

Anthology of Cassie58

Presented by

My poetic side 



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Forever My Darlings

on a glorious morning
my losses rise up
a choir of golden
they sing from blue sky

and though I am thankful
their faces aren't blurred
today is for memories
there's no time to cry

the decades since passing
grow distant it's true
yet lingers that sorrow
it plays on a harp

its song pure and loving
as feelings don't change
forever my darlings
the hem of my heart

Things I Wish I'd Said

in the quiet hours of pre-dawn
in this sleepless drowsy state
i'm reflecting as I'm prone to
yet I know it's far too late

to ponder on what's been and gone
and wish I'd done it better
what wasn't said with my own voice
i should have sent by letter

nothing can prepare us for
the finality of death
how important that these things are known
before our final breath

so today i wish to speak out loud
sincerely and it's true
i always shone my torch for you
while standing in the queue

Hope

hope is the last eye lash left
when you are bereft of
all other hair on your head
when it died overnight
after the second chemo
did its best

when you stare at your
reflection in mirror glass and
don't recognize yourself
because the cancer has
invaded every part
of your body

so you take your mascara
from your cosmetic purse and
with its wand you build up
layers to give some
definition

to that one lonely lash
because surrender
is not a word that resides
in your dictionary

Yellow Is The Colour

little flower
when I look deep
into your open sunshine
petals

reminding me of butter
and all that is good
in life and worth the
celebrating

do you have any idea
how on a blue morning
you flood my mind
with memories

of happy and laughter
yet here you are alone
without company on a green
grass lawn

in your smallness
rising above all the rest
to catch a single falling
tear drop

When The Heart Chooses

love defies all logic
all boundaries land and sea
it permeates through solid rock
through doors without a key

unafraid of any borders
undeterred by darkest night
it doesn't need two wings to fly
or eyes to give it sight

love settles where the heart says
it's carried on each breath
it burns as if by magic
it can't be killed by death

in truth it's unrestricted
not caged within a home
it can float into the heavens
it can comfort when alone

its fervour undisputed
true love remains unshaken
its diamond strength enduring
its presence unmistakable

Calls A Graveyard

far away in southern Devon
as the crow flies to the sea
where white crested waves are rolling
where green hills are gently rising
where thick red clay cakes the wet boot
in a graveyard lies my father
with a wish to speak to me

'close your eyes your heart will guide you
do not pine for long lost loved ones
do not wish me back to find you
with your grey eyes sadly misted
in a world i don't remember
nurture all who struggle daily
in your living family

stand beside your little sister
as you did when you were children
when her tears spilled out in sorrow
when her knees were grazed and bleeding
take her hand and lead her forward
through her darkest days of grieving
serving her you do so me'

On the Scent of Pine

imagine
if all the souls
of our long departed
lit up the pine forest
at night like fire flies
in love

chasing
winking and blinking
beckoning us to their party
having a ball
while we

in wide eyed wonder
in silence and gratitude
watch in awe
a taste of timeless
of heaven's potential
on the scent of
lasting pine

Je Reviens

i will return
says the perfume
a promise in a
bottle of midnight
blue

today for the sake
of old times
she wore it anew
with a pledge

its fragrance is lasting
it lingers

yes it lingers for you ...

green floral
with a hint of narcissus
and a touch of English rose
I suppose she is saying
something as old as
the Malvern Hills

here for all time
refreshed
drenched in summer's rain
where there is love
patient darling
there is also pain

Camille (1879) Monet

even in the throes
of death
her last breath imminent
he took his brushes
a palette of pales
and a canvas
to capture her ashen
features

thin dry lips half parted
it was natural he said
to paint her before
she departed
in hues of shroud like
mourning veils

Lark Ascending (Vaughan Williams)

a violin plays Vaughan Williams
its four steel core strings
strung to Welsh perfection

vibrations of high pitched notes
float in spiral movement
as the reed bow sweeps low

then moves slowly upwards
imitating a lark, the messenger
of a brand new morning

rising above roof tops, above spires
higher on spanned feathered wings
avian beauty scaling the heights

ascending in circular flight
in blue sky above verdant green fields
of English countryside

close your weary eyes
transcend closer to the sleeping stars
soaring in new found freedom

far above the problematic earth
far from the troubles of the day
rebirth, there fly I

Echoes of Lavender

mist rises
as newly birthed disc of sun
kisses easterly horizon's cheek
promising heightened heat on a
sultry summer day

flimsy chariot clouds
fly past at rapid speed
in a blue sapphire sky
hurtling on a journey
to certain dissipation

we walk waist high
through scented spikes
of fragrant purple lavender
alive with a charm of worker bees
buzzing busily at the seams

he asks me if this
is a touch of heaven
i'm not sure i replied though when i die
if it echoes what we share here
then maybe dreams become reality

Like River Grass

behold tall bold river grass
as it sways in a westerly morning
breakfast breeze

moving with overhead cloud
before its flexible backbone
returns to o'clock

while biscuit coloured foxtail plumes
brush the cool dry air
in feather duster tickles

as the whole cycle repeats
like a stuck stylus when i recall
our own species

how we can bend with
wind change to bounce back
after a battering

while some sadly break
to become crushed by
all that's belligerent

not all are resilient
not all can go with the flow
for even in a lakeside show

casualties of cruelty
inflicted by fickle ways of nature
lie bruised and bleeding

