

Poetry Series

Ron Price

- poems -

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Ron Price (23/07/1944)

A: EMPLOYMENT POSITIONS HELD

2005-2000-Writer/Poet: George Town Tasmania
-Program Presenter, City Park Radio, Launceston
2004-1999-Tutor and/or President: George Town School for Seniors Inc
1999-1988 -Lecturer in General Studies(1996-1988) :
Lecturer in Human Services, West Australian Department of Training
1987-1986 -Acting Lecturer in Management Studies and Co-ordinator of
Further Education Unit at Hedland College in South Hedland, WA.
1985-1982 -Adult Educator, Open College of Tafe, Katherine, NT
1981 -Maintenance Scheduler, Renison Bell, Zeehan, Tasmania
1980 -Editor, External Studies Unit, Tasmanian CAE & Resource Centre
Association, Launceston
1979 -Lecturer in Organizational Behaviour, Tasmanian CAE & Radio
Journalist ABC, Launceston
1978-1976 -Lecturer in Social Sciences & Humanities, Ballarat CAE, Ballarat
1975 - Lecturer in Behavioural Studies, Whitehorse Technical College, Box
Hill, Victoria
1974 -Senior Tutor in Education Studies, Tasmanian CAE, Launceston
1973-1972 -High School Teacher, South Australian Education Department
1971-1969 -Primary School Teacher, Prince Edward County Board of
Education, Picton, Ontario, Canada
1968-67 -Community Teacher, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern
Development, Frobisher Bay, NWT, Canada
1967-59 -Summer jobs from grade 10 to end of university
1967-1949 - Attended 2 primary schools,2 high schools and 2 universities in
Canada: McMaster Uni: 1963-1966, Windsor T's College: 1966/7.
1963-1944 -Childhood(1944-57) and adolescence(1957-63) in and
around Hamilton Ontario.

B: SOME SOCIO-BIO-DATA

I have been married for 39 years. My wife is a Tasmanian, aged 60. We've had 3 children: ages in 2005-39,35 and 28. I am 60, a Canadian who moved to Australia in 1971 and have written 3 books-all available on the internet. I retired from part-time teaching in 2004 and full-time teaching in 1999 after 30 years in classrooms. In addition, I have been a member of the Baha'i Faith for 45 years. Bio-data: 6ft,225 lbs, eyes/hair-brown, Caucasian. See my website for more details at: <http://bahaipioneering.bahaisite.com/> and go to any search engine and type: 'Pioneering Over Four Epochs' or 'RonPrice Poetry' for additional writings.

Works:

SOME BOOKS/LINKS/poetry ON THE INTERNET BY RON PRICE

These three books were put on the Internet in 2002 and 2003 and contain some 2000 pages of content. Anyone having questions or comments about this content can contact me at my email address: ronprice9@gmail.com

1. The Emergence of a Baha'i Consciousness in World Literature: The Poetry of Roger White: 400 pages <http://bahai-library.org/books/white>
<http://www.juxta.com/main>
2. Pioneering Over Four Epochs: 850 pages
42 sub-sites: <http://bahaipioneering.bahaisite.com/>
3. Pioneering Over Four Epochs: An Autobiographical Study and a Study in Autobiography: 850 page book.
Internet Ebook Site: <http://www.eBooks.Mal> (\$2.95)
Website: <http://bahaipioneering.bahaisite.com/>
4. Search Engines: Most major engines, like Google/Yahoo or Ask Jeeves, have dozens of my sub-sites with my work. Just type the words: Pioneering Over Four Epochs into the search box.

A Narrow Beach on an Autumn Evening

The poem below is by William Wordsworth. It is entitled 'A Narrow Girdle of Rough Stones and Craggs.' I have placed his poem in italics and the verses of my poem alternate with his. I have taken Wordsworth's poem and directed its content toward my own life. I remember my mother reading Wordsworth in the 1950s, but I did not read him seriously until the early 1990s when I was nearly fifty. The events in my poem took place, but in quite a different way than I have conveyed them here. I have taken some poetic license in writing what follows; or you might say this poem is semi-autobiographical. I write this prose-poem on the eve of another school year in the northern hemisphere as primary and high school students go back to school tomorrow. -Ron Price, Pioneering Over Four Epochs, September 4th, 2005.

