

Poetry Series

Adrian Flett
- poems -

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Adrian Flett()

Born in Pietermaritzburg (1936) and grew up on a farm in the Richmond area. Farm schooled in my early years and then Richmond School, from age 8 years. Maritzburg College, 1950-1953.

Managed branches of United Bank at Rosettenville, Braamfontein and Springs. Self-employed Accounting and Tax Practice from 2001-2015. Now living in Howick. Studied through UNISA majoring in English. Widowed with four children and seven grandchildren. I started writing at an early age, short stories, poems and three novels to date.

A Blasted Heath

Ahead and behind us over bare earth
all blasted by wind's cold raw sound,
range terriers and a deerhound.
Stop, look across our native heath.
Towards the road far down,
bright green bush is fodder soon,
its own success its own doom.

Over parched veld, fingers touch, stark
in this short-lighted winter's day.
There's much to be said but what to say
in fast fading light, though not yet dark.
Space between us all important we know,
though ignored, will become ever more so.
And will be so as the longer we go.

The moon a soft pink fullness as it rises
hardens to a cold steel disc as sun fades.
Our lives collide, emerge from this surprise,
impact others as our decisions are made
in a fearsome flurry, of what future holds.
Lives will change, we'll break moulds.
Or should we wait for tomorrow morning's cold?

Adrian Flett

A Cheval Mirror

The back of the cheval
faces out tells nothing,
or does it?
Out of never changing window
never changing curtains hang
never drawn open or shut
just set apart; say nothing.
Blind cheval back sees out
sees nothing stares out
as if to say, nothing
is happening anymore.

All happened before,
he watched, as she sat
at the mirror each day;
the careful preparation
before the mirror
now a vacant reflection
as he passes by
of hair brush, hairclips
powder bowl, lipstick
pencils to line the eye.

Nothing happens now
only, as he passes
some days he could swear
her face reflects there
disrupts his thoughts, his hopes
hinged now, leave all as is.
As was, before her going.
He could not move or dispose
painful enough to leave
alone; set in hope.
Light filters, casts shadows
just changing as the days
go by, each one moving him
closer to her - further from this.

A Christmas Question

At the end of two thousand and eleven,
people billions had reached seven.
Then there were nine million bikes in Beijing, but how
do we figure just how many there are now?

When you were young
in the toyshop long ago,
I'd know what gift would have done
to delight you, but now it isn't so.

Now too costly too complex
beyond my comprehension,
all this has me in a perplex
of thought - these modern inventions.

Reaching out to you I want to say
have a great year, enjoy Christmas day.

Adrian Flett

A Crossroad

At the Cross sacrifice is a need
no thought if straight the way.
At crossroads we plead
a proxy killing, of special other, paid,

We need the sense as cultures divide
to hear others' ways, needs and thoughts.
Sift through it all; to reconcile
despite the conflict so wrought.

A wilderness memorial walk
will commemorate us here.
Counter all where none else but sacrificial talk
will do; our cultural response is clear.

Adrian Flett

A Fiscal Shrike

Many people I know dislike
the courageous, fearless fiscal shrike.
With small talons and hooked bill
he'll tackle, fight and kill
beetles, hoppers, worms small birds.
This bird's nature seems uncurbed,
he hangs prey out on the fence
returns to eat without pretence.

People in reserves stop their cars to see
leopards drag antelope up a tree.
They watch lions in a pride
descend and devour their prize.
While raptors dive and in one strike
drive talons into doves or the like.
A pride will kill with blood and gore,
but let my shrike, with muted beak and claw,
make attempts to kill his quarry
it'll raise ire and shouts of bully.

08/02/2019

Adrian Flett

A Meander Morning

The wind brings in a front
sounding out the tall pines.
Branches sway, needles whisper, whistle,
sometimes even whine
and sigh in the wind's rhythm.
Below, I wish to be
up in that rarefied zone
but the wind doesn't stoop to me,
instead a cast cone lies grenade-like
helical patterns trace its ovality
though spiky and stark; a flower.
The sky a pale smoky blue at the horizon
as straw-coloured grass waits,
records dew print evidence of my passing.
It's patient - knows Spring is near.

Adrian Flett

A Municipal Lament

We are underwhelmed as the town
labours under mismanagement.
Potholes, dirty verges overwhelm us.
The cemetery is undergrown this Winter
Soon to be overgrown as Spring attacks.
What work will then be undertaken?
Only bodies.

Adrian Flett

A Sprig Of Heather

Heaved the loam then, where grass once grew,
disembowelled soil of terra cotta hue.

Deep mortise mouth so neat,
eager then to receive the tenon casket,
yearned to cover what remained of his life.

Yours already reduced to ash
we bring to spread over him.

□

□

Heaves the loam now, once exclusive,
at last the domain of all who grieve.

And though so many still perish
in the aftermath of apartheid's vortex
at least side by side we lie.

The young work and play together now
not only at life's end.

□

□

Coming down to Applecross in misty
myopic frustration of what we'd missed,
from damp dark soil I pulled a sprig of heather for you.

I was too late, you'd gone. I never knew
until later after London again, Geneva and Thoiry,
at Durban's dreary airport I heard you'd gone.

The heather? I have it still, waiting???

Richmond

28 September 1999

Adrian Flett

A Thin Wind

In the street
the wind chases papers
chatters after tin cans.
Only us lonely ones
out there walking
as the Town Hall clock wheezes
and coughs out the late
Sunday afternoon quarters.

Laughing you lean against the wall
as a thin wind of your words,
coming easily to your lips,
sweeps through me
and chills my soul.

