

Poetry Series

Shaun McGurgan
- poems -

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Shaun McGurgan(Melbourne Australia)

To me writing is like cooking. Add a spice, taste, look, smell. Change the texture and the layers. The good thing about writing is that you can take words or phrases out of your pot, re-use them or change them and put them back.

I write for relaxation and reflection. I write best when I am in a strange place or on a journey. I like to write when I am in my back yard.

I draw inspiration from many sources. My colleagues at work, local soccer games, people in transit, bars that sort of thing.

I was a teacher at Silkwood School in the Gold Coast Hinterland and a teacher at Green School Bali.

I have been an Australian Rules Footballer, a travelling bush conservationist, a coca-cola sales rep., a council garden worker, a uni. student, a traveller and a drinker of life's spirits.

I can speak Indonesian.

Now family man with mortgage, lovely partner Lianne and two girls Mythra and Jaiah.

I currently live in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia

21st September 2000

The disk
The cold room
The nasty stare
All permutations of the
 next phase
The next feeling
The lovely lonely wandering
The stare of fable
Long ago rejoined
 recast in a mist
 a mission
All the wonder
and happiness
 cast upon me
Though I was not willing
 to grasp
Or able to immediately
 accept
 fine & good moments in
 my life.

Shaun McGurgan

A Kind Teacher

All rhyme and nonsense
carrying on
with smiles and spelling askew
grammar invented anew

One child in love with words
another quietly spoken
softly cranes his lips
they're curved with waxen lyric

Inviting a gentle struggle

Inviting a simple mimic
of images put down
informing strokes
guided by subtle

Kindness

Shaun McGurgan

A Rainbow

Standing on the
edge

of a precipice

I saw you.....

With open wings,

and a pause.....

Now and then wondering

Where is my rainbow?

You fall,

you gently glide

You weave the arc of seven

colours

by your side.

Shaun McGurgan

A Simple Chance To Breathe

A deep breath in
 a years worth
punctuated by brief
 far too brief
 inadequate out breaths
Has been relieved
by a four week outward surge
The tied is in recede
The worm has turned
 as it always does
And happiness has returned
 as if by stealth
To rule my heart again

Shaun McGurgan

Allowing Joy

The spiritless metronome
laid its heavy syllables
on the contours of my life

Frost veined and muddy on fertile loam
To pause after a long struggle
gulping for fly blown air

Instead I lie in trembling grass
And allow the sunshine to scythe bitterness
and unsheathe joy

Shaun McGurgan

Appear

When you first appeared
 over my crumpled life
at first I understood
 only the poverty of what I have.

Shaun McGurgan

At The Start Of A Relationship

I'm wondering about unkempt
- disused & poorly maintained
feelings that are slowly being
bourn out again.

Reborn - a birth of sorts
a care
and not care
of care worn thoughts
Daring to be with another
this firm unavoidable task.

And days of uncertainty
are also reborn
with a happiness
which comes from exploring
the unfamiliar.

Yet these tides are not unknown.....
not entirely.

Shaun McGurgan

Believe

The people who
make believe
make us believe
the world
is not lost
and have found
an answer
in the dark recesses
of the darkest corner
of the soul.
A story can go
either way
until
tumbling waves and
grumbling noises
from an imaginary place
are whisked away
in a flash
taking with them
precious things.
There are people
who's outward urge
is to express dismay
at the loss
of all good things
and others
who would
make us believe
they make believe
that the word
was not lost
and the answer
is always
in front of you
when you need it most

Shaun McGurgan

Bitter Journey

Tired, the weary traveller trudges on
just a little further now
a whole life time's wayward journey
t'ward a fitful night's sleep.

Daydreams the distance away
each hour is the same
as weary limbs press on
destination closes in.

Remember the time when spirit ledger balanced
and food was the fantasy of forgotten dreams
now only the road
a wound that never heals.

Outwardly vivid colours appear as a procession
a lifetime of the birth/dream/death/dream/birth cycle
the waking hours doze and drift
every one is time closer to eternity.