Aspects Of Light

let there always
always be
this glare from sunlight
on the sea
that lifts all spirits
in distress
that calms and soothes
all restlessness
to sprinkle sparkle
where the mood
of brooding clouds
have done their best
to hamper thoughts
of happiness
to sink the soul
beneath the waves
into the oceans
darkest caves

Far From The Madding Crowd

i'd rather be in the company of a
dead poet than no poet at all

so armed with Seamus Heaney
who understands my outside world

far more than the living and is close
to emotions that can split seams

even though he has no heart beat
or blood pumping through his veins

i find clear water where the lake
creeps closer to the lane in winter

it is summer magic and the surface
ripples are blinded by sun

my back arched against a tree in shade
this quiet glade hidden by a canopy

dense greenery thick with contentment
serenity reigns as life's dross is far away

Gratitude

so unexpected through the maze
and from the confines of her bed
at last a pathway clears the haze
was it something that i said
that made her stretch to touch my hand

her head leaned forward not a word
i heard her laughter as it broke
through all the smoke that fogs her mind
I never thought once more I'd see
my mother's eyes smile back at me

Random Kindness

when all the world's in conflict
and the path ahead uncertain
each one of us in our own small way
can lighten someone's burden

so if you read these words today
please remember what i've written
and practice what I've asked of you
to see the warmth you've given

a simple greeting like hello
this can't be understated
can lift sad eyes and spirits too
like a ballon does when inflated

Locket

inside your soldier hands
my silver heart
of sterling i am valued
more than gold
undo the tiny clasp
find you and I
the wealth lies in the
timeless bond we hold

i am the reason why
you fight to live
there's nothing else of me
that i can give
our lips meet daily
in the desperate dark
come life or death we'll
ne'er be torn apart

Here, Sit I

i do not know you
yet I'm drawn to sit beside
this moss stained stone
here in shade where pine cones fall
drenched by April's constant rain
here I sit where songbirds' notes
sing mournful songs from tiny throats
where bluebells gather at your feet
and ivy clings to dampened ground
here beneath forget me nots
your buried bones reach out to me
i swear I heard a muffled cry
here i sit alone with thoughts
of why a child should breathe her last
of why a child from decades past
should early die

should touch my heart
an open grave
should kiss my cheek
as I walk by

Connections

some have found their silver
though others search for gold
some are hooked on passion
afraid they'll end up cold

and some are never satisfied
with a fear of growing old
yet most are quite content it seems
to find an anchor's solid hold
in the safety of a harbour

now surely that is priceless
those arms that long to love you
far better than lost treasure
more valuable than gold

Absent Stars

And who has swept the stars away
not one remains in sight?
Too eager with their bristle brush
they've cleansed the sky at night.

So all those clustered gems I love
which give me peace of mind,
are huddled in an unknown place
that torchlight can not find.

A canvas stretches end to end
devoid of silver light,
the moon has left those sparklers gone
will no one hear my plight?

If I should ask or make a wish
or plead for compromise,
will someone spare two tiny stars
and place them in my eyes?

Perfect Integration

in awe of starlings
flocking in murmuration
fluid in blue sky

Through The Skylight

i have loved the stars with fondness
with passion and delight
so when i lie here sleepless
i am thankful for their light
that spangles in the heavens
and has done all my life

to those eyes that wink in darkness
that enter in my room
that chase away the demons
the worries and the gloom
i am thankful for your company
and the shadows you consume

through the skylight you are welcome
at any time of year
no need to seek an invite
as i'm grateful you appear
and the value that i place on you
is priceless that is clear

An Empty Space

in summer time beneath its shade
my children drank their lemonade
its branches stretched its branches swayed
in garden safety there they played

this cypress gifted tiny cones
for me it represented home
it stood there proudly on its own
my children now are fully grown

all living things on earth must pass
this friend of mine has breathed its last
my grey eyes now are downwards cast
a drawn out death prolonged not fast

and soon i'll witness from my door
an empty space forever more

Sandcastles

some days i long to take
a bucket and spade to
Bembridge beach to build
castles with my brother
in dampened sand

magnificent with turrets
crenellated walls, tall towers
always with a drawbridge
surrounded by a deep moat

when the only company was
an odd wasp or two competing
for jam in our sandwiches
or the sun's rays freckling
my fair skin , burning my
exposed shoulders

i didn't mind the creep
of the incoming tide as we watched
it send fingers of foam
ever nearer closer and closer
tickling our toes

until eventually our masterpieces
of medieval fantasy collapsed
into a sunken mess
under swirling salty water
forever gone

Stones

before my Father died
he combed beaches for stones
picked for surface smoothness
colour or shape

i picture him in my mind's eye
at Anstey's Cove
pockets half filled with finds

why he decided to apply
clear varnish, allow time to dry
glue a few chosen ones together
graded by size, escapes me
i haven't a clue

perhaps he knew his days
were numbered and already
encumbered with that disease
which killed him, on a whim
he instructed his creative side
to shout out

years have passed by
i sigh as i look at unstuck remains
in my hands i hold the relics
of my Father's last days

Where The Shade Falls

where reigns the oak a mighty king
the beech is surely England's queen
beneath her lush green canopy
that hides me from a cloudless sky
i watch as from the river bank
the cruisers with their ease of grace
so gently smoothly sail on by

oh Fagus god of this fine tree
today in overbearing heat
i thank you for the use of shade
i thank you for the softest breeze
and from the inner core of me
i curtsy to this queen of queens
for growing in this welcome glade

Evoking The Cologne

Dad's dressing gown
remained exactly where
he last placed it,
on a shiny brass hook
on his bedroom door
where it stayed
in its deepest blue state,
hanging lifeless, long after
his fate had been sealed.

