

## Poetry Series

**Bill Mitton**

**- poems -**

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### **Bill Mitton (26-03-45)**

Electrician, Soldier, Electronics Engineer, Quality Engineer  
(Part-time playwright, writer, poet, Scholar, Historian,)

Married to Rosyenne, one son, Simon, (flown the nest)  
I'm too big, the house is too big, Rosyenne is still beautiful, loving, patient,  
kind, as gentle as an Angel's smile and STILL too good for the likes of me!  
I love Corned beef Hash, Chilli, any literature from Chaucer to Pratchett, all  
types of music. Manchester United, (Football) Sale Sharks (Rugby Union)

Works:

Roadworks (The A6 Poets)

## **A CHANCE MEETING**

He sat and cocked his head  
so that his eyes seemed almost  
vertical.  
Unfortunately  
he spoke no English  
and I spoke no Blackbird.

Bill Mitton

## **A FOOL IN ALL HIS GLORY**

If  
as they say  
a fool in love  
is  
a fool in all his glory  
then  
I am he  
Here amongst the golds  
and russets  
The rustling and the  
almost holy  
bareness  
of the autumn trees  
where greens and golds  
compete  
to become  
the next voyager  
upon the cooling  
breeze  
A fool indeed  
but oh  
the glory

Bill Mitton

## A FRIENDSHIP TRILOGY

### THE VIXEN

I hear her cry, once again, she is alone.  
Once again nature's clock dictates a mate.  
I hear him answer, and I know this night,  
will echo to the sound of their joining.  
In the turning of the season she will come,  
tired, and heavy with her burden of new life.

She is more grey than red, with one white leg  
I know her and am sure she is aware of me.  
I feel her trust, wary tho' she is and must be.  
I will feed her chicken laced with cod liver oil  
to help her through the growing heaviness.

We will spend the winter watching each other.  
I will watch her feed from the tray I leave,  
Then, through my field glasses 'til the hedge.  
I know she watches me as I put the food out.  
And again at the hedge she turns to look back at me.

### SHE IS OLD NOW

She is old now her  
breeding days  
are done  
It is hard to Spot  
her white leg  
the greyness  
is so advanced  
her movement  
is slower  
she limps on  
a hind leg

Yet for all this  
I knew her  
As soon as I  
Saw her  
As I'm sure  
She knew me  
And then I got  
to wandering  
if I had aged  
as much in  
her eye

### GREY INTO BLACK

I started my walk with a happy step

there was mist and rain mixed  
but I was warm with  
a heart full of sunshine  
Why should I feel downcast  
beside me walked my own tall son  
mirroring his mother's smile.

Off to one side the rain shimmering shape  
of Heaton hill and  
at her brambled feet  
the dark but evergreen  
of Brody's spinney.  
as always at this point I thought of her  
my once gold and red but now grey friend.

I wished a wish to see her  
just once more by that hedge turn  
but no, fate held only pain  
as we turned my son and I  
in anticipation of supper and laughter  
through the evening mist  
I caught a hint of greyness in  
amongst the wet grass

My heart turned in that moment  
and had she been across  
John Garton's cold pool  
I would have gone waste deep  
to see her in that place  
But there she lay amongst wet grass  
the numbers of her days written  
across cold grey red tinted fur.

I sat and cried and my son  
unembarrassed, took off his coat  
and gently wrapped her in it  
she was not his friend but  
his father's friend  
this was for him, enough  
and now she lies beneath  
the hedgerow corner where  
I can still see her turn  
and watch back over our years

Bill Mitton

## **A Hedgehog with handgun**

I'm Hedgehog with handgun  
you should worry.....cos I'M PISSED!  
I've been dodging cars all evening  
and thank God all they just missed  
Well now the worm is turning  
(at least the one I ate)  
You should maybe run for cover  
before it, and you, are LATE  
JESUS! I've got the needle  
what's happened to this place?  
When I went sleep, a quiet road  
Now there's a By-pass in its place!  
So like I said, I'm armed and mad  
and there ain't no going back  
'cos they've made a six lane thoroughfare  
from 'off the beaten track'  
I thought about The Ball response  
but it didn't seem quite pat  
'cos other hogs have tried it  
and they're out there..dead and flat!  
So there's gonna be some shootin  
I've brought extra rounds as well  
OK it'll scandalise the neighbourhood  
But it's already gone to hell  
The next car that comes around that bend  
I'm gonna take the bastard out  
Gentle nature hasn't worked  
So it's time to use some clout!  
You never know it might catch on  
Could give them quite a scare  
It would bring a different chill to road kill  
If they had to take their share

