well laugh
but I'd much rather weep
at the ease in which this
ridiculous lie
has affected my world
so many millions
so lost
because they cannot see around it

February 14, 2006

Hypocrisy

around the world
the Muslims howl
protesting wild
at their dead lord
insulting drawn

and the world quakes
and quails
and entreaties makes

yet I, a Christian lad,
can't help but think
that we've been had
as they quake in fear
of Muslim wrath
who joyful deride
the Son of God

February 2, 2006

Sometimes A Day Goes By

sometimes a day goes by
sometimes not
as I pause in the forever

eternal instants ambling along

waiting
for what can not come

November 15, 2005 - December 4, 2021

His Light Has Come Upon Us

Arise! Shine! For your light has come!
And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you!

too much we take for granted our walk upon this earth
within the soaring towers of mankind's dreams
our words, our deeds, we call our own
from birth to death forgetting God
our steps but raise the dust to settle as we pass
our plans and dreams follow us to death
yet we walk on hallowed ground
this world belongs to our mighty God

Our God! He too has set foot here
our boundless God squeezed into His creation

a babe
a boy
a man

a Saviour!

measuring the earth beneath His steps
which not even demons could efface

our God is here, He lives, is near
our hearts long to feel His quick'ning joy
our Creator, our Master, our Lord, our Friend
is here, is with us, is guiding us to life

His light has come upon us

October 12, 2005

Opposable Thumbs

arrogant thought
that time and chance yield life
that physical attributes yield wisdom
that existence yields justification
oh how far we have come from Glory
to replace it with futile thoughts
exploring phantom dreams as truth
oh how far we have come from our Source
that we fabricate our own
and remove all our hope

I had watched a bit of Alien Planet over the weekend and was struck by man's arrogance: creating a lie to discuss as fact to disprove Truth. So noble a being, so wasted a life. This is the Alien Planet. Alien from He to whom it owes its all.

The title comes from one of the final arrogances of the lie when we are told that opposable thumbs is one of the requirements for intelligent life.

Is there no end to our arrogance?
Yes, actually, there will be.

September 15, 2005

Easy

it would be so easy
so simple that
no one would ever know
parents, wife, children
all unknowing
I could get away with it

if only I could forget myself

June 28, 2005

One Million People Weep

standing here thirty-six years later
I wonder how they would feel
our vigorous defense of marriage
while their countless thousands die
in apathy

the real battle should have taken place
decades ago

Since 1969, when abortion was legalized in Canada,
an average of 100,000 children have been aborted
each year. Yet our churches do not stand against this
but weep at the current re-definition of marriage.

Noble Words

Carl Sagan's thoughts on seeing our world as a "pale blue dot" set in the vastness of space might provide some perspective on the events of the past weeks. This excerpt was inspired by an image taken, at Sagan's suggestion, by Voyager 1 on February 14, 1990. As the spacecraft left our planetary neighborhood for the fringes of the solar system, engineers turned it around for one last look at its home planet. Voyager 1 was about 6.4 billion kilometers (4 billion miles) away, and approximately 32 degrees above the ecliptic plane, when it captured [a] portrait of our world. Caught in the center of scattered light rays (a result of taking the picture so close to the Sun), Earth appears as a tiny point of light, a crescent only 0.12 pixel in size.



"Look again at that dot. That's here. That's home. That's us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives. The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every "superstar," every "supreme leader," every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there--on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.

The Earth is a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena. Think of the rivers of blood spilled by all those generals and emperors so that, in glory and triumph, they could become the momentary masters of a fraction of a dot. Think of the endless cruelties visited by the inhabitants of one corner of this pixel on the scarcely distinguishable inhabitants of some other corner, how frequent their misunderstandings, how eager they are to kill one another, how fervent their hatreds.

Our posturings, our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the Universe, are challenged by this point of pale

light. Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves.

The Earth is the only world known so far to harbor life. There is nowhere else, at least in the near future, to which our species could migrate. Visit, yes. Settle, not yet. Like it or not, for the moment the Earth is where we make our stand.

It has been said that astronomy is a humbling and character-building experience. There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known."

--Carl Sagan, Pale Blue Dot, 1994

that he can with grand poetic words
deny the One who placed him here
upon this "pale blue dot" among the countless stars
and yet irrationally accept His virtues
is a denial of the highest order

from whom but God
could "our responsibility" come

what reason is there "to deal more kindly"
if there is no reason for ourselves

May 18, 2005-November 18, 2019

A Father's Days

Dedicated to my father ~ George Rhebergen ~ with deepest appreciation

I remember
years ago, you said

"I would like to have been
a better father"

as though you hadn't been
and all opportunity had gone

I do not recall

being hungry
or cold
or unloved

I do recall

laughter
open arms
a caring heart

self evaluation is not
the truest guide
comparing what is
to what could have been
leads to despair

I have seen fathers
in many days
and know you to be the best

you led me to God
not prideful
or selfish
but with a woman at your side
and children beneath your wing
humbly seeing His example
of a Father's love
pale our own

you taught me tears
sometimes matter more
than muscle

you showed me to forgive

when hopes
turned into dreams
and morning came

you did not stop
being a father

nor I your son

when I left home
to return with a woman at my side
and children beneath my wing
but coached from further along
encouraging me onward
into this new
and sometimes overwhelming life

and years from now
(many, I pray)
when God has finally called you home
you will not cease
to be a Dad
for what I saw you live
I will live myself
in ongoing appreciation
of lessons truly taught
and the Truth behind the man

May 13, 2005

Oh LORD!
I need you

I need your protection
from the evil I willingly pursue

I need your guidance
for a mind joyfully corrupt

I need your love
for a soul hopelessly lost

Without you
oh LORD
I am lost and without hope

Oh LORD!
I need you

I need to desire you
rather than myself

I need to seek your way
rather than my own

I need to show your love
rather than my hatred

Without you
oh LORD
I have no reason to live

Oh LORD!
I need you!
Oh how very much I need you!

March 26, 2005

Wishful Thinking

PINELLAS PARK, Fla. (AP) - Michael Schiavo's lawyer is disputing claims by her parents that Terri Schiavo is close to death.

George Felos says her "death is not imminent by any means." Felos says he saw Schiavo today -- and that "she looked beautiful." He says she appears "calm, peaceful, resting comfortably."

Schiavo's parents lost another court fight today, when a Florida circuit judge rejected another motion to replace her feeding tube. A family spokesman says that will likely be appealed to the state Supreme Court.

The family claimed Schiavo tried to say "I want to live" hours before her tube was removed, saying "AHHHHH" and "WAAAAAAA" when asked to repeat the phrase. Doctors have said her previous utterances weren't speech, but rather involuntary moans consistent with someone in a vegetative state.

Would we kill a criminal in this way
there would be incessant cries for justice
But now the judges blink
"She's beautiful," they are told

by others speaking for her
seeking to assuage concern
healing headaches with ice-cream

"and is dying with dignity."

as if starvation could be dignified

though self-willed it just could be

when choice has been removed
for expediency
it is no more than murder
slow and painful and sure

death

what would be said if she could speak

that her death is the desired outcome
cannot be questioned

that her life is a desired outcome
cannot be questioned

would that those in power would think for once

of someone other than themselves
of something other than finance

how can it be just
to break a pledge

how can it be just
to take a parent's child

how can we just sit
and wonder how it ends

she will not "just go away"
but will remain with us always
the outcome of this "situation"
will haunt us all our lives

February 21, 2005

On Reading of the Death of Hunter S. Thompson

(not about him, particularly,
but reflective of my emotions
in reaction to the accolades he received)

wild man
careless living
cowardly dying
such a waste
of life

would we weep
if he died

would we care
to notice the hole he might leave
would we even notice
his passing

would he pass
loudly hailed and revered
the defiant cry his last refrain
or in the whisper
of an exhausted final breath

would we miss
the man he used to be
or find an other
on whom to pin our cause
with tears but barely dry

would he stand
before analysis
would we even care to weigh
or save that for an Other

would we weep
when he died

and why

February 16, 2005

nothing here but us
these glorious skies

empty

bespeaking no wisdom beyond their Maker
all sufficient

there is no need for more
for in Him there is all

February 13, 2005 - March 11, 2015

Broken Body

"This is My body, broken for you
eat, drink, remember and believe
I did this for you"

the time honoured words caress my soul
feeling the bread and the wine in my hand
remembrance of life flows into my body
claiming as my own the love of God
once again

and I rejoice
in spite of pain
this body shall pass
its pain as well
my soul eternal has been saved

all is well

February 4, 2005

Under the Shadow of Bigger Kids

when I was a young boy the big kids used to tease
and on the playground made the rules
that kept me from their games
not always
just enough so that I noticed that they were bigger

but I grew
as did they

into bigger kids on a bigger playground
the rules became more harsh
teasings turning to beatings
relentless
as bigger exercised its power

but I grew
as did they

into bigger kids making larger rules
to determine who can play and who cannot
I cannot

the big kids today are playing with guns
no one taught them how to live
and now they are on their own
and they don't know how to die

February 2, 2005

standing on this little ball
I am thrust into the midst of glory
the heavens surround me
creation overwhelms me

and I am small

who am I that He should care
what is my name that He calls it
engraving it upon His hand

I am small and beneath contempt

yet in His eyes I have value
infinitely more than creation

I am worth His Son!

this little ball that carries me shall pass
these glorious skies shall fade
I, though small, am in His hand

I shall live!

for publication in "News From The Heights."
(Newsletter of Westney Heights Baptist Church)

November 10, 2004

The Schedule

finally, after seventeen years
my courage stirred but shaky
I dared speak my life
a fearful man seeking guidance
un-concerned at last of others' thoughts
welcoming their correction

and was passed over
a slip of paper with a schedule
too hard a taskmaster
to allow even this diversion
within the courts of God

so close
yet so infinitely far

October 27, 2004

I know how it works, this generational hatred
passed from fathers to sons, mothers to daughters
an eternal remembrance of an event so old
only bitter memories can keep it alive
I too, have cause to extend pain beyond its life
but am blessed, my parents never taught me to hate
though fascism overran their native land
and hatred would have been an easy escape

I learned instead to forgive

and the Sun shines brighter for it

The use of "Sun" in the last line is a
nod to the original Star Trek episode
"Bread and Circuses," in which the
word "Sun" was confused for "Son."

"Sun" here is said, "Son" is intended.

October 17, 2004

I don't want to smile
I don't feel like I should
after being surrounded by hypocrisy
selfishness and carelessness
and seeing the same in others
why should I smile?
what would be the point?

and then reluctant
surrounded by the saints
their music
and their God
I changed

what changed the early saints
changes me

Got to church this evening, absolutely
miserable. Emily and the "boys" were
playing in their usual style and I found
myself smiling in spite of myself.

October 13, 2004

At that time
a great persecution arose
against the church which was at Jerusalem;
and they were all scattered
throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria,
except the apostles ...
... Therefore those who were scattered
went everywhere preaching the word.

So
what is wrong with us
why do we not go out
enthusiastic
our sins have been forgiven!
we have been saved from death
how can this be kept secret?

He has even promised success!

I will deliver you from the Jewish people,
as well as from the Gentiles,
to whom I now send you,
to open their eyes,
in order to turn them from darkness to light,
and from the power of Satan to God,
that they may receive forgiveness of sins
and an inheritance among those who are sanctified
by faith in Me.

So
what is our excuse?

Written at a Bible Study at
Westney Heights Baptist Church

Scripture quotations from:
Acts 8:1...4
Acts 26:17-18

October 11, 2004

darkness descendant
joy, a long lost companion

my friends, my family
unknowingly uncaring

is there no one who hears me
is there no one near who cares

and in the midst of my depression
one Voice incessant

I AM

October 8, 2004

The Long Dark Night of Peter Rhebergen

"I'm forgiven, because You were forsaken
I'm accepted, You were condemned
I'm alive and well, Your Spirit is within me
Because You died and rose again

Amazing love, how can it be
That You my King would die for me?"

pride
goeth before the fall

in the evening
the mirror showing a man of God
resolute and strong
able to overcome
stalwart

in the morning
nothing but reality
no more than a man
who resisted temptation
once less than he needed to

in the night
a struggle between
creature and Creator
flesh and spirit
sleepless hours
earnest prayer
excuses
failure

regret

and questions

"Have I fallen off of the path,
or just fallen on the grace of God?"

"Do I remain deserving of God?"

"Does God still love this man?"

and answers

"Even David fell and got up again
unswerving in his love for God."

"I didn't deserve God in the beginning
when He took me out of death."

"YES!"
the Bible tells me so

and repentance
it is not God's fault, He has not failed
it is mine, I am weak and needful of
forgiveness, that is God's and out of my hands
except to accept it
over again
as I need it each moment anew
(I need Thee every hour!)
forgetting once again
(assuming self-sufficiency)
I am nothing if I am not in Christ

If we say that we have no sin,
we deceive ourselves,
and the truth is not in us.
If we confess our sins,
He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

After a time of struggle and failure
and the realization of God's mercy.

Scripture from 1 John 1:8-9
Quote beneath title from
"You Are My King"
by Billy James Foote

The title and idea are very loose echoes
of the fifth season Babylon 5 episode
"The Very Long Night of Londo Mollari"

October 3, 2004

Why believe in such a god
who has love but has no power
who wishes well but cannot fulfill
why would I entrust my life
to one who cares but cannot save

there is comfort greater far
in He who loves and who has saved
in spite of evil's power
whose plan is not by evil altered
but overwhelms in evil's home

September 22, 2004

Look at Me!
(grace vs. self)

Look at Me!
see how well I am doing your will
Look at me, it will please you
See how I keep your day of rest
Did you notice the size of that cheque?
Observe that I avoid what insults you
and feast on what I know I do
Do you mind if I point out my prayers
or call attention to my holy living?

and yet my words seem dry and pointless
reflective of the bondage that I endure
within these tattered walls that hold me fast
yet to them I cling, for in them I have comfort
in the knowledge that I can save myself
am in control
have no fear of strangeness

where is the grace I have been promised?

I take the path well trodden
my own footsteps mingling with countless peers
within walls offering the reassurance of definition

"Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith." Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them." Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law

ignoring the open doorway
and its pathway paved in blood

It is hard to let go of self and to let grace
redeem us but that is what we all must do

Scripture from Galatians 4:10-13

September 20, 2004

Job – Closely Held by God

And the LORD restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversity that the LORD had brought upon him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and each a ring of gold. Now the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first Jemimah, the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Keren-Happuch. In all the land were found no women so beautiful as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers. After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations. So Job died, old and full of days.

Job 42:10-17

I wonder how he did it

afterwards

I wonder if he allowed fear to rule
that which grief could not conquer
if each visitor to his home
reminded him of others
less gratefully met

before

undoubtedly he rejoiced in his God
Whom blessing blesses truly
with gifts time cannot erase
could grief have left a seed
in so righteous a soil

I doubt it could

for he was closely held by God

September 17, 2004

Hockey Naught in Canada

I think that I will not miss hockey all that much
after all
there is soccer
 and wrestling
 and boxing
it really is a shame though
it's far more convenient in a single game

Actually, I am not a hockey fan at all.
Partly because I enjoy other games more.
Mostly because I don't like fights at all.

September 12, 2004

at the center
down at the bottom
sucking all into its need

my pain

endlessly fighting life

September 8, 2004

there are insufficient words
nor monument large enough
for the praise these have earned
who protecting other lives
ceaseless risk their own

God could not be far removed from us
from men and women such as these
that He shows His character so clear

September 8, 2004

first Beagle 2 now Genesis
you'd almost think something was going on
other than what man was planning
as if his dreams to supplant God
were not overlooked
but given their just dessert

man will have to more determinedly
work to achieve his own ends
and commit himself to the task

September 9, 2004

How Dare We

how dare we
with smug and patronizing remarks
assuage our sorrow at their expense

how dare we
ask Russia do
what we dare not do ourselves

how dare we
not recognize justice
for an evil so blatant

how dare we
insult our neighbours
in their hour of grief

how dare we
presume to know what is best
whose children still breathe

how dare we
not weep

September 8, 2004

Beslan

words are too good for them
and will fail justice
relentless, excruciating death
is what I want of them
who did not harm me
do not even know my name

what must those they touched demand

very rarely have I so rejoiced
to see a person killed

may God forgive my lack of charity
such evil should not expect it
from bloodied human hands
from broken human hearts
whose hope and joy lie now in earth
which scant hours before lived and breathed
and shared tomorrow's dreams

tears could not do justice
to this sorrow
to the grief this world should share

may God's vengeance satisfy our sorrows
and His holiness comfort all our fears

August 12, 2004

Temptation

it's not ended when you have said
"No!"
but lies in wait for your pride

the self-congratulatory smile
that says
"I've done it!"

the sense of elation
that comes
from being tempted

the lingering wonders
that rise
from the "What if..."

it is not truly over until breath at last is gone
and we harvest the reward of our "Yes" or our "No"
and the reason for the word

After a NYCC meeting where
something happened
or something didn't.
I'm not sure
and I shudder to think.

August 10, 2004

And Yet
(foolish man)

"If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed
which could not possibly have been formed by numerous,
successive slight modifications,
my theory would ultimately break down."

Charles Darwin, 1872

and yet ...

and yet ...

he went ahead
in spite of proof
that shows its lie

It is said that Charles Darwin expressed the above.
If that is true it seems that he was very willing to hold
his view despite the overwhelming evidence that our
universe and all within it did not occur by accident
but was deliberately created by word of God.

August 9, 2004

The Dark

it is there
I can feel it
it clutches at me an incessant beast
merciless
striving all the more when weak
all more subtle when strong
it is no stranger to despair
but its source
seeking to devour
from within

there is no source for my disgrace
but I
who have within
my first father's sin

there is no source for my salvation
but He
in Whom alone
lies all my hope

August 1, 2004

there is too much grief in this place
too many times where tears flow free
sadness surround what was created for joy
distracting us from life

we ask "Why?"

even those whose doubt is greatest
ask a reason for their pain
those who merely live,

enduring

where will our sadness find its solace

This poem was written in response to the death of a young boy in Toronto this week and asks where those who have been lied to (that there is no God) can find the answer to their unending "Why?" It is all too easy to believe that God is a fake in the midst of such circumstance yet all the more essential to continue to hold on to Him in spite of them.

July 28, 2004

The Smallest Work of God

The smallest work of God
shows more wonder than all that man can build
yet it builds upon itself in vast patterns
ever more intricate and man is infinitely surpassed
our finest works are utter coarseness
compared to His most tender touch

June 8, 2004

if us, why only us
why not almost us
why a single line
where parallels should abound
why are we alone
world builders
heaven dreamers
commanders of our fate

surely
if the old lie were truth
there would be almost us
among us

June 8, 2004

Perhaps ...

"Perhaps, if I could but touch His robe, I would be healed!"
the phrase wearing a track within my mind
like a broken LP stuck on the same repetitive thought

"Perhaps ..."
"Maybe if ..."
"What about ..."

endlessly working a path around the incessant silence
hopefully trying all the tricks that have worked for others
with no more result than a broken heart and increasing pain

"My God!"
"My God!"
"Why have you ..."

but you have not forsaken me, it is I who has abandoned You
I know it is Your love that holds all that I have, safe
I have no doubt that my life is held secure within Your hand

"But God,"
"I hurt!"
"Where is Your touch?"

"Perhaps, if I could but touch His robe, I would be healed!"
endlessly, hopefully, searching for His robe
that I could reach out, touch it and be made new

April 25, 2004

What Lies Ahead

What lies ahead but glory? Glory!
There is no need to fear
for Jesus Christ has died for me
that I with Him may live
Death has had its sting removed
My enemy can no more accuse
what has been claimed by God
made holy through Jesus' blood

April 19, 2004

Vancouver carpenter Karl Prevost, who once traveled to the seat of the Dalai Lama's government in exile in Dharamsala, India, lined up almost three hours early with his seven-year-old daughter, Emily, to see the renowned spiritual leader. "I thought it was wonderful. The energy was nice. But it was a long session for my daughter," said Prevost. Spinning around in circles outside the stadium, Emily said she couldn't understand what the Dalai Lama was talking about. But Prevost said that since Emily attends a Catholic church with her mother, it would be beneficial for his daughter to be exposed to a great Buddhist teacher so when she grows up "she can make her own choice" about religion.

CBC Vancouver (British Columbia Online News)

it would seem odd to give a child poison
as an option to cereal and milk
unless one were self ignorant of truth

one would hope when her maturity comes
she will choose the food over the poison

one, churchless, long ago told me
she sent her daughter to church
to enable her to make a wise choice
between faith and faithlessness
but children learn their parent's lives
and live what they have learned

April 16, 2004

To: Mr. Svend Robinson (again)

I must admit I admired you yesterday
not many would have your courage
to make so large an admission so publicly
I appreciate your honesty and forthrightness
and today cannot condemn you
I have no stone to throw
wishing to say as fellow fallen man
medicine is not the answer

never has been
never will be

the Answer died on a cross centuries ago
taking our punishment in our place
rising again
giving us hope that the payment applies

I pray
as a man who also falls
that you as well can know His grace

April 14, 2004

they would have as love what is not love
that which cares more for what one is
than cares for what one could be
it is not love that takes one as they are
and asks them not to change
but carelessness
that locks one into what one is
and throws away the key

true love cares for what one may become
given the chance to experience truth
holding all doors open save those that lead to death
relentless proclaiming Life till death has sealed life's choice

March 10, 2004

ah today, one could dream of summer
with sun's warmth upon the face
blazing blue sky to cheer the heart
one could dream of spring
as long absent birds sing again
and grass pokes triumphant through the snow

on today, one cannot dream of winter
that is one to be endured
as the body beneath the zipped up coat
seeks a more pervasive warmth

March 10, 2004

Just Say "NO!"

"Just say 'No!'" they say
as though it were not the hardest thing in the world
as though it were an easy task
to deny that for which the body screams
I have no power to refuse what I crave
I am weak and I fall often
into the delights that call my name
yet lie in wait to destroy me as I fall

it is impossible
for forty years I've tried
yet tired, am undone by a thought
no power of my own can save
thank God His power prevails
and heals this deceasing flesh

February 5, 2004

Dancing

dancing on limbs newly made strong
cavorting as a calf,
released from its pen to the wide open field,
rejoicing beneath God's sun
eyes no longer dim
fear no longer strong
beneath the gaze of He who saves
and brings the dead to life

Has it come to this?

I suppose democracy must be to blame
giving people choice in matters fore-ordained
presuming to choose God's leaders for Him,
uninformed masses choosing calculated deceit,
guiding our lives by standards more pleasing
than God's to those who have the greatest voice
desiring freedom and recognition of the "oppressed"
we are cast from our mooring
adrift upon a sea of deceptive calm
nature abhors a vacuum and democracy a guide
other than its own, where God is banished
eventually all aberrant voices will have their say
making their way of rebellion the norm
all voices have speech yet adhering to none
in a realm where no word is law
any word may become law
escaping God's good rule
we are subject to the tyranny of man
and without voice to re-consider

Based in part on the recent discussions
within the Anglican Church on the "matter"
of the ordination of homosexual leaders. It is
unbelievable that such a stage is acknowledged.
Would that God's law be that upon which man's
was based. How can any doubt exist about God's
condemnation of homosexual behaviour?

December 12, 2003

Empty
(of the Colour of Christmas)

the four of you,
standing upon your fame
before the adoring decades,
lied
there was no Christmas here

(nor a christmas, or X-mas even,
save possibly in the bits we couldn't hear)

merely aging egos serving selves
and in that a darker cause
for whom Christmas is not joy
but despair, not victory
but defeat

we prayed
were unharmed by the assault
and in our walk with God
went forward
sad at such talent lost,
wasted in the enemy's cause

In response to The Colors of Christmas,
Massey Hall, Toronto, 2003. In which
was much colour but little Christmas.
Their own promotional statement that:

"The Colors of Christmas is a new
generation of Christmas Show designed
for today's audience as a contemporary
alternative to the standard holiday attraction"

seems more an attempt to say that the need
of the Christian Christmas has passed away.

November 28, 2003

Why?
(in response to the murder in East York)

"Why?" is the question asked
as though what happened
shouldn't here
as though "a good neighbourhood"
was its own protection
and stain could never fall
upon its whitewashed walls

Through centuries of lies
they are now
ignorant of the truth
that God in heaven created
good
which deceived
fell to sin
rebellious
disposing Godliness
for self

And now
lobbies protecting rights
once unworthy thought
blood flows past our doors
and we wonder "Why?"
we are reaping
the crop of sin's dark seed

Claiming to have come so far
wherever we go there we are

November 28, 2003

To: Mr. Svend Robinson
From: A Neanderthal

"This should be a warning cry to those in the Conservative party
who are contemplating the possibility of joining up with this gang of Neanderthals"

Svend Robinson, November 27, 2003
In response to Larry Spencer of the Alliance Party

of so high estate, so popular and well-beloved
acclaimed for your position despite your position
respected advocate of social tolerance and reform
you smugly sit amongst your supporters
and in tolerance slandering your opposition
show that your own tolerance is little more
than window dressing for your own agenda
in which you tolerate none beyond your peers
or those who foolishly see your stand,
courageous as it is, to take it with you
unknowing of the consequence rebellion has
your tolerance is of the lion for the dog
content so long your needs are met
and if not met then content to crush that
which laying claim to your ambition
stands upon your way

you are deceived to believe you practice tolerance
if you would silence the opposition's voice
and close the door to the discussion of ideas
once you claimed to love
in tolerance to force your will on all
it is not tolerance but dictatorship
if all views but your own are wrong

you are a curse upon the land
who in your defiance against the Holy
would laugh to scorn the faithful

November 16, 2003

we've found the universal unity
we've known it all along

though dis-believed

that force that this universe unites
prevents from flying free
holds all disparate bits together
and electrons to their core

we've found and known what all this world still seeks
that alone which of all makes sense
and doubted ridiculed and scorned
stand firm upon our stand
upon the grace of God
alone which gives us strength

so sufficient is His power as to hold us firm
long after atoms cease their spin

This and the preceding poem were written in
response to a chapter from "The Gagging of God"
by D. A. Carson

November 16, 2003

do I weigh least at noon
when sun by pluck and earth by push
together conspire to remove me from this ball
or do I weigh least at night
when Earth its spin and curve about its Sun
work to throw me further than in the day

do I weigh most at night
when earth and sun united pull
at my feet to plant them firmly in this soil
or do I weigh most at day
when Earth's orbit would press me close
to the soil that stops my outward leap

a multiplicity of forces
act on me each moment anew
were it not for the grace of God
I've no idea where I'd land

September 22, 2003

An Other Lost One Found

I had such hope this morning
even though the power went away
and my backup died
I remember telling God
once the children were dropped off
thank you for this awesome day
could it possibly get any better

and now
after my office system crashed
soapy water splashed into my face,
washing my coffee cup,
bent with an upset stomach
I struggle
to say the same thing

September 17, 2003

Ignorance of Grace
to Martin Cauchon et al

you claim victory in the midst of your defeat
never aware of what you have lost by your gain
unrealizing that the One against whom you rail
is unchanging despite your protest of
His word that has established all that is

which also gives to you your breath and blood
yet you deny His grace, His law, His love

feeling by His mercy too close constrained
seeking freedom where all roads freely followed
we may become what we are becoming
your grand words of equality and fairness

very sweet and pleasant but still lies
despite your flowery sentiment

mask the ugly face of humanism as
narrow-minded in its blind broadness
as you claim is God in His open grace

Whose love knows no end
but that which you have chosen

you enter a door our parents never knew
seeking life and, shocked, find only death
in that day you will weep to God
for the mercy you once scorned for "freedom"
but far too late for you and those you led
away from their Creator

while there is breath there is hope
reconciliation received is forever ours

once breath has gone there is despair
reconciliation refused is forever lost

September 5, 2003

I am like one who has died
yet not
unlike those beneath their stones
whose outside life has passed away
mine is the walking breathing death
of one who has no purpose
whose inner life has passed away

June 27, 2003

two sides to the same fence
a mauled but breathing bunny here
a mangled unbreathing mouse there
sorrow and joy respective
and between them both, a cat
that cruelly paws its prey
long thick tail twitching 'neath the hedge
python-like

June 25, 2003

there is no place, there is no time
where God is not God, where I am not His child
here, there, everywhere He is there
now, then, everywhen He is Lord
in night's deep darkness, alone, afraid
He is with me just as He said
in day's bright dawning when all is well
His hand is on me for my good

June 15, 2003

faith suffers not embarrassment or shame
but boldly stands and works the truth
never doubting its cause regardless the outcome
steadfast it shows the hand of God on earth
and is not shaken by the mind of man

June 11, 2003

empty parents weeping
over the loss of their joy
while others discarding more
care less

May 29, 2003

glorious light shines down from heaven
illumining death with life
relieving overwhelming fear by pure and holy joy
could God remain un-worshipped on such a day as this
argument for-against, because-why
nothing matters save this alone
Jesus lived and died and lives once more

and I am saved

December 10, 2002

they believe the fabled Atlantis
but deny the truth the fable shows
that once long ere nations now known rose
to place their claim upon this earth
this now gloried realm once stood
and to its doom disdained its God

November 21, 2002

that is not love what you call love, accepting
of all who come in their need before you,
it has a far more evil source than
the Creator of all good things
wherein the light of truth to seek the best,
is perverted to accept the worst
to becomes a tool in darkness' lie
with smiling faces and gracious words
and tolerant of all who come
seeking not to change but to encourage
what holiness proclaims is sin

true love is not self-seeking
it has a higher value for truth
than it does for peace and comfort
it is willing to sacrifice itself
that its object may be saved
knowing a present judgment
regardless of the cost
could prevent final condemnation
unwilling to accept the easy way
it leads to one that is higher

November 12, 2002

Vanity of Man

you dared speak with Satan's voice
among the children in the house of God
boldly declaring your lies
in the place where He is adored
you must be mad

you dared defame the One
who died to set you free
and would claim a wisdom greater
than He who falsehood never spoke
you must be vain

you dared deny the power of He
who daily guides our way
seeking instead your will to follow
t'ward the doom to which it leads
you must be a fool

you claimed a wedge within you
by the righteous, proclaiming truth
separating you from God
but it is of your own making
of your mannish "wisdom" formed

you dared defy the holy God
within His very courts

I pray for your soul

Sunday evening, Dr. John Mackay

Pride

I sat in prayer as you spoke
begging God to let His truth speak loudly
imploring Him that His people would see through
your deception
sweet words denying truth, bolstering confidence
in mannish wisdom
"I make my living studying rocks"
you said
implying a wisdom greater than God's own
Who those rocks created
I prayed that God would forgive you
and save those hearing your selfish lies
never have I so badly wanted to hit a man

I sat in prayer as you spoke
begging God to let His truth speak loudly
overwhelming the words so recently spoken
God's truth
alone the Rock upon which we may build our lives
in Godly fear
to study and rely for life on Him
your words
eloquent yet firm in defence of the truth
Who our lives upholds
I prayed that God would support you
and save those lost to demon's lies
never have I so badly wanted to hug a man

Dr. John MacKay came to our church today and presented two lessons. In the evening lesson a time for questions was given and one man stood to claim that his knowledge in geology gave credit to God for His creation but to man for the understanding of time.

Even within sacred precincts the enemy has his voice.

November 7, 2002

bed-ridden, pain wracked, deserted by hope
corpses waiting to die
selling bodies to their soul's destruction
knowing no dream other than the next oblivion
other lives, less prone to pain, equally given to death
accompany and encourage (both selfish and selfless)
to a doom that is shared
with grandly jaded dreams of cleaner lives lived more wholly
empty of the TRUTH but promising of life that will never realize
fullness of soul can never come from a change
of the circumstances surrounding the person
but of the person within the circumstance

Heard on CBC news today of a doctor sponsored program
to give a clean environment to drug addicts in order to let
them better enjoy their lives and do their drugs far from the
slums and dumpsters where the poorest exist. They tried to
make us feel sympathy for a woman who sold her body for
drug money in a way that would allow her to continue to do
this horrid thing but in better surroundings. As though the
act of selling her body was of no consequence at all. How
can our nation have gone so far on the road to Sodom?

August 29, 2002

Explosion on Coming Home

there, that's done, after another gruelling hour in traffic
(seems to be worse with every day gone by)
savouring the peace and tranquility of my own driveway
for hardly a measurable moment of time
the engine barely stopped
when around the corner of the house an explosion of life
hats, safari jackets, and journals full of the day's adventure
surrounding my vehicle as a newly captured trophy
a tentative opening of the door and distracted
they claim their own a new prize

with such a welcome home I'd go to work any day

April 1, 2002

Note on the "Found in My Basement" poems: We were going through boxes in preparation for moving to a home with less storage. In a box of my Bible College notes I found the poems below which I had all but forgotten about. Somehow they found their way into the recycling box without my knowledge and I tore the house apart to find again what mere days ago I never knew I had. My best guess to their age is that they date from the middle to late eighties. I have grouped them here for no other reason than that it is now that they have returned to my life.

Found in My Basement: #1

First Draft

standing on the shores of forever
I gaze
at countless stars about me spread
and hear
the gentle laugh of silent bells
that in the stillness chime

far away, eternity
yet within my grasp

Found in My Basement: #1

Second Draft

standing on the shores of forever
I gaze
at countless stars about me spread
and hear
the gentle laugh of silent bells
that in the stillness chime

time stands awhile
as do I
 awestruck
confronted by
the mystery of life
the glory of the skies
the perfection of creation

standing here
beneath eternity
symphonies of sight

Found in My Basement: #1

Third and Final Draft

standing on the shores of time
I gaze
at countless stars about me spread
and hear
the gentle laugh of silent bells
a puzzling child
 am I
confronted by
the mysteries of life
in all its glory

the time that holds
mem'ries and hopes
now expands to take it all

questions often
answers seldom
this child wonders

why do icicles sound that way
when their tears on water fall
why does the stream then laugh
can stars still shine
when the sun is bright

misty windows seldom clear
but a glimpse is often enough
to set the soul to flight
to give the heart a song

this soul flies

this heart sings

Found in My Basement: #1

Fourth Draft (June 25, 2020)

standing on the shores of time
I gaze
at countless stars about me spread
and hear
the gentle laugh of silent bells
time stands awhile
as do I
 awestruck
confronted by
the mystery of life
the glory of the skies
the perfection of creation

a puzzling child
 am I
explorer of life
in all its glory

 the time that holds
 mem'ries and hopes
 expands to take it all

questions often
answers seldom
this child wonders

 why do icicles sound that way
 when their tears on water fall
 why does the stream then laugh
 can stars still shine
 when the sun is bright

misty windows seldom clear
but a glimpse is often enough
to set the soul to flight
to give the heart a song

 this soul flies

 this heart sings

Found in My Basement: #1

Fifth Draft (January 20, 2021)

standing on the shores of forever
I gaze
at countless stars about me spread
and hear
the gentle laugh of silent bells
time stands awhile
as do I
 awestruck
confronted by
the mystery of life
the glory of the skies
the perfection of creation

a puzzling child
 am I
explorer of life
in all its glory

 the time that holds
 mem'ries and hopes
 expands to take it all

questions often
answers seldom
this child wonders

 why do icicles sound that way
 when their tears on water fall
 why does the stream then laugh
 can stars still shine
 when the sun is bright

misty windows seldom clear
but a glimpse is often enough
to set the soul to flight
to give the heart a song

 this soul flies

 this heart sings

Found in My Basement: #2

the morning sings for joy
sheer bliss at being alive
the sun springs joyfully into its course

Found in My Basement: #3

how I am able to envy you
the people of the day
He walked among you
healing your sick
raising your dead
turning your water into wine
what joy it must have been
to see Him
to touch Him
and hear Him speak

how I am able to envy you
the seventy He sent out
His divine commission
upon your head
the power of His name
fire in your blood
you performed miracles!
in His name
what a feeling it must have been
to be His hands
and His feet
on that long ago road

and how I am able to envy you
the twelve He called His own
walking, talking, being with Him
for years on end
how I long to learn those words
the way that you learned them
you loved Him as a man
as I never can

Found in My Basement: #4

quiet moments
briefly snatched
from the hurdy-gurdy pace of life

enjoyment shortened minutes fleet by

Found in My Basement: #5

for a brief moment
angels sang
while tears crept to my eyes

Found in My Basement: #6

I tread the light fantastic
the only way to go
no more the gloom cloaked trail-way
or vile, misleading road
onward and upward
the way I walk

Found in My Basement: #7

sounds like

THUNDER!

rambling on the winds
slow come trumpeter

Found in My Basement: #8

alive! I am
I feel, I breath
I live

and yet I feel
I'm going rogue

Found in My Basement: #9

Sing Alleluia to the Lord!
for He is all we are
Lift your heart to God!
for He is lord of all

Found in My Basement: #10

we interrupt this show
to bring to you
a news flash
events on
the lower east side
are happening
Johnny's on the spot
to bring it to
your lives

hornet's nest activity
besets this
seldom heard from quarter
tonight
Tennant's Block goes out
in a blaze of glory
flames
livid against the night
(so silent and deep)
writhe in the agony
surely felt by all
emergency crews
battle rubber necks
to see who gets there first
silence retreats
as the battle rages

um-m-m-m, could you get more personal please, Johnny?)

huddled
in the shadow of doom
devoid of all
(possessions
dignity
hope)
stand ... the victims
a few hurriedly grabbed garments
upon their shivering bodies

(My God!
How could this be?
Where are they?
Oh my God! Where are they?)

okay Johnny, that's it
we've got to get back
to regular programming

sorry, ladies and gentlemen,
for this intrusion,
we now return you
to your show,
thank you,
good evening

Found in My Basement: #11

today I woke up
happy?
I'll tell the world
I was happy
I could have leapt the moon

Found in My Basement: #12

I live
breath, work, and sleep
 that's all that is required
 in life
even though I feel
I'm going rogue

the mind I have
is not my own
a demon took it
and calls it home

so now I live
in the curtain of dark
light all around
except where I walk

February 28, 2002

Leahy

there!
this is the way that it should be
no segregation no divide
between faith and life
one upon the other so tightly bound
their shadows inter-merge as one
the love for God enmeshed on life
joyous lived and full of praise
an echo of a distant glade

Listened to Leahy for the very first time today.
Very inspiring how the music shines their faith.

February 25, 2002

I have tried to weep but cannot
I have grasped at grief but it escaped
I have struggled with joy and it has the victory
I have held the hand of God and He has held my life!

Praise to the Lord! From Whom all blessings flow!

February 25, 2002

Two Weeks Later

my dear Lord, I recall the tears that Thursday morning
crying desperately "NO!" into my unfeeling pillow
screaming for time to be reversed and damage to be healed
knowing all the while it was not to be so,
that death remained in spite of my anger or my tears
my silence sudden in the face of so great a reality
so much that I could not change though all power be mine
thankful that all power is yours beyond all changing
for you my great and glorious saviour have done it
saving one of our dearest and best beyond all chance of loss
no tear to dim the eye, no thief to steal the joy
no wisp of doubt between your pure unsullied love
and yet another for you whom you died to save
I thank you my Lord and my God for this indescribable gift
that through your death his death has led to life
may all our praise be ever yours and our joy be found in you

February 17, 2002

if you could see my face the smile would fail to shine
too great is the misery currently etching
too many are failing me that should not
the pain I am asked to forgive happens even now
and I cannot see the strength to do it
the tears still flow too freely

unlike Christ I cannot forgive at the point of death
Who, as nails held Him fast as His life drained away,

forgave

showing mercy even as He died at their hands

Written after church, one week after Mac's death.
A hundred people walked past me, ushering at the door,
only one remarked upon our grief and offered understanding.

I don't quite know what I expected,
but I know it wasn't this.

February 11, 2002

Thursday Morning

harbinger of glory so soon after pain
hours of weeping in my bed give way
to unrelenting praise, He has done it!
one more life safe beyond the tempter's
clawing reach, to that bright land where
no shadow falls.

heaven's blessing pouring free, tossing
grief aside as it were smoke upon the winds

February 9, 2002

A Man Dearly Loved

today we said our last good byes to one so dearly loved
the parting should have been the end of worlds
but was not
thanks be to God it was not
and we continued, safe in His great hand

December 17, 2001

The Longing of Home

tears flow for joy or sadness
too great an emotion for this frail flesh
I have been made for greater lands
songs of praise overwhelm my sense
creation's beauty my eyes observe
but can never wholly own
all within cries for its fulfillment
beyond this land of shade

December 9, 2001

"And They Shall Be One"

to Peter and Stephanie Ferwerda, on the occasion of their re-union

Sunday morning, a special service, you stood before us
a child about to be reborn, your wife standing, smiling, beside you
hands enfolded as Pastor Adrian spoke of the joy of new life
I saw your hands and recalled my own joy at the gift of a loving God
my own true helpmeet beside me, a companion along the way
and rejoiced to see you both, now as God intended, together
united in body and now in spirit, two of one mind, with one goal

almost weeping as you knelt before our God and His people
hearing those immortal words

I baptize you in the name of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit

repeated over you to the pouring out of the water
and saw you cleaned, all the deeds of your yesterdays washed away
purified you rose before us prepared for all your tomorrows
weeping as you were welcomed to our family by the one you love best
could your wedding day have been a day more holy
truly heaven's hosts rejoiced to see you now as God had planned
a man whose strength and glory is to serve his God

may the God whose joy overwhelms your soul today
be your joy in all your days that follow
and may the beauty of His great salvation gift
never cease to give you awe

September 16, 2001-September 11, 2013

they must be never forgotten
these men, these women, these
heroes
who by their hundreds died
that others by their thousands live
inscribe their names on every beating heart
in ceaseless honour to a love too strong for even death to still

they must never be forgotten
these who by their thousands died
unknowing
not as warriors who in battle
fought their foe on equal terms
but victims of a faceless evil in a battle with no rule
but bloodshed
senseless and brutal

they must never be forgotten
this enemy, who from the darkness fights
evil
bringing terrors beyond imagination
to a people seeking peace
may the God whom they abhor have mercy on their souls
their now mortal foe cannot

September 14, 2001

who could have believed it scarce a week ago
that such a thing could even be considered
and now it has happened with thousands gone
leaving lives incomplete and empty homes
which short days ago held life and joy
one's mind can hardly wrap itself around this
terror so new poured out upon us
surely this is the blow of an evil hand
though distant with strength all too great
overwhelming lives once thought strong and sure
our frailty that of steel

dear God I want to cry

would to God the hands that did this deed
be forever stilled

September 14, 2001

No Such Thing as Safe

last night the power went out
I sat in my baby's room, shaking
they have robbed from me my peace
that my tomorrow will dawn
and that those under my care
will remain protected
for I am helpless against this evil
I have no defence to raise against
a terror which sudden and violent strikes

the arm of an evil greater than man
requires the strength of a Greater Good

and in my fear, upon this chair
I turned my face to God

September 11, 2001

The Day the World Changed

dear God in heaven, how could this have happened
such destruction, such disregard for life
in magnitude unprecedented in all the earth
no words exist to describe such an act
my tears, and others', can never wash this pain
all my grief before today unimaginably small
may its perpetrators suffer unimaginable agony in death
and an eternity of damnation make the death seem bliss
I find rage an easy companion to my prayers
the horror of today cannot diminish in time
too many have died, too great a hate has been unleashed
God, in this our hour of greatest need, may we turn to You
be the God of all our comfort as our weakened courage fails

August 11, 2001

these fragile bones
weak, often straying off the path
so desperately long to praise You
that to fail to do so
is death
yet often die
still Your blessings pour
down upon me
in abundant measure
so much that I am unaware
of most of what You give
that You can love such as me
is astounding
for I know the kind of man I am
and know that You know better
and still You love me
without regret
to the point of dying in my place
my life upon Your mind
in Your dying hour
You love me and because You do
Your own resurrection can be mine
a joyful welcome into eternity
through blood freely spilled
in place of mine
oh my God
may I take Your salvation
as I take my breath
trusting in its power
to save my life

August 11, 2001

dear Lord God
there was a time I felt I knew
was certain of
why You placed me here
and I rejoiced to do Your will
to please You was my joy
and to teach Your people
was my life

dear Lord God
that time is no more
I am at sea
lost and with no direction
my compass spins
no star is seen
my course is no longer sure
and I feel about to sink
beneath the waves
those very waves once that buoyed me

dear Lord God
I know
there can be no direction apart from You
Lord stay my compass
that whatever course I find
be found on only You

August 11, 2001

The Silence

tired
inertia a reluctantly defeated foe
as exhausted feet
step by step by step
tread from darkness depths
to the welcome glow of light
upon the landing
gaining strength from the vanquished task
and more in the pause
to hear the sleepers slumber
care free spread within the night
chest welling with gratitude
at so incredible a gift
that I should belong to such as these

August 11, 2001

The Glory

oh God help me to write
these words which wish to praise
You
and You alone
my God and my King

oh how this body seeks Your glory
too weak to feel but a part
overwhelmed by the merest hint of You
revealed

in thrusting mountains rearing up their heads
in mighty waters pouring into nothing
in roaring thunders upon the cloud
in the still small voice upon the soul

and weep
truly You
and You alone
are the only God
the One to whom all things seek

would that this body could be empowered
and joyfully, completely, give You Your due
but I am weak and bound by chains
which I have not allowed You to break
help that these as well may pass
and I be released to Your praise

June 4, 2001

not so obscure a place
that has seen such height of glory
and shown such depth of shame
we may be one among uncounted number
it is more likely we are not
that we are alone within this vastness
alone able to render homage to our King
without whom others seek companions
to fill the hole within and yield explanation
for the reason why we live

I was reading Carl Sagan's book "Contact,"
which is quite well written but exhibits such a
loneliness that for all its beauty it is sad.

A pale comparison to the excitement of Truth!

May 27, 2001 - February 11, 2021

A Poem on a Sunday Afternoon

we joyful view the butterfly
which lovely oft' does flutter by
in early form gave death the lie
became a feast to please the eye
in wondrous hue upon the sky

of such beauty our own may shy
with scarce more than a quiet sigh
but such response would truth deny
for none but man did God's Son die
and triumphant rise to reign on high

May 26, 2001

"It happened once,"
they say
"It will happen again"

alarm
as mankind's cherished hopes
fly before reality
his greatest work no match
for God His smallest thought
and still to rebellion tied
deny the witness of their sense

reaction
the brightest thought
of the brightest minds
made real
burning endeavour, rising
one massive, overwhelming effort
yet to failure doomed

fear
as the event so long foreseen
unfolds in God's good time
mankind's end will come
regardless his desire

At the beginning of the movie "Armageddon"
the statement at the top of this poem is made
with respect to the meteor supposed to have
killed all of the dinosaurs so many millions of
years ago. While they lie they prophecy truth.

May 24, 2001

God or Fraud

"I am the way and the truth and the life,
No one comes to the Father except through me."

