

Poetry Series

**Steven Cooke**  
**- poems -**

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# Steven Cooke(01-04-1958)

## Profile

Coming from an inner city estate in Sheffield I never went to school as I was always a bit of a rebel. It wasn't until I was 36 years that I accidentally went into education. I was lucky enough to have a mentor called Malcolm Simms who channelled my rebellious nature, and taught me to write at an academic level. This culminated in me graduating from Sheffield Hallam University with a degree. It was here that I first picked up my inspiration for poetry, from the War poets. In particular Siegfried Sassoon. His description of the First World War really shows the power of the pen. His works always haunted me and it wasn't until I was in my 50s that I decided to have a go at writing meaningful poetry. My work focuses on short story poems depicting subjects such as forgotten history, War, love, and the human condition. I have a particular fascination with World War one. Being published gives me a chance to leave something for my grandson to remember me by.

# A Flawed Prophet

I am a successful surgeon  
but In reality I am a failure.  
For I pay for the company of life.  
I pay to be human,  
pay for the understanding  
that my patients receive for free.

I am the geek in the corner  
the wall paper that eyes don't see.  
My bond is with God  
for he shows me his creation  
and I must correct his mistakes.

Vanity is to say such things  
but the sick will come to my door.  
They gamble that I could be a saviour  
for fear is anointed by hope.

The good and the bad  
will sell their convictions.  
My hand can cheat  
the cards which have been dealt,  
and my face belongs to  
this poker game,  
we call life.

I am the fall guy too  
who will walk down the corridor to hopeful eyes.  
But remember where there is God  
the Devil exists too  
and you will judge me.

For I must bare my soul  
in the darkness of defeat  
that tells your relatives that I lost.

I failed to grab the hand of life  
which held the royal flush  
that no player can defeat,

and I will feel your doubts  
that perhaps I am not  
the perfect prophet you thought me to be.

In truth I am a glorified mechanic.  
I am the surgeon that repairs your vices,  
I am the bloody hands that remove your pain.  
I can make you beautiful  
I can change your heart,  
though I need the sacrifice of the departed to help.

And when age threatens your life  
money will save the chosen few,  
In the illusion of immortality.  
Though time will always be the clown  
that will laugh at you in the mirror.

I am a tinker of time  
who fears the night.  
I shake hands with the dead,  
receive tributes from the living  
and somewhere in between I see the dawn.

Sanity is a lonely place for me.  
My indiscretion is grateful for her apartment  
for I need her beauty to take away today  
and a shower to wash away mankind.

She removes my pain with love  
so I can feel human from this butchers table.  
Sodom and Gomorra's a small price to pay  
for my patients to see  
the sun for one more day.

God never gave me good looks  
but he gave me a steady hand.  
A hand that can caress your heart  
for I am a maverick that puzzles him.

In truth I could be a monster,  
I will not cry when you die.  
Blood is just another day,

though I hate to lose  
as all gamblers will tell you.

But who amongst you would care  
about a stranger who gives you life.  
For in truth even the Devil  
would make me a hero,  
as long as I save a sinners life.

Steven Cooke

# A Northern Night Out

A voice in the mirror,  
God your good looking  
The gladiators chin  
And the eyes of Perseus  
Captured in the energy of youth  
This night belongs to him

But love has many players  
Its Intoxication is addictive  
Saturday night on the town  
Wildlife on display

From the liar bird to the labra doodle,  
To the lion and the jackals  
Each eyeing the herds of Wilder beasts,

Displaying their courtship rituals  
Dancing round the sacred handbags.  
Ready to stampede at  
The sound of last orders please

Glances across the dance floor  
The weak and easy, singled out  
The outcome uncertain, the winner  
Destined for passion, or maybe more

The loser, to sit alone on the bus home,  
That miserable face in the window  
That passes by as you cross the road.  
Consolation found in a cold kebab  
And just one last thought,  
As you burp, before that lager sleep  
Mirror, mirror on the wall  
You tell lies.

Steven Cooke

# A Sniper'sview Of The Great War

Fly on hand  
born of comrade's corpse,  
the only memory of what has gone before.

The fleas that hide,  
slowly drinking my soul,  
a world where freedom lies  
snug in the recess of my body,  
a giving god to them.

And as I curse the itch with embers burn  
I peer through the sight once more  
waiting for my foe.  
For country has made an avenging god

To see the eyes before they close,  
knowing that darkness has come.  
This tribute of victory  
Is mine alone to dream

Though sleep is my victim's vengeance,  
a place where haunting faces  
with broken skulls and withered lips  
All gather to greet me.

For tomorrow the dream will begin again,  
and their words will grow louder  
chuckled by feeding rats  
which draws the attention of another sight?  
for my foe seeks the eye of me.  
This harvest is a lousy feast.

Soldiers in limpet ground  
shooting at images of man  
For reality would tremble the hand  
And a miss, is to know the man  
In the mist of this no man's land

And what of god

The day is near when we will lower our heads  
For to look would be obscene  
We criminals of heaven, we disciples of hell.  
But no matter,  
Our papers are a blessed pass  
For king and country comes first

The victors will judge  
Hero or assassin,  
The victims will argue in heaven  
And god will know the failures of man.

Forgiveness was not mine to give  
To follow orders, history will condemn  
But the last word is mine  
And Adam in his sin will answer to me  
A soldier of this Great War.

Steven Cooke



# A Snowflake Passed This Way

Fragile is the mind  
That cannot see a friend  
Fragile too is the snowflake  
Seeking sanctuary on my window sill  
Both are anonymous to the world

The dreamers will see many snow flakes  
Whose beauty we can only imitate  
Within this gift, there is a place  
That reminds us of the summer days to come  
A garden for the soul  
Where Friends are bees  
That pollinates the spirit with love

For you too are part of a fragile world  
Seeking life's journey  
A visitor within a snowflake  
Beautiful and Unique  
Born to melt away  
In the heat of time

For it is an honour to know a life that others did not  
To be chosen by this snowflake on my window sill  
A memory for my garden to keep  
And perhaps that is enough for anyone's existence

Steven Cooke

# A Soldiers Tale

The trembled hand  
the twitching face.  
A desperate draw on cigarette  
looking for courage in a cordite breath.

Huddled in mud protected by  
slime filled walls,  
these walls of Jericho shake  
crumbling into my fear.

My tomb beckons another inspection.  
Buried alive under corrupted soil,  
a land lords greeting from the  
putrid remains of the tenants before.  
Did Mother give birth to me for this?

The screams of the howitzer,  
Marching in footsteps, stamping it's wrath,  
for fear of the dead rising.  
And we who are alive, that dare to look  
will see the face of death that hides within it's light.

A face I would gladly see,  
if bargain I could contemplate  
in exchange for silence,  
and the solitude of darkness.  
Where fear cannot go,  
where the cold become's a welcome blanket  
for I wish this suffering to end

To hear the guns, all seeking me  
to shred my guts with shrapnel scythe  
and amputations rip.  
To die with blood soaked ears  
punctured into silence for man's aggression.

This man placed here by another's ambition  
to pay the price for no man's land,  
The only thing that is really free,

for dead men will not stop you  
from taking a soldier's walk.

Another draw on my cigarette,  
and a prayer from my anonymous conscience,  
trembles upon humanities lips.  
"Gives us this day our daily bread  
Though I do not forgive them  
For thine is the Kingdom  
And men will destroy thy glory  
Forever and ever  
Amen."

Steven Cooke

# A Tree Grows In Avignon

Planted by a Soldiers hand,  
She slept, while Europe blazed.  
Bore silence through winters cull,  
Captured in darkness, there to laze  
Amongst the ruins of Avignon

Freed by the spring,  
Guarded by the sun  
Born in thunders drench  
A seedling of hope for Avignon  
Gave witness to unjust death,  
Found her strength in summer's breath.  
Drank the blood of murders shame,  
Grew fertile, her innocence to bear  
Seduced by the bees of Avignon

Gave birth, to temptation  
Casting forth her gift,  
Amongst the ruin,  
While Children played, in her boughs.  
A new beginning, the bad forgotten  
Healing the scars of Avignon

Taken confession, the old to cleanse,  
Listened to love,  
Their dreams to mend  
Sheltered the lost, from Natures eye  
Watched children grow,  
And the old men die,  
For she is the spirit of Avignon

Planted by a soldiers hand,  
When dark clouds gathered  
A place of love, redemption tethered  
To forget the war  
And find his wife  
A tree of Life for Avignon

Time moves on.  
The soul returns,  
And still she grows.  
Anonymous to a stranger's eye,  
A cathedral of hope, a grannies smile  
A tree of home  
A tree that set us free,  
That tree that saved my Avignon.

Steven Cooke

# A Whiskey Love

Through a glass of Whiskey I found her.  
Her eyes, Flaming Blue, hiding a glance of Heaven  
Her hair golden like the reflection of an English buttercup,  
Open to the flirtations of the sun.

Her lips soft, pink,  
Like the dawn over a distant tulip field,  
With a promise to reveal, even more,  
Moist, sweet, the taste of a woman

Her neck, slim, elegant, with a hint of summer,  
Jeweled with faint dew drops from the evenings heat  
Her shoulders, graceful, a ballerinas calling  
Perfectly formed, a place for heroes,  
To rest their head

Her arms slender, delicate, with a promise of an angels embrace  
An embrace that could wash away, all your sins  
Her dress clinging to her body, like the lilies in a pond,  
Hiding the secrets below

Her wrist adorned with a single pearl,  
But it is she who is more precious  
No mortal offering could eclipse her.  
Her hands soft, with a touch,  
That I would gladly die for.

No ring, dare I wish?  
Her legs, long, perfectly formed,  
Made to move, like a gentle summer wind,  
Caressing the flowers of some meadow,  
In a faraway dream. Breathtaking.

When she walked the whole world stood still  
She glanced, our eyes met  
My soul was stolen,  
Engulfed in flames of desire  
My heart penetrated, laid bare with a love so rare,  
My mind lost in sweet expectation.

A feeling beyond, any poets gaze

She smiled, my body quivered  
For this moment, I would gladly lead the forlorn hope.  
These seconds, I remember them so well.  
I was overwhelmed by the closeness of her spirit,  
Her presence commanding an invisible audience,  
Of stolen glances, a vision of woman,  
Of such form, such desire, such love.

Then like a gentle whisper, her body, brushed against mine  
Leaving the air perfumed  
Like orchids being carried by a holy dove.  
Then my heart shattered, strewn across the floor,  
Like yesterday's confetti.  
For the smile, was for someone else.

Steven Cooke

# A Wishing Well Love

I sit here all alone  
The snow melting on my face,  
A falling leaf sheds a memory,  
Of my first love

It was here, that barmy night  
She tripped in fun, amongst the leaves.  
She breathed a smile,  
Took my hand,  
And softly seduced me with a kiss  
A secret wish comes true.

We made love that summer evening,  
By the river, under the willow  
.Watched by a lover's moon,  
Hidden from View

Stared at the stars with our wishing well,  
We dreamed of love and silly things,  
Two hearts, inhibition to the wind,  
Our souls locked in nature's song.

But Young Love is a precious thing,  
And winters do blow cold.  
And in the fading light  
She said goodbye.

A last glance, a precocious smile,  
And the last moon dance was over  
So here I sit with my wishing well  
Full of broken dreams,

Yet still, I see embers of a girl  
Who shared love, under the willow  
Gave hope to my dreams,  
Touched my heart,  
And taught me well about  
The wishing well



No tears now, there are dreams to make.  
For That wish has flown away  
To find another love  
To breathe another wish  
Into another's heart.  
To unlock more dreams  
For her wishing well to pour

But our union was fruitful  
For my wishing well is full  
And dreams I can now give  
For I seek my real love,  
Where ever she may be.  
Could it be you?