Shaun McGurgan

Cup Of Love

Pouring my memories
into a cup of love
Trying to fill it up
when out and out
The memories overflow

Shaun McGurgan

Dream

In this dark carnival of dreams
I heard what you didn't say
and felt what you didn't mean
I know the sky is my temple
But I still feel wet in the rain

Shaun McGurgan

Echo

I am listening for an echo
to set my heart free
listening for an echo
to pulse from you
and to me.

In the ever liquid ebb of life
perhaps, perchance
the cup is empty now
though I'm listening.....
just in case.

Shaun McGurgan

Forsake

And I shall not forsake strong liquor
and I shall not
shall

The liquor of my hearts content
is enough

The trials of a sad heart are
not made content by strong liquor
but I shall not forsake
you

Shaun McGurgan

Frailties

Feeling just the shadow of a beach
this time once
 or just once before
I'd turn expecting collisions
 and more.
Merging mending unbending
 a consequence of this way and that
pushed and once was pulled
 pulled hard enough and senses appaled
received the here and now.
 Once a talent and time
 came nearer and revealed
ready to receive
 ready to deceive
 had one
 and once revealed
 once or twice concealed
 ungainly
gets in the colourful read of sometimes.

Shaun McGurgan

Gentle

Be gentle
for everyone you meet
is fighting a hard battle.

Shaun McGurgan

Gold Coast

And I find myself in South East Queensland
Where the rivers do not flow.
Where the people flee from their homes.
Where the sunshine is aglow.

The sunlight bleaches you
in its everlasting stream.
An uninviting inhibitor
where paradise is parody
and peace is but a dream..

Shaun McGurgan

Half Hearted Wishes

We kiss in the sea of memory
It's a house and a world away
from the green of the trees
and the brown of the land
belies the hand
curses lost and found
'til at last there's you and me
wishing we'd never met
never took the chance
Whispering our half hearted wishes
to the sea

Shaun McGurgan

I Followed A Piece Of Light And Returned Burned But Unbroken

I stand in the sand
surrounded by time
surrounded by home
and a piece of my mind.

I stand on the soil
that gave em my life
that sustained me and grew me
that carries me still.

I opened my heart
and look to the sea
I dream about the women
who have sustained me.

All shallow and cold
and half filled with doubt
all frosty and tired
once in now turned in to out.

A face in the crowd
a face lost and found
someone who once cared
who is not now around.

Chasing the infinite
finite buried within
open infinity
looking for light.

Sever the ties
binding me down
flying too high
touching the sun.

Return burned
salvation in a matchstick

fire in my pocket
alive to the changes.

Alive to the sound
the beckoning forward
the siren's call
that sustains me still.

Shaun McGurgan

I Step Sideways

I said things had to change
but the weight of memory kept pulling me back
to faraway grey skies
emancipated
where the river flows
down past coles.

Close your eyes and watch
the white birds fly by
and the smell of going back
made me lose my place
and the fear of going forward
made me step sideways.

Shaun McGurgan

Indonesia

Come to Java

See Borobudur

Enjoy the hospitality

See amazing nature

Drink coffee from the home of coffee

Learn Bahasa Indonesia

Ride becak and andong

See Sultan's Palace

Buy batik

Be in a city that has 'call to prayer'

Experience traffic

Walk Malioboro

Just don't ask for bacon

Shaun McGurgan

Infinity

Immense

in whatever is large is
reflected in the small
in whatever is small is
reflected in the large

The more we see
the less we understand
Those things are there
like eternal life

In a star is me
in me is a star
I am a piece of the greater
as the greater is a piece of me

Eternally grateful

Shaun McGurgan

Leave

People come & go
and so do I.

The last people in the world
you would expect to leave
are leaving by and by.

Shaun McGurgan

Little To See And Less To Do

The first thing I notice...