Adrian Flett

A Time To Come A Time To Go

Memories arrive unannounced
in the head, much inclined
to hold in thrall, let them bounce
about, and fill the mind.

Those thoughts when young,
energy filled, I watch hope to be
like them as further along
the pathway I go to my destiny.

Those times of reaching maturity,
now being singularly able,
and thinking one's immortality
to be and remain ever stable.

Watching those depart who want to stay
leaving me more and more alone.
Seeing them all here today
but tomorrow gone,

no semblance or clue of where,
old friends lost in space,
they've gone now, left us unaware,
the only clues hope and faith.

Adrian Flett

Addington Beach1

So bleak so empty is the beach to me
as I walk its lonely sand soughing length
in an aura of sunless disbelief,
for while yet you fought for life under theatre's
harsh light and knife in rubber gloved hand,
I was killing time.

At the tide's high line of fragile crust
I find a water smoothed stone and tomorrow
when you see me at the door I'll say,
'I gathered it while you were in theatre.'
In stead I waited 'till tomorrows ceased.
Now I return it to the deep.

So sterile seems salt sea and sand to me.
Barren wards and carbolic corridors
where trolleys trundle pulling green gowned
awkward-slippered surgeons and masked nurses,
while we in foetal sphere, about your bed
are saying our inadequate farewells.

We stand at the window of ICU
easing eyes tired from green line vigil
in luminous spike telling your life away,
each bleep of the monitor seers deep
until the straight line silence riveted
us into the future without you.

Adrian Flett

Addington Beach2

Hear the surging lift
of water weight sheer and clear
in wave's lip hover and spume,
until the foam dance white sparkle
at the thin top edge
of sensuous lip so finely carved
bowl edge of crystal delicacy
in sun's rays and breeze flighted spray
ridges, cresting with my hope.

But gravity's crush crashes
down and down into white flat foam;
leaves the surface
as a wild animal's coat
spotted and blotched so haphazardly neat
as I feel the load of my grief.

Adrian Flett

Anno Domini 2018

Mendacity abounds in this year.
Honesty, its antonym, seldom heard
amid falsehoods fabrications spuriousness,
dishonesty terminological in-exactitudes.
Lies are the words, if we're bold.
Lies, if the truth be told, are the mould
that fits this fateful year,
fills truthful hearts with fear.

Year filled with Facebook tweets, and the like
the shear speed of info is what delights.
Quick response to messages distort,
leave no time, for thorough thought
before global messages are conveyed,
spread; bend the truth, along the way.

We yearn for times long since left
where written truth, placed in stick's cleft,
borne by faithful bearer, arrived in time to hear
wise words thoughtful and clear.
If urgent then flown by pigeon post
veracity was what mattered most.

Immigrants arrive but cannot stay
they're not welcome, wherever they stray.
Climate change accelerates a pace
we need to soil somewhere else in space,
a new planet to desecrate.
Leave this wrecked globe alone
Pray forgiveness for what we've done.

Adrian Flett

Apple Dreams

As a young girl she would go
into the orchard, into the orchard
and when the firm red apples
were ready to fall, ready to fall
she picked them from the loam red soil
from the loam red soil.
In her apron they bulged and rolled
bulged and rolled.
When firm red apples began to fall
she picked them from the loam red soil.

Now as she shuffles behind a trolley
into the supermarket, into the market
where cold leather-skinned apples lie
packed in the rack, packed in the rack;
she takes them in their Styrofoam pack
in their Styrofoam pack.
In her trolley they lie trussed and tight
all trussed and tight.
When firm red apples began to fall
she picked them from the loam red soil.

In bed tonight in nightgown dreams
into the orchard, into the orchard
she goes and feels the sun warmed apples
rolling glowing red, rolling glowing red.
They drop and roll about her bed
drop and roll about her bed.
Young dream legs chase them down
chase them down.
When firm red apples began to fall
she picked them from the loam red soil.

Adrian Flett

At Humanity's Door

At Humanity's Door

Without bias or malice then
the children that once we knew
mixed and met, with those others
who became different as we grew.

The language we all knew,
though in culture and hue
different. Apart separate we
dwelt; us here, them over there.

Customs beliefs of the past,
through teaching learning,
supposedly we have cast,
they still embrace believe.

In mind's deep recess lie the terrors
that lurch slither and reign,
over our being's very core to
surface unwanted, but ever remain.

How to free ourselves from those bonds,
rid the rule of deep powers that store,
build defences against our efforts
to shed, what we should abhor.

Is it within us to hope to be
beings that do no evil or wrong.
Are we meant to be model mortals
where all will be equal, all belong.

But history tells us a different tale;
it's not possible to be one with each other
to gloss over, submerge and curtail
those differences that somehow prevail.

But what if we can never achieve,
as we grieve, the goals we perceive;

those standards we never fulfil
by any humans' measure.

So where do we lay blame - religion, race, colour
culture, language or just at humanity's door;
excuses and failure to achieve lie
there as we continue to explore.

19/05/2019

Adrian Flett

At Mother's Knee

At Mother's Knee

Where do the demons come from
where do they hide to emerge,
at who's strident call so strong,
difficult to suppress and submerge.

Is their source in old tales and rhymes,
innocent nursery tales heard at mother's knee,
fester in life's troubles and dream-time
whatever standards of measure maybe.

Should we apologize for what we are,
filled with demons from way back when,
bearing it all unable to cast, perhaps unaware
but constantly chagrined, trying to mend.