Steven Cooke

# After The Battle Ww1

I felt his breath leave the battle field  
as bayonet pierced his heart.  
The surprise of death lay in his eyes  
his blood poured warmth upon my hands,  
anointing my soul with his.

His flow of life will find the earth  
to merge with victims past  
and another ghost will follow me,  
shouting for my demise.

This lowly man who took the shilling  
as Judas took his thirty,  
now looks across this no man's land  
for this corruption belongs to me.

Beneath this mud  
lies the dreams of men  
the commandments of life,  
now lost within these decaying bones  
for this war has silenced them.

And up above heaven receives  
the righteous who take their place,  
but the blood of my victims  
are now a moat  
and I would surely drown.  
The dreams I have taken  
will guard the gates  
while angels turn their back to me.

I am the soldier who orchestrates the kill  
my sins can wait in heaven.  
The Holy Ghost can watch his time  
for I am Lord this day.

It takes a soldier to humble the gods  
for their power lies with me  
a solitary man who has done his duty.

So God, send your laurels to me.

I am one of millions  
Destined to be forgotten  
But men were born with tears  
our tears will match  
any storm that you can send  
For we are the battle  
and death is our destiny

We who feed this moat of blood  
now fear the morning mist rise?  
For this grey belongs to dead men's dreams,  
their sweet stench a reminder  
of what's to come.  
For tomorrow, I will be one of them.

Bury me deep  
God must not find me  
Anonymity will be my peace  
Only Mother,  
will remember me.

Steven Cooke

# An English Life

It is midnight the Milk train pulls into darnall station  
No ordinary passengers here  
Steelworkers with their families  
Loaded with fishing tackle, sandwiches and maggots  
The Fossdyke in Lincolnshire, their destination  
The fare Half a crown for happiness

The long walk in the dark  
A stairway to heaven in my memory  
Dawn on the Foss and a cup of tea,  
Fever in the blood, the first eel of the day

Our cane rods lovingly handed down from father to son.  
I remember, Pheasants looking for mates  
Shrieking their songs of love  
Swans begging for scraps  
Their majestic white necks, nodding,  
A greeting into their kingdom

The mist off the water revealing  
Families being together, laughing, enjoying what was free.  
For tomorrow the grime returns.  
A conversation with a stranger then out of a bag,  
The rabbits, sometimes hare, sometimes pheasant.  
Onions and carrots, shortly follow  
The smell, forever linked with summer  
The scent of my childhood

Summers were hotter then  
At times I drank the Foss, for I was nature's child  
Being clean was never a priority,  
Catching fish was, never killed always returned,  
Our Covenant with Nature  
For it is the sport that we honour

On the train back, the talk is fish, who caught the biggest,  
who caught the most  
Sprawled on the seats my five brothers and sister,  
all in a heap fast asleep.

Dreaming of floats going under, catching that elusive Tench,  
Catching more than my brothers  
Small dreams for some, the World to us  
A spawning ground for future World champions.

Dawn Breaks once more  
And a small unassuming man closes the door,  
Off to the Steelworks,  
But he must have been a demon in bed to have fathered seven kids  
My mother wakes us,  
Four in a double bed and one bed wetter  
Off to school, Mother off to clean other peoples windows,  
a pioneer of her time.

Another show and tell day  
The repetitive stories of day trips to Skegness and fun in the Arcade  
Always good for top marks

Me, still in my Wellington boots, in the height of summer  
Explaining my Fosdyke adventure,  
laughs from the teacher, laughs from the kids  
Half a crown cooky on the bank side,  
how boring, an outcast from crowd

Time moves on  
I still go fishing, only this time in competition  
Now the audience hangs on every word I say  
Hoping to discover my secrets,

But my gift came from the dawns of childhood  
Theirs Dawns lost in hot dogs and sea side arcades  
Poor I may have been, my education neglected  
But I have a Doctorate in nature, for I have seen the dawn  
Away from the factories, where the pheasant runs free  
And where the swan reins king, I was part of them.

It was here I learned what family was,  
To share, my last drink of pop with my neighbour,  
A simple life, maybe, but what a life  
For I have seen what Constable painted  
Lived every word that Wordsworth wrote  
Understood the Fragrance of the Flowers

And revelled in the poets dream

I loved every colour, every sound, every scent,  
And every fish I ever caught.

Father and mother are gone now,  
Never complained about their Station in life,  
For they found paradise on the Foss.

They left me the seeds to their heaven  
And the key to my happiness  
A key forged in a man's worth  
To open up my soul to the beauty  
That surrounds us all.

Dawn on the Foss, was my church  
My soul was cleansed here  
And my heart was shaped here  
My memories kept safe here  
And the Foss fever still resides here  
I will die on some bank side, one day  
Rod in hand, and I will be content,  
So tight lines my fellow anglers.

Steven Cooke

# An English Love

Not a rose, or a lily,  
But a buttercup  
Languishing in a field of gold,  
In some English meadow  
Waiting to give herself to him.

That boy with the impetuous smile,  
And the eyes of Perseus  
That hides a spirit, more delicate than any poet's heart,  
But not from her,  
For she is more precious than all the songs of the world,

And I am nothing more than an apple.  
Lost in an orchard of charades and folly.  
She released me, with her lips,  
For she is my English Love

Like the chalk streams of England, giving birth to the May fly  
Every day is our love, our lifetime,  
I celebrate the nightingale, and the wren,  
For their song is our song,  
Our home, this England, this love,

For my English love, my soul quivers,  
Her glances, our hearts together  
Her mouth, her soft voice, her touch,  
Rivaled only by our meadow,  
Where we first kissed,

Where the swallows flew their dance of love,  
And where the pheasants strut in all their majesty  
Where we shared our poem of Love  
Our love, this love, to share a future  
To cherish, our hopes, our joy, our dreams,  
To cherish this Earth, this Life

For this is my dream,  
And I bear my soul to this quest.

I do not care for life's baubles, nor do I crave fame,  
I am not in ore of Beauty, for it is shallow,  
A dream, which will haunt the fickle  
My love is for you.

Kept safe, among the fields of gold,  
Safe in our English meadow,  
Waiting for the sun, to seed our love once more  
For she makes me more,  
Than, I am meant to be  
And my poem of love I give to you.

Steven Cooke



# An Epic Woman

Woman tell me your thoughts  
Shall I be the fool and you the teacher?  
Am I your Adonis, or do you see a toad.  
Chivalry demands that I am your knight without reward,  
For my kin is that of Beowulf and Lancelot,  
Dragon slayers, so command me.

I am woman I need no gesture, for wisdom lies in  
Raindrops hung out to dry on silken cobwebs.  
And in the beggar who is happy, while his king sleeps in fear

For my kin, blessed me with a rare beauty,  
My reflection rivals that of the queen Of Sheba  
My thoughts entwined with the warrior queen Boadicea,  
My tenderness lies in queen Amyitis and her Hanging gardens of Babylon  
My passion is that of Cleopatra for Mark Anthony,  
And my faith equals that of Mary

So beware young Jason, speak from the heart,  
Or you will summon queen Kriemhides in me,

For she killed Attila the Hun for less,  
This Woman will send you to Phineas  
A slave for the harpies, if you lie,

.  
My lady, I have slain the sirens with Lyre music,  
For my love for you was greater,  
Alexander wept when there were no more worlds to conquer  
Achilles killed Hector for Helen,  
And King Leonidas defeated the Persian Empire

One glance from you and their deeds fade into oblivion,  
Medea the Sorcerer, My mother,  
Gave birth to me, for this moment  
Woman take my hand and show me your love

Jason of Argo looks into my eyes  
For I see the soul of a man  
Your shield is heavy to stop you running away.

Your Hero Achilles was slain by a true suitor Paris,  
His love for Helen was true.

You deceive all women.  
Your Friend the Goddess Hera  
Was killed by you,  
It is my enslavement you seek, not love.

I send you to the Eighth Circle for Eternity to be whipped by Devils.  
For the Harpies deserve better.  
And Remember, these words  
The Wisdom of King Arthur,

When a Woman you seek, be honest at all times,  
No matter what the cost.  
And defend her faith, her home,  
And her country with your life  
For these are the Thoughts of all Women.

Steven Cooke

# Another Zulu Dawn

Another Zulu Dawn  
(The Battle for Orgreave Pit)

Cries of Zulu as miners rushed the barricades  
Truncheons banging against riot shields  
A nation at war with itself  
Men of South Yorkshire,  
United in the right to defend their pit

Maggie's the Caesar of capitalism  
Her legionnaires bought with 30 pieces of silver  
Brought from the four corners of this septic isle  
To take away another man's right.  
To destroy his culture, his freedom, his way of life

A democracy of road blocks and strip searches  
England for the few  
While miners live on Pots of rabbit stew  
Demonised by the elected south,  
Propaganda their stew.

Orgreave, now a place of forgotten ghosts  
And Coal the driver of this great economic power  
All gone  
Memories, now overwhelmed by the banks and the city

But power is fleeting, a house of cards  
For they too have felt the wind of recession  
So beware the hurricane, or you too might become extinct  
And what Caesar will save you.

Footnote to this poem

This poem is about the Miners' Strike, June 18th 1984  
As a young lad and bizarre as it may seem I played in a 5 a side football match  
at Orgreave Pit on this day.  
My way was blocked by 1000s of miners and a cordon of Police blocking our  
access with barriers of Riot Shields.  
We made our way to the front and asked a Policeman to let us through. To my  
amazement the cordon opened and we were let through.

Behind us was a surge of Miners all shouting Zulu. It must have been a rallying call, for me it was a magnificent site, a place of community rebellion, a place to be proud of. In response the Police beat their shields with truncheons. The sounds were deafening,  
From the sides mounted police horses galloped into the crowd causing miners to fall and split. This was war without guns. The Miners regrouped and the Cry of Zulu saw miners coming over fields and down the lane charging at the barricade of shields, the sounds of the clashes were unbelievable. At the end of the day I was coming home there were coaches of police holding up their wage packets to the window at the remnants of miners now left, a final insult to the miners. None of this was reported at the time.

What the general public did not know was the government intervention on reporting the struggle. Many incidents were deliberately withheld from the public. Never before in the history of this country have the forces of State been used on its own people to implement a policy by a minority. An account of this battle can be found on Wikipedia. In light of recent press spying and phone tapping, one can see that the seeds of such practices were sewn here at Orgreave. On a more happy memory the rock singer Bruce Springsteen was playing his concert in Sheffield. He donated free tickets to all the striking miners and gave £50,000 to the striker's fund, as he came from a mining family. A reflection of the strong community links by miners throughout the world.

Steven Cooke

# Betrayal Of Love

He cares not for conversation,  
Though he moans all day  
He is not handsome,  
Yet beauty will seek him  
He cares not for any one lover,  
For he loves them all

My friend is ungainly,  
And children run from him.  
He cares not for broken hearts,  
Or for poets dreams,  
Though their pen would be silent, without him

His manners are questionable,  
For he takes all, without asking  
And they cannot refuse.

He grows fat from their offers,  
But he always craves more,  
For his lovers cannot resist,  
The secret our lover keeps.

They reveal all willingly,  
Just to hold him.  
Two strangers naked for love  
For they need his touch,  
To complete their love

He is an addict,  
His addiction made worst.  
Tempted by the summers colour,  
Climaxed by sweet odor's,  
A conspiracy of love  
For him to taste.

But I will betray him.  
I will calm him down.  
I shall rob him of his prize,

For I too am a lover  
And I need his sweet offerings  
To give to my love.

You see  
We know each other well  
He does not question me,  
Though I hold his real love for ransom  
I do not question him,  
Though my future is his to command,  
You see I am his keeper  
And he is the Honey bee

Steven Cooke

# Bombers Moon

Making love to my demons  
Under the flag of my country  
Caught in between the never believer  
And a pardon of angels,  
Who bargain their souls for my redemption?