Long after his unexpected
demise, and my eyes
had lost all focus for life,
I would wear it.
Wrap myself in its embrace ,
close my lids, then breathe in
the essence of him.

That familiar cologne,
bringing him back
for a few precious moments,
before the sense of loss
would kick in with vigour
and tear me apart
like a ripped seam.

Conversing With Blake

it is a known fact
that as he stood admiring
a fine skyline of the city of London
in all its breathtaking splendour
Blake conversed with the sun
from atop Primrose Hill

content i would have been
if he'd sat with me upon this bench
hewn out of a fallen tree
strategically placed to appreciate
the quiet slopes of our valley

sweeping from feet to depths below
while the glow of sol burnishes
where meadow grass once danced
now cut back rolled perfectly baled
to bake in warm sunlight

like ink blots on yellowed parchment
crows in random rows
in their black coat and tails
pause in golden stubble
resembling musical notes
on a composer's manuscript

i am singing
i am singing

Walking in Woodland

these woods have stood majestic for
more years than i will ever know and
saplings grown from scattered seed
are keen to stretch their necks to grow
taller taller to the height
where they can touch the stars at night

see copper-coloured leaves float down
another layer move on by
then soon a clearing starved of trees
where i can view a cloudless sky
higher higher on the wing
the Red Kites soar what joy they bring

i can but hope this place remains
for generations yet to come
for here is where my senses feel
acute in truth my song is sung
louder louder hear it clear
with each and every passing year

There Lingers Dignity

for now cascading branches greet the sun
whose kind embrace grows weaker by each day
with courage leaves like artists on trapeze
cling fast to brushwood tendrils as they sway
soon greenery will tire of this dance
as creeping gold replaces verdant hues
the splendour of the change the season brings
a wealth to match a velvet sky of blue
such elegance on show for all to see
short-lived before the jealous wind takes rage
to steal the foliage left upon our birch
ensuring all remains an empty stage
yet even in its naked form to me
this tree surpasses all in dignity

In The Maze

these early summer days
find auntie in a deeper maze
of lost in the past

memories of times gone by
blue sky and childhood friends
fast forward to a wretched end

today she didn't remember me
pieces of the jig saw gone
scattered and eaten by brain's decay

i had morphed into my mother
her brother's wife and she was so
delighted to see me

you look so young she said
how do you do it tell me how
where have you been all these years

why am i staying here my dear
can you take me back to the square
to see my mum and dad

glad the visit was cut short
caught in the misery of dementia
and the fear of what comes next

so held her hand and hugged her
what else can you do other than
reassure her and say we all love her

Harvesting The Gold

Now hold within and don't release
uplifting sights of priceless gold,
full glory to the rising day.

Behold the harvest gathered in
that Turner with his brush conveyed
displays of richest opulence.

My mind is brimful, filled with brights
of lucent, lustrous, blazing sky,
a palette of my own delights.

And dappled, dancing glints at sea
all misery be done, be gone
you can't compete with morning sun.

You can't compete with nature's gifts
a therapy for those whose eyes
are dimmed by doldrums of the dark.

A spark for some is all it takes,
a blinding flash for them to see
a lighted match can offer hope.

The Summer of ?49

a claustrophobic journey in
a packed coach of day trippers

finds sweethearts posed for a
snapshot moment on Southend pier

the heat of a burnished summer sun
not lost in Kodak monochrome

he with his sweater over a shoulder
casual in white open collared cotton

she with away day hair tousled and fair
a radiant smile focused on his eyes

she has found her ever after with a
penniless uni student of physics

he has found his soul mate and a
mother to a future brood of happy

theirs was a match made in the stars
foundations of a home built to last

Resilience

Out of wreckage and destruction
broken streets of bomb blitzed London,
razed when warfare wreaked its havoc
causing life loss and despair.

From the darkest, bleakest hours
sprang the sight of tiny flowers
as they struggled through the rubble,
stretched their necks to breathe in air.

Where no other plant life flourished,
soon these pretty rosette faces
colonised the empty spaces,
spread themselves without a care.

Free and easy in surroundings,
lovely pink their pearly petals
covered empty barren places
stronger grew and settled there.

Out of wreckage and destruction
when each day it's hard to function,
search for nature's wiser counsel,
grief a state we all must bear.

Let with time there come solutions
every season brings a reason,
courage sent to help us cope
with welcome sprigs of new found hope.