5/6/2019

Three poems on Racism: In a Dark Recess
At Humanity's Door
At Mother's Knee

Adrian Flett

Beside Polela River

Gnarled trunks over many years
draw strength from river's pool.
Tender tread underfoot
on fallen leaf and branch.
Bees in the flowers above,
old man's beard, fanned by cool
air rising, hangs over
strong gentle flow of river.

We beside its meander
on the cusp of a curve,
inexorably on it goes
from high mountains
in its seaward flow.

We part of its journey
listen, as the murmur
of water's insistence,
its prerogative to drive
ever on, persistent.
Water washed pebbles,
in soft sound of rapid's course,
flash in sun's rays,
reveal in gentle form
gravity's relentless force.

04/03/2019

Adrian Flett

Blood Rush

Suspended in the present
we float, probe crudely at the future;
locked in the now
wistfully we look back.

Relentless gravity pulls
to the grave.
Our counter is,
the tip of the green bud
the leading edge of the falcon's wing
the bow of the Viking's boat
creaming the sea,
to cleave it apart.

In the churn of the cleft water before the bow
in the wing tip turn of the falcon
in the wrinkled green curled bud
is the source.

In furnace heat flush of dross
so strong, surface memories
in a blood rush
of some primeval energy
bursting through to consciousness.

As an old strong memory,
some new exciting idea
or is it a part death,
a small death.
Each to be summed at the end.

Adrian Flett

Brotherton Store

Behind the wide brown counter
the wide brown lady takes your cash
and you know when you get back,
your car will still be behind
Brotherton Store.

Hulks of past motoring glory lie passive now,
as hungry puppies and Natal Game fowls prowl
amid tufts of grass while you lace boots,
and your car settles down to days of quiet behind
Brotherton Store.

A last check to see your car is locked,
keys safely stowed in the rucksack.
The path invites towards Solar Cliffs,
Didima and far beyond
as you leave behind
Brotherton Store.

Coming back, after the river crossing
is Solar Cliffs again and the start
of the never ending path leading out.
Each hill is crested with expectation of seeing
Brotherton Store.

Still another rising hill before you
as you plod on, rucksack rubbing shoulders
and toes each with their own point of pain,
as weary legs head for
Brotherton Store.

The final crest and there's the clump of trees
and the old orchard - no fowls scratching now,
no wide counter over which to buy a Coke,
no easing tired feet or throat,
Brotherton Store is no more.

Like an old man's mouth, all gaps and rotten teeth,
the walls crumble and rot now,

windows, roof timbers all magically gone
in a few days after the wide brown lady left and,
Brotherton Store is no more.

30/12/2011

Adrian Flett

Celestial Sofa

□

Celestial Sofa□

There's mist in the gorge today
early sun nudges as it floats
wisp by wisp eases away
to join the oriole's notes
with cobbled clouds to form
a fainting, Celestial sofa.

The sacred ibis chevron
pierces the cobbled highway,
a disciplined measured throng,
over its cobbles in smooth sway.
Strong Vee shape outlined by
A fainting Celestial sofa.

The huge Vee races in unison.
There's a gentle urgency in the view
of each thrust of wing, a vision
of silent power, slicing through
the sight of cobbled sky against
a fainting Celestial sofa.

Adrian Flett

Corded

In sporadic sleep, self-maligned muttering
swims the hulk of contriteness,
floats in circles; returns to argue
each fine point of stupidity.
Wake from sleep a mere gel.
Hope coats a husk.

Eagerness to please
leads a lapse to friendship's
warm lulling arms.
Now if, to seize the moment,
sever what remains corded
there is none other
to supplant you.

Adrian Flett

Defence Of Dandelions

Given half a chance
dandelions will dance,
if left alone, at best
they don't seem such a pest.

Bright faces that show
their sun-heads come out
all faces of yellow,
as Nature's display is about.

Whisks of white float and fly
puffed in the breeze
before your very eye
to spread their seed.

So when you see dandelions are about
some good gardeners will give them room,
to dance and spread their yellow blooms.
Not all enjoy them though and go pulling them out.

Can't imagine why they don't give a chance
for our dandelions to dance.

Adrian Flett

Early Spring

Sages worry, they monitor their gauges
'This is the driest Spring in ages, '
they say, they fret and fuss.
'What will become of us,
if it doesn't rain? '
But it does again, and again.
Spiders crawl from underemployed gauges,
now rain-filled to reward attendant sages.

Leaves cast six months ago
lie rotting now, down below.
Those in trees not yet loosed,
but no longer of further use
are ruthlessly thrust aside,
left to wither now and die.
Spring's growth-thrust of green
all around us seen.

Grass asserts with each blade
arrogant opposition to efforts made
by ardent gardeners to suppress
its buoyant assertiveness.
Man's desire to control emerges
and results in neatly clipped verges.
Sacrificed are dandelion, lamb's tongue
and clover, soon to flower, if left alone.

Incurved bills probe the grass
for subterranean fodder as Hadedahs pass.
Trees glisten in sunlight, display their skirts
of new green leaves, a reason to flirt.
The robin still seeks cheese each day
but his nursery duties cause delay.
Dogs behind fences are eager to run
I tell them, 'Spring has indeed begun.'

Felling A Tree

Think before you fell a tree,
think again and let it be.

At the host, the very core
where trunk meets soil,
the secret zone; causes life to soar
as roots draw nurture as they coil.

Harshly is the felling done.
Wordless as a lamb
trees yield to gravity and succumb
through growth ring and limb.

Moments before a balanced frame
full of buds bursting to emerge.
Too late now to claim,
or respond to Spring's surge.

Winter's filtered sun, Summer's shade,
space empty now, gone years of history.
Memories over time will fade
leave only tree's mystery.