Empowered by a nation,  
Glorified by heroes departed  
My life sanctified by religious compromise  
For tonight I fly, under the bombers moon  
Nearer to God than most  
I see the world differently,  
This Earth orbits in a sea of cold  
My plane hidden in its recess,  
A place where silent screams dwell  
And rainbows are sent to die.

Away from the gaze of my enemy,  
A phrase worthy of the Devil  
Away from the patriots sting,  
These too, sanctified by a religious hand  
The History books dilemma

My run begins  
My mind listens to a confess of whispers,  
The engines my Priest,  
The bomb doors open,  
Horsemen of The apocalypse,  
Released from their tethers  
I am the Arbiter of Death

As in Nature, Chance will decide  
The faceless will fall  
And god willing I will return home

In the scheme of things  
A Cities worth is one minute,23 seconds  
The camera to record in slow mo for Posterity,

And to delight the victorious

The Impact sweeps away the sweat of past generations  
Creates queues of ghosts, waiting,  
To lay in row after row, of white marble  
Their silent screams absorbed into Heaven's Gate,  
A cold Hallelujah for God to judge  
Just another day on planet earth

But don't worry,  
Time, like, the brook of sighs, will wash away these sins  
But not the seeds,  
For we are the gardeners of sin,  
Their germination, lovingly corrupted  
In our differences, them and us  
The Pillars of capitalism our advantage  
The fear of the Devil theirs

Our final epitaph in the circle of life,  
We are conditioned to repeat the mistakes of the past,  
As is the Wilder beast to cross the River of Death,  
Or theologians using religion as a weapon of war  
The devil and the Crocodile dines well, on such a menu  
We truly are, a blessed Race.

Steven Cooke



# Broken England

My Brave ancestor of England,  
Look away, for I offend thee

For your England is no more  
Decay eats away at this fallen empire.  
Your people divided  
Its laws weakened by Europe's power  
Its leadership, protecting the few  
The fresh air of your Country gone  
Only the stench of anarchy remains  
Heroes of The Somme look away for I offend thee

Stock Market Parasites, take without producing  
Corporations overwhelm, the weak,  
Without paying their due,  
Their off shore havens digest the life blood of this once great nation,  
Leaving the scraps of minimum wage for the masses to beg  
The dead of Pashendale look away for I offend thee

Government legislate to keep us in bondage till 66  
Over the hill at 50, to wander the dole queue  
Youth denied education,  
Universities at a price  
Qualifications for the chosen few  
Unemployment, for the poor,  
Our brothers of Gallipoli look away for I offend thee

Our Cities are in pain  
Hopeless lives, with hopeless dreams  
Hopeless choices, drugs, crime,  
Or silence behind closed doors.  
Babies born to fail  
Children, exposed to depression and chips  
The ghosts of Arnhem look away for I offend thee

A voice in the darkness, shouts its rage  
The iron curtain of youth descends on England  
This is no Lennon revolution,  
This is youth with no future, abandoned by government

No rules here to obey, No Civic pride,  
No sense of History, no Country to protect  
The Savors of Goose green look away for I offend thee

But fat cats beware, for there is a dream  
That cannot be bought,  
A warning from history  
A country cannot go forward  
Without learning from the past,  
Your greed will self-destruct  
Your Paradise a lie  
For a Dangerous wind now blows  
And common sense, will fail  
For England is Broken,  
And life will never be the same  
In England's green and pleasant land  
You see I too look away, for this all offends me.

Steven Cooke

# End Of Ops

I am nearing the end of my journey  
The path that I walk is almost done,  
Over my shoulder are friends now gone?  
In front of me a life, underpinned by yesterday's fear  
For I am in a world where no one belongs

Tomorrow I look through the sight for one more time  
My finger, no more the killer and my shoulder  
Never to feel the recoil of tracers sent  
I have spent too much time bringing Peace to others  
It is time for peace to find me.

This letter I write to you

For you have been my rock, and my friend through this ordeal  
Your love has been the oasis that protects the candle that is my life  
Whose flickering light is fragile, refusing to be extinguished  
For it is entwined in my love for you, nourished by your letters  
Without which, I would not care for fates demise,

On lonely patrols I am comforted by the beauty of this river,  
which reminds me of you  
For you are my river and I am the salmon,  
happy to wallow in waters so blue  
I traverse the waterfall that is your spirit  
My strength though faltering, can still conquer these shallows of misfortune  
And my courage is strong, as is my love for you  
For I can still face the bears that seek to destroy us,

This old warrior has spent too much time in wars arena,  
A soldier's death I will not seek here, for my end is to be with you  
To die in your arms, held safe in the spring waters that is your soul.

I am leaving this place, where friends gave so much,  
Where sacrifice, and loss dwell,  
Where silent widows weep.  
Fate has decided, I'm coming home, coming home to a peaceful life  
To live again with you, in freedom, my beautiful wife.



# Enslavement Of A Lesser Being

Freedom won on a distant battlefield  
Gallant words to remember them by  
Unspoken tears for the old to cry,  
A game for the young to play  
Never a thought for freedoms way

For tyrants are easy to spot  
Peaceful takeovers not,  
Look through the haze  
For when wheat replaces  
The meadows and open spaces  
And forests are felled, our oxygen smothered  
Your fate is complete, it now belongs to another

When TV calls caressing your soul  
With the next discount, and  
"Yes its free fitting"  
Without a shot being fired  
Your future mortgaged  
And your rations of bread and water  
Homogenised by supermarkets foreplay  
Modern Taipans for us to obey

This is the legacy  
There is no escape  
Hunter gatherers no more  
Mankind in a zoo of its own creation  
Come, peer through the bars at,  
This once great Nation  
For freedom lies on the other side.

Steven Cooke

# Epitaph Of The Dragon

Chained to these walls of despair  
I was condemned by a Judas race.  
Assassins' wait on every corner  
hiding in the lights of man  
looking for my face.

To be last of your species is a lonely place  
in loneliness everyone's your enemy,  
my existence violates this earth.  
I am demonised by children not yet born  
for I am Auschwitz I am war,  
I am the monster behind your door.

Cremation is ordained upon my soul  
the future dies when cities burn.  
Life gives way to extinction  
but the last rights give way to destiny  
for the dragon has one last legacy.

Lead me to your abattoir  
and take my dignity.  
My scales will provide a heroes shield  
this blood will give you courage.  
Take these eyes made of jade  
but do not look too close  
for I may possess you.

Artisans take my teeth  
record my sins in scrimshaw  
for I have flown amongst you.  
Memories laid down in human bone  
for the samurai has felt my breath  
and his god has given homage to me

Immortality now gives way to fairy tales  
Dragons used to frighten children  
for it is all you have  
to protect them from reality,  
though some will grow

to envy me.

The truth of mankind  
lies on the battlefields.  
I am woven into your victories  
given blood to lick from the land  
I am the last thing you see  
and only your shadow  
will remember me

For I am the darkest secret of mankind,  
in your actions I became the executioner  
and you a plague of demons  
that burned my soul away.

But always remember,  
when you look into the fire  
there will always be a dragon  
looking back at you.  
Waiting to reclaim his throne  
from the demons that exist in you.

Steven Cooke

# Five Pillars Of Poetry

Imagination is the river  
that guides the quill.  
Dreams the sailing ship  
that unleashes the voyage  
through the pages of a poets mind.

To write is to find  
the meaning of love.  
Where beauty opens the gate,  
to a never ending yellow brick road  
Of human emotion.  
For that is what we seek.

The pen can create gods  
and mortal frailty.  
Sunshine is the span of life,  
darkness is forever  
and within these letters  
we find immortality.

Beauty is found in pain  
hope is an emerald sea,  
envy comes from Oscar's words  
and belief becomes a prejudice.  
The pen will drown your epitaph  
for the Cyclops knows his destiny

Words can be a jigsaw of fears,  
Or a rose sculptured in the heart.  
All belong to confession,  
trapped in the confetti of poems  
which hide behind a harlequin mask  
though a poets heart,  
is for all to see.

Steven Cooke



# Genie In A Gin Bottle

Her lips caress another cigarette  
A fading belle looking for love  
The smoke veils her face,  
For she is, Genie in a gin bottle

Her Make up hiding the past  
Silk fingernails hiding the smokers hand  
Her wig of blonde hiding the soul beneath  
The ladder in her stockings,  
Torn like her Hollywood dreams

Her perfume sickly sweet,  
Masking the odors from yesterday's gin  
The ashtray is full,  
Cheap Lipstick covers the tab ends  
Her vigil to find happiness  
But he never comes.

Only a stream of chancers wanting to spin lady luck one more time,  
Fuelled by the promise of paradise  
A vacation from life,  
A brag for jack Daniels

Under neon lights  
A beautiful girl in a gin bottle,  
An inner voice plays in her mind  
"I could have been a movie star"  
A role she can play all too well  
But morning light never lies

Her beauty, has fled, left on the pillow  
Like some Monet's impression.  
Regret lays sprawled out  
Like yesterday's salad, thrown out with the rubbish  
For the slugs of corruption to eat

.  
Her aging face revealing, every rejection,  
Every turned down script, every broken dream  
A lifetime of heart break

But she still plays her part well,  
Play it again Sam  
And another cigarette,

The same mistake, the same men,  
From All the gin bars in the world,  
She had to choose this one

Another lottery ticket to litter her despair  
No winning numbers here  
Her silent acceptance speech,  
Laid bare in her blood shot eyes of regret  
A mouthwash of gin,  
And the genie of love returns to her bottle  
Her legs bruised and varicose,  
Testament to waitress by day, and genie by night

He closes the door, his only thought,  
To get away, not his finest hour  
Jack Daniels, his moral escape goat,  
Nosey Neighbor's, his jury  
They bare witness to his walk of shame

She opens the curtains, and sees him fade into the faceless crowd  
Alone again, a full ashtray, and an empty gin bottle,  
Symbols of last night's play,

The mirror torments her image  
As She drinks coffee through smoke stained teeth,  
A wave of her head, a smile, and a daydream  
Tonight, her prince will save her  
This is her delusion, her reason to live,

But Time is running out,  
For she is part of life's crap game.  
The dice rolls once more  
Will it be happiness? Or loneliness?  
But in the end, deep down she knows  
The House always wins, in tinsel town.



# Ghosts Of War

Within the fog of did you see?  
An old woman, made up to the nines  
Can be seen in the corner of the non-believers eye  
Purse in hand and a glass of wine  
Waiting for a lover who never comes

Just shadows on the wall  
Whispering names, through  
Spiders silk, the inheritors  
Of this forgotten, debutants ball

While Portraits glare at vacant laughter  
An echoed waltz swirls  
The embrace of loves decay,  
Images now jailed within the Crystal shards  
Of a fallen chandelier

A tear of Woman wears mourning face well,  
This vigil Mask hiding mortality lost  
Now broken and marking time,

Love lies lost in the barbed wire of war  
Fallen stars to shine no more  
Their Remembrance merging into darkness  
Behind a cloudless unforgiving sky

Alone is the corpse in cratered field  
Covered by poppies blood  
Walked on by ghosts to come

Another Whispered soul is roaming  
The guns have left their post  
And Peace is just an illusion  
For yet another Flanders ghost

This cruel winter's night  
The withered rose has lost its fragrance  
The champagne has all gone flat  
And love calls without an answer

For silence is the memory  
And it is we  
Who walk hand in hand  
With our ghosts of War?