Bill Mitton

## **A Man of Two Islands**

I am a man of two green islands  
Which by unhappy force and nature  
Have become home to five peoples  
Not that these people are different  
For we have lived cheek by jowl  
For fifteen hundred summers  
We have traded, and fought wars  
Against, and alongside each other  
We have loved and married  
We have moved and mixed  
The blood that flows in our veins  
contains the elements of all  
And the whole of none  
Cruelty, treachery, dishonour, deceit  
We have used and shared them all  
But it remains a fact  
We of the two islands, have become  
Who we are in this world  
Not, as history would have it,  
In spite of each other  
but because of each other.  
Throughout the bad times  
The men of Andrew and David  
Bled and died, alongside  
The men of George and Patrick  
Not for any Queen or Flag  
Not for any Flower or Plant  
Not for some government edict  
Nor a Royal command  
But for a far simpler truth  
The cement which in the end  
Let's us live in this sometimes  
Fragile, sometimes unequal  
Edgy brittle harmony  
simply  
because of this love we share  
For our two green Islands

Bill Mitton

## **A WET SQUIRREL**

And there he sat  
amid a halo  
of raindrops.  
handling an acorn  
like it was  
fine bone china

Whilst all around  
towers collaped  
Gods were beseeched  
and bombs and food fell  
like the acorns  
discarded shell

Not for him  
the worry of poison  
by post.  
There are always wars,  
but only so many  
so many acorns  
before winter.

Bill Mitton

## ACID REIGN

At least 15 were mad as coots  
several more were deaf  
four we know, responsible  
for their older sibling's death  
Six we're sure had syphilis  
and seven more were drunks  
one it's said, distastefully  
had his mother chopped in chunks  
a number, Gay, we also know  
and there's nothing wrong in that  
but when a kings a raving Queen  
it doesn't sit 'quite' pat  
most of them were warmongers  
and for some, we spell that 'whore'  
and one was locked up straight away  
MAD! 'he tried to help the poor'  
We had one called 'The Virgin Queen'  
but did she really fit the bill?  
as she had the 'evidence' all bumped off  
we don't know.....and never will.  
At least George the Third was funny  
he thought he was a tree  
He even had them water him  
how much more Royal can you be?  
Quite a lot weren't British  
I mean, Richard One was a French  
Orange Billy a Dutch import  
is this making ANY sense?  
A good few had their relatives  
Locked up in some tower  
And some poor sod was on the Throne  
For barely half an hour  
The Queens we've had (except THAT King)  
Were just as bad, and in cases even worse  
If you got too close to Lizzie one  
You'd end up in a hearse.  
Her dad, you know him, Henry 8,  
Was very big on weddings  
He went through wives like nobody  
'cos he also liked beheadings  
One was forced to abdicate  
The scandal of divorce  
There would not have been a bigger row  
If he'd been marrying his horse!  
The present lot are German  
Sax Coberg was their name  
But in World War I, hey presto!  
The Windsor's they became  
By ditching consanguinity  
From the royal marriage form  
And marrying their cousins  
Strange children they have born

These grow up as ugly kings  
And most of them are ...well....dim  
look at the Crown Prince we have now  
would you be ruled by HIM?  
Of course we have the dear Queen Mum  
Oh hurrah I hear you say  
I'm sure I'd live passed a hundred too  
If I'd, never worked, one day.  
And they've upset every body  
Caused strife on every shore  
But it doesn't matter what they do  
THEY never fight the war.  
Yet the thing which really riles me  
Yes, the thing which really jars  
Is for all they KNOW about the likes of me  
We might as well be from Mars.

My apologies to any Monachists out there, don't worry I'm sure the House of Windsor (?) will be around for a long time yet. You'll get the last laugh. I'm quite sure I'm going to die out before the Monarchy does.

Bill Mitton

## **ALLEGIENCE.**

This is my land  
it the land of my birth  
but it is only my land.  
Not my father's nor mother's.  
It is the land of their  
history's persecutors.

Yet, it is the land I love  
The land I long for  
when I'm away from it.  
I am part of its fabric  
It's part in my heritage  
is cruel and painful.  
but it is the land I claim  
this I cannot nor  
would not change.  
Though I will always  
bless the Black Rose  
I Rose I love is Red

My life is clothed  
in this island and people  
they belong to me and I to them.  
Never would I deny  
my roots or history.  
Yet across my heart  
is written, one word  
England.  
She is both my  
paradox, and my love

Bill Mitton

## **An Audience Granted**

I saw him briefly once,  
like a three dimensional  
shadow on the lake.  
And I was breathless in  
the presence of such majesty.  
The sheen of his plumage,  
changing, as the sun danced  
on the rippling water.  
He turned towards the  
bank where I lay.  
Across the small distance,  
We met eye to eye,  
suddenly as if to offer  
me a benediction he  
raised himself in the  
water and spread his wings.  
Then he turned and was gone,  
yet in the contact of our eyes  
I felt his pity, in that I was  
just a mortal man.  
Whilst He, was a Black Swan.

Bill Mitton

## AND SO THE WOMEN WEPT

In the noise and dust of that dark day  
When pain and anger mingled.  
Where Love was driven on with whips and jeers  
shouldering the oppressive burden of a sinful world.  
A world blood hazed and scorched with hatred  
with the dust of its decaying filling the eyes and mouth.  
Hope held hostage and life bleached of any meaning  
The women wept, for they saw love bleeding.

Ringed by indifference, goaded by ignorance  
Love staggered, faltered, slipped and fell,  
And goodness bore the kicks, blows and bites  
of poverty, famine, hunger and despair.  
Pity fled, compassion turned its face away  
chaffed shoulders bled, thorns pierced as spikes.  
The burden grew heavier with every faltered step  
Once more the women wept, for they knew love's agony.