Gratitude

so unexpected through the maze
and from the confines of her bed
at last a pathway clears the haze
was it something that I said
that made her stretch to touch my hand

her head leaned forward, not a word
i heard her laughter as it broke
through all the smoke that fogs her mind
the unkind battles she has fought
i never thought once more i'd see
my mother's eyes smile back at me

Forget Me Not

of all the flora i have grown
there's one self-seeding i adore
that brings in spring light powder blue
to fill the spaces in between
red tulips and gold daffodils

their tiny yellow centred heads
create a splash in garden beds
so loved by Beth when she was six
she picked a posy for her Dad
to take to his last resting place

forget me not is what she said
and who was i to disagree
so when she left them lovingly
beneath the branches of his tree
with innocence she paused to say
my Daddy does remember me

Resolve

calm the lakes that bleed the river
as the mist drifts off its surface
rising upwards dissipating
torched by burnished morning sun

ghostly trails of veils now perish
as the light grows ever stronger
courage comes when it is needed
stay the course and see it done

now the sparkles dance on water
gleaming on the skin of ripples
i was born my father's daughter
taught by him to overcome

go find inside
your strength he'd tell me
let the lion roar and freely
dig in deep and don't succumb

Though Lovely Is Her Memory

across the lea a north wind blows
soon follows on soft swirling snow
to cover where the grass grows green

into the distance there alone
and flanked between a wall of stone
stooped low and twisted leans a tree

her branches bend her branches ache
caked heavy burdened they will break
or wait for warmth to set her free

throughout the winter chill and bleak
her aging limbs are weary weak
and shiver in the biting cold

long gone those russets gone the golds
the rustle of October bolds
in skirts that danced in autumn breeze

alas the verdant green of spring
will not adorn her frame again
nor will her blossom gently fall

no living thing is built to last
like us this tree was doomed to pass
though lovely is her memory

Interlude

gentle waves of crystal kindness
edging closer to my feet
as i laze upon these pebbles
smooth and flattened on their surface
by the power of the sea

as i lie here contemplating
nothing more than naked toes
empty thoughts are more than healing
as the creeping calming briny
cleanses me of all my woes

If Your Face Doesn't Fit

on an ice splintered twilight
sits dark in the gloam
a bird on a wire
the others have flown
perhaps they've migrated
and left it alone

so I think of the city
and its burnished bright lights
and the plight of the homeless
forgotten at night
as they huddle for cover
and keep out of sight

i ponder on faces
on the mothers that birthed
the ones who have nothing
on this cold planet earth
and the lesson i've learned
if your face doesn't fit
your prospects and future
are worthless as spit

In Spirit

we are in time a mote of dust
a pin prick in an ocean sky
while some may catch the comet's flare
each one of us is doomed to die
what causes some to burn so bright
when most live out their lives in night

i'd like to dance above the clouds
do cartwheels over mountains high
chase rainbows to the valley's end
and grow two wings so i might fly
these things i may not do on earth
but will in spirit with rebirth

Blue Eyes, Blue Eggs, Lost Love.

joannie struck a chord
sang the saddest of songs
of a revisiting ghost
she sang about bobbie

when the moon was full
in her soulful soprano voice
diamonds and rust, lost love
a haunting of sorts

she sang that his blue eyes
were bluer than robins eggs
i remembered those eyes
knew it to be true

and though i have never seen
a robin's egg, one was hidden
for sure in a nest in the ivy
outside our back door

for the robin diligently
entered with juicy grubs
when it was safe to do so
when no one was looking

until one morning I found
on the unforgiving ground
a fledgling, pathetic
cold in its half made vest

i watched the distress
of the returning bird
heard its anguish

saw it take off for good

my thoughts caught joannie
was she pushed from the nest
or did she fly away
of her own accord

Misunderstood

not a glint of precious light
penetrated Nan's backyard
not a hint of sunshine on a
spring day to warm caked earth
nor a blade of living grass
yet alone a flower head

only noise, the noise of trains
rattling past on arch tops
brickwork blackened by smog
and the sight of jaundiced nets
hanging from sash windows
that had seen cleaner days

yet flowers were beautiful
and in the front garden next door
an abundance of saffron crocus smiles
at age four not knowing better
not knowing they had been nurtured
she picked them, all of them
a posy for her Nan

all she can remember is the
punishment metered out, the shouts
of another and the neighbour crying
for her lost garden
no one understood that the flowers
were intended as a gift for someone
much loved who had no flowers
of her own

Long Distance

while rummaging in my
dressing table top drawer
for my mother's blue-grey
long drop earrings
i found you
framed in gold

at thirty one
looking so damn handsome
one of your father's better
photographic efforts
he captured that hungry look
in your hazel eyes
that melted mine
on our first meeting

your black hair curled slightly
clinging closely
where your shirt collar caressed
the nape of the neck i kissed
the neck and lips
i couldn't resist

you were wearing the sweater
i knitted for you
every stitch worked lovingly
on steel needles
in four ply
patterned in complex cable
in shades of Cumbrian forest
fine pine trees
foreboding and dark

and how I pined for you
all those long months and nights
that distance kept us apart
when only the phone
reached home

Gone The Summer

August crawls towards September
summer days are almost over
gone the chance to dance in clover
barefoot with the one you love
soon we'll gather by the handful
ochre leaves in autumn free fall
watch them tumble to the paving
not for saving we will burn them
warm our hands when cold winds blow
then the snow will freeze our fingers
and the frost will choose to linger
late into the morning hours
bleak our garden with no flowers
in the midst of winter pall

Missing

where are those flimsy flutterbys
that grace my summer garden fair
where are those precious spirit friends
whose fragile wings caress the air
the scented flowers stand and stare
as I do too this fragrant day
i'm told the weather wet in spring
has changed the timings
caused delay

the cabbage white adonis blues
the painted ladies can't be seen
and yet the flora thrives so well
the grass is lush the ivy green
our buddleia it softly sighs
as morning dew has teared its eyes
my flower garden mourns this loss
of all those lovely butterflies

