

Poetry Series

# **William Cook**

## **- poems -**

**Publication Date:**  
2006

**Publisher:**  
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

## William Cook()

William Cook is from NZ. BA Hons in English Literature. Published poetry in *Canta*, *Zephyr*, *Poetry NZ* (20) , *Southern Ocean Review*, *Indite Circle*; short stories published in *Remark* issue 34 June '05 and *Mindfire Renewed* June '05. Currently working on an noir-crime novel & a collection of short stories.  
Website: , features poetry, prose and graphic art.

# Annual Commemoration Of The Divine Passion

You eclipse me & I have stained the Sun with black love...  
death from a bottle cools my ardour  
for a while, until I see you again.

The damp distance is bleached  
then blackened with shadows  
& flocks of shrill birds, screaming for blood

Bound hands grow swollen  
body – silently numbed  
a bed on fire I laid upon  
now reddened with burning life

In these blistered hours of insomnia  
objects are like lead  
I believe they are other things & less than they are  
as if fewer of them would create  
a stillness like sleep  
— if only to dream of her again

The cushions beckon in the mirror  
white & summoning, judicious  
the bed reflected in that fantasy land,  
that round pool of hope

Why stir dust on a sacred tomb  
as I lay down with a prayer for darkness  
a snowflake melts on her virgin eyelids  
somewhere & now, together again  
we drink every breath of poisoned air  
she asleep, I awake...

Not believing in resurrection —  
I stroll through cemeteries  
looking for her name, not wanting to see it  
the damp brown earth reminds me  
every hour we breathe is our last;  
victims don't want blind skies  
their toil & consistency as mortals

are truer religions than faith itself,  
so welcome me as one of them — into your house.

The last star's neon spark  
will be dissolved painlessly.  
Morning will knock on the window, still —  
like a grey wet wind  
slow day will begin to stir.  
Livestock shiver in the cold dawn,  
some kind of slaughterhouse morn  
the blood drained dreams  
dissipate, replaced by  
perpetual sameness...



Awakened from a long dark dream,  
I thought I saw her somewhere in there  
the awesome force of sleep's return  
shut me down like wild song  
like black amphibious wine  
a hollow ghost —  
peering senselessly through the cold  
window of every lost night

This morning once again  
on motionless ground,  
& along with it  
drinking cold mountain air outside;  
refined air, once, our air...

Across the crisp cool valley — white snow  
blue mountains of decrepit glass & dream  
dissolve, in this fresh green brocade

Hope sparkles in the diamond dew  
that mirrors the sun  
for a minute  
while across the way, beyond this place  
despair draws its dark curtain of cloud  
over the broken road;  
another day annexed,  
closer to you again, I come.



## B & D

B&D

There I sit in Dunedin Public Library  
my spine turned toward the Octagon  
through concrete fences & facades  
Robbie Burns' statue shambles  
arms outstretched  
birdshit on his shoulders  
to fumble through my pages  
as I stand unopened  
squashed between Baxter & Curnow  
quite happily, at least...

& there I flourished  
quite briefly, if nowhere else  
in my florid imagination  
at Auckland University Library  
in the soft hands of a woman book-buyer  
who took a chance on a 'no-name'  
(just file me under 'C')  
to fill a quote with her order  
& no doubt if she stopped to read  
she would have found every typo  
every tumour, but hopefully  
she would have found the gold  
beneath the grammar & heard  
the breath behind the stammer  
before she cast me on the shelf  
somewhere between B & D

William Cook

# Blue Dress

Where the wild things run  
through the grass & the pine-needles  
next to the shore  
you walk  
blue dress  
wrapped tight with wind  
your arms folded around you

the pines creak & sway  
the surf brushes against  
wet sandy shores  
now grey with rain  
waves tumbling greenly  
to a gentle swell  
small ripples run  
from each rain drop  
heartbeats  
for you

the horizon curves a white line  
dark clouds refuse to part  
& nowhere can I feel you  
yet there you stand  
in the dunes  
your blue dress wrapped around you  
horizon in your eyes  
& the cold wind blows  
you evermore away