Adrian Flett

Flies Are Faster

Given half a chance
dandelions will dance,
if left alone, at best
they don't seem such a pest.

Bright faces that show
their sun-heads come out
all faces of yellow,
as Nature's display is about.

Whisks of white float and fly
puffed in the breeze
before your very eye
to spread their seed.

So when you see dandelions are about
some good gardeners will give them room,
to dance and spread their yellow blooms.
Not all enjoy them though and go pulling them out.

Can't imagine why they don't give a chance
for our dandelions to dance.

Adrian Flett

Galileo Knew

Galileo Knew

Galileo knew; sun stands as Earth and I rotate,
lets its shafts of light glance and grace
while I wonder at the trust we place
in this fragile uniform though steadfast pace.

Galileo knew; the sun stands still,
while we revolve, he knew it always will.
Yet the Pope needed Galileo to recant,
his faith and belief in turmoil rent.

Galileo knew; faith, belief were part of it all.
When I watch dry leaves, feathers fall
as they do because of gravity's pull,
but in vacuum, fall as fast as a metal ball.

Galileo knew; when he withdrew
nothing changed that he knew.
Ahead of his time his research revealed
what no church or Pope could repeal.

13/06/2019

Adrian Flett

God Botherers

They're out early today
in full voice you may say.
If they're bothering me that's okay
at least they leave others for a day.
Once a week's my turn to be bothered by each
in turn, Jew, Roman, Protestant and Greek.
I have six days of the week to restore
gird my loins, prepare for more.
Bothering god is the sport we know
with room's full of those ready to go.
All migrants waiting to depart
in the blocks ready to start.
Well prepared, bothering to the last
in the boat, the rope ready to cast
off for Styx river crossing
despite all the fussing.
If it's mine to tell
I'm a major botherer as well.

15/11/2015

Adrian Flett

Going Back Again

Will things ever remain,
stay always the same,
if we go back again?

Rather keep in memories halls
those trees, rooms and sturdy walls
the way things were, as I recall.

Will they all be there now?
Can't tell, I'll never know.
So now I won't ever go.

Adrian Flett

Grafted In

(Tatham Art Gallery Gardens)

While just a boy
I ran and played:
ate phutu from the pot.
Schools in village and city
took all that away.

Don't call me alien as you
sit haunched now
on winter worn grass
amid raucous, joyous game
I long to learn.

Shepstone's statute,
cast in concrete,
stands on colonial plinth;
surveys the city and your mirth
while mynahs and pigeons
sit and shit in healthy disregard
for imperial image.

Gone forever now
the precast ideas
as grafted in I sit
sidelined and watch.

Adrian Flett

Home

If there is anything I still see
it is those soft, those rolling hills, they encompass thee.
Old oaks holding to the last, Autumn claimed leaves,
the flash of sunlight on breeze blown trees
and lush slopes skimmed by fleeting cloud shadows
in distant patches of pasture and meadow,
with the herd etched against the green,
here we were left by Africa, unseen.

If there is anything I still feel
it is the strength you yet reveal.
Like warmth from the stove long ago
yielding, under your hand, hot bannocks from the dough.
Remember the hadeda's strident calls
echoing over the green clad hills,
and those wide stone walls,
how safely they held us all.

Adrian Flett

Ian Player

When I; just a boy, he was famed
of river and of rhinoceros.
A pioneer, leader - much acclaimed
the champion of wilderness.
When first I met him face to face
evidence there was of the iron will.
Physically limited now but yet in its place
champion of wilderness, river, rhino still.
Through Jungian dreams, foundations, trusts
to exhort, to encourage all seeking release,
his world-wide fame now exists.
The legacy for all to know inner peace.
Lasting, his impact on both young and old
There for all to have and behold.

Adrian Flett

In A Dark Recess

In a Dark Recess

In the deep root of the mind
the dark recess of the other
me, not me, sees difference
in the unknown fearful other.

Before us beyond our ken
the other me etched to vent,
knowing the wrong of it,
but too late to prevent.

Bigotry sways it between
what is not left behind
with what might have been.
In the recess of the mind,

the terrible shadow rises
engulfs all we prepared.
Don't lay blame at history's door
we've moved beyond there.

But have we come that far?
if at all, as culture calls.
Still locked in the dark recess
some more equal, though not all.

04/02/2019

Adrian Flett

In Cat Cave

Climbing out of Cat Cave,
the others far ahead,
I felt the sense
the intense presence,
ever with me now
as vital thought stemming from
paintings just seen,
in Cat Cave.

The artist, the one
who painted such true depictions of life
-wild all about him-
walked this grassland
gathered his paints,
made his brushes searched for
and found canvas,
in Cat Cave.

No scope for sketching
for margin of error
as he begins to portray
trance induced images,
drawn by his power of perception
and prior execution
in his mind,
in Cat Cave.

The light fades to
a mellow pink on dry grass
but his artistry evident to all,
lifts him free of time and culture
a statement of sheer creativity
locked forever in my mind
though left behind to fade,
in Cat Cave.

Adrian Flett

In The Chinwag

As I sip coffee, read the news
eat muffins, take in the views
a couple floats by
his arm goes down to her thigh.
Her jumper stretches and bulges
in all the usual places.
Listen to Chinwag chat
mostly about this and that

Through multi-muted murmurs
of old folks' rumours,
spread by wags of chins
talking of people's multi-sins,
while sipping frothy cappuccinos
and expounding on life's scenarios.
Chins wag and lips utter
as people sit and mutter

Unsteady feet just able
to fetch a sachet from nearby table,
an old man sweetens his cup.
In the opposite chair his hat sits up
watches every move he makes
as he enjoys coffee and cakes.
Will time ever drag
here in the Chinwag?