John 14:6

If He was correct, He alone is worth following
If He was not, He is above all to be avoided
Not an other choice is permitted man
Only "For" and its "Against"
He, the one pivotal man in all of time
He, the one God who became us
that He alone could save us

May 24, 2001

How kind of God to give us time
before our final parting in this life
to gently heal our pain scarce begun
filling with His grace this tragic gap
within our lives that by His mercy
go on despite the heaviness of our hearts
We live in hope of an eternal joy
that bids this short sadness know
its pains are far below the joy to come
We live in hope of heav'n's reunion
where earth's tear will forever cease
its pain is not permitted and our love
will find at last its fulfillment in its King

In memory of Rick Campbell

May 21, 2001

mini-vacation
Victoria Day 2001
three children
two bikes
one dog
in the van
on a busy Monday morning
before the long drive home
and arriving
hours later
doing it all in reverse

and done!

looking down at my feet
I see my father's shoes

May 14, 2001

Blindsided

it came out of the fog, unseen and silent
blindsiding my life, giving no warning
sending the man I was on the unseen path
to the garbage heap, cast aside and useless

how can you prepare for something
that after which is nothing
any preparation is insufficient, incapable,
like scotch taping a window to face a tornado

what do you do when the land runs out,
you've been dragged to the edge of your world,
and yet you must continue walking
where do you go from there

how does a man, a lifetime in the making,
begin again to prove his value
to a world that has no need, has no care
for who God has made him be

dear God above you stand alone
secure for one who alone now stands
you alone of all know my value, or its lack,
give me chance again to serve

I don't really know what a mid-life crisis is, am really unsure if my experience would even qualify, or even if such an event is a real event or an excuse to cover our excess.

I do know that the past fourteen months have been the hardest in my life, that the man I was for over twenty years has been disposed of, and that the prospects of going on in ministry are dim at the best. So if this is a mid-life crisis or not it is still hard.

How do you prepare for something you can't possibly imagine the other side of?

May 8, 2001

Echoes of The Glory

there is of Him an echo within all that is
silent and relentless proclaiming His glory
regardless opposition, careless of time
from the insignificance of specks and atoms
to the insignificance of the star spread sky
and between them both, man, unknowing
yet rendering even his maker praise
denied

there is no escaping He whose hand the heavens
tossed as seed from out the sower's palm
about this incredible expanse of nothing
so much room in which to grow
so little place from which to hang
no peg upon which to fix and stay
but upon His word that even now
maintains

we can't but see our greatest work
has within it His foundation
our smallest smallness His power belies
our greatest greatness His strength subsides
where can we go that He is not
what can we think He has not thought
our every deed His own
allows

May 3, 2001

The Highest Service

we are not called to see our neighbour as we wish
through selfishness feed our needs
through selfishness use our fears

we are not called to see our neighbour as they wish
through selfishness feed their needs
through selfishness use their fears

we are called to see our neighbour as God wishes
in Him to satisfy their needs
through Him to calm their fears

far too often our eyes are like our neighbour's
suspect
not seeing the full reality
not knowing the demon behind the pain
seeing the need but not the deception
seeing the fear but not the terror
they are lost and know it not
we are found and show it not
and behind us all Satan laughs
but we are called to teach, rebuke, and encourage
endowed the holy power of God
to tear down the walls that
death divides from life

those who oppose him he must gently instruct,
in the hope that God will grant them repentance
leading them to a knowledge of the truth,
and that they will come to their senses
and escape from the trap of the devil,
who has taken them captive to do his will

I realized today that I too often look upon
people selfishly, seeing how they fit into my
life rather than fitting them into God's. Text
is from 2 Timothy 2:25-26

April 30, 2001

Everything I Do

every thing I do
every chance I take
every word I speak

falls
 useless
 upon
 the
 ground

lying there spent and unused
not a thing I have done
these fourteen months past
has been of value
all attempts at holy work
dead ended before a chance
of properly beginning
scorned and despised upon
this same ground
upon which I fall to weep

Oh God!
What do I do
that this curse remains?

April 30, 2001

Our Greatest Loss for God's Greater Gain

photos taped upon a board
tender duty of loving children
a smiling man taking his part
joyful in the lives of others
son, husband, father, friend
child of God in His great care
these tears too shall pass
for the promise still remains

and we know that in all things
God works for the good of those who love him,
who have been called according to his purpose

he too has been called
called to serve a greater cause
than merely drawing breath
willingly walking close with God
that his desire would God's will obey
the sacrifice made for others
God will not deny nor forget
His gift new life from our loss
as once before in greater measure
new life came from His own

unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies,
it remains only a single seed
but if it dies, it produces many seeds

the man who loves his life will lose it,
while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

what was once is no more
that better things may come

we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed
in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet
for the trumpet will sound,
the dead will be raised imperishable,
and we will be changed.

the plan of God is inscrutable
His patience all forbearing
that His will
His good and perfect pleasing will
may yield its great reward

He is patient, not wanting anyone to perish,

but everyone to come to repentance

In memory of Rick Campbell

April 30, 2001

we buried what used to be you yesterday
mournful after the celebration of salvation
saying our final goodbyes to a good man
family gathered silently around what remained
your unused body the focus of our sadness
we know you are in glory and that our grief
is no longer yours
and for that we could rejoice, thank God!
we do not grieve for you but for your absence
the hole that has been left in our lives
God has given us the joy of your friendship
which sin's effect has now removed from us
we do not grieve your joy but the loss of ours
even knowing that the reunion will be sweet
with joy greater by far than all we have seen
but while we struggle toward that goal
a helper has been taken and we mourn

In memory of Rick Campbell

April 30, 2001

strange that it didn't make the papers
this tragedy that has shattered our lives
no newscasters shared a downturned eye
nor shed a silent tear at our grief
our world which so suddenly stopped
for many others continued on unbroken
streams of ceaseless life flow unknowing
around we who now scramble to pick up pieces
and carry on in the face of our greatest loss

In memory of Rick Campbell

April 30, 2001

To Friends Long Distant

strange
after so long a time of silence
to see you in the time of our grief
strangers now
bearing gifts of comfort
soft words healing hard times
not unappreciated
and yet
tarnished by all that has gone by
and
in the hidden corner of my mind
this uncharitable thought:

if you had truly cared
as you say you do
why is now the first we hear of it
when for the past fourteen months
we needed it as much as now or more

Beth says it is because you did not know
had not the skill
I say you could at least have tried
for you had the knowledge of need
we have forgiven so much already
clumsiness would have been easy

I do not hate you, praise God I couldn't
but I find it hard to admire you
far too long you have left us alone in our need

It seems that I have not entirely
forgiven them for their slight.

Please God step in and help.

April 30, 2001

Away from the Body, At Home with the Lord
2 Corinthians 5:8

death has forced its way upon our lives
tearing from us our peace
turning our dreams to vapour
shattering our smiles into uncounted tears
and our thoughts, flung from the trivial,
cast about in life and death
cling to God in whom there is hope
in spite of all travail and heartbreak
all our fears find their rest in Him
who holds our hearts secure
amid the trials that would shake us free
and cast us down among those who have no hope
where our despair would be real
and death itself, our vanquished foe
would be the victor

thanks be to God our saviour and our friend
though the punishment is sure
our salvation is as well and more

In memory of Rick Campbell

April 27, 2001

"If God wants me to die so that my family can be saved, I'd be happy to do that"

many months have passed since you spoke these words
I remember at the time they scared me
for I believed that you believed it
and I did not wish to consider the death of a friend
but time has passed and now you have died
 far too high a price we have paid
may God's perfect will be done
that in your death others may find their life
and join you before our God in eternal love

In memory of Rick Campbell

April 27, 2001

my neighbour doesn't quite understand
"We've all got to go," he said
"it was just his time," as well
somewhat embarrassed of my talk of glory
standing slipper footed on our new cut lawn
he is a good man
but goodness doesn't cut it when the standard is perfection
I pray he hears our truth
and sees it not delusions

In memory of Rick Campbell

April 27, 2001

Mac asked me to say grace last night
the whole family seated around supper
except for you
our first meal incomplete
I could scarcely choke the words around my tears
suddenly it was just too much to bear
it should never have had to happen
death is alien to our purpose
the result alone of ancient ingrown sin
a grief too great to carry
as is the mercy that brought to God's home
you who used to live in ours
great is our God who has overwhelmed our curse
with a life beyond expression

death our foe will yet be vanquished
its sting forever stilled
our Lord who sits in glory
will take us forever home

In memory of Rick Campbell

April 26, 2001

Afterwords

your children are here now
two out of three
leaving their mother with her family
(Beth got the call after you left
but I prayed for your life any way
as, apparently, did they,
and an other when I slept,
praying for restoration still)

now that you are away
I still do not understand
God was supposed to heal you
and He did not but rather took you home
to golden streets and blessed peace
but away from us
this morning Valerie came and we hugged
weeping, missing you already
 the joy of the promise assuages grief
 but does not blot it out completely
some friends of Natalie's came with a card
and I wept again

suddenly it was real
you were no more

you will be missed my friend
may our God keep both you and us
until that glorious day of joy
when death itself will die
and joy be never tarnished

In memory of Rick Campbell

March 20, 2001

I stumbled upstairs to "The Hotel Room"
desperate to remove a headache from my head
and opened the door

to see two little bundles of joy seated before a video
dutifully drawing as they were instructed to draw
"Look," said Daniel, "I drew a duck
see, there's the water, he's swimming!"
proud of his accomplishment
and walking to his sister
"See Dadda," my little Jewel calls me that
"I made a duck too, but mine is flying!"
different but the same
as I gazed at the paused instructor on the screen
they looked so lovely
these two treasures (the third on a grand day out)
that I wept
for I have no hands that could hold this moment fast
for the time when they are grown

thank you God for your love
given me again in this gentle form

March 20, 2001

we only have the now
this inestimable instant upon which we stand
our foundation for all our time
crumbling away behind us as it is restored before
a bridge moving between our history and our dreams
a place from which both are considered
coming to this now at any other time
the result of our considerations would be altered
what time has built, what we hope for it to build
our skew upon ourselves

this one precious instant
all we will ever have
until time itself shall end

March 18, 2001

Lost

lost, seeking direction in an unknown realm
ineffective in my forgotten backwater
even fervent desire has been quenched
unlikely to ever bloom again as far as can be seen
would that the heavens would speak forth the answer
to the emptiness within, to my eternal weeping "Why!"
what mistake had I made, what task left undone
in which duty did I err to be thrown aside so far
as to not be able to even think of return
isolated by all once held so dear, untouched
yet needing to be touched as never before
alone as I've never been, unbelieving the sensation
had heard but never felt or known the terror
of losing the fire, of losing the desire, of losing
everything, the tremendous gift once held so close
removed by the Giver as from a wayward child
or so it seems to me, voiceless yet filled with words
unable to sing for joy yet needing to praise
would a mediator could be found
to bandage wounds that linger still
and restore the unity so sharply sundered
would the damage be undone and life continue
as it should, in joyful service to Heaven's King
Earth's creator and my Lord
would that life return to this barren land
that again its value could be known
oh Lord my God I am forsaken and alone
what once I loved I fear I now despise
there can be no going back without you
yet you hold me here where I am useless
even David returned after twice thrown over
your chosen to the end in spite of fickle favour
I remain in terror of they who removed me
unaware the pain and uncaring
Lord God it's been a year without a word
if they had cared would they not have spoken
now they prove they do not care did they never
and if never have I really done a thing for You
oh God restore me 'ere I die and leave your work
undone
I stand in terror that I have failed, am failing
deserting the highest call, but alone and forgotten
what else is there to do, I have no strength
no desire to the task, the burning flame
extinguished but a year, has even lost the ember
what once had hope of life is dead and on the rubbish heap

March 3, 2001

Dedication of the Land
Ground Breaking for Pickering Christian School

the balloons rose into the sky
slowly dwindling specks of
red in white intermingled as
smoke and flame of an altar
long remembered
the echo of the shophar
lingering in the cold
we stood beneath, feet stamping
breath white, wreathing faces
themselves wreathing smiles
excitement a palpable thing
as the plans of many days
begin the bearing of their fruit
how long ago these roots were laid
our God has blessed us richly
here, beneath His sky, we praise Him
giving Him just glory for His mercy
here the foundation we have in Him
will find an earthly bearing
that our children too
may be firmly founded
our prayers for them ascending
alongside the exuberant balloons
to the courts of Heaven's King
and giver of every good and perfect thing

We celebrated the ground breaking for
the new building today. One child from
each class driving a shovel into the earth
in answer to prayers long laid before God.
How good He is to us to give this answer.
Could tears not flow at the joy of today?

March 1, 2001

the fool has said in his heart "There is no God!"
and set about to prove it, proving nothing but
his foolishness
how can one presume to prove no God
using the very evidence of His reality and care
against Him
His glory pervades all that could ever be
and how should I respond other than I would
they attempt to prove the sky not blue

January 26, 2001

He came as a breath of fresh air
to a stagnant, asphyxiated world
preaching a message of joy to all
a glorious man who knew to love
friend of the downtrodden
teacher of the wise
healer of the sick
a man who made a difference
for all who would ever live
a God who cared enough
to become the creature
in their world to die for them
restoring the broken bonds
making all who came, clean
children of Almighty God

What an absolutely amazing
man He must have been. What
a joy to have been able to see Him.

January 11, 2001

Good God, what creatures be these
that you have made and place here
wild
in hordes beyond all counting
frowning brow all pointed down
by great bony crests adorned
and sailed above by foul
whose very beauty cause the soul to stir
here in this not so barren wasteland
your glory freely cast
upon this vast forbidding shore
between these years
and eternity

I was watching the episode "Canada: A People's History, The Pathfinders," which had some magnificent scenes of the beauty of the northern wildlands. This inspired by a shot of a herd of Musk ox running wild across the plain.

December 21, 2000

Standing on my Own

I tried, Lord
by myself to stand
thinking to use my own resource
to keep from sin
unaware my own resource
is sin
Adam and Eve also tried
to stand alone
and failed
as do I
each new day
Oh, my God,
reach down
as once you did for an other
and pull from this sea of sin
that struggles so to claim
one washed by your own blood
save me before I am lost
and dead
and damned

November 21, 2000

a universe of two
God's magnificent creation
narrowed to the joy between
the lover and the loved
all things external paling
to insignificance
in the face of the love
of one human for an other

After watching Pippa Gumbel's response to her
husband's words during the fourth Alpha session
and realizing that I often experience this myself.

November 16, 2000

OK, so it was a busy morning today
things happening left, right, and centre
all around me going quickly
coffee scent doing too little to perk
and no time free to drink
one out the door
breakfast fed
coffee poured
hugs and kisses shared
four remaining, one crying
desperately holding a bottle
Linus with a more practical blanket
coats on, shoes on, and tied
lunches packed safe away
and look, a mess on the chair
sends dad over the edge
and a child is told again
THE RULES
and out the door we go
hurriedly forgetting nothing
packed into the car and off

the day passes and I am home
before I usually leave
lugging mail, notebook, and printer
through lazy rain into the house
and look, the chair is neat
how he had time I don't know
but he did it and I thank him
smiling only when his things I see
upon the banister
who knows where next they'll land

November 12, 2000

The Name of the Lord in My Children's Songs

"the name of the Lord is
a strong tower
the righteous run into it
and they are saved"

from two lovely children in a kitchen
colouring their squashed things
joyous, without knowing why
at the life they've been given

and me, their father
and she, their mother
glance at each other
and smile

can any gift be greater
than to know one's children
love the Lord
and sing His praise

With memories of John and the gang at Ivanhoe,
sitting in front enthusiastically doing the actions.

November 10, 2000

does the reward validate the effort
or its absence negate
if peers show no recognition
nor awareness of one's labour
does that eliminate its value
or does God
who watches from above
give the deed its value
irrespective of its reception
here

October 24, 2000

helpless before the power of God
a drop of water to His raging sea
both in awe of His waves
and buoyed up by them
wondering at the incredible joy
of being allowed to frolic here
wanting others, too, to have this joy
knowing that that same power that saved me
is also their salvation
helpless to do more than what He allows
human frailty by His holy fire empowered

Writing On The Sand

But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. "Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

John 8:1-11

He was surrounded by the crowds
eagerly watching His every move
hanging fast to His every word
wondering what wonder next would come
the sound of their voices ceasing
as stern men, surrounding a woman,
approached to hear Him stumble
at the cleverness of their problem

men who never felt the joy of love
waiting in secret to condemn
never thinking that the law demanded
they confront in daylight to protect
that which weakened, faltered
men who, mistaken, saw a broken law
not the broken life before them

they confronted Him, asking Him to judge
Who never came to judge
while they, uncaring, stood confused
as He stooped
and began to write upon the sand
with hands that ages past
formed from that very soil
their father who like them
fell
then more confused as He rose

and permitted them to kill
if only they themselves were pure
and one by one they left
condemned and yet not saved

alone with the woman caught in sin
the very act her condemnation
the crowd waits
expectant
what on earth would happen now
eternity paused upon the brink
a hush upon the world
as this man to this woman
declares humanity's future

"Neither do I condemn you"
Who most has cause to judge
"Go and sin no more"
Who alone could conquer sin
with power beyond all of man's
proclaiming that which was broken
whole

eternity races on
humanity's babble now continues
yet none of us will He condemn
who likewise fall upon His grace

September 30, 2000

man his greatest attempt at perfecting
that thing of subtle beauty
expends prodigious amounts of energy
in the making of it for himself
and possibly even more than that
in the praising of it to others
only to have all his efforts rebuked
by this statement of unshakable power:

"And God said...
...and there was"

by the power of His word alone creating
all the vast substantive source
of even our smallest fabrication

and for all our countless years of investigation
new wonders we see each time again we look
beneath the smallest work of man
God's hand becomes apparent
His depth of thought and intricacy of creation
extending beyond our greatest capability
rendering man his highest work
the subtlety of a brick

After reading part of the introduction to
Alexander Hislop's "The Two Babylons"

September 29, 2000

the rose has fallen
lying unused upon the silent ground
its glories long remembered

no longer bold upon that charismatic lapel
no more our father protecting our land
from visions not his own

the rose has fallen
may the blooms that follow
shine as bright

and also true

In memory of Pierre Elliott Trudeau,
be he well or poor remembered.
October 19, 1919 ~ September 28, 2000.
A request that those that follow be as grand
and stand also for Truth.

September 22, 2000 - April 28, 2016

Jairus

he may have feared
the result
other than that desired
dreaded the words of his peers
or his superiors
he may have hesitated
at the brink of
commitment

he may have had his doubts
of these we are not told
but of his faith we hear
and that he did come
to the feet of Christ
and beg his daughter's life

nor are we told
of his joy
after Jesus woke her from death
as easily as a parent would
from a nap

After seeing it "acted" in
The Miracle Maker, wow!

September 21, 2000

Can a blind man lead a blind man?
Will they not both fall into a pit?

and when they did how would they know
but even so they run roughshod over justice
truth given to the highest bidder, the closer ally
as they together stumble along the lower road

Passage taken from Luke 6:39

September 10, 2000

floating
suspended on the difference between water and air
more concerned by the depths below
than by the infinity above
for above is awe and wonder
spectacular light by deepest night
enfolded
but who can fathom what mysteries move
beneath these trackless waves

September 10, 2000

Darwin's mind conceived a thought
which unconcerned with God
raised its face to heaven
and made its way defiant
into the hearts of man
giving nothing far greater credit
than ever it had before

August 26, 2000

Catching David's Fire

told my friends about you today
after our visit on Thursday
and what impressed me also
impressed them
astounding to our wonder starved ears
why is that so amazing
why are we so unaware
of God's provision
that its presence astonishes

there you are sharing your bed
with tubes that feed
machines that blink and beep
and chemicals that destroy
confronted again by a disease
too closely held by death
and your eyes are aflame
as you speak of how good
God is being to you

"Last year," you say,
"I almost died.
Now things are better.
God's timing is perfect."

you long for healing
yet dream the better place

as most
I do not feel I could rejoice
as do you
and I long for your fire to burn
in me

After a visit with "David" Rick Campbell
this week. In the hospital with leukemia,
again, yet rejoicing in the love of God.

June 28, 2000

Optimism Without a Hope

today, at Connie's graduation, someone said
"trust your instincts, they are always right"
with those carefree words assuming a purity
universal in all who breathe, and I wondered
when Adolf, Idi, or Genghis graduated
were the words the same for them.

June 25, 2000

I had thought, scarce' a year gone by,
that I was born to the task

how soon is iron bound
fast upon the stump

I, who would with eagles soar,
could not exchange my sparrow's wings
and worry now to fly

June 25, 2000

The Gift

four months today away from "home" where so long I had lived
a stranger in a strange land, yet not strange to my God
loneliness, despair, sublimate to joy in sadness' face
even in grief His care is never far, never gone, merely not
appreciated for the gift it truly is

"we know that in all things
God works for the good of those who love Him"

even my father Job knew that, and lived to love Him more
oh that even now, through this gift of life
I too will learn to love Him more
who has given rest where none was sought
but much was needed

A reflection of time well spent cared for by God
in His presence at Crossroads Community Church

June 25, 2000

just large enough for fire to warm
rain to cool
apples to satisfy

just small enough to ride a horse
climb a tree
ride waves upon the sea

large enough for skin and bone
small enough for air to cool
strength enough to change a world
weak enough to seek for God

all about us calls out His truth, His life
will brook no dissenting voice
we are at home within our skin
upon this world within unnumbered stars
because He has made it so
and for that reason alone

and the wonder of it too many escapes

June 20, 2000

"The arrogance of man will be brought low
and the pride of men humbled
the LORD alone will be exalted in that day,
and the idols will totally disappear.
Men will flee to caves in the rocks
and to holes in the ground
from dread of the LORD
and the splendour of his majesty,
when he rises to shake the earth"

this God from whom they will hide in terror
He is my saviour, He is my strength
what need have I to hide
on the day He who loves me is exalted
He has already given me His Son
what else could He withhold

Passage in first verse from Isaiah 2:17-19

March 28, 2000

that I thought would bring me God
did not bring God to me
man's attempt at easy glory failing
yet again

He is not to be found in books
though loud they proclaim His Name,
His awesomeness on every page inscribed,
and the beating heart goes beating faster
at the reading of the words
no book on earth could contain this God
no word His magnificence completely show
He whom we would find through foreign means
stands knocking at our heart

March 5, 2000

they lie peacefully abed
my sweet little angels
treasures beyond all price
the gifts of today upon a chair
between their beds
beside their heads
ready for their need
tomorrow's hope
but the merest glimmer
at the fringes of their dreams
all too soon that day will come
drawing ever distant less
the passing of the torch
to younger hands
I myself have raised

I pray
the gifts I bequeath to you
be the equal of those
my father gave to me

Daniel and I went to Crossroads Community Church this morning and had a tremendous experience. On way out he saw a book with a pretty cover ("Today," a devotional put out by the CRC) and he wanted one. We got one for Julia too. At night, when I went to kiss them good night, I saw the books on the chair between their beds. Daniel calls it his bible book.

February 27, 2000

some would see this world of stuff alone

no heart

no soul

no spirit

no God but the winds of chance
blowing free as one orb circles an other
in the vast emptiness of space

but such suppositions are without substance
in the face of such immensity
such wondrous beauty can never merely be
the offspring of atomic collisions
and changes in energy over time
there is far too much wonder, even in the stuff
for that fallacy to have any truth
I live in a world of stuff and more than stuff
where angels shelter children beneath wings
on their way through winter storms
and an only Son can save a race

Some weeks ago Connie told us of a time, when she
was still taking children from school to their homes,
that she had to do it through blizzard and how two
men that she had not met before, nor has she seen
them since, helped her, hiding children from the cold
beneath their overcoats.

February 26, 2000

sitting on the couch
feeling rotten
remote finding nothing to watch
when sudden smiles enter the room
bearing a bucket
just in case
having been sick themselves
only too recently
and getting a hug
run back upstairs
for a pillow
and an other
hug

life is good

Earlier in the week Daniel and Julia were alternatively sick,
with buckets and blankets beside their beds. Today it was
my turn and they took care of me on their own accord.
It really brightened my heart to see these smiling children
enter the room to take care of their father. Thank you Lord!

February 22, 2000

And Again

I feel

ineffectual

unable to accomplish
that which I have been sent to do
am I alone
am I the only one
in whom the reformer's cry

"Sola Scriptura"

resounds?
God's words
untainted
by human hands

my words seem to fall
from my mouth
to dusty ground
yielding no crop
despite the water of my tears

how is it that I
who have served you all my years
am deserted and alone

February 7, 2000

it's more difficult in the evening
as I sit alone among you
whom I have long served
confused that none realize the pain
at the sudden loss
of what I had been born to do
seeing some strange new
avoidance in your eyes

no longer a teacher among you
I find communion hard
more than any time before
I need you, where are you?

February 7, 2000

I begrudge them Lord, these men
who doing what I would never
attain the place that I had hoped
I begrudge them their voiced regret
conveniently found after the events
have transpired that placed them
displacing me, regardless your will
I begrudge them for they are where
I would and was and can no longer be
I begrudge them and I wonder
how you could use hands as these
to accomplish your perfect will

and pray your forgiveness
for thoughts as dark as these

February 7, 2000

I am not a strong man, not at all
my weaknesses daily assail
and overwhelm one far too willing
to be beaten
were it not for the strength of God
I would fall

February 5, 2000

"Because of the increase of wickedness,
the love of most will grow cold."

I fear I live in those promised days
where lives are lost
securing life
and selfishness
is a virtue

February 3, 2000

Comments on a "Man's Magazine"

that's not for men
but for shadows
fallen from the ideal
who crave earthly joys
in place of heaven's own

men love their own wives
not those of other men
and dream the love of she
who warm in his embrace
is his alone to love

how can joy be truly found
within this shallow dream
to treat the woman thus
abuses man's completion
to please his savage lusts

February 3, 2000

To the Girl on the Cover of the Man's Magazine
(an alternate attempt at temptation evasion)

this new technique I'll try today
and see if I allow it to succeed

your body graces the magazine rack
scant scraps containing your beauty
seen as I should see my wife alone

she of far greater joy
than your fleeting paper dreams
however much they promise

your pose arrayed to lust arouse

for who can love
what is not known

must have been studied
or practiced
to meet with such immediate success
for upon eyeing you my mind
instantly deserts my family, my loves
for the joys your body offers

scarce clothed
immodest showing all
but the essentials

seeking where none can follow
the pleasures of your love

there's a word misused
for it is not love we call love
that unmask itself as lust

and fighting desperate
the urge to see you more
I pen these lines to your tribute

not to your body, for all it merits praise
nor the emotion raised, strong though it be
but to your higher, better self
that you of God's design
beyond this earthly guise
you choose so to misuse

in the hopes that as a prayer

they will help to love, as would God
this one who seeks my ruin

I pray this One who stands beside
this failure as he writes
and prays
may also be seen by you
to your salvation
that you may be no longer used
by Hell, the author of man's doom,
to lead to their destruction,
and your own,
those your beauty snares

may the God who saves me
save also you

February 3, 2000

maxim ~ a saying that is widely accepted on its own merits
it stands before me now, in spite of many prayers,
imprint upon my remembrance,
more an assumption than a saying, still mostly true
as borne by its pre-sale presentation of itself
o sad world in which I live where such is desired
fleeting pleasure with a lovely stranger
rather the wondrous joy of the lover of one's life

February 2, 2000

the fool has said: "There is no God"
and yet continues living
each instant unaware
of the mercy so freely spent
within his skin contained

January 30, 2000

does no one care, does no one know
have they any idea I have been taken
from what I would have died to do
they see me as though I have not changed
that Your choices do not have pain
I sit where I had hoped so long to stand
amidst those who have left me here
and they have no wonder at the tears
their eyes can never own

January 30, 2000

To Shaun

tonight my friend you made me proud
that I could call you friend
seeing you where once I stood
serving Him as I once served
giving tribute to our God

if this be the passing of a torch
from prideful hands to you
then God has chosen well
and I am pleased
to see the choice that He has made

if not the passing of a torch
but a step upon your road
then God is guiding well
and I am pleased
to see the man that He is making

my friend
closest and best of many years
may the God whose grace has saved us both
be your guide throughout your days
may your choice be always Him

January 30, 2000

The Pit

gone
what once I held so dear
so removed beyond my power
that even the desire
has died

Lord God
you have seen fit
for what ever cause
to take from me this
treasure
leaving only
an empty pit
filling with grief
this soul once
filled with delight
in your service

oh my God
that you would rend the skies
come down and speak
explain why I feel this grief
why you took my joy
and tell my weeping soul
the purpose of your plan

where else is comfort 'midst these tears
what other power heals this wound
who but you can bear my trust

I stand upon your ball
a man of your creating
wanting only to please you
and you took from me my joy
and tonight
where once you made me brave
I stood in terror
and

I
don't
know
why

January 27, 2000

I want to hurt
I cannot hurt
God's grace is too profound
His will was done
who cares the means
I can rejoice

January 27, 2000

To OP

no longer unquestioning the trust has been shattered
doubtful I am now of all that you say
such a fragile thing is trust in spite of its strength
the smallest word can destroy years
giving the backward glances new meanings
I once trusted you, without question or reserve
I can do so no longer and I am saddened

"Abstain from all appearance of evil"

you have not and now my trust is gone
regardless of your innocence or guilt

Quote from 1 Thessalonians 5:22

January 27, 2000

Last Night

that was it, last night
no tears nor regrets
the anger, fear, and tears
are gone, at least for now
the pain subsides
life continues

careless words spoken
to assuage a conscience seared
easy words to say
yet possessed of no idea
of the damage that is caused
again

tempting to ways of wrath
this soul who in his weakness
once again has fallen
upon the gentle hand of God

January 25, 2000

Your Tears
(to Susan Moratz)

you called this morning, unexpectedly
a friend, concerned, to see how we were
doing after the fall of Sunday
telling of your appreciation
for us and all we've done
a high and lofty sentiment, noble
and easily doubted amidst the pain
but your tears, filling your words,
gave sentimentality flesh and blood
made it real and gave it life

may Heaven treasure them
for through your tears I am saved
and no longer greatly fear my friends

January 24, 2000

Me, After January 23, 2000

almost eleven years
discarded
with hardly a thought
so quickly overwhelmed
like a hole in the ocean
essential

I am like I have never been
who will notice my passing
in the advent of such a brighter star

Lord! hold me up
for sin crouches at my door

December 31, 1999

The Event of a Thousand Years

some feared, some scorned,
countless millions cheered
counting themselves blessed
to be living at this moment
in time

the progression of millennia
the rounding of the sum
hope springing forth renewed
that terror will not live again
in time

a vast and chanting horde
counting down to zero
to get to two thousand
and cheers when the change
of time

and some, in prayer, and kneeling bow
their heads in supplication
to the God of all our ages
their salvation implore 'ere the end
of time

November 24, 1999

To My Sister – In Memory of the Days of Dreams

we would move the world
once when we were younger
and unaware of our limitations
star eyed with expectation
excitement our very strength

gone now
save the God given moments
when the blood courses wild
in exultation of life and hope
of things yet to be done

years gone quickly by
like water under stony bridges
unable to be recalled except
the mem'ries of growing days
from the vantage point of time

fleeting
joys surrounding overwhelm
those whose time is gone
no more the world changer
world makers we

He giveth more grace
to those who are faithful

November 11, 1999 - November 11, 2015

The Lark Ascended

the lark ascended and flew in joyous bliss
o'er wreckage of days far gone and dust
untroubled in the air once ploughed by guns
men aimed in rage at fellow men, unknown,
careless of the blood once that flowed
as rivers on distant foreign lands
and seeped into their soils
unknowing the freedom so highly bought
by our fathers and our mothers, gone
that their children may grow in peace
with the sons and daughters of fellow men

amazing grace that God could give
us men like these who many died
for men as yet unknown to live

we cannot glory these lost enough
our lives forever in their debt reside
we live, we breathe, upon their loss
we joy upon their tears

As I wrote this CFMX played "The Lark Ascending,"
a very fitting tribute to they who fought.

October 16, 1999

down in the family room, laptop on my lap, sleepless
Duff a quiet, unknowing, companion
there when I need him but not certain why
needing God I come alone to the couch
begging for your life

upstairs your children lie, unknowing
aware that something is wrong
fearing the worst, not expecting to receive it,
and tomorrow their heavens will fall
Lord God may You hold them
when they learn how bad it is with you
how can I sleep knowing you do not, your wife does not
and tomorrow I must teach with you in mind

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear,
though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.
Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Come and see the works of the LORD,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.
He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear,
he burns the shields with fire.

"Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."

The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

I ask our God why you, why now
no answer comes, save that of my lesson

"Be still and know that I am God!"

And as He is God I pray for you

For my brother-in-law, Rick Campbell,
when he was diagnosed with cancer.

September 8, 1999

To my little bundle of sunlight, on a special day in the fall.

my little yahoo girl
riding up and down on a pedal
oscillating on the bottom of its round
one foot her whole exultant frame
connecting to this thing unmoving
my little girl in her all-overs
pony tail bobbing behind her smile
playing in the world
her Father made for her
simply wanting time
before her dad

September 7, 1999

Tracey in God's Care

the ways of God are inscrutable
we see but scarce the gleam
of His glory mighty upon us
His power amazing to save
His work defying opposition
performing even through a dog
the purpose He ordained from old
beyond our comprehension
save of His mercy and His love

"I am only a man fanning a flame
But I'll keep it burning till I see You again
So until the day we live as one
To the end I will remain fanning the flame" *

"I lift my eyes to Your ocean
I turn my face to the rising sun
I lift my life to Your altar
Let it run
Let it run

Something inside of me says we're only beginning
You're part of me
From the dawn of my life
To the end of this race I will run ...

... I don't know what my life will be
How to run where my eyes cannot see
I'm not my own
You've made me free!" **

Written after Ivanhoe Bible Camp '99 where
we saw Him move in ways beyond our minds.

* Fanning the Flame, by Kirkland

** Let it Run, by Kirkland

Further to the above. The inscrutableness of God became very visible on the final Sunday morning when, after a chain of circumstances of which each was dependent on the previous, I was able to comfort Tracey Arney after an angry dog bit her on her face and neck. Why God wanted me to be the one to help her I do not know but I am certain that all these were set so that it would be me who would come to her aid. Thanks also to His servants Len & Brenda Jackson and Wally Reid each of whom gave me comfort after she had gone to

the hospital and the shock of it finally hit me that without His care I could have been holding a dead child in my arms.

So many things happened that week, so many taken ill or injured in accidents that it was all too clear that Satan was opposing us and attempting to distract us from the purposes of God. Yet we saw God overcome all. Death came close but could not grapple. Our preaching was from the same source and aimed at the same target. Events were orchestrated that God would prevail regardless of Satanic force and prevail He did, in every event of every day, His plan went forward in spite of ours.

Only one came forward to meet and devote himself to God yet depression did not overwhelm us or threaten. Heat claimed many yet we were not distracted. Peanuts and dogs tried to kill but death was held at bay. Pranks were played and failed, yet through them a man was able to rescue a child that, if all had gone as planned, he would not have heard.

September 4, 1999

Never a Cry

it is so very difficult to write these words
to a friend who'll never read them
likely
with songs of glory wondrous in my ear
to write such words of sadness
seems wrong
as though glory had nothing to do with pain
and the ending of a life scarce begun
forgetting that He came for such as you
as well as the one you lost, unknown
with never a cry but to the Lord
who also waits for yours

Several of us were singing & enjoying each other's
company in the "Leader's Cottage" earlier today.
Found out later that one of the people there that
afternoon had had an abortion earlier that year.

The death of an innocent child is hard to reconcile
so soon after we were all singing hymns together.

The mercy of our almighty God is hard to reconcile
with the reality that we are, at our best, sinners.

Yet despair and mercy are not strangers
and where they meet God has glory.

September 4, 1999

Ivanhoe, Saturday Afternoon, 1999

Saturday afternoon
six in forty seven
listening to an angelic voice
remembering chains
released by one far greater
than the friends gathered
on a quiet, well earned break
from the labours of their loves
heat forgotten
in the heat of heaven's love
discussions free and wild
roaming unhindered
as afternoon winds down
into evening
with their redeemer
going home

August 10, 1999

Sunday, Evening Sermon

"No, not yet!" I said
wishing to hear not him
but him
thinking that to follow dinosaur trails
now
was not hardly the thing
"Daddy, could you go down
and get me one sheet
of plain blank paper?"
optimistically asked
of a father by love committed
as Julia and Emily happily gaggle
"No!" again
but inspired
open a dinosaur book
to an empty last page
where a son ecstatic
went busily to work.

Silence

some minutes later
inquiring of the art
was told it represented
"You and me,
going fossil hunting."

outdone, I wept



Daniel's great thing this summer has been
his constant wish to go fossil hunting with
me. The picture truly exists, as do the tears.

July 20, 1999

Noon – July 20, 1999

resplendent against a cloud spread sky
it flies
red, white, blue
tossed about the wind
half raised upon its staff
as though ashamed to fly
in the air that failed the son

On the news today they showed us a shot
of the Kennedy Compound at Hyannis Port
with the flag at half-staff in respect for a
departed son, his love, and their sister.

July 15, 1999

outside my children
their parents give command
daddy has a sermon
mommy needs a nap
baby is alone
beside his working daddy
and children quick obey
lest the penalty befall

outside my children
in a world of no demand
save that they remain
take care of their small domain
a portion of a vastness
beyond our greatest thought

Written after we had chased Daniel and Julia
outside to play and I, while working at the
kitchen table, saw them using their water bottle
and Mommy's garden jug to water the bird bath.

July 4, 1999

make like a fossil
he said
Silly Putty in hand`
along with a plastic leaf
trying a trick learned
upon watching
"I Dig Fossils"
improper phrasing
preluding proper technique
and the result

the first a smile
from Mom and Dad
watching proudly by
(while sister plays aside)

the second
triumph
and a smile on the face
of this young explorer
of unknown realms

and a fourth
as sister joins the game
her brother invented
increasing his joy
with her own

June 23, 1999

leaving self
I tried to do it once
and failed
"No matter where you go,
there you are"
one wise once said
wise
to such as I
who try and find
we can never leave
our selves
but merely change
the face

June 16, 1999

A Workday Morning

"hey daddy," said mommy, "look what happened to your bed"
so I looked, and saw two lumps where there should be none
and, amid torrents of laughter, teased them from their rest

June 6, 1999

Fifty-five Years Later

fifty-five years ago
men were dying

I live

scenes beyond reality
heroes on both sides
men and women
to final conflict called

I breathe

my freedom from oppression
began in blood
amid the sounds of chaos
and waves lapping sand

I love

odd juxtaposition
peace amongst the carnage
foreshadowing
the peace these strangers bought

I thank God

fifty-five years ago
men were dying

March 31, 1999

Sunlight

sunlight, in three acts
plus one
surround a working dad

three, behind, before the sun
light streaming through
glorious in the burgeoning spring
where the dog likes, as flowers,
to follow the light through the day

one, in and out as a playful breeze
dressed as Mary, then not,
cavorting before a mirror
with sudden, instant, naps upon my bed
a smiling face to daddy's silence
exultant to his laughter
my little girl makes my day

May 26, 1999

Songs of a Dead Man

listening to your CD today
I am moved
and grieved
by the life contained upon
that you no longer share
since the tragedy of your death
save in happier home
where the music is pure
and golden in the air

God's troubadour you were
and a man of uncommon gift
I miss you
as I miss another
two men of God
now with Him in eternity

may even now
His rich reward be yours
His smiling face your delight
for your songs are a blessing
in spite of my sadness
that no more shall be heard
may the song you sing
truly reflect your Love

The first is Rich Mullins,
the second is Keith Green.

March 26, 1999

Hope - A Memory before they begin

he used to love to bring home sticks
dog like
burying them in a convenient garden
wondering when they would begin to grow
growth being God ordained

they are there now, found while dusting
blowing in the sunny wind
refusing to grow
and yet
refusing to die

March 9, 1999

Letting Go

You tell me to release it, to let my failing go, but I cannot
it feels like letting go of breath to never draw again
or my hand or eye, imperfect, scorned to use, I would be less
a man than what I have been born. Deep they are and will not go
without pain.

You tell me to release it, to call on God and let it go but no
that cannot be done, they are too deep ingrained in me to leave,
their leaving would be death and I do not wish to die this way.

March 9, 1999

To Emily, Daniel and Julia
on a play day in the Desert and the Ice Stage

Hark! What wonder from yonder desert comes
bearing wild extravagance twixt fingers and her thumbs?

Who is that comes from such distant strange extreme
and carries tribute golden for the lord and his regime?

What golden treasures beckon 'neath that happy care
that such an emissary guards with fortune rare?

Is that sound, that great and joyous clamour
that swells upon the streets, found of true ardour?

Why, 'tis fair Emily, carrying blocks careworn
in the desert of our kitchen this happy Tuesday morn'.

The gladsome noise that of closer friends caroused in play
that greets our fairest playmate this golden God sent day.

March 5, 1999

what if they gave a newscast
and no body cared to watch
what if all the sensationalized sound bites
fell not on any hearing ear
but wandered away a aimlessly
searching for some to inform
what if all the ceaseless drivel
that permeates our day
were ignored for life, what then
what if no one wished to be informed
of scandals beyond our sphere
what if all our news were seen
in truth for what it was
would gossip fade away
replaced instead by life

March 5, 1999

Leaving Earth

A gleam, a glimmer
reflection of the skies
within the shallow pool
fantastic for its depth

A dream unending
barely known as such
a vast, unsated yearn
to be where that light is

How many good men gone
the way all flesh must go
have seen and dreamed and longed
the pleasing of that hope

Begun
atop columns of fire
scant miles short of the goal
ending where tomorrow starts

March 4, 1999

March has come, entering lion like, and winter's cruel torment,
recall the shovels in spite of sudden snow borne games,
soon ends

These bitter denials squalling about the clearing skies
but a forlorn attempt at endurance into the warmth beyond
its realm

At last! March has come and bids march our relentless foe
for coming soon are April's joys of life renewed
and hope

March 3, 1999

thirsting for life in a universe devoid of sign
elusive in this fastness eternities in length
vast expanses of nothing with the stuff
of life replete upon one magnificent diamond,
most beautiful gem of the universe
holding that we hopeful seek yet have never found
one spark, one tiny, promising light,
would be sufficient to prove us right
(but could never prove the other wrong)
these seeds of life they must be spread
far and cast about upon distant worlds
unheard and yet unseen, would we could
our dreams would no more dream but live
in a universe made smaller by the sharing

March 2, 1999 – January 18, 2014

I am not one of Buchan's heroes nor am I of Shakespeare's swains
I am not one with whom Faust once wept nor have I the unknown tomb
I am not one on whom the world awaits for either word or deed
I am not one whose favour kings would seek or lords my wisdom hear
I am but a man, unknown, unheard, unseen
I am eluded by fame, unknown by fortune, ignored by glory
I am one who each day meets each day's demand
I am but a man, husband, father, friend, and teacher
I am nothing more and nothing less than who I am
I am one of God's own sons
I am content

February 28, 1999

How did you do it
when loneliness cried for fulfillment
how did you resist the evil
for your Father's greater good

How did you do it
when anger threatened, unjust, to break
how did you hold back your words
for your Father's higher love

How did you do it
hungry, thirsty, alone and tried
how did you resist such tempting
to serve your Father's purer cause

How did you do it
when facing night or blazing dawn
how did you voice unutterable praise
from merely human lips

How did you do it
alone, facing death, in highest agony
how did you bear my endless sin
that I could be forgiv'n

The Bible tells me that He experienced all
the temptations that I experience, and won!

February 17, 1999

too much on angels we confer
avoiding God who placed them where
they may point the way to Him
whose Son was giv'n man to save

we worship all created things
yet not the One whose glory shines in
all that is so well beloved
blind, we long to worship death

February 17, 1999

almighty God this world has made
that man his maker may discern
to glorify with endless praises
He whose glory fills creation
and we distracted seek love
seek pow'r, fame, and wealth
all to please this passing time
while pleasing not He who holds
our lives, our breath, our souls
within his hand and patient
waits the turning back to Him

February 3, 1999

Jim Parker came to school last month
he'd been expected for days

my boy was some excited
he wanted a guitar

so we made him one, smallish
out of an old Kleenex box,
elastic and some cardboard
strips all taped together
and off he went
guitar, backpack, and some shades
after spending an evening
with a marker or two
tongue between his lips
adding life to daddy's makings
smiling ear to ear
though not a dinosaur in sight

at times like that God's best reward
is being father to a child like that

and to his sister
more recent to the scene
her babies clothed in her
old cast off undies
heaped upon her beds
my little long haired girl
her brother's favourite friend
last night in her nightdress
her imaginings released
she became a bird
soaring ever graceful
upon our kitchen floor
to and fro
little legs
unencumbered
by schwebes
however short or long

God's greatest gift
His allowance to love
without condition

December 14, 1998

Aircraft down in the St. Lawrence
Three souls plucked, injured, from the roof
Seven remain inside
Plane now submerged

the headlines screamed
on paper and in air
imploring me to listen
as people died

Written in response to the minute by minute updates
on the news as the tragedy continued and asking myself
if we were indeed an improvement upon the Romans.

how insidious that Satan's attempts to replace God
really are

low down
 dirty rotten
 nasty old
 tricks

here we stand
upon a ball "poofed" into existence
by the awesome word of God
and Satan tells us:

 "why, it's merely cosmic dust!"

above me
blazing jewels adorn the night
flaming galaxies cavorting in the hand of God
and we are told:

 "nothing plus nothing equals something"
 or
 "0 + 0 = 1"

gazing back in wonder
from whatever mirror we use
we see the amazing creature
God calls creation's crown
confused
not knowing whether to be revolted
when told we began as bugs
or to be proud
when told we all are gods

but we are God's
whom God's own Son once died to save
exit disgust
fade away pride
enter joy and claim our lives

even the beasts
God made and proclaimed "Good!"
are given higher honour than is allowed
when called

 "alternative offshoots of a common ancestry"

well I don't care
how sneaky that demon tries to get
he won't fool me

I am God's

by right of manufacture
by right of maintaining
by right of Jesus' blood

He didn't die to save no whale
He died for me

Lies,
however persuasive or pervasive
cannot
in all of time
change truth

November 12, 1998

After the Thirty First

for too long a time ghouls danced upon our homes and lawns
pleasant little horrors, symbolic of a greater evil
all too few confirm, fewer still can see
and one night, after knocks and cries and thanked good byes
it ends

the innocent "Trick-or-Treating" encouraged for our kids
their introduction to extortion, they know it not
the sacks that went out empty came home full
or not at all and the ghouls came down, mostly
and on the first a Christmas carol plays

they capitalize on our emotions
kindness to our children, though we do to them
harm incalculable
by promoting friendly fiends
and deny the One who came to save our lives from their death
by trivializing Him with the must gets of the season

may God have mercy on our land
for raising our children to love
evil more than His good

may God have mercy on us
for allowing this to happen
in a land where the church
is locked up and empty
six days out of seven
and the example of sacrifice
is scorned

Remembrance Day 1998

30

You will hear of wars
and rumours of wars,
but see to it that you are not alarmed.
Such things must happen,
but the end is still to come.
Nation will rise against nation,
and kingdom against kingdom.
There will be famines and earthquakes
in various places.
All these are the beginning of the birth pains.