William Cook

# Blues Riding

i'm riding the blues  
along your way today  
got to have a scene  
with you  
again today  
& the wind blows cold  
against your cheek  
black lipstick shining  
& the rain's coming down  
sky's gone dark quietly  
& then you're  
fading in & fading out  
fading in & fading out  
& i'm part of you again  
some other time and place  
blue skin  
fine chrome trim  
hyper-real survivor fear  
stumbling  
to the door  
looking like a brother  
bred in hell of mother whore  
flame on  
free spirit fly away  
another time, another place  
another day away  
to see your face again  
hashish  
i see your face again

William Cook



# Genus Canis Liberalis

I hate to hear dogs barking  
it reminds me of the humans  
that put them there behind the fences  
of boring little houses  
with unimaginative small yards

it reminds me of stupidity  
bleeding from those ignorant fools  
like blood from a wound that never heals

it reminds me of war  
& the things that die therein  
that had no cause to die  
& blunt greed that passes for posterity  
& all the other putrid human traits  
that we convince ourselves as honourable  
& pure  
we without fault or accountability  
judge & jury  
to the poor dumb animals  
we breed & burn  
with our twisted love  
empirically void of truth

I like to hear dogs barking  
with excitement  
when they chase rabbits into the briar  
from across an open field  
with the sun on their backs  
& not a whip

& then the dog will sit  
paws crossed  
a smile on his fresh face  
amongst the shade of nearby trees  
in long grass  
& it will watch & wait  
unafraid, content  
just a dog

unfashioned by anything other  
than its own pure nature

far away from fences  
small yards & even smaller  
human minds.

William Cook

# Invocation Of A Dream

invocation of a dream  
here you are  
hundreds of wishes  
a lifetime of looking  
& a pinch of providence  
delivered with remarkable  
timing

between your shoulder  
& soft neck  
the smell of you  
dreamed about  
the reality  
all encompassing  
your soft words spoken  
deeply  
so believable  
with those beautiful eyes of yours

i must've done something  
right, this time  
each day brings  
a new level of tangibility  
of surety  
resounding in your smile  
& in my heart  
pounding like a bass drum in my chest  
every time I see you  
every time I think of you

William Cook

# It Has Been Given

What lies outside the heart and soul is restrictive decision  
that leads an arterial bypass past life's true intentions.  
Love gone, never to be reflected in the passage of one's lifetime  
tradition all too familiar in the lives of many  
too old to go back, to dream the dream  
to partake in life's big meanings.

Losing space in a trajectory of time  
net advancement of four walls of fear  
all else uninvolved, seems so far, so sublime.  
Rain starts falling, damp blankets of ash  
caresses turn from light to sodden  
with frozen napalm kisses  
the light fair fall of a night moth's breath  
a bludgeoning hammer-fall of sharp steel smelt  
new ferocious pounding —years of distilled rage  
comes racing from the Heavens, intent on forced age.

The capture of moments long ago lost it seemed  
as past lapped the present and you became dream.  
Marching becomes possible, even after Blindness occurs  
programmes control programmers  
with a subliminal switch, in guise of fashion  
something new created, for betterment of humankind?  
Something borrowed, twisted, mutated, mirrored as virgin  
brings something broken into being.

The glass age flourishes with apparent lack of meaning  
save, for something better, something new — created,  
while plans behind the construction became lost forever.  
Forgone was the reason and not known, were the results.

Journey we go, into a place where lost buildings of time  
stack against each other in a delicate city of memories  
walking these barren streets, searching for hidden clues  
we get lost in the quest of looking for answers to the future  
in gloomy poisonous back-streets of the past  
black galloping pillows of cloud  
hasten like advancing sentries of night

against the grey sky, proclaiming  
ferocious thunderheads glory  
blossom and stab tender side of the West  
the East's long sabre, draws out and twists  
spilling gushing blankets of deep, deep maroon  
all over mortal Earth  
casting great floods from the West  
decaying plagues ravage the North  
famine bleeds dry the South's cold haven  
East connotes slow suicide in prophetic insane seclusion.

