

Poetry Series

James Tipp
- poems -

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James Tipp(20-06-1945)

I began writing poetry in 1969 and to date I have self published 24 books of poetry. I have begun a new concept for poetry for me that is, Pictures and words using digital photography I combine my photo's or pictures that inspire me framing the finished article and exhibiting them in galleris and exhibitions. I am married to Elaine who is an artist.

A Chance Encounter A Poem Of Love Over Hate

Beneath the London landmark of St Martins
A meeting of cartoons and reality surprised me.
Political art broke down the prejudice of either side
Showed the futility of hate in all our lives.
Then the meeting of reality, two faces undistinguishable
We are bereaved women, Palestinian and Jew you choose
Each a victim each in pain a pain so real within their eyes.
This pain had no cultural divide such idiosyncrasies irrelevant
Now they travel the same journey together challenging purists
To look in the mirror of hate and see who is staring back.

Dedicated to Robi Damelin & Seham Abu Awwad

18 January 2010

This poem was written on the London underground after what was for myself and my wife a very emotional meeting with Robi & Seham challenging us to find ways become involved ourselves.

James Tipp

A Child Shall Ask Them

What's it like to be old mum
What was it like as a child
Winters were really cold then
Now they always seem mild

Was there snow on your boots at Christmas
Did you wrap us so snug and so warm
Was the story still told then of Jesus
Of the stable and where he was born

What was it like at Christmas Sir
Was the playtime spent out in the cold
I thought I would ask you Sir
'Cause you must be really old

Perhaps we should ask the vicar
If only I really would dare
He's so old its quite possible
He was actually there

Yes seen from a childhood perspective
Christmas is always old and yet new
The story has been in existence
Always told 'cause it's true

To each generation he enters
Asks people to live in his way
To change the world for the better
This child who was born in the hay

James Tipp

A Different Kind Of Mary's Song

Yes Bethlehem was small insignificant even
So how do you think I felt called as a child myself?
Least that's how I felt, young vulnerable and scared.
The songs they would sing forget my fear, my anxiety.
Forget I was to be a mum for the first time.
That day and all that night I struggled, was it a dream
Was I fooling myself and Joseph was he fooled as well?
Angels with messages don't happen to ordinary people
Having babies when you've never known a man unheard of.
So in this town and in this place we trusted in God.
The questions why here? Why now came later?
Tonight the little man lies sleeping, a little man
In a little town with a little mum, somehow
They never tell the story this way, on his birthday.

James Tipp

A Dockyard Pilgrimage(Chatham Kent)

The sun cast its heat
I sat in the cool of this historic place
Here I pondered and dreamt
This seat shadowed by an ancient wall
Brought comfort and allowed the muse to run.
'Avast there sailor what ship?
'The Pelican sir'
'Man the sides captain coming aboard'
The rigging dripped like rain
Onto a red painted deck. ready for war
'The French are out., war it is, we sail for the Nore'
Man the braces...
I stirred the echoes of the past
Grew dim and distant
Again the soft sound of an Indian summer
The droning of the insect life grew louder
The red bricked building seemed on fire
The droning turned to a whistle,
The whistle to the crump crump crump of falling bombs
Steel hatted figures dart here and there
The dockyard lit by the incendiaries.
Men fight to save the ships
The war has come to you,
Who for so long sent war to others.
The sun warmed bench brings echoes
Of a nations history.
Where press ganged men awoke in fear.
Here now the young seek learning.
People come for recreation.
Pilgrimage through this site
Listen to its echoes
Of sadder times and bitter times
Lived by ordinary people
Who never knew they made us proud
Gave us freedom made us what we are.

James Tipp

A Man Called Maze

I call to a power within yet hate myself for weakness.

I make decisions which in myself I cannot keep. I am weak and stupid unholy, unreasonable, unresponsive, uncontrollable and sometime unrecognisable. I seek for holiness but find only loneliness. I do things I despise in others, and those others despise me for them. I despise weakness yet a soggy sponge is like concrete compared to me. Placed on a pedestal by others who forget to tell you their rules so you breaking them is very easy. Yet even then there's no excuse for look how easy you break your own. How weak you are, yet some see you as a tower of strength leading some to God and pushing some into hell. You complex person, your name should be Maze for some find their way through you and others become hopelessly lost.