The sound of hammer on nail, a death knell ringing  
and Love was iron spiked to the wood of sacrifice.  
Upon a hill named for skulls, they raised love up  
to be ridiculed below a label of false titles.  
In that moment love took the evil of this world  
and gathering it all into an anguished heart.  
To place it imploring at the feet of eternal light  
and the tears of the women became a prayer

Side pierced on that hill who's name was skulls  
Love died, and the world knew darkness complete.  
she who had born love in her womb, felt the sword  
and she who had once denied love, now knew her lie.  
So they wept, together, for the lose of that light,  
and love was entombed in haste amongst dark rock  
Thus a world hung in the canyon between darkness and light.  
Huddled, cold and frightened the women wept in fear.

From the radiant glory, of a third dawn,  
fulfilling the prophecy and promise of his word  
in glory, Love arose, Hope was given wings and flew  
to illuminate all the corners of a dark world.  
The light of eternity smiled upon Love's ransom  
and in his gift this world would be redeemed.  
Death is banished for all who's lives hold love  
this the women saw and they wept with joy.

Yet still, down the ages the women's tears have fallen  
at births, and deaths, in sacrifice for life's grief and joy.  
Yet in these tears, Love's message is ever present.  
They wept for the lives they've born into an evil world,  
from crib to cross, in gentleness and compassion,  
they watch each painful step up to the hill of skulls

anguishing at the ignorance in every hammered nail  
the women wept and will ever weep, for they weep Love's tears.

Bill Mitton

## **AND THEN YOU KNOW**

In an instant I saw it clearly.  
This smiling girl  
was  
no longer a casual date,  
but the person who  
filled  
all the corners of my life.  
In her eyes I saw the  
future.  
In the passing of a  
heartbeat  
my life was made  
anew.  
In one breath  
Time stood still  
and  
we  
became a lifetime.

Bill Mitton

## **Dancing Lightly on The Wind (In Memory of George Best)**

Dancing lightly on the breeze  
As any autumnal leaf would  
Just ahead of that final  
chasing icy winter wind.  
How we've watched you  
Over the wasting years  
In the sure and dark knowledge  
Of our own untold guilt  
This mass implicitly  
In your change from summer's  
vibrant, and virile green  
to the brittle dying russet  
you've become.  
We witnessed you halcyon day's  
roaring you on as you danced  
lithe and supple, across  
those green gladiatorial meadows  
little knowing or caring  
that with every roar and cheer  
we were bringing  
winter's icy and killing blast  
more surely and swifter  
hidden within fame's golden shroud  
and now I stand watching  
this sad and grieving panoply  
unable to grieve, held back from  
what should a natural thing  
upon the lose of greatness  
I cannot grieve George  
My shame won't let me.

Bill Mitton

## **DAYS LIKE THESE**

On days like these there is no other song  
just the soft duet of gull and sea  
no perfume sweeter than the scent  
of salt upon the warm gentle breeze

On days like these Neptune's breast  
sings a gentle song of peace, and  
the sun smiles fondly upon his slumber  
clouds float by on a canopy of Azure

On day's like these there is no land  
The world holds only that which we see  
No Gods save the sun, moon and sea  
And the benediction of the wind

On days like these all worries are becalmed  
all ills hidden across the circling horizon  
all angers and hatred held at bay  
by the blue salt vastness beneath our bows

Yet my head tells me of the falseness  
working upon my heart and eyes  
That with the night, dark clouds will gather  
bringing the reality of the horizon's storms

but oh with all my heart I dearly wish  
that I could share with all who breath  
the wonderful falseness that holds me  
as I live through days like these

Bill Mitton

## EDMUND PETTUS BRIDGE

The bridge Spans the Alabama, six blocks out of Selma  
an early morning mist still coats the road  
the only sound the breeze dancing in the bridge supports  
Then forty years just fall away as my memory plays  
and my shoulders hold once more the heavy load  
I can hear the dogs barking and feel the tear gas sting  
My eyes, blood blinded from the truncheon wound.  
heart beats with the same terror of that day  
a bullwhip's crack echoes loud upon the flood.  
Screams of fear and hatred fill my ears and mind  
and the self same panic bile rises bitter on my tongue  
ground trembles with the hoofbeats of the mounted troopers  
again I'm stumbling, falling, trampled beneath the running feet  
for a moment I am gripped by  
that same,  
suffocating,

terrible,

darkness.

Then the darkness melts into a smile, warming as a noonday sun  
a gentle but urgent voice urges, we have to go, we have to go  
It's only then I notice the broken, Cellotaped, glasses  
Her name was Martha she was a marcher and a nurse  
In so many way that day change my...our world  
two weeks later we crossed Edmund Pettus Bridge. Hand in hand.

Hand squeezing mine pulls me back across forty years  
that self same smile, now framed in silvered hair fills my vision  
a hand softly touches my forehead scar, a voice urges  
Jacob, it looks like rain, we have to go, we have to go.