Green stems from the smouldering grey and all the glass age:

redeems itself back to the crimson beaches, whence it came.  
As the journey recedes and tired time takes its course,  
the past (to the future) is no teacher, but a painting.

Always hunting, without knowing  
for three properties of motion:  
the beginning, the middle, and the end.

Life, death, fire, water, Earth and ocean  
bringing in the space of the old: the new  
the idea, the propulsion, the result is seen in all things.

Cause, effect, and result of action  
is a troublesome discourse  
for those beyond consciousness  
for those beyond feeling  
for all those TV babies breeding...

William Cook

# Lost

I'm waiting  
the night is down  
the sweet smell completes  
my solitaire sonata

through barking streets  
your whisper bleeds  
calling, calling me

I wait for the sound to die away  
as it does, too quickly  
lost again in the divided mind  
between there & here

I call your name  
in attempted harmony  
as if this would make you hear me  
any clearer

anything at all  
to entice you from the black ether  
from the other side of night

William Cook

# Love Is For Suckers

immortality is bullshit  
the only thing that lives forever  
is the night  
love is bullshit  
imagination breeds disease  
the heart is hung up  
on blood  
& cigarettes  
& cholesterol-free cutovers  
but not love  
love is for suckers  
who think the heart feels sick  
because of love gone lost  
love is just dumb  
human desire  
for something we can't have  
like immortality  
or the night's  
last  
gasping  
breath.

William Cook

# One Minute Of Freedom

realization  
a never-ending vision  
the horizon  
perpetually receding  
a being, spinning  
quite alone  
eyelids dissolved  
that second of freedom  
when the heart  
skips a beat

I can make the sky cry  
the clouds fume & rage  
worlds shrink  
level hills/mountains  
smash cities  
hold the sun burning in my hand  
then swallow it  
I am alien  
& everyone  
& no-one  
a giant killer  
& a giant  
I am dead & alive

where is the ritual  
that means more than this?  
where has it all gone  
if it ever existed at all?

a naked couple  
straddles the white steel flagpole  
gazing hungrily at the twisting flag  
flapping lazily  
in the warm breeze above  
sweat glistening on their slick backs  
they squat in unison  
tilting heads back  
grasping the pole then



sliding up its length  
shimmying, legs elongating  
their bodies stretch & merge  
transformation of national pride  
into tumultuous serpent  
twisting on a skewer

meaning — in pain  
or in fantasy...  
what follows us  
will be our shadow  
our blood  
hot & boiling  
with hate  
wanting nothing better  
than to kill  
our rotting memory...

to the insights  
of the poetic vision  
the truth dictates ignorance  
to replace purpose

god cannot undo what has been done  
she cries, after she hits me  
this hurts me more than it hurts you  
& she is right  
my pain only occurs in flesh  
my conscienceless heart  
hung like a stone in cement  
youthful arrogant sadism  
wielded like a fist in her face  
her daughter runs sobbing from the kitchen-knife  
held playfully at her throat  
now back in the drawer  
hidden from view — coveted  
she rids the house of all its weapons  
to cut meat is father's privilege  
I make the most of my own collection  
carving apples with a stolen cutlass  
like 'Jim Hawkins, ' considering  
the spot between the captain's shoulder-blades...

nothing is as plain as it seems  
when you put words to it  
when you apply words to the world  
hopping like a sand fly  
ducking diving dodging hiding  
behind between on top of  
wind-blown dunes  
alive with writhing copulation  
through the swaying swishing cutting-grass  
pink bodies entwined in a sandy furrow

caught between  
a gesture & a pose  
you contemplate my gaze

lost  
in a beautiful moment  
your heart flows  
out of your face  
into my mouth  
burrowing deep  
in my throbbing heart  
like a knife