Above the coffee machine's roar
things busy up, voices soar.
Parents sip coffee from mugs
while their boy nosily sucks
at a straw stuck deep in a glass.
All three enjoy their repast.
The menu's up on the far wall
Pancakes, toasted muffins it's your call.

As she goes to pay
Her handbag's in the way
Her face shows the passage of time,

creased by two or three lines.
Eyes squint, focus and probe
fingers stab at the pin code.
Cushions In the Chinwag's hum
soften seats for plump and bony bums.

Steam rises from cups, it curls
with chat and giggle of three girls.
Their voices a clarion call
of exuberance above it all.
Around the girls are muted moans
from old folk's limps and groans.

Adrian Flett

In Your Eyes Plain Writ

I have stood with Wordsworth and I have heard
that still sad music of humanity.
It is the hope that human thought, shared
with men gives to us, and therefore an audacity
not sad, unless you think so few attend
or even hear a us there's no choice,
no life in diversions, most pretend
use brave know and rejoice
still turn to face what is to come, you do
it is in your eyes plain writ, I see it,
in your voice still echoing through
from so long ago, when first we met.
Does your first happy greeting long ago
mean you saw these things in me? Only you know.

Adrian Flett

In Zambezi River

In Zambezi River

In the upper reaches a fast
expectant flow ruptures the river's urge
around vast islands that split the flow
boldly before the approaching surge.
Borne by impetus of thirst for equality
it comes, carries huge vistas of gravity's
load, inevitable ever down it goes
from Africa's regions far flung flow
downstream thunder with energy's release.
While elephants at water's edge play
we give hippos their good space
in vision overload of elephant, hippo,
gap-billed storks and bee-eaters.
From the mile wide falls sheer spray
still visible as up river into fast setting sun
boat's motor thrusts against stream's pace
while sun sets over broad stretch of river's face.

7/4/2019

Adrian Flett

Landing At Heathrow

Over heads of fellow travellers
and padded backrests
through the mean slot of cabin's port
I peer at the sliver in the east
of faint scimitar pale old moon
as the sky lightens, knowing
we'll soon be landing at Heathrow.

Out there cold as snake skin
alien in thick shrouds
of scudding skimming clouds,
moist with clammy trails,
lifts cradles us all
in controlled descent, the wing
in tight chest suspension over Heathrow.

Opens, between wing and cloud
a sudden window, my first view
of the soft, the green and ancient
countryside of England,
meadows vague and soft,
lanes between horse guards hedgerows,
as we touch down at Heathrow.

Now in full view of crowded 747
floods of sudden emotion
drive unannounced tears
to my eyes and I, a boy again
relive with Wordsworth and Williamson
all the vicarious pleasures of youth
real at last as we land at Heathrow.

Adrian Flett

Leaf

From uppermost leaf
to root mystery beneath
we derive as four season's pass
the unnoticed unrewarded task.

Buds tightly curled in sun's rays
those swollen, bursting shoots
spread, grasp each day as they
ray by ray draw succour from the roots.

Leaf a gift freely given, beyond our choice,
we give no thought; slow to recall
how we, in spring's green, rejoice
but in autumn we let fall.

Winter leaves, they fade, fall and rot
cast aside of no further use
to be crushed under foot
each passing step an abuse.

Trees now in their nakedness,
leaves shed as their time has come.
Sun's rays filter through trees' undress
all thoughts cast aside after work is done.

So small so adept is a leaf
to be a motif beyond belief
at doing such things that man's
modern technology cannot span.

Adrian Flett

Metro Cammell

In evening's glow we'll nod by the familiar places,
I'll try to stay awake as my station approaches.
But in the morning, crystal morning
alert, fresh as the long harmonica screeches with friction's load
to a halt beside me, we board, sit, yawn and wait
for the rest of the day to begin.

Sailing on steel in studied silence of tabooed eye contact
but when, with a fast flick you catch an eye
what floods of smiles and conversation
now the ritual barriers are down.
Faces that seem familiar need confirmation
as they're seldom seen two trips in a row.

Now a nonchalant glance through the window
tells where we are but the list still rattles
in my head like the joints in the metal,
Florida, Unified, Maraisburg.
Going home in reverse they rattle
in the drowsy afternoon.

Turning north at Mayfair; first sight of cubist mountains
rising high over foothills as low sun wheels, strikes eyes unprepared.
Brown Braamfontein tells me Jo'burg is day will soon begin.
But we're still in the foyer of the , "Good morning, "
startles fat women in glass cubicles as they clip at tickets and grin.
Are they the new foresters issuing permits to hike the wilderness?

Amongst the giants wind rushes and swirls
and mist high up hides the square grey peaks.
I dream of Gray's Pass as my feet strike the unyield;
feet that dream of spongy grass-rooted paths,
for I see the sheer rock faces, the grass of the field
and caves filled with ancient paintings.

Mountain Breeze

You, a fresh mountain breeze,
flush away all musty web-dross
of old links, long trapped
in corners of my mind.
Leave a neonatal crispness
a serene harbinger; of us.
I knew it too, when first I saw you
but never dared to hope `till now.

Adrian Flett

Muse

When I was a child I'd run down the hill
not far from the house, to play beside a stream
then work up the valley to the place
where the eye broached from under a rock.
There clear spring water seeped and oozed
dripped into a small pool; stirred the air
cool, dark and green above moss, fern
and damp pebbles, as I'd watch and listen,
when I was a child.