Jesus Christ
Matthew 24:6-8

1915

In Flanders Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses row on row
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders Fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields

John McCrae
1872 – 1918

1918

relief
it must have shone like daylight
dawning after the too long night of fear
at last
an ending was in sight
to the "war to end all wars"

reality bitter
the hopeful optimism of distant sunny days
destroyed by endless days of carnage
death
and destruction

1945

shock
incredulity
thirty millions dead
and that just a conservative guess
warriors and citizens equ'ly mingle
where all is level
and beyond
where all is not

thirty millions dead
lives sacrificed, taken, and wasted
all too real a proof, if such is needed
of the evil that inhabits with us
this world awaiting peace

and if evil, then good
and if good, then God

lives that never more can live
until God's final call
thrown aside, for good or evil
in mankind's greatest struggle

1998

eighty years gone by
hope growing less hopeful
that wars would forever end
far fewer years since we last proved them wrong
countless deaths
injustice beyond recompense
how can these lives be pleased
by a single silent moment
and a poppy upon the breast
surely their blood cries out for more

for now

upon our perch of time
we see ever clearer the evil that died
and the good that against all hope
survived warriors now long dead
who died in vain

if only we forget

Satan's evil demands the fighting
and he is falling

God's good demands sacrifice
and He shall prevail

between the two lie all man's choice

October 29, 1998

Upon Learning of the Death of an Israeli Soldier

there can be no greater deed, done by the hand of man
than that which you, in your final seconds, did
to save with your life the precious lives of others
hoping against hope for success but knowing
in games such as these
that death is often the price

many lives that today have a future
owe to your love their current joys
"weeping may endure for a night
but joy cometh in the morning"
may your memory never fade but gain glory
as each morning the lives your life saved
go on

Heard on the news of a Palestinian with a
suicide car bomb aimed at a busload of children
who was blocked by the Israeli soldier guarding
the bus. The terrorist exploded the bomb and both
lost their lives. What a tragic world where soldiers
must guard against such acts. God Himself must weep.

October 5, 1998

Forsaken

"Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh,
shall he find faith on the earth?"

Luke 18:8

We stand at the end of time
years by the thousand passing by
since its remote beginnings at the word of God

We stand at the end of time
desolate
forsaken by God
having forsaken Him

Alone at last
in this universe
whose very seconds numbered
are ticking by
too rapidly to count

Oh Lord our God that we could turn
again to worship you
that You would set our spirits free
from the cage they clutch so fierce

Oh Lord, God of all creation
though we honour your name
how greatly we despise it

October 5, 1998

Living in the New Town

our town is not old
merely fifty years and some
the first houses still stand
as do some munitions plants
built during the war
where nations united under God
defeated Satanic evil

talk to anyone today about the war
that's the one they'll remember
costing thirty million lives
for peace

not

The War
that goes on even today
costing billions
for eternity

the physical vs. the spiritual

I live here
in a town scarce old enough to stand
built for war
but, lasting longer,
to war a stranger
no gracious stone cathedrals
grace our busy streets
 save one of brick on Church
an economy of spirit marks our burgh
and for that alone I grieve

newer buildings stand
but the light once so wide revealed
stands contained and cradled close

I was recalling the lights playing along the skin
of the cathedrals in my old town, lamenting the
fact that there are none here in my new town.
I discovered that something else appears to be
lacking as well that was once so common.

October 5, 1998

Mocking Grace

Roe vs. Wade
and its liberal supporters
have decreed thirty millions to their deaths
along with all their generations
the cost of our world's war
the population of my nation
never breathing God's good air
never living beneath His care
dead and consigned to dumps
not even a tear at a graveside shed
anonymous
merely a mother's choice
to let her baby die

and we stand there
critical
eyes wide open, feet planted firm
not doing a thing to save a life
God's own children run away from home
we do not care, we cannot dare
"Our lives!" we cry
and quick deny
that grace which saved us from our sin
we have no faith to proclaim His power
we can barely feel His hand ourselves
how can we tell others
when we are so empty of His love

thirty millions dead
and countless more to follow
while we sing praise in our lovely churches
to our God whose wrath o'erhangs our world
the barest instant separate all from death
and we think nothing of it
but spread many gracious words

would to God our world would be changed

At less than three months we lost our
first child. We have no doubt a person
died that day whom we will meet in glory.
Would to God our world would be changed.

October 2, 1998

Worshipping Earth

our Lord, our King
we have forsaken you
alone the God of all creation
for the creation you have made
in love
for we your image

we are your image
created for your good works
that your name alone
be glorified
be glorified
o Lord our King
even if we forsake you
let your power show itself in all the heavens
may your thunder cause again our heads,
our hearts, to turn to you

turn our hearts to you
forsake us not
who have forsaken you
alone our God
alone our Lord
be honoured in our works
may our works be once again
devoted to your name
may your name once more
be proclaimed from the early dawn
may your glory
may your praise
be ever on our lips
for you are worthy

you alone are worthy
o Lord my God
when I in awesome wonder
consider you
I quail
for you are great
and I long to praise you
as I haven't
but as I should
let me and all my kin
again give glory to your name

September 24, 1998

each attempt to learn more without indulging,
about but not use, more closely spoils the gift
for the surprise that almost mostly revealed
is no more the distant glowing dreamed of hope
but has become a somewhat tarnished reality
each glimpse pushing back the newness
until all is no longer new but old and worn
and no more desirable for its loss of value

August 13, 1998

A Reflection on Being Improperly Prepared

sun glints on waves that slowly subside ashore
while silence gently returns
to cradle the morning in bird song
and the cool water's laughter
at my WaveRunner's swift retreat
from where it left me floating

August 13, 1998

Paul

eyes cast downward, inside
attempting the bold
eye forward look, outside
I stand before you
as your pride struggles with mine
and I pray
I will love you still

August 12, 1998

Rose

you gave us hope
for a brief moment
hope in a small good
to be extracted from this great evil
after the blinding terror of catastrophe
fear and anguish for the sudden dead
tempered with hope for your life
for a brief moment
the world prayed for you
rejoicing at your discovery
hastening to your rescue
one life
amidst such tragedy
suddenly gone
as on the morning of this day
your body, shorn of life,
was found
and all hope died

may your killers ever feel their shame

August 11, 1998

The Thunder

August 11, 1998
working on a sermon
kids with Mom at the library
alone in the house
with my thoughts,
God,
and Rich Mullins,
 the legacy
 of a man of God gone home
music mixing theology
wild dance within my mind
the glory of our God
revealed!
HALLELUJAH!
surely this is what the fathers knew
that God would be exciting
when His thunder breaks the clouds

I really was working on a sermon,
on the integration of faith with life,
while listening to Rich Mullins sing
 "The Color Green" off of the CD
-a liturgy, a legacy, & and a ragamuffin band.
 Nothing more need be said.

August 10, 1998

Wrapped Within a Shroud of Stars

darkness, utter and complete,
enshrouds us where we lie
broken randomly as the flaming lights of distant suns
beckon we who can never come
too distant by far
earth's hope, our own hope, dying while we live

May 21, 1998

I saw you on the road that day
after too long a time in traffic
and didn't slow, though many did
hence my oft' cursed delay
passing by you slowly
I saw you there with your blanket
and regretted your passing
I had lost but a brief span of minutes
you had lost your remainder of years

Drove by an accident last fall on the 401. Saw
the body laying flat with a sheet over the face
and regretted my earlier impatience.

May 11, 1998

oh that I could fly high above this plane
and see below the fields a'blow
roiled by winds as scattered thoughts
within my timid brain

May 6, 1998

on occasion we would wish to ask
why
of God
and have Him answer and calm our fear
of not knowing

we too seldom realize that we shall
live
with Him
in blessed peace and never a tear
for the conflict

which in earth's life did tear and abrade
faith
with death
yet could not tear the child away
from the Father

who is Life, in His our own life holds
fast
in Love
saints saved for His land of life
beyond time's end

May 4, 1998

Our Children's Blood

The blood of our sons
our strong and silent youth

The blood of our daughters
fair maidens thrown to hatred's lust

The hope of our years
lost
embed within this restless soil
from which now grow
lives of other form
indifferent to their lot
and ours
who mourn their loss today

They would have us give up these lives
betray the love for which they died
they know not what they ask
I cannot
my child lies beneath that field
we cannot forget
the love of life
that caused that death

The blood of our sons
our strong and vibrant youth

The blood of our daughters
fair maidens for a husband's love

The hope of our years
live
blood yet flows their pulsing veins
from which may grow
lives of younger years
their joy parental love
and ours
praise God! They live today!

They would have us give up these lives
betray the love for which they live
they know not what they ask
I cannot
my child plays upon that field
we cannot permit
the hate of life
to cause their death

I heard on the news today about how Britain and America
are encouraging Israel to give up yet more land
in order to assure peace.

And thought "How dare they!
Their sons did not die.
Their daughters were not harmed.
They know not what they ask."

Surely the blood of children dead
demands to be remembered.

Then I saw the other side.

And thought "How dare they!
Their sons must not die
Their daughters must not be harmed.
To retain a land that in time will pass."

Surely the blood of children living
demands to be preserved.

May 1, 1998

Upon Children Awaking at Awkward Times

sleep
blessed, delightful peace
the wond'rous quiet
of somnolent slumber

wrenched away

why

do they always get sick
at two am?

April 30, 1998

Oh!

I wish I lived in Quebec today
where the sun smiles brightly
upon a favoured land
in which the sick and the well
can walk proudly side by side

Oh!

I wish I lived in Quebec today
to tell all my children
Yes! I once did live there
with good men and strong who worked
a good deed and did that deed well

Oh!

I wish I lived in Quebec today
where pride reigns in splendour
where men the world over
can see and proudly proclaim
I, yes I, am one of their race

Oh!

I wish I lived in Quebec today
where the world's good men long
to have their names giv'n as
citizens, bold, free, and strong
to the good work laid on us by God

CBC-2 last night carried the story of the decision
of the province of Quebec to extend compensation
to the victims of Hepatitis-C infected prior to 1986.
This is a day in their history which will not soon be forgotten

April 29, 1998

Beyond the Walls

these words I pen
not really
lately they've all been keyed
earlier I used a pencil

are me
no holds barred
the guts and the glory
if you read them
know I love you
and respect my trust

be careful

you've climbed the wall
into my garden
and all its blooms are fragile

April 29, 1998

today I am ashamed to be Canadian
refusing conscience
men and women leave their closed rooms
heads bowed and silent
avoiding the eyes of those they failed
refusing to help
those neglect has harmed

only one man
had the courage to speak
later
several miles away
to defend his choice
and end debate

would to God I had the voice
to call the attention of those in power
to those in need
we surely owe them something
for their deaths
through carelessness

CBC-2 this morning carried the story of the defeat
of the motion to extend compensation for victims of
Hepatitis-C to those infected prior to 1986. This is a
black day in our history which will not soon be forgotten

April 27, 1998

we sang "Amazing Grace" last night in Church
twenty of us seated on the stage
one of Marilyn's bright ideas
 which
 as usual
 worked
 despite my fear
at the end Gwen and I
started everyone off on the same tune
but carrying the words "Praise God!"

and suddenly I am transported through time
twenty years back, or so
and see Rhebergens, Karsenbergs, and their friends
sad
singing the same words
surrounding Oma's coffin
aunts and uncles crying in the cold
motherless
especially Uncle John
who started us on this song
all sad
that their mother is no more
yet glad
at where she is

ever since that day I've seen
sunsets as the portals of heaven
where Oma sings her own version
of "Amazing Grace"
before God Himself

April 22, 1998

The Untempting

if you ask Him He will aid
I know for He's aided
time and time again my life
removing desire for the death
renewing desire for the life
above all lives

His

praise His name
He saved me
again

April 22, 1998

Where Our Wonder Went

there was a time when wonder
filled our eyes, which seeing
revelled in the beauty seen

the awe struck
mouth agape
standing stock still gaze
of the ardent admirer

that beauty, that wonder, which all the world amazed
see here!
look there!
it's been done but here alone
nowhere else is this to be had

come
look
marvel

we put an end to that
wonder no longer fills our day
we worry now o'er growing digits
science has left us no magic
it has failed us bad

we breathe
exhale
and breathe again
our heart asurge within us
our muscles supple move

never stopping to wonder
at the miracle just done
air turned into life

we think to act
and act out thought
and a million thoughtless more

who cares!
that love can turn to life
and grow to breathe its own

our romance is dead

we have been lied to
and we believe

our wonder has been robbed
and we ignore the crime

God gave to us the grandest gift
life,
and its appreciation
and we have trodden down
His truth
for the lie of man
that says

this is all but chance

how could wonder stay
where love itself could not
denying the glory of creation
we make even our greatest feats
no more than termite nests in scope

we have no more wonder
nor have we hope

After reading "Time and Again,"
and "From Time to Time" and the joy
Simon Morely had in what surrounds him.
Both were written by Jack Finney.

April 10, 1998

Facing the Cross

my predecessor once
could not travel east for fear of death
before his dying God

I find now
I cannot live if I do else
than face the cross and cry

Lord!
Be merciful to me!
A sinner.

After John Donne's "Good Friday. 1613, Riding Westward."

Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward
by John Donne

*Let mans Soule be a Spheare, and then, in this,
The intelligence that moves, devotion is,
And as the other Spheares, by being growne
Subject to forraigne motion, lose their owne,
And being by others hurried every day,
Scarce in a yeare their naturall forme obey:
Pleasure or businesse, so, our Soules admit
For their first mover, and are whirld by it.
Hence is't, that I am carryed towards the West
This day, when my Soules forme bends toward the East.
There I should see a Sunne, by rising set,
And by that setting endlesse day beget;
But that Christ on this Crosse, did rise and fall,
Sinne had eternally benighted all.
Yet dare I'almost be glad, I do not see
That spectacle of too much weight for mee.
Who sees Gods face, that is selfe life, must dye;
What a death were it then to see God dye?
It made his owne Lieutenant Nature shrinke,
It made his footstool crack, and the Sunne winke.
Could I behold those hands which span the Poles,
And tune all spheares at once peirc'd with those holes?
Could I behold that endlesse height which is
Zenith to us, and our Antipodes,
Humbled below us? or that blood which is
The seat of all our Soules, if not of his,
Made durt of dust, or that flesh which was worne
By God, for his apparell, rag'd, and torne?
If on these things I durst not looke, durst I
Upon his miserable mother cast mine eye,
Who was Gods partner here, and furnish'd thus
Halfe of that Sacrifice, which ransom'd us?
Though these things, as I ride, be from mine eye,
They're present yet unto my memory,
For that looks towards them; and thou look'st towards mee,
O Saviour, as thou hang'st upon the tree;
I turne my backe to thee, but to receive
Corrections, till thy mercies bid thee leave.
O thinke mee worth thine anger, punish mee,
Burne off my rusts, and my deformity,
Restore thine Image, so much, by thy grace,
That thou may'st know mee, and I'll turne my face.*

April 8, 1998

I asked His help this morning, desperate,
and went along my merry selfish way
finding long past noon
His hand becoming the help I could not live
without

April 7, 1998

Looking Back

there can be no regret
giving up what makes Him unhappy
how silly I have been all these years
assuming that relinquishing
meant despondency
rather than the final removal
of a barrier to life
and the love of Him who loves me best

and furthermore
that the longing dies
if one truly longs for Him

It therefore appears that I do not love
the Lover sufficiently to give up the
rubbish in my life that I enjoy so well.

This is very loosely based on Chapter 26 of
Alexander Dumas' "The Three Musketeers",
"Aramis and His Thesis", and the discussion
of Aramis, d'Artagnan, a Jesuit and a curate.

March 2, 1998

Cast Upon the Care of God

Upon the death of Ellen Mawson,
the sister of friends, February 26, 1998.

it was raining as we left
water falling from heaven
like the tears of God
lamenting the lot befallen man
that death should reign for life

we could leave your grief behind
but its shadow becomes our own
this visit, these quiet conversations
will one day surround our own
unhearing ears and unseeing eyes
as those loved struggle for courage

death is not a foe
that saints like us need fear
one simple faith
a life of death transcends
as we are cast upon the care of God

cast upon the care of God
"the only one almighty God!"
stronger far than death itself
the joy awaiting
upon the other side
the fulfillment of His word

these tears may last a season
our love has been betrayed
but love is never dimmed
our God is Love Himself
each soul cast upon His care
will find its eternal home
within His endless love

"Lord, one of your lost lambs
is coming home tonight!"
to that home where sin no longer
can cause the lamb to fall
and all the tears of Earth
are lost in the flood of Love

First quote from a song sung by the Campbell family, also

by Hiram Joseph and Pickering Christian School; the second from a song by Rick Campbell. Both sung on Sunday as we prayed for Joe and Maggie and their family.

February 27, 1998

A Leap of a Different Kind

I came to an edge
where the reality I lived ended
upon the vast unknown realm
against which my solid world
became immaterial and fleeting
contained within
that great beyond
inscrutable yet not alien
pointed to by all
this world's unswerving signs
the Reality beyond the real
all encompassing and grand
confirmation of all I knew
what else could I do
but leap

and I leapt and landed
safe
upon the Truth beyond the edge

how more reassuring
than to wander this life
avoiding Truth
only to find the edge
bottomless
in death

In a mix up over which computer had the more recent file, I inadvertently deleted the file that contained the only original copy I had of this poem. What you have read is a reworking of the theme. I think it is superior, but the lively original upon which it is based but since that is gone we'll never be able to tell.

February 24, 1998

they throw themselves carelessly
knowing not who eyes them now
nor fear the mind's imagin'd joys
God's given gifts free given to all
to please this little day
that even in its glory
gives way to the greater Light
wherein all joys do find their hope
the Rewarder of the life right lived
Whose simple pleasures careless used
betray the heart still cold in death
though hot the flesh would burn
rejecting of the heart's release
pleasure's flames that heat the life
will yield in turn to greater fires
heat the death in bitt'rest pain

reclaim His life while life is yours
lest death close that door to hope
and your pleasures yield at last to

agony

February 20, 1998

Void

you died
I cried
for your songs would never more be new
upon this earth
and for those, like I, that loved you
who now were left alone
one has said of you
"nobody on the planet
wrote songs like he did...
we've lost one of the only true poets"
what more could be said of you
other than
in this life you walked with God
and now
though we feel it far too soon
you walk with God
in His life

On the loss of Rich Mullins
September 19, 1997.
Quote by Michael W. Smith.

January 29, 1998 - July 6, 2020

so long
for so long I've listened
hearing the words
and not understanding
the words

and now
at last
I know!

when Phil sings about
"just another day in paradise"
I know
as far as this world is aware
I live daily in a paradise
beyond the poorest's dream

I have never had a care
for my next meal to eat
or a place to sleep
even when Mom and Dad almost lost it all
I never lacked a thing

Thank God!

I have never known hunger
cold, or fear of storm
I lead a life of bliss
while unthought others look on

jealous

cold

and hungry

December 7, 1997

Echoes

it brought out the best in us
remnant of something grand
a tiny touch of God left back
within the stubborn soul
echoes of His grace
rebound
where touched, so briefly,
by excellence,
nobility
and love

Again, after "A Thousand Men and a Baby"

December 7, 1997

a hand
clutching
fingers white
in the effort
of holding on
to long

Lord God! I've fallen far
please
don't let me further fall

releasing
grabbing
stabbing air
seeking a hold
any kind of thing
to live

Lord God! I'm falling further
no where near
the kind of man I was
hold me
like Peter, hold my hand
lest too far I fall
to die

Lord God! I long to live
please let me

After "A Thousand Men and a Baby"
the true story of David Ashcom Cruz
and the man that Keenan was.

December 4, 1997

it may be seen by many
to be the primal roaring of the man
from deep within his cave
rejoicing over the woman he desires
the mother of his sons
the future of his line
as is our accepted history

but what it really is
the roaring of a savage beast
craving fleshly joys
supplied by fairer sex
not in Love's grand design
but the selfish, craven, drooling
of the creature fleeing God

the woman's beauty claim
the searching eyes of lonely man
not for some evolutionary urge
for beauty to satisfy beast
ensuring survival
but by the selfless gift of God
that man may share His love

Man is encouraged to love
his wife as Jesus loves His
Church, kind of dispels the
evolutionary concept of the
lovely cave-woman seducing
the rugged cave-man that
life may be ensured.

October 30, 1997

it is a grand day outside
the sun is shining bright and high
in a sky as blue as ever was
warmth, from God's own hand,
upon the coat that Beth's love gave me
even the short walk
from Mitchell's to ELM
an awesome experience
never to be forgotten

it is a grand day outside
because it is a grander one
inside

October 30, 1997

no more embarrassed by what I am
God has saved me I'm that no more
no more regretful of all that's past
God has healed me for tomorrow's hope
no more held down by all I've done
God has come, made me be His son

I am finally free from all I was
to be free for all He is

October 9, 1997

the stars o'erspread the sky as jewels on velvet black
proclaiming the world throughout His glory by their light
whose hands encase and hold secure all that was or ever
will in spite of man below his protestations and denials
the truth of God remains the TRUTH forever and beyond
not being altered by all that he in stubborn pride will do or try
for God is God and cannot be but as He is in our today
and was upon the day when today was a but distant dream
in the minds of men now dust and so long forgot by those
who live today with wonders long unseen and unheard
all unchanging is God alone, change in changing changes
all but God; man, his world a fleeting place, seeks strength
where strength is naught but fragile dreams, a smoke wraith in
the howling wind that seeks to yank him further from his place

October 5, 1997

you will not go wrong
when the Bible is your guide
but you will go wrong
for it is more than that beside

you will not go wrong
if its wisdom you consider
but you will go wrong
when your sin it does not hinder

you will not go wrong
if you treat it with respect
but you will go wrong
if its teachings you suspect

you will not go wrong
when you hold in high esteem
but you will go wrong
if its author stays unseen

you will do well to read this book
and hold it with regard for
it opens wide where man dare not look
pointing to his only door

October 5, 1997

Centennial Road Standard Church
Brockville

echoes of wood grain
in the piano upon the stage
its resonance richer
its beauty greater
in the timber from which it is made

echoes of wood grain
in the guitar so gently fingered
like the piano
a thing of beauty
from living organs formed

echoes of wood grain
in the life of the singer
her Lord's sacrifice
imprinting upon her love
the cross on which He died

September 30, 1997

Oklahoma

you look into my eyes
seeking a reaction
wanting me to do something
your mind can understand
because you cannot grasp
what I have done
and would do again
had I the chance and opportunity
you want me to react?
Ok
how can you be so stupid
I cannot fear death
I died before the bomb went off
I died when I planned it
this past year
was waiting
for the inevitable
I am dead as you see me

Loosely based on Timothy McVey and his
involvement in the Oklahoma City bombing
and the newscaster's statements that he
did not react when sentence was passed.

How could he? He is not like us.

September 30, 1997

Brian, and He that he Reflects

carpenter's hands
big, blunt, and spade-like
waving in the air to
emphasize points of thought
and dialogue
hands which could grapple an oak
submissive to the ground
and yet have time for lunch

carpenter's hands
large, spread, and love-filled
held out into the gap to
prove that love takes thoughts
and chances
and turns them into deed
beating submissive to the ground
the works of hate

Inspired by Brian Bertrim,
our new Assistant Pastor,
and his reflection of our Lord

September 16, 1997

A Parable for the Toolman

a man with a thought before him
too big for his mind to hold
standing astounded in his room
trying to grasp hugeness
with finite tools

September 16, 1997

The Unburdening

it's too easy, sometimes
to slip the harness on
of ways once forsaken
too simple to walk along
a road more desired than attractive
when the bones that mark the way
have been forgotten

its siren song calls
and beguilingly tempts
strength unwillingly strong
to simply walk along
with pleasures too subtle for fearing
as deadly as the greatest sin
man has e'er conceived

strength, its weakness found
too late demands redress
from a foe uncaring
who trades alone in death
with traps and snares and iron hooks
our heart's desires ensnaring
in his evil web

yet, condemned to death,
a stream of blood is found
from One who died for all
and lives and grants us grace
frees from chains of death the slave
now adopted to the house of
heaven's mighty King

September 11, 1997

it starts of slowly, a subtle pounding of the defences
little things to be permitted
while the walls hold off the greater guns
small and poisonous weapons become food
and the walls begin to fall upon their crumbled foundation
defeated from within

only when we wish to fall
will we fall

September 10, 1997

The Genius Behind The Words

I read your words the other night
beautiful
words I could never write
words I am incapable of putting together
in such amazing strings
I see small bits of your heart
embedded in your lines
wrapped up in what you say
lies who you are
I see you
not as you are
but as you would be

After reading Jewel Kilcher, who
writes some interesting words.

September 10, 1997

As Embers Die

as embers die
faces glow in the wash of light
 who'd have thought such change could come
 so quick
 like the sparks that fly beneath the stars
 suddenly changing
 to random bits of ash
hopeful of something
fearing that same thing
here, but not really
curiosity battling fear
as spirits fight for lives
and death waits a decision away

September 10, 1997

The Other Side

years ago I was you
I stood where you now stand
I sang the songs you now sing
in my own life there was an other
who knew God
who shared Him with we learning

but now I am with you
I stand where you now stare
and sing the songs you now sing
I stand before you as your other
who knows more
and shares this with you learning

the other side is not so easy
as once I may have thought
more responsibility
less casual
aware at last of the nature of the life
your lives are worth more
than an instant's fleeing thought

Written after assisting Tim Rigby
with the youth at Ivanhoe and seeing
the changes God worked in their lives.

should our hearts prove silent
when The Maker comes
and this globe be wrapped in light
what then
shall He return in silence
to His glorious throne above
no!
should we fail to give due glory
to He who formed our frame
the stones beneath our feet
shall put our still to shame
giving glory to their King

Found in the Bible I gave to
Gord Davis, who needed it more.

July 30, 1997

The Next Logical Step

you stood before me
presenting your body for my admiring
 and it is worthy of admiration
 few finer may be found
 through much diligent searching
cavorting in the sun
God caused shine upon us both
in your beauty
rejoicing
as did I

and as I sat
rejoicing in your beauty
you gave your body to my admiring eyes
and laughed unknowing before me

I wondered
 were I a bolder man
 and not a Christian man
 a saved man
 though a weak man
 but a lesser man
 a fallen man
if you would be shocked
were I with you to take
the next logical step
or even if you understood
that from your actions
the next logical step
from my point of view
would take us to a bed
away from lovers scorned
where naked and alone
in unholy union
the joy your body promised
could be mine
would be

How many women would dress and carry on as they do if they knew that the conclusion of the male in observing her is that he has received an invitation to enjoy her body. This is not intended to condone rape, which is a sin of an entirely mannish sort and without the female inducement that is described here. It is to condemn the seduction that is the rape's obverse. A great part of it is certainly based on the attractiveness of the observed and the susceptibility of the observer to temptation, even in innocence.

July 22, 1997

even a callous
built through years of abuse
may feel less pain
when the needle plunges in

the damage is still as real

July 20, 1997

I'd Rather Have Jesus

my one true joy
greater far than others
though oft' shoved aside
by lesser, fleeting loves
my love of God
His Love for me
envelopes all I am
or ever hope to be

Kirk Moratz, Sunday morning,
singing "I'd Rather Have Jesus!"
You should have seen his face.

July 20, 1997

Flotsam

a trucker's cap
discarded
laying forgotten
beyond the char
on a shattered abutment
isolated from other
minor wreckage

what journey ended here
where is now the head
once sporting this
forgotten bit of life

we know not
nor can ever tell
but drive on
scarce slowing
eager for our own journey
to end
in calmer fashion

June 30, 1997

the price of joy is far too high
to pay in eighty years
infinity waits to carry the debt

the price of Joy is set so low
that a single human life
can inherit an infinity of bliss

June 24, 1997

I rejoice when goodness triumphs
and the shadow is o'erwhelmed by light
for God rules this world
it serves His will
and as every shadow departing flees
His glory is shown to all

June 12, 1997

people are people no matter where you have them
at home

(you know)

at work

(you know it here, too)

in provincial politics

(leaving secret documents

upon the floor of a public hall)

or even the United Nations

(dead-beat dads using law

avoid the loss of cash to kin)

if we our faith in people place alone

we are doomed

for nowhere in all our books

do people vary from what they are

Within days of each other there
were two news reports. One of
secret provincial gov't papers
being left in a public hall of a
downtown hotel. The second
of United Nations employees
using exemptions from various
laws to avoid having to pay child
support fees.

And our lives are in the hands
of people like this. Good thing
that God is in control of my life.

June 10, 1997

Death Row

Unbelievable
it must seem to you
I too had plans
dreams
hopes
aspirations for my life
things I once
wished to be
now I merely
wish to live

Too many years
I've been in this line
waiting
no longer caring that time flew by
wasting opportunities
killing chances
for my dreams
to have life
I too
wish to live

Nothing else matters

I heard on the news today about
a man who has been on death row
in the 'States these last 12 years.
This is an attempt to see his view.

June 6, 1997

D-Day
June 6, 1944

my parents were captives
young children
held in Hitler's hand
observers of the wreck about them
viewers from afar
of their parent's understanding
they could not have ever met
in occupied Holland

strange men
carrying with them strange white loaves
new after years of famine
and delicious
freed them
their first step fell at Normandy
to turn the tide of war

years later
in freedom
their families pulled up stakes
sailed to Canada's distant shore
and met where they could not have met
had Hitler's reign endured

in that simple way
I owe my life
to strange men of war
bearing white loaves
to me
they are heroes

"Greater love hath no man than this,
that a man lay down his life for his friends."
These were not friends
and their love is beyond our ken
but this I know
near every day I live
I thank God for them

My mom (Texel) still remembers the Canadians coming over the narrows in their machines, carrying with them white bread: "The best bread I ever tasted." My Dad (Gelderland) recalls dogfights overhead. Mom (Texel) tells the story of an Islander with the Canadian armies

convinced his commander to send one or two amphibious vehicles to Texel just so they would not be left out.

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)

June 5, 1997

our clocks are slowly dying
it's really quite a shame
one is stuck at three
it always says the same
and one is dead at four
which is really quite alarming
we can get in but can't get out any more

Written at ELM on an endless afternoon.

June 4, 1997

Act Two

I took my part upon the stage
and proudly gave my lines
'twas not until the noise had died
I knew I played no final scene
on that side of the veil

June 4, 1997

Mid-Afternoon Walk

This heat that wraps my body close
beneath a sky I've dreamed for months
the pounding of my feet upon the walk
the feel of my weight upon my foot
Ah! It's great to be alive today

The air that freely fills my lungs within
clothes that press against my chest
the glory of green leaves at last in their relief
against the wondrous blue at infinity's edge
Ah! It's great to be alive today

Blood pounds hot in my veins again
my muscles twist and flex
this body works its working well
as I in walking experience life
Ah! It's great to be alive today

June 4, 1997

June 4, 1989

Monuments of bodies in oppression's distant lands
corpses high, piled rotting in the sun
death strikes the ones who would change,
the ultimate weapon of the fool.
They die in vain, it seems at times,
but their blood will find its voice
if not now then at the throne
where judgment will rejoice.

But now, beneath the whitewashed walls,
change must take place and people move
ere human freedom falls to dust
and tyrants wash the world in blood.

And on the toy I purchased for my son
"Made in China" proclaims my guilt.

June 3, 1997

Poison'daire

there's poison in the air
which is neither seen nor heard
and when I tell them to stop it all
they tell me I'm absurd

I daren't touch the leaves
I daren't touch the lawn
I daren't touch a single thing
this stuff is sprayed upon

I am slowly dying
done in by degrees
simply so that greener grass
may exist beneath the trees

and food last longer
before we eat it
and cars go faster cooler...
my life, I just can't keep it

and since we're all partakers
in a certain subtle sense
the people that are killing me
are me and all my friends

Out for my walk this afternoon
I smelled poison on the grass
and wondered what it did to me.
The allusion in the title is not
at any specific manufacturer,
it's just to show that all of us
are responsible.

June 3, 1997

The Square Circle

an almost nothing
an insubstantial something
from this they presume
that all there is proceeded
how can this be?!
if the something that is
came from the nothing that was
something more than nothing
was before all this something

it is astounding to my startled eyes
the contortions that some will endure
to avoid a plainly revealed
God

I was reading in July's "Astronomy" magazine the
article "Why is there Something Instead of Nothing"
and laughed, after which I wrote this.

June 1, 1997

my son is excited about
his new blinds, and how
when they are closed
from where he lies in bed they aren't
and he can see where
little bits of sky peer in
to sparkle in his eye

May 29, 1997

Progressiveness

"What's the point of having all these progressive social beliefs,
of being willing and able to break every rule in the book,
if I just end up living the same life as everyone else?"

Karawynn Long

it's not progression but regression
Sodom and Gomorrah had it too
as did Corinth, Rome, and others
too numerous to count
you are nothing new who think you are
it all has been before
and all will be again
it's not progression but rebellion given form
if it were truly progressive,
would it always be the same?

May 29, 1997

it is calling me
its tempting siren song from the distance I can hear
luring me

it knows my name
it knows my longings
it knows where I live

it calls me
it proclaims my heart's desire
its voice ever stronger growing
its distance ever shrinking
it's too strong to resist

I am besieged by immorality

May 15,1997

Karawynn II

strange
so short a time ago
I dreamt to be your friend
appreciating your personality
but not the lifestyle you endorsed

now
after an evening with my wife and children
made even better by the things you showed me
and the love we four do share
after praying to my God
you hold no power over me

today was a pivotal day
thanks to you

May 15, 1997

something once I tried to grasp
an innocence not quite innocent
a naiveté not quite naive
a thing not quite what I am
refreshing for its newness
appealing for its...danger
flirting at the edge of the blade

I cannot hold it, it isn't me
though from that one I may learn
and so live life better for my God

May 15, 1997

Karawynn

I never knew that people like you existed
I thought only writers conceived you
who are unlike all I've ever known

I like the presentation of yourself
before all the world to see

But now I know that you exist
that truly are conceived such as you
who are unlike all I'll ever be

I am envious
I've often wondered what life would be
if lived that way
the joy is plain
and freedom great

I am relieved
for I know what life would be
if lived that way
the joy will fade
and freedom die

May 15, 1997

Corywracken

four strands
slender in the storm
struggle to hold against the flow

four strands
fine as gold, strong as steel
all between us and certain death

and if I fail all fail along

I too have a greater hope
and desire to flee what pursues
I am fearful of what would be
if desires were given form
and thank God that these four strands
are held by One stronger far than I

An understanding of Corywracken as
found in "I Know Where I'm Going."

April 8, 1997

if I am not a man of God
I am not a man

I am of His hand
residing in His world
surrounded by His stars
and numberless unknown things
provided yet unseen
and even if I reject His name
I dare not reject His world

everyday His hand sustains me
every breath His love compels
each meal I eat, each step I make
His pow'r alone allows
I cannot live as though He does not
for the meshing would be gone
His grace pervades all that is
I cannot avoid nearing Him
in how He makes things be
and thus, no matter how I live
if I live as though He does not
I live at odds with life

April 3, 1997

Far too Close to Home

I see her breast,
its gentle slope alluring,
her slender waist,
gracing hidden joys beneath
the swelling curve of hip and thigh,
and dream and shed a sigh ...

how would it feel to love her,
close clutched upon her breast,
and feel her body move on mine
released to passion's flame

if somehow it could be managed
alone
where none could hear our cries

... I'm drawn to think
before I know it's wrong
and stop, or try,
rushing once again
to my pen and paper

and
at last
my knees

April 2, 1997

it matters not
that it is spoken wide
it matters not
that often it is asked beside
it cannot be
it is not God's
and if i listen then i die

March 24, 1997

They Stride as Kings

They stride as kings upon the earth
arrayed in mighty pow'r
their heads held proudly
high and gazing t'ward
the land of God beyond their way
That wond'rous place that calls them on
its glories great and yet
as dust beneath the feet
when matched with Him they love
His glory great, so far beyond
what mortal mind can hold
His love their call, their
heart's desire, that leads them to their home

They stride despised upon the earth
laughed and scorned to death
their heads held meekly
down and leaning on
the hand of God along their way
That One so great the earth cannot
with His greatness battle,
and o'er His saints cannot
gain sway, though beaten, cursed,
and cruelly killed, they are not
o'ercome. On He leads them
by His great abiding love,
this world is shamed beneath them.

March 24, 1997

let me tell you of the land where the cannibals love
to feed off the lives that other men live
they have no care that what they do
so freely
will be the downfall of many more
completely
"Put 'er down!"
"Take yer chance!"
there's more than fun in this grim dance
there's blood and blood to spare

and thousands flock to Rama
and Windsor
and the corner for a stub
those who can't afford it
and those who can and more

March 20, 1997

you cannot stop a dog from being
a dog
once he is outside and on his own he
will bark
forgetting with great enthusiasm
all the habits of the house

and also the scratch on his nose
that cat gave him last time

may as well appreciate that wagging tails
and forgetful minds are part of the package
and love him for what God made him

Written after Duffy went outside to bark.
Wonderful little doggy mind,
always forgetting, always loving.

March 20, 1997

A Line From Babylon 5

death happens
to us all
it is only a question of
 when
and
 with how much honour

as to the when
I pray my God to please
may He be pleased
to let me live long on the earth
in preparation for His home

as to the honour
I pray my God to honour
may He be honoured
long as I live by how I live
on earth and in His home

I think it was Marcus who said the top few lines
 (later it was Delenn, and later still Lenier).
J.M.S. has created a very interesting world, from
 which even Christians who believe a Christ he
 doesn't seem to know may learn.

March 20, 1997

one said, long ago,
words to the effect

“I do not believe that what you say is true,
but I will defend to my death your right to say it.”

I do not

I am willing to learn
I am willing to change
I am willing to understand

I am even willing to give my life
that others may see my God
and seeing Him, believe

I am not willing to give my life
that those who deny my God
may go on doing so

At least, I would like to think that I am willing.
The poem is based on a corruption of Voltaire:
“I detest what you write, but I would give my life
to make it possible for you to continue to write.”

March 20, 1997

After a long and lonely wander
in the wasteland of our winter
that desert of snow
incessantly robbing our souls of hope
at last that bless'd oasis

SPRING!

and its soothing warmth

March 19, 1997

I stand not at the parting of the ways
nor at that point where what is
and what ought to be
began to diverge
that stand wasn't taken long before
I came upon the scene
 that no man's land
 amidst the conflict
 of exclusive beliefs
wondering that the obvious
was so easily trodden under

I stand here now in the ruin of our time
not at the crossroads of a culture
nor even at the crossroads of a life
I am but a signpost to the Way
upon which I stand
wherein there is life
as opposed to death

March 18, 1997

I squandered a wander
to wonder a wonder

Mid-March, 1997

after the Mormons had left
I wept
for them who believing a lie
could not behold the truth
I held
too dark their eyes were made by death
unable to see through the devil's snare

Mid-March, 1997

odd
that by a simple turn of phrase
a casual conversation
is changed to one on which life depends
touching on important things
where rules no more apply

After reading a paragraph in
"The Seven of Diamonds"
by Max Brand.

February 21, 1997

I had the facts
my knowledge of the truth was overwhelming
Having studied for years
I knew the answer
and I was bold enough to venture into the arena
with an un-armed foe

SURPRISE!

All my facts
all my wisdom
all my carefully marshalled thought
couldn't undermine his armour
True it was armour of ignorance
not a bit of truth containing
But he believed it
and I could not change him

No matter how I argued
or how strong the thoughts put forth
if he chooses not to believe them
I have lost
I cannot change him
until I change his foundation
and that I cannot change

February 19, 1997

I think therefore I am
It don't think therefore it ain't

If it ain't and I am
who's to say that I ain't and it am

Once we rely on our mind alone
there's no telling where we'll roam

February 12, 1997 – June 17, 2020

up! Up! UP!

up from the slime where we were born
on through the years in varied form
time and chance their will to work
on and on our past to shirk

up

on we grow through countless ages
leaving behind forgotten pages
we come, we go, we fall, we grow
willy-nilly, we cannot know

up

Up

up from the mire and through the goo
up through the fin and fur and shoe
up through the gases and solids and carbon
up to the time we choose to put garb on

up

Up

UP

until today our journey's run
we rest here basking in the sun
faces aglow and eyes alight
with nothing left to give a fright

up!

Up

UP

and still we grow and change and whirl
and all about we change our world
and we and ours we search and scan
and proclaim as best this beast called man

up!

Up!

UP

we have our thoughts we know our mind
we're far improved on what's left behind
though kin-beast dwell this world we share
yet we stand here and they crouch there

up!
Up!
UP!

the chasm between us can't be surmounted
and how we got here can't be accounted
but here we are and here we'll stay
and since we're here it's as we say

up?
Up!
UP!

but one conundrum yet remains
after all this time, how do our brains
wrap around a thought and build
until all opposing thoughts are killed

up?
Up?
UP!

and another, more troubling still,
how do our minds conceive a will
develop ideals, either right or wrong,
or write a word, or sing a song

up?
Up?
UP?

if it's true that from the beasts I differ,
(or from that distant green conifer)
by thoughts that course inside my head
how am I here, why aren't I dead

up?
Up?

for in a realm derived by chance
moral thought bears not a glance
for all is wrong and all is right
whether love or hate or talk or fight

up?

the very morals I possess
deny the past that many guess
and if I ponder good or bad
by that thought the dream's been had

if a fish had lungs but had no air
he couldn't breathe, he wouldn't dare
thus if some deed begins my cryin'
it must truly be by some design

my righteous mind cannot remain
where time and chance have their domain
there'd be no use, it'd all be madness
my life, my joy, and all my sadness

I can't express philosophic joy
and not remain my Creator's boy
if I can think and say and feel
I must bear on me the stamp and seal

of He who is and stands alone
before the world and all its stone
it can't be aught as He has made it
for by its thought my mind betrayed it

"...the fool says in his heart
'There is no God!....' "for
since the creation of the world
God's invisible qualities...
...have been clearly seen,
being understood from what has been made"
by Him

I was reading tonight (February 12, 1997) from
"Whatever Happened to the Human Race?"
by Francis A. Schaeffer and C. Everett Koop
and felt that I should write this.

Regarding the fish/lungs/air thing:
If a fish had lungs but had no air
would that be a step up or down?
F.A.S. and C.E.K. make the point,
I appreciated it and put it here.

Scripture from:
Psalm 14:1
Romans 1:20

After Posting "up! Up! UP!" on Facebook

February 21, 2014

Reader - "Terrible poetry, but acceptable theology. But I still say that it's not necessary to believe in a 6 day creation as we understand days to praise the Creator for the wonderful universe He created."

..

Writer - "Terrible poetry? Perhaps, but I like it. Acceptable theology? No, but I'm not trying to be merely acceptable in my theology, I'm trying to be right. No arrogance is intended, I'm only saying that if I'm going to believe in God I want to do it to the best of my ability. Necessary to believe in six days of creation to praise the Creator? No, even the mountains will praise Him and they believe nothing. Necessary to believe in six days of creation to show that one takes God at His word? Yes, because if I start to doubt what God says about creation why should I believe Him about salvation?"

..

Writer - "Also, in this poem I wasn't only trying to say only that six day creation was theologically correct but that it is an inescapable truth. Once we start to ponder our origin we've already proven that we are created. Once we are created the need for countless ages disappears."

..

Reader - "Just as your poetry is not a novel or an essay, so not all parts of the Bible are straight narrative. Most Biblical scholars recognize the literary aspect of the beginning of Genesis as not straight narrative."

..

Writer - "Just as my poem states truth, despite its not being a novel or an essay, so the parts of the Bible that are not novel or essay also speak truth. Whether something is narrative or not is not an indicator of its ability to tell truth - otherwise every love song ever written says nothing and no hymn we sing in church has any meaning."

..

Reader - "No more comments."

February 8, 1997

The Blank Page
(a comment on "Modern" art)

begin

middle

end

January 17, 1996

Bill Cosby Jr. was killed yesterday
for reasons no one can fathom
senseless, brutal, and sad

newscasters made much of his plans
his desire to help others to
overcome what he overcame

making his death all the more tragic
I thought upon hearing this
but death is tragic regardless who dies

for ultimately men ignored
and princes loved
lose the treasure God endowed

December 2, 1996

I was reading some old poems today
I'd written long ago
some I wondered why
some I didn't
and now I sit and stare
wondering if I would do it all again
as well
or worse

December 2, 1996

did you ever wake up at night
screaming and in a cold sweat
because Bill had taken the world over
and ruined it
and Steve, a different Steve,
had made it all right again
except that it was all wrong

or even worse

suddenly confronted your past in the broad light of day
and felt the shadow descend
as you realized your best days were gone
with your life less than half expired
and nothing in the world you did
would ever make it better

November 24, 1996

The Lost

We see them distant, glowing tread
upon their heav'nward way
these saints of God from death redeemed
through blood so freely spilled.

We see them sing in distant joy,
our end so far from theirs,
who seek and serve the greatest love;
that glory we abhor

And as we cringe in mortal dread
of Him whom they adore
two words alone our fear torment:

We knew!

Dear God in heaven our judge alone
we knew, and laughed to scorn the truth
of true freedom freely giv'n.
We knew, and know, and weep in pain,
who now live here in death,
removed fore'er from utmost love ...

... and pow'rless to change.

November 5, 1996

To Serve Man

they stand aloof, commentators of our world
the work they display defining where we stand
(and often leads the way
to where we would go)
their position, self-declared, to show what can't be seen
yet powerless, save by the will of whom they lead,
they exist by grace of patrons, who in turn exist on death
careless that those they seek to govern
are lost to fund their cause
building their castle on the bodies of their kind
they care more for the job of working
than they do for the work of serving

In frustration over the attempts of various 'artists'
to argue legitimate reason to continue to receive
funding from the cigarette companies so they
may continue to 'serve' society.

November 4, 1996

once again i prove my mortality
how is it that i can do over and over and over
what God must not desire
i am embarrassed
ashamed
remorseful
and repentant (for now)
but time has proved
over and over and over
that this curse is greater than i

or is it that i seek to be o'erwhelmed
by that which i desire
a frantic change of thought
to preserve an innocence that never was

"For all have sinned and fallen short
of the glory of God"

"But the gift of God is eternal life
in Christ Jesus our Lord!"

so then
it is i that sin
and my mind allows it
but i desire the greater thing

God

may His forgiveness and love
claim even me

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, (Romans 3:21-24)

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:21-23)

October 15, 1996

a deathly gap exists
between the thoughts of God
and those of earth
and I
leaping confidently from one to the other
fall into the gap

August 23, 1996

We sent him up on a pillar of flame
a tiny man
larger than life
atop the greatest machine were ever made
his name will live forever
the one who touched the stars
and returned to earth alive
to accolades unreceived
buried in the flames of war

Loosely based on the song by Planet-P: "Static on the Radio."
But you can take it much further than that.

August 17, 1996

I walked into his room last night
Lord
to kiss my boy good night
and almost asked his bird to watch over him
what a silly thing to do
and
since you had made that bird
I thanked you
for making what makes him smile

August 16, 1996

I saw Andromeda!
tonight!
right outside and high in the north
a great hazy patch of light
dancing,

as I was later for joy,

weaving about my binoculars
held less steady
not from excitement
but inexperience

I saw Andromeda!

August 15, 1996

If I Had Words

"If I had words to make a day for you
I'd sing you a morning golden and new
I would make this day last for all time
And give you a night deep in moonshine"

just look at that man!
his feet
his words
his JOY

so surprising
so unexpected
so characteristic
it's awesome!

