

Shades Of Poetry

Tom Boston

Presented by

My poetic side 



Dedication

I dedicate this collection to my wife and my children who are my inspiration

Acknowledgement

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About the author

The author was born in Ireland and brought up in Brazil. He presently resides in the English Midlands. Poetry has been part of his life since being introduced to the works of Lord Byron by a friend in South America. The author began writing poetry as a means of channelling the passion and emotion of life into the written word. He often finds himself pondering the inexplicable and seeking the unobtainable. This reflects in his work.

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RUNNING WITH THE J's

The wind-churned sea with leaps and peaks and lively twisting twirls,
moves to the fancy float and tune of a thousand dancing girls.
It spills and glints quicksilver-like and glimmers garnet green,
as the tips of tall trimmed sails appear in the distant hazy sheen.

Soon the mast is bearing down; keel slicing water through.
This mighty, splendid sailing boat holds to her course so true.
Tell-tails flying straight as dyes, she takes the centre-stage.
Her sleek hull lulls the wilding sea and dulls its noble rage.

As fabric flaps and halyards clap, she eases back from heeling.
She tacks her graceful bow away, with air from canvas peeling.
Sails spill the wind then fill again and shape like soaring wings
and through the surf she flows, she goes; her rigging loudly sings.

On the track of her new tack, she rides the raw emotion
of the frenzied, frothing, foaming sea, so graceful in her motion.
She charges, cutting up the waves and carves the ocean blue.
Through wind-blown swirls like dancing girls; a 'J' class and her crew.

SEA STORM

At dawn this wild coast plays early host to a storm that's covered in cloud.
Waves rise and tumble and rolling they rumble under a low foggy shroud.
They froth and they hiss in a flurry of mist and carve their artwork on rocks.
They crash on the beach and threaten to breach walls protecting the docks.

The haze starts to lift as winds slowly shift revealing the power of the Ocean.
Nautical surges bear down on sand verges reshaping land with their motion.
Swells rear and dip as a squall wields its whip, spurring white horses to run.
They thud on the coast with thunderous boast and roar like a galleon's gun.

The storm driven Ocean, a sea in commotion, spills onto a coastline so frail.
It's fickle and free and this treacherous spree strikes terror in those under sail.
Full of myth and magic, it's cruel and tragic, its splendour spans east to west.
Tides ebbing and flowing, ever coming and going; the Ocean is never at rest.

Far out to sea the storm rages free, forming peaks and canyons so grand.
Dark waters rise high and touch the grey sky, mocking the mountains inland.
The storm's venom is spent; it ceases to vent; the Ocean has run out of fight.
Now perfectly still like the pond of a mill, no waves or white caps are in sight.

SPACE

What is this expanse where darkness dwells?
This space unknown that answers to no name.
No meaning can describe its perfect awe,
nor reason can expound its shrouded fame.

This eternal mass, though mass it cannot be,
nor can it be a void for it holds all things within.
An endless abyss, where chaos forms its laws.
Limitless, timeless, time too is trapped therein.

Its darkness tames the fury of a flaming Sun
and quells the stars, as sparks 'neath water plunged.
Their light, their heat, their power, their all,
drawn into its blackness and there expunged.

It clasps all things inside its frigid grip.
All grandeur shrinks and pales in this expanse.
Yet fragile life is found in its embrace.
A universe preserved; defended, takes her stance.

Does it exist to shield this dawn of life
and cocoon her like a rare and precious stone?
In this fearful, dreadful span she hides.
This diverse place, unique and on her own.

Is this dark vastness solely there to frame
the possession of an unseen higher force?
Such greatness is beyond the human mind.
Can we begin to fathom this enigmatic source?

What is this expanse where darkness dwells?
Where time did never bloom nor know decay.
Did it begin and will it end or can we know

its Alpha and Omega; its first and final day?

EVERGREEN WOOD

Two figures make their way across the pine-needled ground of a dark, dark evergreen wood. Shadow-like they go. They flow as ghosts and move as spirits move; like spectres, yet they breathe. And with each breath they breathe, they're filled with the earthy essence of the evergreen. Musty mildew on bits of bark, and fungus covered fallen firs, fused with perfumed pine.