Steven Cooke

# Grandads Secret Love

The Pendulum of time is like the Pendulum of love,  
Anchored in the being that is you  
Your makeup tears hide the fading belle,  
who once danced down the Champs -elysees  
But I too dwell on the past, for time has vandalised my youth too,

My mind no longer curious for what lies on the other side of the hill  
Like a tree abused by the countless storms, now forgotten  
I still stand; face on, to weather life's misfortunes

Vows that I have taken, died long ago,  
Along with my faith  
For god and I no longer speak, a shallow life I have led  
My ambitions entwined in the garden and walks in the park  
I thought that time would make love fade, as does the beauty of youth

But when I saw you drenched in mornings sunlight  
Smelling the blossom on ball gown bushes,  
For a brief moment you were young once again

I caught your eye, and memories flooded back  
A strange romantic notion caught me  
Like a bird who has spent his life in a cage  
Suddenly freed, yet this cage I fear to abandon  
But silent love is noble, and though it has taken a life time to know  
I understand, why the lover cares not for fates demise

For I have spent my life lingering in the darkness between the stars  
But now I can look beyond our age for we are two well worn shoes  
Comfortable and secretly loved

We are silent lovers, who have spent a life time together,  
Living in our dreams and thoughts, speaking  
Different silences,  
Which say all that is needed to know?  
For our souls will always listen and our hearts will always be in love.  
And only you and I will know



# Harry

(Humbly dedicated to the last veterans of World War One)

He stares through the window  
In wheelchair he knows,  
Gabriel is just a pause behind him.  
His last duty, to open a door in his mind  
Of memories torn from 1917, where he left,  
Jack Fred and Bert, Pals forever

A moment singled out from a thousand days of torment  
Bully Beef, Baccy and sweet tea in the Morning  
A pair of socks from a loved one,  
And friendship forged in the baptism of War.  
These were his treasures, His only relief

Then the guns of Britannia, manufacturing widows by the gross, as  
Gas and Shell screamed for their quota of today's carcass.  
For a moment Harry felt sadness for his foe  
Then it was gone

No time,  
Heart Beating, Breath quickening, Stomach in Knots,  
Fear held in check to avoid the Officer's gun,  
No time left, Stay Close Jack, Fred glanced,  
While Bert squeezed a locket around his neck  
A quick nod, The Soldiers farewell  
Then the whistle, Gabriel's Horn, over the top

His refuge abandoned, for the embrace of the fog,  
It masked the land, as if to avoid offending God  
Slowly creeping its vale of death,

Gun in hand they walked into the grey.  
Fodder for the Machine gun, No defense, we fall.  
Once more our lads are summoned into oblivion.  
Their blood sanitizing the soil with England's youth  
Like a red carpet, for their comrades to walk the next day.  
Then the retreat, back to his rat infested trench  
Gods reward he thought,



Then Roll call, Silence for Jack, Silence for Fred, and Silence for Bert  
Harry felt shame in answering, for a second; he too wanted to embrace silence  
with his pals.

But Soldiers must go on, as do the righteous  
And England expects  
For I fight for a Heavenly cause, so I'm told,  
Though I do not know what that is  
All I know is fear  
Although this impostor, I can live with

You see my friends are gone;  
My humanity is lost  
And my soul awaits its next trial  
Is it a blessing that I am alive or,  
Just a delay,  
For death stalks me, waiting for his reward.  
My sanity saved only by the sweet tea and a fag,  
Dry socks, and a letter or two from home  
No time for sentiment, the whistle,  
Memories, memories  
Oh, there you are Gabriel welcome.  
Hello lads where you been.

Steven Cooke

# Kiss Of Darkness

A grain of sand was once my rock  
this rock was once my life  
and life was but a story,  
lost in the nurseries of time.

The shadows you see  
cannot be trusted,  
the sun bleeds red in shame  
fleeing to another realm,  
for it is time for me to reign.

I who have seen  
the doors of time close  
on ambitions of kings  
and paupers dreams.  
Decay and deceit  
all pay homage to me,  
behind this curtain of immortality.

Immortality that sweetly came  
under the shadow of injustice gallows.  
Exiled out of reach of Christ,  
my saviour an angel of the night.  
Her kiss of darkness  
my redemption from life.

Life is now a memory  
no fear upon my lips.  
Only light can bar my way  
for darkness is where I play.  
These wings of death  
will plague your dreams  
and you will long for me.

Long for the thirst of liquid life  
To take the thing that life denies.  
No bride can cross this altar  
for love will wake for me.

And love will be  
an image of God  
that mirrors cannot find.  
I will be the valentine  
concubines my queen  
and together we will lurk  
amongst this vineyard of blood  
salivating on what we see.

Humanity will soon be ripe  
fermenting in their illusions of life,  
your shadows are destined for me.  
Room temperature and decanted right  
for tonight I have a gracious bite.

Death will come in empty glass  
for sleep will find no blood.  
Your existence will not be wasted  
for the night now owns your soul.  
The stars will be you're only light  
and another victim will die this night.

Steven Cooke

# Love In All Its Glory

Within the petals of the rose  
Captured in the fragrance of the orchid  
Nurtured by the holy water of love  
Drenched in the sunlight of your being  
My love is kept safe in the woman  
That is you

Within your eyes there is a flame  
Born of passion, fuelled by a sacred trust  
A woman beyond Michael Angelo's imagination  
Beyond the dreams of first love.

Your face worthy of every love poem ever written  
With a smile that my dreams can,  
Play over and over again in a world,  
That only you and I know

Where we can walk, hand in hand  
Through dreams that have not yet spoken  
Down paths where our emotions merge  
Where two hearts beat as one  
In this glorious thing we call love

Here our souls can lay down together  
Away from this troubled world  
To make love, for angels to envy  
Where your kisses heal the man that is me  
To bring me back from the abyss

To see the sunrise through your eyes  
Hand in hand with my one true love  
And when we are three  
I pray that our child will grow  
To find love and happiness  
Just like you and me

Steven Cooke

# Love Under The Dollar

In kindle dreams her life retreats  
With Botox swagger  
And gel filled glory  
A plastic rose  
Hiding a once varicose being

A flower with a sting  
Whose predatory ways  
Leach off this sexual forest  
Of spar infested vanity  
Where youth is for the innocent  
And cougars dine on essence divine  
With triffid fingers and mosquito convulsions  
Of unspoken ways for  
The dollar will always pay

And when her thirst has gone  
The dark of reality descends  
Hiding the face of yesterday  
Whose masquerade is left on morning pillow  
A Monet impression to greet the light

The camera is stopped  
The potions are in a queue  
For her vanity waits  
Another audience with snow white  
This imposter among the weeds of creation

And in the balcony the fashion clones swoon  
Sculptured dolls under butchers knife  
Waiting with credit card lines  
To feed on groped applause  
And we will envy them

We that live in the mud of this life  
We Parasites and leaches  
We Saints and Pulpit Preachers  
For we all envy things  
That we cannot be

Envy things that  
Come in dollar dreams  
That buys the illusion  
That one day you will envy me

Steven Cooke

# Lovers Of A Storm

Old Friends that say hello  
Who share a secret memory?  
Away from the road now travelled

This love that hides in your eyes  
Betrayed by the glint of a held back tear  
This mystic bond that ties us together

And in a stolen moment, over a bottle of wine  
The dream runs free  
Dissolving the paths that we now tread

For deep within my soul  
A world with an incorruptible sky  
Plays host to a lovers imagination

Where the electricity from her touch  
Gives birth to the storm  
Her passion fuelling the Hurricane  
Within me

And in the eye of the storm  
Time stands still,  
And our love will reside there  
Oblivious to the pain that we cause

And as I fall back to reality  
In the dying wind I can hear your heartbeat  
A whispered beat that calls my name  
Longing for us to start anew

But your Romeo always knew  
That dreams were all we had  
This Love was always just out of reach

And now I am left to dream of yesterday  
Lost in a bottle of wine  
Longing for another storm  
Longing for another kiss

And longing to be with you

Steven Cooke



# Made In Sheffield

Its Early Morning, a mist descends into the valley.  
Not a Mist, from some love poem, but a fog forged in graft.  
No sun shines here, for there is no welcome.  
For here lies the Crucible of the World,  
No bird song, only furnace dust,  
And a dead river.  
For this is Sheffield Steel.

The grime covered buses arrive for Morning shift,  
Windows grey with smoke,  
For breakfast, Woodbines and Senior Service,  
A dripping crust and a flask of tea or two  
One by one, they descend,  
A goliath of manhood,  
Raw Power, Natures finest creation  
An elephant gun would not bring these men down.

A pot of tea, another cig, then into the mill  
Into the Heat, Dante's Inferno,  
Armed only with Leather Aprons and tongs,  
First job, a tank Barrel,  
They work as a team,

A sacred bond, forged in years of graft  
Pure Strength twisting, the writhing white hot ingot,  
In a rhythm, nay a dance, with a twenty ton hammer  
The Grace of Men in harmony with Machine,  
A rite of Passage, their inheritance

But this is also a dance with the devil,  
One crack and shards of death rain upon them,  
No escape, Just a Bed in Tinsley Cemetery,  
Plenty of company there

Another crew tames the roaring furnace  
Spewing flame, like some demonic dragon  
Molten Metal, thrashes out,  
Shower upon shower, of burning sparks,  
That brand and sear the skin,

A steel workers tattoo of Pride

And the heat, always the heat,  
Creating a perfume of toxic aftershave  
A vision of Hell created by Man on Earth,

But yet through the heat and smoke, there are voices,  
No Angels here,  
For this is them, these Men of Steel,  
"Ready for a pint",  
"Ahr lass got belly up, "  
"Stick us a ten bob on that horse",  
"Goin in club t, neight",  
"Ready for me grub",  
This is the voice of Sheffield.  
No hardships, for this is their blood,  
Their culture, their world

Dinner time approaches, the apprentice brings dinner  
Half a loaf of bread, dug out, and filled with chips,  
Plenty of Salt and Vinegar  
Then a link of black pudding  
Washed down with four bottles of Stones Bitter,  
And a couple of woodbines  
No Health and Safety here.

I pay but, a moment's homage to this scene  
For this was Sheffield Steel,  
The Cog that drove the World

But Time moves on,  
The steel workers and Miners, all gone  
Broken By Maggie  
Thrown on the scrap heap of yesterday  
Sculptors of their craft,  
Never to work again

Now the Rivers run clean.  
And the birds sing,  
And the sun, shines on the valley  
But not on the Steel workers,

For they have faded away  
Replaced by the souls of Progress,  
Shopping Malls and stadiums  
For Sheffield is now a City of Sport.  
And Tourism reins King.

But spare a thought, for these Men.  
Our Fathers, who lived there way,  
With courage and honor  
Steel was there Church,  
Built on the Foundations of Pride  
Their graft, a noble Calling  
And sacrifice, there honor in death.