In forty years we're crossed so many Edmund Pettus bridges.  
It ain't over, It won't be until the day  
any child, mine or yours, is able to cross any bridge they want to.

Note:

On March 7, 1965. Civil rights marchers, including Dr Martin Luther King jr. set out to march from Selma to Montgomery some 50 miles away to bring attention to the injustice of a segregated south.

They only made it six blocks. At the Edmund Pettis Bridge, the marchers were met by state and local lawmen wielding clubs and tear gas, who drove them back to Selma.

Bill Mitton

## FROM THE STUDY WINDOW

Across the white mantled lawn  
The dotted smudge marks  
of a feline homecoming.  
And through the naked branches  
The twinkling signals of  
a universe\*s past and future.

From the Heaton hill come shadows  
As in homeward pilgrimage  
Upon sled and childhood\*s laughter  
girl and boy and man descending.  
Reminding me of my bygone part  
In this self same happy pageant.

Another year is come and gone  
And most is just a memory  
loss and pain are yet for healing  
But there upon the bird table  
Unaware of all my thoughts  
A Blue Jay takes his evening feeding

How fragile the dividing wall between  
mankind and man, savage, cruel, greedy  
Then the Blue Jay\*s call distracts me.  
Its snowing, the lawn is white once more  
And for a while the world is pure  
Until I start again, to thinking

Bill Mitton

## **GOD'S DOG**

God's dog he barketh never  
His tail is ever still  
For heaven hath no cats to taunt  
Nor rabbits yet to kill

He scratcheth not  
And howleth less  
His life a bitter pill  
For omnipotents they throw no sticks  
And low they never will.

To throw a ball in heaven  
Is simply never done  
And cars to chase in paradise  
Are numbered less than one.

So paradox on paradox  
The circumstances tell  
Of a hound who dwells in heaven  
But lives his life in HELL!

Bill Mitton

## **I DON'T LIKE CANDIED PEEL!**

I don't like Candied Peel,  
And never will I fear.  
So I am lost to cakes and pies  
baked at this time of Year.

Most Christmas cakes contain it  
Along with love and care  
But I can't eat these offerings  
I ask you, is that fair?

The Brown sugar and the brandy  
Sultanas and their ilk  
I love them as the next man would  
Along with the flour and milk

The icing and the marzipan  
The bowl after the mix  
Are things that I enjoyed as well  
If just the peel, they'd fix!

Mince pies are simply no go  
The cake I dare not touch  
I'm missing part of Christmas  
Is it asking very much

To instigate a PEEL FREE zone  
At least within the cake  
The pie of course is hard to do  
Peels essential to the bake.

Dedicated to Mike Morris 'Christmas Cake Baker Supreme.'

Bill Mitton

## **Life**

Collectively Life is cheap.  
that which makes life precious  
is the individuality of each one  
for we walk this earth unique  
throughout all eternities  
each life never to be repeated  
every one a notch upon time's tally  
and in that way  
each death it's own small Hiroshima

Bill Mitton

## Questionable Horizons.

How should it be I speak  
and yet say nothing  
When sun, and sky and sea  
can say so much.  
Why should it be my voice  
booms in shallowness  
When mind and heart together  
sing so readily in tune.  
Where are my darling buds of May,  
my sparkling ice of winter  
I know the path, I see the door,  
but the key eludes me.

What worth my eyes, when I see nothing  
save the sparkle of false baubles.  
when all around precious stones  
are trodden underfoot.  
Why does my footfall echo  
into the emptiness?  
And not the measured  
tread of reason.  
Where are my summer birdsongs  
Winter's song of twisting ice  
I know the path, I see the door  
But the verse eludes me.

Who am I to speak and sing of love,  
to plead for peace in all things  
yet to be at war within myself  
entrenched inside my soul.  
Where is the ache of hatred  
when love holds a greater pain  
How can I share my journey  
I do not know it's end.  
Where are my snowclad mountains  
My warming summer rain  
I know the path, I see the door  
But all answers elude me.

Bill Mitton

## **ROSES IN A LIONS DEN**

Across the fields where  
once a bugle played  
The returning echo  
of the children's laughter.  
Ground that shook to  
history's martial boot  
Sings now to the small joyous  
feet that tread the future.  
Blessed time has thinned  
The rows of marching men  
Into a rainbow crocodile  
of curiosity and wonder.  
Now where rifle and  
bayonet once held sway  
A sand pit and plastic slide  
Give the calling and the purpose  
Nor am I sad at what I see  
For things are, here at least, in order.  
Children at play and learning  
And wars and soldiering, held  
Safe, within old men's memories.

Bill Mitton

## SONAR

What did I think was I doing here?  
This was no old man\*s cruise.  
These waves belonged to the  
Fresh faced, twenty something, sailors.  
Their deference simply made it worse

Even here in this dark Sonar room  
faces tinged green from the screen\*s glow  
My heart holds only loneliness  
my mind ever on her who's smile haunts me  
and even their young laughter jars

The vow \*never again\* becomes a mantra.  
And I dig inside myself for one,  
Just one, small spark of joy  
But my mind and heart are  
Like the seas we sail, troubled and grey

\*We have a contact\* brings me from the greyness  
and on my screen the dots appear and grow  
strange, unusual contacts, \*Go to aural\* headphones buzz.  
Suddenly my heart lifts, my eyes swim and my soul soars,  
as my head is filled with waves of whale song.