First verse lyrics by Johnathan Hodge
(as sung by Farmer Arthur Hoggett)
from the truly great movie: "BABE."

August 15, 1996

Behind the White there lies the Black

(to today's Sunshine Girl and her corporate self
whose sumptuousness, though appealing, is a lure to death)

there you stand, in two dimensions
pretending at three
glowing rhapsodic in the sun
my impure thoughts gaining sway
as your promises of pleasure
in the delights of your body
and freedom of your loving
overwhelm my mind

there you stand, in string and patches,
smiling, un-ashamed
your body scarce contained
its curve and softness fully shown
inviting and desirable
the pleasures of your flesh
eagerly calling my name

I flee
yearning your passion
craving the softness of your breast
despairing of a world where such things are
the lure of steadfast men
to draw them to their doom

in Proverbs you are described
as one who offers love for free
to all who would enjoy you
appealing you may be
but all your lovers die

yet I am God's
and He is mine
while I love Him I live
and if I love you I die

I must stand firm
resist your snare
grace restraining greed

appealing you may be
but all your lovers die

yet am I God's

I believe that the woman whose picture prompted this poem is married, I simply cannot understand how a woman could even think to please strange men with the joys that belong only to her husband.

After Words

For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night: And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart. (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.) So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves. For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey: He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed. With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life. Harken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

Proverbs 7:6-27

When I was a child I felt that, no matter what God said, if a woman acted in such a way as to let a man not her husband know that her body was available for his pleasure, and that it was her desire for him to have this pleasure, then in this situation there was nothing wrong with giving her what she asked for since no harm had actually been done to her. He would simply have accepted the offer of her body which she had made to him. She could not possibly have been violated since she had desired that which had been done to her (or more correctly: with her). She wanted a man to make love to her, she looked for one who would be willing to make love to her, and through her actions encouraged him to make love to her. It was her actions which resulted in the man giving her that which ultimately they both desired: the satisfying of the love of physical pleasure in place of enjoying the pleasure of the satisfaction of love. What I had failed to understand at the time was that adultery is a sin not because someone has been violated but because our relationship with our God (and potentially our spouse) has been violated and He considers adultery

to be a sin. In profaning the marriage relationship adultery profanes the love that He has for His people and which marriage had been designed by Him to typify.

The prevalent belief in my culture, that sex is merely a pleasurable biological function (instead of one of the components of an intimate biological, emotional, and spiritual union), has resulted in the belief that sex need not be restricted to the bond of matrimony, and that it matters not with whom it is enjoyed so long as it is enjoyed freely, without restriction or compulsion. Since sex is understood to be no more than a pleasurable biological necessity, necessary in a similar sense to the functions of washing, sleeping, or eating, therefore the Christian ideas of sexual morality no longer apply and the concept of adultery itself is done away with. We are encouraged from childhood to seek out the lovely of the opposite sex (and ever more increasingly of the same sex) and to enjoy the pleasures which they are able to provide us, in whatever form they may be provided, and not to worry ourselves with moral absolutes or the harm that we are possibly causing ourselves or the one we are using for our pleasure. It is believed that no harm could result because the morality of the sexual union has been previously deemed to be a non-issue and the judgments of those who continue to hold it as an issue are therefore without power.

In the Bible we find that harm has actually been done to both parties for Paul writes that whoever joins himself to a prostitute (even if one charges nothing for sexual intimacy prostitution still occurs since a prostitute is defined in the Bible as one who offers sex outside of the covenant of marriage for some personal gain - and who can be either male or female though the context here is female) has become one with her, and Paul describes it in a manner that makes it clear that one who carries in them the Spirit of God must not partake in such practices. Harm has occurred because both have been violated: One by yielding to sin through its temptation, the other by becoming the tool of sin, a utility to serve the desires of another. In submitting to the temptation of a prostitute we weaken our relationship with our God and we reduce another human being, an image bearer of God as we are ourselves, to a tool for our own personal pleasure. Our fellow human becomes a sub-human object of scorn, rather than a living soul for whom Christ died.

Though I have never physically followed the whole route of sexual temptation, the fact that it was a possibility surely filled my imaginings (how often I dreamed the scenarios that are so prevalent in our current entertainments and accepted by our society). While I have never yet been guilty in deed, at the very least I have been guilty in contemplation. It is a trap where, once we are caught in it, we seek pleasure rather than pleasing, human joys rather than the joy of knowing God to whom all pleasures point; and so we are lead, just as the fool is above, from Life to death by the chain of our desires.

We are also told that in breaking one commandment we have become guilty of breaking all of them (you cannot partially break a plate, it is either broken or whole). It is wrong, not because we are wronging the woman nor because we are wronging ourselves, but because God has said that it is wrong. It is an absolute not only philosophically but legally because our Final Judge has told

us that He holds such things in contempt. In doing these things we are ultimately wronging our relationship with Him. It is not that sex in and of itself is a bad thing (it is a creation of God after all) but that sex outside of the context for which God designed it is wrong. There is a moral absolute regardless of how we try to ignore and deny Him. He has said that a certain thing is wrong and so therefore it is and there is therefore no room for debate.

The same would go for euthanasia in that the person asking for release from sickness, pain, and infirmity is asking others to do what God expressly forbids ("Thou shall not kill," Exodus 20:13). Yielding to such a request is not mercy killing, it is murder. Man is never given control over the life of his fellow man except in the cases of capital crimes and warfare against the enemies of God and even in these cases only at the command of God. We must learn that the only absolutes that exist are those that belong to God, we cannot create our own to serve our own pleasures because we have no power over this world other than that of stewards. Our pleasures are not an end in themselves but one more means by which God shows His love for us by giving us the ability to enjoy this life and perhaps to ponder the why of it all and so arrive at He who waits that more may be saved. God is the ultimate authority and if we deny His authority for our own we doom ourselves to damnation.

Satan will not fill our hearts with desire to do an obvious evil, he seduces us with minor aberrances that are often extremely enjoyable (as he often perverts what God has made for good) but that only serve to separate us further from God. If we could do that little wrong we become less able to resist the slightly greater wrong because our logic for refraining from it has been tossed aside. Once the wedge is in it drives ever deeper until we are either eternally separated from God or must give up something incredibly desirable in order to continue in His fellowship. That is Satan's ultimate goal, separation from God, because he is hatred and would rather have us destroyed alone than alive with God. He will give us our heart's desire if that desire can remove God from our lives. We can literally sell him our souls in return for what we perceive as pleasure and loose ourselves to its delight and loose forever the delight of Heaven and an eternity with our Saviour and God.

For the longest time I would view myself after my various sins and wonder "What could God want with me." I would try to justify my actions, make excuses that great heroes of the Bible also experienced moments of weakness, and compare myself to my peers in an attempt to make myself believe that I wasn't as bad as I felt that I was. But the fact of the matter is that I was being confronted by my very real guilt, that no matter how large or how small the sin I had broken the law of God. This was not a personal response to a negative burden placed upon me by my church nor was it in response to the ridicule of my friends. It was an awareness of the awesome perfection of God and my sinful state before Him. Regardless of my actions I was personally guilty of breaking His law and was consequently also guilty of the death of His Son Jesus Christ. My greatest problem at the times when I felt such guilt was coming to the realization that God still wanted my company, I felt that He would find me so repugnant that He would abandon me. It was in this way that the enemy sought to move me further from my God. (Remember that our enemy does not please our desires for our benefit,

nor ultimately even for his own, but he pleases our desires in order to alienate us from God for our own destruction.) What I had failed to realize is that Jesus died in my place to bear the very wrath of God which in my guilt I feared...while I was dead in my sin. He did not wait for me to become acceptable before He offered Himself in my place, He offered Himself so that I could become acceptable. His mercy is such that He came to save me while I was utterly lost in my sin, while I was in my death He gave me life and that life has overwhelmed all that my sin continues to do. I am not perfect, nor do I believe that I will ever be perfect on this side of the grave, but I do believe that because of Jesus sacrifice in my place I am able to stand before God as an imperfect man who has been forgiven his imperfection. My sin has been punished on broader shoulders than my own and I have now the promise of eternal life through Christ and Christ alone.

This is not to say that it matters not what I do in my life, that my actions have no consequence, but that regardless of what I do I have been made right before God and His condemnation no longer rests upon me. My calling is to live according to His grace, not to minimize the blood of Jesus Christ but to treat it as the treasure that it truly is. The airbags and seatbelts in our cars may protect us in the case of an accident and may even save our lives but that does not give us the license to drive however we wish, we bear a responsibility toward the other drivers around us, our passengers, and ourselves that causes us to drive in accordance with the established rules of the road. Just so we have a responsibility before God to live according to the established rules of creation. Those who would live however they wished all the while counting on the blood of Jesus to satisfy God's righteousness on their behalf crucify Christ again to their own detriment and show their disregard for a salvation so dearly bought. No, I am not perfect, but I struggle to overcome my imperfections and to live according to the holy calling of God, not giving in to temptation but seeking the path of holiness that I might become ever more what God would have me be.

May 10, 1996

in a world getting ever closer to the night
it's ever simpler for the flame to cast its light

May 10, 1996

I am not a bigot
never have been, never will be
one to deride my neighbour
for behaviour un-condoned
from my lofty perch

I too have failings
all too plain to see
I cannot treat you with less love
than I myself require
I have also sinned
falling short of the glory of God
and He has saved me

but!

regardless of our law
in support of 'basic human rights'
I do reserve the right
to decry your lifestyle as an error
and a moral abomination before the Lord
and pray for your salvation

it is not you I hate
it is what you do

They (federal gov't) passed a law last night
giving 'equal rights' to open homosexuals.
Yet another restriction on the freedom
I have to practice my religion.

Now they can call evangelism 'bigotry'

April 26. 1996

ah 'tis Spring
the season of our freedom
at long last the sun shines warm
upon legs and arms too long hidden
beneath layered bundles of clothing
again it is joy to amble
outdoors into the wind
and back again
and feel the better for it
it is spring!
and after a winter harsh
like the one just past
spring is enough

April 25, 1996

After Milton and His Sort

across the age of years they called
my moments to possess
these words of men long dust who,
without the tempt of current pleasure,
mirrored in their work the world they breathed
filtered through minds strange to mine

all who scoff the might of word
who laugh the strength of ink to scorn
have never felt as I have felt
their weight when rightly read
as the stroke of the blade forever changes
words, though distant, their pow'r retain
once read ne'er forgotten,
even those bespeaking lies,
my years to come forever changed
I cannot be who I once would be
having grown, I'm not the same

I must have more I cannot slake
this thirst their words impart
knowledge is a worthy quest
on its own merit, were there nothing more
find me the fountain where I may drink
comparing their draughts to my own
for even those not found on God
had things of worth to say
and I must hear them
to find tomorrow's form

Finding Milton, Calvin, Buchan, others,
and their sort in our global free-for-all

April 23, 1996

A Treatise on the Christian Life

being a Christian is the hardest task
assailed within and without
by temptations both bold and delightful
(seldom will the tempter set
a snare with repulsive deeds
to lure us from our golden hope)
that must constantly be quelled
a tiresome task at best
yet our desire holds us strong
for the hope of meeting Christ
and living for Him to die
is often greater than our need for fame
but even if it weren't
our hope of self-eternal prevents us
for to say "I desire 'this'"
is to realize that 'this' is sin
to sin is death
and death is what we wish to avoid
so self-preservation prevents us from dying
by our very fear of death
as our desire to live with God
secures us from that He hates

some tasks are harder than resistance
of which forgiveness is one
in forgiving we are not
as some would have it
forgetting a wrong once done
we are unable to forget
the past
(and often cherish it far beyond its worth)
when a Christian forgives a wrong
the pain of that wrong remains
resting upon the one forgiving
who in innocence forgives
he who has the wrong
if we have been wronged
retribution is what we are raised to take
yet God commands us to forgive
to accept the person wronging
if not the wrong itself
for no cause other than our love for Him
and our love for him
the pain remains and must be borne
beneath the gentle hand of God
who knows from heaven
far more than mere human minds assert

April 22, 1996

I have inside this skin of mine
the heart of a predator
 leering
 lurking
 skulking secretly around
 in the dark of others' ignorance
its teeth have been only slightly blooded,
so far,
no penalty has yet been paid
but this slith'ring beast within is strong
seeking forever to destroy its chains
at last to revel in its debauch
and raise its bloodstained lips in roaring praise
to its dark god of utter night

it writhes, it cries,
it seeks its pleasure

and I am tired of the fight

April 1, 1996

I feel sometimes that I could fall off the edge of the earth
and not a soul would note my leaving
nor mark the thud when I landed

but I've landed already and all that remains
is a shadow-Pete
a mere echo of the man I used to be
and no-one notices or cares
not even God, who seems to have forgotten

but no
that is far less likely than my forgetting Him

I look up and see them all there
living their lives for all they are worth
while I lie here alone and ignored

March 13, 1996

I've heard it said You were
a credit to Your race
in flowing words and pretty tune
respectful of the things You've done
except one

if we deny Your deity
are You really You
could You even be good?

You spoke, and acted,
as though You were truly God
and followed Your words to the cross

You've got to be more than a man
(yet a man indeed
if I am to hope)
Your words proclaim it
Your deeds acclaiming

You are either God
or I am dead

In response to "Row Row Row"
by the Barra MacNeils

December 14, 1995 - August 9, 2021

The Gallery

APOLOGY

what if time bent back
upon itself
and what is not yet
visited what no more is
supposing a place was built
for them to stand
and watch
from time's remote beginning
to its distant end
to learn, to praise
what wonder would be seen

and if too light I seem to tread
on that which so holy is
recall that I as well as you
love the Lord and God of all
I am His and His alone
and know His word is best
but I can't ever stop the asking
"What if..."

PRELUDE

there was nothing in the beginning but God

no

silence
darkness
light

God alone
all sufficient
all knowing

ALL

still the stage is conceived,
made, and set
the "play" is put upon it

DAY FIRST

the nothing shattered by a thund'rous word
"LET THERE BE LIGHT!"

and there was
a sudden burst of flaming light
the glorious breaking of day's first dawn
new born darkness flying wild
embed across the infant universe
with God's eternal light

and He looked and saw that it was good

darkness came
and night,
and after night, new dawn

DAY SECOND

the day old brightness shattered by a mighty voice
"LET THERE BE A SKY!"
and there was
bold and wide and awesome clear
between two tumultuous seas
one reaching Heaven's grace down to earth
one stretching high to creation's King

darkness came
and night,
and after night, new dawn

DAY THIRD

between the seas His voice of power
"LET THERE BE LAND!"
and there was
a sudden heaving of the seas
all eager for their maker's will
piling up in sudden haste
revealing His called forth land
mountains rearing to the skies
from murky water's depth
to bear the beating of the sea

never even here eternal
scarcely two days new

upon His new named Earth
of vast and undulating plains
hills and vales and river's gorge
in their silence proclaiming loud
the glory of their Maker's Name
whose power did tree and grass command
to spring abundant taking root
from tallest height

to lowest low
fast onrushing green hued flame
of towering redwood
and sea borne mite
all pleased to do their Maker's will

and He looked and saw that it was good

darkness came
and night,
and after night, new dawn

DAY FOURTH

that great voice spoke
"LET THERE BE LIGHTS IN THE SKY!"
and there were
a sun, a moon, and a countless host of stars
to serve as a reminder
for a creature uncreated
of his Father's glory, majesty, and pow'r
when e'er he saw them reel across the sky
wondrous, untouched beauty
without breath giving praise
to their Maker's glory

and He looked and saw that it was good

darkness came
and night,
and after night, new dawn

DAY FIFTH

again that voice mighty spoke
empowered o'er the vast and arching sea
yet unfading into silent air
"LET THERE BE THOSE THAT SWIM AND THOSE THAT FLY!"
and there were
swimmers that swam
vast and unimagined beneath the waves
large and small and all that lay between
flake, fin, and fan
almost infinite variety
and fliers that flew
fast and free upon the wind
calls and throbbing wings
with splashes into the sea
and the noise of life began

and He looked and saw that it was good

darkness came
and night
and after night, new dawn

DAY SIXTH

this last day's brightness shattered by a mighty voice

"LET THERE BE BEASTS!"

and there were
dino's and rhino's and all sorts of beast
fur clad and bare skinned
tossing horns, chomping teeth,
shaking mane and whipping tail,
stomping and neighing in a holy clamour
rejoicing at the last to be made
as He in love had made them
and in His power stayed them

spoke again that voice, full of might,
and pow'r,
and gentle love,

"LET US MAKE MAN!

LET US MAKE HIM MAN IN OUR IMAGE!

LET US MAKE HIM TO BE OUR STEWARD

RULING BY OUR AUTHORITY THIS EARTH

THAT BY HIS SIMILARITY

HE MAY BE DRAWN TO US

AND FIND IN US HIS LIFE."

and the hand of God reached down to earth
forming from the soil the form of man
dusty fingers framing His likeness
moulding him gently in the mud
labour of love

by Heaven's almighty King

His hands to his body

His lips to his lips

His breath to his breath

His Life to his life

intimate even here

and life springs forth from silent earth

a dancing, praising man

a dancing, praising woman

together before their God

in the world brought forth for them

and He looked and called it very good

darkness came
and night,
and after night, new dawn

DAY SEVENTH

and He looked and saw all that He had made
and saw that it was very good

hallowed
because the Holy One
who alone is Holy
proclaimed it so
and blessed it
"LET THERE BE REST"
a remembrance perpetual
of the labour of the six
their Lord and His rest

THE GIVING

and again that awesome voice spoke
giving all His tremendous wealth
to His subordinates of dust
to rule and treasure and obey
filling with their offspring
the proof of His eternal love
and live lives in honour of Him
who alone could be their LORD
obedient to His will

THE LOSING

but fell
to flattering words
sweetly spoken lies
wrap tight their coils on life
leading careless to temptation
from temptation to desire
and from desire to realization
of their rejection of His love
awareness of their shame
and onset of their death

He came
and suddenly they feared
Whom once they only loved
and hiding made Him look
who already knowing all
found and covering their shame
showed again His love
even then forgiveness came
in spite of such abuse
but with it banishment

flaming, he stood at the entrance
sword held and ready
his tears the merest echo of Heaven's sadness
a guard
preventing the return of friends
who once roamed free with God
now wanderers
every ruined thing
their own
His final words
a lingering echo in their minds
their return to dust
but before that death
great toil
great pain
and enduring that
great hope

THE WASHING

at fearful rest
after years of labour
faithful to God to the end
in the face of ridicule
all alone, these eight
enclosed by God in a box of their own making
already smelling of too many animals
far too close together
mingling close with tar and sweat
listening in fear to the sound of downpouring rain
in torrents unbelievable
God's grim judgement suddenly real
silent in their shelter hearing:
the laughter of their neighbours
their ridicule and scorn
turning quickly to cries of terror
shrieks and frantic poundings on unyielding wood
diminishing to terrible silence
as fathoms of water flow wild about them
and this box of their own making
to the gracious plan of God
shudders and trembles in the flood
lifting them boldly from the earth
floating on a sea of retribution
while beneath them the world they knew
passed away

THE TESTING

he was already old

when this joy had been a promise
now walking beside him
carrying his burden of wood,
curious but ecstatic, he was with his dad,
while he carried a burden of an other kind
a tear flowing sadly down his wrinkled cheek
his feared destination looming ever closer
upon this rocky plain
how could he do this thing
could his God be asking too much
first taking him from his family
now taking his family from him
but no
how could he not do this thing
his God could never ask too much
and as his hand felt slowly down
to the knife within his belt
his heart went up to heaven's throne

would that God would intervene
as oft' before He had
 He would have spared the city
 had the righteous been enough
but if even He did not
a promise made is a promise kept
God's word is always true
and from this boy His promise filled
and so slowly up that des'late slope
he trode beside his son, his love,
answering the questioned lack
with dependence on God's provision
carefully he built the pile of stone
tenderly taking his own little boy
and binding him fast upon it
beneath his upraised hand
gasping with relief
at the intervention
the staying of his steady knife
by the joy of his Father's voice
and the sight of a ram in a bush
that would die where his son now lay

THE REVELATION

he clambered on alone
already old
visions of bushes burning,
vast and mighty wonders,
great seas parting,
and countless numbers praising
flowing through his mind

that very God before him,
who appeared within the bush,
been with him through all his trials,
atop this heap of rock
waiting on him
within the cloud and flashing lightning
The One who saved them
by His mighty upraised arm
and he hurried on
to meet His God
and carry to His people
His law
excited as a little child
fearful as a new wed man

THE KINGDOM

a man, once a shepherd
a king, always a shepherd
dancing before his God in jubilation
and the praising of his folk
the presence of their God!
again to be with them
the strength of their kingdom
their glory and delight
as upon their dusty streets
mere mortal voices echo those of heaven
praising the one, eternal King

THE CLEANSING

light has come,

He walked beside us
living
human
divine
alone among all men their God
exciting rush of Heaven's
call
forgiving all who came
who heard Him speak God's speech
loving mankind from the first
Earth's eternal glory
and her only hope

and night,

He hung before us
dying
broken

scorned
alone as no man had ever been
sole target of His Father's
wrath
forgiving those who killed
for they "know not what they do"
loving mankind even now
Earth's sublimest moment
and her only hope

and after night,

He goes among us
alive
healing
adored
alone our help before our judge
our help where other helpers
fail
forgiving all who ask
the unquestioned gift from God
loving mankind to the last
Earth's ongoing challenge
and her only hope

new dawn

THE LIVING

I
who bear upon myself
Adam's curse

the usurper

walk upon this earth
this same earth
entombed the One who formed me
as it shook beneath its makers wrath
that it was not torn apart
proof of grace

as I walk
grace again is proved

tears
I don't know why, I'm happy

God be praised!

THE ENDING

it comes at last
after centuries of waiting
ridicule and expectation
that night so long desired and scorned
the night of light
the night of joy
the night of terror and falling hills
the night Earth's rightful King
returns to claim His own
the night to end
all nights
save the longest
darkest night of all
for those who have refused the Light

He shall come and call my name
and split the sky to take me home
then death shall flee to reign no more

FINALE

eternity in the city of our King
eternal bliss
eternal glory to our God
saviour of our souls

damnation in the despair of Hell
unending torment
hopelessness eternal
utter endless despair

the decision made so long before
decided forever by a glance at His face
Who in love and righteous anger
welcomes His own
and damns the dead

the choice is yours which you must make
no man alive your fate may take
that happened once and nevermore
but only He whom all adore
has done that and you must

choose

November 8, 1995

and God spoke

LIGHT!

(the word broke the darkness with the sound of a thousand thunders
trembling with power
instantly working His will)

and the darkness shattered
into a billion blazing bits of brightness
mighty galaxies and countless brilliant stars
(merest echoes of their Creator's glory),
soundlessly burst into being with a thunder of light,
begin their trundling way across an infant infinity
and from that day forth
proclaimed their maker's praise

November 11, 1994

sidetracked
waylaid by a dream
walking secure
I am tripped up by a whim
a passing flight of fancy
holding no promise for tomorrow

beauty is fair to behold
its pleasures all too real
so sweetly it calls
but hardly comparing
to the beauty of Him
whose love didn't tempt
didn't lie or deceive
but brought Him to die
for such a one as I

November 8, 1994

LORD!

It's come again
stronger than I can take
overwhelming my defences
flooding my heart with thoughts unbecoming

Help!

Like Peter
I too drown
please take my hand
ere it be too late
and I sink to the depths

November 4, 1994 - September 5, 2020

God is Love!

I know that now
having met His Son

Not the wimpy
"I'll love you till the seas run dry"
kind of love
quickly whispered in a hot embrace
when everything is well

But real love
the kind that will love me
not only till the seas run dry
but the next second after as well
and on beyond
when not only the seas run dry
but the worlds around them dissolve

The kind of love
that would make one rather die
than risk another's pain

The love that brings tears to the eyes
at the mere thought of it

God is Love!

November 4, 1994

I came face to face with true love
one time

I
who thought I loved
who knew how
and cared

it confronted me by surprise
one time

and I cried

On reading "Joshua's Journey"

June 1990

again I prepare to leap
down from these cold-dark cliffs
into the waters that rage
alone, I stand
save the One who brought me here
preparing

June 1990

see that man standing there
hunched and looking ragged
he has no mind to call his own
no thought to light his eyes
just dark shadow about him draped
preventing life from living
see him
I have no liking for him
he runs counter to all I love
his ignorance destroys my joy
and I cannot stand him

and then it hits me
always late
that the Saviour whose I am
died for him as well

June 1990

death!

it screams at us its finality
the last removal
of heart from heart
the dark, foreboding shadow
that turns into seconds our years

we who remain
stand silent and grieving
holding fast in our hearts
brief moments of gold
from a life too quickly snatched
seeking to continue
despite the lingering aches
of mortality and loneliness

it need not be so
that we whom death will vanquish
go futilely to our grave
death itself is vanquished
its own hold will not last
our God is the God of life
death holds no honour in His courts
He alone has defeated it
thanks and praise be to God
Who has taken the terrible spectre of terror
and made it into the pause
that can only separate
life from Life
which comforts us eternally

April 1990

shelter
not seeking it but finding
I stepped out for a moment
from the world rushing wildly by
into a room in the midst of prayer
suddenly I saw
how greatly I needed prayer
along with the peace
fellowship and love it yields
no longer did the world clamour
but, in my need
God stilled my troubled soul

April 1990

To Penny

my friend
for years I have prayed over you
years that once only grew larger
as my prayers grew shorter
but I did pray
that God would save you
redeem you
and call you "My child"
and, when I prayed
I meant it

thank God!
that He is more faithful than I
thank Him who claimed you
and now at last does have you
praise our great Lord and King
that His rule extends to your heart

I pray still
for others, your friends
and also for you
that this awesome God who is ours
may always be yours
now, at last
having grasped the gift
do not release it
on pain of death

praise our great God
you are saved!

March 1990

before God
before Jesus, the Judge
before His kingdom
I beseech you
preach the word!
always be ready
at any time
 convince
 rebuke
 exhort
with patience

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. (2 Timothy 4:1-4)

February 1990

fog obscures Toronto
making it impossible to see
anything more distant
than that within reach
the towers across the square
formless blocks of grey
even our sun
that brightest, closest star
unseen
known only by a vague
off-white glow

how then
being able to know so little
of that which we see
directly
and even less now
with this obstructing fog
can we presume to know
what God has not revealed

February 1990

walking alone
in the dark of early night
this cold earth below
holding me up to the stars
and the moon
full and rising in the east
where lies my youth
that same light shining
upon the lawns wherein I played
distant in miles
and years
and mind

walking along
these thoughts in my mind
an abrupt iron rail
stops me
this rail, cold and still
my path from now to then
suddenly unleashed
my dreams furiously boil
I pray
turn
and head for my life
as I have chosen it
as God chose for me
and halfway back
a GO rumbles by
under the cold Toronto light
of a newly risen moon

January 1990

get back you evil horde
leave this man alone
too long he has fought with you
too many days have been lost
in Jesus' name I command you
leave!
and return not here
this man is God's
he is not
will have no part
of you
God has claimed him
through Jesus' blood
go now
and do not return
he has work to do

December 1989

too much we take for granted our walk upon this earth
beneath the soaring towers of mankind's dreams
or on the open field pressing us t'ward the stars
to us our steps just raise the dust
stirring once, to settle as we've passed
our words, our deeds; we are our own
even we of God seem often to forget

our God
He too has set foot here
with stars adorning His brow, a crown
measuring the earth beneath His steps
that none but demons could efface

our plans oft' transcending His
whose designs none can understand
we carry on too much, thinking all is day
while hour by hour, beyond all sight
our God moves us in His will
as the flower unfolds beneath His care
so all else is in His sight
the dust behind us settles quick
our plans and dreams follow us to death
yet we are walking on hallowed ground
this planet belongs to our mighty God
His love is upon it
the dust we raise, we raise before Him
the castles that crumble, crumble in His sight
our God is here, He lives, He is
our hearts too rarely feel this quick'ning joy
our Creator, our Master, our Lord, our Friend
is here, is with us, is leading a way
that in life we must follow to find in death

December 1989

LORD!

where are you?

I NEED YOU!

and I can't feel you here
which scares me

PLEASE COME!

I need you now
more than ever

HELP ME!

please

November 1989

here I am
at almost thirty
the fires burning low
the brilliance dim
the man of value to all
worthless
of no account

how painful is the recollection
of yesterday's glory
when faced by today's death

November 1989

leavings
many things behind
sadness of joy recalled
joy of blessing seen
changes and progressions
that oft' outweigh tomorrow
its dreams
and aspirations

how is it
that the joys of life
are recalled with tears
like pain
that never fades away
growth hurts

November 1989

I had it once
but then it went
I saw it
then I didn't
seemingly of mind possessed
it flew away
and I no longer had it

I found it later
upon the floor
where I hadn't dropped it

November 1989

you, the Beginning of God's creation
the Word that was with God
and was God
as your voice spoke the stars in place
or caused the world to have its life
as your hands formed man of earth
and your lungs breathed out his life
even then, at the start of all
as you joyfully sang creation's days
you must have known
that the life you created with love
would one day kill you with hate
even as your hands formed my features
you must have known
that for me you would die

you are God
all mighty
all knowing
you knew
even before our fall
that you would raise us up
what love you are
in giving love and finding hate
to give it life and die for it
yet to go on creating
what you knew could destroy

thank you, God
that in this love I have my life

November 1989

"In the beginning God ..."
there is no removal from Him
even at the start of time
for time could not start
without Him

November 1989

truly Jesus you are great!
every word and every thing
proclaims your greatness
shouting it forth in praise
joy beyond exuberance
unbearable upon this earth
only fitly expressed
with every ounce of strength
every part of being
every bit of life
 which comes crashing in
 as good as it is
 black against you
 tears flood my eyes

I have to stop, Lord
you are too much for my pen
in praising you I stop
overwhelmed
when will this body take you
in all your glory
without weakening?
I must praise you and I can't
to do it right
would take more than all my words
more than all my days
I start ... and stop
weeping to praise you
saying only "I love you!"

November 1989

For the Geleynses

once long ago
when shadows danced
our prayers flew to God
lest the shadow of your lives
turn leaden

years passed
tears came
as did joy

and now
the dance moves heavy
too many tears
for any to bear alone
laughter only a dream
freedom from pain
and fear
a ghost
blown by autumn winds
harsh and cold
and twisting quick

again our prayers ascend
to the heart of our life
that yours may be nourished
that the hands that formed this earth
and hold it
strengthen you in the storm
so wind may blow
fierce and cold
and not harm you
so you will remain
with us
in Him

November 1989

my parents after the war
uprooted themselves from their homes
to plant anew their lives
in fertile, foreign soil
strangers in a strange land
now their home
having grown up much
in "the old country"
it came with them to the new
an island of familiarness
in a strange, foreboding sea
finding a place for themselves
among others of their "home"
"the old country" lived on

and I was born
that entity proclaimed
"first generation Canadians"
still tied to the last generation's home
 (I still recall church services
 spoken in Dutch
 to a congregation after lunch
 or of Sinter Klaus
 celebrated on the fifth
 so that Christmas
 all could worship our God
 undistracted)
I, of two worlds, must live in one
I too an immigrant
like my parents
they from Dutch to Canadian
I from Dutch-Canadian
must drop the Dutch

November 1989

Final Draft

my God
my most wonderful
incredible
and awesome God
you were
before the beginning
after the end
you are
God alone
even now

by your hand
nothing became

stars in their glory
in the grandeur of night,
insignificant points of significant size
infinite in number
far beyond our fondest wish
nearer than our dreams
and all that is beneath them
daystar's blazing flame
nightstar's changeless ice
birds in their sky
all filled with blue
and green, and air
and light!
oceans wild with creatures
splashing in their dance
earth rampant with beasts
that climb and dig and run

the center of the universe
but off to one side
your footstool

and I
standing here
sudden rock beneath me
endless sky above
I feel the air inside my lungs
and I breathe
in
and out
and in again
feeling this body work
blood of life racing my veins

life itself burning in my heart
dreams that rampage across my mind
out of the smallest you made me
my God!
at once I am
my father's growing child
and the man that writes these words
the marvel that I am
the work of your hand

by your grace alone
the hand that holds this pen
can write
I think
I feel
I love!
grown from clumsy grasping but still unsure
this heart still full of self
can love my friends
adore my wife
reel in the exuberance of its life in you
I who once knew only tears
can reach and hold
and plan and dream
and praise
for I alone am nothing
the merest man
of this mere ball
your footstool
and yet I am Something
for you came for me
and bought me whom you made

my God!
all I see proclaims you
God alone
sovereign Lord
King of my life

Sorry God, this doesn't
begin to say "Thank you!"

November 1989

First Draft

my God
most wonderful, awesome God
before the beginning
after the end
you are
God alone
out of nothing you made all
 this solid ball on which I stand
 the skies about my eyes
 the life around my feet
 the air that fills my lungs
 the life, the dreams that fill my heart
out of the smallest you made me
at once, a tender growing child
and the man that writes these words
by your Grace alone
the hand that hold this pen
grown from clumsy grasping but still inept
this heart still full of self
yet full of love for friends
weak in adoration of my wife
exuberant in its life in you
I can reach and hold and plan and dream
who once knew only tears
and in my sin you came for me
buying me back who once was yours
all I see proclaims you
God alone
sovereign Lord
King of my life

November 1989

autumn landed hard today
its chill wind started
somewhere west of here
by the rock of autumn
dropped in summer's calm
soon all the land will feel its hold
blue skies given the lie
by dry brown leaves
in the corners of the curbs

too close now does winter lie
too soon that cold hand to fall
summer's grace just barely ended
already attack is made
leaves lie frozen in the track
dead
like Alexander's Greece
or Arthur's isle
trod underfoot by feet
soon as well to fall

November 1989

Sadness

leaves blown over grass
in autumn's grey wind
once green and living
now dead
dry and flying
away

Don't know what the problem
is. I usually love the fall.

October 1989

how can tomorrow come
if we do not release the chains of yesterday

how can we enjoy the sun
if we do not give the clouds a chance to pass

how can life go on
when death is regarded

October 1989

there is condemnation
and condemnation
a man has an illness
he is not the illness
but needs curing
a man has sinned
he is the sinner
he is not the sin
and needs curing

(that is
love
and Jesus)

October 1989

I stood aside
my head a storm of thought
asking God:
 how could those
 who love you, Lord
 persist in their sin;
 knowing their error
 and continue in it?
Do you still forgive us
even as we open your wounds?

Ages later,
too long almost,
the answer came:
 Not by works or deeds
 of good or bad
 are you saved
 but by my mercy.
Only.

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, (Titus 3:4-5)

September 1989

I hate this world!
and the things of it
we, once destined for joy
crawl hungrily in pain
our noblest emotions
perverted
our hands
perfect for lifting up
so often strike down
and mouths that should be praising God
deny Him without tears

oh God, take me up
this evil thunders down
strikes my heart
lifts my fear
where
in all this storm of life
can I rest
I am too tired
too weak
to do your good, God
I fear to give up
but I dread going on
I need you Lord
near me
to save me

September 1989

I realized Lord
that the battle would be a hard
throat clutching
fist raising
confrontation
I accepted that
life is, after all,
unfair
we all suffer the consequences
of an other's fall
but Lord
I'd never even thought
until now
it would be eternal

help me
I continually fall

September 1989

Gabriel came in
and went out
and in between exulted
a smile radiant on his face
barely fitting his joy
in the room with him
as he said ~
"The Lord is with you,
highly favoured one!"
to a puzzled woman
eventually
the mother of Christ

August 1989

sometimes, I fear
I am further from Heaven
than I am from Hell

sometimes, I am
further from God
than I should be
and closer to death
than I care to be

sometimes I see
less than I can
but more than I should

sometimes, I should
be taken out to a field
and prayed for
or shot

July 1989

something in me permits me live
while all about screams "die!"
a trusted hand that holds my life,
in the tumult of the rage,
secure
when I alone cannot survive
when demons shred my soul
my God remains and hears my cry
and rushes to my aid

alone I will not stand
unless I stand in Him, alone

June 1989

here I am, Lord
once the child
thrilled to be alive
now the man
confronted by life
it changes
it
continues
the child I was is not the man
I am
yet is
somewhere within

confusion abounds me
this soul bends
twists and almost snaps
this child sees life
and longs to leap
this man lives life
and knows
mourning and dancing
together

May 1989

it is evening
the almost end
of an other day
the sun is slowly pulling the shades
sweeping up
the last of its light from the sky
yet some does remain
hanging in the air
light blue and almost grey
but for the singing of a bird
or three
and the wind on the trees
silence

far
far beyond me
the moon
radiant in twilight
floats upon the sky
far beyond our reach
but within our touch
the moon
pleasant mistress of nighttime waves
keeper of the lover's prayer
shines

May 1989

in The Commons
studying
unsuccessfully
farewell is too soon
from friends so dear
as these
piano music floats
soft upon the air
Brenda is playing again
gloriously!
songs of praise
bursting at my lips
how could I not sing
God is here

on the right Evy talks
to friends of hers
passing by
conversation entwined with song
God is here too

in my seat am I
shortly to leave this room
full of life
for another
equally bright
in the presence of love
life is calling
I must move on
God is here as well

how can God not be here
the music
the love
the life
all proclaim His here-ness
can separation be final
when God is here
everywhere

Some of my friends added:
"Hallelujah! Praise the LORD! AMEN!"
"Muy bien mi hermano! Gloria a Dios! Amen!"

April 1989

my Lord! why?
why do I suffer now
as none has right to suffer
why do these ghosts persist
their tormenting of my heart
I am alive Lord
I am young
my days should be filled with joy
yet the joy I have is fleeting
torn from my grasp like water
frantically clutched at in thirst

I feel there is no right
for me to feel this pain
its cause should not have been
yet it was
its memory lingers
its dark vines clutch at my soul
strangling life
that struggles desperately to live
I cannot escape at all
the grief
the pain
the sadness
it lurks about
a hidden but proven foe
dear God
why am I so small
as to let these demons live
help me
oh please God, help me
reclaim for me my life

April 1989

it may be my exhaustion
bringing back this fear
dark nightmares of past events
and my reaction to them
I have less control of my mind
when it is tired
 frightening
 for I am tired often
and it rambles over ground
I'd sooner not tread
so I fight it hard
fear and I
bitter combatants
in battle for my heart

yet when I awake
from this occasional gloom
it fades as the demons of the night
becoming but the merest shadow
of a deadly encounter
laughed at in the day

this ride I cannot endure
it strikes my very soul
oh God!
come quick to aid me
rescue yet again
these trembling feet of clay

April 1989

I walk upon this earth
a man
a man of God
but still a man
who stumbles, falls
and sinks in seas
too rough for feet of clay

I have no idea
of what God has planned
nor why things that are
exist
apparently of His will
to my baby spiritual eyes
why does He uphold my heart
when pain throws its deadly darts
none can explain the heart of God
who does so every day
I only know
that through it all
good or bad
God is
that alone sustains my life

April 1989

I have suffered Adam's curse
in ways few would understand
great misery has been brought me
because of one man's fall
I alone, I feel at times
bear this awful load

oh Lord my God!
these thirty years I've sought to serve
faithfully your commands
I love you
I love my brother
oh my god
why has misfortune come to me
most unfairly of all on earth

I am no more righteous
than my brother
or my sister
I too, stand in need
of sovereign love and grace
while I may not merit
what I receive
I cause in others pain as well
so in the end I do

I have suffered Adam's curse
and suffer from it still
but I enjoy the love of God
who cares
that too is undeserved
though mourning, I rejoice

April 1989

I praise my God
for His sustaining grace
I rejoice in my Saviour
for His love
in my despair
He did not forget me
He held me fast
granting my life
renewed strength
in the face of awesome foes
my God alone has pulled me through
His love alone my strength
His gifts the stuff of life

oh you people praise my God
 He is worthy
 He is holy
 He is alive!
not only holding the stars
spangled on the night
but my life as well
praise Him for my life
praise Him
believe Him
and live!

April 1989

In Memoriam ~ A Self Portrait with God

death is not the master
death cannot hold sway
where life was
life will be
a higher power holds the strings
a greater love still lives
joy and pain roommates aren't
joy and love go hand in hand
a larger, tender hand
sustains what once was lost
life goes on
in face of death
forgiveness, found and freed
death cannot live
in love's return

April 1989

In Memoriam ~ A Self Portrait

he walked and he talked and
yes
he even sometimes laughed
a pleasant laugh
if dishonest
harsher thoughts hidden
beneath its gentle sound

if you'd taken a closer look
into his eyes
then
you'd not have seen joy
hidden behind the fog
joy and pain do not share rooms
his eyes
had he not hidden them
would have told the truth

yes
he lived, he breathed
outwardly
he was alive
inwardly
he was all the time
his own mausoleum

through his life
death held its grip
until he himself
became a pale façade
a front of life
through which death lived

April 1989

yes
I am alive
again this body flies
the skies above no cage
the earth below a springboard
flinging my heart again on high
t'ward the heavens
so long beyond my reach
songs come free upon my heart
so long the home of death

I am alive!
again

thank God!

March 1989

for a time
an animal lived
where there had been reason
self-serving
self-concerned
self-destructive
struggles for continuing life
regardless the cost
violent opposition
based more on instinct
than thought
a beast
cornered
desperate to live

occasionally
the man returns
beating back the beast
more successfully at times
than others
he too involved
in a desperate fight to live
in the face of a foe
too evil to respect
prayers and tears
alone his weapons
he fights
sometimes as a beast
sometimes as a man
dearly wishing to live
afraid of the death
already too close to hand

March 1989

the grief hides deep
behind smiles
 at long last
 returned
buried beneath layers of me
none could ever touch
it is there
in the midst of me
a darkness
a fear
lives and breaths
and has its life
far behind what others see
never told in what they hear
mine
mine alone this pain
that slowly
 oh so slowly
dies

March 1989

how can I reconcile
the forgiveness of God
to the pride of this man
unless as man I die
to find my life in Him

so if I must die as man
then I will die
hoping for the faith
that a life in God
is better than life as man

March 1989

how dare you demons curse
the ground where I wish to dance
how dare you come
where you are not allowed
leave me
let me live in peace

oh God
it continues
this nightmare curse
release me Lord
that I may live
come and chase the demons out
'ere I die

March 1989

looking back
from this place
I now find myself at
I see foreboding towers
dark
in the light of day
but behind me
with many others
older
about the road I took
standing there
dark and silent
places of death
I've narrowly passed

massive mountains crumble
others thrusting high
my roadway alters
what is
changes

time moves
dust deepens
life goes on

March 1989

do you know how good it feels to dance
at last
unrestrained?

I do

I am released from death
again my soul takes wing

March 1989

clouds are boiling overhead
some inside as well
I'm walking in between
joyful
in the midst of pain
I still walk
and live and breathe
God has not left me
and I can sing

March 1989

there's a thunder storm
rolling north of town
I can see its clouds
black
on the far sky
where last night stars
uncounted shined

the stars
for all their glory
could not slow the storm
that rendered them
a memory
any more than
the memory of better times
can pause the mourner's cup

March 1989

ah, but life goes on
indeed
it goes on well
even locomotives
 and their cars
may be re-railed
God does not
let us stand alone
no matter how rough the ride
He is near at hand to bless
sustain
encourage

this man knows
this man is nothing
apart from God
and it makes this man
happy

March 1989

I am but one
at that, the least
of a race at once
great upon the earth
and small

no one knows
why I live
not even I

no one knows
who I am
not even I

yet I live
I breathe
I love
and am loved
and as this is true
I am content

March 1989

a pause
at midday
to look inside

seeing floodgates open
water rushes forth
enthusiastically
to soon become a torrent

and birds
they are only truly birds
when loosed from the earth
or a cage
to flit about the sky
to land at random points

so too my thoughts
like waters long held back
suddenly flowing free
as the dam is bust
like birds aflight
to land on random bits
where at last they may be seen

March 1989

sun rising high
among our spirits
moon shining full
with our joy
beyond the stars
our hope lies
He who framed the earth
who spoke the stars to life
holds us strong
within His hand

February 1989

I can't forget Your love
I thought I could
but it came back to me
like birdsong in spring
after a long hard winter

February 1989

my God!
the grief you felt
that awful day
your only
treasured Son

dead

my god!
could tears become your face
that laughed creation's dawn
could your hands
that juggled stars
and moulded man
truly clench in pain
could your breath
that gave men life
stop
as we took His

my god!
I am sorry
for me you endured this pain
but for the man I am
it need never have come
I am sorry

my God!
how you must have smiled
a million suns obtaining life
by your joy
your laugh
it must have shamed the thunder
as He came dancing back
leaping planets in His joy

My Father!
My Father!
It is FINISHED!

your Son
the mighty King
returning to your side
surely the universe ceased its pause
dancing quick from mourning
echoing to this day
the joy of love fulfilled

my God!

I thank you
for being saved by what I caused
I too can come to you
singing and dancing in joy
and bow before you
in adoration

Inspired by Carmen's
"The Champion!"