J Tipp 1970

James Tipp

A Poem For My Dog Casper 1993-2002

You have gone my little man, my companion
My friend through thick and thin
In rain and shine we explored the quarry
The country lane the hedgerows.
That handsome face and golden coat.
Wet nose dripping with expectation
The walk would bring in new smells.
The house this room, your chair lie empty
A stillness that cries lonely; and empty space
Where once my friend lie sleeping.
I mourn for you for you were family
Though you never spoke a word
Your love was real and freely given
I miss the nudge that said open the door.
The perfect timing of your clock for dinner.
The patient wait for your piece of toast at breakfast.
You enriched my life, farewell my most handsome friend.

James Tipp

A Poem For Now, Today, This Moment

Our lives are lived in the millisecond of the moment
The past is beyond change, cannot be tampered with.
If only we knew this truth, instead we plan and wait.
Looking forward to the future living in a false tomorrow
I have witnessed so many disappointments first hand.
Listened to the tears of regret, seen the scars of waiting.
For a dawn that came and brought change unexpected.
Yet still I carry the burdens of yesterday and tomorrows hopes
Like a checklist to be dealt with and worked towards.
Whatever happened to 'enjoy the moment' thinking.
It is dismissed as unworkable despite its reality today.
What can you do to change yesterday or tomorrow?
What you can do is to change the plight of the poor and oppressed
You can do something now in this moment pray, give, now.
Then in the millisecond that you have you will have made a difference.

James Tipp

A Poem On Difference

"What is the difference? " they asked
The tears in both their eyes were warm and salty
What is the difference?
In the pain seen in their dark eyes.
What is the difference?
In the life blood staining the ground.
They made a difference
By weeping together and sharing their sorrow.

Dedicated to Seham Abu Awwad and Robi Damelin

Written on the London underground after meeting Seham Abu Awwad and Robi Damelin in St Martins in the Field at the Cartoon Exhibition.

James Tipp

A Psalm For Today

A Psalm For Today

The language of old was couched in awe and wonder
Fire and power, subjection and domination, fearful language.
The wonder of the stars laid out in majestic beauty, awesome.
So we struggled to find the language of humanity addressing the gods.
But in another time and place this language is anathema, subservient.
We are thinking beings, not pots or vessels, not clay images, we know.
We know the world is old and the universe is vast, and still there's more,
The image of a demigod is one we seek to change, democracy, and ideal
We seek to bring to this orbiting sphere we call home, earth, our planet
Is god dead? Should we move on and up and out and wherever, alone?
The universe is full of more wonder more questions, more un-knowables
So why not change the metaphor, the language, to that of wondering
To that of searching, to that of involvement and discovery, with the unknown
To still believe that in all this vastness and complexity life has a meaning
A purpose that lies in the mind of one who conceived it all and calls us on.
The moment we conceived the complex question why? The box was opened
We search still for the answers and demand the right to ask the questions.
In no other sphere of life do we use ancient maps to guide us and our thinking
Informed by but not governed by ancient explanations of our beginnings
Our seeking after truth and daring to move from the past, is essential
For truth lies out there as well as inside the human framework, and mind
Allow us the freedom to seek another language, another metaphor, in our time.

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James Tipp

A Stranger Called Erik

Struggling, the old man tries
Agony is etched on his face
Confusion in his eyes.
He has walked so many years
One foot after the other.
Now he learns again
Only one foot
His arms in youth
Lifted and carried
Today when he needs them
Their memories are past.
The bars seem high
His weight intolerable
Muscle memories confuse
So his pain is seen
My pain recedes
Another lesson
In the school of life

James Tipp

A Suumer Walk

The fern lined path rises step by step, ever upward.
The climb is essential to gain the exquisite views.
Rocks covered in gentle waving fern acts as a backdrop
The sea is calm displayed in various shades of blue.
The path meanders on up and down even more stairs.
Suddenly you turn a corner a surprise awaits!
Flowers in abundance lie strewn across the headland
As if nature has her own florist stall to display her wares
This island is full of contrast each with their own beauty.

Walk from Petis Bo bay
Guernsey 2013

© J Tipp

James Tipp

A Winters Walk

This winters day defies the season
The sun kissed lanes resonate with atmosphere
Kent in the sun a delight to mind and eye.
Yet few invade the quiet wayside lanes
Isolation is a joy, a cleansing from people
From the noise and clamour of this world
Where value is found in man made things
Bricks and mortar, stokes and shares.
Here all is free, the sun, the scene, the air.
Such peace invades the tissues of the mind
Creating inner cleansing, true value, self worth.