A narrow girdle of rough stones and crags,
A rude and natural causeway, interposed
Between the water and a winding slope
Of copse and thicket, leaves the eastern shore
Of Grasmere safe in its own privacy:

It was a few hundred yards from the big lake.
I'd never measured it exactly, but a straight
street on level land interposed itself
between my house and the huge bulk
that was Lake Ontario in the middle of
North America so very far away now.

And there myself and two beloved Friends,
One calm September morning, ere the mist
Had altogether yielded to the sun,
Sauntered on this retired and difficult way.
-Ill suits the road with one in haste; but we
Played with our time; and, as we strolled along,

And there myself and a friend,
more beloved now after 50 years,
walked and ran as we so often did
down to the powerline to play football
on an autumn evening or on our bikes
to the lake to swim on a hot summer day.

It was our occupation to observe
Such objects as the waves had tossed ashore-
Feather, or leaf, or weed, or withered bough,
Each on the other heaped, along the line
Of the dry wreck. And, in our vacant mood,
Not seldom did we stop to watch some tuft
Of dandelion seed or thistle's beard,
That skimmed the surface of the dead calm lake,
Suddenly halting now-a lifeless stand!

And we did observe, although not finely
for we were always on the run and missed
much that was in front of our nose.
But you could not miss the sun and sky

and all the houses down below where
we lived our lives and got our start
on the long road that was our life,
a road we hardly knew and hardly
ever gave a thought to-mostly.

And starting off again with freak as sudden;
In all its sportive wanderings, all the while,
Making report of an invisible breeze
That was its wings, its chariot, and its horse,
Its playmate, rather say, its moving soul.
-And often, trifling with a privilege
Alike indulged to all, we paused, one now,
And now the other, to point out, perchance
To pluck, some flower or water-weed, too fair
Either to be divided from the place
On which it grew, or to be left alone
To its own beauty.....

So much starting and stopping in all our
sportive wanderings and reports, though
I can not recall making many/any to anyone.
Yes, we noticed the wind, the heat, the rain,
if any: you'd have to be blind and deaf not to.
We plucked few flowers and the only weeds
we worried about were on someone's lawn
we cut for a few dollars spending money
to buy baseball cards, candy and soft drinks.

.....Many such there are,
Fair ferns and flowers, and chiefly that tall fern,
So stately, of the queen Osmunda named;
Plant lovelier, in its own retired abode
On Grasmere's beach, than Naiad by the side
Of Grecian brook, or Lady of the Mere,
Sole-sitting by the shores of old romance.
-So fared we that bright morning: from the fields
Meanwhile, a noise was heard, the busy mirth
Of reapers, men and women, boys and girls.
Delighted much to listen to those sounds,

The lawns along the street were all clipped
and green with flower beds, tidy at the edges.
Maple trees and cars from the fifties lined
the driveways as did hedges and neighbours'
kids only some of whom we ever got to know.

And feeding thus our fancies, we advanced
Along the indented shore; when suddenly,
Through a thin veil of glittering haze was seen
Before us, on a point of jutting land,
The tall and upright figure of a Man

Attired in peasant's garb, who stood alone,
Angling beside the margin of the lake.
'Improvident and reckless, ' we exclaimed,
'The Man must be, who thus can lose a day
Of the mid harvest, when the labourer's hire
Is ample, and some little might be stored
Wherewith to cheer him in the winter time.'
Thus talking of that Peasant, we approached
Close to the spot where with his rod and line
He stood alone; whereat he turned his head
To greet us-and we saw a Man worn down
By sickness, gaunt and lean, with sunken cheeks
And wasted limbs, his legs so long and lean
That for my single self I looked at them,
Forgetful of the body they sustained.-
Too weak to labour in the harvest field,
The Man was using his best skill to gain
A pittance from the dead unfeeling lake
That knew not of his wants.....

And as we fed our fancies and breathed our
unarticulated assumption that life was one
long indulgence, through a thin veil of
glittering haze we saw coming toward us
two young, beautiful girls and we, having
just passed through the puberty pickle,
were drawn to them as bees to a honey pot.
Seeing as there was noone around
and the beach was as empty and deserted
as it ever could be, we toyed with them
as best we could to see if they would comply
with our youthful lusts and hot desires.