These Men who celebrated Friendship,  
A pint, a smoke, and a gamble  
For this was their Home, their Sheffield,  
It was Their Craft, Their sweat,  
That, forged the world,  
And it forged me,

And now, a part of my World is lost forever.  
So let the history books be kind,  
And lets us remember fondly, these Men,  
Made in Sheffield

Steven Cooke

# Morning Blues Of London

I see reflections in the window,  
My coffee, my only friend.  
Waiting for my journey to begin.  
My suitcase, my only possession  
Yesterday's clothes, yesterday's photos  
Yesterday's dreams, all packed neatly for yesterday's man

The whistle, slowly we move off  
Leaving yesterday life  
As I ponder through my window,  
I hear the track mocking,  
"It's all your fault", "it's all your fault", "it's all your fault"  
No peace for yesterday man

We pass fields of lavender, a reminder of when love was sweet  
I see fields of barley, and hay bales  
Where forbidden love was born  
Then ploughed fields, the furrows of betrayal  
Raking through my soul

We pass a ruined castle, my dreams my hopes, all perished there  
Swept away by the forces of passion,  
Crumbling the walls of yesterday's love,  
My window of torment, reveals all "please go away"  
For I want Today's window,

But my confession, rapes my mind  
You see my wife loves another,  
My neglect, my fault, all the judges agreed.  
Into a tunnel, a respite from all this  
A moment's darkness  
Alone again, with my coffee

I'm still, rolling down the track of despair  
The guard announcing the next station  
"All change at Piccadilly, "  
"Connections for nowhere and oblivion"  
"Platform Three"

A rush of bowler Hats cram the doors  
Anonymous souls leading anonymous lives  
And me, with my cup of coffee, alone with the window,

I see reflections once more,  
I lay my pen down,  
And I Thank god that's not me.  
Oh how I hate Monday mornings,  
Time to leave

Steven Cooke

# My Immortal Love

Hiding within the feathers of an angels wing  
My love waits, shy to the world  
Content to fly, never wanting to stay  
Until I met you

I have traded immortality for your kiss  
A mortal kiss soft, moist, like the birth of a rainbow,  
Leaving me with no fear  
My sacrifice to love,

But love is a feast  
And illusions dance in its shadow  
And temptation has a price  
For my angel danced with destiny  
Now I stand on the precipice alone  
An outcast from heaven  
With broken wings that can fly no more

My dreams lay in the salt  
Of a billion tears  
This burden is mine to carry  
To slow my walk through The Valley of death

For love is my cross  
But it is a thing of beauty to show God  
And perhaps within my suffering  
He will understand  
That love and loss is the price  
We angels pay for  
Living a mortal life.

Steven Cooke

# Natures Democracy

Democracy is at America's heart  
You lead while others follow  
And your citizens bear the right to be free  
With freedom comes responsibility  
And democracy applies  
To all who inhabit this earth?

Within this premise Kyoto speaks  
That sound which disturbs  
The majority of a wider democracy

You deny their global solution  
In favour of the American way  
But there are whispers in the wind  
For nature too believes in democracy  
And nature will make the agreement for you

For she is omnipotent to unleash her democracy  
You can deny your future, but your ghosts will deny you  
This way of life feeds a changing climate  
And nature gathers her strength  
Slowly rising to give you her answer

The Hurricane and tornado  
The desert and the flood  
Her democracy to maintain  
A balance within the hemispheres

Your Freedom is a noble thing  
For freedom lies in every beast.  
But only humans carry the burden of democracy  
This is the price we pay for freedom

But freedom is worthless  
When all you grow is destroyed  
When all you build is washed away  
When all that you hold dear is taken without mercy

Look over the fence America

Look beyond your borders  
Look at your planet  
And look at this baby born  
For it may never grow up to remember you

Steven Cooke



# No More

(To the unknown boys killed in the the First World War)

No more will he look into the eyes of his Mother,  
No more will he see his Brothers smile,  
No more will he feel love.  
No more will he fish, and climb the trees of England  
Or marvel at the voice of the nightingale.

For he is Sixteen and a Man,  
He has done is duty by his Country,  
Taken the shrapnel, which exploded over him  
Like a Bright light sent from an avenging God.

He sees the dark approaching  
But he can take it, for he is an Englishman  
No more will he hear the whistle to advance  
No more the frost and Snow  
No more the fear of being killed  
For I am no More  
Remember me Mother

Steven Cooke

# Not For Them

A poem about World War 1.  
(Ich tötete is German for I killed)  
(J'ai tue is French for I killed)  
(Yellow mist refers to Mustard Gas)

Not for them  
this poem of life  
for the pen is full of blood.  
Writing the names of yesterday  
on lichen memorials  
washed by the tears  
Of these forgotten years.

Not for them  
a sunny day  
only shadows from the cross.  
Hiding their faces from tomorrow.  
Stored in this warehouse of silence,  
kept secret by churches reverence.

Not for them  
to burn this candle of innocence  
their light was sold for war.  
To search out death in no man's land  
for machine gun and snipers hand.

Not for them  
the words of love or the gift of flowers  
for only poets can pick their dreams.  
No nightingales and moonlit nights  
or gentle caress upon the shore.  
For death is but a moment,  
Inspiration dies,  
with the pain in soldiers eyes.

Not for them  
to sleep in peace  
or to wake to mothers bread.  
Only memories of a yellow mist,

for the banshees longs to be kissed.

Not for them  
to lie to God  
to say we did not kill.  
For in death they can all say  
Ich tötete, J'ai tué, I killed.  
We who came from Eden,  
are now comrades in heaven.

Not for them  
to know the future  
for we see only the graves.  
Let this be our peace,  
less we forget the meaning of war.  
And pray historians will never write again,  
with a pen full of blood, this poem,  
Not for them.

Steven Cooke

# Oh What A Lovely War

Oh What A Lovely War

The sins of granddad brought me to war  
for England has dined on this before.  
The arrogance of dad who brags my shoes  
for in his eyes I am England blue

The teacher who bellows you do us proud  
a vindictive sod who ruled my class  
The preacher who seeks my confession  
who drinks the blood of Christ in whiskey heaven?  
But never mind for god is always right

The trough of greed will grunt with pride  
the bombs will fall killing the dreams below.  
These fat cats of war all feasting on me  
Oh what a lovely war, everybody in work  
More champagne for them  
and the grapes of wrath for me?

The rain of mother's tears  
will wash my soul  
The marbles of play are gone,  
No chance for love to warm my nights.  
Only frost and the company of rats  
gnawing on the bed of my insanity

No youth will smile with me tonight,  
no innocence can protect me here.  
The voice of death whispers my darkest hour  
for this heart will soon be cold  
and you who sleep in beds tonight  
will never know the truth

The forces of ambition have gathered to see,  
this place where youth will die.  
Charlie Chaplin give us one last laugh  
for the guns are straining on their leashes.  
The generals have given their salute  
and murder is about to bleed on countries lips

for this is a glorious war.

And in motherland they shall sing my praise,  
hero is what I am,  
But I still have a voice for one more night  
though your ears will be deaf to me

Liars you are to the last,  
So dam the lot of you.  
For pain and fear is all I know,  
the bragging rights will spill your beer  
for Life was never mine to enjoy.

The lamb and beast all share my fate  
though they will die in peace.  
For their bodies serve a nature's law  
While my carcass will rot in Flanders land

Out of sight of country  
for another will take my place.  
I am an inmate of war  
my letters the only sign of freedom  
and my photograph a reminder to those,  
who should have protected me?  
A youth of another's man war.

Me who gave the invisible a lucrative life?  
Who served an empty command  
watched over by mother's tears.

My absolution will forgive their sins.  
You see I am a peaceful lad  
all I possess are the marbles of childhood  
and the mercy that god gave me.  
I am every mother's boy  
And every mother is proud of me.

But in death I will not enter Heaven's gate  
For I will wait for them.  
Wait for the hand that brought me here  
for I need to know the reason why?  
Was this Flanders field worth the sacrifice of me?

And as this multitude of youth  
marches into the arms of angels pity,  
will god be blind to their confession?

For we remember that Charlie Chaplin made us laugh  
We remember our mother's tears  
But most of all we will remember the buggers  
Who brought us here, to die in Flanders land?

Steven Cooke

# Old Bill

Old Bill died today  
He was a grumpy old sod said Mrs. Grey.  
Fool thought me,  
For you do not know what memory is

He was a decorated soldier who,  
Courtied beautiful women  
Argued with royalty  
And dined with the Aga khan

For Oscar Wilde and Keats was his tipple  
But women cheated him  
And his money cheated him.  
And finally time cheated him

All gone now,  
Just silence echoed by a distant memory,  
Interrupted by Coronation Street, and East Enders  
Is this the legacy of modern Life

For Bill, all that is left is the shell  
And now that has gone.

Yes he was a grumpy old man  
But Modern life too will be cheated by time  
And what memories will it leave  
And what will people say about you Mrs. Grey

Steven Cooke

# Revised Enslavement Of A Lesser Being

Freedom won on a distant battlefield  
Gallant words to remember them by  
Unspoken tears for the old to cry,  
A game for the young to play  
Never a thought for freedoms way

.  
For tyrants are easy to spot  
Peaceful takeovers not,  
Look through the haze

.  
For when wheat replaces the meadows  
The birds have no home  
When forests are felled,  
Extinction will come  
You are a commodity,  
For globalisation has won

.  
When TV calls caressing your soul  
With the next discount, and  
&quot;Yes its free fitting&quot;;  
Without a shot being fired  
Your future mortgaged

And when your ration of bread  
Demands the last fish in the sea  
Neatly Packaged and dolphin free  
Who will pay the price?

.  
This is the legacy  
There is no escape  
Big brother is watching

.  
Mankind in a zoo of its own creation  
Come, peer through the bars at,  
This once great Nation  
For freedom lies on the other side.

Steven Cooke



# Seven Billion Reasons

Another baby born, another bushel of wheat  
Another piece of land, for another family to eat

Another net is cast, another fish is caught  
Another fire in the forest, another tree sought  
Another bird flees, another bird gone  
No home for the beast, diversity all gone

Crops in the amazon, Rivers clogged up  
Flooding in cities, Seas on the up  
Nature under pressure, Pollution the price  
Shortage of wheat, Shortage of Rice  
Temperature rising, Deserts expanding

Oil running out, the world is in doubt  
War for resources, the west uses force  
While the poor beg in cities  
Victims of policies, Victims of atrocities

Seas that are empty, Bellies that are swelled  
Mankind too many, Riots a plenty  
The button is pushed, and humanity is hushed  
The Earth is now empty, Heaven is full  
And we are 7 billion reasons  
For God to cry "Treason" "Treason"

And the stars look on, silent  
And galaxies die alone  
And no one will know.  
This place,  
Where once, our babies did grow  
But time will go on  
And the earth is aglow  
Just as it was, 7 billion years ago.

7 billion today  
Tomorrow more  
What is the real figure?  
For all out Nuclear War?

Steven Cooke

# The Bible According To Netto

In these isles of cheap illusion  
the kids run free,  
screaming for the sugar of childhood.  
While their mother walks on  
down wine bottle lane,  
to escape life's demons  
for one more day.

The shells of beings look  
but do not see.  
Part time lives  
in worn out trainers  
minimum wage to stretch,  
their withered faces  
all smart price packed,  
on another out of date trolley.

Buy one get one free,  
a horse burger is a burger  
a person is a person.  
Each hiding themselves from the world,  
Incognito in a world of poverty.

Tomorrow the kids will cry  
each will find their jail.  
The weight of despair  
will sentence their lives  
In these streets  
You will find a different kind of humanity.

Where social security  
hears the dunnings knock  
and boredom leads to exotic dreams,  
wrapped up in foil of rainbow brown.  
We all crave the womb  
for the world cannot reach us there.

And behind the curtain  
the detritus of existence survives.

Old men in young men's clothes  
with regret filled veins  
counting the burglars sin  
as the blue light of night closes in.

The child becomes a woman  
and woman carries the pain.  
Another babe born.  
The hand of indifference  
grabs another box  
of powdered baby milk,  
for family allowance is her work.  
Life belongs to an electric token  
and a chip pan of joy  
her disfiguring pleasure in life.

These are the isles  
where no one has a name  
complete with a special offer of sadness.  
Existence is a hangover for under a fiver.  
For this is the sum of life,  
and no one will take away  
this credit on society  
our triple (A) rating of poverty.

Steven Cooke

# The Comfort Of A Drunken Mind

Lipstick on an empty glass  
A Memory of a smile  
In my time, don't you know?  
Young girls vied for my attention  
Always posing, Heartbreaker to women was I.

God, I will never see her smile again  
Her voice silent to me  
Inside I am a flower without rain  
A musician without music  
My love waits in a queue,  
Full of fools, and whiskey bottles

Ahhh another drink  
Yes tomorrow, will be better

I remember her stare,  
Sitting on that chair,  
That damn chair.  
Drink Darling?  
My Blossom of the night,  
A smooth talker me.