James Tipp

A World Of Upturned Faces (Thoughts Of The Preacher)

The time has come
The word is read,
The time to listen.
Theology, philosophy;
God's man Minister speaks
To upturned faces.
A time to pause, pose,
Look keen, look bright
Look out!
The weekly ritual,
Hours spent in prayer
Reading, writing,
Regurgitated on
Upturned faces.
God speaks, challenges
Comforts, convicts.
Yet the man of God
Will never know
If the upturned faces
Listened learned
That God loves them.
Assurance is their need
The key to people's hope
To know the tomb is empty
That he's there
In the valley of the shadows,
Upholding in the dark,
Uplifting in the deep,
A presence when all is lost.
He holds, sustains, comforts,
Brings joy and peace
To a world of upturned faces.
His message is given
Yet needs to be received.
Or will hang forever
Above a sea of upturned faces.

James Tipp

Advent Poem-What Kind Of King

We are waiting for the coming
The coming of a King
We'll cheer his mighty armies
We'll dance and shout and sing

He will free us from our captives
Reinstate us with great power
I hope he's coming soon
Hope this will be his hour

But the one for whom they're waiting
The one to give them hope
Brought no armies to release them
But just a towel and soap

He came as one among them
A King who came to serve
He called for them to follow him
If they only had the nerve.

Today he calls us just the same
A king whose power's benign
He comes to be our saviour
The choice is yours and mine.

James Tipp

Advents Colour Is Now Green

The scientist declare the small apocalypse
Global warming is on the Christmas agenda.
Act now or leave no future generations
Stark choices to change our ways, repent
A religious word meaning to turn around.
So we watch the Jungle, X Factor, Strictly
Get focused on who should win as though it matters.
The big picture too big the selfish gene holds sway
The decisions for tomorrow can wait, later is ok.
December once was focused on a peasant birth
A child born in poverty, crudely wrapped in rags
Whose message was about future and repentance
Learn to love one another as you love yourself
A challenge to the selfish gene, overcome it.
A message about the bigger picture, Gods view
'For God so loved the world' hope outside ourselves
So Copenhagen will come and go with much fanfare
The crowning of the dancers and singers go on.
The lights will sparkle in the main street, Bing will sing.
But the story of the child will barely impinge the conscience
The message of his father lost in the clamour of the tills.
This is our greatest threat to survival, forgetting God
Forgetting it's his world, his promise, his story, in a baby.

James Tipp

Amazing Love

Human love demands relationship, response
Needs the oxygen of acknowledgment, recognition
Nobody loves in a vacuum, love dies without contact
Ceases to have meaning or relevance ceases to be.
So why does God love humanity? Here is contradiction
Mystery, amazing love, that has no boundaries
Has no dictates of communion, is always there
To bring His grace to undeserving humanity
This love is all one way like a constant stream
He listens and comes alongside the stranger
But the stranger is the one who does not know God
God knows the stranger, loves the stranger
With amazing love, agape love, self giving love.

James Tipp

An Ode To The Wisdom Of Leonard Cohen

An Ode To The Wisdom Of Leonard Cohen.

Youths certainties have distilled into the amber nectar of uncertainty
Youths visions now seen through the cataracts of time and experience.
The grey haired man, lined face, who proclaims the truths and visions of youth
Makes you wonder were he has been, what he has seen, and why he has not
moved.
Age the distiller of all certainties presses on and the desires of ambition fade
'Been there got the t shirt' the expression of the old and getting older.
Will anyone listen to the voice of the sage and old wise men, unlikely
For youth must find its way, learn its lessons, dream its dreams, forever.
The wisdom of the wise is wasted on the youth, they are just sad old words.

© J Tipp

Inspired by his new book.

James Tipp

And The Carpenter Came!

And the Carpenter Came...

A subversive Jesus! please wait outside
Talk to me after the orchestra have finished
The procession passed, and the servants,
Dressed as they are in splendour and pomp
Have taken their seats with dignity.
Whilst the congregation stood in silence.

I listened but no one said "come up higher"
So should I really be here at all in the line up.
In the world they say Master and Lord
It shall not be so with you, an echo of subversion,
From a carpenter who was only invited, allowed in
So he could fix the stage for those in fine robes.

Here a fisherman's friend is sucked, not followed
The power of priesthood re-instated, intermediaries
Standing so the people can see the godhead.
Forgetting too often that he is the living one
Who ever stands before us, goes before us
But we have become the curtain restorers.