Bill Mitton

## THE SCENT OF GOD

Behind the eye  
before the mind  
where 'feel' and 'see'  
are one.  
A place of  
least resistance  
all pre-conceptions  
gone.

A void between what  
was and is  
where must and could  
both vie  
twixt wake and sleep,  
a limbo.  
where truth's barriers  
all die.

It's here within life's  
molten core  
where who we are  
holds ground  
and we see ourselves  
from inside out  
that the scent of God  
is found.

Bill Mitton

## **The Black Mountain (Brecon, an old adversary)**

I stood in tight chested forbodeing  
at the hem of your heathered dress  
long years on from when  
you did your best to kill me.  
I brought a garland of bright memories  
of the years between then and now to show you  
See here my son is born, there his graduation  
the continuing song of the life you held to ransom  
for three long cold and painful days.  
In spite of your dark wrath, I am, still.  
Now in sunlight once again your beauty belies  
the icy wet stilettos neath your dress  
the dark shroud with which in seconds  
you ensnare those who you select.  
Standing in tight breathlessness upon your crown  
The backpack of years weighing heavy  
I see the rocks where once I lay broken  
from one sunrise to another dawn  
for an instant again, death's icy hand upon my heart  
then in rain and fading light I descend your flank  
the memory of a nightly kiss upon a deep shoulder scar  
given I know, in thanksgiving for my life.  
I see your own brown scar, a road cut deep into your side  
You are nolonger the mountains you were back then  
and I am nolonger the man I was.  
I suddenly feel that thought I lived inspite of you  
I am who I am because of you,  
perhaps we are even Now, mountain.

Bill Mitton

## **THE BLESSED VIRGIN OF THE LATE NIGHT STORE**

Her Children sleep, Guarded by  
a fourteen year old disciple  
whilst she works the dead hours  
dispensing, pale smiles, pepsi and  
tobacco, to the weak beards and  
young breasts of a student population  
Saving lives and slaking thirsts  
Blessed virgin of the late night store

There in her neon glass grotto  
the conduit between the last joint  
and something sticky, sweet, quick.  
Worshipped, protected, 'til semi dawn  
dreaming of her lost childhood  
and picking away childhood's shells  
from those who worship at  
the blessed vigin's late night store

Until at last their drunken youth  
becomes an empty echo in the aisles  
her dreams grow cold within the dawn  
her limbs grow numb from worship  
and the call of her children's love  
drive the blessed virgin home to  
her earthly life, and a few hours fitful sleep

Bill Mitton

## THE CHOSEN

You who were the 'Chosen',  
you who suffered long.  
You who wore the yellow star,  
The victims of great wrongs.  
You who lost six million dead,  
slaughtered for a creed.  
You who for centuries have been  
the whipping boys of greed.  
You who watch the old ones come,  
to scan the lists with dread,  
with tattooed arms and memories,  
to say kaddish for their dead.  
Has the pain and grief,  
your race endured,  
stopped your ears and eyes.  
Does the horror of the Holocaust,  
Silence Palestinian cries.  
Are the camps across the Jordan,  
with their dying diseased and pained,  
less real than those your fathers knew  
and by which humanity was shamed.  
Though you've never had the peace you crave,  
and your children still are lost,  
Can you really want to add the blood,  
of other innocents to the cost.  
The things we see your soldiers do  
and hear your politicians state,  
can they really be the deeds and words,  
of refugees from hate?  
Can oppression be the practice,  
of those who bear its scars.  
The use of fear and naked force,  
when your history it mars.  
How far apart Salaam - Shalom,  
'Peace', in both your tongues.  
This land has held you in its palm  
in truth you both belong;  
Arab, Jew semitic both,  
your histories entwined.  
Can you not find a middle ground  
with differences that fine.

To Arab, Jew, and Christian  
this land has long held sway.  
In Gods name, yours, theirs, and mine,  
can peace never find it's way

Bill Mitton

## **The Eternal Circle**

These terraces and pillars are pitted with  
the dying screams of generations  
and where I sit base instincts  
grew with every final pained breath.

Here within Rome's stone centre  
on display the glory of her name  
and yet the grim reminder of  
the history of her lowest ebb

These stones that echo to our steps  
once rang to blood hazed roars  
whilst in counterpoint there raised  
a song of praise and supplication.

Here within this pained theatre  
The stuttered beating of a dying heart  
and all the Gods of Rome  
did become, recognisable as clay

Within this ring of ancient stones  
upon the plain of blood soak sand  
here in the torment and the pain  
a stone ring became a crown of thorns

here against this backdropp of  
a civilisation's death throes  
came forth in fiery baptism the light  
which brought eternal truth.

Held in trust within this open space  
The answered prayers  
Of those who turned  
A Crown from Thorns to Gold.