It's not the blue sky and the wispy clouds

It's not the sound of the railway

It's not people chatting and childrens voices; sports callers

It's not suburbia creeping up the hills

It's not the mansion at the top

It's not the light towers, power poles and gum trees

It's not the dry dusty ground

It's not the long morning dappled shadows, dancing like a lover's caress languidly
on the long grass

It's not the wind blowing dirt into my eyes, the pages of my book, the smell of
children's sport

It's not the cold air, the smell of burning cigarettes

It's not my country, love in bright landscapes

Shaun McGurgan

Lost And Found

I lost everything that I never had.
I even lost the gentle breeze
 that set me free.
That helped attach my wings.
That helped turn on the light.
That sent me to you.
Finding you made it all worthwhile.

Shaun McGurgan

Love

I would walk through the fires for thee
garments rent and eyes behold
flesh of my flesh
light of life

Love lost now found
life's melodious secret sound
fresh flash from underground
Once confused now understood
the tasks and trials were all worthwhile
for one simple glimpse of your smile

Though now glimpsed
I must return
to drink from that sacred well
one takes for granted
then forgotten
now remembered
the pain
and joy
of love.

Shaun McGurgan

Loves Embraces

Strangers faces
far out places
dreams that open wide.

Loves embraces
brief placate us
breadth and shallow tide.

Loves enhance
no long romance
dragged along by the divide.

Shaun McGurgan

Magic Words

Those magic words were just spoken to me
Words that bring me to my knees
With a slight Jogjakartan accent
The refined nature of the Javan people
There is a knowing here
When words can lift up one's heart
Only when someone speaks to me this way
Is my faith in humanity consolidated
These words are like choirs of angels
Never were more joyous things said
'Would you like a free coffee sir? '

Shaun McGurgan

Memories

Where are the new memories

I am building up.

From which in my old age

I may sup?

Shaun McGurgan

Nerang

Wandering aimlessly through
 Nerang
 the poets lament
 stirred
 not by previous admissions
 or by secret stares
but the calamity of lameness
 quickens a fertile mind.

Shaun McGurgan

Nest

Off course from the frail music
sought by words
And the path that almost always claims the journey.

In pursuit of a more oblique rhythm
creating mostly its own geography.

The mind is an old crow
who knows only to gather dead twigs
then take them back to the vacancy
between the branches of the parent tree
and entwine them around the emptiness
with silence and unfailing patience
until what was fallen, withered an lost
is now set to fill with dreams
as a nest.

Shaun McGurgan

Night - Haiku

In all directions
Night speaks in the darkest tones
 The little boy hides

Shaun McGurgan

Ode To The Magnificent

A loyal and true
party
Couldn't help
but to be seen
walking alongside
of a beaten down
old house
containing
the soul
And
giving nothing meaning
forced a smile
then an uncontrolled chuckle
about this chance meeting
For the first time
in a while
a body was
given to contemplating
meaning
The answer
we all know
was very close
But most couldn't
see

Shaun McGurgan

Peace

The sea is at peace

The wind is at peace

But the pain in my heart
is never at peace.

Shaun McGurgan

Pregnancy

Oh to see your abundant

belly

Rounded and so full of life

The push and pull

of liquid and life

More evident

Than the swell and rise

of times and tides

Which take us away

three times

and leave us

knocking on the door

looking in.....

waiting.....

Shaun McGurgan

Rainbows

Whenever I see you
 my heart sings
 rainbows

Shaun McGurgan

Rare

Weekends away become rarer
When parenthood arrives
You have to steal your isolation
As you steel your heart

Shaun McGurgan

Ready

I turn
 expecting collisions
 of sorts
certain collusions
 merging
an unending sequence of
 this way and that
pushed
but not nearly pulled hard enough
appalled senses open now
ready to receive
What does ready mean?

Ready to receive
 Ready to deceive
 Ready to die
Ready to take off into
the cloudy grey sky.

Ready to know when I was
wrong
with my feigned affection.

Shaun McGurgan

Relaxed Insecurity

Dipping toes into the dam
dipping toes into the dam
dipping toes into the dam
dipping toes into the dam
An exhibition in finality
A wide world
A faulty scam
poor treatment of a close relative
not emotionally
more like a lapsed friend really
and heaven only knows the truth
when such interactions come to head.

Worlds and words interact, coalesce
coincide.
Interactions fade to blue
or some other shade of sky.
And faith in what is thought
to be real can be a dodgy thing.
Yet we are all guilty of it
once in a while.