February 1989

Dad
I've never told you
of the impact you've had
on the way I've grown
maybe that I never will
but daily
in my prayers
I've thanked God for you
(and beside you
Mom)
and the influence you've had
from babe
to boy
to youth
and at last
as a man
each step I took
was beneath your eye
to approve
or rebuke
in either case
you were there
mere words could never say
the thanks I mean to give

now as I take that final step
from your home
to one of my own
I think of all you've been
as I've grown
and I remember one
more than all
your walk with God
guiding mine
helping it mature
to where I can face the world
unashamed of my Father
as my father is unashamed
and for this
more than all
I thank you

I pray someday that I may show
to a son of mine
what you've shown to me
and watch him as he grows
from child to man
under God and myself
as I was

under God and you

January 1989

For Opa and Oma: Early Farewell

happier days
I see them shine
on your pictures by my side
days when smiles were free
unclouded by pain
open
honest
and there
not at the end of a journey
but actually there
seen by all

now but a memory
recalled after years
have long unrolled
blinding though they be
merest shadows
of the smiles today
near the close of the book
pain dogging
each move
joy shining loud
you hear God calling
and long to go
leaping in His courts
in joy
the bodies now frail
upheld by His strength
rejoicing in His life

go
stay no longer
on account of me
He wants you more than I
I am older now
and grown
I'll remember love
as shown by you
and rejoice
in the life God let us share

December 1988

the battle rages
fierce within my heart
the power of love
contending with
the power of hate
enjoined
in bitter
mortal conflict
over me
sinner/saint that I am
my heart the spoil
protected by light
assaulted by dark
all that I am
lies under siege
there is nothing that is me
that is free
from threat of war
every deed I do
to honour my King
touched and perverted
by the pretender to the throne
yet will I rejoice
for every sin I am
is touched and cleansed
by the King Himself
He does not leave me
as often as I fall
but stands beside me
Love is surely
a better friend than foe
hate can never live
in Love

December 1988

Madison Square

Jesus loves me this I know
for the Bible tells me so

we sing the words aloud
enthusiastically
the Spirit of God with us
working through us
to lead us on to Him
except
that Spirit I don't feel
weeping on the inside
for what I couldn't have
I stand
unlike my friends around me
weeping for joy in the Lord

feeling lost, alone, and forgotten
I stood silent
how could I sing these songs of joy
knowing that for me
these words were false
Monique and Ron
my friends right beside me
have it right
as I hope that God
will soon allow me

People need the Lord
we hear a little later
and I
recalling an other friend
Brenda on the piano
cry at last
honestly
quietly
Peter, too,
needs the Lord

December 1988

God is great
God is good
let us thank Him for

lives
lived in joy
God's guiding hand
leading us on
in love
through grief
to glory
His love entwined
in our every step

family
raising us in love
supporting us in our grief
supporting us in our growth
a safe, warm place
where love is found
unselfish
an example of Christ's

friends
that give life joy
burden bearers
laughter raisers
companions on the road
protection from danger

through grief to glory
His love entwined
in our every step

December 1988

oh Lord
you're beautiful
your face
is all
I seek

I want to write this
so badly
but it's been said so well
already
by better writers than I
so instead of writing
in my poor hand
I'll sing the song already wrote
with joy within my soul

December 1988

we take it so casually
our ability to eat
anything we want
anytime we want
to eat it
no worries confronting our hearts
we do not fear hunger
we feed it

we have been given much
of us much will be asked
guilt need not haunt us
as we enjoy our meals
and our cupboards are full
unless we have done nothing
to fill the cupboards
of those with less

December 1988

To Auntie Anita

in attempting a favour
to you
I obtained one
for me
fleeing from my loneliness
past your home
I remembered my forgetfulness
to you last week
and stopping the car
went in to see how you were
you were great!
and rubbed off on me
one friendly voice
in this lonely city
thank you

December 1988

unanswered questions
hanging in the air
their journey never completed
slowly they fall to the ground
enlarging the wall
between you and I

December 1988

Chicago

this morning the girls tried on
for fun
thirty-five thousand dollars in rings
one ring
laughing at the "movie like" feeling
of it all

then, adventure calling
rising ninety-four floors
above the street
to look down upon this city
from eleven-hundred feet
country kids
out for a walk in town

this afternoon it changed
from diamond studded pendants
to litter ridden streets
from the height of man's achievement
to the depths of his despair
and we
as Christians
in shock
observed these two extremes

from the world's top
to its basement
in short hours
shaken by the transit
we want to save the world
it came and entered our home
our safe backyard invaded
no longer safe from storm
we
with our hearts ablaze for God
desiring to work His will
found for ourselves
how close His will can be

After a "Students Serving Students" weekend
in Chicago and finding the limits of reality and
how close despair exists to our sheltered lives.

November 25, 1988

who will bless the givers
if not the Lord Himself

for your gift, I thank you
it is a thing I don't deserve
again God's grace is shown to me
I pray I use it as I must

may our Father richly bless you
as you have done for me
may He return a thousand fold
the kindness of your heart

To Mac & Doris Snobelen
one month before the day
the greatest gift of all
thank you
may God bless you

November 1988

Lord
who am I
that you call my name
that you love me
I am but a man
sinfully living
after my kind
how great you indeed must be
to love me as you do

there is nothing I have Lord
that is not from you
all that I possess
everything that I do
is all from you
you've filled my life
with joy and love
surely I don't deserve it
I
a creature of your hand
standing proud upon this ball
so tiny next to you
how could I dare lay claim
to all that you have given

I stand in awe, Lord
of who you are
you are crowned as king
by the stars themselves
the sun and the moon
are mere candles in your sight
you speak
and the earth is silent
you speak
and things happen
yet in all your greatness
have you to forget me
the smallest of all on earth
I sing your praise falsely
far too often
even now I may not be true
to what I write
my life, great God
is filled with sin
yet you love me
I am amazed
truly you are God
almighty over all the earth
if I didn't before

I believe it now

you are my God
over all the king
I am your servant
whatever that may mean
the humble praise I offer now
accept it from my heart
not as this pen can tell
only in my heart
exist the words to praise you
as best this person can
whatever service I can do
be it small or large
I am yours to command
accept as you can
the humble and imperfect devotion
of this man you made
and love

November 1988

another test I've failed
lies at the front of the class
on the table
for the overhead
wrapped in silver
with a bow

seeing it
I immediately think
it's mine
though why it is
is beyond me
sheer greed must dictate
this possession I feel
for that little box

so I fail
and in failing learn
again
of my frail humanity
and its control
over my life

November 1988

my companion
I'll miss you
too soon our paths diverge
each going on
as our God sees fit

I count as blessing
the years we spent as friends
you've helped me grow
into what I am
I love you
as I love few others

and now our lives depart
the course that once they shared
our great God
whom we both serve
eagerly
calls us on
I'll miss you
weeping that those days are gone
rejoicing
at the days that come
as God has promised
when our lives again unite
before His throne
singing praises to His name
the one who made us friends

November 1988

For Richard

so many years ago
we sang
a song of praise to God
a song I sing again tonight
alone
you
my dearest
oldest friend
were not here
I wept
with joy that I could praise my God
here
far from home
with sadness
my friend
that you are not here
celebrating with me

I remember years
we celebrated together
so long ago they seem
they are almost enough
although
I long to sing with you once more
the song we sang back then

Sing alleluia to the Lord!

For Richard, who is not dead
but the times we shared
are now long gone.

November 1988

The Guys on Fuller

you guys on Fuller
praying for me at night
are saints
and a blessing to my life
for such as you
I praise and thank our God
to you He is real
our world needs that
His reality goes unseen
too often
even with us

To the guys on Fuller:
Anson Veenstra
Ernest Stellingwerf
Peter Jansens

Thanks!

November 1988

outside the storm winds blow
trees are picking up their skirts
and dancing in the winds
while leaves leap out
from underfoot

behind these windows
I look and see
glad that they are there
for I hate the wind
in its careless force

these trees that dance
joyfully in this wind
have no fear of messed up hair
this wind that could be their doom
is their cause to dance

November 1988

the fear of the Lord
is the beginning of wisdom
those who trust in God
do nothing wrong
the Lord rewards with blessing
those faithful to His name
who do as He commands
He speaks to those who love Him
guiding them in His work

November 1988

To Those Who Pray

my friends I thank you
before God I thank you
unasked
you prayed for me
standing before God in prayer
asking for His help
where you could not go
true friendship is nothing more

I now live in jubilation
your prayers were answered well
my life is dancing on
there are many upon this earth
to whom I owe my life
my growing faith in God
may God reward you well
on earth I have no greater gift
than the love of faithful friends

To my friends,
Grace Hu and Carolyn Van Der Woude
who prayed for me. In gratitude.

November 11, 1988

we had our moment today
a short
sixty seconds
of remembrance and prayer
closed by Doctor Kroeze
praying from the front of the class
together in silence
we thanked God
for the life we have today
thanks to those who lived
yesterday

November 1988

thank you, my Lord
for your love
and your grace
to the man of sin
I am

I called upon you
in my despair
the sadness of my life
and you answered me
relieving me
from all my fears
showing in your grace
mercy to me
more unworthy
than all else on earth
claiming yet again
this creature for your own

though my life may not be smooth
though trial and error come
I will rest in the Lord
my God alone
He is able to comfort me
and sustain me in my ill

November 1988

somewhere out there Lord
is the goal to which I walk
some job to spread your glory
some deed to praise your name
of which I am unaware
I want to work for you
my God who gives me life
I want to serve you as I can
in what you've called me to

need I wait
must my years pass by as waste
dear Lord
I feel I spin my wheels here
waiting for your call
wasting my years as days
for what I could do now
yet I feel correct
even blessed by you
to work toward that time
your will is fully known

fill these years of mine
short though they be
with joy and purpose
and labour for you

November 1988

my friend
you are confused
and in your confusion
you abuse my love for you
hurting me

the first that it happened
I hated you
feeling you betrayed my love
now I am older
praying for you instead
that you may be
what God wants
happy
and serving Him
fulfilling the trust
He has placed in you

personally
I pray it happens soon
for I find I am unable
to remain your friend
on your terms alone
 though I love you still
I too
am a child of God
I too
have fears

After Randy V. exploded for some reason or an other

November 1988

this heart of mine demands me weep
I have no reason why
of all on earth
none other has reason to sing
as I
yet I cry

oh my God
please give me the strength
to rejoice in you always
in joy
and when life drags away
forgive me for my grief
remain my reason to dance

November 1988

I am a dreamer
hopelessly
helplessly
my feet not firmly grounded
upon the earth
they are
cloud walkers
more than anything else
I do not admit reality
except as it touches me
too easily
my mind slips its gears
idling along
following a random whim
while the world pass me by

November 1988

I have once been young
I am growing older
my days have been filled
with the ways of man
yet in all my steps away
God remained
to whom else could I return
my God has never left me
the Almighty God hears my prayers
lifting me from my shame
 He is faithful to the righteous
 He upholds them in temptation
 He redeems them from their sin
who is a God like my God
who accepts me in all my ways
who but God accepts my prayers
forgiving me
yet still blessing me greatly
who but God shows mercy
to me who is but dust

October 1988

the answered prayer
suddenly
surprisingly
in ways unexpected
the fervent prayer answered
God works in mysterious ways
His wonders to perform
and my heart is glad
those who have faith
in the God who lives
will not be forsaken
I have learned it
I believe it
God is always with me
for He is my God
Him alone will I serve

Written after Beth said "Yes!"

October 1988

To Steve Vanderhilt and Larry Ablen
(friends at Reformed Bible College)

my friends
my dear and trusted friends
how could I ever repay you
for what you've done for me
my gratitude knows no bounds
it cannot be expressed
by my merely human lips
you've reassured my grasp on life
again I feel its joy
again I live for Christ
thank you

on earth God has no servants
more faithful than loving friends

After an hour of talk
about my future
and its connection
to God and to Beth.
Thanks guys!

October 1988

"Dear Pete:

Keep smiling, because God loves you and I'm trying!!

Randy"

it's odd
sometimes
what friends will do
in some of their various moods
above, a line
from one rejoicing
in life
in friends
and trying hard to make me stay
when my heart is heading home
those who aid a man
on the path designed by God
must surely be rewarded
by the God they work to please

October 1988

creator of the rain that thunders down
do you see it stir me
appreciating in my small way
this show you're putting on
all nature sings your majesty
this rain proclaims your name
and I can merely stand in awe
wondering how in your perfection
you can love the likes of me
and that you
owner of all creation
would pay your own Son
to save my life
amazed that the greatness that you are
can accept my humble thanks

October 1988

material things
possessions of this life
are standing between
me and my God
whom I serve

me
a man
at once
humble and proud
a scattered collection of thoughts
unknowing of the future
to which I ride
merely a man
born to death
breathing a span
suddenly dead
uncaring then
for all I own
save God

God
my God
awesome in power
glory and might
only ruler
of all creation
the very life
of all that is
how are you willing to love
such as I
and pay for me
to let me live
you see my imperfection
and love me yet
guiding these wayward feet
on your chosen road
of all I possess
only you own me

how can the things I have made
stand between my God and I
plastic and metal
will all burn away
only you live on
save me from myself
oh Lord
help me live for you alone

October 1988

on my desk beside me
are four pictures
with dozens more inside
and thousands more at home
of people once and always dear to me
a varied collection of faces I've loved
and love still
my group of friends
that made and make my life
the wonderful experience it is

mere words cannot express to you
the gratitude I have
to you
the ones who love me
and to God
who gave us love to share
I pray that someday
after Christ's return
I may stand with you before the throne
and praise you to God
and thank you before Him
for without your urging
I wouldn't have arrived

I love you
I thank you
I praise God for you

may our God richly bless you
for all you've been for me

October 1988

I read in the bible
and in other books
of the casting of life upon the Lord
fearless of tomorrow
trusting fully in Him
for all that is needed
and my heart beats more strongly

I read of the men of old
like Paul
and Peter
and James and John
and also of the men of now
like Billy
and Watchman
and Calvin and Lewis
casting their lives upon the Lord
and being richly blessed
while blessing others
and fire courses my veins

I read of the devotion
of the people of God
to God
through life
even unto death
regardless of hate
or persecution
or even reward
other than God's
and I weep

I read of selfless sacrifice
for the Lord
trusting on Him to sustain
and the lives that were saved
as a result
and I want to shout with joy

I write these lines
while reading others
asking myself time after time
why not I
if God can use me
I long to serve
the God I love is able
He will uphold me
in any circumstance
of that I am sure

why not, my God
why not I
if you can use me
take me
I'll serve

Calvin Miller, not John Calvin

October 1988

on the edge of sanity
reason having fled
control being taken
this body is falling away
on a berserker course to ruin
warning signs ignored
precipice just ahead
beyond which lies
destruction
a once exuberant life
now to be
a tangled mass of ruin
so very soon

to sleep
oh! to sleep just one night
the trusting sleep of childhood
one night alone
to shake this devil from my back
that screams forever
 "Drive on!
 Go!
 Fly!
 Have no peace!"
and regain once more
the ability to live

October 1988

our God reigns
in this world we see it
the beauty of creation
proclaims our God as king
ruler of all

can we deny Him honour
we who from His breath have life
to turn our backs on Him
defies our cause for life
if the silent earth must praise His name
how much more so we
the creatures of His image
are called to honour Him
our being begs to praise Him
with all that is in it
let us then be led by nature
praising God our maker
with all that we are

October 1988

autumn
her dashing hand now comes upon
us
painting as she runs
leaping tree to tree
leaving in her train
colours
such as amaze the eye
brilliant, blazing hues
overlie the green
of summer's fading beard

October 1988

To Ron Visser

tonight again I heard
the song I feel is yours
always when I hear it
I remember you
my friend of years
confidant and pal

where you are
once I was
so far from here
but I keep you in my heart
my friend
love can never end

September 1988

where gratitude and grace are met
let me be there
dear Lord
let me be there
an example of your grace
alive
through your death
filled with life for you

where gratitude and grace are met
let me be there
dear Lord
let me be there
thankful always for your love
grateful
for your life
through which my life is lived

September 1988

this morning Lord
I heard your word
preached by a man on fire
a holy flame
burning for you
 bless him Lord
I felt the flame lick at my heart
but not quite catch hold
fan them Lord
the little sparks that glow
cause them to grow
so I too may burn
a holy flame for you
and set others alight

September 1988

For Mike Baxter

it is Sunday
late in the afternoon
beneath a brilliant autumn sky
I've just completed
part of a letter to Beth
as you've just done
a letter of your own
and have fallen asleep
across the table from me
as I write this
and now we come to the reason
why I write this

I wish to thank you
for helping me live
so far from home
you are indeed
a friend

September 1988

to my friend Randy
who is continually quoting
God's word

here
my friend
are some words for you

"I sought the LORD
and He answered me;
He delivered me
from all my fears."

pretty decent, eh!
this is from the psalms
of David
psalm thirty four
verse four
to be precise
though the whole psalm
is awesome!

September 1988

thunder rumbles outside
in the daylight sky
I see the flash
of lightning
Gilbert is taking another swipe
at us here in G. R.
however much weaker
he has become

over the sound of life
here in this city
the distant rumble sounds
soon it will be here
the storm
and rain again will fall
silencing the world
so Gilbert might say his piece

and when he leaves
we'll continue on
life picking up
where once it paused
moving on
'neath star filled night
or sun brilliant day
the sound of thunder
a fleeting memory
the flash of lightning
lost in light
rain
but a whisper on the wind

September 1988

in your image
have I been formed
yet I differ
for I am sin
you are holy,
and since you are mercy,
love,
and all other things,
you gave your holiness
at great sacrifice
to me
and I again
am in your image

September 1988

outside the window
trees are aflame
even in the rain
now falling from Heaven
wind-tossed leaves
scatter random drops
across the garden
yet these leaves burn
and fly
and set the ground ablaze

September 1988

For Dave Boonstra

My dear friend
I have loved you dearly
I love you still
I pray for you often
that our God will bless you
guide you in you walk
and keep you safe
especially now
in your different world
so far removed from mine

I read in your letters
what you say
and I am cheered
but I often wonder
how you feel
how difficult it must be
to live so far from home
yet
how easy it must be
to see God's hand

I would not trade places
indeed, I could not
but still
I envy you

September 1988

they are born alone
which is a miracle
 (being alone)
and for a time
they live alone
while they grow
larger and wiser
which is too, a miracle
 (the growing)
yet being alone
after a time
eventually ends
 (most times)
in a thing much better
because God made it so
and proclaimed it good
that love should exist
between them
together

because God made it so
a man will leave his parents
and a woman hers
and the two
shall become one
which again is a miracle
 (being two, yet one)

September 1988

so what do I do now
with the life I have before me
this life that God has granted me
where am I to take it
or let it take me

if I let the fear take hold
I return to what I was
without change or chance

if I let God take hold
I'll know only the goal to which I strive
not the path He's chose
it is in other hands

but I know
the choice for life that I must make
I shall go with God!

oh my God
grant that I may know your desire
lead me where you will
I pray the strength to follow
guide me Lord
so even I may see
and follow only you

September 1988

"Come!"
you said
with open arms
and I did
eagerly taking the chance
to see you again
and get used to my new life
a step at a time
you say
you are happy to have me
I think I believe you
but tell me this
why you ate breakfast today
alone
leaving me to wander about
alone
now as you leave
I have time to reflect
I feel like an obstruction
placed here in your lives
staying here didn't help
hardly at all

September 1989

this is it
here we are
my last full day at home
I prayed it would be easy
it was
until tonight
I love you guys so much
and now I go

pray for me
that I may live
as God will lead me to
I'll miss you
oh
how I'll miss you
pray for me
that I may carry on
past this hole
that for this time
holds back my life

September 3, 1988

I'm sick to death of covering up
I want to rant and rave
I am mad
angry at the world
how could it be so wrong
on my last night at home

Mom
Dad
I'm sorry I wasn't there
you'll miss me
after I go
yet all I do
is stay away

Beth
I love you
as I have told you
tonight
I needed you
like never before
to talk to
to be with
to soothe my fragile soul
I busted tonight
the sadness of leaving is real
much more than I can take
I needed to tell you
to open up with someone
shove aside my brave
but put-on face
but after the party
we're watching videos
with friends
I had no idea how
to take you away from that
though the desire was strong
I needed you
I couldn't begin to reach you
so now I write
and pray
hard
for I am miserable
and I know not what to do
I love you
I need you
always

My friends

forgive me
if I didn't dance around
the evening was all wrong
but nothing would have been right
no matter what
I had too much on my mind
to enjoy it at all
I am too selfish
to enjoy it your way
thank you for your care
and for your love
forgive me

After the "All Purpose Party" of tonight when it
finally hit that I was leaving & and a misunderstanding.

September 1988

To Opa and Oma

you said you would miss me
last night
as we talked
for what may be the last time
for a time

then
sitting on the couch
silent
staring at the window
slowly growing darker
the sun was setting
I guess it has been for a while now

I'll miss you Opa
(and you too, Oma
you both have meant a lot
always)
and how we used to talk
I'll remember you with love
everywhere I go
I wish I didn't have to
my life is calling me on
and I must go

I'll see you when I can

August 1988

A Poem for Darlene

lying here, on my bed
reading the many letters you've written
listening to the "Messiah"
praising the God you love
I remember the things we've done
the talks we've had
the friends we've been
and are (though distant)
I remember your smile
how it used to light up the room
I remember your voice
and mine in conversation
each a shoulder for the other
a sounding board for life
in all its variety
I remember your letters
always friendly
always praising God
which I seldom answered
do you remember the Youth Service
August '86
in Port Perry?
I wrote this there for you and Doug:

sitting next to you in church
last night
I thought
 what glory!
 getting carried away in love
God was truly there!

El Shaddai

Praise the God:

do you remember the soloist
faltering on the words
the three of us
and others
began to sing
we knew the song
and felt it bursting out
a church full of youth
joyfully singing
freely praising God

El Shaddai

I remember it
often
God was truly there!
He was truly in us!
as He is truly in you!
in all I remember
lies proof

you said (long years ago)
I was a friend to you
it may be true
for you are one of those
that showed me God
how could I not be your friend
after that?

and lying here, I think
that soon you are to marry
William
the man of your dreams
you spoke of him often
I pray that God will bless you
that He will remain truly in you
in the two of you
as now your pathways join
others (like myself) are praying
they join also with God's
in Him alone lies life
(you've told me that so often
I remember)

I pray God will keep you
and guide you through your life
as He promised
I pray too, that you love Him
in the time to come
as you did
in the time now gone

continue to inspire me
with your faith
and joy
God bless you
as He has blessed me through you

For Darlene Borger, a very good friend
Her wedding to her Will was Beth and my first date.

August 1988

the craziness of the weekend
ended early
only I carried on
'til midnight Tuesday
and not even I
went further
no one else took over
and I was the rest of the week
alone

August 1988

it's hard to believe there's a hole in the sky
on days like this

on days like this
the blue goes on forever
sunlight streaming down
hot, clear, and blinding
colours exuberant in it all
just look at Hinze's new barn
gloriously red
plunked squarely down on a field
of living, vibrant green

there ain't no hole up there
on days like this

Found August 20, 1988
Written after Uncle John Died

in death there came
care
concern
love
and laughter

a perfect meeting
between faith and life
life and death
and humour

a perfect wish
with perfect care
so much was received

thank you for your acceptance
of my tears
my love of friends
and my need to laugh

To the Belleville Young Adults,
and William (who though a guest,
signed his name as well).

August 1988

could I become
and honourable man
now
in this life
this body

could the beasts that plague
this fragile skin
be overthrown
by this skin
to save the soul within
without God

this body lives its vibrant life
but once
then to become as dust
its desires
its struggles
its needs
its pains
all pass
the soul it cannot save
it cannot save itself

could I become
an honourable man
now
in this life
this body
yes
by grace of God
alone

July 1988

a metal scream echoes in the night
an eerie spectre
of monsters long gone
for a moment alive again
in my mind
then the truck next door stops
ten tons of rolling steel
coming to rest
in the night

July 6, 1988

I saw the tree tonight
where we used to climb
half of it was gone though
like us
it died, I think
shortly after you
I wonder what will happen
after I die

for now it lives
and so do I
its remnant is still great
that's the part we used to sit
for hours while old folks talked
now I talk with them
strange how we change
yet stay the same

Opa and Oma were married
twenty years today
I talked to Opa for a while
excitedly sharing views
seven decades spread
he too changed
once he walked in our world
now I enter his

I miss you Ben
I'll see you
some day

praise God!

July 6, 1968 to July 6, 1988.
Twenty years for Opa and Oma!
Five or so for Ben.

Found July 1988

I saw you tonight
as never before
sitting
 asleep
in your corner chair
a window breezing beside you
a fan
bathing weary feet
in coolness

I thought about those feet
while you
 under the lamp-light
slept
the countless miles they've gone
the places and the times
they've carried you through
and I realized that I love you

For Dad, again. He doesn't read
poetry, probably written last summer.

Found July 1988

How can this body sing
that so recently cursed your name
this sordid web of nerves and skin
so closely tied to earth
can this thing praise you
as you desire
This frail heap of tangled mores
how can beauty live here
one perfect thought
or holy hope
this frame possessed
and swine could eat the rose
This morbid brother
clutches wildly at life
so freely given
yet ignored
Stupidity called intelligence
repugnance revealed as beauty
its greatest day is foreign to
one hour of holy bliss
How can praise from this
be music to your ear
How can you who gave your all
accept glory from these
self-serving, un-righteous
and craven lips?

Found July 1988

He has depths of honour
which I have never tasted
in even my finest hour
and still I called him fool

Definitely for Dad,
upon remembering.

Genesis 4:7

sin lies crouching at the door
its desire is for me
my desire is for it
my desire is also for God

things get very difficult
at this point

The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it." (Genesis 4:7)

June 1988

tomorrow is Friday!
words screamed it joyfully on
the Thursday evening of a hectic week
one more time for duty
before the well earned rest
arrives

this is not fake
it is not put on
the peace of five-o'clock
Friday afternoon
is real
the two days after
for hobbies and worship
a glass of wine
complimenting
a five course meal
the last is desert
the first is broccoli (Yo! Tom)
all is good

May 1988

Part Two

a year ago
or so
our mothers met in K-Mart
and talked
as mothers will
of their growing single sons
and their thoughts on marriage
yours: the field is getting larger
mine: let's just wait and see

now
after your sudden fall
I'm still waiting
you have the greatest field of all

Sadness comes at the death of peers,
even those unknown. Twenty six years
is not enough, death too high a price
to pay for childhood's folly.

May 30, 1988

Part One

we heard about you Sunday in church
just after speaking of the beauty of the day
just before sudden exclamations of shock
and fear, and pain, and sympathy
 we've known your families for years
 you were of us
we were asked to pray for you
and we did
 how could we not
 you were of us
on Monday the tragedy went on
we could pray for your families alone
in their grief at your sudden calling
 two decades is too short a time
 in which to pack a life
the prayer of the righteous, it is said
availeth much in the courts of God

Sunday night we sang
 I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless
 Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness
 Where is deaths' sting?
 Where, grave, thy victory?
 I triumph still if thou abide with me*
I believe this
I pray you did too
I pray your families do still

In memoriam:
Chuck Bruinsma and Ferdinand Kloompmaker
May 29 & 30, 1988

*Psalter Hymnal (1976), # 470, verse 4

May 1988

speed

it's in my blood
it's on my mind
it is

speed

it's the thrill of windblown hair
it's the thrill of racing storms
it's the thrill of

speed

I can plod along no longer
I'm longing to go faster
to race along the winds
I long to feel the edge of

speed!

March 1988

a bird flies
from one tree to the next
why
and what does it think
while it's getting there

A silly reminiscence from last summer.
I had gone to see Pastor John Visser
about my desire to enter Bible college
and saw a bird flit from tree to tree
and wondered why.

March 1988

again, tonight
the rain is falling
through the sky
to the ground
a thousand different roads
to one end

man too
travels varied roads
from common birth
to common death
but
one would hope
he has more intelligence
than to fall through his life

March 1988

you who I'll be leaving
in some not distant month
have raised me
and led me
hand-in-hand with God

I pray He rewards you greatly
for that if nothing else
"Whoever turns a sinner from
the error of his way
will save him from death
and cover over
a multitude of sins"

In guiding me to where He lives
you've guided me to life
Thank you.

March 1988

and even so
I may laugh
at the lines befallen me
for not all foretell of doom
but some give life the light
so rare joy is
in this world of ours
yet present everywhere

March 1988

sometimes
when the world is far
we live as God intended
it's written on our faces
sometimes
the joy we have inside
our faith in Christ
blazing in our eyes
His love
burning in our hearts
impossible not to see

sometimes

February 1988

outside, snow is falling
clouds block my view of heaven
again

I stand beneath a curse
and know not why
the God I said I love
is withdrawn
my friend no longer hears

why are you so distant
oh Lord!
what have I done
or am I doing
that would remove myself from you
tell me
so I may stop
and walk again in light
with you

February 1988

did you see the sun this morning
peeking through the clouds
for once the grey was golden
it was quiet too
like spring almost, but not
too much winter lies between
here and that distant time
but the sun did shine today
like heaven smiling down
blessing yet again this world
and those upon it
for as it shone without, it seemed
as though heaven shone within
this will be a big day

February 4, 1988

Dear Al, Dear Judy

twenty minutes ago
you called
said "Hi"
and left again
I thank you
contact with friends
 like you
is a treat all too rare
moments turn golden
and are stored in my safe
for recall in the down times

over here nothing much is new
'cept a razor
 uninteresting
 unless you're my chin
oh and the car will be mine in March
mortgage burning party to follow
closed ceremony
only me and those who show up

I think RBC will receive me
with open arms
I registered two weeks ago
Director of Admissions says
I'll be welcome
so I guess
I'll be leaving
come August

yippee!

we got snow today
tomorrow the skiers celebrate
winter's joyful other side
fun makes snow endurable
it seems
it does for me, at least
anyway
six inches of it
blanket our fields
little animals leave their calling cards
everywhere they go
the world seems more open this way
God peeling back the watch cover
to show us the spinning wheels

I digress
so often this occurs
maybe it shows a lack of control
who knows?

to continue
how are you and yours
your lives and your hopes
your dreams
your loves
are things going well?
it is to be hoped
God's blessings never stop
eyes only close

I've always dreamt
to write this way
I hope you enjoyed it to read
as I have to write
if not, oh well
compensation is enclosed

send your smiles along when you can
so I may see again
my once and future friends

Your Friend,
Pete

February 1988

down in a pit
drowning in the atrophied morals
of a Godless society

Paul was right in saying
"You are in the world,
but not of the world"
he also wrote
"The sin I don't want to do,
I do"

here I live
in a world I'm not part of
yet I am
I eat, I live, I celebrate

here I live
in a world I am part of
yet I'm not
my goal is a better gold

tarnished Christianity
is worthless
so I sink like Peter
on the storm before his Lord

Christianity itself
is valuable
life itself it brings
and calm within the storm

disgusting as this world may be
however sick its dreams
I can survive, intact
in the middle of it all
in it but not of it
hanging on to God

and if, as man, I drown
I drown but a shadow
of what I am in God
with Him I am everything
without Him I am nothing

January 1988

On Parting

headlights run Front Street
all heading away
inside Wendy's we sit
we three
comrades of other evenings
and other years

we sit
discussing our futures
making our varied plans
away from this focus
our lives soon will take us
away from the warmth
of a sudden evening tea
and get togethers over videos
on rare Monday nights

seven months lie yet
between us
and that coming day
I should rejoice
in the times you're left to me
but I don't
the tears of tomorrow drown
the joys of today
I find my dance decay
its steps go leaden

God brought us together
and we grew as friends
for that I give thanks
always
glory to God!
my prayer is now
that someday
in some unknown where
we will meet again
to smile
and laugh
at the yesterdays
once we shared

In Wendy's of Belleville, "dining" with Cathy and Shirley,
faced with the sudden reality of parting.

January 21, 1988

Me, On January 21, 1988

I am still
me
after

twenty seven and
one half years
three cars
ten jobs
half a dozen
girl friends
countless other friends
several episodes
of disaster
thousands of snap shots
 millions of
 changes of
 mind
sporadic realizations
of God's mercy
innumerable jokes
 most were laughable
two hundred and fifty thousand
kilometres
and billions of
light years

I still am
me

which makes me
a constantly changing
rather normal
kind of human

January 1988

the sun rises this morning
gloriously
as it always has before
a silent trumpet's blast
proclaiming the majesty of God

yet a Christian
I flee this awesome sound
twice

driving to T.O.
to see a friend's son
baptized
and celebrate
the covenant of love

closing a door to God
not allowing Him
free reign
in the tender/callous shell
of me

I too
trumpet His praise
less faithfully than His sun
the faithfulness of His Son
allows me too
to shine as pure
and celebrate again
His covenant of love

December 1987

close to the edge
I am
too close to the edge

one
little
push
and

I am
far too close
to the edge
far too
close

one
little
push
and

I am history

December 1987

great Lord!
all powerful King
Creator
Redeemer
Friend
you use the stars
for a playground
this ball of earth
to you is but a mote
a stool
to rest your feet
an inconsequential spec
and I am among the least
of those that live upon it
could you truly care for me?

December 1987

clean!

all the black marks of the past
erased
wiped out
what cause is there for grief?
although I may fall again
forgiveness is assured

today I may dance
for yesterday is grace
and tomorrow lies on the horizon
shining like a diamond
with hope

praise God!
again my life has meaning

December 1987

here we wait
Christmas overshadowed
like a falling fist
the gift of God
now a curse

mankind
in an effort to mature
has grown away from God
but has retained
in part
His glory
it struggles to purchase
what He would give for free

December 2, 1987

To Emily and to Life

alive!

somehow that word has meaning
now
after the sledge hammer bang
of on-coming traffic

full sized reality
does terrible things
to my little toy

after the close friend of

one hundred
fifty two thousand
two hundred
thirty nine kilometres

is reduced to scrap

God looks after us!
it's nice to know
when we are operating right
it's really impressive
when we are kind of stupid

so what
that Emily is dead

affection
for a ton of steel
is foolhardy

I still walk this world
I still praise my God
I rejoice in that



After Emily stopped a large Chrysler, shoot!
Emily was my 1984 Chevette coupe.

November 1987

they praise your name
and profane it too
to say: "God be praised!"
on one hand
and to curse Him
on the other
seems strange
two faces of man
at odds with each other

can God be praised
or cursed
by such as these
where does the line divide
a careless attitude
from one of love

Found November 1987

sun's coming through the window now
oh what a heavenly light
now shines upon this child
small and puny on this earth
amazed to silence
at this thin strand of gold

bejewelled by raindrops
attended by clouds
this final remnant of glory
fall softly on the air

November 11, 1987

quiet
all we hear now
the muted hum of our machines
unable to observe
our respect
for a sacrifice
forty years old
or more
our nation's heroes
now dead
these forty years
their stories but
tales passed on
down the line
of we who live
with hope for tomorrow
thanks to those
for whom our tomorrow
never came

October 1987

Tribute

if there is any comfort
for us alive on earth
 aside our faith in God
it is in love of friends
naught else on earth
 aside our faith in God
can render life a joy
a tender touch
by hand or prayer
support in times of trial
life is full because of these
 aside our faith in God

and you
my treasured friend
I could not ask for more
God has no gift greater
 aside nothing
than love

I love you
I thank God for you
without you
life is but existence
God bless you always
if only for what you are to me

love
in tangible form

October 1987

drowning
here
in this silent reach
of the human ocean
alone
but overwhelmed
one silent unsung ripple
proving again
entropy's law

Found October 1987

you stand there smiling
at my spiel
and ask me how I do it
when it is done

you are it

a simple phrase
or tone of voice
posture, pose or presence
a thousand little things
taken in
played about
twisted 'round
amplified
exaggerated
and spoken forth
loudly

you're in a carnival
and I'm its funny mirror

"Jesus loves you!"
you say
at the last

This morning we had baptism
a symbol of His love
a picture of the washing
water used for blood
Jesus does love us!
we cannot but see it
in salvation
in love
one for another

He loves you too!
you are one of us
even though you wander
you are one of us
you are a child of God

He will guide your feet
wherever your way be
God, the guide forever

Found October 1987

you who stilled the wind and waves
why do you show love for me
I who am but a breath
a mere collection of atoms
together for a span of years
as short as days
why do you care for me

October 3, 1987

last night in prayer
you started
starting with God
so good a beginning
for so large a step
 "Where two or more are gathered...
 I will be there"
He was!

today we felt it
in His name were you wed
kneeling together in prayer, you said
 "Our Father
 who art in heaven..."
but He was here
on earth
with you
on your day of days
standing before us
hand enfolding hand
so simple a showing
of your love

how honoured I have been
to be a part of this
thank you

as days move on to years
when smiles give way to tears
recall this day
that you began with God
that He does love you
beyond all human thought
 "All things work for good
 for those who love the Lord"

remember as well
this man loves you
as dearly as possible
on this world

God bless you both
now and always

For Ben and Helena Heuving, on
their wedding, October 3, 1987

August 1987

On Laughter

a fellowship of friends
seated joyfully
in the halls of God

can Rolaid's find solace here
in the absence of Kings
(humour for a Sunday night)

maybe not
but humour is a gift of God
laughter is relief un-bought
as smiles we pass along
these hardwood pews
in which we sit
and worship God

let us praise our God
who lets us laugh
before His throne tonight

in this too
let us rejoice

Inspired by Veronica Bylsma who passed
Rolaid's in church in place of Kings.

August 1987

To Al Bennink and Judy Jonkind
(two very good friends)

beside you in church
I see your hands join
and smile
as your friend
I rejoice with you
as in days to come
your lives will join
I rejoice also
that the God, our God
remains your guide

a man once said
 "True friends
 are a treasure beyond price."
I agree with him
especially, it is true
of those who love the Lord
friendship achieves a greater depth
when based in the love of God
within all good things will grow

as they have for you
whose joy is the Lord

as they have for me
to have friends such as you

July 1987

oh Lord!
you have clothed me
in your cloak of righteousness
you have bought for me
a brand new start
you gave your life
to save me from my sin

Lord I love you
how I long to serve you
I want to give you me
whatever that is worth
my life, oh Lord
I want to give to you

But Lord
inside me is a demon
struggling to overcome
and he often does
I love you Lord
yet I feed the demon
his pleasures
though temporary
feel good

Only you can change my heart
I need you to
for I alone
can do no good
please Lord
change this heart
make it yours
in you alone
do I desire to live

Forgive me Lord
redeem me
let me claim for good
the gift you died to give

June 27, 1987

Today

we stood last night
with each other
laughing
tomorrow too distant for belief
reality surprised by joy
and then

a pause
as you sang of your love
a love from God alone

my sister
my brother
before God are you wed
before God you shall live
if He be for you
what can stand against you

our God of love
who gave His son
has given you yourselves
serve Him
praise Him
in Him alone is life

To Ellen and Walt VanderWerf; June 27, 1987.
"What God has joined together, let no man put asunder!"

June 1987

To Kim Probst
(a friend at Erie)

I try so hard
to reach you
every chance I use
to save you
yet you do not care
to use your words

“Why do you worry?
I don’t worry about myself.”

if you were drowning
and I threw you a line
you would grab it
hold it
and live

please
oh please my friend
see the line
I throw you now
and live

please

May 1987

To "Opa" Hoftyzer

I saw you once
in my youth
you were old then
seated on your lawn
sharping your scythe
on an antenna anchor peg
watching you I learned
more now
than then

today you sit
on the lawn of God
in clearer, fresher life
I learn again

of love
of life
of God

soon I shall come
and sit with you
on God's lawn
before His throne

May 1987

oh Lord
to light you think to call me
who am I that you should care
yet I live my life

(a life received from you
for nothing I have done
to obtain it)

every chance I have I fall
mud seem to welcome me
yet each time as I look up
I see the cross
I see your love
I see your hand
reaching out once again
to lift me from myself

to light you have called me
to light I shall aspire
help me fight the dark

May 1987

not too long for this world
this body
Sodom cannot make good its hold
it tried
it failed
it cannot even trip
this body
once tied to death
is heaven bound
it will live
as God has planned

the world's fine cloak
put aside as rags
to pick up the robe
designed by a King

this body
is heaven bound

April 1987

standing in the rain
here, tonight
confused

of what I am
and where I'm bound

You are the God of all creation
I stand here
confused

April 1987

To Lee (II)

we pray for you
now, when the time has come
for tears
we, who used to laugh
stand
again of the curse reminded

though now we stand in sorrow
we stand with hope
mightier arms uphold us
mightier eyes weep for us
we, who used to dance
stand
again of a gift reminded

April 1987

To Lee (I)

off to one side
I stand, your friend
while in your grief
you're held
 Cathy always did do that
 better than I
eyes unknowing
I look aside
and pray

our God of love
He is here
He does care

see the love
we have for you
our friend
and know
our love is of God

April 1987

Dad and I
on our journey
two men
separated by time
tested by fire
saved by grace

He and I
what stories could be told
by us or of us
generation of war
begat
generation of id
both lethal
both survivable

We see not eye to eye
yet we do

April 1987

After Karlkje '87

we walk through the wrack
of other's ruin
uncaring

there
but for the grace of God
go we

bodies at our feet

once alive

victims of our love
the burden of us
that at last has laid them low
still uncaring
in the flames of our faith

empty eyes
at a preacher staring
hungry
in the midst of plenty

Christ
would have gone to the cross
just to save one child
from being lost*

suddenly opened

a hand extended
a body stands

again Christ lives!

*Randy Stonehill "Save the Children,"
from Celebrate This Heartbeat

Karlkje is the annual talent show of the Eastern League YCF

April 1987

rain drops
water flows
oceans sleep
clouds blow
rain drops

again
and again

April 5, 1987

Evening Service, April 5, 1987

the rain is falling
hard
I hear it on the roof
 wooden arch
 pointing out God
a different sound altogether
than the whispers of saints
 fellow sinners all
in the pauses in the songs
I hear it
the gentle applause
of a thousand transient hands
dancing on the roof
 wooden arch
 pointing to heaven
 as raindrops fall

April 1987

To John

I look
at a snap shot from the past
your hand on my shoulder
your wife in your arm
we are laughing
at some long lost line

you
with the smiling eyes
you always seem to be
there
epitome of a Christian
caring always
for your brother
in this case
me

by Christ's example
we see how to live
by your example
I see what that means

March 1987

were I outside
and looking in...

no, but that is folly
I am inside
and looking out
to see through biased eyes
that which bears my name
and this can not yield truth

you who see
you know
but can never tell
the truth as seen

March 1987

today is dead
that never should have lived
looking back I see
an untouched span of hours
I merely survived

can God be praised like this
can this neglect be excused
can I truly stand above
my human frailties
or do I remain here
feet planted firmly in mud

great Lord!
I need to praise you
loudly and often
forgive me please
for days like this

March 1987

I know not what
thoughts your mind controls
as you sit in your
room, rocking in an
old chair
smiling

your concern for me
turns to
my concern for you
and we both are just
true to our concern
we both have devils
the devils that ail me
are strange
to the devils that ail you
yet both are devils
and not of God
only our concern is that

they may
they may not
succeed, these
devils tangled deep
it's up to us
to you
to me
and God

all that stands
between us
is us

March 1987

An Afternoon with Pete & Kelly

outside

wind howls cold
blowing needle rain
slashing through the air
in constant turmoil
water runs from trees
to everywhere
on ice

inside

pleasant music plays
mugs are full of tea
hot on tongues
shortly silenced
from laughter
Sunday afternoon
pleasant with friends

February 1987

thank you Lord
that a soul
as sick as mine
can glorify in Thee

February 1987

the sun shone bright
that Sabbath day
down into
the courtyard of a pool
where a man and a man
were speaking

one standing
on healthy feet
one lying
on threadbare mats

two men
trading words
of some worth
two men
beneath the sun
alone

as he who stood
spoke
he who lay
stood
ran
wept and danced
and taking up his bed
went home
in joy

he who spoke
remained

other men regarded
he who spoke
with contempt
his rebuttal
of their belief
a gap too great to bridge

and seeing this
with clay made eyes
saw only a shattered law
and not the law now written

could they have seen
what a procession
would have danced
to the home of he who sang

After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath.

So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed." But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed, and walk.'" They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."

This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. (John 5:1-18)

February 1987

for a time
on this thin shell we toil
beneath the eyes
of heaven

beneath the sun
of God's creating
our feeble lives run on
forgetful for a time
that He too once walked here

beside these rivers
He too sat
and bathed His tired feet
human
like the sons of His creating
in every way but one

three times he tried
and each time failed

in living our lives
He gave us life
in dying our death
He gave us hope

beneath the eyes of heaven
we live

February 1987

being men of saintly calling
why struggle we with death
is our humanity
a cloak too great
to toss aside

why do we
who've seen the light
seem content
to dwell in night

February 1987

the skies were red
crimson borne on tears
a flaming, sky borne pyre
over empty, silent halls
silver where bloody skies subside
silent service
for a world
for a life
for a king

beneath and bright
on rain damp stone
flames entwine with lace
silent on the wall they lie
drop cloth for the God

a living veil replaces
one destroyed

as we denied the Son
the sun itself will praise Him

February 1987

distant brother
I pray for you
to a God you've never heard
that you may live
an extraordinary man
in an extraordinary life

I pray you may one day realize
the gift that your life is
to you
to others
to me

I who've never seen you
now pray
and write
and think
you've changed me

someday, I pray
my God will be yours
to turn your mourning to dancing
your evening to morning
and give you new eyes
for old

Written to/for Witold (Warsaw),
"Shooting Up Under a Red Star," Time magazine, 87-01-19.
"I don't want to be an ordinary man with an ordinary life."

January 1987

undeserving
I am
of all you've sent to me
friends
times
sun and snow
all more
than imagining

why

there is nothing
nothing I could do
to pay you
yet you give
and give

and give

to the point of death
and beyond

you are truly great
awesome
beyond all there is
thank you God for you
and thank you for me

January 1987

to Cathy

there, but for the grace of God
walks death
the victor
but for the grace of God
a miracle
through the grace of God
brought you to a place
you would not have been
to save a life

you saved a life!

by grace of God
you saved a life!

if you could be an angel
you could be no better
for already you are best
as our Father's blessed child
a servant on the road
to a Father's open arms

I thank God that you are you
for only you could do
what He has called you to

To Cathy, a good friend who saved
a friend from suicide; by grace of God!

January 1987

to Ev Flim, an other friend

the wind it howls
hard and cold

standing, walking
on the shore
sudden gust
determined to change course
blows
and doesn't
life is again stronger
cleaner, surer

you, my friend
who walks this shore
continue on your way
the sun's been found
by grace of God
choice accomplished
what cruel winds couldn't

in your gifts you wrote:

"the clouds suffocate the sun
the winds fury
the waves await
my heart's uncaging

and I dive"

and

"I believe that I too reflect
a greater glow"

to you now I give:

your heart's uncaged
sun's no more obscured
howling winds
still rant and rave
the waves are satisfied

my friend of words
you dove
and in diving found
treasure greater by far
than those you found on shore

a man once said

“live long
and prosper”

continue to fulfill
your God given call
and reflect the greater glow
together
with the Son
and the sun
you’ll set this ball ablaze
and defy
even the waves

somewhere on the shore
a lone goose roams free
that once beheld your fate

January 1987

great God
You have placed me here
a man
 imperfect
 unholy
yet a man
placed here
to glorify You

why?

I could never achieve
the perfection that You are
how could it be that You
of awesome might
enjoy praise from me
a creature of mud

I stand here in awe
of a gift so great
which You gave so free
that makes me praise Your name
that allows me praise to sing

truly, You are great

January 1987

it is over now
the season of joy
all is as it was
once again

but Lord
for a time
we praised your name
glorified our God (the God!)
sang of your birth
and ultimate sacrifice

and Lord
for a time
our eyes shone bright
excitement burst forth
through every deed
the world sang of your birth

but now, oh Lord
it is over

how can it just stop?

January 1, 1987

sitting beside you
silhouette against the skies
you are truly great
as you sit and praise the God
with voice lifted high

smiling, I see you
God's servant
joyful in worship
through you
God has created
on this day
the first of many more

To my friend Richard Prinsen
Starter and leader of our New Year's Day Worship Service

December 1986

201 rue de la Commune

many miles separate
the voices now united
in song
the spirit of God
alive in this room
as in any other

December 1986

my two horses
and I
in Montreal
I take them with me
wherever I go
and yet they rule
the path we take
worst of all is
they eat the same as I
these two fine horses
of mine

December 1986

after a time
pain subdued
God is still love
God does still love

all things work for good
for those who love the Lord

my friends
my dearest friends
I've prayed for you
I've wept for you
and now
I rejoice
that you are still
God's!

Again to John and Marian Vandermeer

December 1986

we sit here now
confounded by wealth
around us
on the floor
tattered ribbons lie
stark
when compared
to the Truth

December 1986 – January 1987

words
from my father's pen
and a long ago uncle

and
on the same night
of my Opa

two trails
both unique
now converge
to me
an heir of thought
of pen
of word

of deed?
only time will tell

all is gone
and yet continues

December 1986

one night
of open words
so soon a world destroys

unthinking statements
yield only smiles
quickly turned to knives

sudden shadow
on open sky
you brought it on
yourself

and now
alone
in sleepless state
you worry on your life

December 1986

Relief at St. Joseph's Oratory

corridors
long and silent
dark and empty

aimlessly
wandering these halls
footsteps silent
in the shadows
lost in myself

in relief
and carved in stone
around a corner
just turned

sudden awareness
of a sacrifice
so freely made
floods me
drives me to weep

He went through this
for such as I?