Bill Mitton

## **The God of Hedgehogs**

I am the God of Hedgehogs  
It's a living, though quite small  
Yet still within my mood swings  
Hedgehogdoms rise or fall

The spikey skin was my idea  
a nose man did the snout  
its colour scheme, traditional  
as were the 'in' and 'out'

Mobility I did myself  
likewise the feet or paws  
The tail, a small sad victim  
of the overspend on jaws

I think we got the balance wrong  
between temerity and pluck  
so the roll-into-a-ball response  
was quite a stroke of luck

The size and weight? A safety net  
I mean, how happy would you be  
at a Hedgehog the was eight feet six  
made by a larger God than me.

The brain we used an old one  
I got it cheap some Garage Sale?  
one previous owner, hardly used  
from some guy called Dan Quayle

The eyesight was a bugger  
I just couldn't get it right  
So I boosted up the sense of smell  
And said don't go out at night

But all-in-all it ain't that bad  
It came out better than the Bat  
and let's not talk about the Platypus  
The Guys STILL rib me over that

Bill Mitton

## **The Journey of The Magi**

I have long know of their journey  
learned at my mothers knee.  
How the Magi travelled long and hard  
To the land of Galilee  
I never questioned why they went  
on this journey so profound.  
for I knew too of the Christ Child  
who beneath a star they found.  
Gold and Myrrh and Frankincense  
These names through ages ring.  
The gifts they brought the infant  
as their homage to a king.  
The prophecy of Seth had told  
of a star so wondrous bright  
to lead them to the Prince of Peace  
across the Eastern night.  
Balthasar, Gasper and Malchior  
The three Wise men of old  
who did not betray the son of God  
So the story is still told.  
Balthasar came from the East  
Gasper from the West  
And Melchior came from the south  
All at the Star's behest.  
Some say it's just a legend  
I believe that it took place,  
but that really doesn't matter  
The story holds this grace.  
That everyone has such a star  
and they follow where it leads  
to find there own small stable  
away from cruelty and greed  
or in a quest to find some answers  
in hard journeys for some proof  
by sacrificing everything  
enduring all to gain the truth  
and the journeys always different  
for some it's Pole to Pole  
for others it's much longer  
'til they reach their own life goal.  
It's a journey that we all must make  
to find that place of peace  
or throw off our pain and sorrow  
and know the joy of that release.  
Or in the footsteps of the Magi  
To find, just as they told,  
the stable and the Christ Child  
and the flame which lights the soul.

Bill Mitton

## **The Memory of a Smile**

The memory of a smile long gone  
returns to warm me on  
this windy March morning  
and in it's swirling song  
the happy counterpoint  
of gentle laughter

For we were children of  
this quartered moon  
hip joined in childhood's  
joyful wanderings.  
Rascal partners upon  
a rocky mischief trail

We were the young immortals  
unbreakable in space or time  
given wings to fly  
across the skies of youth  
small lords of the domains  
without a far horizon

Yet the Gods and Nature  
conspired against us  
and in one dark night you  
and your smile became  
a legacy, to be fixed  
within the amber of my mind.

I watched the sad tapestry of  
your earthly leaving  
with unbelieving eyes  
for I was sure you would return  
as we had always done before  
tired contrite and hungry.

Another March wind blew  
before my hope and expectation  
grew into the certainty of death  
the black stone was not  
your hiding place, I knew now  
you would not come, you could not come

Never does the March wind blow  
That your smile shines through  
my minds amber once more  
Yet there is no sadness in it  
only the glow of childhood's joy  
for in our time we knew no other  
nor could we have, nor should we have,

Bill Mitton

## **The Moon and Icarus**

He never saw my reflected warmth  
his reason blinded by light of Sol  
drawn by the brilliance  
unable to know the danger  
held within Sol's close embrace  
so on fragile wings began his dance  
and I waited in my quarterings  
hoped in my waxings and wanings  
but mine was only a reflected glory  
and Icarus saw only  
day's golden molten glow  
Even in my full dressed beamings  
I was unnoticed in his flight  
and as his wings obeyed Sol's heat  
as the earth cried out it's death call  
Icarus in his falling must have heard  
Lunar's invocation gentle and soft  
My embrace would have been warm  
caressing and often  
Yet Icarus you would have danced on

Bill Mitton

## **The Song Of The Atheist**

There are no giants, save for egos.  
We all enter the world,  
to the fanfare of our own wailing  
and the cries of our mother's natal pain.

There is no greatness, save the infinity  
of the universe's expanding gases,  
which places our facile, plodding, achievements  
into an ever shrinking context.

There is no history, save that of Earth  
in her timeless turnings,  
we are and will be but an incident upon her skin,  
a rash which will die.

There is no Salvation, for that would  
imply transgression.  
Our sentience transgresses nothing  
except the dying earth. No omnipotent watches.

There is no future, just the same thin drama  
against the backdrop of insignificance.  
We still die, lie, cheat and kill. just  
more efficiently, and fiscally and for the watching millions.

We have no cure, only a futile hoping  
in the dark of night.  
Small implicit yearnings for solutions,  
to problems, we've yet to know we have.  
The planet will have a cure for us.