Watch and listen with me the broach
of the eye is a slow seep, the air stirs,
a growing dampness darkens pebbles
to a cool glisten of clear, sharp movement
as droplets gather in the font.
Sip from soft, small cupped hand,
then the long wait for the font to fill
as with child's eager gratitude
I sip and savour my words,
from whence they come.

Adrian Flett

Name Change

At the bird bath he sits
drinks in sips without care
of the new name, they insist
on, he's blissfully unaware.

What is it that brought
about this really absurd
scientific shift of thought,
no agreement with the bird.

Just chose names we'd not heard,
or refer the change at all;
they never consulted the bird
and went ahead, as I recall.

I say to him rather ignore
that a robin doesn't exist
and keep the name, evermore
even when others do insist.

Adrian Flett

No Need Of A Wide Vista

NO NEED OF A WIDE VISTA

Over early grass dew drops gather
shaft sun's oblique colour arrays
stayed there in red yellow green
and white, a colourful display.

While the sun, ever still
in this early time of day
watches dew drops, me move
as those refracted lights play.

I have no need of a wide vista
here is enough to fill the mind.
My view of dew gathered sparkles
leaves all troubled thoughts behind.

While an oriole without response hounds
this one-sided argument from a distant space,
to his melodious notes I'm mute to respond
If only I had the voice to enter the debate.

9/4/2019

Adrian Flett

Primulas

Primulas grace my garden
see me all winter through.
At winter's end, without pardon,
what do I do?
I mow them down, every one.
For they fade and all about,
my comfort through winter done,
spring is coming out.
Come autumn; unheralded they rise
each flower penetrated by
bee, insect and human eye.
As beauty fades -they're left to die.
If after such treatment they return,
what joy to greet them again
in another spring. I hope to earn
that right, if we both remain.

Adrian Flett

Pushing Eighty

Those other places teem,
echo shouts of anguish and joy.
Our long gone days seem
so close now yet so far away.
So when is a good day to go,
Or is it a good day to stay?

Memories echo back resound
down passages bounce off walls,
back to me they rebound
of long gone days, I recall it all.
Why walk when you can run
As we did in nineteen seventy one?

Still now, silent rooms greet
faint calls, in times' halls
of needs, I could meet
then, now not at all.
It's a bridge too far now, time to lean
On a firm stick in twenty sixteen.

A free mind goes on its way
to pursue a new path.
Sun sets on yet another day.
I'll bask in its quiet aftermath.
When is a good time to go
And how will we know?

All those dissipated times
Left me stranded in a queue,
A corridor in memory's lines
As now I recall, form a view.
All about me I see
Those so important to me.

Adrian Flett

Rob We Filled St. Mary's

At the memorial service of a friend,
Richmond 22 January 1991

Rob we filled St Mary's
spilled into the chancel
and the choir.
In the gentle rain, others.

Sweat sticky thighs
stuck to pews
were cooled
when singing we stood.

Deaf old ladies
smiled, shuffled, sniffed
and stage whispered
across the aisle

While young were
gaudy tied
slicked and jounced,
out of place.

The vicar's voice,
raised above impious hadedas,
spoke of love and service
to the district.

While some women, remembering
love and service of a specific sort
wept surreptitiously
beside cuckolded husbands.

You lived your life
out in the open;
now we, heads bowed,

examine ours in tight secrecy.

Adrian Flett

Roger Bannister

(the champion First sub-four-minute miler, May 1954.)

To most a sub four-minute mile was a definite no,
to Roger B, a target to go below.
To walk a sixteen-minute mile makes me
four times slower than Roger B.
Thanks to Household and the Brothers Wright
whose perseverance led man to powered flight,
and trips to the moon and maybe Mars;
they paved the way to the stars.
While others dithered on the moral issue,
Chris Barnard knew the heart's just muscle and tissue,
and once he had the courage to jump
they all began to replace man's pump.
So I'm quietly confident now that Roger B
is merely four times quicker than me.

Adrian Flett

Sonnet At Call Of Roll

The bell rings, brings us by its toll
to the quad, our presence to express,
around the hallowed square at call of roll
to answer prefect's call, 'Here' never- yes.
Behind those memorial doors,
voices echo off the old brick walls
of names called down long corridors
as each young voice answers to the call.
They echo still, memories of long ago.
The generations of countless feet
that stood on bricks, worn down low
by those before us, others will repeat,
the press and wear of many more
at times' endless pace, as before.

Adrian Flett

Sonnet To Sea And N3

I love the sound of the sea
yet abhor the roar of the N3.
Wave upon wave wash their way
up the sandy shore with floating spray
while trucks thunder the highway,
bearing goods to and fro
from there to where no one knows,
Jo'burg to Durban back and forth they go,
a steady stream fills the air with noisy roar.
Far rather sea's call on sandy shore,
with tides ruled by sun and moon
than the raucous roar called a tune
as rubber on road makes a rough sound
to which we all are so closely bound.

04/05/2018

Adrian Flett

Soul Airport

□

Departure times are unknown.
You never meet those who've flown
ever before; turnover's high
leaving us wondering why.

But this is a crucial zone
though we call it home.
Arrivals and departure unplanned
just based on supply and demand.

No thrust of engines, roar of jet
departures unexpected quiet, silent yet,
arrivals patiently await their space,
hoping for a satisfying place,

in the random queue, await their space.
No first come first served in this place,
be patient sit, and await your call,
the last call, to end it all.