My Love

as long as trees do green their leaves in spring
and bluebells carpet woodland where we walk
as long as bird song trills for
you and i
and we are wrapped in soft silk pillow talk
gazing through the skylight at the moon
our audience a wealth of spangled stars
my admiration holds no height or depth
it wanders in the blue sky that is ours
for you the holder of my beating heart
protector of my shadow
at all times
for me no snow capped mountain is too high
for you the rock face surface i would climb
one glance across a room you meet my eyes
returned is love eternal as the tides

And So It Is

sun shines
regardless of
grief

each one of us
a leaf waving
on a deciduous tree

not quite knowing
when our last goodbye
will arrive

fleeting
like a rain cloud
passing through

fragile
like a white winged
butterfly

though some
would wield a sledge hammer
strike a mighty blow

can change
a river's flow in the
waters of history

My Father's Daughters

here are my sisters
laughing and smiling
surrounded by meadows
embraced by the sun
purple the loosestrife
tall above green grass
abundant white cowslip
as years have moved on

thankful am i
the eldest of siblings
the river flows downstream
now what of our dreams
some have proved fruitful
some best forgotten
some may still happen
we're not out of steam

regardless the weather
we stick close together
in times when we're happy
or days filled with sad
the lessons we've learned
we can not be broken
we're here for each other
through good times and bad

A Winter Passing

the price one pays in life for love
is grief, so when it grips you know
the measure and the depth of it
when passes on another soul

it took a fall of winter snow
its simple beauty pure and white
to break the numbness that I felt
to let the tears flow gently down

the flakes of crystal doomed to melt
were swirling, whirling dancing free
those quiet moments standing there
alone with all my memories

one door has closed yet clearly now
with eyes wide open I can see
without a doubt I loved her well
she was indeed a friend to me

Felt

there were no cathedrals
domes or church spires
or even heavenly choirs
when I dreamed in the clutch
of covid

yet there was peace
and a blinding flashing of lights
against a backdrop of
vast ebon sky

and there was singing too
a song of eternal love
emanating from the presence
of a pulsating brightness

a voice not recognized
mesmerized me completely
no doubt it was my song
lyrics written for me and me
alone

brimful was i to overflowing
knowing that I had lived
and there was love from another
to the depths and heights
of the unknown

my poet mind wanders
no big deal
though the tears cried on waking
no figment of my imagination
they were real

Bicycles in Beijing

Katie sings of bicycles
nine million in Beijing
can you imagine all those bells
if they should start to ring
an orchestra's obnoxious sound
a jarring noisy din

can you anticipate the hell
of parking in that place
you'd need to know your bearings well
to find an empty space
and then you'd have the problem of
retrieving one you own
how would you find the one that's yours
when all of them are cloned

i'm thankful that i've room to move
with air that's clean to breathe
i'm thankful for the birds that sing
in woodlands deep in trees
and though i've been and seen Beijing
was pleased that I could go
i couldn't wait to hurry home
to country views I know

Pastures In The Sky

it was a mistake
to take time out to dive
into the past

where I met my mother
in her prime
posing in monochrome

my father by her side
casual with his James Dean looks
a protective arm draped
reassuringly round her shoulders

parked before them
a seen better days coach pram
holding two under two
my younger brother chuckling

mum's eyes flashed bright
as did her smile
while mine today
cloudy grey

brimful of rain
portray pain
at the loss of all three

swallows now flown
to pastures unknown
in a too high sky

i remain grounded
just about

The Leaves Are Down

the leaves are down
in market square
parched and thirsty
in the town
too soon they've fallen
dried and brown
not that they've been
noticed there

the people pass by
to and fro
does anybody really care
the leaves are down in market square
where faces do not smile or see
too busy are they
on their phones

they walk determined
in their stride
armed with back packs
and alone
too busy with their mobile phones
to notice anything at all

the leaves are down
in market square
the trees are crying out
in vain
in need of nothing more
than rain
does anybody really care
that leaves are down
in market square

A River Song

look at dancing sunbeams
that glint before your eyes
pretty pretty they may be
but they are only temporary
for when the cloud blots out the sun
it signals their demise

sunlight on the water
that dazzles wild and free
spangled gems that sparkle bright
worth more than gold to me
their presence is but fleeting
a passing memory

Loving Light

it's the light that lifts our mind set
when the heart is sunk at sea
when you sit there by the harbour
in your state of misery
when you dwell on all that's heavy
when the future paint is grey
and the palette shows insipid
on the doldrums of the day
it's the gleam upon the water
it's the sparkle in an eye
it's the flash of silver lining
that will raise those spirits high

Scarlet Skirts

we count the cost of those we've lost
their sacrifice, the price they paid
the blood they shed, our honoured dead
their hallowed memory will not fade
so we recall with passing years
the tears, a stream of solemn flow
as we remember all those deaths
in fields where scarlet poppies grow