There is no mercy, save the sterility of cosmic oblivion.  
All arts, all cultures, all technological wonders,  
are but a tick upon the clock of time.  
Out there are other sentients, like us  
Simply, season's blooms, in the garden of the universe.

Bill Mitton

## **The Unsung Bell**

The unsung bell  
atop the tower  
of a ruined church  
unchallenged by wind  
mute witness to  
the creaking rotting  
supports which will  
one day break beneath  
the bells silent weight  
and allow the unsung bell  
a final death nell

Bill Mitton

## THE WATERING CAN INCIDENT

I said I hadn't borrowed it  
so stop accusing me!  
but the bugger wouldn't listen  
how stupid can you be?  
Anyway, the damned thing leaked!  
and it was far from being new.  
but he just went on about it  
There was nothing I could do

So I soaked him with the hosepipe  
By Gum! he did get vexed  
if he hadn't fallen on his arse.  
who knows where we'd been next.  
He jumped up like a young un  
his vengeance for to take  
but he trod upon the upturned blade  
and met the handle of the rake.

By eck! his nose looked awful  
and his lip was cut as well  
so he never saw the bucket  
and so once again he fell  
It could have been quite serious  
so when you take it, all in all  
he really was quite lucky when  
the manure heap, broke his fall.

He staggered to his feet AGAIN  
Yea Gods he looked a sight  
and if he'd packed in at that point  
he'd have probably been alright  
but no, he'd got his dander up  
he just would not see sense.  
so in his rage he mistakenly  
leaned on the broken fence  
it's lucky that the duck pond  
is really shallow at the back  
unluckily when they get frightened  
it's well known that, ducks attack.

He refused the help I offered  
I tried to make the peace  
but he slammed the gate behind him  
and that upset the Geese  
I think he got away unscathed  
but I couldn't really see  
he was hidden by the foliage  
as he was sitting in the tree.

I put the Geese back in their pen  
then I heard a yell and crash  
the tree was now unoccupied

and he was face down in the grass  
But just as quick he was up again  
and running through the trees  
which I thought rather strange until  
I saw the pursuing swarm of bees.

Just then old Jack he ambled up  
He said "Yon looks a busy man,  
I'm sorry that I missed him though  
I've brought back his watering can."

Bill Mitton

## **The Waves Upon The Bass Rock**

The waves upon the Bass Rock  
Beat mournful in the dawn  
And in the Leaside of this monolith  
The Cod and Mackerel spawn

Across the shore proud Tantallon  
Part shrouded in the mist  
And edged with gold the hillsides  
Where the morning sun has kissed

Upon the Rock the Seabirds nest  
Their presence caps it white  
and golden sunbursts drive away  
the rear guard of night

The wind blows strong and coldly  
To chill unto the bone  
and herring gull and gannet call  
are silenced by it's moan

But wind nor sea nor bird cry  
Can hold back the angry cry  
in the Wolf like howl  
The Grey Seal gives, defiant, to the sky

As though in thankful sacrifice  
we offer to the waves  
The filletings of Cod and Ling  
The Mackerel roe we save.

This wind is set to drive us home  
This bitter spiteful blow  
And soon the swell begins to rise  
The sign for us to go

As we turn towards the shore  
from a rock just feet away  
a Grey bull roars defiantly  
so near we feel his spray

Bill Mitton

## **The Winds Around Kilturra**

I sat against the graveyard wall  
looking out across the Mayo peatlands  
reaching out to touch your souls  
and the names upon the crosses  
became stepping stones between  
the greyness of our orb spun turnings  
there in one ten graved row  
the stones aged before my eyes  
polished black and brightly gold  
to granite wind worn grey and Lichen green.  
Then the winds around Kilturra sang  
and my soul reached out,  
In one heartbeat those who had bought and  
brought my life to this hillside  
pulled me to the dancing circle  
of all who's blood I held in trust.  
This was the ground which held  
the final paths of nine generations  
I am ten, and here in this watery dawn  
my heart sings the memory songs  
of countless voices and my soul  
dances the dance of a hundred souls  
then, all to soon, Kilturra's wind died  
the heartbeat, once more became my own.  
As I closed the gate upon the stones  
the Bittern's called their joy upon this day  
my soul gives thanks to earth and sky  
for all the pathways given to my life  
and at my back,  
Kilturra's wind sings me home once more

Bill Mitton

## TO OLD TO BE A REBEL

"Your to old to be a rebel,  
your marching days are gone  
let someone younger do it this time  
your protesting days are done  
and I can't blame her really  
all my battles should be won.  
yet something in me won't let go  
whilst the war's still going on

I'll be to old to be a rebel  
when I'm to old to breathe,  
and to old to see inequities,  
or to old to see men bleed,  
shed tears for children starving  
and not try to ease their need  
To old to raise an angry voice  
Against prejudice and greed.