December 1986

staring at the floor
not really knowing
I sit

joy
so quickly replaced
by pain

unanswered questions
echo along empty halls
no reply
understood
for now

if I could stand
between you and pain
I would

I am only a man
I can only love
I do

one truth remains
through devilish lies

God is Love!
He is alive!

to you I pray
in Love abide

To John and Marian Vandermeer,
after hearing of your pain.

December 1986

Encounter

hate!

sudden
vicious
flaming

destroying with its fire

reason
love
concern

your life is obscene
you appal me
in hate
I turn a page

suddenly
wrathfully

why?

I too am ill
with chains as ugly
as yours
in the eye of God

I too am ill
yet loved by God
as you must be

Upon reading about a man named
Todd Shuttleworth in the Time of
December 8, 1986

December 1986

To Kim Probst

you lie

you stare at me and tell a tale
and yet you die

the truth you see
is a deadly way
read the truth
see the light
the way you're on is only death

please
oh please listen
and live!

After a talk of 45 minutes
with a friend who is blind. Sob!

November 1986

stories that lay locked inside
stuff of stars behind my eyes
fragile web of mem'ries bright
hidden, locked and kept from sight

November 1986

Reflection

in a cautious state
of mind I roam'd
exploring these horizons
so long that wrap'd this world

pushing
touching
feeling
knowing

always moving on

and looked below me
where I stood
to see a face well known
wreathed by reed
held by mud
floating on a breath
waving upon
flowing crystal

all I am
was once before
in some forgotten form
and to it will return
I
the creation's crown
but breathe this freshness
once
and graduate to dust

November 1986

shadows
like coal
sharp
on a river
like silver
flowing

November 7, 1986

The Rain (part II)

standing outside of church
thinking
so many things undone
so many bindings gone

waves continue
from the source
regardless that it's gone
birds still sing
rain still falls
people grow and change

these walls that now
rebound my thoughts
so shortly held our praise
unchanging through it all
only I have grown

The Rain (I & II)
Written November 7 at Ebenezer
CRC
in Trenton. Services for
Mr. Sikke Smit; fellow bass,
uncle of friends.

November 7, 1986

The Rain (part I)

we stood around the gravesite, silent
some bowed low
some bowed high
staring eternally
at a small, dark hole
 (out of dust created)
 (hence to dust returned)
we heard the words
we sang the songs
we stood then, silent

quiet drizzle falls
soft upon our heads
bowed in prayer
baptism of grief
all stand under

God
from life does call us

God
to Life does lead us

November 1986

late at night
he sits
in his room
upstairs
alone
and weeping

memories of
better days
brighter hopes
too clear a mirror
of the truth

what was once
is gone
a newer page
is being writ
down a saint
up a demon
unfeeling brother
now holds sway

and life goes on
and on
and on

October 1986

thoughts at bedtime

granted
taken for
always

always there
ignored
conflicted

why
you who mean so much
should take this
I don't know

larger than life
trapped by it
too
you're there when I need you
I'm glad you're around

to Dad –

words can never say
the appreciation I have
for you
someday, I hope,
I will follow

Pete

October 13, 1986

those who hold the storm clouds back
why do they take this task
the saving of a race
so surely doomed to die
can this be done by man

the storm winds blow
longer than today
friendships die
promises end
when the handshake is forgotten
too soon the axe may fall

can man deny
the hand of God

its faith will be its doom
ending all that's known
separate paths someday converge
continue and will not change
ideologies clash in flame

prophets of a way
their own destruction bring
man will fall
while angels sing
the end of all that's known

On the cover of "Time" this week was a drawing
of two men, pushing aside darkened clouds of war.

OCTOBER 13, 1996

\$1.95

TIME

APPOINTMENT
IN ICELAND

Getting Down To Business



Emilio P. S. S. S.

SANJAY'S IN EXILE
Elena Bonner's
New Book



October 4, 1986

shadows flit across the floor
here then gone away
endless cycle:
 light
 shadow
 you
moving alive

by the shadow you cast
we see who you are

children of Light
by your deeds are you known
as in darkness you wander
eternally home
look forward!
God's hand is near
the light that casts the shadow
the higher voice you hear

as now in life you travel
side by side your way
I pray the God to guide you
onward to that day
when together we shall praise Him
and thank Him for His love

God bless you both forever
 in life
 in love
 in Him

To Andy and Yvonne Geleynse,
On the shadows at their dance, September 20, 1986

October 1986

in my soul lives death
so constant a companion
these days

where the leaf disturber
where the bouncing boy
could they all be hid
beneath the lady's cloak

scattered remnants
empty ruins
even for the tourists
closed
where once was a song
now lives a dirge
where once there was dance
there now is a march

these walls once full of life
and banners hanging down
now stand naked
shorn of all but form
slowly proceeding
to rubble

October 1986

David beneath the stars
standing, awe-struck
at the majesty of space
the diamonds of God
spilling out on the night
just for him

and Dick
his brother, my friend
an out stretched hand
pointing
there
and there
and there again
see the stars that praise our God
see them and believe

An if'n and suppose for Dick Bulsink,
a guide and David, Clarence's son,
of insatiable thirst.

October 1986

upon hearing you sing
I wept
laughed
danced and sang
that praise like this should flow
from human lips

At the wedding of Andy and Yvonne Geleynse,
after Liz & Lucinda sang "Love Too." See also
"The Poet's Release" by Lynda Del Valle which
appeared in the Calvinist Contact earlier this year.

September 1986

sitting here
morose
I tried Lord
I really did
was I right or wrong

Lord, to me you are
awesome!
beyond belief
I praise you as I can

here I sit
the leader for tonight
afraid
do they hate me?
was our talk false?
Lord I tried
I tried to praise you
did they as well?

I tried to praise you
to somehow show
how I love you
how you deserve such honour
praise and admiration
was I wrong?

they tried to laugh
out of time
I spoke a lot
and got frustrated

Lord, I'm so confused
who was right
why am I so sad?

now they sit and speak
so free and clear
and here I sit
a stranger

why?

this is a group
designed to praise
and glorify your name
here we sit
talking turkey

At a Young Adults meeting where I was the leader of a Bible Study that failed miserably.

September 1986

I took the chalk within my hand
to write upon the board
a tale of me through all the years

I wrote upon it all I've done
and all the things I thought
and stood back and looked

what I wrote in white
now showed up as black
such a load of evil
to be carried by my name
and anchored by it to my death
in shame I wept

I cried to God
He took it all away

At A.O.B.M. Sunday service by
Ken (the swimmer) from Pembroke

September 1986

Focus
(Andy McIntyre – November 20, 1986)

We are as stones on the shores of
Eternity
Weathered by the seas of
Life
Only to disappear into the sands of
Time

The preceding was given to me
in response to the following.

Andy

two flamingos out in the front yard
with sunglasses and an umbrella
standing around on spindly legs
while cockatiels inside laugh
who knows what others lurk about
where such exotics play

birdman friend it's good to see
your prison has been flown
no care; why worry
the past is all but gone
this moment now is one for life
and after that the next

To a wild and crazy friend,
and terrific photog! After
seeing two of Corning's
mascots, carousing in his yard,
with sunglasses and umbrellas.

September 1986

life
unfortunately is:
 painfully
 slow
 unsure
 dog tiredly
 circular

Life
on the other hand is:
 joyful
 love
 endlessly
 enthusiastically
 one way

life I see
Life I know
one so near
the other so hard
the tug-of-war goes on

and on

and

on

August 1986

childhood missed
innocence transgressed
the path I've chosen
who else could have guessed
all things come together for
God's glory

God's glory!
why then do I weep
if God would be served through me
surely I would dance
yet here I sit
morose

who am I
what I've been
and will be
oh God help me!
if ever you've helped before

there's a spark within
Lord, fan it
cause it grow
so light may shine again
where death doth blow

August 1986

the colours are changing
already
after hardly any summer at all
God has not seen fit to give
too much heat this year

why?

I don't know

for me maybe a reflection
of the coldness of my soul
but the autumn is my fire time
a time for me to live
in that too early may be good
more time I'll have to improve
and set to flame
this stagnant, morbid soul

After Montreal trip three,
with Ron, Ev and Bert

August 1986

To Doug and Darlene

sitting next to you in church
last night
I thought
 what glory!
 getting carried away in Love
God was truly there!

El Shaddai

Upon singing loudly at
the Port Perry Youth Service.
Praise the Lord!

August 1986

let your mouth never speak
of what your hands have done
do the stones speak loudly
of the ballet that they perform?
but in all things
let the glory be God's
He will recall
where others fail

do not be concerned
with the tribute of men
God, who sees your heart
will praise you in the end
one word from His lips
is more than the songs of the world

in all things you must see
that
in all things He must be

August 1986

Monday went like lightning
down the road and gone
Tuesday crawled like snails
its seconds ambling on
Wednesday, Thursday and the rest
the same old timeworn trail

I see it all the same
as men have seen before
time it goes and comes unsame
always on its way

why?
and where does it go?

August 1986

you created, oh Lord, and said:
"It is good"

i have looked, oh Lord, and said"
"If only..."

Help me oh Lord
to see as you see
all that you've made

Let me rejoice in what I am
and be happy with what you made

July 1986

To John and Marian

once I loved you as a man
a man and full of fun
we loved
we laughed
we had our fun
not knowing what would come

but come it did
and caused us change
 a little
you to your wife
 and calling
I to my job
 and calling
both of us have grown

I find I love you still
though deeper than before
you with her are more than one
together now you serve our God
seeing this again I grow

two dearer friends I've never had
for you now I thank our God
and find
that now I love you as a man
of God

To John and Marian Vandermeer.
In thanks for an awesome week!

July 1986

a score and five I've lived
of the three and ten I have
one third of life has passed me by
and before me lies the downhill slide
too near at hand it seems

I've walked this world of sand and stone
ever and again I've turned
a flight of fancy, a glint of sun
a distant voice that's called me on
Two thirds left and fit to spend

I've not ventured out on limbs
or climbed the pathway to the stars
I'll never be a king of men
and in daring win their praise

Upon the earth and in my heart
I've sung my song to God
I've laughed and loved and smiled and cried
and held many a friendly hand
I'll hold many a friendship more

It's true I'll never tread the moon
or journey past the skies
still I'm a blessed man
I've love, I've God, I could ask no more

And if many pathways I'll never walk
or many cities never see
at least "I've seen their signs"
and that will be enough

A line from "Kate and Allie"

July 1986

you sit aside
surrounded by your pain
a wall without relief
too sudden the clouds descend
in hordes too great to count
you sit aside
in your darkened world
begging for a light

walking by, I see you there
and in sympathy I pause
waiting, knowing...thinking
thinking, I walk on
and pause again to pray
and thus relive my guilt
beset by devils of my own
I care not to take the time
to rid you of your pain

forgive me please, for what I've failed to do
I know it must be you I serve
I've been called to this by God
forgive me please, and give me prayer
that I'll not fail again

forgive me,
please

June 1986

Heroes

faces
flat upon the wall
not all that small
not all that tall
flat upon the wall

that's all

June 1986

Late at night and I come home
lights on in the bedrooms
only the sound of the drip tap
greet me as I walk in.
Upstairs in my bedroom
nearly ready to sleep
Mom ambles over to ask:
"How was the wedding?"
"Fine," I say, "just fine."
Biting back the tears
that could come or not at all
"It's a lie!" I want to scream
but no, I stand and smile
and say that "I'm okay."
Most times I am
my life alone is okay
I have my friends I love
for them I'd gladly live
But what happens when
my last friend is wed
and I'm alone
will I still smile
and bite back tears?

Will there be laughter
Will there be pain
Will there be someone else

June 1986

do they? I don't know
they say they do
are they true?
do they lie?
if they do
they give me proof
that you do too

why you do, oh Lord
is so beyond my thought
but that you do is enough

so undeserving I am
of you
of them
of love

oh Lord! what am I?
but only dust
to dust I will return
that you bless this breath
with love beyond belief
help me to love again
to give the gift I get

and thank-you
very much
for friends
and you

Rainbows, Friends and Miracles
Convention Koinonia

rain
falling
down
from clouds that block the sun
uncaring it
falls
down
upon the life
beneath

sudden sun
by grace of God
warm upon
a quick turned back
upon the cloud
a covenant borne

miracle!

friendship felt
by grace of God
warm upon
an outstretched hand
upon this love
a covenant borne

miracle!

"Last year we saw a rainbow..."

May 1986

If I am less than perfect
how then could I cry
at the faults of others
All of us have sinned
Why does theirs seem worse

If God could forgive us
the death of His Son
why can't I forget
the sins of my brother
the sins of my sister

How could I
as black as night
as dark as death
hold a grudge inside
against those God loves
as He loves me

Oh Lord, forgive me
for my lack of forgiveness
Help me Lord, to love
those this body hates
Let me be like you
in all my ways

May 1986

Could it be that
the sky where once I soared
once more gives its call
sending once again to flight
this soul resigned to plod

Could it be that
life again would come
to hold the magic once it did
when so long ago I sang

Could it be that
the earth be not my fate
my dragging footsteps cease
cease to hold me down
could the sky again be mine

Above it beckons
blue and oh so deep
high above the mire
I hear it calling

Will I go?

After NH. One month
of death at last let go.

May 1986

love, anger. Grief
all pervade my mind

love for you
as ever before
for what you helped me be
for what you were to me

anger because,
of what you've done
it doesn't seem that fair
I want to hurt you too
and make the pain real

grief too great
it feels as though I've died
everything we used to do
now reduced to "was"

why you did it
I don't know
I pray to God you were right
I pray to God you were wrong
I miss you

May 1986

winks and smiles
and hugs and hands
now all gone away
joy that gave my heart its wings
no longer wildly leaps

you're gone and all I have
are pictures and some tears

May 1986

the song has now been sung
its melodies slowly fade
now the tears of sadness well
where once lived only joy
gone the pictures from the wall
all that are left to me
are scattered memories

private hell
for now at least
I live on, again alone
but for the love of God
shown forth in peace an loyal friends
the pain is there but still I live

I'd not yet read any of the John Carter stories, as far as
I knew "still I live" was entirely my own - June 5, 2012

April 1986

clouds
over for no reason

fear
anger
jealousy

why come they now
when I wish so hard to smile?

why the pain
why the bonds
I'm so powerless
can't do a thing

oh God! help me!
help me outlive this curse
let this life again leap forth
please Lord, let me sing

April 1986

shame
now too near a companion

grief
now too familiar a friend

my world, for a time
knocked off its spin
wildly falling
to oblivion

your nearness was all I craved
your nearness was all I missed

love
wrath
envy

all have had their day

but now the wrath is gone
I pray the envy too
so only love remains
in this hollow shell of me

the pride and the glory
replaced by shame and grief
a bitter trial of growing
I pray I now have passed

April 1986

a hole
black and deep
just barely made out
just barely in time
almost fallen
just held back
almost dead
alive by a thread
almost gone
but life restored
to shame

oh God!
forgive me
for all that I am

oh my friends!
love me still
and pray

I struggle not with flesh and blood
but with the very hounds of hell
I need you all so much
please stay near

April 1986

They asked me at work
the other day
what I'd give you for Easter
 (as if you'd not enough)
amazed, I replied
"Why?"

Now I wonder
could Easter be to them
what it is to me?

Birthdays bear gifts
and Christmas too
and sometimes days unnamed
surely, today of all
forgiveness is enough

April 1986

silence

outside the sun shines
in through stained glass

seated before a man of God
they listen to His word

hunched
elbows on my knees
hands clasped
staring at my feet
eyes open during prayer
unashamed
before the throne of God
wondering
at where those feet had been
at where those feet would go

what do I know
that I could guide them
it's you they need, oh Lord
to help them on their way
guide them Lord
that as they walk, they walk with you

March 1986

Spring!

Blue skies
overhead and deep

Softly calling wind
laughing as it plays

temptress of our spirit
slowly mounting
desire

Open air, clean skies
again the soul reborn

Below, we walk
side by side
our thoughts that intertwine

March 1986

twisting trail
'neath Sunday's sun
word and grass
onward run
leaping back
and on again
paths meander
we know not where

nor care
the sun is high
on friendship dear
God's greatest blessing

After a long and enjoyable
walk in Mount Pleasant Cemetery.

March 1986

children's voices
on the wind
coming, falling
riding rain

again

again

their voices come
their laughter rampant
in the sun

March 1986

what would be
if someday I met
all the words
that are not yet

the words I've thought
but never said
to keep them silent
in my head

would they weep
at my neglect
or lie there mute
in doom abject

I wonder now
at what I'd see
if words I've kept
had come to be

March 1986

winter returns
leaving semi-spring
reeling

snow devils overrun
on the high way
tossed aside on trailing winds

return at night
to bury the cause
of their misfortune

Yesterday was 22 C, today 0 C
and snowing. This seemed apt.

March 1986

Here I am
 at night
 at home
 at work
I struggle with my notes
and oh the fight is hard
my thoughts oft' stray
 to you
 to God
 to life

Here I sit
 two men
 two hearts
 two minds
with one I wish to work
with one I need to sing
which one should I hear

February 1986

there should be dancing
I sit here
restless

there should be singing
I sit here
silent

there should be love
I sit here
uncaring

Genesis 22 v. 1

a voice called
to a man on his knees
calling him to act
in faith

came a voice
in reply
to the God he loved
"Here I am"

would the sacrifice
have been known
could the words
have been the same

can we do any less
when called
than to reply in faith
"Here I am"

After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." (Genesis 22:1)

February 1986

you sit across from me
speaking at your turn
proceeding quite well
until you say a line
that leads all to laugh

you pause
respectful
of their/our need to laugh
but then a surprise
as it goes too far

anger flits across your face
or it looks as such
while others laugh
you sit silent
 wronged
you think you are
and I believe you are right
and I sympathize with you
but as you thought before
we all have needs
for laughter

Janet was leading our Young Adult Bible
study when we misused one of her statements.

February 14, 1986

In Memoriam; John Prinsen
Message: Our Father of Compassion and God of All Comfort

spring

the seed long dormant
begins to bloom
growing into flaming glory

spring

the earth of our own making
receives again its own

spring

be still and know
that I am God

spring

the flower lives
in faith restored
though silently at times

spring

you've been through your winter
you've shared with us your

spring

and now you have your summer
in the very courts of God

spring

be still and know
that I am God

spring

Kingston Christian School students sang "Thou Wilt Keep Him in Perfect Peace"

February 1986

words fail me
what could I say
how could I know
what it is that now you need
I have never seen the cross
that now you're called to bear

we who've shared our laughter
so recently as New Years
must now share tears
mine as real as yours
they're all that I can do
I pray that they're enough
how else can I help you

my dearest friend
you spoke of faith
that God's way is right
so recently as New Years
I pray it is so now

all I can give
is words and tears
but both are from the heart

To Richard Prinsen, whose father
passed to glory February 12, 1986

February 1986

tiny little feet
upstairs running
back and forth in the hall
children at play
while their father is at work

if I could
once again believe
it would be like this:
as a child and running free
while Father is at work

February 1986

He rose from the dead!
with a God of such power
each day we must sing
or the very stones rise up in praise
let us sing with them
to our God who made us all

He rose from the dead!
Hallelujah!
Nor can we sit by
life itself is ours
only death is theirs
Let us never leave them
Let us let them live

February 1986

Homeward

In the background
a sleeping bag (unused)
a change of clothes
a heap of memories

In the foreground
quickly passing lines
hyphenate the night
connecting two
disparate times

February 1986

Paraphernalia

a weekend gone
the way of wind
naught remaining but
scattered dreams
aspiring hopes
resettled faith

a smile through prayer
a tear, a sigh
mem'ries now possessed

all we do but fades away
to live again in dreams
all we are as well
but comes again in life

February 1986

How do I return to life
having left Life itself

How can I express my faith
to those to whom it's strange

O Lord I love you
more than life itself
How do I let it show

February 1986

you say to me to be still
that I'll upset an applecart
that your values will be challenged
but I ask you
how could I be still?
He's done so much for me
that not only should I speak it
I should shout it from the highest hills
proclaim it with every deed
every chance I get

how could I be still?
God's been so much for me
and will be so much more

how could you say be still?
and deny me my voice
by which you deny me my God

February 1986

late in the evening
around hearth bound-flames
we sat and read
studying your words
as the embers sing
we spoke of you
who you are
what you mean

so often it seems
you're too far away
but on that night
you sat by the fire
looking with us
at its flames
flickering upward
feeling its heat
as it burned

that night you were
more than just a distant God
you were with us
in our place
as a friend

February 1986

the wages of sin is death
and I'm not bound to die
the chain's been broken
the bill's been paid
my sins are drowned

the only thing that stood
between God and me
was my sin
and He's thrown that aside

January 1986

cast yourselves off from me
you moods of dark and gloom
no longer can you bind me
I serve the Lord of heaven and earth
and death is now behind me

January 1986

two way street
one way trip
spoken words
in blackest night
quiet from the heart
one more step
upon the way
we are called to walk
one step nearer glory
one step nearer life

January 1986

his life entire
has passed as breath
to not be drawn again
a sudden breeze
and brief
beneath the season's sun

He loved, he laughed
he sometimes dreamed
he sang his song for life
His home his castle
his wife his love
his children pride and joy
Storm clouds - sun shine
He took it all and stood

And fell

An open field 'neath autumn's sun
golden leaves blow through the sky
A marble slab
a name
a date
the sum of all his steps
his bitter epitaph

"Also ran"

January 1986

To Luke Meuller

craziness you say
to worship one of whom there is no proof

no proof you say?
do the seas not say a word
or the stars of the night
of the glory of the Lord
endless beauty surrounds you
where do you see no proof?

I see grass blowing in an unseen wind
but you say you feel it
as do I

as do I feel
the Spirit move within
I the grass
He the wind
of which there is no proof
but the way I blow

Leadership Training Conference 1986
at Wesley Acres, while they all sang
from "Grace and Colleen"

January 1986

he has in his possession
a picture
of a young man
strong
arm around an old lady
frail
both are smiling

he's looked at this photo often
noting in particular
the young man
his healthy looks
his smile
his...appearance overall

passing over the old lady
whose best days are done and gone
with only the casual eye
so frail and feeble
pale and drawn
all over
such a contrast is seen by him

another contrast is seen by him
in walls
his need of them
her lack of them
when all is said and done
is he better off than her
he has his health
she has her God

December 1985

Lord!
at last I start to see
you
as you really are
 my God
 my Lord
 my Life

you move through me
in countless awesome ways
 I see
 I feel
 I sing and dance
and Lord
I even love

Lord!
you are so incredible
my words could never tell
though they speak a million years
of all you are to me

December 1985

at last
I feel the dance once more

at last
my heart flies its course

at last
my smile greets the world

after night
glorious day has dawned
life again is mine
tonight I fly the skies once more
soaring spirit free
o'er worlds again in view

alive
and kickin'
long may the song be mine

December 1985

I must sing your song
it strains at every cord
I try so hard to set it free
let it fly and have its course
but
I lack the courage
ignore my faith
and somehow quell the storm

oh great Lord and friend
in this world of dark and drab
I try to shine your light
and yet I close my eyes
so I too live in night
forgive me Lord and give me strength
to face the earth in its wild career
and proclaim my love for you
without fear
let me love, Lord
with all my heart
this world you died to save
help me Lord to live the truth
help me Lord and give me life

December 1985

sing and dance
but sit still

rock and roll
but don't move

awareness comes
like summer's rain
to leave again
in the thunderclap start
of another song

somehow Lord
you must move us to move
beyond our faltering dance
to follow through
and do Your will
with heart

At Randy Stonehill & Leslie Phillips concert
In Kitchener. How could we still sit quiet
after Save the Children?

November 1985

standing by the road and tall
waving in the wind
a tree
fruitful in its season

look! the strangest fruit of all
surrounded by birds' nests
blowing leaves
above the crowd
could it be?
yes!
Zacchaeus clinging there
searching for Christ

so I must climb
above the crushing crowd
to search for Christ
so that like Zacchaeus
I may entertain God
and be saved

December 1985

Late at night I knock
on your window and playfully
sing my song
but you roll over
ignore my music
let sleep abide

In the morn when you awake
you will see that I was there
and though you may have missed me
you will recall my name
as you treasure my flowers
I've grown upon your pane

November 1985

around the edges
your fire burns
I feel it and it's warming
a very pleasant change
from the coldness of my heart
a way of life too long

but Lord I'll ask
just this one question
why does it take so long
and stay so short

November 1985

screaming through a world
careening on and off
uncertainty
too familiar a friend

so much potential
wasted

so much life
gone

the winds all howl and burn
blowing who knows where
still leaving where I am

sunlit portals some without
could all roads lead to Rome?
or heaven even

virtues taken
choices made
black cloud blue sky
rainy day or what

there
but for the grace of God
go I

or

but for the Devil
I could be there

hindsight blinding foresight
shadow voices passing wisdom
unheard
ghost like in the roar
tossed aside
so casually by the wind

alone
I tremble
I cringe
at the edge of abyss
dare I take flight
and even so
could these wings soar
against that roaring wind

the wrack of other things

I know not what
they were

clutter at my troubled heart

these ruins
what of them
did they wait too long
or take the leap too soon

but what!
who cares
I am me and I still live
and while these limbs
possessed of life are mine
I fight
I dream

of what
or when
or how or who
and I

towering castles fortress solid
blown away as smoke in fall
that stormy autumn blast

no holds barred
it lives

replaced by others equally bold
to the task at hand
equally mute
before the force without

before my feet abyss gives way
too soon I must take my dive
following those to whom belonged
these bones now dead as dust
shall I prove equal
or come up less than whole

sudden gale
a cyclone plays my hand
blowing where it cares
this will now made of straw
dust before the wind
still blows

where is the sun
that once I loved

dares it shine
where night is hailed utmost

where will it end?

a small and naked man
humbled to his core

or

a bitter callous shell
proud to quell the storm

the eye draws near
but will I prove unworthy
or prove that I am still quite strong

tumults clash
within without
the leap draws nearer
will I be bird
or dust?

November 1985

I heard your name
the other day
after many mistakes were made
mentioned by a friend
who had no cause to cheer me up
although he did
when he said you said "Hi"
to me
a stranger you once met

I thanked him
now I thank you

November 1985

honour held
for those of you
 my friends
who now are gone
you I've loved
while you lived
and now in death
I find I love you still

a chain of gems
my remembrances
of times gone by
a smile
a cry
a tear or laugh
good times
that now are gone

I ask my Lord
why?
why in youth He took you
and no answer comes
that I can see
yet while I live
I see and learn

I love you
I miss you
more than words will ever know

October 1985

the second hand
goes around so fast
yet time goes by so slow
each second
lasts an aeon
will I never leave this place?
there are places to go
people to see
while I sit here stuffed
in study for a future
I might not ever see

Written in the midst of an evening
course on principles of management.

October 1985

To God, In Thanks for Friends

seemingly uncaring
the world ambles by
preoccupied in destiny
 golden achievements
 just around the bend
it trips me up
knocks me flat
stomps me down
all but kicking sand
as it passes

gloom
far too heavy to lift
fears me further
down
prayer is tried
and doesn't work
for days and even weeks
till alone
a voice is heard
distant though it be
it praises God
and so must I
and so return to life

since the life line
I could not grasp
God came down
and kindly helped
thank you Lord (God)
for your angels

In thanks for one phone call from
Annette VanderMolen, who praised
our God and so cheered me up

October 1985

outside
in the sun
in the fall
brilliant flaming trees
ignited again
each time seen
redefine colour
oh God!
it's beautiful

in the morning
to sit at the dawn
watching
sun rising through
morning's lace
gently drawing night aside
slowly raising morning up
oh God!
each day this show
praises you

and there's more
so much more
stars
eternal glowing gems
friends and laughter
cavorting dogs
blowing grass
and softly singing birds

such beauty Lord
I do not deserve
yet here I am
amidst it all
for some reason
you alone can tell

you gave me to live
and use this world
you made
but surely Lord
I am too small
to accept
a gift so great
and use it right
to honour you
what if I make a mistake
and blow the job

help me Lord
that all I do
while I'm here
will be to you
guide my steps
and bless me Lord
so I may praise your name
and do it right

October 1985

let me praise my Lord
with all the breath I have
in all my deeds
in every word
in all the things I do
let me praise my Lord

let me praise my Lord
for the love of Friends
or autumn leaves
even for the tears
for everything I have
and all the things I am
for everything that is
Praise the Lord!

let me praise my Lord
for life
for stars
for dew and grass
Praise the Lord!
for life
or even as I die
with my failing breath
let me praise the One who gave it
let me
Praise the Lord!
for the life I've lived
for the life I'll live
for the eternity of love
let me praise my Lord!
forever

September 1985

a fall of leaves
under autumn's hand
red against the blue

simple proud
full of life
background for the songs
so
awesomely sung at night
upwards embers
light their way
to the courts of God
hidden in the stars

friendship ring
draws us near
a stranger is a hero
a friend
is still yet more

crackling logs
late at night
stir the fires
we sing yet more
and more
and even more
could God grow tired
if we do not
we could go on
forever
and still have not begun

a fall of leaves
and we'll find out
until then
we sing
unceasing
Praise to God!

At the All Ontario Board Meeting.

September 1985

friends
briefly together
forever united
 caring
 sharing
 loving
gifts of God
subjects of praise

glory
eternally
to the Father
for glorious
eternal
friends

At the All Ontario Board Meeting.

September 1985

rocking for the Lord
holy let it play
praise His name forever
arm in arm the way
soul to soul to stand

rockin' for the Lord
the holy power sounds
music clear
voices loud
keep on rockin' brother
rockin' all night long

keep on rockin' brothers
holy let it sound
music is our weapon
the devil's losing ground
make him give us way

keep on rockin' sisters
let your voices ring
arm in arm beside us
let us praise His name
with every breath we have

keep on rolling songsters
never stop to rest
awesome is our Saviour
He will hold us best
marching on the way

At the All Ontario Board Meeting.

September 1985

I'm going to live this moment
this one I'm in
right now
for the Lord
maybe I'll not get another
so this one is His

At the All Ontario Board Meeting.

September 1985

Lord
I long to honour You
In all the ways I can
with all the gifts I have
You gave them
so I must use them
to honour You

but Lord
great as You are
still I am small
human so greatly at times
please Lord
set me free
free from the need for fame
from the vanity
that is sure to come

oh Lord
as I honour you
help me not
to honour me

At the All Ontario Board Meeting.

September 28, 1985

Andy DeBruin
d. September 27, 1985

nevermore
will your smile we see

nevermore
will your hands we hold

nevermore
will your laugh be heard

my friend
now that you've gone
I realize what you were
the fun we've had
 (the sand we've thrown)
now it's merely memory
I say to God
it isn't right
but He must know
what's best

oh to have seen you
once before you left
to see once more
 your smile
 your eyes
 your life
if only we could have said
just one last good bye

At the All Ontario Board Meeting.

In memory of Andy DeBruin.
I found out this morning that he
had died, he was a good friend.

September 1985

if
you and I were brothers
your faith and mine
in the same room
who would be shocked
you
or I

September 1985

the morning broke through
 loudly
 gloriously
 magnificently
proclaiming
with every sight and sound
Glory to God
in the highest
glory
forever
glory
unceasing
glory
to God!

if I could learn from nature
I would
oh God!
please help
keep my world
from interfering
with yours

September 1985

we are the light!
no matter what
come what may
we are the light
their windows
to the Lord
all we do
every thing we are
every word we say
every where we go

come
together let us praise
our Lord with our lives
that what our neighbour sees
will be true

for we are the light!
and are called
to serve
God
and all else

September 1985

last night
I had a dream

walking down a street
dusty in the fall
while scattered leaves
flutter about
in ceaseless hurry
I see a car
black, fast and lovely
idly floating
about
scarcely nudging leaves
barely lifting dust
gleaming in the sun
circling
circling
endlessly
waiting
and waiting
and turning
and not
turning
heading straight
straight for me
walking in the sun
and coming
faster
and faster
and fast ...

... and the show ends
and I wake
shaking
sweating coldly

on the lunch-hour walk
I recollect the dream
and stop
to laugh
and go on
only a dream
I say

but in the distance
far far away
I hear an engine start

I wonder if the car is black

September 1985

pray for me
for all that I am
and all that I'm not
that I will agree with God
in His will for me

forgive me
for all that I've done
and all that I'll do
I too have faults
and will make mistakes
please
forgive me

sing with me
to the great God of life
and honour and praise
His name forever
that together
side by side
we may enter His courts

and thank Him
and honour Him
and praise Him

September 1985

idiotic ramblings

a fanatic
I write them all down

who I am
and think I am
where I am
and where I'm going

little lines
and short of word
to another mind
would a rose be seen
or only thorns

September 1985

thank you
Lord
for your care
concern
and love
you've helped me o'er
an other pit
safe unto
the other side

were I alone
would I have crossed
and lost
as little

September 1985

I always seem to be there
for you
and yet
I'm also here
for me

I live
I breathe
I laugh and cry
I too am one
an entity
like you
and it is true
that I'm here for you
but kid
who's there for me but you

I don't know what to ask
for
what do I deserve
but somehow
deep inside
I expected more

September 1985

margins
a space along the side
for words
or art
or even work
an added feature

to the page
for depth
and character

to the man
for depth
and character
and grace

September 1985

confronted
by ideas
 unheard of
by songs
 undreamt of
by tears
 unthought of
a life
may fall away so fast

and aeons later
sanity rethought
persona rechristened
hardship
pain
or joy endured
another course is laid

September 1985

and miles to go
before they fall
disjointed lives
pick up the bit

scratch and claw
love or code
the shattered pot
retakes the wheel
and spins to land
a world away

autumn leaves
on concrete curbs
or blowing
in the wind
rusted life
in glory shines

storm tossed gems
in liquid night
laughing
as the dance goes on

September 1985

staring
at your picture
just
staring
thinking
of what we are
will be
 maybe
of what God's made
making us
one you and
one me

disjointed thoughts
flood my mind
endlessly parading
what is happening
 will happen
 has happened
I see
but I don't know

here I am
a man ...

and I'm more confused
than ever

On ending

September 1985

I lie
thoughtful on
if I am wrong
or
if I could be right
putting off
to the tomorrow
that never comes

and I wait
hoping
praying
crying
while the days go by
like seconds

August 1985

uneven
this spreading of your joy
I weep
while others sing
 of your life
 of your love
 of you
and yet
I too believe
 feel your love
 praise your name
in ways far different
than my friends do

I love you Lord
am I so different
than those
who love you too

August 1985

Look forward my friend
look forward
gone are the days
behind us
near are the days
before us
Look forward

Our lives like the candle flame
flicker and burn
passing so slowly
it seems
but sooner than guessed
the flame blows away
Look forward my friend
look forward

Look forward my friend
look forward
and guard the way you walk
hold tight
and close
the great hand of God
Look forward!

To Dirk Brinkman in memory
of many days well spent.
God bless you in your life
as He's blessed mine by yours.

August 1985

Lord
because of you
I have friends
who love me very much
 add joy to my life
 add meat to my faith
and show me too
how to love

I thank you Lord
for them
and in return
let me be to them
what they are to me

Darlene Borger, Yvonne Kloosterman
and Carrie Feenstra at Camp '85

August 1985

Lord
my God
I need to treat you
as my closest
dearest friend
not as
my fairy godfather
I wish to dance
to dance before your face
in joy
I need to weep
to weep and clutch your feet
in pain

Lord
my God
this life I live
I only live
from you
this love I have
I only have
from you

Lord
my God
as I love my friends
please help me love you

August 1985

silence

sunlight
floating on the water
borne to shore
on silent waves

a sudden splash
a silent dash
feet lightly
making circles
quickly
disappear

soundless
passage
cool and clear

On a friend running quickly
into lake Ontario at Grafton

July 1985

the first hour took a week
the second a day
and then it was five
the first day over
the second waiting
a vacation gone
for good
all that remains
is some leftover magic
and over-exposed memories

the second day was better
and just before bed
a triangle of stars
pointed the moon
glowing in the cloud
behind two maples
and the nightbirds
singing quiet
took the magic
and held it
safe
for a rainy day

July 1985

am I
Lord
one
whom you have crowned
with majesty
with these thoughts
running rampant
in my mind
my drooling
that so seldom
stops

oh great Lord
whom I have killed
am I
of morbid flesh
the pinnacle
of your creation
oh forgive me Lord
for all that I am not
and redeem me Lord
from all that I am

July 1985

you stand before us
in fear
 for I would be fearful
and grief
 for I would have wept
and yet you did not give in
to the temptation of self
but rather
you asked us
 to pray for you
 to care for yours
 you even joked about
 the sharing of churches

I will pray for you
care for yours
laugh with you
and will you please
pray for me
that in despair
of even now
I may live the gospel
as you have done
and show others
why I live

To Glen Jackson, a man of God,
and pastor of Port Perry United Church,
Jacquie was playing the organ for them.

June 1985

late at night
on the path to home
stars so bright
they almost leap to my grasp
 voiding
 the vastness of space
skeletal arms of budding trees
arch across the road
 shelter
 imagined and real
all so new
and still so old
others have walked here
 in life
 and then in dreams
who now are gone
did they feel
as I feel now?
surely they laughed
and cried
and worshipped
felt pain and joy

frog-song calls me back
from this philosophical track
and I walk on
beneath stars and leaves
here long before I came
here long after I leave

"This is my Father's world,
and to my listening ears
all nature sings,
and 'round me rings
the music of the spheres"

June 1985

today, Lord
while walking the street
surrounded by people
aware of myself
alone

I saw a thing, Lord
that made me stop
and think
of all I had
and not
of all I missed
so beautiful it was, Lord
I thanked you
then and there
and walked on

and paused

I suddenly felt, Lord
that that thing of beauty
had been there
waiting
for me to come along
with my walls
so it could knock them down

did you, Lord?
put that flower there
knowing all the time
that I would come
and see it
and praise you?

June 1985

Lord, I'm confused
I've nothing to gripe at
yet I sulk
and pout
and frown
and treat my friends like dirt
and I know I'm wrong
 making my sin all the worse

I pray for deliverance
maybe
a lightning bolt of joy
free from on high
and it doesn't come
and I wait
and it still doesn't come
and I feel alone
and every slight
is intentional
is this some kind of test
that I've just failed

Lord
as this devil takes control
please help me to fight it
it's not right to feel this way
in all honesty Lord
I'm not good enough
to say to them
what I have said
if I were
I wouldn't want to

fill me with your perfect love
oh Lord
the hand I wish to bite

June 1985

distant
the thunder sounds
to echo in our minds

pausing beneath
in silence
sadness
like a blanket
covers us all
here
standing on the edge
trying so hard
to understand
why?

oh Lord
in our darkest hour
your love comes through
once more
once more
is your promise given
by your servant
by your hand

today!
you shall be with me
in paradise

At the coronation service of Dick DeMoor.

And [Jesus] said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in
paradise." (Luke 23:43)

June 1985

How you must have wept
that awful afternoon
 alone
 confused
and ashamed
face to face at the end
with yourself as a man

How you must have wept
as the cock crowed
after you denied Him
 once
 twice
and once again
and He came
and loved you still
and you fled in tears
 could that night have held peace
 or your pillow sleep
 as you lived
 alone with yourself

how you must have danced
several eternities later
 forgiven!
leaping into the sea
not quite restraining joy
at the sight of Him
frying fish
for you
once more

May 1985

if I would talk with God
tonight
I'd tell Him thanks
for you
and what you are
to me
I would thank Him for your love
so pure an offshoot of His
and all it's been for me
to believe that you do love me
for what I am
God's greatest gift is friendship
and I thank Him always for you
God bless you
my friend
eternally
as you have been a blessing to me

May 1985

images
both you and I
a reflection of
a higher source
and yet
we differ
normalcy
bastardized
normalcy
sanitized
you and I
are different

and yet
when I look
through the mirror
I see you
I see me
I see God
that is all there should be
please pray
that that is all there will be

May 1985

my friend
I am sorry
I've done you wrong
unknowing
unthinking
without awareness
I've hurt you
something I thought was you
was not
it was worse
it was me

please
take this hand of mine
black though it be
and forgive me
that I may start anew
take this stain from my heart
and let me live
free
from my awful burden
please

To an old friend, in apology
for all I've done, or not done

May 1985

lying on the grass alone
what am I
 one life
 among so many
I lie on my back
beneath the suns I'll never touch
and dream
 of glory
 of grandeur
of creation's endless majesty
the scent of fresh cut grass
filling my lungs
my brief span of years
 to me it seems so long
so short
compared to the life times of stars
or the ring counts of trees
how can these three-score-and-ten
take in all there is to see
each day new wonders dawn
to add to those before
and my mind
 too small to hold it all
allows it to fall ...

... it spills on the grass beside me
a private universe
dew drops light
on a silken spider's strand
holding all I've ever dreamt
and more

May 1985

retreat
back pedal
get out

I thought on entering
after a day
the noise
confusion
and company
is just too much

I've got to be alone
awhile
to regroup
gather my resources
find my wits
so I may survive
the onslaught

of the family

after a day's hard work

April 1985

you left your flower in the car
last night
 red on blue
 like how I feel
stuck behind the visor
up where I could see it
and remember
and smile

now
in an old ginger-ale bottle
it struggles to live
and I pray it does
for the way it brightens this room
is like the way you brighten my heart

April 1985

if
like a bird
I could sing and fly
happily unconcerned
about tomorrow
I would

so why
as a man
must both my feet
be planted
firmly on the ground

In defence of charismatism

April 1985

with these hands

I may create

beauty

anger

pain

joy

I may pat my friend

on the back

or hit my foe

in defence of honour

I may shake hands

or crush them

or even pull them along

with these hands

I may help someone out

or hold someone back

but always

with these hands

I do what others see

as the works of

a child of God

A Wish for You

I wish for you:

Sunlight and starshine
and the light of the moon
to fill your life forever
and throw away the gloom.

I wish for you:

Raindrops and rainbows
and soft summer breeze
to fill your life with freshness
and your heart with peace.

I wish for you:

Cat purr and dog games
and squirrels by the score
to fill your life with laughter
and lead your soul to soar.

I wish for you:

Mercy and blessing
and never ending love
to lead your heart to heaven
and turn your eyes to God.

I wish for you:

Good news forever
for all you've done for me
forever may His riches
give your life its joy.

A birthday gift for a friend

April 1985

long and lone I wandered
aimless
 heartless
 despairing
that the wall of night would never end
the isolation and fear
would continue forever
all alone
dead
but yet
alive
but...
who cares?
 and why should I?
life
that once was loved
has become one long road
boring
to oblivion
 no purpose believed
 no glory heard
 no beauty seen
only
endless
joyless
night

and then
 (blessed relief)
comes the rain
a gentle stream of love
free from the skies
so cool
and refreshing
oh man, it's great!
 again
my life is new
 once more
and the flickering flame grows strong

 and the celebration breaks
 tidal wave on quiet shores
 crashing through the walls
 life again is free, alive!
 life is mine!
 let me live!

and still the rain is falling
and there's the bow

to tie the knot

With a little help from Supertramp

March 1985

When in dark despair I wander
along this path I've chose
and hope seems like the morning
in a night that's been too long
then Lord your sun up-rises
to fill my heart with love
and my life that was so dismal
becomes a life that's filled with joy

March 1985

there
behind a pile of bricks
lies safety
a haven
from
a world of probing eyes
and voices
storming about
life cyclones

huddled I cower
from the tumult which abounds
 raging voice
 clashing thought
fearful
that unlike Christ
I shall prove weaker
and join them

March 1985

To Ron Visser, a Friend

I saw a sunbeam
 golden
shoot into the room
and thought of you
one of the many special people
who brighten up my life
in ways I can ne'er repay

As a gift from God
I count you
treasured beyond all price
each day anew
I thank you Lord
for giving me
a friend as good as you

And now
I take this time
to thank you
for what you are to me
and I pray
that God will let us live
as friends
for life

March 1985

the world about me
spreads its snare
and Lord
my strength
has failed once more
a token resistance
is all I give
and I fall
again

my Lord
in despair and shame
I cry
to thee
Lord, be my shepherd
be my portion forever
while my flesh and heart
grow faint
revive me
be my strength
and save me Lord
again

March 1985

Douglas, Roger, and Dad

I remember
you

when we used to share a job
how you would stop
to tell me things
my youth could not have seen ...
... and how Charlie
used to brag
about us
and how we'd never agree
but for music
and stereos ...
... and how a customer
could walk away from you
their day made bright
just by talking ...
... and how we used to joke
over steaming hot coffee
on a hill
by the bay
in the fall

thank-you
for showing me the ropes
for giving me some fond memories
for ignoring my ignorance
may God bless you
even more
than He has blessed me
through you

All my mentors, great and small, the first bit.
Douglas Law, block artist, the Charlie bit.
Roger Burton, Sears, the customer bit.
Dad and I siding a house in the fall out on
Rednersville Road the final and best bit.

February 1985

a man
disillusioned
I struggle
with mediocrity
like Peter
I try to walk on water
and then proceed to drown

Lord
what is it wrong with me
that I cannot even write
a simple song of beauty
for you
in gratitude
for you

why is it
that what you give
I destroy
that I wish
for your glory
to be mine
how could I aspire
to the threshold of your throne
while I scrabble so in mud

clean me Lord
and make me whole
take me still
to be your child

February 1985

in the fog
 gray houses
 chirping birds
 laughing children
in the morning
 yawns
 turning to smiles
 thoughts
 turning to breakfast
cool breezes
rolling on the carpet
end
as the door is shut
and all is silent
save
the racing feet
of playing cats

February 1985

for you to understand
a picture
 a sound
 a sensation

thoughts
like carillon bells
ringing
striving to be heard
above all else

one comes clear
then an other
so flow ideas
one just barely spoken
yields
to the next
and so on
confusion results
and occasionally
beauty

February 1985

late at night
I lie on the floor
and struggle with sleep
not succeeding
and turning out
I write a poem
that also fails
I ball it up
as I have been
and toss it to the cat
who rolls it about
in careless play
and has a bit of fun

it came to some good
after all

Not sleeping; on the floor of the
organ room, way too late at night.

Lord's Day One

my only comfort
in life and in death
is this:
 that I
 both body and soul
 belong to God
 who made me
and that nothing
in heaven or earth
can remove me
from His love

ever

Heidelberg Catechism - Lord's Day One

Question:

What is your only comfort in life and death?

Answer:

That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, all things must work together for my salvation. Therefore, by his Holy Spirit he also assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for him.