I broke her dreams  
Now Petals on a stormy sea  
I remember her scent  
Now washed away on the hurricanes breath  
Called Whisky

Ahh another drink, she won't leave me?  
Damn that empty chair  
To bed, the morning will bring her back

The bottle sleeps  
And the sandman paints his illusions  
Dreams invulnerable to reality  
The glow of dawn, incinerates these imposters  
Fabricated in the monsoon of a drowning brain

Cornflakes and Barley wine, a man's breakfast  
What now, a snifter I think and another thought?

Love has left this empty chair  
Where dreams and happiness dwelt  
Where futures were planned  
And where love flowed, intoxicating our lives.

Still, the empty glass remains.  
Ahh, another drink, and another illusion to comfort my soul

The bottle is my love now,  
And the empty chair, my sentence.  
That damned empty chair  
Ahh did I tell you, once I was a heartbreaker?  
Come Share a drink with me friend?

Steven Cooke

# The Democratic Way

Where the arrow falls  
A life is taken  
Its flight was always destined to find  
The rebel's heart  
The believers who shake this world  
Extinguished by the powers of state

For the rule of law defines society  
This history that made all men equal  
That teaches our children democracy

This democracy that America holds dear  
And England expects  
Has been stolen, hocked to the highest bidder  
Reformed homogenised and re distributed  
By the invisible hand of a powerful few

Your choices defined by control  
Hidden in the refuse tip of mankind  
Austerity and debt  
Dumped by Druid bankers mesmerizing us  
With chemical whispers that poison our dreams  
Democracy has found a new owner  
And we are its victim

A nation of employees procreating our lives in debt  
Government no longer the servant  
People in a cage, no escape  
For we are the slaves  
Destined to die in unmarked graves  
Forgotten by the winds of time

This illusion that this, is the bed we choose,  
But even this is rented  
For all property returns to the soil  
Waiting for the next solicitors pen

The money that you scrape  
Its value has been raped

Slowly evaporating in the  
Inflation of wet banker's dreams

For your democracy was always a dream  
And this nightmare is here to stay  
Your heroes have all been seconded  
To protect the carcass that these jackals share

And the rebels that are left  
Will never fire a shot in anger again,  
For The slave has nothing to fight for  
Because nothing will ever belong to you.  
Except for a copy of their democracy  
And another bill  
For explaining all this to you.

Steven Cooke



# The Devil Wears Armani

She was eighteen, I was thirty two  
She was an unread poem,  
I was yesterday's gift.  
Her heart she gave gladly,  
Her beauty mine, to enjoy  
Given away in youthful sacrifice,  
The Guilt was all mine.

But I take this gift,  
For business is good,  
And I seek many rewards.

What was love for her,  
Was ego to me.  
This man, her dream,  
My dream, the pleasures of the night  
Her attraction, my Armani suit, my Aston Martin  
My attraction, just another bloom,  
Found on the florists shelf.

So follow me, for Chanel number 5 Paris awaits.  
Young beauty with eyes, so blue  
And hair, so fair,  
Who men desire  
And women, love,  
Come, your catwalk demands.  
Look into my eyes, and see your future.

You will see my strength.  
I will see my deceit.  
You will see my friendship.  
I will see my betrayal.  
You will see your perfect love.  
I will see a naked fool.

But do not judge me,  
For my disciples are lined up.  
Flashing their Cartier time piece, on life's bar stool,  
Intoxicated by their illusions,

Waiting, with a fashion house web  
To claim the next face,  
The next soul, looking for love

Just As the deserts wait for rain.  
It is ordained  
For the dove will find no love hear.

Only the thief,  
Who takes her beauty, and plunders her love.  
Who will tarnish her soul,  
And steal her youth.  
Only false Honor left  
Kept in, A Gucci hand bag,  
Full of lies, for friends to envy

So look again my love  
Choose wisely,  
For the devil wears  
Armani tonight  
And Prada will be his next victim.  
Can I buy you a drink?  
Love the dress.

Steven Cooke

# The Execution Of Romeo

They came in the depths of sleep  
Dream eaters to plague my darkness  
Troll whisperers taunting my love  
Their poison running through my veins  
My soul in chains and on trial

I plead to the jury for love  
I plead again only silence  
The voice of love, lost in a sinners scream  
In the balcony weeping angels,  
Rain teardrops of salt onto my bleeding arms

In this dark nether world  
I see the cold light of a distant star  
The last refuge of my dying soul  
My only comfort in this realm of fear

Phantoms sit at my table to deliberate  
While dining on lonely hearts,  
And drinking promises made in the heat of passion  
Sweet as unicorn blood, the last deceit  
Hecklers at the windows  
Mocking silent poems never sent  
A life never to be

The verdict guilty as always  
My beating heart the last bastion of my love  
I kneel in sacrifice to the Gorgon  
Love is lost, and so am I

Behind the eyes of the beast  
I see grief not of this earth,  
Pain beyond any dying planet  
And yes love, in my executioner  
For even the blackest heart  
Needs love, for this is the secret of all existence.  
And as I die a distant star waits  
For the next lover to find this truth

You see love cannot be chained,  
Nor can it be selective  
It resides in the pillars of good and evil  
And it will be with you  
Even in your darkest hour.  
My epitaph, Romeo

Steven Cooke

# The Humble Pen

What dreams we have  
We share with the pen.  
What love we find,  
We share with the pen.  
What happiness we find,  
We share with the pen.

When our soul bleeds,  
We find solace in the pen.  
When our hearts are broken,  
We find comfort in the pen.  
When all hope is lost,  
We find salvation in the pen.

And when we leave this mortal coil  
We will leave the pen,  
For our Children to pick up.

For the pen, is a rainbow,  
For our dreams, hopes and fears  
Where the heart and soul has a voice  
Where love resides for your fellow man,  
And where beauty is found everywhere

It confirms our existence, our beliefs.  
And though our lives are brief  
It is a noble quest,  
A gift of love to the world,  
And a seed of hope,

So Let the children plant and nurture this hope  
And they too will see the rainbow.  
Let this legacy nourish their lives  
With love and beauty,  
And let the humble pen go on,  
To find the next voice,  
The next chapter on this wonderful planet, we call Earth



# The Importance Of Pomposity

The Perfect life, a wife half his age  
Their house grand, with a zip code to match  
All bought and paid for.  
No hawkers, appointments only  
But look closer

The Wife bides her time, waiting for his demise,  
A heart attack would be nice  
For she has her own dreams  
No love baked bread here  
No roses from seed.  
A plastic hug, on a plastic lawn his reward

The library full of Shakespeare and Keats  
Never opened, for it's the show that counts  
Dinner Parties, A new painting  
Purchased, because we can,  
A favorite phrase for American wealth,

Pompous talk of Wine and Poetry  
Vinegar, and Plagiarism their only worth,  
Still the new boob job to admire  
Perhaps a recipe, her mother's creation  
Michel Roux the real star.

The children born out of lust not love  
Sent away to England, Trophy kids,  
Breast fed by American Express.  
The Debutants Ball awaits them  
And a hoorah Henry wedding their destiny

Church on Sunday  
New money at the front  
The old money sitting in the private pew  
God for sale,  
And the greenback will mop the saint's brow  
A church of Pomposity

Even in death a grand memorial

But decay gives no privilege  
Let's hope the pearly gates are the right colour  
And god has the right zip code  
For pomposity, might just send them to the wrong house.

Steven Cooke



# The Jellyfish Chronicle

Beneath my tendrils,  
The sea has many secrets  
And I am the last witness

To ships that sink  
To gulls that die  
To hear the whales that cry  
To see the births,  
Far away from man's eye

Drifting under frozen seas  
A last paradise where man has no welcome  
Let nature be our shield  
The Cold our government

This place where  
The Northern lights dance  
In honour to the ancestors

For we came before man  
And will be here when  
Man has gone

Life and death in harmony  
With nature's will.  
Written in the snow everyday

Steven Cooke

# The Letter

Dear Marlene.....  
Sweet heart of the dead  
Adored by generations not yet born  
Marlene we love you.

Your beauty burned the wings of JFK  
And brought big John to his knees  
For your love, was meant for more.  
You shocked the World with a velvet kiss  
An elegant truth in a sea of Fools

It took one voice to start a War,  
One bullet to unite false prophets  
One woman to speak out  
You ostracized the Nazis for what they were.  
Stood tall, through treason  
Did not follow, Hitler's Spell  
Chose to Love America's freedom instead.

When Reapers scythe came  
Song and Compassion was your shield.  
It Gave comfort to the damned as shell and mortar pound  
Your words a respite, from the fear  
And your beauty, a reminder.  
That love awaits the Soldiers return.  
Back to the German farms and the English meadows  
For love knows nothing of war.

You witnessed holy sacrilege,  
Saw blind disciples fuel the reapers fire  
Both sides, in the name of god,  
Oh how heaven must have wept

Marlene you dared to question religion,  
For Your soul could see through the flames,  
While others perished in mortals Pride.  
You Asked god to review his plan.  
Only you, Marlene could do that

Where have all the flowers gone  
Your message to Humanity,  
But the Heinkel and the Spitfire  
Flew too high to hear  
And the flowers of youth  
All Eaten by silent sheep, and taken to yet another slaughter.

Yet be proud Marlene  
For Your echo awakened a new generation to peace,  
Although lasting peace is like true love, so hard to find,  
But never the less, a goal we devote our lives to.  
Some countries have found their Peace  
While other search.  
Humanity is still a child in these matters,  
And war still goes on  
When will they ever, learn, when will they, ever learn.

Try to forgive us,  
Perhaps the man upstairs,  
Really does have another plan, Marlene Dietrich,  
At least I'm sure that Eternity  
Will be a far more beautiful and interesting place  
With you in it,  
And I look forward to meeting you.

Love Steven

xxxx

Footnote to this poem

JFK relates to her affair with President Kennedy

Big john relates to her affair with John Wayne

The Velvet kiss was the first lesbian kiss on main stream cinema 1930, Marlene was bisexual.

The line where have all the flowers gone and when will they ever learn comes from the song forever associated with Marlene Dietrich.

Brief Biography

Born 1901 in Germany

First film in 1920

Became American Citizen 1937

Awarded Medal of Freedom USA 1947

Awarded Legion of Honor by France

Died in Paris,1992

Steven Cooke

# The Lovers Ghost

I am absent from heavens table  
For I miss my love.  
Compassion from an angel  
Helped me slide down a moonbeam,  
To visit your lonely heart

As you sleep, I am with you my darling  
The warmth of my love  
Creating a fire in your memory  
Where we can sit and talk.  
In the glow of embers love

In this realm we can feel love once again  
Let us dance above these flames of desire  
You In your prom dress and me in youths blush

Once again I can feel your whispers  
Your hidden messages concealed on the breeze  
Listened to by inquisitive angels,  
Envious of our love.  
Your words seeding my lonely soul  
With dreams for eternity to keep

Tonight the moon smiles for you and me  
For she too remembers  
The tears of joy from our first kiss  
Slowly running down both our cheeks,  
Like Dew made from some holy mist.  
Love was our then and time our friend,  
We never saw the hour glass empty,

But pain did not hurt, for your face was always with me  
And love cannot be killed by time  
For our love will endure  
And heaven has dreams for us,  
Though angels know my grief

My love, my love, the dawn approaches  
And the Moon grows weak

The last moonbeams begin to fade  
And mortal minds are waking

So I leave you with our memories and a farewell present  
I give you my spirit  
To keep safe in your heart, for this is the only thing I possess  
It will protect you from the sad things in life,  
And heal your precious dreams.