.....I will not say
What thoughts immediately were ours, nor how
The happy idleness of that sweet morn,
With all its lovely images, was changed
To serious musing and to self-reproach.
Nor did we fail to see within ourselves
What need there is to be reserved in speech,
And temper all our thoughts with charity.
-Therefore, unwilling to forget that day,
My Friend, Myself, and She who then received
The same admonishment, have called the place
By a memorial name, uncouth indeed
As e'er by mariner was given to bay
Or foreland, on a new-discovered coast;
And POINT RASH-JUDGMENT is the name it bears.

I will not say what thoughts were ours that day;
I'm not sure our thoughts could have been put
into words, only feelings rushed through our

young bodies on that hot summer evening.
But we did not fail to see within ourselves.
We knew too well the rush of heat on the tongue.
Love had not yet done with us, had only started
as a seed in our veins, as it raged in those moments
and continued over the decades to subdue us
and still we hardly knew the process at all.

There was much need to be reserved in speech
and action that evening but reservation was not
ours that day. Our thoughts were far from tempered
with charity. Golden light articulated their breasts,
fragrant as oranges in our mouths; their outspread hair
in the wind, dark and supple as the cyprus and our
expectant eyes so luminous with lust.

Their limbs so lithe and slight, their thighs so promiseful
as orchards and so unarguably compelling and warm.

Ron Price

At The End of An Epoch

Those rooms swam in soft light, awash with holy and mysterious intimations. Looking back at those rooms it would appear that I was becoming, in the eyes of my family and friends, a deranged angel, a stable and sensible young man, slowly going off his rocker. And he did and he was. -Ron Price with thanks to Roger White, "Evangel", Occasions of Grace: More Poems and Portrayals, George Ronald,1992, p.58.

By seventeen you'd felt His warm Word;
a shining knowledge slowly came in the
evenings as you read His books in bed,
incremental rises of brightness as the
paragraphs grew thickly read and read.
Something was acquired, then, in that
prosaic kitchen with the obtuse linoleum,
where your little family gathered in its homely
knot, dense with astigmatic virtue, blunted with
life, undefined, inarticulate, just stepped out on stage.

No transformation here, but something mysterious
happening in your head, taking you deeper and deeper,
insinuating itself into your heart, unobtrusively replacing
baseball and hockey, if not girls. And you woke up in that
new house in early autumn of 1962 pioneering as quietly as
the feathers of a bird floating on the air at the end of an epoch¹
with its two wars, its depression and its eve of self-destruction.

¹ the first epoch(1921-1963) of 'Abdu'l-Baha's Divine Plan. The Guardian said in 1956 that the world was 'hovering on the brink of self-destruction.'(Messages to the Baha'i World: 1950-1957, USA,1958, p.120.)

Ron Price

Encounter

When the world within us is destroyed, when it is dead and loveless, when our loved ones are in fragments, and we ourselves in hopeless despair, it is then that we must recreate our world anew, reassemble the pieces, infuse life into dead fragments, recreate life. -Hanna Segal in *Guilt and Depression*, Leon Grinberg, Karnac Books, 1992, NY, p.233.

We must recreate our world as
He did back then, established
that anchorage,¹ that fixed and
accessible centre, then on the verge
of extinction; the tide must be turned
from its dead and despairing state,
from its fragmentation, to a flood
point of inestimable benefits. And
so I must weep to have that which
I fear to lose², form amidst discord,
beauty amidst ugliness at the heart
of my experience, encountering it
all as I help to form the structure of
society, as I give myself to solitude.

1 Shoghi Effendi says that Baha'u'llah established this 'anchorage' in the Babi community on his return to Baghdad. It was a community 'on the verge of extinction'.
2 Shakespeare, Sonnet 64.