And the woodland softly sleeps. Its slumber split by the screechy scream of a distant fox and the haunting hoot of a hunting owl, flying phantom-like, from bough to bough. The two press on with perfect purpose, tramping tough terrain. Slowly through the dark they move. A light appears in another time, and then, it's gone. At the very time it goes, it glows, above the wood.

The figures halt and through the trees they gaze and raise their eyes perplexed. Transfixed towards the sky they stare and dare not move, stricken beneath this foreign orb. The moon, wrapped in drapes of darkened cloud now wakes while stars keep watch and yield. Wolves howl then whimper and flocks of wakened birds take fright and flap in frantic fear.

The light grows bigger, brighter, bolder as it moves mute across the sky. It flashes thrice and then, as though a switch were flicked it's gone. The dim draped moon resumes its sleep as darkness now descends.

They wonder what it is they've seen and where it went and why and sense they're not alone. In the shadows stands a figure and they, first bewildered then bewitched, hear what it has to say.

Without speech it speaks and without speech they listen. No voice disturbs the dormant wood. It steals into their minds and makes them see the mysteries of the stars and suns revealed. How man one day will tame light's speed and tether thought and by that tether conquer time. It speaks of distant planets, of other worlds and far-flung moons just a dream, a thought away.

At the speed of thought the light returned turns night to day. They watch. They wait. They wait. For this descendent demi-god they wait. In vain they look for more from this enlightened erudite. Darkness falls again. They search the shadows, seeking, sensing and sense this time they are alone.

The night settles into slumber. The moon and stars from cloudy cover creep and sleep no more.

The wood whiff drifts on the dank breeze. Musky mould and pungent pine permeate the twilight.

A fox-shriek mingles with the hoot-hooting of a hunting owl slipping swiftly tree to tree.
Shadows grow in the undraped moonlight. Ghost-like they grow in the glow of meandering stars.
Two figures make their way across the pine-needed ground of the dark, dark evergreen wood.

BRUSHSTROKES

Spring splashes colour on a landscape so bare.
The birdsong shrill fills the mild morning air.
Sun slivers slice through the leaves overhead
And tinge the dull greyness with brightness instead.

Light chases darkness and warmth blankets cold.
The new season emerges both busy and bold.
A new picture is painted in pigments so bright
Toned by shy snowdrops in swathes of pure white.

Squirrels scuttle and peep from the tops of tall trees
as a sparrowhawk watches the dance of the bees.
Foxes and badgers forage, famished, for food,
while pigeon calls echo across the dense wood.

The rivers and meadows, the mountains and vales,
flaunt beauty and life as the winter's grip pales.
This mastery of nature, such talent, such flare.
Bold brushstrokes of colour on a canvas so bare.

DISILLUSION

Pricked by the bloom of winter flowers with thorns that soothe my skin.
I see a warm day's moonlit sky; cold streaming from within.
Bare and barren, broken trees, shade night from reckless dreams.
At dusk, I wake from sleeplessness to silent piercing screams.

Through miles I wander, standing still, along this short-lived span.
Each step I take just leads me back to where my walk began.
Blind onlookers line the route; with sightless eyes they stare,
and jostle for position with the crowds that were once there.

With lowered glass, a portent toast to life's all I propose.
Scent of decay is sweetened by the stench of summer rose

UNDER THE MILK-SOFT CLOUDS

Under the drifting milk-soft clouds, blooms the perfect day.
With brooks, ravines and sun-touched streams, and beams of light at play.
The distant edge of purple spills downhill and turns to green,
as brightness herds the mist away from this seductive scene.
And wise tall trees in conference stand, their emerald crowns give shade
to sheepish swathes of blossoms closed, shy amongst the glade.
Then tickled by a breathy breeze of scented morning air,
flowers reveal their glory with their colour, taint and flare.
Whispering wings of butterflies, exploring blossoms sweet,
blend with the hum of honey bees in search of nectar's treat.
Now, dark inked skies with stars for eyes, stare through the steely chill,
that spreads below the faint moon glow, o'er lifelessness so still.
The far-flung edge of black rolls close, becoming granite grey
and darkness tainted shades of cold keep daylight far away.
Age-old trees in silent sway, roots running wide and deep,
hold firm against the icy blow that flows from mountains steep.
The butterflies and humming bees await the morning bloom,
as seas of coloured petals hide, shut in the nightly gloom.
No covenant with light is made or promise of new day.
Expectant life awaits to see tomorrow's bright display.