A last kiss, and a secret promise, I now plant.  
Wrapped in love,  
To dwell in the recess of your mind.  
To be opened when angels call  
For our prom date, is not yet over

The Music will play on  
My love will be waiting at the table  
Waiting for your hand  
To dance once again, under a smiling moon,

Till dawn whisks us away into the mists of time  
To spend another life amongst the angels  
And no more will I miss you  
My one true love.

Steven Cooke

# The Murder Of Civilisation

An Englishman lost in afternoon tea,  
Memories of a lotus flower love  
Rajas and elephants in Delhi  
Livingstone the explorer  
Religion to convert

Laurence of Arabia  
A leader of men  
The Boers and the Zulus  
Gordon and Khartoum  
These are the things that shook the world

Silk and Cotton,  
The wealth of Empire  
Earl Mountbatten our man in Burma  
The cry of Bombay and Ceylon  
Oblivious to a young man's dream

England was the world  
Her Empire was great  
For the sun never did sett  
On her wealth  
The jewel in this noble crown

Yet History was not kind  
Exploitation her crime  
Though civilisation came hand in hand  
For Freedom we planted  
Democracy you chanted  
The union jack you did burn  
And what have you learned

Greed breeds poverty in silence  
Sectarian dogma your anthem  
Murder by the chosen few

How flourishes your tree  
When your morals all flee  
With bombs in the souk

And murder by troops  
Education restricted  
The poor evicted  
To make way for corruption  
And tyrants consumption

Look to the horizon  
For there lies Britain  
It empire gone  
But our pride lingers on

Can your freedom say the same?  
Or is oil to blame?  
Who shall we accuse?  
For your freedoms abuse?

Not the British  
Love us or hate us  
England brought you civilisation  
And civilisation lives on  
In this green and pleasant land

Steven Cooke



# The Prodigal Son

Let this day vanquish our differences  
for father is still the head.  
Put by our petty grievance,  
let family rule the day.

Come brother let us be at peace  
your heart can melt this snow.  
The voice of child was always you  
and the tears of ancestors  
now watch with pride  
of the man you have become.

Your place in life  
is to be at this feast,  
the family is united.  
This legacy of Christmas joy  
has written your story.  
The manger has carried your children  
and a star shines upon this house  
because of you.

So remember this day  
family is precious  
the joys of the world belong to you

Happiness has smiled  
health is in celebration.  
So Grandmother be proud  
for this is the legacy of you.

Joy permeates this house  
The eyes of the child  
look up to the family.  
So drink to mother and father  
for they gave roots to this tree.  
Our family is the earth and the earth is you,  
On this day we can all believe.

The hurt of the world be gone

It is a day of forgiveness  
and that is enough.

Rejoice on this special day  
Christmas was born for you.  
The pages of time are yours to write  
and your story will go on and on.

Steven Cooke

# The Prophecy Of Me

These Hallowed halls  
Frequented by myth and griffin  
Whose presence Guards these priceless minds  
Protecting the unwritten novels  
M C Squared and ingenious thoughts  
The prophesy of zero one

This gluttony of ideas thirsting on capitalisms juice  
Summoning their messiahs to walk among us  
The commodities of life, this treasured bible  
Children the future and Capitalism dissects  
Yet Another batch of disciples

So what care I for prophets of doom  
Population before climate  
Religion over peace  
Vanity before reason  
Pride over poverty  
Cap and gown before that which created me  
For I live high above these ghetto streets

Yet my peace is drowned by Evening chorus  
Screams from the gutter  
Another tattoo and the rush of heroin  
Another type of messiah  
Something for the poor to believe in  
Just another nickel and dime resource to me

Yet to hear this is a damnation of me  
This arrogance over nature  
To control that thing  
That shackles our existence  
That jails our thoughts  
Prostitutes our freedom  
And lets us die without reason

This way of life  
Of poverty and desperation  
Of concrete and aborted foetus

Of welfare cheques and sex for sale

Of unhappy beings behind

Unhappy doors

Protecting their own portals of betrayal

In a private subjugated hell

For Compassion has left these mortal beings

And my mind is closed, for there is no profit for me

But conscience is my jury

And nailed to this holy cross

The verdict is written

Vermin under the butterfly

For compassion was never my thing?

And Human nature can be,

A most desperate thing

Steven Cooke

# The Rose

This immortal rose that lovers seek  
will be glimpsed by all in youthful peak  
for her presence will be on every corner.

And those who confuse that heady perfume  
with a lust for love,  
will only find winter in an unknown heart  
for beauty was always a fragile thing.

We who have seen this gift from above  
will always get burned by its light.  
The poet and the painter  
have perfumed our existence  
with loves testimony to this.

The pain and tears fall on empty shield  
for love will break your heart  
but when we reach out to hold the rose  
picked from these fields of hope,  
a moment in life unfurls,  
love will kiss your soul  
and the world belongs to you.

Fleeting are the petals of time  
the rose is a symbol to love.  
For others it is the pain of life,  
to find and lose this immortal gift  
leaves a desert where life cannot breathe.

The laughter replaced by silence  
the smile that is kept in darkness,  
the kiss exiled to the memory.

Love is lost in the deepest pit  
of your despair,  
the thorns will bleed your soul red  
but she can never die.

Love will always leave a spark

that will lead you to redemption  
and only death can take this from you.

The rose was never yours to pick  
but its creation yours to admire  
for your being was made for this.

And as our mortal bodies die  
the spirit will seek the rose once more  
for in death its petals fall too  
blessing the ground of your resting place.

The rose was always yours  
and its beauty a source of life  
the chains of doubt will always  
break in its presence.

The rose is pure  
as is your faith in mankind.  
It can show you a deeper meaning  
for you are the petals of life  
she is the perfume of your existence  
and it is you that made her life complete.

Steven Cooke

# The Silence Of War

Behind the Curtains of a church window  
Men in Prayer, orchestrated by sweat and Lice  
Find relief from snipers gaze

Beside the cross sits the last candle  
Flickering precariously, searching for sanctuary from the wind  
But the wick is near the end  
And so are these men  
The Harvest of War is almost in  
For this is November 1918.

The German guns call like the song of the Siren  
Irresistible, for only the dead will hear  
New orders to cross the Sambre-Oise Canal  
Another postcard for Historians to write

Machine gunners scythe the ranks  
Gone the Irish regiment, clover for the beast  
I take shelter behind a splintered Oak Tree  
Once magnificent, A survivor of Natures glory  
Now a hideous specter to man's intervention.

I wait here with Wilf my captain  
Waiting for death to find me  
The mud beckoning for blood,  
The Canal red like the River Sticks  
A feed for tomorrows Newspaper.

A groan from wilf, his eyes start to dim  
Fear brings the Lord's Prayer to my lips  
A last haven for my soul to cling  
I watch his spirit fly away,  
As the words fade from my voice  
Like so many others on this day of carnage  
Wilf, my friend, died November 4th 1918

Yet another contribution to this dark harvest,  
Another soul for god to tender.  
A statistic, a casualty of war,

To be remembered generically  
A wreath to share with a multitude of lost darlings,  
Another photograph to fade on the mantel piece  
A piece of History for a grieving widow to dust

In the ranks of the dead  
Angels count our losses  
What dreams did we lose?  
What voices were made silent?  
What books were never written?  
And how many tomorrows gone,  
Lost in the darkness of death?

Under this oak tree, fading from memory  
A soldier Wilfred Owen was taken too  
Unspoken truth in unspoken poems  
Silent to mortal's ear  
Another casualty of war  
A feast of wisdom for angels to keep?

For His words were far too much  
For the hogs of war to stomach.  
His poetry made silent by country's shame,  
Unpatriotic, not cricket old bean said the generals  
Only now, through peace can we learn  
The voice of one soldier,

How I pity humanity  
For silence is a killer  
Democracy, and justice its victim,  
And the inevitable Silence of war will kill us all.

Footnote

Wilfred Owen killed in action, Sambre-Oise Canal, 7 days from Sanity  
One of England's Finest War Poets.

Steven Cooke



# The Thatcher Years

No poppies for madam  
that privilege is reserved  
for the common man.  
Drape her coffin with Union jack  
though there is no union for me.

Your guard of honour is expecting you,  
made from the empty shell of boys  
who left their dreams on Falkland hill.

This life that you once held  
will be remembered.  
The miner's bones will see your corpse  
for death came to them with broken heart,  
their blood was washed away  
and community was lost of hope  
In the weeping's of a crying pit.

The taste of rabbit stew  
still stays upon my lips,  
for I shared my bread with neighbours,  
while boys in blue waved five pound notes  
and beat their shields in rhyme,  
for they were truly, Maggie's whores.

This common man seeks redemption for you  
but forgiveness is for God to give.  
These pearly gates that your spirit seeks  
among the hymns that praise this earth  
are but remnants of the pit gates  
and in their rust they are jammed shut to you.

The chosen few were Maggie's men  
their daggers have been cleaned of blood.  
The wits will praise your passing,  
A final toast to Caesar,  
"she came, she saw, she conquered"  
but in truth they know,  
the evils of today still carry your mark.

Iron lady your soul will seek the light  
But your light went out long ago  
during the Devils reign.  
Lost in the furnace of men  
lost in the pride of England.

And now your service has ended  
redundancy killed you too.  
Your victories have gone into history  
but Steel and coal  
and the grafters of England  
will never forgive you.

Steven Cooke

# The Tommies Lot

While general's drink their claret wine  
In taverns far behind the lines  
The English Tommy spills another wine

On Flanders table made from mothers pride  
In front of guns in faltered stride  
The sweet wine of youth seeps away  
Dragging dreams of tomorrows men  
Into broken hearts to be remembered by she.  
A vintage lost to you and me

And, when autumns harvest came  
The Tommy was the crop,  
The Somme and Verdun is where life was stopped  
And when winter froze the ground  
The Tommy slept with reaper sound  
Content to die with enemies damned  
Caressed by yesterday's ghosts in this Flanders land

When loved ones sent letters from home  
The Tommy bore silent pain alone  
For tears are for lovers and kisses for wives  
Now replaced by the tears of loss  
And boys too young to find love

Their first kiss that of the bullet  
For they were not too young to die  
Though "mother" was often their last dying cry

Now the guns are silent  
And the fields are green  
The marble cross the epitaph to nightmares dream  
In death the axis and Allies are equal  
In life we failed to stop the sequel,

So remember that cross and remember these lads  
Remember the wives and remember the dads  
Rest in peace our brave Tommy lads.



# The Wind Will Never Forget

The tears of life now sleep with them  
the guns have found their silence.  
These fields of war are now in peace,  
only the poppies remain

These red petals that cover this land  
with remembrance of youth  
of the suffering and pain,  
for our lads have passed this way.

These brave boys  
Who bore their innocence  
to this thing we call war  
who renounced their gift of life for us

Strangers to you and me  
yet more dearer to our souls than family  
for here lies the cross of Jesus  
the pain of everyman

That sacrifice that only youth can give  
their epitaph is our peace  
The rose of England bows its head  
in reverence and humbled grace  
and may god bless all of them

For our boys were the roses  
that flowered in every village  
the Jack's and Jimmie's  
the Tom's and the Bert's  
No more footsteps for mother to hear  
their laughter stolen by the wind  
all quiet now in village square

But on a wall in a foreign land  
their names are lovingly remembered.  
Grandchildren shout their names with pride  
for they are the seeds of England  
this immortal rose cannot die

for they were beautiful

And we who are alive  
You who take the time to stop  
who bow our heads in silence  
will feel their pain

Feel the pain of Nations grief  
as the petals fall from above  
and we will remember life  
for life is what they gave to us

The poppies that grow in Flanders field  
are reminders of those who have no grave  
and our tears will remember them too.  
We who live in freedom,  
because of them, because of them.