Adrian Flett

St. Valentine's

People buy bright garish cards
where bleeding hearts abound,
red roses rise in price
and soon are not to be found
by desperate slow thinking lovers,
keen to impress on St Valentine's.
The patron saint of lovers
never could have thought
so many cards and flowers,
so much chocolate would be bought,
with amatory messages for the day
sent by some; by others sought.
For me then, when I think it through,
it's not the day that's special, it's you.

Adrian Flett

Storm

A damp thrush still calls,
gutters drip then flow, roofs leak.
The oblivious storm climaxes,
rain patterns of parallel stripes
against dark green of ironwood,
A grey pinstriped suit, caught in the rain.

Verandahs glisten and shine
in returning light as the storm
moves to lash elsewhere
and annoy another thrush.
In soaked soil earthworms move,
food to satiate thrush's hunger.

Now you can hear each drop
as it strikes a leaf
after the excessive exuberance
of water, moments before.
Laughing doves emerge from under eaves
as gutters, turgid moments ago, drip now.

Drip, splutter and trickle impotently
no longer driven to ecstasy.
All rest from orgasmic efforts
while the matrix drips and sighs
in satisfaction, the interloper moves on
to other conquests and violations.

In the morning's post-coital freshness,
after the storm's ejaculatory climax,
the receptive matrix is damp dark soil
shaded by oaks, girded green.
Mist lifts in the gorge, eased out
by early sun, to curl and dissipate,
wisp by wisp.

Adrian Flett

Tantalus And I

Down below we go
Tantalus and I,
destined to suffer from
unappeased hunger and thirst,
submerged in water to the chin,
whilst fruit of the very finest
hangs before our eyes.

I open my mouth to speak,
lift my hand to touch
and, as with Tantalus,
the water rushes away
to dryness; the fruit
vanishes into the evening air.
I turn to see your face
and you're no longer there.

Adrian Flett

Task Of Life

Believe, just like Sisyphus,
the need to keep heaving the stone
laying all emphasis
on rolling it ever upwards, alone.

An ever present rope about the neck
on waking and at noon
we resume the task and yet
never get relief or rest too soon.

Sleep does bring some relief
from labour at the ultimate task
where echoes call, restore belief
to get final respite from the task, at last.

Adrian Flett

The Demise The Rise Of The Day

The Demise the Rise of the Day

The sun curls up folds itself away
inward in a crepuscular way,
fades into itself and gives sway
as dusk draws in at the end of the day.

What of the new day to come
with vast vigour of the young,
so filled with promise and expectation,
packed prospects, and clarity of inception.

So the demise of the day
brings the hope of a better way,
the rise of a new day we can trust
to follow, to be even more robust.

25/06/2019

Adrian Flett

The Mandela Robe

The monster sloth inexorably creeps
though deflected, it never sleeps
only slows, then goes, leaving a trail
an all-enveloping mantle of iron mail.

The mantle is everywhere and in the van,
the white-rooted sloth-like man.
Moving forward slowly, robe over shoulder
At times waiting patiently, as a soldier.

Up in the high ramparts of the stone tomb
they stand arrogant, unrepentant as clouds loom.
Afraid they look down on the mantle cloud
black, enveloping, spreading mantle shroud.

The mantle corners the bearded lord
black-suited, silver-tied prig, whose firm jawed
granite dogma would engulf,
with harsh unforgiving Calvinistic love.

The crammed train chugs on towards Pretoria
bearing him over carcasses of political dogma.
As the boy looks out over fresh burial mounds
all neatly partitioned, colour grouped ground.

Somewhere is one still in the special womb.
As she trudges forward to give birth to whom?
Everywhere on the Ulundi Mundi road
they tell of a boy who'll wear the Mandela robe.

At times a little boy is the sloth.
Running through the veld on bare feet of both
ideas, smiling at the strength of Africa's call,
smiling at the mantle covering all.

Everywhere there is a little boy who waits
for his anointing and his country's fate
to come. Look not for man's power probe
As a child who will wear the Mandela robe.

While the civet slinks the sacred ibis stand and wait
for the news the hadeda's call will relate.
"Little boy beside the road
One day, will you wear the Mandela robe?"

14.08.1989

Adrian Flett

The Year 2000

Although I know it isn't so,
for we still have one year to go,
it is a wonderful thing to be
alive at the end of a century.

But living at the end of a millennium's span
is something not many have done, or can
claim to have trusted their P C
to achieve Y 2 K compatibility.

31 December 1999

Adrian Flett

Thee And Thou

Thee and thou
are out of fashion now.
You and your
are grammar's new lore.

Aught and naught
ought not to be thought
of, let alone used
by modern purveyors of the Muse.

Foresooth and alas
are really quite crass
while quoth and whit
sound not up to it.

To choose betwixt albeit
and howbeit is just how you see it;
if you use archaic alack
it means your verse is way off track.

To split an infinitive is a bitch.
It's something up with which
we will definitely not put.
Grammar's rules it won't suit.

The damsel peradventure in distress
is now a chick under stress and duress.
It's sad they've all gotten out of use
belike we must subject some new ones to abuse.

Adrian Flett

Tinker

Itinerant tinkers seek the broken pot
carpenter the rotten doorway.
Bees fill the empty comb
ants repair the home.
All seek the emptiness.
The void is what we seek
so don't avoid the void.
□

If pots and pans were poems
then a tinker I would be,
to bring out the hidden word,
beat, bend, patch, tease it free.
As a tinker tinkers so a writer thinks,
never truly content 'till all is
burnished bright, or cast aside.

Adrian Flett

To My Children

The spread and the division of love
without its diminution but rather
its multiplication is only possible
in parents' love for their children.
A father's seeming detached, aloof
yields to a mother's organic link
and takes its place in proper order.
But with its semblance of detachment
it is no less in strength, nor is it so
because of the father's imperfections
and mistakes he me all's true
for I love you all much more today,
if that is possible, than when first
I saw you new arrived from the womb.