I tried to move on
but the divide followed
oh, how it flowed
like a scythe through a forest
of interlocking witchery
and things
of words woven twisted and tied
of memories bound tightly to my side.

Bound in knots that scattered seed
of a wholesome flavour
tasted by many beings
that gave off pleasant twangs and
let us sweep over our soul,
brush it up like new.
As shiny as a lamp-post
covered in Sandringham dew.

A force that twisted raindrops
which settled on my wings
at the time I was close to take off,
when I was learning secret things.

I was testing waters
still but very deep
where once I swam in currents
that wouldn't let me sleep
and took me through to oceans
over waterfall and shale
which sometimes carried me
with grace
and sometimes ripped my skin
right down to its very soul.
So my courage would fail.

In the oceans I swam for miles
in all directions free.
A three dimension exploration
all the offerings of a world
explored by all and none.

But in a while it's all just
flopping, drifting, turning
under clouded illusions that you
push your own steam
while really being forced by
destiny.

Shaun McGurgan

Rest

Time to belong
Time to be apart
Time to relax
Time to sit and watch
 the sky
 to sit in a park
 all day long
and see the world go
 by.
At least a little part of it.
The tiny bit behind my house
 where there's a creek
 a hall
 a bocce court
and a stroll on the grass is fraught
with bindis and barkers eggs.
To sit or lie and take
 it all in
 not once or twice
 but all day long
knowing that tomorrow
 could be the same.

Shaun McGurgan

Running

Running from darkening clouds
I sense your presence
Then I run even faster.

Shaun McGurgan

Satiation

Drinking my life away
the cup overflows
but does not
 satisfy.

Shaun McGurgan

School Children At Play

A flock of wrens,
happy,
tails to the wind

Shaun McGurgan

Shepparton

Well when I came back from New South Wales
To settle for a while, to sit and multiply
With a hard and heave heart I said,
'I'm not long in this climb'

For my spirit lurked in Terrigal
That jewel of the sea
And in the forest of the hinterland
Is where I'd rather be.

The time past slow in Shepparton
And when the Autumn came
My eyes they filled with tears
As the frost put out my flame.

I'd walk cold streets at midnight
Past paddocks and moon lit lanes
Cast inward to sunnier times
Knowing they 'd never be the same.

Yet slow times lead to deep friendships
Something I didn't know
'Cos in the paddocks and the fields
Seeds of happiness I'd sown.

And two long years became a whisper
The sands of time blow on
Casting love, joy and happiness
Some tears and song.

Now again it's time to say goodbye
To journey far from here
And though I leave Katandra's fields
My heart is forever near.

For time I'd left in that little place
Feels like a river flow
I'll not return to quench this thirst
But part of me will never go.

Shaun McGurgan

Shhhhhh...

Exhausted by my tounge, prose with excuses (excesses)
Staggering in the pattern of rain
and
smoke encrypted whispers

Shaun McGurgan

Sigh

There I was
searching for something salty
a whim
while the world turned
open eyed
eyes open wide
and wider still my search.

It went
side to side
and flourished
once begotten
outside times a drifting
tide.

Once was a notion of sentimental sorrows
craven unbent and
sighed.

Shaun McGurgan

Silent Grammar

Your choice of pronoun warmed my heart

Shaun McGurgan

Soar

Soar angelically
glide through oceans and waves
quick as a flame
returning briefly to earth
feeding time
a time of rest
of knowledge learned
becoming ourselves
our soul evolved
preparing to soar

Shaun McGurgan

Soft Heart

Yesterday the night sky detached itself
and wrapped itself around my heart

To soften missing you

Shaun McGurgan

Solitude

An ocean's ebb and flow
bear a distinct impression
reflection
of life.

Lives and loves
Departures and returns
As the search for perfection
continues,
the several seas breath sustain my journey.

Pleasure is easy to obtain
only to pause for a while is enough
to rekindle forgotten emotions
that special purity
spark, sparkle
within us all
and especially strong
during moments of solitude.