Steven Cooke

# The Window Of 2012

The rose has framed the summer  
the leaves have done their duty.  
The flowers have shed their seeds  
and the hedge rows offer their final feast.

This community of life will forget the rain  
that killed their babes.  
Nature's rage is done  
the darkness of winter approaches  
and sleep is what some will fear.

The bee has done his work  
and death will come tonight.  
Though his legacy will protect the queen.

The swallows are over the ocean  
destined to follow the sun,  
they are a year older  
and the wet summer has taken its toll  
the ocean will be grave to some.

The old man who now wears his scarf  
reflects on another summer gone,  
memories of youth grow distant  
and his love for her lingers on.

In the city the face of humanity is blind  
for they have forgotten nature's laws.  
Their life of work and mortgage pressure  
will bleed the soul on corporate mill.

The mandatory tie is a noose  
the alarm clock the wake of despair  
and the rain will greet the morning rush,  
dripping its sorrow on bowler hats  
that feed on the drones they cover.

The autumn years will find them mute  
for release from work will kill.

Life outside will be a stranger  
the ant has lost his way  
and up above the clock ticks on  
into uncertainty and fear.

The blanket of winter has come for payment  
the cold will take the weak,  
But nature will hide her treasure  
for hope is buried from icy grasp

The spring will heal the losses  
and the rose will rise again,  
her beauty will frame tomorrow.

And those who wish to look  
those who admire her beauty  
will flourish in her fragrance.  
Their essence will join this chorus of life  
the cries of the new born will fill the earth  
for the circle of life is complete.

And these corrupted cities  
will look away for the markets are open  
feeding a mirage of wealth.  
Like the magpie for shiny things  
always wanting more.

Death will come in comfort things  
like cigarettes and alcohol.  
though pockets of gold will not follow  
for heaven was lost in yesterdays gamble.

And the ants will rush for one more day  
for all will be forgotten in time.  
Except for the Rose  
her nature cannot be bought  
and she will be with us  
To the end of time.

Steven Cooke



# The Worker

Torn from sleeps oasis  
The razor stings my mortal soul  
A glance in the mirror to know I exist  
For the face of god lies there  
And behind this forced smile  
A lunatic walks in the shadow of me

But within this admission  
The asylum of my brain  
Has a garden where sanity grows

For bound in chains we gather  
Though wind and snow bar our way  
Pouring through these asphalt veins  
Clogged with cholesterol filled ambition

For Monday morning dines once more  
On another workers soul  
And all the while the tick of the clock  
Winds down this drone  
In happy reapers favour

But the rebels among us  
Hide in the womb of our imagination  
To keep the corporate illusions at bay  
And my secret butterfly carries this tortured soul  
To a place beyond the dollars eye

Where the snake rattles its distain for humanity  
For solitude is all I desire  
And all the while the clock ticks on  
Forcing my existence to trickle down the cities throat  
Quenching this monster, they call progress

And as I crawl home through zombie minds  
I feel sorry for the splattered fly on my windshield  
For its freedom has ended  
Yet my dreams of freedom linger on  
Although within my heart I know

These too, will soon be gone

Steven Cooke

# Thoughts Of A Soldier

(World War One)

Memory is our contribution to life  
and sleep the eternal dream.  
This voice of youth has one last breath  
and we give it to you.

My comrade's corpse will be forgotten  
like the ash from generals cigar.  
Our blood will pour to fill their ambitions,  
So sweet is the vintage they consume  
at Christ's table this night.

The claret of soldier boys  
will oil the guns this day,  
and prayers will be sent  
In the glory of our annihilation.

The lines on the map grow restless.  
The horses all know their fate,  
for the rot of progress is in the air.

Our preachers gather their crosses,  
we fight in the name of God.  
But who does God fight for?

Is mercy beyond his gaze?  
Was this his plan?  
To create the widows vale  
that descends upon the son of man.

Is a soldier to see the face of God?  
Through eyes that burn in a yellow mist  
breathed on by fallen angels.  
Whose kiss causes him to gurgle  
for fear he tells the truth.  
Tells the truth,  
to the last believer on earth.

Futility rules this slaughter,  
we are the waste of nature.  
Men and boys are but leaves  
ordained to fall in the winds of war.

There is no sanctuary from the guns  
that spew their rain of death.  
It digests us all.

Sins and good deeds forgotten.  
In retribution they take vengeance  
on we, the poor souls below.  
There is no dignity to be found here,  
Only death in corrupted mud.

Life is the enemy  
and reason the sword.  
We are a disposable commodity,  
and this land will feast upon us.

Mothers of England  
let your children play.  
For tomorrow they will come  
to make angels on earth.

This generation will haunt the sky.  
Sculptured in the storm clouds that gather  
and you will see your son.

For that is where your boy resides.  
Free from the sins of man,  
free from the fear of war.  
And your tears will remember him,  
"Jack ", who was, your little boy.

Steven Cooke

# To Whom It May Concern

As the moon argues with clouds  
In winter's tormented sky  
A frail life lingers in the shadows  
Waiting for death's hello  
To glide over the river of Styx  
On the spirit of his funeral swan.

.  
Through frosted windows,  
A whispered orb appears  
Hovering over mortal conscience  
Mirrored in masked apparitions,  
Around the candles flicker.

Voices fill the room  
Calling the cemeteries dead  
Calling witness to this passing  
And In the Rocking chair a figure

Speaking, plumes of mist  
Looking from a dark abyss  
Where once there was a face,  
The scratching of a Quill,  
Writing, moving across a veil of grey,  
Hiding the pages beneath

The quill of mankind  
Is Here to empty your soul,  
Though your heart will try and hide,  
The truth,  
The person that is you.

For in his wisdom  
Creation gave you a conscience  
And that will always betray  
This person that was you  
And another testimony is taken  
In the trial of Mankind



# Tremble

(Ode to a True Love Lost)

She kissed me under the lamp post  
A kiss so soft that my lips trembled

I felt her being entering my heart  
And my soul wrapping itself around her  
Wanting to keep for eternity

She looked into my eyes, my body trembled  
Life had only one meaning, and it was she  
Suddenly I was afraid.  
I longed for her to be my destiny

But relationships would have to be sacrificed  
And Love cannot be sullied with such things,  
And then, she was gone.

We both knew it could never be.  
She was the Earth and I was the Moon  
Orbiting on the outskirts of her Life,  
I was always just a tear away.

The years have past  
And still she lies deep within my being.

If there is a God, pray grant this Sinner one last request.  
When I take my last breath,  
Let my Soul find her again  
In a place where time and space have no meaning  
And let us be together as one,  
And we will welcome eternity together, as one.

Steven Cooke

# War Horse

(In memory of the 3 million horses killed in War)

Taken from Cloven fields,  
Where skylark and Grouse Linger.  
Into the bowels of a troopship  
No scent of Morning Dew, No Bird song  
Only sweat and urine,

And the distant sounds of war.  
No light, no grass of home, only the whip.  
For he is bound for Flanders field  
His rider glorious in his regalia, sword in hand  
He was his master now, and the horse's salvation.  
Kindness, a quiet word, an apple, their bond complete

His last feed, bathed in a red sun, which  
Hovered above the morning mist hiding yesterday's sin,  
For this is the place where death is king and reason is lost

This day, where man throws sacrifice to the gods,  
Like so much sour grain, crushed, and discarded,  
To blow away into the winds of time,  
Recorded by nations into the ledgers of loss,  
For now it is time

The lines gather, then the slow trot, their proud heads, restrained,  
Their mouths foaming on the bit,  
These beasts of burden knowing no fear,  
A site worthy of Valhalla

Their Trust, in man, galloping where heroes dare not go  
Onward, onward, they gallop,  
Row on row into the fog, No grass here,  
Only mud, and wire,  
Waiting for the days cull.

This place, Mans, ultimate betrayal,  
Onward, Onward, Nostril's flared, Eyes wide, steam rising from his Flanks,  
Every muscle, straining for the next stride



Then the Stumble, a moment's recovery,  
Blood pours from his proud neck, then the ground.  
His head rose, a hand strokes his brow, the last kindness.  
A wavered shot ushers his life away, like so many before,

No one will weep for you my War horse,  
No letter home,  
They'll be No mention in dispatches, No Memorial  
For you are just an animal,  
Sacrificed on the altar of man, left to rot in Flanders field

But for those precious minutes, he was more than man,  
This day, of all days, he kept his bond, did not flinch,  
Though death was all around,  
Galloped blindly through the death rattle of the guns, face on,  
No retreat, Onward, Onward,  
The magnificence of the horse, No equal, never forget,  
For it is the shame of a nation, a sin of mankind,  
To undo the hand of god  
No glory here, only an empty cup left on the altar of insanity.

Taken From Cloven Fields,  
Where the Skylark and Grouse Linger  
For I will weep for you,  
My noble friend,  
My War Horse, You Magnificent Beast

Steven Cooke

# What Lies In Dreams

To walk in dreams  
upon this vale of illusion.  
Each footstep of your being  
crossing the labyrinth  
of a shy but guilty soul.

Sleep can be your witness  
as Galaxies collide creating life  
for we all belong to infinity.  
That place beyond our imagination  
where the darkness hides  
a beauty not meant for human eyes.

Reality is the myth  
for you now walk with gods.  
This world is a reflection of you  
where water and mirror are one.  
The shimmer of a distorted face  
lies on the sea saw of humanity.

The light you inherit  
the darkness you manufacture.  
But in death, at least  
your priest will lie for you.

Life is but a feather  
It glides through the winds of time.  
Sometimes rising to your endeavour  
more often it is a passenger  
falling on a broken wing.

But no matter  
your feather is immortal.  
For it caresses the meanings  
of such wonderful things  
and you beat the odds to be you.

Morning brings a pencilled rubber  
the mind will leave this page,

and somewhere in the universe  
another being will dream,  
of things beyond this human race.

Steven Cooke

# Yellow

Fumbling through a sheen of yellow  
the land and sky merge as one.  
and earthly song goes silent.  
The stage is set for death to breed,  
tendered by phantoms, catching the unwary  
these purveyors of men's souls

The rats were the first warning,  
blind panic the second.  
The sting on the eye brought the fear,  
the search for the mask the doubt.  
was it by my side or did it fall,  
Into the mud or by my gun.  
Focus, Focus.

Shaking hands, remember the clip,  
the burn in the eyes is it too late.  
The feel of rubber sticking to my face,  
breathe slowly searching for the cough  
heart ready to explode, relief the smell of air.

Then silence replaced by the gurgle.  
The gurgle of dying men walking blindly  
grasping for air, but the air has gone.  
Replaced by the yellow that kills  
that yellow which delights in a slow kill,  
that torments the sanity  
of the view behind the mask.

To watch a man die in corrupted lungs,  
to see his sweet words of life,  
replaced by a froth that no man should see  
The mercy of god is elsewhere this day,  
as the eyes blister, his body writhes  
and the light is dowsed from his existence.

Yet still the burning pain remains gathering its strength,  
rushing through the brain.  
No lasting thoughts of home,

only pain, manufactured by Adam  
the gurgle, the last words of a dying man

And I who have survived will witness this,  
every day of my life,  
and people will say "there goes a hero";  
a soldier of the Great War.

And I will accept their drinks and cigarettes,  
and for a moment I will forget  
The yellow that killed my friends,  
but the yellow will return

The yellow that will always follows me,  
hoping for a helping hand,  
a rope, a pill, or a shot,  
the choice is yours.  
As long as you make the roll call right

But the yellow can never take  
the memories,  
that my comrades gave to me.  
For they are immortal  
and my comrades will always watch over me,  
As I will of them.

And now the yellow fades from memory.  
The ghosts will walk no more  
for the ranks are full  
the last Tommy has passed away.  
The trenches a depression in a field,  
and the poppies are histories reminder,  
Of what has passed this way.

Steven Cooke