Ron Price

ENGAGING AND ENGENDERING

The poems I write demand to be written or so it would appear since 1992. I have written an average of 1.1 poems every day for the last 15 years. It's not simply a matter of sitting down periodically with that formidable adversary, the blank page. Sometimes the most urgent need to write will produce only a quantity of insipid scribbling and a nagging bloated feeling of mental constipation. I often find that the poem has to be nurtured over a sustained period, that it must be lived with, must be borne or relished in its nebulous embryonic form for days, weeks or even years before it will yield up a passable first draft upon the page. At other times the poem requires no nurturing; it slides onto the literary pond like water on ice smoothing out my life.

To stimulate the process, I set myself daily mental exercises that may lead eventually to poetry. The exercises are nothing too strenuous most of the time. I find my epistemological sit-ups in the form of reading mixed in with my normal routines: ablutions, washing dishes, emptying garbage, organizing my files and, occasionally, a few perception-stretches in the garden where my wife has arranged a wide variety of plant and flower which does the trick. The mind has a natural tendency to run along familiar paths. So it's largely a matter of stimulating the intellectual and/or perceptual wheels to disengage them from their ruts, their avenues, their places of familiarity, their somnambulance and engaging some automatic creative pilot sitting and waiting on the edge of the familiar places so that the fresh seeing and feeling process can take off.

These are just some of the habits and proclivities that conspire daily to make me a poet. Oh yes, there's one ingredient I must add to the mix in conclusion. That ingredient is a faint, nagging voice from somewhere in the wings. That voice is the expression of a dominating passion in my life to translate my beliefs, my values and attitudes into some articulate form, a form that I can expose to others and so play my small part in the creation of a unified planet: the planetization of humankind. -Ron Price with thanks to Robert Kendall, 'A Day in the Life of Robert Kendall, ' The Cortland Review, 25 November 2006.

What was this bent of mind that
inclined me to turn an image,
thought, a feeling into a poem?
...to turn troubles and delights,
grand conceptions and passages
into what would set my mind
at rest as I whirled constantly
from pillar to post in a world
of impressions and apparently
arbitrary mundane starting points:
engendering ethereal finger-paintings,
hoping that at the bidding of the ideal
King my world of being would be leavened
and furnished with a power through which
this poetic art would be made manifest.

Ron Price
25 November 2006

Ron Price

ENGRAVED WITH RADIANCE

So nigh is grandeur to our dust, so near is God to man!

-Emerson

...the believers must eschew affectation and imitation, for every man of understanding will instantly detect their loathsome odour.

-Shoghi Effendi in Letter to Persian Believers, 10 February 1980 from the Universal House of Justice.

So many deaths: human beings
whose days were crowded
with work for him and them and it.
Memories, such slight things:
a phantom of an attitude remains,
an echo of a mode of thought,
a book or two, at the heart of victory
in some critical hour, shrunk now
into a mere musical note, some phrase,
suggestive of singularity, clarity,
so clear as to be victorious
over the inevitable diminution,
abridgement of death's rare necrology*,
abstract for new generations
who get to the backs of books
and discover what's indescribably
precious in the spirit of humanity.

And so the soul's note rises strong
and clear above the uproar of our times,
to exert in indefinable and infinitesimal ways
its ennobling influence over the future,
occasionally a written garment, inseparable
from matter's chemical marriage, some style,
some reporting of spiritual seeing
and inborn desire, gift of grace,
which eschews affectation and imitation:
some portion of the soil was its to tend
and when all is done what it is, what it was,
engraved on tablets of light as the moment
is engraved with radiance on this
axis of the universe.

Ron Price
26 September 1995

*necrology: -a list or record of people who have died, an obituary
-found in some Baha'i books with some accompanying statement
on the life of the person.

Ron Price

STAR-BURST

William Wordsworth produces poetic work altogether inferior, work quite uninspired and dull.¹ He appears to have been quite unconscious of this inferior quality, of the defects of his poetry. He presents his worst poetry to us with the same faith and seriousness as his best. Sometimes his work is dramatic; sometimes it is epic, as in his Prelude. But it is all of a piece, all a product of a serious and sincere mind. In a collection of short pieces, as in my collection of his Selected Poems² which I was given by the college I taught English at in 1989, the impression made by one piece is continued, is sustained, by the piece following, indeed, through the entire text. In reading Wordsworth the impression made by one of his finer poems, indeed even his finest poems, is too often dulled and spoiled by a very inferior piece coming after it. The reason I have given emphasis to this point raised by Matthew Arnold nearly 130 years ago is that I think it is true of my own verse.