Be they at Nannup or Circular Quay.

Shaun McGurgan

Something I Found On A Beach

Washed up on a lonely beach
Craggy black brown
From greenery - movement
Layered infinitely slow
Home to beetle ant butterfly
A skeleton of former self
Twisted; not quite right
Supporting within leathery crag
A remnant of the cradle of gold
The light
Burning bravely bright
Cast and glow shadow and sight
Warmth reflecting inside
Omniscant eye

Shaun McGurgan

Stealing My Solitude

Now and then
too many times now
in coffee houses
car parks
and rarely in bars
on longish walks
at practise
stealing my solitude

Shaun McGurgan

Summer

The last warmth
of the summer day
whips our faces
competing with the
sea spray

Shaun McGurgan

Summer 2

The last lingering touch
of summer's season ebb
whisps gently over our faces
competing with gossamar
spray of ocean

Shaun McGurgan

Sunburn On Course

Sunburnt stare
 whispering I care
whispering a daydream
 to a once forgotton
 twice remembered
outward looking stare.
My dreams are all like clay now
 ready to be baked
ready for the glaze
 which takes imagination away
and sets my soul on course.

Shaun McGurgan

Sunday Afternoon

I am marvelling at my own brilliance
 polo fungi melting in my mouth,
as dreams of sleepy days
and books well read rock on.

It's a dream now
those sleepy days
and well read books
a thing of the past.

Who was to think that in those times
I knew they'd never last.

But as I sit and
contemplate,
Do I get another beer?
The answer 'Yes'
comes streaming to my ear.
I'm glad I've got one near.

Shaun McGurgan

Sundays

Who'd have thought it would be
me
sitting by the river
peacefully reading a book
eating silences
listening to Sundays
drifting idly by

Shaun McGurgan

The Breakup

Life

Once it had been better
Even after that it had been
tolerable.

Now the little flower
has shrivelled up.
The sense of impermanence
overwhelming.

All pleasure
ended in a breath.

Shaun McGurgan

The Fishers

The fishers sat on
 the old jetty wall
A cynical smile
 sinister, snide
The wondrous delight
 of the old fishy tale
Now once again
 stinky and swale
A curse or delight
 to share separate
Always tonight
 always to fail
And recognition
 once partition
Now once more what it was
 is and can be.

Shaun McGurgan

The Mind's Travel

I waste those wiles
and endless long weekends
on silly dreams of youth
and counterlevered smiles.
As several floating whispers
pass me
gently
by.

Once a source of inspiration
now an endless stroll
through muddy banks
and knotted roads
filled with tiny holes.

(those holes they become ridges
which burden small places in my heart
and tell of the small aches
that I put there myself)

(that scratch the shiny surfaces on my heart
which I take such great care polishing
lest someone see within)

(which scratch and my poc-mark my feet
and make them lumpy.
Like my poc-marked soul.)

Shaun McGurgan

The Oak Of My Soul

I still feel wet from the rain
That swept away my dreams

No amount of Balinese sunshine
Can dry the dampness on my soul

I still feel wet from the rain
That germinated my dreams

No amount of Balinese sunshine
Can scorch the shoot

Which will become the oak of my soul

Shaun McGurgan

The Ocean

Sometimes you might find a message
or a note in a book.

There's always a story
either way.

Is it our turn to question or wonder?

To question with curious smiles.

To rail against the incoming tide

or work

(in a fashion)

with the waves.

The ocean throws up so much that

is unpredictable

and takes us places

not to be expected.

Whether on the crest

or down below.

Shaun McGurgan

The Return

There was a time once long
ago, when....

the world she seemed so wide
and staggered waters
 still as ice
 deep as oceans
taught me how to fly.

So fly I did
was a long time gone
before I changed my mind.

Freedom is not out there
in the ocean or the sky.....
it's in the deep blue waters
or deeper craters
 deep.

Made by countless angels
while we wake and sleep.

Old earth she turns and glides
 alone in space
 alone.

A fortuitous incidental
 or a Kabbalistic lie.

The world she turns and glides
 like it's nothing really new.
Though space is not quite what it seems
(it might be stuck with glue) .