I'd be to old to feel injustice  
and my heart to know the pain  
or to see the growth of poverty  
and my soul not burn with shame.  
To old to shout in protest  
as many innocents are slain  
To old to strive for what is right  
with hand and heart and brain

I understand your reluctance  
To risk this life of ease.  
But the rebel in me can't just watch  
People driven to their knees.  
I hope and pray that this won't change  
Til my soul finds it's release  
And when I'm to old to be a rebel  
I'll face eternity, at peace

Bill Mitton

## To Slay The Dragon

Throw off the soft cheeks of childhood  
But not the joy nor laughter.  
Let not the dragon's roar  
stop your eyes and ears.  
All that was fresh and wonderful, still is.  
Keep them near, against the cold times

Hold to your dreams, no matter  
who or what, do storm against them.  
Listen to the song within you  
let not fear of the dragon mar the music.  
Be as bold in your giving as you can,  
hold not your heart to ransom.

Though the path may pitch and roll  
Plant your feet with care  
be steady in your stance and gaze,  
and then, when time be right,  
tread a measured and deliberate step  
by these things, is the dragon is held at bay.

Know your worth, in sinew, steel, and gold  
yet rejoice only in the former.  
Understand that love is a borrowed gift,  
yet do not hesitate in the borrowing,  
for there is no greater gift.  
Let it be your strength against the dragon's claws

Learn well what lies within your heart  
and you shall surely soar with falcons.  
Fear not the horizon, for its  
distance is of your own making.  
Understand the nature of all things,  
thus will you see the nature of the dragon

Hold to these things, they will keep you safe,  
and life's bright talisman shall be your guide.  
Your heart shall beat to your own truths,  
And the only borders shall be your own.  
Til' at the sunset, your own tall sons shall bear witness  
upon the body of the dragon, you have Slain.

Bill Mitton

## TWO FIFTHS

### THE FIVE HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE

Of the Horsemen of Apocalypse  
We speak in hush-ed tone  
For were they go they leave a trail of  
Sadness grief and bones

But are they such a dreadful lot  
As bad as what is said  
Have we ever really stopped to think  
we could have somehow been mis-led

For a start they all like horses  
So they can't be all that bad  
Who knows the guilt they live with  
Or the childhoods they each had

Ok lets take death for starters  
Did you know his first name's Jim  
And his horses name is Constance  
So perhaps he's not that grim.

Ron Pestilence has haemorrhoids  
So it goes against the grain  
The hours he spends on horseback  
Well he's a martyr to the pain

Now War who's name is Sandy  
Is really sensitive and meek  
In fact he can't stand violence  
So his outlooks really bleak

Gerald Famine has a lonely life  
Except his colleagues three  
He's none who want to love him  
How desolate can you be?

whilst collectively they're menacing  
alone they're rather sad  
sort of 'tragedies on horseback'  
and pathetic more than bad

### THE FIFTH HORSEMAN OF THE APOCALYPSE

Along the dark and Windswept road  
The dreaded Horsemen swept  
The traditional four were  
hopping Mad!  
Their new colleague had overslept.

But they could really say a thing  
Though they didn't need a fifth

This horesman's name was Derek  
newly promoted  
from accounts,  
to train for Armageddon  
and sort their expenses out.

Death he frets in silence  
Famine's gives a worried sigh  
Plague and Pestilence  
both did quake  
When Derek  
the Bureaucrat rode by.

The Horsemen ride as always  
all four in line abreast  
and Derek rides  
behind them all  
costing out their quests

All may flee before them  
this apocalyptic  
deadly host  
but the horseman of  
Bureaucracy  
Is surely FEARED the most.

Bill Mitton

## Uncaring Shores

There is beauty here within  
this sea silvered bay  
rich bounty too, along the  
tide's shorn edge  
whilst the green ramparts of  
proud Cumbria  
hold back the weather's  
cold, angry, excesses  
and the wind hold no threat  
within her singing.  
Lulled by the scene,  
drawn on by the promise  
of the sand's hidden bounty  
six thousand miles from home,  
they walk upon the  
moon sheened wetness  
of this foreign bay  
not knowing of the tide's  
Medusain threat.  
That silver icy snakes  
crept steadily upon them  
hidden by the contours  
of glowing sands.  
They should have left  
an hour since  
but none is there to tell  
none hold their lives  
of importance  
none care for their safety  
they are pitied  
no better on the shore  
than by the silver snakes  
who came to kill them.  
They are illegals  
escapees from another tide  
which sweeps their land  
they are a new slavery  
bought and sold  
by the slave masters  
of this mobile age  
and  
tonight the sea's silver snakes  
will pay their slave price

Bill Mitton

## **VOICES ON THE EDGE OF THE WORLD (in honour of my fellow poets)**

It is how we are and who we are  
that we live out here on the edge  
the ragged rim of the world  
It's the nature of our vice  
This dark self imposed isolation

Yet the paradox in it shines bright  
As the isolation bears heavy  
upon our pale and brittle skin  
for unless we share our souls  
there is but dust in what we do

Each staking a separate claim  
along the river of the golden muse  
and each naked in hand and heart  
bares the working of a soul  
tasting the ice in the edges isolation

yet from each site along the rim  
the voices of comfort and support  
and a song becomes an anthem  
so into each isolation a warm voice  
'We know, we understand we're here'

Bill Mitton