Wordsworth's finest poetry was written in a ten year period, 1798-1808 in the second decade of his writing of poetry. He wrote poetry for sixty years, 1790 to 1850. After a hiatus period of 30 years, from 1960 to 1990, during which I wrote some 160 poems, 130 of which are still in my files, I wrote 40 poems in 1991 and 120 in 1992. The years 1991/2 I now see as my initial poetic burst after a long poetic novitiate. The quality of my poetry I leave to others to assess as Wordsworth did. -Ron Price with appreciation to ¹Matthew Arnold, "Introduction to a Book of Wordsworth's Poems," Internet Site, 2006(1879): and ²William Wordsworth, Selected Poems, editor, Walford Davies, L. M. Dent & Sons, 1986(1975) .

It took off like a star-burst
in that year, mirabile dictu,
part of my soul's rendezvous
with its Source in that holy year
with its sacred remembrances,
anticipating a deep encounter
with the forces operating
with bewildering ferocity
in my world at that auspicious
juncture in history, unbeknownst,
in obscurity from most of the world.

Indeed, I paused and reflected
and thus began the early years
of my poetic maturity, if I can
call it that, my reconsecration
and preparation for tasks
yet to be done, heights yet
to be attained, splendours yet
to be unveiled in the wondrous
leaps and thrusts of epochs ahead,
with new victories, fresh initiatives
and remarkably dynamic years with
their onrushing, quickening, winds.

Ron Price
May 10th 2006.

Ron Price

The First Rock Star and the Onset of the Kingdom

Dylan Thomas, Marilyn Monroe and James Dean were all icons of the early fifties as the Baha'i community approached its Holy Year. Of the three, Thomas was a pioneer writer who established contact with his audience aurally, much as musicians had done for thousands of years. Perhaps he was the first rock star. He died just as the world of verbal imagery was changing: 1953 was the year Britain went over to TV. Dylan Thomas used radio very effectively and was going over to TV as well when he died, just as media technology was remaking the nature of fame. In his last months he was "pulling away from those who wished to help him"² because fame had begun to focus attention on every aspect of his personal life, including his defects. Thomas was just beginning to get fame's mass adulation in 1952-53. This same year the Baha'i community celebrated the hundredth anniversary of the Birth of its Founder's Revelation. Nine days after the end of that Holy Year Dylan Thomas died: November 9th 1953. One hundred countries had received their first Baha'i pioneer in the previous twelve months.-11953: The beginning of the Kingdom of God on earth to Baha'is; and 2 George Tremlett, Dylan Thomas: In the Mercy of His Means, Constable, London,1991, p.176.

Just as the Kingdom of God on earth
was getting launched, this rock star
disappeared from the heavens,
this recreator of the world of the everyday,
this singer of a new song to the Lord,
this disorganised creator, this alcoholic,
this depressive, this walking melodrama,
this fantasy dweller, this entertainer,
this intimate of elemental forces with poems
waiting to be born and conversations
making life easier, with belief in his own powers,
part of an oral tradition. Sound was what
he was all about, no careless expression
of exuberance, no bursting the seams
of the garment of imagination, but
carefully wrought combinations of vigour
and virtuosity, reactions to a deeper reality,
an embededness of thought and words,
a heightened awareness of sense impressions
and emotional tensions and so much more.

I would not have wanted your life,
too much turmoil to suit me,
even with your great gift.
Mine is a more peaceful expression.
My recreation of the everyday,
my singing of a new song to my Lord:
is not as carefully wrought,
as punctilious in detail,
as nervous, as disordered by alcohol,
has none of the depression and melodrama:
well-not nearly as much
and none of your greatness.

1 George Tremlett calls him the first rock star.

Ron Price

Thinking Of You, Boris Pasternak

The famous Russian poet, Boris Pasternak, sad that to be a great poet it was not enough to write poetry. One must also "contribute in some vital way to the life of the times." It is essential that such a poet, Pasternak emphasized, "respond submissively to a high and lonely destiny." Such a poet did not chose poetry as a vocation but was singled out, in some unmistakable fashion, by destiny. Pasternak was "overcome by an irresistible urge to write poetry." Poetry literally seized possession of him in 1912/13. In the next few years he was confirmed in this overpowering sense that poetry came naturally to him. But it did not consume him and he did not project himself as a poet and its intermittent inspirations.