It harbours many secrets
contained within ourselves
isn't it a perplexing paradox
that for freedom we need
 walls
to get flights we need the depths
to fly we need to dive (into the deep)
and for flight we need

deep blue seas.

Shaun McGurgan

The Tour

I visited evil the other day,
 I didn't even consider that
 there might be a reason.
On visiting I paid a high price;
immeasurable.
That price was insignificant to
 the value of what I learnt.
The second lesson is that
 I would pay the same
 price again for the lesson.
What did I learn?
What I don't want to be.

Shaun McGurgan

Time

All these minutes.....
 how did we make them ours
 or sever them
into seprate incidents
 of fear?

Shaun McGurgan

Transform Me

I'm fascinated b the way the heart changes when it's put into a song
I'm interested in the essence of that change
As one would compare a landscape when it's transferred into a painting
I imagine every moment living in history the moment after it's born
To while away and enshrine imagination into story
I want to know what separates this moment from the one
which is drawing its first breath
To understand the essence of transformation

Shaun McGurgan

Waking

Nothing can mediate that goodbye to sleep
like waking next to you

Shaun McGurgan

Waking Freedom

'Come play'

'You can be the horse'

He offered his hand

She offered her heart

At thirteen what choice did she have?

No flowers grow in untilled soil

Now marigolds wave with gay abandon

He twitched, passionless and apelike

Two people's ideas of freedom

One leapt

The other was dragged

Shaun McGurgan

Wasn'T You

I held her in my
arms
but it wasn't you.

Shaun McGurgan

Weed

Officer Officer

I protest

That Weed in the Bag

I did not

Molest!

Shaun McGurgan

When The Sun Comes Up

When the sun comes up
I stopped to dream
and my consciousness
dreamed with me
of ragged cheeks
and softly spoken
half truths
which barely ring
a chord.

But once or twice
I was taken apart and released
to dream
 to dare
 to do
to touch that part of myself
which needs a silent caress.

To soft to touch and
hollowed out
like an old fashioned ball
of string.
To gaily tie and wait
a while
and search for precious things.

Precious things we
barely see
 but know are always
there
beneath the remains
of satin stains
and burgeoning relief.

I know they're there
they have to be
beneath the old gum tree.
In that secret unbeknownen
place

shared by you and me.

We'll take us there and wait
awhile
while what is precious
remains
that thing between us
seldom seen us and
our saligacious smile.

Shaun McGurgan

Whisper Freedom

I whisper a rainbow
Yet sing the colours
I whisper a cloud
Yet sing the rain
I whisper the sky
Yet sing the blue
I whisper emotion
Yet sing joy
I whisper life
Yet sing love
I whisper a house
Yet sing home
I whisper a bee
Yet sing the hive
I whisper the sun
Yet sing light
I whisper the moon
Yet sing peace
I whisper the ocean
Yet sing the waves
I whisper a forest
Yet sing the trees
I whisper a mountain
Yet sing a river
I whisper grief
Yet sing tears
I whisper destination
Yet sing the journey
I whisper flight
Yet sing soar
I whisper dream
Yet sing action
I whisper freedom.....

Shaun McGurgan

Winter In South East Queensland

It's the deception of the
winter sun that gets me
every time.

Especially in S.E.Q.

A memory of summers past
tired eyes lament the loss
as another death creeps up.

Shaun McGurgan

Word Of Man/Word Of God

Word of Man

'Please see fit to deliver my dying child the gift of life so that I may once more fully embrace the spirit that I so love'

Word of God

'Please see fit to release this spirit that I so love and deliver this soul to my breast so that I may once more embrace this child that I so love'

Shaun McGurgan

Worry

Worrying wont stop
the river.

Shaun McGurgan

Your Embrace

Ten pages on my phone bill
Nine nails in my front door
Eight cracks in the ceiling
Seven times I regret
 seeing you no more
Six broken bottles
Five moths on my windows
Four times the wind bangs
 the fly screen
Three rose petals
Two cappuccinos
One memory of your embrace
No time to remember

Shaun McGurgan