The Colour of Void

what is this void
that plagues me so
an empty ache
that won't let go

with age comes loss
too many gone
i've lost the base notes
from my song

and yet what's missing
builds in strength
in width in depth
and also length

in truth i guess
i grieve for me
that golden leaf fall
from my tree

Keep A Lid On It

one day i too
may be confined in
this oakwood chest of
ancestral treasures

where the sepia
rests with dust motes
and old letters reveal
at times what we prefer
to conceal

i ponder on
items you may choose
to keep of mine
worth the saving

perhaps the court orders
stamped and sealed
promises made of a path ahead
a settled future
for three entrusted
to our care

or maybe a collection
of my better poems will
find their way in notebooks
thumbed and dog eared
for perusal

though I sincerely hope
you do not feel that grief
that family ghosts bestow
on me when i open

the lid on yesterdays

to ride the waves
of loss rolling in to shore
on the back of memories

When Words Bleed

not since those final words
of Chidiok Tichborne
penned so many moons ago
a traitor or a martyr
take your pick

written prior to his youthful demise
have these eyes of mine
suffered so
a water well busted by a hit

let me tell you this
tears dripped unrestrained
a poem penetrated tissue
of resistant pain

words pierced chamber walls
to make their mark
a poem adrift from all others writ
touched every fibre of a
would be poets heart

A Losing Game

it seems a tad distasteful
that raised wine glasses
clink for Amy

especially when her crusade
against alcohol addiction
became a lost cause

ten years gone while our
bluebird of happiness swings
in its usual place

suspended
from a central wooden beam
over our summer deck

silent appreciation
as back to black plays its dark
lament

as lantern light flickers
honeysuckle vines shoot strands
from beehive chaos

saluting the mistress of song's
creative vowels
in scented respect

A Pirate From The Past

torrential rain cascades
on stone paving
crazy wild wetness spilling
over gutters
creating lakes of puddled
opportunity

downpour from
mackintosh grey sky deluge
relentless winter water
brimful mind bursts
its memory banks

i recall a blue plastic
toy chest
a galleon of homemade
happiness
containing a cutlass
and a black eye patch

a small boy afloat
wearing soaked shorts
his knees scraped
messing in the garden
sailing white crested waves
of salty seas

Black Beard has grown
tall with the years
has a son of his own
who awaits play days
with the toy chest
in Nan's attic

Choices

miss you, miss you, miss you
miss you every day
miss you with the rising sun
or when the clouds drift grey
miss you when the snow falls
on ground as hard as stone
and more so when each leafless tree
cries out with winter's moan
miss you, miss you, miss you
what happened to your smile
and all the happiness you gave
departed now some while
miss you, miss you, miss you
the you, you used to be
so many years your light switched off
the blinds are closed and broken now
the poison that you built yourself
holds you a hostage locked inside
the pathway that you chose for you
storm clouds the darkness that you live
a prison too for me

All Things Considered

i do not know
if bamboo wind chimes
ward off evil spirits
maybe they do

or whether they entice
souls of the departed
to revisit their loved ones
all things considered

but as I sit in this garden
with a light breeze blowing
on a true blue sky day
in blistering heat
i hear music

there is something so
satisfying in the gentleness
of that subtle hollow sound
of canes clacking softly
while suspended from
a beam on our deck

close your weary eyes
take a long deep breath
be still and hear nature's notes
her unique playful
composing

imagine being in Bali
barefoot and fancy free
beside the mountains
far far away where all

concerns are going going
gone

wind stirs in strands
of uncombed holiday hair
not a care in the world
drift in thought flight
all is well, all is peace

Seen With Sadness

take a long look at Winnie
commissioned in serious sepia
here she sits before a camera lens
focused on delicate pale features

her long dark ringlets cascade
into a wild mane over her left shoulder
her sad expression as though
she knows her days are numbered

encumbered with a disease
which stole away her breathing
sent her on a journey of no return
robbing her four brothers of a sibling

the child is sixteen, has barely lived
a portrait at the behest of parents
ensures she is dressed in her best attire
buttoned and covered to the throat

i hold her in warm hands
over a century since her demise
her eyes colder with the years
gathering the dust of bygone tears

Oyster Shucking - Factory Girls

look at the dark subdued eyes
and grubby faces of three children
not a trace of a smile between them

pretty little girls who work at
the cannery shucking oysters from
shells prised open with knives

outside the factory gates
the year is 1911, the photographer
harvests hardship in monochrome

stark poverty stares back
lives drained in the same way the
photographic image is devoid of colour

smock dresses torn filthy and patched
ill fitting laced boots yet it's their hands
those calloused little hands

wrapped in bandages, knotted ties
round small gashed fingers
that hurt and cry out most of all

Bake Day Beth

our kitchen smiles when
Beth has a blitz on baking
whether it's bread
biscuits or cakes
or some other experiment
in the making

an aroma permeates
that's positively scrumptious
while the finished product
has us drooling and asking
for more

be sure not to notice
the chaos left in her wake
for goodness sake
comes later in the day
with clearing

is there a single utensil
left untouched
or a bowl or pan clean
from ingredients of
left over cooking

well is there ?