I was attracted to this analysis of Pasternak and his work in Max Hayward's introduction to Olga Ivinskaya's biography of Pasternak: *A Captive of Time: My Years With Pasternak*(Fontana,1978) . I had a similar experience, not in my early adulthood, as was the case with Pasternak, but in middle age, in my late forties. At first, I too did not project myself as a poet but, by my early sixties, the early years of my late adulthood(age 60 to 80) , I had become comfortable with this label, this literary avocation, this terminological assignation, this new, this fresh and personal poetic nomenclature. I had contributed to my society in a vital way as a teacher for over 30 years. My emotions and perceptions had gone through at least fifteen years(1992-2007) of an exceptional pitch of intensity; an impetuous flow of language had been released, a flow which showed no signs of letting up.-Ron Price with thanks to Max Hayward, "Introduction, " *A Captive of Time: My Years With Pasternak*, Olga Ivinskaya, Fontana Books,1978.

It was not a revolution and a love affair
that brought on this impetuous flow;
I'm not sure I will ever know for sure
but it was another type of love affair
that had slowly ripened over decades,
so unobtrusively amidst the ragged bone
and choulder shops, the fatigue, the talking-
the endless talking not to mention listening—
surely one of life's most demanding tasks
after fifty years(1949-1999) of being subjected
to an excess of speech and its deadly poisons.

I, too, Boris, had my melancholy and depressions,
so low I fell in love with thanatos, easeful death,
but, as you said, there would appear once more
"things that have long lain dormant: noble, creative
and great things...a time of final accounting."
And, Boris, it has appeared and I think of you.¹

¹ Boris Pasternak, Front Page in Olga Ivinskaya, op.cit. Pasternak told his readers to think of him after he has passed on, when life would be richer and more fruitful than ever before, at a time of a great accounting.

George Town Tasmania
27/7/07

Ron Price

UNTOUCHED: A NEW MUSIC

Electronically-produced music was first experimented with during the 1870s when Bahá'u'lláh was in the prison in Akka. One of the earliest fully electronic musical instruments was invented in 1919 by Russian Leon Theremin in the same year as the unveiling of the Tablets of the Divine Plan. But it was not until the early years of the Ten Year Crusade (1953-1963) that the first synthesizer was built at RCA in the USA.; and in the first years of the Nine Year Plan (1964-1973) that the first record based only on synthesizer-produced music was released: Switched On Bach in 1968. The story of synthetic, electronic, music, theremins and synthesizers, in the forty years since the Beach Boys tried to get the use of electronic technology in the production of their 1966 song Good Vibrations is full of the names of the inventors and developers of aspects of electronic technology like Robert Moog and the names of musical artists who used this musical technology. This forty year history is also filled with the names of films and TV shows where electronically produced music provided background sounds.-Ron Price, "Internet Sites on the Synthesizer" and "Into the Music," ABC Radio National, May 10th 2006, 5: 00 p.m.

Those forty years have been busy ones since I left home in '66 and the Beach Boys began churning out songs.

All this synthetic, electronic music has been on the edge of my life, quite peripheral to the main flow of what it has all been about from '66 to '06 in this new century.

But that Plan, initiated away back in 1919, has been at the centre of it all, it's a symbol of another synthesis much more peripheral to the world's agenda. A new world that is played in by a few and not touched by the many, just like that synthesizer-theremin, an instrument which produces music without being touched.

The principle of heterodyning oscillators, allows a theremin to generate an audio signal and the capacitance of the human body affects these signals too. The complexity of teaching in this Plan is also as mysterious and as difficult to understand and implement but, however difficult, a new music is being produced in the background of this new age; though we may at first be unaware of its affect

yet the virtue of the grace vouch-
safed unto us will sooner or later
exercise its influence on our souls¹.

1 Bahá'u'lláh, Bahá'í Prayers.

Ron Price
May 15th 2006

Ron Price