January 1985

here I am
a man
proud
life
resting in my hands
 yesterdays
 like a crown of jewels
 resting on my brow
 tomorrow's untold joys
 hopes that light my eyes
every thing I touch
brings me such joy
every move I make
God has blessed
every friend I have
a treasure beyond price

great Lord
you've placed me here
to do your will
 and I will
 (I pray)
and like a child
I look to eternity
with joy
but Lord
great as that will be
 a lifetime
 an eternity
 with you
still I live below
where joys are great
as well

I see perfection here, Lord
 in love
 in music
 in people
if this is but the prologue
the book must be ...
 ... awesome
to say the least
but Lord
mustn't the prologue be read
to fullest extent
is it against your will
for me to wish
to stay
below

a time

there is so much yet
for me to do
so very much yet
for me to see
dear Lord
I want to serve you
in every way I can
and live my life
for you
that's what I'm here for
for you

but still
you've made your child a man
a man
 who loves
 who laughs
 who cries
a man who loves to live
the life you gave
for all its little joys
 birdsong
 and sunshine
 and...
 ... so much more
please
let me taste it more
before I cross the threshold
to you

please, oh God
let me live,
while I live,
to praise you
to serve you
to love you

and to accept your will
for me
in the life I live

January 1985

Hosanna!

I say

I scream

I try

to feel and fail

why?

o Lord

can't this body you made

sing just praise

to you, its maker

words fail me

Lord

when faced by your greatness

what am I

that my song

can mean a thing

to you

please help me sing

in every way I can

to You

with love

and honour you

in my small way

down here

January 1985

out in the first morning
i stand

small
puny
insignificant

against the immensity of sunrise
and stars fading away
in the departing night

psalm eight
ringing in my mind

oh great Lord
what am i
that You love me
enough to give me

life and love
sun and stars
music and laughter
eternity forever
beauty where-ever
i look

such joy i have, Lord
while others suffer
why me?
what did i ever do?

my God!

i love You
i thank You
i praise You

i live because of You
everything i am
all i do
is all You

thank you

that i live
that i see
that i love

thank you

for You

Wesley Acres, out on West Lake ice,
very early on a Sunday morning

Psalm 8

O LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.
Out of the mouth of babies and infants,
you have established strength because of your foes,
to still the enemy and the avenger.
When I look at your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him?
Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
and crowned him with glory and honor.
You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet,
all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
the birds of the heavens,
and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.
O LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

January 1985

walking
living
joyful in where I am
there could be nothing else

could there?

the sun shines
birds sing
children play
there can be no more

can there?

far on the horizon
dunes break...

what lies beyond them?

reach to the sky
block my view
but my ears hear
glimmerings of sound

what could they be?

the sun rises

over there

and sets

over there

what could be there?

surely nothing

yet ... maybe

Written at Wesley Acres
during a WET weekend retreat

January 1985

My Friends:

If I could put to words
 what I think of you
 how I feel for
 how I love
all of you
I'd write forever.

You are all
the greatest gift
 save life
God could have given
this small life.

In your love
 I see His love
In your smiles
 I see His joy
In your eyes
 I see His life.

For all you are to me
I thank God,
I'll love you guys

forever!

Thank you so much
for being part
of my small life.

Forever yours,
me.

January 1985

Monday morning sun
streams through the
kitchen window
 something like a promise
 of extra glories to come
at the table I
stare across
 cheese
 milk
 tea and scrambled eggs
to you
 hurriedly dropping my eyes
 to my food
 when you look my way
and think
 of how you make me feel
 of what you make me see
 of...
 ...anything and everything
but mostly
 of how one like me
 could dare lay claim
 to the friendship
 (even love)
 of one like you
it floors me
to think of the gift
you are to my life
I wish I could find the words
to tell you
this:

because of you
I feel this way
I've never felt before
it's so...
 ...wow!
I'd gladly live like this
forever
 and a week

trying to find out
for so long
but I knew it
all the time
I love you
please, oh please
still love me

January 1985

once I looked on you
as a stranger
and from a distance
admired your life
envied your friends
hoping I would be
fortunate enough
to become one

and I did
thank God

then I looked on you
as my dearest friend
and by your side
my life was blessed
as seldom before
your friendship
was a gift
beyond all mortal means
all I could do
was just to love you

and I do
thank God

now I look on you
as a man in love
and it scares me
either my life changes for the best
or it changes for the worst
but it's never the same again

and so
my dearest, closest friend
I beg of you
forgiveness
 if I act confused
 for I am
 if I hurt your feelings
 I couldn't on purpose
 if I cause you pain
 I'm sorry

my eyes see two questions
both seem true:

- i) what right do I have
asking that friendship
be turned to love
- ii) what right do I have
to think it can't

but no matter what
my friend
remember this
I loved you then
I love you now
I will love you always

January 1985

A Year and a Week
(November remembered)

after the song
boredom strikes out
and I fall
to its temptations
not minding the sermon
I stare out the window
and thank God for the sky
that is all I see
thin tendrils of distant cloud
foretelling sunset's richness
and beauty
skylarking birds, alive and free
soaring in rapturous flight
exuberant and alive!

and my mind flies away
going crazy with joy
over all God's given me
the friends that share my life
 my greatest reason to live
the songs
 the tales
the tears and smiles

"Amen"
he says
and I return
aware of you
beside me
one more reason
for that crazy smile on my face
one more reason
for thanks

401 and Shopping Malls

dark, dismal, drab
no sun
no sky
just cloud
and more cloud
 rolling across the plain
blowing
overtop of huddled
 stooping
 masses
hurrying about
without the slightest regard
for a sight
so dreary

look there!
on the crest
a thousand statues sway
marble veins on granite skies
to sliver on lead
where billows recede

and on it goes
a path that goes forever
full of plans, dreams, goals
and destinations

and there!
on the left
comes sunlight crashing through
one small piece of daylight
becomes the painter's brush

gray
silver
white

and still the mad wheels turn
life gets lost in living
lives are lost of hope
hope becomes a dream

dark, dismal, drab
though often
yet beauty will abound
tears give laughter meaning
laughter gives tears a hope

life's chain of plans
a necklace of pearls
too fleeting to ignore

slowly comes
awareness
to the mind

the colours
are brought to life
and dance in far off skies

that dies
hard
though often

Ellen and I were on our way to
Bowmanville during a winter storm.

December 1984

upon reflection
comes truth
realization
that what was long avoided
 for fear?
may be
is true
it's true!
nothing will stem it
this bond between strangers
it is life
it is greater than life

the joy you make me feel
cannot be put to words

 it's ...
 indescribable

 it's ...
 unbounded

see my smile
hear my laughter
feel my love

thank you
from the bottom of my heart
thank you
for loving me

December 1984

why
for me
 (a believer)
does joy
 (faith, peace, love)
come more readily
watching snow fall
 (seeing rain dance)
than
fellowship
with my friends
 (other believers)

could I be wrong?

December 1984

a smile
like an open door
not impossible
 (an umbrella needs support
 but can keep you dry from)
rain
dampens spirits
hope
lives on in bloom
 with joy
unfading with time
which in passing
yields opportunity
a mule has been used
even I may be

First All Ontario WET/VSC Conference
in Willowdale CRC, Toronto.
Where I met Andy Geylense
and Ingrid Oudyke.

November 1984

above my wandering eyes
stars in myriad number
look so
beautiful
I sing
speechless with emotion
I sing for joy

oh God!
Lord of all I see
thank-you
that eyes as small as mine
can see something as great as your love
for a little child like me

November 1984

distant
the thunder crashes
 rumbles
 grumbles
while rain
nearer
snickers on grass
backs bent to the sky

or

stars
awesome in their glory
shining down on
this small child
the Milky Way
pouring itself through the sky
mere words cannot describe
the beauty

or

the quiet song
of a serving child
of the Lord of Love
in a life that's lived
in dedication
and joy

His beauty is everywhere
in love He builds
for us

The verse of the song inspired by
Dianne Denbok singing in church
"I Have Decided!"

November 1984

ah, 'tis autumn once more
sighs the soul
breathing deeply of the
coloured winds
flying
from far flung
hills
sporting Jacob's coats
(for a time)

scent, sight, sound
the mind assailing
 scent of the rain
 wet-blanketing excitement
 sight of the leaves
 running through the grass
 sound of the wind
 singing lullabies to trees
fight for (and win)
attention (for now)

rain falling light
from wind shepherded clouds
washes away the world
and I walk as Adam
before he fell
I fall too
and head for home

October 1984

by living
death is left
behind
its shadows fleeing
from the light of glory
bolts of hate
flung in despair
 of their
 defeat
 (no agony here)
stay
but are soon
overwhelmed
by the blinding light of love
that knows no end
 healing all pain
 restoring life
 giving love
 (no agony here
 either)

death is removed
for life
eternally
life shall be our lot
God shall be our love

October 1984

to the depths of heaven I ascended
exultant on wings of joy
the clouds my footstool
the stars my crown
dancing
for the sake of the dance
living
for nothing but the love
running wild
in my soul

finding bliss
and diving in
plunging through
to despair
life cut short
almost cut off
the pain so intense
stars dim to gloom
wings turn to lead
and I fall

down,

so

far,

forever

(it seems)

oh, to fly again
ignore the pain
to find love
to live joy
oh, to live once more

and

I live!

I breathe!

I sing!

the dance which faltered
once more leaps
flinging to the skies
my body once locked in death
in wild abandon
I follow the steps

laid out before me
and live
 and laugh
 and love

and sing praise!

to the great God who healed me
may glory be given forever
long may I live in His temple
to sing praises to His name

Years later all was forgot
and she came to me a friend
with a wonderful hug at Calvin.

October 1984

You came into my life
bringing your gift of love
and I stand
in shock and amaze.
How could one like you
love on like me?
I, whose eyes
can only look to glory.
I stand forever in your debt
and in awe of your perfection

And I stand here,
eternally grateful to you
who stooped so low as me.

To Dave 'Booney' Boonstra,
my very good friend,
on a dark and dismal day after
the longest, most melancholy
boat cruise I have ever had.
Plus one other whose name
I can no longer recall. Sorry.

September 1984

thoughts upon returning:

wow!
what a day
 friends
 loves
 waves
 lives
continual sequence
upon the stage (and off;
the stars
celebrate
my jubilee)
gifts
tales
roiling about
my eyes
shut tight
brilliant smiles
blinding joy
dearest
closest
friends
all fade
to
drowsy
sleep filled
peace

to The One
one says
"thank you"

After a picnic in Kingston

September 1984

wars raging
senseless
selfish

lives taken
wasted
distorted

an evil machine
right on rolling
the devil's toy

tool of God

in darkest night
shines a light

in the wildest storm
lies a calm

amidst this tangled world of sin
my Saviour gives me peace

Ke-Mon-Oya on Chandos lake
where we often met with God.

September 1984

Puzzlement
Wonder
Curiosity

What is He
to me?

Who is He
to me?

Me?
How?

Why?

How could it be?
Him?
for me?

Thank God! it's true
I'm confused
but saved!

Ke-Mon-Oya on Chandos lake
where the cross is in the stone.

September 1984

There is a barrier
in front of me
(vertical stripes
on a field of tan)
stopping all
 the carpet
 rushing to its base
 the world
 crashing without
 the light
 bursting with life
nothing breaks in

But wait!
there is a flaw
a leak
the world comes crashing
through
where I can see the sky

 and dream
 and soar
 on silent wings
 to distant 'scapes
 and times

ringing of the phone
(my anchor
to my now)
cuts it off
all
except the leak
wherein there is hope

Sitting at my desk at Erie
where, leaning far to the right,
it was just possible to look
out through the window of one of
the conference rooms.

August 1984

here I am
standing
on the ocean of earth
looking on
to the ocean of light

grasping
the world
never
quite
reaches
touches
it

in my heart
all the while
a gift
received
my guide
on the road
to forever

those distant shores
on the ocean of light

August 1984

It is Monday
 once more
The mask is on
 again
Hiding for a time

 the pain

 the agony

 of parting

 the bliss

 of dying

 of growing

life
gives way to
living
the tears are real
for both
 have smiles
hidden away
 somewhere

August 1984

caught in a streamer
flung through o'ercast sky
a spray of leaves
takes flight

red
green
gold

gently falling
toward the ground
careless circles
scribed in light
blown about
and overlapped
carving the wind
with loop and glide
till in closing
they bump the floor
and rest

August 1984

Searching
vainly
for something lost

Groping
blindly
at lives gone by

Callused feet
tread
burning sands

Agony

Pain

Despair

Can it
 (will it)
ever
 (never)
stop
 (come)

Comes the dawn
at darkness' edge
Life
stumbled over
given, taken
Gone the pain
I'm found
I've found it

Hallelujah!

Ev liked this one too, she gave it an A++

August 1984

Look! the stars
their courses move
 ballet
 eternal
 beauty
 unending
symphonies of light
blessing
this distant shore

beyond sight
 can we see
 really?
their beauty
with eyes so small
 or feel
their glory
with failing lives

YES!
we can

I believe Lord
quench my unbelief*

* Joe Wise "I Believe Lord"
from "Songs for the Journey"
Ev liked it, she gave it an A+.

August 1984

Up high
at zenith and around
stars in silent glory
 flame
 pulse
 fall

Jewels casually toss'd
on the drop cloth of night
So far away
my bridge still falls short
and imagination takes over
where my hands will never go

July 1, 1984

alarm ringing
too early in the morning
I wake
just to make sure
"Yep, it's too early"
and fall back asleep
and wake again
in good time
to bike to town
to see the parade
from the shade of
a well planted tree
 off to one side

and there it is
our chain of life
wending its way down Bridge
Harvey in his Model T
A.R.C. on their trailer

 it's over, I'm hot
 Baskin's ice-cream
 sure hits that spot

outside the sky lights up
anemones swim the night
their call bouncing
through our town
flashes
 (light and sound)
on church walls
and dying in the night

Dominion Day, 1984. Spent the day
in Belleville, having biked in early.

June 1984

The walls are built
the windows?
shut
high held slits
look out
not in
defences
erected
over
the course of years
impervious to all
save the wrecker's crane of
love

it sets the human free
and throws it
into life

June 1984

Landmarks

Mouse houses
 (private tale, oft' told)
in ragged
windswept lines
Opa and his flock
hard at play
again

Laughter
on care free winds
gently tossed about
with
clattering notes
of the children's vanes
hand built
with love
painted
with joy

Times
remembered forever
as forever
closes in

"You're never too old to build mouse houses!"
 Ben to Opa van Dyke.
In memory of Ben Prinzen, 1966-1983.
 Opa followed him later, 1899(?) - 1996.

June 1984

Woke up with a mist
lying in the bottoms
reducing to shades of gray
what should be green and gold

Swallows, safely hid,
sing to greet the sun
red
through all the sky
dull
glowing ember
adrift
on billows of cloud
silent on the breeze
 carrying also
 summer showers

Luke 19:40

Shall we cease
to sing in praise
then
to live our lives
useless
 silent
 wasted
shamed
by the joyful songs
of rocks?

When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'"

So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" And they said, "The Lord has need of it."

And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." (Luke 19:29-40)

May 1984

Stars in my eyes
after countless tears
so much have I missed
yet will I live
beauty will abound
where once there was pain
in light I will walk
yes
and joyfully leap
for
caught up in the dance
I may no longer be lame

Great Lord
you have healed me
please
Heal me more

May 1984

friendship ring
forever circle
warm fuzzies
on
Chinese place mats
mem'ries brought to fore
conversations
like summer rain
moving everywhere
Saturday night
growing up

sleeping bags
on a Grafton beach
moon
light on the waves
laughter on the night
stars leaping to forever
joy bursting through
lights a face

dances existing
with wild abandon
changing patterns
frozen instant
strobed

tears
smiles
steps to miles
walls built
doors opened
let in light
summer rain
gently down
laughter
to the skies

April 1984

Old Sol dances in his fields

brilliant yellow
in celebration
on royal blue

at eternity's edge
prelude to forever

Beneath life's boughs I lie
and gaze through
to an endless ocean

living sea of light

waves of colour
breaking on the shore
splashing off the world
frolicking on me

and beside

flowing
like waves in the bay
glinting
in the sun

Between the branches
on bare and
budding twigs
birds carol the wind
which holds the dance
they wild gambol
across the skies
specks against infinity

Down in the distance
blue
rolling billows
end the basin

ancient
shadowed

ramparts headed
t'ward the stars
earth taken along
not reluctant
eager

Laughter bubbles
with leaping splash
entwined
narrow ribbon of light

set free
from
deepest
darkest
night

flowing though the field's
carpet of colour
flowing life

free
exuberant
wild

faithful mirror
yet untrue

In joyful exaltation, the world returns to life
Life - leaping from hill to hill, rolling through the plains
Spring has come, and its music for the soul

April 1984

At last!
the ice mistress vanquished
she retreats in silence
save the random note
singing in summer's delights
Heat waved sky
 full of sun
stirs the soul to sing and soar
 with childhood(s) joy

Unbridled life released
overflows from the world
within as well
as
victory once more
blesses spring
and
life is free again

April 1984

What is a friend
exactly

A friend is faithful
more so than the sun

A friend is a smile
that is always on call

A friend is a hope
that never expires

A friend is a love
that never dies

A friend is a gift of God
to the one they've befriended

That's what a friend is
in no uncertain terms
One more thing as well
A friend is love
personified

March 1984

Out on the river are two men
in a ship of fancy
boat of wood
held fast
by an earthbound chain

over on the street
jackets come off
arms exposed to brilliance
and warmth
and sidewalk sales

ice
in crushing defeat
is formed (at last)
into cubes
or
races north to rest
pausing with rearguards
beneath outstretched limbs
of waiting forest
to remain for a time
in defence and defiance
but
both futile
it retreats
shapeless

March 1984

Rainy Night on Front Street

It is night
 (dark and glowing)
above and below
bright bits of day
set
in the infinite black
challenge its rule
add to its beauty

on the street they
crisscross on
the windshield
flowing to the hood
never to touch the earth
until rain
makes an easy path
and the lamps
 (and stars)
are
unbounded in travel
filling the air
with light
that glistens
on the road
like quicksilver
in endless motion
till it stops
and light is bound
to transient man-made sheets
and panes

March 1984

gems along the way and back
priceless treasure far removed
from this point of view
within reach one way
slipping away all others
re creation fails
where telling won't
the sun never dies
but grows golden
value ever soaring
on wings of emotion

the sun never dies
but grows golden

March 1984

Why?

When one is flat
why do others
stab his back
rub his nose
in the dirt?

What kind of life
enjoys this so
is so small
that it must declare
victory! (?)
in a battle never fought?

How could you
my perfect Lord
forgive
when I, a dead man
would rather take them down?

March 1984

Cheese Run

On the storm-line
On the road between
 dark masses of cloud
 piled high
and
 clear and brilliant sunlight
 untouched by snow
Two sides
to one day

The sun is there
then it's gone
Likewise the snow
comes and goes
goes and comes
Highway 37
straight on sight
to where the cloud
outflanks the sky

Here I am
I, who love the sun
am heading for the storm
on a two edged road

On the way to Mapledale to
pick up a brick of cheese

March 1984

On that far horizon
 cloaked
 by cloud surrounded
 gleaming in the morn
the sun rises
wide eyed
awake
emissary from the stars
our local life
our childhood's god
fire starter of the skies
our adulthood's dream
far beyond our ken
for that made
more worthwhile

Not perturbed
by mankind's
flights of fancy
it rises
above the dark of night
to bathe
our little ball
in warmth
 and light

March 1984

Christ is King!

I'm His subject

Hallelujah!

What more is there
or could there be?
Nothing!

Life is God
God is life
Praise His glorious name!

March 1984

happy-sad
ecstatic to have seen you
sad to have left
alone
with two warriors
battling for my soul
who may win
depends on me

courageous smiles
unhidden frowns
both return
 retreat
and come again
as the struggle goes on

until that day
we once more shall meet

 speak
 smile
 and laugh

life goes back and forth
but then I'll sing

 like a dog
 full of wild abandon
 when the master calls

in pure unsullied joy
you're near again

In Trenton, after spending the
weekend with a very dear friend

March 1984

Riverview March

cold March
windy day
fast
run-off river
quietly laughing
by lace
on the edge
swirling
flowing away
under ice and star

leaves cutting the wind
rustles tossed
away
 beyond reach
soaring
towards the sun
beyond forever

a cry returns
followed by a duck
then two
Wow!
so many
 swimming
 living
 playing
too cold for me
such fun it seems

beautiful
diving deep
up top
water slithers
from Jacob's coats
blue
 (purple?)
the colour of kings
not a red carpet
for these
but one alive

it's gone
the call came
I left
back to
 cloistered life
 iron laws
 broken dreams
yet full of hope

maybe tomorrow

yes

maybe

A bunch of us went to Riverview Park just
outside Peterborough. I went off by myself
to contemplate life, the gift from Ev and
friendship. This was the result.

March 1984

how do I say thank you
for a gift so finely wrought
what expressions can I use
to express to you
my unbounded joy

such a thought deserves much
so much more than I can give
in haste
love is one gift
payable only in kind
but how?
 to you
 to all
 to what

I know!
I'll climb the highest peak
there to snatch a piece of the sun
to put it into life
the joy you made
eventually returned
through another
meanwhile
"Thank you!" will have to do

This was when Ev gave
me one of her poems
as a friendship poem.

March 1984

insight
the look within
what will be seen
or what not
one surprise
or another

wipe the mist off the pane
peer inside
the cogs are turning
can you see?
moving all the time
basically the same
but different
what you are
from
what you were
can always be told
if you know how

March 1984

It's night again, Lord
and I'm in bed
reciting the evening prayer
please let it not be false

I thank you for today
for the fun I've had
of the tears I've shed
as well

You let me see my friends
thanks for that
their love with yours
is all I really need
I think I believe that now

For the sins I've done
please forgive me
please give me strength
not to fall again

As tonight I rest
to start afresh next day
keep me safe in your love

Amen

February 1984

Redeemed!
Oh the beauty of that word
Sin
washed away
The record book
burned
Day's dark gloom
turned to joyful sun
by the Son
praise His name
Because of Him
I'll live forever

February 1984

Heat that rises
from sweating pavement
Ice cream that falls
from careless grasping hands
Breakers of refreshment
crashing on a beach
crowded with life

of all the dreams that come
with winter's icy edge
why would these persist
while others flee

What a wond'rous gift
is the humans mind
that can recall the sun
when snow confronts the eye
and ice lies on the shore

February 1984

paper dream
lying there
 flat
epitome
of all my desires
shepherd
of my mind
my guide
in the weary way
of life

security
slips away
 comes again
fleeting and fickle
damn that dream
its strength
its wiles
thief of my life
Lord, come back to me
take me back
be my dream
be my life

February 1984

the moon's a reflection
an image of life
marred on its skin
(though solid beneath)
its wounds are its beauty
 the overcoming
 its treasure
bright as diamonds
on the night's velvet mantle
with which it's sometimes cloaked
but always there
shining more often than not
glorified in its triumph
master of the skies

February 1984

Autumn (the fall)

up for a visit
in the quiet peace of fall
silent
but for the random memory
spoken aloud

thick underfoot
leaves
in red and gold
glorify the place of tears
vibrant in the sun
that shines
in cloudless sky
and glistens on
dark marble slabs

We had gone last fall to Picton to
see where Opa Ellen was buried
and to remember at his grave.

February 1984

at one moment wild
with petty intrigues
at the next
sodden
by reality's wet blanket
life is ever changing
there's always
something new
 to do
 to see
 to be
or not to be
there is no question
just enjoy it
while it's there
while the door is far away

two men came to the Lord
one day
to pray
one stood and spoke
the other
one crept and wept
imploring forgiveness
of the sins he'd done
the proud one stood
thinking of those he
didn't do
"Thank you Lord,"
he said,
"that I am not he
on his knees
in the dirt."
with a tear streaked face
he on the floor cried
"God!
be merciful to me
a sinner!"

two men came to the Lord
one day
to pray
one man stayed
forgiven

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:9-14)

February 1984

gems in flight
sparkling in the sun
silv'ry in the air
arcing from the earth
only to return
to lay as jewels
on long and green
blades of grass
blowing in the wind
yards from where they were
when set to sudden flight
by a transient thing of rubber

Edwin Koopmans was driving us in his father's van
to a bowling tournament in Oshawa when
we drove through a puddle on the 401.

January 1984

skis rasp on the snow
underfoot
drowning out calling birds
overhead
falling silhouettes of white
backed by a drop cloth
of living green
of red
where the fall
has been frozen
by premature cold

moving at all
starts another shakedown
as flakes
temporarily indisposed
to touch the earth
are jarred
from their cedar berth
to follow with wild abandon
the way of autumn leaves
when the tendrils
of the ice clad mistress
first tickle the winds
in the season's square dance
on the earth

January 1984

sing oh earth
to the Lord of the dance

in wond'rous life
His works unfold

in glorious praise
they proclaim His love

the birds in their wild carousing
across a sun drenched sky
see the wind as it moves
playing games with ripening grain
shadows of clouds
dance across the hills
echoing the cries of children
while they in exuberance
celebrate life

Sing to the Lord
Laud His name
to the height heavens
Glorify the Lord
to all His creation
Praise the Lord
with all your breath
with all your will
your blessed life long
Sing, sing to the Lord
and live

January 1984

life goes on
it always does, always will, always did
no matter what goes by
tomorrow still lies ahead
to soften the cross of today

the grief of the hour
is softened by the years
but still exists
when a name or a memory
return in conversation
to bring the trace of tears
to smiling, joyful eyes

viewed from afar
the hole is so small
all that is gone is you
whom we'll meet again in time
until then life continues
while we try to survive
with a photo' to replace the person
whose smile is gone the way of summer
when autumn leaves fill the sky

In memory of Ben Prinzen
1966-1983

January 1984

flaming against the sky
tossed about by wind
 like the breath
 on a cold, sub-zero morning
various shades of red
tangle with those of gray
 or is it silver
 on this cold, sub-zero morning
illum'n'ed from without
the mass receives new life
when, escaping from its prison
it shoots against the morning sun
to become a flowing gem
drifting from its tow'r of brick
where once it was confined

A pillar of steam was escaping the
stack at the Domtar plant one morning...

January 1984

late in the day
on the homeward trail
climbing crests of earth
many eyes stab the night
at tangents to the line
they're speeding along
sixty miles an hour
such a hectic pace
for such a centipede

once on its way
like the Rubik cube
never more the same
kaleidoscopic change
each part an entity
without identity
until the homeward trail
comes close at hand
and the time has come to go

Just for those who cannot guess
this was inspired watching cars
on the 401 between Trenton and
Belleville wend their way home
at night, all in a narrow line.

January 1984

staring into a mirror
at what's staring back
as at a stranger
's the way i seem to be

never knowing
just who to be
i hide behind facades
that quickly crumble down
like an old brick house
against the wrecker's ball

have patience
for eventually i'll see
the face in the glass
that's not unknown
by anyone but me
who has just avoided it
in search of fragile dreams

December 1983

a life I wanted
is a life gone by
and now that it is
I'm glad
for the one I wanted
is not the one I have
it's the one I had
it's the one that's bad

I'm on the tightrope now
and loving every minute

The tightrope is a reference to
one written in December 1982

December 1983

This world with all its beauty
Is a wond'rous place to stay
While that final home's prepared
Here we live where life abounds
In all its many forms
In all its lovely ways
Greater than all I've heard
One outshines the rest
Two girls singing to another
"Ere Zy God" in Dutch

To Audrey Couperus and Ilse Koopmans,
"Keep on singing."

I think we were at a retirement home,
Audrey and Ilse sang ("Glory to God") to
an old Dutch lady whom they found there.

December 1983

When the lake is green
And tossed by wind
To rolling breakers
Of surly wrath
Will you love me then?

When the record skips
To the dance's end
Smooth, flowing movements
Wrench'd to the door
Will you love me then?

You said you would
Under sunny skies
But what about the rain
Will you love me then?

You are mine
I am yours
I will love you always

December 1983

For unto us a child is born
Let man their songs employ
Or their hands
Or their hearts
Bring forth that joyous line
Christ has come!
Stand up. Stand up! for Jesus
For Jesus saves
Praise the Lord
Spread the word
Christ has come!
He is come

December 1983

My Lord, you are great
Whole worlds you have made
From earth to heaven
Your works abound
You made the mightiest suns
You gave the bird its song
You gave me a life
Beyond my dreams

Your beauty, oh Lord, is all around
Your grace abounds forever
Of your love, oh Lord
I'll tell the earth
All it's been to me

Thank you, my God
For what I am in you
What you have made in me
Such a blessed life
I'll give it back to you
Use it, Lord, as you wish
And grant me the courage
To agree

December 1983

What do you do when the music stops
The weekend's over
Your friends back home

What do you say when you cannot sing
The song is dead
Your heart not in it

What do you do when the laughter ends
The tears feel near
And no one is there
To help you

What do you think of
Where can you go
To rid yourself of that awful mood

O you children believe
In every day of life
By every fallen dream
In every spring of hope
God is Lord
He rules all
In God there is peace
In Him will I trust
For in Him there is life

December 1983

Snow
Drifting down
Through the air
Into the lane
And on to the yard
And stopping
When the stars come out
 Brighter than ever
 In a night
 Darker than ever
Swirling at the feet
Shov'ling out the drive
Dusting into the face
Sweeping off the car
Glowing like marble
Thick on the lawn
As shadows cast by plows
Float across it
Departing like summer
To lands unseen

December 1983

A friend is one
Who gives life meaning
Makes it worth the pain
A friend can make
The greyest day bright
Or a bright day heaven
A friend shares hopes,
Fosters dreams,
Gives a twinkle to the eye,
Helps to sing
The songs of the heart
And give them form
A friend seasons life with love

December 1983

You thought it was yours
You thought you had it made
You could just sing, you could dance
Life just fell into place
Like the yellow brick road
It led you on

All the while
When He was pulling strings
You were cutting them
Tying them to you
You're on the wrong road man
Loose yourself now
Before it's too late

December 1983

I can sing
But the song's not mine
I can write
But the words aren't new
I can dance
But I'll never lead

I'm being led by a higher one
A greater voice
That sings the song
A better hand
That wields the pen
A nobler frame
That leads the dance

I will sing
That great song of life
I will write
Mark the words He's given
I will dance
And give wings to my soul

December 1983

To those who wondered
why I ran
while others walked
or stayed inside
You'll find an answer here

I ask of you,
what else could I have done
other than dance to life
to the song in my heart
the gifts I treasure most
 my God
 my friends
 a song
 a fantastic day
all were there
all were good
Under these conditions
running was not too much
it was not enough

November 1983

Lord, it's a beautiful day
I've just noticed now
staring out the window
at November's cloudless sky
clear and empty, bright as love
going on forever

it makes me want to sing
to just run out and play
for what other reason than this, Lord,
to run and frolic and glory in life
could this day be made?

In church with Ev Flim, she
taught me something of poetry.

Vortex

Round and round you go
Where you'll stop no-one knows
You took the chance some time ago
And now you've been dragged in
No more freedom, no more time
The life you've lived no more sane
Now a canoe in the rapids
You're following a furious course
You're cut off from all escape
Oh yes! you're committed now

You thought you'd get out
Once when the going got tough
But when the going got tough
You found you had stayed
No excuses, no complaints
Not even a trace of regret
How can you mind what you have done
The entrapment is pleasant some times
Friendship binds with cords of love
Oh yes! you're committed now

November 1983

Tonight it rained
Not really that odd
Save this is November

Off to the west
Were bright city lights
Setting the sky aflame

Down in the north
There sky meets land
Gems shining on the edge

On size 'leven feet
Rubber boots sang
Slapping against the road

Coming home
The dog barked
And ruined it all

November 1983

I know that without God I would die
As surely as now I live
It is He who gives me life
It is He who gives me all
The greatest of them all is you
You who are my friend
You who show God's love
And help me see what I must do
To be more like Him
May He reward you richly
For all you've done for Him
By doing it for me
You've brought me nearer Him
And without you my life would be less
I thank God He's let me live
At the same time and place as you
I hope I can do at least for you
A little of what you've done for me

God's greatest gift is friendship
In which we show our love
Keep on loving, it comes from above

John Vandermeer in mind,
among others

November 1983

I can't stand alone
Much less sing and dance
I need someone to pull the strings
For I can't reach that high
Haven't even the strength to try
And if I did, I would fail
My eyes are too small
To see what must be done

But I'm not alone
For God will help me walk
With Him on the strings
I just can't go wrong

The first line is from a song
sung in the series "Fame"

November 1983

Crosswords

Cried out at the end

Of a life lived well

A cry of despair

Resounding through the ages

For all mankind to hear

And remember that awful cry

"My God, my God,"

"Why have you forsaken me?"

Remember

It was said once

And never again

Unless by choice of ours

That second time
it would not be the
forsaking of Jesus
but of a fallen soul.

November 1983

Lord, show me your hand
That it may guide me
Through darkness to life
Let me remain true
In all of my ways
Free to follow you
And to love my neighbour
Help me always remember
That a life with you
Is the best life of all

October 1983

He came with a song
Which He sang for me
He cared not for what I was
But for what I could be
After hearing the song
And singing along

After reading:
"The Singer,"
"The Song,"
and
"The Finale."
Thank you Calvin Miller,
and Stuart Couperus
who got me to read it.

October 1983

I come home, late at night
The lights are out
The doors are locked
In just a few hours the alarm will ring
Waking me up for another day's work
Usually I'd go inside right away
But on a rare occasion, like tonight,
I'll wait outside
To look around
And forget the bed for a time

On these nights the stars might shine
They might not
Sometimes the birds will sing
Sometimes they won't
Quite often a dog will bark
Seldom not
The one unchanging fact
That makes these nights as one
Is that each time I reflect for a while
On how good God's been to me
And holding this thought
I go inside
Refreshed

September 1983

All the little things I do
I do them out of love
Love and thanksgiving
The love of God for me
From there my love for you
Thanksgiving to the Lord
For His vast mercy
And thankfulness for you
Who are my friends
Why you are
I'll never know
But that you are
Is all I need
To make me believe
That God does care
Because you do
And since you do
So will I

To Ev Flim and Ron Hosmar
who helped when Ben was dying,
in sincerest gratitude

September 1983

I'd just returned from a weekend
Showing up at your place
Full of joy and laughter
Ready to be with you again
When I heard that you were sick
But I didn't worry
Later the family came back
Crying
Seems you were worse than they thought
They all cried, I couldn't
I just sat and stared
And wondered

Forgive me Ben, I just can't cry
Though I feel sad just the same
Tears that should come now
I'll save till you're gone
But until then
I'll pray God lets you stay

In memory of Ben Prinzen
1966-1983
My cousin and a good friend.

I had been at a youth retreat
looking forward to seeing Ben,
and the whole family together
again for the first time in years.
When I got to the house there
was no one waiting. Ben had
been taken to Emergency. He
died just two weeks later.

September 1983 - November 1983

Roll back the curtains of the mind
Let the feelings come
Never fear the well of tears
Or the flicker of a smile
Let them play across your soul
There's a beauty that exists
In these frail webs of emotion
That cannot be set aside
Let them grow within you
Don't keep them bottled up
Not until the flask is opened
Can the wine be had
Not until your love's expressed
Can your life be lived

August 16, 1983

Let me have the innocence of a child
That I may not see my neighbours
Through the biased light of life
To wrong them in my mind

Let me have the faithfulness of a man
That I may follow my saviour
Through the jungles of hatred
To the glory He has promised me

At John Vandermeer place on
King in Oshawa on my birthday

July 1983

The word once written
Can never be erased
A deed once committed
May not be refaced
A sin once forgiven
Is never more recalled

It's an amazing grace we're subject to

July 1983

Bindweed Parable

This morning
Looking out the window
I saw
Growing on the lawn
Sprinkled like confetti
Some
Fine smelling
Sun tracking
Flowers
Tossed and turned
And stepped on
But true
Never shirking duty
Until picked

Why cannot I
Do the same

June 1983

Thunder rumbles in the distance
Lightning flashes on the pane
Wind tossed rain
Sings on the screen
Then stops

All about me all is quiet
Save those distant cannonades
Rumbling on
After the deed
Is done

June 1983

He's left,
Forever maybe not,
But he's been gone
A long, long time.

Where did he go,
That boy who once lived within?
He who could find joy
In a birdsong.
To whom each new day
Was a miracle
Each sunrise a gift of God
To his wide open eyes.

Where is he now?
That boy whose name was
Childhood

June 1983

Rejoice
Rejoice in the Lord
The giver of all things
And source of all blessing
How great is our God
How glorious His love
Oh people, give thanks
That His mercies never cease
Sing the song of His greatness
To all who live
Let them see our God
That our joy
May be theirs

Praise the Lord
Let all that breathe praise Him
Never to forget
That it is He
That lets us live
A life beyond our greatest hopes

June 1983

From here
All I see
Is tomorrow
The promised gleam
Of distant years
That calls me on

Now
Is where I pause
Between
Where I was
And where I am
Going

Yesterday
Is naught but a dream
Recalled
Over the years

Tomorrow
Is all that counts
The old mistakes
And ancient ways
Can be forgotten
Are forgotten

I'm a clean slate
Each day anew
To stand hopeful
For tomorrow

May 1983

Shelter Valley at Night

White reflections against a black abyss,
A foreboding mass that defies its name,
Joined by triple lines of silver thread
Form a barrier from this dark hole
So the lights may go safely on their way.
White to red on that side,
Red to white on this,
Fading from before and behind,
Jewels on the thread
That spans the crack
Where once the sun shone bright
That now resides in dreams.

Quotes from this poem appeared in the August 27, 2003 editorial
of "The Independent," an independent newspaper from Brighton,

May 1983

Echo

The hills
Are alive
With the sound
Of Music

They yelled,
and came back:

Are alive
With the sound
The hills
Are alive
The hills
Of music
Are alive
Of music
With the sound
Are alive
The hills
With the sound
Are alive
Of music
The hills
Are alive
With the sound
Of music

Slowly fading off
to nothing
in the evening breeze

April 1983

Yesterday-Tomorrow

I remember what happened that day
Many years ago it is now
I was on the bus bound for school
He was in his sitting room refuge
Staring at the world through the glass

I glanced at him as the bus went past
Arthritic hands held clasped
One old man facing a day
That would be like so many before
Filled with yesterday's dreams and deeds

I don't think he saw the bus go by
Or me behind two glass sheets
I've never seen him again
And truthfully, I've never tried
Tomorrow was waiting to be plucked

April 1983

Give me a padded cell
For I fear that I'm about to go
I need a place to go wild in
Somewhere to beat the walls
And scream my head off
Where no one else will get hurt
Where I can turn the animal
Loose for a while
And get the animal
Out of me
Instead of being civil
And holding the beast back
To slowly progress
To insanity

Someone give me the room

April 1983

That distant bird
Afloat on high
Is a creature of the imagination
Its wings don't flap
But instead leave behind
Frail streams of white
That are tossed on the winds
And disappear as do dreams

Its cry in the day
Though metallic in sound
Is regarded with ease
But at night
When its eyes are aflame
It springs from the dark
A phantom against the stars
And assaults the senses
With the sound
Of nightmares

April 1983

Macabre circus
Darkest humour
A merry-go-round
Always turning
Always with a different face
Never the same
The grandest ride
Life

March 1983

Does the Sun Shine Only...

Does the sun shine only
To be obscured by clouds?
Does a laugh exist
Only to become a tear?
Why do some feel saddest
When joy should be foremost?
 Does God temper our joy with pain
 Or does He lessen our pain with joy

Why does one smile
When tears fill the eyes
Is it of pride
Or the joy of finer moments recalled
While the shadow falls

Why do tears flow freely
When smiles are all about
And not a cloud's in the sky
Can frail human senses
Not bear the bliss?

February 1983

Have you heard the news?
The future's here
It came today
But don't worry
It's coming again
Tomorrow

February 1983

No Turning Back

Sun slanting down
Its light weaving ways
'Tween buildings
Many stories high
Granite mountains
By asphalt streams
The new frontier's
Iron cathedral

Below the spires
In the canyon's depth
Sun struck panes
Observe silently
Hap'nings of life
Big Brother sees
Not deviously
Just not openly

Kid walks by
The sunlit window
And sees himself
Large as life
In a quarter inch of glass
He's free
But stuck inside

A remembrance of lower Yonge Street
after many years gone by.

January 1983

Welcoming Committee

The new kid in school
He walks to the door
His heart beats wild
As his hand extends
Turns the handle
And he shuffles in

The room's full of stares
That pick him apart
Like a puzzle
Teacher swoops in to help
Him find his way
Against the tide

Following him now
To his front row seat
And nail him there
Lunch-time has a new game
Called "Pick on Him"
Them against him

For a while, least-ways
Till he feels at home
And won't run there
They will let him in
Once he proves his stuff
It'll be okay

December 1982

I sit here
In silence
Surrounded by noise
 People talking
 Music playing
But I say nothing
Fearful that I would
Ruin the balance
Upset the scheme
Make myself a fool

I cannot keep silent
The tide is breaking out
The words wishing life
Live not in sound
But lie on paper
Expressed but locked away

December 1982

Here's to the dreamers
To those of us
Who
Have the courage
To think of new ways
Who
Paint new pictures
Or
Write new stories
Or
Shed new light
On old ground
Who
Have the courage
To see their ideas
Come to life

Here's to the dreamers
We owe them our cheers
For without them
We would be
Very
Bored

I

My friend
You are down
That's not good
I miss your smile
And how your eyes did too
Your whole face lit up
Showing more than words could ever say
How you felt

In the gloom
Your face shows naught
But a trace of the turmoil below
You clutch at laughter
Like one who is drowning
Like one who is drowning
You cannot hang on
And it slips away

Here I am
Powerless to help
You share your laughter
But not your sorrow
Please, let me help
I know I can
Two together beats one alone
It's the least I can do

II

Thank you
For your offer
I know you mean well
You (and I) know you can help
But I don't budge at all
Or very little

I'd open up
Let the problems billow out
But I can't do it to you
You've never seen me mad
So the door remains
Closed

I think I wrote this after seeing
Ilse cry for no apparent reason

December 1982

Man on a tight rope
A long thin line
He's carrying his world on his back
And it's a fair sized load
He'd look up
Before he looks down
For he's closer to heaven
Than he is to hell
 That only makes the fall
 A harder, faster one
 Say some--the fools
Its chasm looms
Its tendrils clutch
But they cannot do battle
And win
The tight rope's his lifeline
And walk it he does
His head's in the sunlight
But it doesn't blind him
To the wiles
Of that below
That is his strength
Knowledge of his foe
Faith in his friend

I showed this one to Terry Barber
who made one or two good suggestions
which I used; don't know what they were.
You can see a little Rush-ism in here
if you look carefully

December 1982

I see the line
Impossible dream
But is it
Why
cannot I
Like all men
Dream of success
In life
In love
And all else
What reason keeps me
From being happy
Calm,
Loving,
Caring.
All I can do
Is watch others
Do what I could have
Should have
Would have
Done
If dreams in the day
Could be real

December 1982

The Artist

Studying his element
The artist begins his work
Looking for something
That looks like something
He's seen before
He searches his mind
Arranges his thoughts
And poises his hand
Whether pencil or pen
Chisel or torch
He is holding
He begins his creation
With love and care
And the skill of years
He does what no other can do
He creates a part of himself

November 1982 - August 1984

Antagonist

you and I
we've had our fights
some of them
 mine
some of them
 yours
most
for no reason at all
other than simply
we had nothing worse to do
some for ideals
we have long since
laughed at
and still we argue
and rant
and rave

it's about time
that one of us gave
a helping hand
to the other
to put it all
behind closed doors

I'm reaching
but I can't quite make it
please! don't pull back

I need you

October 1982

Autumn Ride

Like shadow thoughts in my mind
Forms roll out of the mist
Trees at the roadside
Skeletons at first
Then filling out
As we pass
And drive on
To a hill that ends in the clouds
Goes on beneath
To rise again
And displays the sun
Behind a shroud
Of delicate lace
That wisps away
In the morning breeze
Treetops like shrubs
On the sky's carpet
 (A lagoon
 Around the hill-island)
Poked through
To see what lies above
The silver band

Shuttle birds
In a magnificent loom
Dart in and out
Sewing earth to sky
With free sung song
And rapturous flight

The wind shifts
The island sinks
We go on
Beneath the thinning veil
Lost in wonder
Speechless at the sight
Of a crayon-box-full of colour
Spreading like good news
Across a sun dappled
Tree quilted
Hill
And its flock
Upon which a child
Went wild
And forgot the lines
And did it all
 (A patch here

A dab there
Leave that alone)
The same
Different
A picture stored in the mind
Along with others
 (Grandma's apple pie
 With ice-cream
 A sand-castled beach
 A reunion with friends)
Laid aside
As we go on
Down a grass grown lane-way
Tunnelling through trees
Past a fair
In its restful madness
To a home
Where a repast awaits
Fit for a king
Or a just home traveler
From an autumn ride

October 1982

The promise of tomorrow
Is the hope of my heart
The light that guides my way
Is beyond that last door
And with me every day
In all I do, where e'er I go
This thought sustains my soul
Salvation is mine
Praise the Lord!

October 1982

Autumn's hand once again is shown
In all its splend'rous ways
As once again the summer fades
Into the books of time
To be called to life again
When photo-books are brought to light
And carefully dusted off
Old times and good times
Lie for all to see
And at the turn of a page
The blink of an eye
The past is gone like the summer sun
And autumn's glory lies ahead

October 1982

O God you let me live
Each day, each hour
In your care
I see, I feel
I sing, I love
As in you I grow

I see because my eyes you opened
I feel because my soul you cleansed
I sing because your love you gave me
I live because you give me all

Thank you God
For this my life
And all its little joys

August 1982

Master of the Storm

Lord, I am at sea
Wayward and lost
The boat has holes
The sail is torn
Waves tear at the tiller
Wrenching it from my grasp
Lord, I am helpless
The storm is much too great
For me to face alone

Lord, please take this tub
And bless its course
Guide it to peaceful waters
And fruitful shores
Let its catch be great
A glory to your name

Lord, the storms are great
But You are greater
Your love beats all that can happen to your child
Its fullness will present its power
As we sail together
Through the sea of life

Thank You Lord
That You are all
That You are mine
That I am Yours

fBased on a talk by Chet McPhail during
the 1982 Y.C.F. convention called:
"Let Down in Deep Water"

April 1982

Buildings upon a block
Tow'ring skyward
Follow them up
See the sky
Hear its song
Feel its life
Treasure its beauty
The sunrises and sunsets
The thunderstorms and rainbows
Remember these
Or remember nothing

April 1982

I've got to sing
My soul's joy out
The smiles I've kept inside
Are bursting from my face
I cannot keep it in
Anymore
I am the Lord's

March 1982

Questioner

I wish I knew
What I'm here to do
What stuff is planned
Who will I be
Or never be
Which life I'll live
How long I'll live
If I will love
Or be loved

I wish I could see
The way ahead of me
The twists and turns
Of the sunny trail
(Or overcast)
(Or both)

I'm full of doubt
Within-without
I'm at the door
Now what?