Flood

this new year brings in
a swollen fat bellied Thames
unable to contain his over gorging
on plentiful winter rain
falling falling
relentless falling

he belched

his belly burst in a fit of pique
a stretch too far for fast flowing
manic moving water
as trouser belt gave way
spilling over sandy park
and the fields of the flood plain

while river remained raging
seething and speeding downstream
flooded fields transformed
into a scene of wonderland of
breathtaking wonder lakes as
graceful willow trees bathed
knee deep

swans have found their heaven
so have i as i stand nearby
watching as they swim towards
wooden fencing separating
the old garden of mum and dads
cardinal close home

what would they make of this
my eyes smiled in thought

caught up in the reverie
of a one off occasion

I Should Have

i should have risen early
when the sunlight blessed the water
when the clouds were driven westward
on a breezy blue sky morn

i should have seen the willows
on the crowded banks a swaying
while the geese and ducks were dozing
in the river's flow at dawn

i was oh so far away though
i was floating in the heavens
i was chasing silver moonbeams
i was dancing with the spirits
i was ageless newly born

i saw the comet soaring
through the darkened night time velvet
i was mesmerized by brightness
with a feeling i was weightless

while the clock had long stopped ticking
there was nothing i was missing
there was nothing i was yearning
there is nothing here to mourn

When the Sun Illuminates a Sapphire Sky

when sun illuminates a sapphire sky
and rays make dancing gems upon this stream
a breeze blows softly through the verdant leaves
and i am left to wander as i dream

my back rests arched against the bark of pine
my toes stretch closer to the water's flow
and cooling crystal laps about my feet
my roller coaster life begins to slow

in harmony my heartbeat and my mind
i drift into a meditative state
i hear the sounds sweet nature as she calls
the world i know is absent it can wait

Maternal Love

Lily sits in a high back chair
her vacant eyes stare into limbo
soft music plays in the background
her ears do not hear the notes
she has a pink scarf at her throat
hiding her wrinkled skin
on her chest her baby rests
snuggled in a shawl
a mother's tenderness
can't be mistaken
her thin fingers caress that child
with delicate slow movement
over and over again
and no one can prise that doll
from her even though
the lunch bell rings

Veils Of Mystique

say what you mean
mean what you say
don't allude to your feelings
while turning away
don't hide what you're saying
behind veils of mystique
with words rarely spoken that sound like they're Greek

spell it out in an instant
there's no need to stall
use language that's simple
the best type of all
not dressed in disguise
but upright and proud
though it might raise an eyebrow
just speak it out loud

i'd rather the truth
the truth that you see
although once you have said it
i might not agree
we might on occasions
not share the same views
that doesn't mean failure
it's yesterdays news

Sunset and Wind Farms

far from finding
wind farms an eyesore
they stay a fascination as
offshore turbines salute
a fast dimming sky

from Roan beach
carbon fibre blades rotate
as moderate winds
aid graceful clockwise
turning

row on row they stand
embracing air
as though a surgeon's knife
sliced through sky's heart
rip roaring red no sutures
as crimson clots appear

they spread it bleeds
it plasters heaven's highway
reflected in evening's dark
salty waters
skyscraper slaughter

as golden sol
slips slowly beyond
horizon's black ribbon line
while hours pass on by
building clean energy

Reaching

the lady in the corner
is missing a shoe
her face is obscured
her hands are too
yet her voice rings out clear
in a silent room
where the seats are all taken
though the mood is of doom
heavy and sad with a rallying call
it may have been farmyard
i'm not sure at all
it woke up the sleeping
it shook the half dead
that's a cockerel's greeting
somebody said
one after another the old
folks joined in
a few smiling faces at the
sound of the din
the whole room was filled
with the noise of a farm
so I joined in the chorus
what possible harm

Driving Ambition

tall turrets tower
towards sky's ceiling
on a sunlit morning
where a neck stretches
with ambition

a route map for a
reckless small boy
as he ascends
climbing his potential
a dream for heights

he finds footholds
in red brickwork
honing his skills
imposed on Victorian
splendour where he climbs
to scale upwards
and outwards

on to a sloping roof
of his family home
lithe limbs move
sans fear
as young Mallory
peaks then descends
time and again

paving the way
for days ahead when
Everest loomed large
creating possibilities
of both glory and death

Martha

a spirit crossed my path as i
breathed in the scent of pearly pinks
in garden beds of hyacinths

her presence lingered, caught my thoughts
a pause for moments to reflect
to pay though late my fond respects

to conjure up those early days
on visits guided to a chair
i'd listen, learn each time i stayed

how old she seemed , how thin her skin
on hands that poured out lemonade
and played at making paper dolls

it's strange that drapes once tightly drawn
can part at random to reveal
lost souvenirs that time can steal

she left as softly as she came
but not before i called her name

Fragile

brown eyed girl
warm chocolate melting
soft curl a fountain
tickles on her left ear
a tumble of summer cornfield
half smile from a white cotton pillow
sheet turned down
three days in
how long a piece of string
blue curtains tremble
roller coaster heartbeat
another day passes
pawns in waiting
breathe a sigh of relief
family ghosts whisper

Little Things

happiness
is a small wooden figure
with a funny face
a wide smile and a white beard
wearing a cheerful Christmas hat
with a large red heart on his chest
taken from a loft's safe keeping
full of other forget me nots

he has found his way
on to our garden deck table
where he sits amongst
cyclamens of purple passion
keeping an eye on a fat pigeon
feeding on spilled bird seed
and a robin with a wriggling
worm in its beak
enjoying their morning breakfast