I am your servant  
my dry lips drink  
from your river  
from your wounded life  
yet words don't quench  
my body's love for you  
without you  
the thick air I breathe  
is poisonous & empty...

it is terrible without you  
when you are next to me  
I sleep  
I dream we are together  
forever in dream  
or reality — whatever  
I will strive to be with you

to appease this thirst  
with your beauty  
with your evanescent presence  
melancholy  
your form eludes me  
your effect  
preys witness  
to my beating heart

kids leaping clouds  
as quick shadows scroll  
across the concrete path  
passing fast like planes above<sup>1</sup>

drawn to a knobbled breast of tree  
perched on a reclining withered trunk  
whorls of years knotted in grain & bark  
an iris of ages — a lichened Aeolian  
the wind whistling across its gnarled chest  
collapse = expansion due to reversal of time

everything collapses

My god, My god — why have you forsaken me?  
Eli Eli lama sabachthani?

Why can't we see wind?

Early on, I walked the streets & recognised good & evil at play — I first learnt of their essential nature through TV dreams & broken books that wept from septic wounds so bloody & so beautiful.

At home, I watched & participated in the tragic farce of human comedy performed on every urban stage, set against the fantastic nightmare of domesticity & banal relationships.

I

painted hills with fire & houses with blood — walked on the clouds throwing handfuls of dung down on skittering pedestrians hiding under clotheslines, old cars, smashed mailboxes, pornographic magazines held above their shaven heads...

I kept a journal painted with words & crude ink drawings, to record my existence

in terms of my surroundings...

Death becomes us

More & more

Shifting stark worlds

Impure to pure

the harsh white light awaits

William Cook

# Perfume

i love  
the smell of the city  
the hustle-bustle brilliance  
of life effective in every moment  
sweet ambrosia of death  
sits lurking  
in the shadows of rancid alleyways  
signposted with ciphers  
symbols of strange forests  
hieroglyphics of night's construction  
breathe in  
the humanity  
breathe out  
the horror  
the horror of concrete & steel  
a flailing colossus  
the smell of victory  
over death  
not too unlike□  
"the smell of napalm in the morning"  
lingers  
like perfume in the back of your throat

William Cook

# Questions

You want something new  
from our language?  
Something new?  
Lewd?  
Not over used?  
Shrewd?  
& what would you do with it?  
What difference would it make  
to this little interlude  
called life?  
Maybe, some old words  
thrown in  
to stretch time  
from one point to another?  
Words like love?  
Truth?  
You?  
Blue?  
Truer than true?  
Maybe not?  
Maybe we should just  
shut up  
& see  
without speaking?  
Just feel  
the silence  
of our minds  
entwined  
in some strange  
mute  
alien language?

William Cook

# Sad Case

Pierced  
stabbed  
again & again  
gutted  
Oh! what a marvellous crime  
your love is  
& you're driving me to death now  
on the end  
of your sharp tongue  
& impeccable wit  
seamless  
impenetrable  
& I'm drinking myself  
normal again  
You bitch!  
I love you  
here I am  
come  
crucify me, again. . .

William Cook

# Staring Into The Sun

staring into the sun  
white light  
pure essence  
the burning love  
hypnotic fare  
resolute dawn of darkness  
the eyes succumb  
thirst for pure water  
to chill the warm blood  
pumping to the charred cornea  
essential will  
broken by nature  
made & broken  
seduced by beauty  
the danger of vision  
i stared in wonder  
til i could no more  
senses flared  
flaming  
excruciating joy  
the brilliance  
incoherent, insolvable  
now dead to sense  
recoverable only in  
the pagan ether of each new dawn  
a twinge of soft light  
searing the edges  
of black vision  
& colours remembered  
sights seen  
unbelievable now.