KILRAVOCK

Amongst the granite and green, on an Oak tree I leaned
to rest in the shade of its crown.

For that moment just then, I was Lord of this realm,
with these ruins of history renowned.

And in this ancient place, I tried to retrace
the footsteps of those from the past.

In that reticent wood, as a young man I stood
in search of the play's ghostly cast.

But none there was seen, not the Prince or the Queen
nor the Laird, named after the rose.

And the fierce men of war did battle no more.

No soldiers were railed against foes.

All the colours of fall seemed to recall
the clan tartans from seasons of lore.

The echoes of time and the ancient bells' chime
saluted a world that's no more.

Now, as I left this scene where legends have been,

I stole one more glance just to see,

if I only could glimpse that Queen or that Prince
or those few that fought to be free.

The Highland Sun teased its way through the leaves
and dappled the ground with its gold.

And whispering trees with the voice of the breeze,
lamented the fallen of old.

The author recalls a trip, as a young man, to Kilravock Castle (pronounced Kilrock), Inverness, Scotland. The ancient home of the Roses or Rosses of Nairnshire who lived there in the 13th century. Famous visitors include Mary, Queen of Scots in 1562, Bonnie Prince Charlie (whom Sir Hugh Rose entertained with a violin rendition of an Italian minuet), the Duke of Cumberland (the day after the Prince's visit just before the two men fought the Battle of Culloden) and also the poet Robert Burns (in 1787).

ABSENCE

Draping o'er the glow once more; the dark, the night; the absent light.
And with it, comes the chill, the pain; the fear of absent light again.
The vow made by the fading Sun, of warmth and radiance yet to come,
would comfort none against the plight of darkened, nightly absent light,
if it were not for that deep tone, that fills the edge of sky alone.
Golden-red, that stunning sight; to shadowed earth, a pledge so bright.
And in that everlasting fight, 'tween darkness and the dawn of light,
the part we play, the closing page, conspire to numb our rightful rage.
No more to flee from absent light but shelter 'neath that final night.

THE DARK

The Dark is all; awesome, absolute. Ineffable expanse of absence
that ceded to the cosmic chaos, so night and day were born.
The waters flowed and heavens formed, the Dark released its hold.
From her depths, she freed the might and light of ten-thousand suns
but as a spark suppressed, this light would universal lightlessness become.

Power and heat are cloistered in her core; she has scant use for them.
Yet from the Dark all that was and is, became. Galaxies and planets
with their spinning moons, bask but for a moment in the glare of stars.
From within this madding motion, languid life emerged.
Clasping to the hem of darkness, crawling into daylight, it converged.

Fretful, fragile, futile life. Fearful of the finite dimming glow.
Millennia mass and melt as centuries chase across her chilled domain.
In her eternal patience, Dark awaits and follows not the hour.
Time, that mocker of mortal men, for her it has no say.
It flows and ebbs and flows again, like an ocean's fickle tidal sway.

But the Dark will rouse one awful day. She will rise and rest no more.
The final fire will fizzle out and with a flicker end the vigil on man's ways.
Earth and its borrowed time will flee with faint-lit stars into her depths.
Suns will shrink and freeze and spinning moons will slow then stall.
Life's lease, so brief is now extinct. Perfect in her desolation; Darkness is all.

ILLUSION

What is this flash, this pointless dash, a journey through this time?
It's borrowed space, this lonely place; it's fantasy sublime.
And so, this dream-like endless stream of likenesses at play,
make this fake scene and make-shift theme take form then slip away.

Mute mountains bare and forests fair; here rivers twisting creep.
This World seems true, the skies are blue; the oceans dark and deep.
I hear the song, a sing-along; bird symphonies that swell.
Does it appear that I am here? I can no longer tell.

The trees stretch tall and raindrops fall; bright rainbows arc above.
Just figments these, the mind to ease, with images we love.
What is this flash, this pointless dash, is no one there with me?
Is that devious place, that cryptic space, an illusion that I see?