Legacy

wild heather in the highlands
lay thick across the vista
a purple headed carpet
spread wide before my eyes
the sky a raspberry sorbet
the loch a lake of echoes
and there the sound of bagpipes
a lonesome piper playing
drowned out the calming silence
he stood there serenading
pink ripples on the water
my love he turned towards me
it was a tender moment
a tender tender moment
a tear fell from his eye
swamped by the sense of history
the castles and the battles
the wretched cries of battle
the clan men clashed in battle
like every conflict since then
no matter the location
the loss is overwhelming
division more division
no winners only losers
this heart is done with clashes
this heart is done with battles
the nails are in the coffin
what's left a bridge of sighs

Constant

misty moon
hiding behind cloud moving
your skin revealing hues
from subdued to mesmerizing
viewed through the skylight
in the darkness of night
aloof and distant
yet constant in a lifetime
rock solid to me
in times of sorrow
or those joyful

Counting Blessings

as i walk in winter's garden
past a birch tree and green ivy
down to where old seating's lonely
in a corner in the dark
there i turn to face the red brick
of my home and on the decking
fairy lights glow so inviting
lifts the spirits soothes the heart

hanging from the beams are lanterns
table covered potted planting
seasonal in red/gold colours
festive dressing our delight
where our young ones like to mingle
where their laughter echoes loudly
cold air cheered while breath condenses
wrapped in layers stars shine bright

count my blessings i am thankful
for the gifts of all i'm given
in a world that's rocked by conflict
marred by death, destroyed the light
where destruction and division
blitzes souls and hopes for future
all while logs inside our burner
blaze and spread their warmth by night

Friendless

i spied an old man sip his beer
his eyes were glazed full cloudy day
oblivious to all around
he didn't hear the raucous sound
of other drinkers loud at play

i watched him as he raised his glass
i didn't miss a tear that fell
that trickled down his weathered skin
i felt another's suffering
his sadness wrapped me in its spell

where was he in his troubled mind
for sure he wasn't here with us
his shirt was stained his hair unkempt
i pondered where his thinking went
he drank his pain with little fuss

my thoughts returned to you and i
the reaper is a friend to none
for when you've lost your trusted mate
you lose your compass and your fate
lies in the stars your present gone

Mud Maid in Winter

mud maid sleeps soundly
lays low in permanent unmoving
her left shoulder and rounded rump
form hills of femininity
exposed to nature's elements
she slumbers

attired in cold keeping
resting on her side
her sculpted body and head
embrace snow crystals
flakes softly falling
to leave light kisses

on ivy's clinging coat
settling on womanly curves
her eyes will never open
she will never see the seasons
the day finds her clad
in winter coldness

a blanket of thin whiteness
surrounds her
as do naked trees on guard
year on year rain or shine
grounded she remains
in her woodland domain

Swans A Plenty

crossing caversham bridge
on the coldest of afternoons
breath condensing
fingers tingling
light fading fast
in a blemish free sky

first friday of the new year
sees ripples on grey water
frost on a deserted promenade
a plenty of swans a swimming
a graceful gathering of so many
white feathered beauties
in mid winter surroundings

impossible to count
bodies gliding and intermingling
in regal silence it seemed to suggest
they had gathered from every meander
on river's length congregating in strength
in a chosen place to celebrate
without a trace of conflict

Footprints Left In Sand and Snow

far deeper set than those in sand
which mark a path across a bay
our dearest will not wash away

as imprints left in dampened grains
soon fade whenever tide returns
or when the wind sweeps them astray

on borrowed time they can not last
compare them to the winter snow
which melts when warmth demands it so

yet footprints cast within our hearts
cemented smooth with love and pain
they are the ones that will remain

you'll see them in another's smile
or in the tears they gently weep
who says we go without a trace
we stay for those whose love runs deep

Lasting

for friendship is a cherished gift
it lifts, enriches, outlives time

when death destroyed your beating heart
it cast a shadow over mine

this morning as i sipped on tea
i swear i saw you wave to me

Highgate Cemetery

through a colonnade we see
how green the ivy and the ferns
grow in this shaded avenue
where trees have seeded over years
to shelter mourners left in tears

vines entwine where lichen clings
to monuments of chiseled stone
angels bow their heads in sadness
others lift their wings in gladness

influence of far off Egypt
Redgrave, Marx and Mahler's daughter
Grecian urns or Celtic crosses
all the faiths have suffered losses

magnifique this ornate splendour
only for the richest people
yet the dead i sense some linger
and their shadows point a finger

carvings mingle in with flora
little cherubs trumpet loudly
Gothic style on family tombs
while gloom descends on catacombs

and someone has tiptoed over
Pandora's grave
time to leave

Melting Snow

fathoms deep in heart and mind
resides a secret you won't find
he never was a made up lie
he was a precious whispered sigh
who wandered in my garden fair
before i knew it there turned i
when fluttered by Adonis blue
i morphed into a butterfly
a weakened creature i became
a risk it was a passing whim
he stole the strength that i once built
inside my fortress safe within
my admiration can not die
my wings got crushed yet still i fly
on melodies of love once felt
when winter snow one spring did melt

Wind Chime Tree

this hilltop climb
steeper than expected
slower walking an aging
canine

breathless
with each step taken
that grassy plateau nearer
dusted in overnight frosting
white winter bites hard
swallows on the tongue

sadness of four years passing
lingers on a pathway paused
to listen to the tinkle
of wind chimes carried
carried on a breeze of swift
sweeping

sweeping across our valley
weeping in remembrance of
a young vibrant life
last breath lost to youths
to a steel blade ambush
hotheads of stupidity

Olly Stevens RIP age 13 ?