Adrian Flett

To My Children 02

It's of a sudden I wake,
have overslept, you've all gone.
If I'd waked earlier - grasped the moment
while it was there.
If I'd stirred and risen earlier
it was the morning of your lives,
instead I had little time to spare.
Too late I want to recall you all
give you all my time it's yours to take
use as you wished then and now.
You're all long since scattered in life's wind,
the years passed, moments flown.
But I grasp and gather them now,
each one - store them in this morning's delight
to fill me with the joy of their remembrance.

Adrian Flett

To My Children 03

In the adult still I see the child.
It's no desire to reverse the clock
but I see now I'll need one day
to leave you and grandchildren behind.
This is a natural thing not to be grieved.
For each a short walk/swim in the gene pool
in the long trail that started where?
and where will it end?
As my offspring marches on so
I wish I could stay and watch and take care
It is not so much that I want to stay,
and I do, but when the time comes
I'll not want to go.
I know I'll not want to leave you all.

16/09/2010

Adrian Flett

Trust

On porcus aortus I weigh
as carotid press comforts fear.
Short-lived assurances falter, though.

There's no fail-safe,
my net an abandoned deity.
Overtures now, smack of
death-bed confessions.

But trust in porcus aortus
and maker of pace,
not Maker, leaves
naked exposure
to terrifying void.

Adrian Flett

We Met A Lady

At the crossroads a sandstone post
takes the strain of the fence,
strand by strand; in the background
the high escarpment rises beyond Winter's veld.

Floral dress neatly over knees she sat,
luggage beside her near the post.
Black buckled shoes shone as if she trod too lightly
to disturb the powder brown dust of the road.

We slowed, vacillating between the photo
and the thought that she would expect
a lift and we, full to the seams,
bulging with bodies and baggage.

Her smile stopped short our greeting
and apology, "No I saw you were full, "
as we took our picture and, suitably chastened,
left her waiting patiently for the taxi.

Adrian Flett

Were I The Full Possessor

Were I the full possessor of your soul,
your body and you of mine, as we
that once were, then forever would we be
suspended, free from gravity's pull
obligations and other things that weigh
us down, back down from the summit
to were now we remember with me
how we were for so short a day.
Of all the intended thoughts sublime
not said or done on the high slope,
only the memory now vividly fixes and builds hope
each hour and each tick of time,
hope that one day it will be in reality
as it now is only in our dreams.

Adrian Flett

Were I To Lose Her Now

I met an old man□
he ought to know
and he said,
"If you love her let her go."

You tell me, old man
to let her go.
Show me how
and I'll show you
furrows of joy.
Instead glands of sorrow
in awesome piles
of desperation
gather in vacant eyes.
I'll show you
taut gut clenched
in paroxysm of fear.

Stubble chinned booze
ticks time quicker
but stubborn cerebral lobe
is slow to join
in the rout;
instead - remembers.

Her golden gossamer threads
out and out, float in space
bind me secure
but a single snip
at her whim or will
severs me to
orbit as if unhinged
from this globe.
Just a raft beneath me
in screaming, rushing silence.

But she is here;
in her scent of neck hair
nose buried deep

safe to quell the sheer
gut twisting fear.

Adrian Flett

When I Jog

When I jog, each metred foot is thrust
one after the other in rhythmic procession.
For with each iambic pentameter must
the mind jog in obedient succession.
The body locks into a steady tread
a treadmill for the mind to follow;
for the heroic line is the neural lyre,
the measure for the mind's voice to borrow.
A runner bustles by with disdainful ease
striding passed me with graceful pace
and I remind him as the heel of each
iambic foot rises in my face,
"Ah! Runner, you may not know it
but you just passed a poet."

Adrian Flett

Where Is Home?

Lying at my mother's breast
to feed, to sleep to rest.
That was all I needed then
in the world back when
no other thought would intervene.
No place or person came in between
us then:

before then, in the womb, no recollection
of that time now, but on reflection
it was closer and better, safer
more focussed and secure than later.
The first home was the womb
a place of comfort, place of home.

When all else is quiet
there's a call at twilight
from a bird flying home to roost
makes me ask:

is home still buried at mother's breast
with shock I find, she's long since gone
left me searching out there, on my own.

So is home in my head
moving around as I'm led.
Sometimes slow to agree
just where in the world I should be
but at last learning to accept
covering over all else, for the best.

Adrian Flett

Winnie-The-Pooh

WINNIE-THE-POOH

is turning ninety two
So what can we do?
Say thanks to A A Milne, for you.

1926 October fourteen
you came into being
since then your fame has been
as huge as ever we've seen.

This now famous bear
has been everywhere.
Age hasn't shown its wear
or its tear.

In languages remote
your story is often spoke,
All fans remain devoted
in long years never out voted.

Chris Robin, Eeyore, Piglet and Tigger
all swell the cast make it bigger
but you remain, as I figure,
the icon that will linger,
always.

Adrian Flett

Zambezi - Eager River

Zambezi - Eager River

Current lines, moving marks mellow
in insidious water fast and smooth
hasten passed eager to plunge.
Every second over the falls
huge bulks of unhindered water bellow;
but wait agitate at the lip, hesitate
then drop away into vast hollow.
Hastening water whitens waves
made visible now in sun's rays.
A heavy shower of spray
in the updraft billows
as from the falls mist rises
while many islands swirl
river's fast flow
into wide current curls.

02/04/2019

Adrian Flett