The people cannot see or hear his words
Because of the signals that are distorted
Paradox reigns, masters hiding behind servant words
Dressed to kill, we kill the message, the truth hidden
Inside our pomp and ceremony, a carpenter waits
To remove the stage and go his way, saddened.

James Tipp

Another Side Of Psalm 139

How often do I sit and think about the how?
How I was made, I know the process
The physical joining of man and woman
But the real how is just an echo of hope.
Was it in love or despair, partners for life?
Or just a passing encounter in the night?
Did they know what they had brought about?
Would they wonder was it worth all the bother?
My capacity for love and hate are real essentials
They help me move on and hold me back.
My capacity to change, develop and grow
All keyed in the instant I cry out and breathe
Wonderfully made, so the psalmist said.
Can I argue with such a proposition?
Would it not be churlish to deny the truth?
Yet the how is still unanswered, still mystery
When I think and really enquire about the how
I am left with the miracle of life, that is me
This complex structure full of mind and spirit
This paradox of good and evil has life in abundance

James Tipp

Are We The Genesis?

Are We The Genesis?

Man is looking out into space

Longing for there to be
Other sentient intelligent beings.
He cannot bare the thought of being
Alone in this great ocean of space.
He insists the law of averages must apply
That other life must exist.
But just suppose that we are the Genesis.
That here on this planet all life will evolve
That will ever evolve in the universe,
That we are still in the primeval stage
Of all that God would have us be.
We have seen the ascent of man,
We witness it in our growing knowledge
Of where we have been and
From where we have come from.
In language and architecture
In developing cultures
In theological and philosophical ideas,
Layer upon layer has been laid down
So now in this present time
We are unlocking more of ourselves
In terms of genetic understanding.
We are out in space with no idea where to go,
For all seems dead
Beyond our light and understanding.
Yet in spite of this we remain primitive,
Unable to find ways to stop humanities
Urge to kill and go to war.
Unable to find a means to feed the millions
Who starve in a world of plenty,
Unable to work together despite our fear
Of loneliness in the cosmos.
So perhaps we are the Genesis
Evolving moving on reaching out
Into our unknown

Discovering how to grope our way
Into space into our minds
Into what makes us what we are;
Until the time will come when from here
All life will seed the universe,
That man will either go on and up
Or here the experiment in freedom
Will grind to a shuddering cataclysmic halt.
Yes maybe we are the Genesis
The Revelation lies far ahead.

James Tipp

Assured Of Love

Enjoy the privilege of beauty,
Majestic swans glide onward,
The river full and running
A steadfast line, in a changing world
Ancient stones stand white
An anvil for the sun,
A place of prayer and praise
A steadfast church in a changing world.
All is still, calm, the sun strikes both points
Ripples, reflects, rejoices.
Itself a symbol of steadfastness.
We need to know that,
The unchanging love of God,
Holds us fast, binds us in the stone
Moves us in the living water, assured of love
In an ever changing world.
We meet break bread, drink wine and know,

James Tipp

At Death Door I Wonder

How far is God from me or I from him?
I have time to think on this bed of pain,
Laying listening, wondering about my life
Thinking about my death and of those I love.
There is so much I have never said,
So much I have never thought I needed to say,
Yet somehow I need to know that I am loved.
Need them to know that they have been the centre
The cause and affect of all that I wanted from life.
Everything seems like only yesterday
I was always too busy to think before this, and now!
I have too little time to work it all out.
Is God someone who strikes bargains?
Or someone whose understanding of me
Cannot be bargained with, no secret cards to play.
Just what is the meaning of mercy and grace?
Perhaps it's true, all we can ever do is trust,
No matter where or when, whether we have time to think.
Yet even now on this bed of pain.
I understand love, for I have given it,
Now I must receive it.

James Tipp

Azure Blue Seas

Azure Blue Seas Beckon

Azure seas beckon across white sandy beaches,
Ragged rocky coastline zigzags this fortress island.
History writ large on every headland tells her age
The summer sun bleaches the stones,
Whilst succulents flower in an abundance of colours.
In the hazy distance a God spot rises pointing up.
The sea breeze disguises the summer heat
Tranquillity captured in an instant, delights.

© J Tipp

Guernsey 2013

James Tipp

Be Part Of The Solution

The sea of hate is as furious and catastrophic as is possible
It has its own Tsunamis, storms and biting chilling winds.
It feeds on the disaster and pain of every breaking wave
Drowns the unsuspecting in the suddenness of the unexpected.
Within this whirlpool of destruction and anger a floating raft
Whose occupants have clambered aboard and cling together
The storm still rages, their pain still as real, yet there is calm.
They seek a solution of reconciliation, another way of pain
For peace will never come without the cost of letting go.
To empty this sea with a teaspoon an impossible task
Yet every dropp removed is a step along the way to peace.
Drown in the sea of you will, but the raft beckons all
Stop being a victim and become part of the solution
No sides taken just a raft of dialogue in a sea of hate.