February 1982

Time goes on
The water flows
We stand at the bridge
And see what is
Feel what was
And wonder what will be
For all is new
As time can tell
And will
As its trails we tread

Time passes
The water slows
The bridge now behind us
Its purpose served
We walk on
Upon this wond'rous shore
In endless life
In boundless joy
And love
In His endless land

January 1982

O man, I must live
Life to the full
For the rowdy days of youth
Will soon leave me 'lone
Today will soon be lost
And the song remain
Unsung

December 1981

One death
So long ago
For all today
And years to come

One life
So long ago
To show all men
How they must live

One man
He gave to all
Let's give to Him
All that we can

January 1980

I wander through this place
And that place
Forever wandering
Never staying
Always straying
Searching in vain for something lost
That will not be found

What shall I do
Where shall I go
To answer my question asked
Who can I see
Who will see me
So I may begin to see
The reason for the world
The reason for me

March 1979

I met my neighbour by the way
While walking on my way
His burden a mountain upon his back
His gloom a hole in which to fall
Friend, said I,
My load is light
Might I help you with yours?
Sadly he surveyed my growing pile
Despair beneath his doubt
He about to refuse
I about to accept

The burden upon my back was great
But I bore it with a smile
To what would have been his end, I went,
Walking down that barren road
To a cross upon a hill

January 1979

I mount on wings of silent might
And sail the winds of golden light
Across the sea, above the sky
To live the dreams that never die

January 1979

Dad

He is a hero
Second to none
Keeping his duty before him

The lives which on him depend
Will not be forsook
Though some will forget
He will live forever

He is one to be proud of
He is my father

May 1978

You Are ...

You are like a fire in the night
Driving away fear
And trouble
Filling souls with hope
And hearts with gladness

You are a shelter from the storm
Keeping me safely
And soundly
From the harsh tumult
And terror of the night

You are a tree alone on high
Refuge for the weak
Unfightable
Pillar for the strong
And inspiration

November 1977

The Forgotten

Peace
And quiet
Like a blanket
Lie over the country
That is slowly waking up
To remember

Peace
Is shattered
When a gunshot
Sounds in the silence
In a final salute
For the forgotten

Peace
Now returns
And havoc wreaked
In fits of anger
Is now reserved by us
For them

March 1972

I Took a Stroll

I took a stroll by the brook
And heard a swallow singing
I heard a baby bird saying
Peep, peep, peep; at the brook

I took a stroll in the woods
And heard a donkey braying
I heard a far dog barking
Woof, woof, woof; in the woods

I took a stroll down the lane
And saw a kitten eating
I saw her mother cleaning her
Lick, lick, lick; down the lane

I took a stroll by the mill
And heard the millwheel turning
I saw the big tall oak tree swaying
Swish, swish, swish; at the mill

I was eleven when I wrote this, Mom liked it and sent it off to the Calvinist Contact (a weekly published by the Christian Reformed Church) which then printed it. I was some excited, I will tell you.

Index

- 1 -

1701 1007, 1274
1984 1204

- 9 -

9/11 1158, 1709, 1710, 1711, 1712
911 983, 985

- A -

Aaron Neville 221
Aaron Rock 250, 314
Abandoned 1152, 1269, 1769, 1770, 1778, 1785
Abednego 319, 433
Abel Grimmer 1296
Abortion 33, 95, 170, 214, 496, 621, 625, 631, 640, 644, 645, 647, 652, 662, 676, 689, 718, 736, 744, 755, 757, 796, 802, 806, 816, 822, 824, 826, 837, 838, 872, 881, 882, 886, 893, 917, 952, 954, 1015, 1017, 1018, 1083, 1086, 1090, 1142, 1178, 1358, 1359, 1620, 1675, 1794, 1827
Abraham 319, 1147, 2204
Abraham Kuyper 418
Abuse 670, 1080, 1081, 1082, 1083, 1086, 1203, 1412, 1439, 1473
Academy Awards 751
Accident 788, 2102
Achilles 578
Adam 169, 1147
Admiral Graf Spee 578
Adolf Hitler 1759
Advent 148, 152, 346, 1344, 1491, 1617
Agatha Christie 636, 1120
Agree to disagree 479
Aijalon 1592
Ajax 358, 578, 1826
Aladdin 850, 866
Alan & Judy Bennink 2092, 2113
Aldebaran 1511
Alexander Dumas 1850
Alexander Hislop 1752

Alexander Pope 1205
Alice de Ste Croix 878, 922, 927
Alison Malee 414, 415
Alone 659
Alternate Reality 941, 1111, 1213, 1292
Amanda Gorman 555, 556
Amelia 1009, 1012
Anarchy 278
Andrew Rhebergen 1737, 1765
Andrew Scheer 834, 838
Andromeda 604, 940, 1926
Andy & Yvonne Geleynse 1973, 2165, 2168, 2240
Andy McIntyre 2172
Angels 1766, 1814
Anger 554, 587, 1264
Annette VanderMolen 2234
Anniversary 682, 1533, 1534
Annunciation 1985
Ansel Adams 358
Anselm 137
Anthony Michael Gerard Rota 42
Apathy 43
Apocalypse 1328, 1428
Apollo 1135, 1221, 1367, 1924
Apollos 980
Apostasy 49
Apostle's Creed 383
Aramis 1850
Arc de Triomphe 682
Armageddon 359
Arminianism 455
Art: Better Tomorrow 950
Art: Fearfully and Wonderfully Formed 95
Art: Feel and Conquer 922
Art: God Being Held Captive by Evangelicals 1377
Art: Inclusive or Non-inclusive Church 226
Art: Our Refuge and Our Strength 750
Art: Out of the Woods 922
Art: Pietà 95
Art: Starry Night 95
Art: The Dance Lesson 118
Art: The Parable of the Sower 1296
Art: Wet Paint 1481
Art: Wheatfield With Reaper 700
Art: You and Me, Going Fossil Hunting 1796
Arthur Hoggett 1927
Artur Pawlowski 397, 425, 431, 509, 520
Asaph 414, 632

Assurance of Salvation 787
 Assyria 1600
 Astronaut 1809
 Astronomy 113, 120, 604, 1131, 1149, 1511,
 1862, 1926, 1995, 2167, 2322
 Atlantis 1677
 Atticus 180, 555
 Aunt Anita Rhebergen 2022
 Autumn 40, 1349, 1497, 1978, 2060, 2175, 2309,
 2320, 2352, 2409, 2412

- B -

Babylon 5 1638, 1903
 Bachelor 937
 Backslide 504
 Banksy 703
 Baptism 1605, 1609
 Barkut 1318
 Barnabas 433
 Barra MacNeils 1940
 Bathsheba 74
 Battle of the River Plate 578
 Behemoth 30
 Ben & Helena Heuving 2111
 Ben Cremer 458
 Berean 437, 540
 Bernd Gretzinger 850
 Bert Van Harmelen 2175
 Beslan 1648
 Beth Rhebergen 5, 1737, 1801, 1995, 2042
 Bethesda 2133
 Bethlehem 1491
 Bible 437, 968
 Bible Passage: 1 Corinthians 1 980
 Bible Passage: 1 Corinthians 11 1630
 Bible Passage: 1 Corinthians 15 38, 1727
 Bible Passage: 1 Corinthians 3 843
 Bible Passage: 1 John 1 1638
 Bible Passage: 1 Peter 2 182
 Bible Passage: 1 Peter 3 433
 Bible Passage: 1 Samuel 18 456
 Bible Passage: 1 Samuel 2 522
 Bible Passage: 1 Samuel 4 522
 Bible Passage: 1 Samuel 5 972
 Bible Passage: 1 Thessalonians 5 1782
 Bible Passage: 2 Corinthians 5 1732
 Bible Passage: 2 Kings 18 1586
 Bible Passage: 2 Peter 3 182
 Bible Passage: 2 Samuel 11 74
 Bible Passage: 2 Samuel 12 74
 Bible Passage: 2 Timothy 2 1725
 Bible Passage: 2 Timothy 4 963, 1961
 Bible Passage: Acts 12 456
 Bible Passage: Acts 16 433
 Bible Passage: Acts 17 431, 540
 Bible Passage: Acts 22 456
 Bible Passage: Acts 26 1636
 Bible Passage: Acts 8 1636
 Bible Passage: Acts 9 399, 433
 Bible Passage: Daniel 3 433
 Bible Passage: Daniel 4 1760
 Bible Passage: Daniel 6 433
 Bible Passage: Deuteronomy 10 130
 Bible Passage: Deuteronomy 18 560
 Bible Passage: Deuteronomy 29 187
 Bible Passage: Deuteronomy 6 130, 843
 Bible Passage: Ephesians 4 279
 Bible Passage: Ezekiel 18 787
 Bible Passage: Galatians 4 1641
 Bible Passage: Genesis 22 2204
 Bible Passage: Genesis 3 976
 Bible Passage: Genesis 4 2080
 Bible Passage: Habakkuk 3 356
 Bible Passage: Hebrews 1 843
 Bible Passage: Hebrews 10 130, 454, 461, 467,
 589
 Bible Passage: Hebrews 12 545
 Bible Passage: Hebrews 13 918
 Bible Passage: Hebrews 4 1813
 Bible Passage: Hebrews 6 21
 Bible Passage: Isaiah 1 152
 Bible Passage: Isaiah 2 1763
 Bible Passage: Isaiah 30 162
 Bible Passage: Isaiah 40 628
 Bible Passage: Isaiah 60 1617
 Bible Passage: Isaiah 8 480, 843
 Bible Passage: James 2 454
 Bible Passage: Jeremiah 5 162
 Bible Passage: Jeremiah 6 162
 Bible Passage: Jeremiah 7 912
 Bible Passage: Job 19 191, 697
 Bible Passage: Job 42 1642
 Bible Passage: John 10 152, 787
 Bible Passage: John 11 191, 317
 Bible Passage: John 12 1727

Bible Passage: John 13 456, 554
 Bible Passage: John 14 1720
 Bible Passage: John 17 609
 Bible Passage: John 3 324
 Bible Passage: John 5 2133
 Bible Passage: John 6 513
 Bible Passage: John 8 458, 1750
 Bible Passage: John 9 89, 505
 Bible Passage: Joshua 24 843, 1480
 Bible Passage: Joshua 6 1466
 Bible Passage: Luke 1 1985
 Bible Passage: Luke 10 130
 Bible Passage: Luke 15 1606
 Bible Passage: Luke 18 801, 1825, 2354
 Bible Passage: Luke 19 1527, 2328
 Bible Passage: Luke 2 26
 Bible Passage: Luke 23 433, 884, 2268
 Bible Passage: Luke 24 843
 Bible Passage: Luke 5 683
 Bible Passage: Luke 6 1755
 Bible Passage: Luke 9 191
 Bible Passage: Mark 12 130, 444, 537
 Bible Passage: Mark 16 546
 Bible Passage: Mark 5 1655
 Bible Passage: Mark 8 191
 Bible Passage: Matthew 1 148
 Bible Passage: Matthew 16 191, 1412
 Bible Passage: Matthew 22 444
 Bible Passage: Matthew 24 130, 1772, 1821
 Bible Passage: Matthew 27 1655, 2378
 Bible Passage: Matthew 5 300, 1478
 Bible Passage: Micah 6 1136
 Bible Passage: Philippians 4 697, 922, 1048
 Bible Passage: Proverbs 7 1928
 Bible Passage: Psalm 119 290, 843
 Bible Passage: Psalm 139 95, 647, 1178
 Bible Passage: Psalm 14 1741, 1777, 1912
 Bible Passage: Psalm 16 746
 Bible Passage: Psalm 19 526
 Bible Passage: Psalm 2 512
 Bible Passage: Psalm 22 1655
 Bible Passage: Psalm 23 23, 191
 Bible Passage: Psalm 42 243
 Bible Passage: Psalm 5 290
 Bible Passage: Psalm 76 1300
 Bible Passage: Psalm 77 632
 Bible Passage: Psalm 8 678, 2294
 Bible Passage: Psalm 90 1552, 2181

Bible Passage: Psalm 91 577
 Bible Passage: Revelation 12 1227
 Bible Passage: Revelation 20 206
 Bible Passage: Revelation 21 976
 Bible Passage: Revelation 22 770
 Bible Passage: Revelation 3 974
 Bible Passage: Revelation 4 843
 Bible Passage: Revelation 6 970, 1024
 Bible Passage: Romans 1 79, 499, 526, 1912
 Bible Passage: Romans 10 440
 Bible Passage: Romans 12 193, 431
 Bible Passage: Romans 13 182, 589
 Bible Passage: Romans 15 433
 Bible Passage: Romans 2 529
 Bible Passage: Romans 3 1922
 Bible Passage: Romans 6 332, 1922, 2215
 Bible Passage: Romans 8 191, 493, 1727, 1761
 Bible Passage: Titus 3 1982
 Big Bang 968
 Big Brother 937
 Bigotry 135, 556, 628, 666, 671, 673, 674, 751, 962, 966, 1081, 1082, 1240, 1270, 1273, 1282, 1299, 1388, 1478, 1957, 2154
 Bill Cosby Jr. 1917
 Billy James Foote 1638
 Bindweed 2387
 Birthday 2278
 Black Friday 354
 Black Hole 1161
 Blackface 850, 866
 Blacque Jacque Shellacque 891
 Blessed 122, 322, 469, 1856
 Blood 43
 Blue Origin 351
 Book Title: Brief Answers to the Big Questions 986, 1068, 1069
 Book Title: Contact 1717
 Book Title: From Time to Time 1845
 Book Title: Helium 1199
 Book Title: Joshua's Journey 1955
 Book Title: Photographically Speaking 628
 Book Title: The Gagging of God 1667, 1668
 Book Title: The Last Battle 376, 452
 Book Title: The Pagan's Nightmare 1574
 Book Title: The Seven of Diamonds 1909
 Book Title: The Silver Chair 790
 Book Title: The Singer, The Song, The Finale 2380

Book Title: The Three Musketeers 1850
 Book Title: The Two Babylons 1752
 Book Title: The Wind in the Willows 1172
 Book Title: Time and Again 942, 1845
 Book Title: Vermeer's Hat 1123, 1124
 Book Title: Whatever Happened to the Human Race 1912
 Boston Bombing 1447, 1448
 Brian Bertrim 1866
 Broken 1121, 1323, 1346
 Bugs Bunny 891
 Butterfly 1718

- C -

C. Everett Koop 1912
 C. S. Lewis 376, 419, 452, 790, 1184, 1462, 1487
 CAA 788
 Cabot Trail 30
 Cain 1191
 Caldron Pool 376
 Calvin Miller 2380
 Calvinism 455
 Calvinist Contact 2168, 2427
 Canaan 1480
 Canada 1840, 1842
 Canada Day 477, 484, 2324
 Canadian Forces 1515
 Captain James T. Kirk 351, 1274
 Carl Sagan 1621, 1717
 Carole King 1520
 Carolyn Van Der Woude 2034
 Carrie Feenstra 2259
 Catholicism 455
 Cathy Mellow 2140
 Cave Rescue 1127
 Caylan Ford 964, 966
 Certainty 485, 1381, 1384
 Chapters 1199, 1200
 Charles Darwin 507, 1650, 1757
 Charlie and Annie Burghraef 1096
 Charlie Hebdo 1340
 Cheryl Rendle 1394
 Chet McPhail 2414
 Chevy Chevette 2102
 Chicago 2024
 Chik Fil A 871
 Childhood 40
 China 1887
 Chocolate 5
 Choice 744, 755
 Choice42 95, 802, 806, 822, 837, 1015, 1074
 Chris Burtch 1007
 Christie Blatchford 739
 Christmas 25, 26, 28, 145, 148, 152, 339, 346, 581, 582, 593, 765, 766, 768, 770, 777, 1018, 1019, 1021, 1026, 1341, 1344, 1409, 1410, 1420, 1491, 1580, 1617, 1664, 2149, 2365
 Christopher Wiebe 1394
 Chuck Bruinsma 2082
 Church 1285, 2126
 Church of God Restoration, Aylmer 525
 Clarence Odbody 1055
 Cliffs of Insanity 340
 Coding 91
 Coffee 572, 583, 888, 913
 Coffee with Jesus 693, 1056
 Come From Away 1158
 Communion 279, 1187, 1630
 Communism 455
 Complacency 1142
 Connie Tryan 1759, 1766
 Connie Willis 39
 Conservative Party 834, 838
 Conspiracy 895
 Constitution of the United States of America 628
 Corywracken 1896
 Cosmology 634
 Covenant House 2056, 2058, 2060
 COVID-19 102, 130, 193, 241, 250, 251, 279, 306, 308, 312, 313, 314, 315, 319, 322, 340, 344, 389, 429, 442, 444, 446, 453, 458, 466, 467, 468, 480, 502, 504, 525, 527, 529, 531, 541, 547, 548, 549, 589, 595, 597, 635, 681, 682, 685, 690, 693, 697, 705, 706, 707, 709
 Covington 1006
 Creation 145, 1272, 1329, 1357, 1596, 1653, 1724, 1818, 1912, 1941, 1970, 1971, 2294
 Creed 38, 383, 1378
 Crocodile 228
 Crossword Puzzle 228
 Cultural appropriation 915
 Curmudgeon 1117

- D -

D. A. Carson 1667, 1668

d'Aartagnan 1850
 Dad 1441, 2077, 2285
 Dalai Lama 1136, 1657
 Damascus 399, 1236
 Daniel 319, 433
 Daniel Rhebergen 1737, 1746, 1747, 1765, 1796,
 1799, 1801, 1805, 1807, 1816
 Darius 319, 433
 Darlene Borger 2069, 2176, 2259
 Darlene Morgan 1481
 Darnell Barrett 522
 Darryl Mackie 437, 438
 DART 359
 Daryll Mackie 439
 Date: April 20, 2013 1447, 1448
 Date: April 23, 2018 1180, 1181
 Date: April 26, 2001 1729, 1730, 1732, 1733,
 1734, 1735, 1736
 Date: April 5, 1987 2126
 Date: December 31, 1999 1786
 Date: February 7, 2002 1702, 1703, 1704, 1705,
 1706
 Date: July 1, 1984 2324
 Date: June 4, 1989 1887
 Date: June 6, 1944 1882
 Date: September 11, 2001 1158, 1709, 1710,
 1711, 1712
 Dave and Morley 1238
 Dave Boonstra 2061, 2313
 David Ashcom Cruz 1857, 1858
 David du Chemin 628
 David Hayward 226, 1377
 David Nelson 363
 David, king of Israel 277, 319, 414, 915
 Dawid Pawlowski 520
 D-Day 1543, 1802, 1882
 Death 821, 872, 1387, 1502
 Death is Not the Victor 2
 Deception 1602
 Delenn 1903
 Democracy 301, 493
 Demons 1820
 Denial 2269

Depression 8, 9, 14, 23, 44, 86, 89, 91, 99, 111,
 112, 117, 126, 184, 186, 298, 349, 369, 370, 395,
 469, 488, 521, 536, 545, 558, 563, 612, 659, 663,
 721, 726, 753, 790, 829, 831, 862, 863, 864, 896,
 910, 911, 922, 924, 925, 928, 932, 933, 943, 944,
 950, 991, 992, 1003, 1005, 1007, 1048, 1061, 1093,
 1095, 1097, 1121, 1150, 1151, 1154, 1161, 1173,
 1185, 1212, 1310, 1338, 1346, 1361, 1368, 1492,
 1562, 1651, 2050, 2203, 2228, 2282
 Derek Sloan 525
 Desmond Tutu 1478
 DestinyBlue 878, 922, 927
 Devotion 1191
 Dick Bulsink 2167
 Dinosaur 71, 1719, 1796
 Dirk Brinkman 2258
 Disagreement 319
 Disbelief 1471
 Discrimination 556, 751
 Disillusionment 1403
 Dispensationalism 455
 Distant Shores 1318
 Diversity 1114
 Division 1112, 1229
 Don Symons 1004, 1481, 1527
 Donald Trump 560, 1029
 Dopler Effect 634
 Doris Tofflemire 548
 Double Asteroid Redirection Test 359
 Doubt 485, 1260, 1381, 1384, 1677
 Doug Cummings 254
 Doug Hoogsteen 2176
 Douglas Law 2285
 Dr. Craig Carter 1437, 1491
 Dr. Hugh 'Bud' Keenan 1857, 1858
 Dream 703
 Duffins Creek 358
 Duffy 1902

- E -

E. F. Hutton 318
 Earth 1621
 Easter 55, 145, 148, 248, 250, 698, 1232, 1332,
 1391, 2012, 2152, 2195, 2378, 2422
 Echo 2393
 Edward Degas 118
 Eeyore 924
 Egg Nog 1417

Eiffel Tower 682
 Elijah 1598
 Elizabeth May 838
 Ellen Vanderwerf 1787
 Emily 2102
 Emily Campbell 1394, 1807
 Emily Dickinson 414, 555, 630, 915
 Encyclopedia Britannica 16
 Epiphany 415
 Equality 135, 556, 628, 751
 Error 1243, 1287, 1301, 1371, 1389, 1410, 1475
 Euthanasia 872
 Euthenasia 1626
 Ev Flim 2141, 2343, 2345, 2382
 Evangelism 886, 1308, 1388, 1431, 1574, 1636, 2246
 Eve 169
 Evelyn Kloosterman 2175
 Evil 995, 1089, 1142, 1279, 1435, 1436
 Evolution 507, 1591, 1618, 1650, 1757, 1818, 1912
 Exegesis 319, 515
 Exeter 578
 Ezekiel 319

- F -

Facebook 254, 314, 319, 372, 495, 806, 845, 851, 859, 878, 922, 927, 950, 1022, 1097, 1148, 1178, 1232, 1289, 1394, 1427, 1448, 1458, 1542, 1912
 Faith 74, 485, 528, 690, 707, 1097, 1202, 1369, 1433, 1442, 1471, 1488, 1674, 1853
 Faithfulness 194, 480, 531, 536
 Fall 1941
 False Gods 1243
 False Teaching 187, 480, 522, 523, 525, 527, 560, 575, 861, 912, 971, 980, 1167, 1232, 1294, 1330, 1430, 1618, 1657, 1757
 fareh malik 133
 Fascism 455
 Fatalism 455
 Fatherhood 1483, 1623, 2123, 2424
 Fear 43, 1112
 February 1522
 Fellowship 130
 Flood 1677, 1941
 Forgetfulness 637
 Forgiveness 90, 322, 644, 736, 749, 785, 938, 951, 962, 997, 1080, 1217, 1412, 2269

Fossil 71, 1796, 1799
 Francis A. Schaeffer 270, 1912
 Frank Capra 241
 Fred Asbury 352, 1481
 Frederick Schiller Faust (Max Brand) 1812
 Fredinand Kloompmaker 2082
 Free Will 7, 18, 1334
 Freedom 278, 454, 458, 755
 Freedom Convoy 312, 313, 314, 315, 319, 322
 Friedrich Nietzsche 973
 Friendship 2234, 2334
 Futility 1243, 1726

- G -

G. K. Chesterton 1462
 Gabriel 1985
 Gael Fashingbauer Cooper 1069
 Game of Thrones 937
 Garden of Eden 145
 Garry Helsby 134
 Gene Roddenberry 673, 1450
 Genghis Khan 1759
 George Bailey 542, 1055
 George Floyd 670, 671, 673, 674
 George Frederick Handel 241
 George Lucas 1450
 George Rhebergen 116
 Gerry Butts 834
 Gerry Rafferty 1355
 Gibraltar 386, 1564
 Gilgamesh 969, 1147
 Glen Jackson 2264
 Glenn Holland 542
 Golden Globe 757
 Good Friday 248, 2152
 Google 284, 290
 Gospel 38, 456, 1308
 Government 589
 Grace 45, 311, 862, 884, 1086, 1140, 1276, 1434, 1442, 1641, 1670, 2386
 Grace Hu 2034
 Grace Life Church, Edmonton 527, 541, 549
 Grace Rhebergen 115
 Grand Rapids 2058
 Gratitude 1354, 1737, 1747, 2132, 2343, 2345, 2366
 Great Red Spot 947

Green Party 838
 Greg Laurie 500
 Grief 765, 821, 1425, 1436, 1652
 Gwen Bell 1843

- H -

H. G. Wells 39
 Habakkuk 356, 639
 Haiyan 1420
 Hallowe'en 1062, 1820
 Han Solo 212
 Hans Wilhelm Langsdorff 578
 Harry Potter 937
 Hate 43, 45, 456, 1365, 1465
 Heaven 754, 1118
 Heidi Sapiano 469
 Heidi Zwaan 1394
 Hell 1118
 Helpmeet 1859
 Henry Hildebrandt 509, 525
 Heresy 19, 480, 971
 Hermeneutics 187, 270, 299, 300, 319, 382, 437, 461, 480, 931
 Herod 291
 Heroes 1327, 1421, 1447, 1448, 1458, 1493, 1543, 1559, 1560, 1561, 1709, 2183, 2426
 Hezekiah 1586, 1600
 Highway 401 1092, 1336, 2302
 Hikaru Sulu 673
 Hillsong Montclair 522
 Hitchcock 1184
 Hitler 453, 692
 Hockey 1643
 Holocaust 466, 816
 Holy Days 1382
 Home 964
 Honour 42, 578, 1903
 Hope 186, 254, 282, 521, 698, 707, 721, 770, 779, 918, 945, 950, 988, 992, 1016, 1158, 1202, 1279, 1448, 1512, 1517
 Hophni 522
 Humanism 455
 Humanity 693
 Humilty 1280
 Hunter S. Thompson 1628
 Hyades 604, 947
 Hypocrisy 33, 744, 834, 1615

- I -

Ian Scott 1394
 Idealism 455
 Idi Amin 1759
 Idols 1243
 Imagination 1184
 Immanuel 148
 Immigration 964
 Immortality 1201
 Imprecation 393
 Indiana Jones 692
 Infinity's Edge 1138, 1277, 1503
 Ingrid Oudyke 2240
 Inigo Montoya 340
 Instagram 254, 372
 Internet 188, 1137, 1148
 Intolerance 45
 Inverness 1318
 Irene Hansen 1038
 Isaac 2204
 Isaac Newton 1135
 Isaiah 319, 639, 1191, 1480
 Isla Fisher 588
 Islam 1603, 1615
 Israel 939, 1586, 1600, 1838
 Ivanhoe Camp 1792, 1794, 1795, 1871, 1872
 Ivy Lea Bridge 1094

- J -

Jack Finney 942, 1845
 Jack Layton 1504
 Jackson Pollock 119
 Jagmeet Singh 838
 Jairus 1754
 Jamal Khashoggi 1057
 James Bond 937, 1129
 James Coates 509, 520, 527, 549
 James Cromwell 1927
 James Elroy Flecker 378
 James Horner 1223
 James T. Kirk 595, 673, 784, 1450
 Jane Adema 1394
 Jane Kenyon 712
 Jealousy 991

Jeremiah 319, 382
 Jericho 1466, 1544
 Jerusalem 939, 1586, 1600
 Jesus 148, 169, 277, 291, 317, 319, 433, 509, 749, 750, 754, 914, 930, 1019, 1021, 1390, 1391, 1606, 1617, 1742, 1750, 1813, 1821, 1940, 1970, 1971, 2110, 2282, 2365, 2420
 Jesus Christ 38
 Jewel Kilcher 1870
 Jim Parker 1816
 Jim Rankin 1515
 Job 206, 1576, 1582
 Jody Wilson-Raybould 960
 Joe Biden 560
 Johannes Vermeer 1124
 John and Marian Vandermeer 2148, 2153, 2180
 John Buchan 1812, 1936
 John Calvin 1936
 John Donne 1847, 1848
 John MacArthur 527
 John McCrae 1594, 1821
 John Milton 1936
 John Prinsen 2206, 2207
 John Steinbeck 1593
 John Van Sloten 1171
 John Vandermeer 1554, 2029, 2127, 2376
 John Varley 39
 John Ward 765
 John Wyndham 39
 Jonathan Hodge 1927
 Jonathan Lockwood Huie 951
 Jordan Hunt 1086
 Joseph 148
 Joshua 382, 1466, 1480, 1592
 Joshua Lovell 1394
 Joy 8, 23, 40, 41, 44, 170, 184, 250, 863, 922, 991, 1016, 1312, 1356, 1361, 1497, 1995, 2084, 2112, 2222, 2371, 2372, 2390, 2413, 2416
 Joyce Kilmer 1348
 Judah 939
 Judas Iscariot 291
 Julia Rhebergen 228, 415, 1737, 1746, 1747, 1765, 1791, 1799, 1801, 1803, 1807
 Jupiter 947
 Justice 1437
 Justin Trudeau 834, 838, 850, 866, 960, 978, 1029, 1045, 1081, 1114, 1204

- K -

Karawynn Long 1891, 1893, 1895
 Kari Jobe 1539
 Karla Homolka 1217
 Katee Campbell 1394
 Kathleen Wynne 1183
 Kayak 1138, 1172, 1277, 1503
 Keep on keeping on 70, 86, 109, 793, 800, 810, 852, 1158
 Keith Green 1804
 Kelly Brown 2131
 Khan 212
 Kill Bill 937
 Kim Probst 2116, 2155
 King David 74, 1147
 Kristen Nagle 525
 Kung Fu Panda 937

- L -

L. Sprague de Camp 39
 Lac Megantic 1414
 Lachlan Mackinnon 678
 Lamentations 382
 Lark 1788
 Larry Ablen 2043
 Laughter 2112
 Laura Klassen 736, 806, 1074
 Lazarus 62, 317
 Leaf Schrunching 40
 Leahy 1701
 Leauna Baker 2121, 2122
 Legalism 505, 1641
 Lenier 1903
 Lenny Kravitz 850
 Leonard McCoy 673
 Leslie Phillips 2224
 Let Down 1704
 Liberal Party 834, 838, 1183
 Liberty 278
 Life 821, 872, 1277
 Linda Ronstadt 221
 Literalism 1565
 Live Action 170
 Loneliness 1134, 1164, 1174

Lori Kernohan 545
 Loss 189, 190, 191, 196, 197, 198, 338, 474, 548,
 1012, 1115, 1355, 1483, 1485, 1703, 1704, 1705,
 1706, 1729, 1732, 1733, 1734, 1735, 1736, 2121,
 2122, 2148, 2153, 2159, 2160, 2243, 2383
 Louise Glück 104
 Love 45, 130, 314, 456, 466, 755, 1202, 1348,
 1365, 1465, 1472, 1520
 Lt. Gen. André Deschamps 1515
 Luke Meuller 2219
 Lynda Del Valle 2168
 Lyndon Baines Johnson 210

- M -

Mac Snobelen 1735
 Macdonald Cartier Freeway 1336, 2302
 Madison Square CRC 2018
 Magazine Title: Maxim 1773, 1774, 1776
 Magazine Title: Time 2163
 Maged Yacoub 1248
 Mainstream Media 495
 March 1810
 Marcus 1903
 Marie-Claire Bissonnette 1086
 Marilyn Bertrim 1843
 Mark of the Beast 444
 Mark Zuckerberg 806
 Marriage 1520, 1533, 1534, 1708, 2042, 2111,
 2115, 2180, 2258
 Mars 113, 841
 Martha 317
 Martin Cauchon 1670
 Martin Luther King 628
 Martyr 400
 Mary 148, 317, 777
 Mary Oliver 555, 722
 Masculinity 981
 Mass Murder 492, 498, 501, 1283
 Matt Redman 1445
 Max Brand 583, 1909
 Maxime Bernier 838
 Media 1418
 Megallanic Clouds 604
 Memoriam: Andy DeBruin 2243
 Memoriam: Ben Prinsen 2076, 2326, 2382, 2383
 Memoriam: Christie Blatchford 739
 Memoriam: Cor Ellen 189, 190, 191, 196, 197,
 198
 Memoriam: Dick DeMoore 2268
 Memoriam: Doris Snobelen 54
 Memoriam: George Rhebergen 1445, 1483, 1485
 Memoriam: Jim Flaherty 1385
 Memoriam: Mac Snobelen 1702, 1703, 1704,
 1705, 1706
 Memoriam: Noel Guerin 146
 Memoriam: Opa Van Dyke 2326
 Memoriam: Pierre Elliott Trudeau 1753
 Memoriam: Rick Campbell 1732, 1733, 1734,
 1735, 1736
 Memoriam: Rob Greenwood 1537, 1538, 1539,
 1540, 1541
 Memoriam: Stuart McLean 1238
 Mercy 45, 785, 829, 1553, 1857, 1858
 Meshach 319, 433
 Michael Edelson 1515
 Michael W. Smith 1855
 Michelangelo 277
 Michelle Williams 757
 Midlife Crisis 1723, 1739
 Mike Baxter 2056
 Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev 2163
 Miley Ray Cyrus 1484, 1532
 Millennium 756
 Millers Creek 358
 Milo 150, 391, 510
 Miracle 1160, 1161, 1179
 Miriam Toews 90
 Miscarriage 1315, 1425, 1675
 Mission Impossible 937
 Moira River 2158
 Mole 1172
 Monday 2319
 Montmartre 682
 Moody Blues 1552
 Moon 626, 2351
 Morgan Weistling 750
 Morley Safer 1292
 Mormon 1908
 Morning News 49
 Moses 299, 690, 692, 1552
 Motherhood 1364
 Movie Title: A Thousand Men and a Baby 1857,
 1858
 Movie Title: Armageddon 1719
 Movie Title: Babe 1927

Movie Title: Balto 6
 Movie Title: I Know Where I'm Going 1896
 Movie Title: It's a Wonderful Life 542, 710, 1055
 Movie Title: Joker 835
 Movie Title: Mr. Holland's Opus 542
 Movie Title: Pride and Prejudice 710
 Movie Title: Raiders of the Lost Ark 692
 Movie Title: Rear Window 710
 Movie Title: The Best Years of Our Lives 710
 Movie Title: The Gospel of John 654
 Movie Title: The Miracle Maker 654, 1754
 Movie Title: The Princess Bride 340, 656, 710
 Movie Title: The Searchers 710
 Mr. Spock 991
 Mr. Tumnus 788
 MSM 495
 Murata Erie 1960, 2116, 2155, 2172, 2219, 2317
 Murder 492, 498, 501, 1142, 1283, 1515, 1516
 Muriel Ward 765
 Music 1223, 1804, 1833, 1855, 2124, 2168, 2224, 2240
 Music: Albinoni - Adagio 610
 Music: Fauré - Pavane 610
 Music: Messiah 344
 Musk Ox 1743

- N -

Naiveté 33
 Nancy Pelosi 210
 Narnia 788
 NASA 359, 626, 841, 1032
 Natalie Hart 2198
 National Day of Truth and Reconciliation 427
 Nativity 581, 582, 777, 1018, 1019, 1021, 1491, 1617, 2365
 Nebuchadnezzar 319, 382, 433, 939
 Neil deGrasse Tyson 1371
 Neil Diamond 1448
 New Democratic Party 838
 New Year 1457, 1486, 1510
 Nick Vanhalteren 517
 Nicodemus 324
 Nicole Querido 38, 736, 779, 785
 Nihilism 455
 Noah 299, 1147, 1677
 Notre Dame 682, 939

- O -

Obedience 589
 Oklahoma 1865
 Omar Khadr 1513
 Omicron Ceti III 784, 991
 Opa Hoftzyer 2117
 Oppression 1279, 1499
 Opression 1887
 Optimism 1120, 1176, 1759
 Oracle of Delphi 318
 Orion 113, 940, 947, 1511
 Orthodoxy 93, 123, 124, 140, 149, 154, 168, 169, 171, 182, 187, 194, 226, 258, 270, 305, 331, 377, 381, 382, 383, 393, 399, 403, 425, 426, 433, 437, 511, 619, 971, 980, 1272, 2169, 2246
 Owl City 1194
 Ozone 2072

- P -

Pain 1315
 Pale Blue Dot 1621
 Palestine 1838
 Palm Sunday 699
 Paradise 784
 Parallel Universe 1111, 1213, 1292
 Paris 682
 Parody/Pastiche 1046, 1445, 1520, 1527
 Parting 1554, 2066, 2068, 2087, 2095, 2180, 2258
 Paul Gowdy 802
 Paul Hutchings 397, 400
 Paul of Tarsus 182, 319, 399, 433, 438, 467, 802, 980, 1480
 Pavel Chekov 673
 Peace 193
 Penny Koebel 1960
 People's Party of Canada 838
 Persecution 400, 432, 453, 509, 529, 539, 549, 1636
 Pessimism 1176
 Pete Hookstra 2131
 Peter and Stephanie Ferwerda 1708
 Peter Falk 158
 Pharaoh 319
 Pharisee 317, 437, 504, 2354
 Phil Collins 1856

Philosophy 485, 1314
 Phinehas 522
 Pickering Christian School 1740, 1816
 Piglet 924
 Pink Floyd 626
 Planet P 1924
 Plato 1314
 Pleiades 113, 604, 940, 947, 1511
 Poem Title: Celestial Music 104
 Poem Title: Good Friday, 1613, Riding Westward 1847, 1848
 Poem Title: In Flanders Fields 1594, 1821
 Poem Title: Invictus 1527
 Poem Title: O Captain! My Captain! 1274
 Poem Title: On Vermeer's Hat 1123
 Poem Title: Perks in the Melting Pot 133
 Poem Title: The Hill We Climb 556
 Poem Title: The Poet's Release 2168
 Poem Title: The Psalmist 678
 Poem Title: The Road Not Taken 95
 Poem Title: The Swimming Lesson 722
 Poem Title: To a Poet a Thousand Years Hence 378
 Poem Title: Trees 1348
 Political Correctness 850, 882, 1081, 1108, 1109, 1133, 1204
 Politics 446, 825, 827, 834, 838, 850, 866, 882, 960, 961, 978, 1029, 1045, 1057, 1079, 1081, 1204, 1418, 1449, 1504, 1840, 1842, 2163
 Pooh 924
 Post-Tribulation 454
 Poul Anderson 39
 Poverty 1545
 Power 89
 Pragmatism 455
 Praise 2416
 Pray 1086, 1321
 Prayer 878
 Predestination 7, 18, 122, 1334
 Pre-Tribulation 454
 Pride 1276, 1280, 1409
 Primal Roar 1859
 Privilege 122
 Pro Life 214
 Project Mighty Hearts 1160
 Propaganda 48, 49
 Protest 301, 308, 319
 Pubilcan 504
 Publican 2354

Purpose 1136

- Q -

Quebec 1840
 Quentin Tarantino 241

- R -

Rachel Ulman 1394
 Racism 628, 661, 666, 671, 673, 674
 Radio Free Babylon 1056
 Rain 2388
 Rainbow 852, 1092
 Ralph Vaughan Williams 1788
 Randy Hillier 389, 525
 Randy Stonehill 2124, 2224
 Randy Vanderveen 2038, 2044, 2057
 Rapture 756
 Ray Blackston 1574
 Reason 1370, 1488
 Rebecca Saint James 1552
 Rebellion 308, 319
 Recovery 1412
 Red Green 1229
 Red Shift 634
 Red Shirt 1274
 Redeemed 74, 1428, 1941
 Redeemer 1512
 Redemption 48, 279, 644, 749
 Reformed Bible College 1990, 2034, 2038, 2043, 2044, 2057
 Rejoice 2416
 Relativism 187
 Relentless 30
 Relief 8, 23, 44
 Rembrandt 1184
 Remembrance 1327, 1421, 1458, 1493, 1542, 1543, 1559, 1560, 1561, 1594, 1788, 1802, 1821, 1882, 2035, 2426
 René Descartes 485
 Residential Schools 477, 484, 492, 498, 501
 Respect 397, 425
 Responsibility 1116
 Restoration 45, 279
 Resurrection 820, 821, 1277, 1332
 Revenge 1267

Revisionism 661, 1108, 1109, 1204
 Ricardo Montalban 212
 Rich Mullins 1804, 1833, 1855
 Richard Prinsen 2030, 2145
 Rick Campbell 1729, 1730, 1789
 Ridicule 1471
 Rigel 1511
 Righteousness 312, 313
 Rights 308, 335, 340, 429, 432, 433, 481, 503, 1017, 1665, 1934
 Rilian 790
 Riya Rajkumar 983, 984, 985
 Rob Ford 1418
 Rob Greenwood 1537, 1538, 1539, 1540, 1541
 Robert A. Heinlein 39, 626
 Robert Frost 358, 414, 915
 Rodney King 170, 628
 Roger Burton 2285
 Rome 839
 Ron Hosmar 2382
 Ron Paul 338
 Ron Visser 2053, 2175, 2240
 Ronald Reagan 2163
 Rosa Parks 438, 439
 Rubicon 1605
 Rudolph Otto 1171
 Rudy Francisco 414, 555, 915, 1025, 1199
 Rufus 559, 675, 686, 711, 734, 745, 1032, 1060, 1120, 1607
 Rupri Kaur 180, 555
 Russell Williams 1515, 1516
 Ruth Bader Ginsburg 625
 Ryan Struyk 60

- S -

Sacha Baron Cohen 588
 Sacrifice 484
 Sadness 2006
 Sainte-Chapelle 682
 Salvation 148, 152, 282, 821, 1166, 1332, 1512, 1570, 1818, 2152, 2209, 2420
 Sandi Kernohan 545
 Sandro Contenta 1515
 Sanhedrin 319
 Sarah Klassen 1545
 Sarah Lemont 1097
 Sarah McLachlan 1584

Saturn 947
 Science 1371, 1488
 Science Fiction 991, 1058, 1108, 1274, 1404, 1450, 1591, 1809, 1834, 1903
 Scotty 673
 Seafarer's Center 2146
 Sean Astin 212
 Seine 682
 Self Esteem 614, 615
 Self-help 282
 Sennacherib 1586, 1600
 SETI 120
 Sexism 1273, 1282
 Shadrach 319, 433
 Shalmaneser 1586
 Shangri-La 1318
 Shaun Tryan 1779
 Shelter 104
 Shelter Valley 2392
 Sherri Baskie 821
 Shishak 939
 Signs 546
 Sikke Smit 2159, 2160
 Silas 433
 Silhouettes 474
 Silly Putty 1799
 Simon Peter 182, 319, 369, 433, 750, 980, 1480
 Simple Minds 2221, 2222
 Sin 981
 Sir Henry Harwood 578
 Skiing 2356
 SNC-Lavalin 960, 978
 Snow 1344, 2356
 Social Media 188, 372, 495
 Socialism 455
 Song Title: 10,000 Reasons 1445
 Song Title: Abide with Me 2082
 Song Title: Alive and Kickin' 2222
 Song Title: Amazing Grace 332, 1843
 Song Title: Building a Mystery 1584
 Song Title: Dear God 1046
 Song Title: Ere Zy God 2363
 Song Title: Fanning the Flame 1792
 Song Title: God Help Me 1552
 Song Title: God So Loved 469
 Song Title: I Believe, Lord 2322
 Song Title: Jesus Loves Me, This I Know 221, 2018

Song Title: Joy to the World! 346
 Song Title: Just Another Day in Paradise 1856
 Song Title: Let it Run 1792
 Song Title: Long Distance Voyager 1552
 Song Title: Love Too 2168
 Song Title: Oh God! Our Help In Ages Past 1551
 Song Title: Oh Lord, You're Beautiful 2020
 Song Title: People Need the Lord 2018
 Song Title: Revelation Song 1539
 Song Title: Row Row Row 1940
 Song Title: Static On The Radio 1924
 Song Title: Sweet Caroline 1448
 Song Title: The Color Green 1833
 Song Title: Trust You With My Life 1609
 Song Title: Verge 1194
 Song Title: Will You Love Me Tomorrow 1520
 Song Title: You Are My King 1638
 Sons of Korah 414
 Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada 42
 Speculation 841
 Speed 2084
 Spheres of Sovereignty 418
 Spock 673
 Spring 1935, 2197, 2198, 2335, 2343
 St. Joseph's Oratory 2152
 Stage Production: Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat 200
 Stage Production: The Colours of Christmas: 1664
 Stan Lynn 352, 474
 Star of David 453
 Star Trek 351, 595, 673, 784, 991, 1274, 1450, 1591, 1634
 Star Wars 1108, 1450
 Stella Shuttleworth 1160, 1179
 Stephen Harper 1385, 1414
 Stephen Hawking 986, 1068, 1069
 Stephen King 241, 751
 Steve Mark 254
 Steve Smith 1229
 Steve Vanderhilt 2043
 Storm 2228
 Streets 43
 Stuart Couperus 2380
 Submission 182, 291
 Success 170
 Suffering 433
 Suicide 99, 536, 565, 721, 829, 855, 878, 927, 1071, 1094, 1134, 1154, 1256, 1258, 1281, 1325

Survival 788, 2102
 Survivor 937
 Susan Best 1609
 Susan Moratz 1784
 Svend Robinson 1658, 1666

- T -

Tara Stephen 1394
 Teasing 1100
 Telescope 1149
 Temple 939
 Temptation 1094, 1129, 1143, 1208, 1568, 1619, 1649, 1661, 1813, 1815, 1854, 1928
 Teresa Lam 1394
 Terri Schiavo 1626
 Terrorism 1142, 1180, 1181, 1283, 1286, 1340, 1447, 1448, 1648, 1709, 1710, 1711, 1712, 1865
 Tham Luang 1127
 Thanksgiving 203
 The Cross 1498
 The Group of Seven 1171, 1268, 1349
 The Story 1941
 Theology 300, 931
 Thoughts & Prayers 1110
 Thunder 2058, 2268, 2388
 Tigger 924
 Tim Bosma 1435, 1436
 Tim Conway 470
 Tim Hortons 439
 Tim Rigby 1872
 Tim Stephens 509
 Tim Taylor 1867
 Time Travel 39
 Timothy Brook 1124
 Timothy McVey 1865
 Tolerance 45, 962
 Tom Copland 918
 Tom Thomson 1268
 Tony Robbins 284
 Toronto 27, 101, 871, 1180, 1181, 1962
 Toronto Star 1515
 Toxic Masculinity 981, 1273, 1282
 Tracey Arney 1792
 Transcience 1206
 Tribulation 756
 Trust 302, 707, 1429
 Truth 963, 966, 1373

TV Show: Alien Planet 1618
TV Show: Art Attack 1737
TV Show: Canada: A People's History 1743
TV Show: Columbo 158
TV Show: Fame 2377
TV Show: Happy Days 865
TV Show: Home Improvement 1867
TV Show: Kate and Allie 2181
TV Show: Nero Wolfe 391
TV Show: The Chosen 19, 194, 654
TV Show: The Red Green Show 1229
Twitter 372, 495
Tyler Knott Gregson 180

- U -

U2 208
Uhura 673
United Nations 882, 1880
Unity 1272
Uriah (the Hittite) 74
USS Enterprise 351, 1274

- V -

Vanity 1679
Venus 113
Veronica Bylsma 2112
Victor Hugo 241
Vincent van Gogh 128, 700
Vinyl Cafe 1238
Violence 1455, 1603
Voltaire 1904

- W -

Walt & Ellen Vanderwerf 2115
Walt Whitman 1274
WaveRunner 1830
We the Kingdom 469
Wenqing Yan 922, 950
Wernher von Braun 903
WHYouth 1187, 1445
Wikipedia 16
William Ernest Henley 1527
William Shakespeare 1812
William Shatner 351

Winter 1394, 1401, 2294
Wishful Thinking 502, 1147, 1626
Wonders 546
World Book 16
Worry 494
Worship 469, 1187
Wrath 1472

- X -

XTC 1046

- Y -

Y2K 1786
Yaroslav Hunka 42
Yellow Vest 834
Yoko Ono 241
YouTube 1148
Yuumei 922, 950
Yvonne Kloosterman 2259

- Z -

Zacchaeus 206, 2225
Zacharias 303
Zedekiah 382