William Cook



# Symbiosis Of Symbol & Sight

Am I dreaming?  
this breast is breathing  
rain is falling

like lead, drip dread  
& the sun remains  
to break through

sprinkling diamonds on the lawn  
mystery dream  
sanctuary scene

& the tall trees march  
rustling leafy tunes, indefinitely  
into the hills  
goose-stepping  
crushing earth  
& they're bringing back the sun  
with them, to their world  
this time  
this trip  
this trip  
this trip  
dripped dead.

William Cook

# The Road Less Travelled - Aotearoa Exodus

We travelled to Mapua  
through Nelson from the Sounds  
in the hot afternoon sun  
between colonnades  
of scruffy apple trees,  
their burden of fruit ready to shed  
sparkling balls of blood  
dancing in the breeze  
& the road rides on  
to Mapua's wharf & over there  
is rabbit island, framing  
the river mouth with a slab of dark pine  
& on the other side  
— the motorcamp, nestled between  
huge trees, not meant for harvest  
just shelter & 'clothing optional'  
the café now spawns delicacies  
a small restaurant behind smokes  
fish & oysters & makes the best  
burgers around, yet here it was  
that another world existed  
& brave men ferried cargo  
across the teeming strait  
on timber boats the size of small trucks  
— even using sails & oars  
& people were withdrawn or deposited  
on these planks long-gone replaced,  
to make way for the new, repair the past  
from Mapua to Nelson...  
still in the sun  
the bay sparkles & a bright sea mist  
covers the horizon — the blue sky,  
faultless — the fields flicking by  
like cubist paint effects in drought  
but still lots of green to lead us  
into night & the broken white line  
of winding black roads  
littered with carrion & daylight  
memories, meanders us back toward

the Sounds.

William Cook

# The Edge Of The Night

A table spread in a tomb, dinner for the dead  
the dead! Why did you pay a visit to my eyes last night?

Night is the time for angels of dreams  
we who, each of us, will one day return  
to our hungry mother the grave. The darkness comes  
from knowing nothing is ours, except death

takes bites out of my heart. O Asclepius pupil  
teacher Chiron, please bring medicine  
to my dead love, and I forever understudy  
will attempt some sort of attainment

to wake with a sore splitting back from the cold floor  
in borrowed clothes and eyes, lent by a saint  
giving at the same time an encompassing embrace  
'Friend, ' is all he said in tears, heart big enough to feed

this dead world. To wake up and see the sun  
if not the glare from beyond, glittering  
on broken glass, beside stretched roadside  
where some had sprayed symbolic worlds and signs

scars full of flowers – to wake is to see  
again this unusual world, whose secret cannot be known  
until we enter the sky, or the earth  
takes the edge off the night, the memory of your smile

## II

Judging this town of sleep, I found it had already been judged  
the Lord on his axe-cut cross of cypress  
he is an incurable domestic bore  
a family man, who never swore a word

an only child with a hollow mother  
full with the carved cares of a household  
wearing his poverty as a coat of arms  
for eyes to look upon that beheld no bravura of vision.

The crisp grass rattles and shakes ripely, dryly  
and all of this in fidelity to death  
it was the same old same old, the hard husk of the ego  
won't ever resolve, yet grinds down hard internally

into the swirl, the wine bitter-soaked seed  
labouring lie - vice is kindled, burned in loins that melt  
peculiar smiles alive, of all hope  
has gone to explore the forlorn desert all alone

far away from the security of grim towns  
where a girl is safe searching numbly in the comfort of fear.  
You have gone or strayed away, never to be found  
I sit and hear sour hiss of traffic calling

this burned and gutted ghost, vague semblance of time  
on and off like one long sick light-switch  
electric dream/confused state of everyone  
greedy for dead love, drain her life, her soul

from every side for me. Greatest dribbling cannibal  
tired Bolshie future, sleep . . . with disease.