James Tipp

Before The Cross Christmas Thoughts

In the garden at thirty three.
I thought about my genesis.
my entry into my creation.
That beginning so inauspicious,
so right.
My father sent the messengers,
and the star.
The Magi had been waiting,
outside Israel.
They had wanted someone to come,
so they came.
The shepherd's were not waiting
just sleeping.
Their minds were on wolves
not angels.
So they awoke with fear
but travelled with joy.
David's town expected
the stable a shock.
I have always been a shock
even to Mary and Joseph.
"I am a virgin not married
I will do as you say".
My world has been filled
with the ordinary.
My actions and words
extraordinary.
So once again they re-tell
my story
But who is listening
the shoppers?
Those surfing the internet
looking for what?
I said so many times
"He who has ears let him hear".
The silence is deafening
or is it that deafness brings silence?
Silence of the heart
silence of the soul.

All this I thought
in the garden in Gethsemane

James Tipp

Belmont House And Gardens

Belmont House & Gardens

We have discovered a door through time
We have entered the past and found real beauty.
A tiny orchard of Kent Cobb's, a kitchen garden
With food to feed the big house, splayed fruit trees
Apple, pear, and peach, plums, all ripening together
Greenhouses of tomatoes, peppers, giant onions.
All this laid out in pristine order regimental almost
Refreshments offered in a real self service style
Pay is by trust box, so we sit in the stable tea room
Drink coffee we have made, munch tasty biscuits
This is a perfect Sunday morning, peaceful, comfortable.
The feel of this place is one of enchantment, another time.
So another gem on our doorstep in Kent explored.

(c) James Tipp 16/08/15

James Tipp

Bewildering Cosmos

Bewildering Cosmos

Records are about to be set, soon the hottest day recorded.
Today the heat has been all consuming draining energy.
But the dazzling sunsets invigorates the moment
Here from a bedroom window a dazzling magnificences
Erupts onto the scene, an explosion of such brilliance
That the breath so hard come by from the day, cries out
The astonishing display a precursor to the record which is to come
Leaves you stunned and awe inspired, gasping for words, amazed
Such is the nature of summer in this island, a moment captured
Like life itself, a transient fleeting moment, in a bewildering cosmos.

(c) J Tipp July 1st 2015

James Tipp

Bird Observation

The wind bends and shakes the trees
The birds re-act in differing ways
On the Pine the crow with pointed beak
Guards the tree whilst below his companions
Like two sentinels stomp and march around
The starlings like old fruit left on the tree
Fill its branches waiting for the wind to call
Dispersing them in one gigantic flurry.
The collar doves fastidiously peck the drive
The Crow remains aloof master of all he sees

James Tipp

Blackeny To Cley Beach

Blakeney to Cley beach

Unfettered horizons of blue sky and multicoloured marsh,
Adorn this Norfolk landscape meandering paths,
Make for an exciting journey across the wetland seascape.
Geese honking, sound like a children's playground.
Lapwing, avocet, egret, dip and dive in this swampy landscape,
Whilst the skylarks sing their melody on high.
We travel on to Cley, the windmill beckons across the marsh
The winter sun warms our way, a cloudless horizon of various shades of blue
The huge sky, a dominant wall to wall feature of this day
Winter will soon be gone, new life will abound, the scene will change.

(c) J Tipp 2015 March

James Tipp

Brokeness

I am surrounded by the brokenness of humanity,
It dwells in every corner of my experience of people,
They strive to fulfil their dreams regardless.
The concept of self is magnified beyond measure.
Yet these same broken people work wonders
Fill boxes for presents for the unknown child
Cry for the victims of disaster they never knew
In giving they do a work of grace that is God like.
Both the church and the world are one in this
Full of broken people striving to understand
Moved by compassion that only comes from God
Love is his direct gift to all who are open to receive
It has no other source than Him, no counterfeit.
My experience of flawed people is universal
My hope is that all are redeemable by his grace.