### III

Torn in two, I stand between, the idol and the grave  
I do not know anything, I do not know. I do not  
of this world, know anything – nor do I want to  
but I have misled the past and will do so again

bring the teachers to the fore, let them stand  
and be accounted as emperors of their own disease  
and demise. As the sky claps the earth - wrings blood  
from all rocks and far away I fly, every day

from the storm in the brain. The science of the mind  
corroded the body, blinded every mile I ever burnt  
in this life and the next if there ever were such a thing.

William Cook

# The Inviolable Trace

your memory  
a spreading pool of blood  
the dichotomous moon  
of your eyes, reflects & relates  
the tales you told so lucidly  
burred edges  
burnt pages from your life  
fell like ash

across furrowed plains of mind  
your glow is eternal fog  
to my nights  
pregnant with secret rain  
i am waiting to be drenched  
your shadow is black silence

your presence is sonar  
to my pointless revolutions  
i try to cast hope  
into your murky depths  
with you as bait, the hook is pain  
yet this notion seems dyslexic now  
in light of the slow dissolution  
of your memory.

William Cook

# The Moon Speaks To Me Of You

Shall we dance into the night  
you & I  
our words but a whisper?

What is it  
that makes this soft sadness  
so indeterminable  
so impenetrable  
sunk so deep  
into this endless night?

The broken light that comes & goes  
between the darkness  
either side of dawn  
speaking of your memory  
ushering in each day  
each, as if a step away from you  
as if, a step towards you.

I see your eyes  
the moon, dancing in their gaze  
with each tremble  
of our sudden doom  
& each song of ours  
sang & played  
in this old house beside the water  
the soundtrack to our time  
fills each & every solemn room.

& the time still ticks off itself  
your presence no less clearer  
no farther from me  
no closer than before  
it wasn't meant to be like this  
nor will it ever be the same again,  
once more.

To say goodbye now  
would be on breath undrawn

from the body laid supine  
just waiting  
to kiss the stars in your eyes  
your breath, to feel, so warm  
& hear your heart. . .  
far away from this malaise  
each tumbling thought  
into the past  
no resipiscent ripples cast.

It's as if you've gone abroad  
along with me  
far from return  
& when I see you on a grey day  
just bursting with your sunshine  
I want to call out  
but you have blown  
on the breeze away  
from the house we built  
& the time we had  
across the night's cold water  
into the dancing moon.

William Cook



# The Night Is A Woman

The night was brunette  
full blown — beautiful  
& warm so warm  
& tender like the inside thigh  
of a goddess  
eyes dancing with neon  
sequinned contours  
undulating in the dusk  
her hazy musk burning  
her moans so softly  
whispered in my ear...

William Cook

# These Things

I miss u more  
than all my tomorrows  
these futile lines  
bleed heartfelt sorrow  
bemused regret  
that falls on only  
deaf ears  
& mute heart  
clenched like a fist  
in your beautiful body  
to tell u these words  
& have u respond  
anything...  
anything, would do  
& yet i know  
this miracle does not exist  
in this world  
that this gift is something  
u don't wish to give  
or do not have to give to me  
the false illusion of your love  
has fooled me deeply  
pulled me deeply into u  
my senses dazzled  
with the promise of u  
with this fiction  
of my own construction  
these words  
will possibly amuse u  
take time to get thru to u  
confirm your judgement of me  
find a shallow grave  
within your hearth  
burning  
close to your heart  
stoked with limbs of love  
but they must be said,  
these things, this way.  
For this, is my lonely, last attempt,

at love.

William Cook

# What The....?

To piss, or not to piss?  
that is undoubtedly the question  
one in the hand  
& two in the bush  
each — their weight — a boiled egg  
hung by a rubber-band  
ribald balls of soft allure  
the firmament of spleen  
begs release  
only to be asked back again  
like a sinful thought retrieved

To piss, or not to piss?  
it is getting harder  
to contain my answer  
a backyard bum  
grimacing in indecision  
grinding in masochistic mastication  
fat half moons  
a hairy ham face  
grinning in agony...

William Cook