James Tipp

Called To Be Fragile

Fragile love that hangs tenaciously, fingertip taut,
Becomes accessible to all who are seeking.
The love that blinds, excludes all others,
Remains a mystery that few can penetrate.
We are called to be fragile seekers, pilgrims
Whose travels sometimes glimpse despair in others
That mirrors our own reflection of ourselves.
Certainty can be a hurdle few will choose to jump,
Frailty a threshold all can master and accept.
Called to be vulnerable, open, exposed
Like on the cross but far less painful.

James Tipp

Can You?

Can you stand where another has stood?
Can you stand in another mans shoes?
Can you feel the happiness that he feels?
Can you fell his joys and his blues?
Could you flinch when someone called you a wog
Could you feel his anger and shame?
Could you clear your mind of the cobwebs and fog
That have slowly clogged you brain.
Could you feel for the wino or meths man?
Who smell so terrible bad
Could you feel as the meths drives him out of his mind
Could you feel as he slowly goes mad?
Could you feel for the rich man surrounded by Gold?
And everyone jumps to do as they're told
Can you feel as he sits with his little black phone
High in his castle yet so alone.
Can you feel for the murderer in his cell locked away?
Seeing only a few faces each single day
Can you feel for the man society hates?
Even in prison he has no mates.
Could you feel for the old man chopping his wood
Can you feel as he lights his fire?
Can you feel as he has his one meal a day?
Just waiting for life to expire.
Can you feel for the baby starving alone?
Can you feel every tissue see every bone?
When you give your donation do you feel nice?
That you gave that thing a small bowl of rice
Only one person could love all of us
Never a murmur never a cuss
Never a murmur nailed to the wood
He answers these questions with a simple
I could.

James Tipp

Christmas 2010

In the village we call this world disasters strike.
The web wings them to every corner in the blink of an eye,
Catastrophe piled on need and want and the world blinks,
Turns and rings its hands unable to respond to the information,
Knowing does not equal doing, knowledge highlights our inabilities.
Does 'the word made flesh' create new possibilities new insights.
Does the 'light shining in the darkness' offer a new hope untapped.
Christmas the expression of God's love for this world in the cosmos.
This shining spinning beautiful world, minute in the vastness
Is in the mind of God and 'God with us' is a message for now.
Outside our knowledge is a greater work that is in control.
We are not alone in the vastness of space, we have a guide
He has given us the key to our salvation and his name is 'Love'

James Tipp

Christmas 2011

Christmas 2011

The time for the clash has come again, the enigma that is Christmas
Here now in this moment in time we are challenged and torn two ways.
The old, old story of humility and powerlessness, poverty and squalor
Engages with the Wifi, the plasma screen, the insistent must have.
The origins kept alive by the few stand in stark contrast to the hype
Reindeer instead of cows, Ho Ho Ho, replaces the magi, but plenty of gold.
Within all of this stand the charities seeking to make life better for the poor
They seek to provide the essentials of Christmas, the Wifi, Plasma screen!
The real essential have always been free available to rich and poor
To know you are loved, valued, special are all found in the stable
The baby who comes for the world encompasses all of humanity
The still small voice continues to call in the midst of the takeover
The messengers are there to be heard, 'he who has ears to hear'.

James Tipp

Christmas 2014

Christmas 2014

The family room was full to over crowding, the cause, the census
Below the animals snorted shuffled, their warm breath rising, moist.
The women fussed around the youngster heavy with child, expectant
Not ideal but not uncommon, the place was clean tidy and safe.
Then it was all over, the faint cry another life had entered the world,
Yet this child's cry would never cease to echo through the ages.
A infinitesimal murmur in the cosmos, would break the mould
Transform the future, call for new ideals new expectations, amazing.
So he began as many still do in poverty, an insignificant birth
In an insignificant place to a people under oppression and suppression.
Still nothing would dampen or cover his cry from straw fill bed
To the tree on which his last words would echo down 'Forgive'
Christmas the joy of hope and an alternative to hate and fear, 'Love'
Listen, still the message echoes on, never ceasing, ever calling
Beneath the iphone, kindle, must have toy, the echo calls, listen
It calls for love, grace, truth, to be the presents presented, freely given
A far cry from the straw filled bed, but not a far cry from the hearts desire,
The lasting gifts for humanity never go out of fashion, always available
Always there in the echo of a baby's cry in an insignificant place, Bethlehem.

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James Tipp

Christmas In(Insert Your Own Town Or Place)

It's here again-glitter time
The comfortable dream
What does it mean
To me here in...

Will it stop the job loss
Who gives a toss
What does it mean
This glitter-dream in...

We're not alone; really must phone
The relations so far away
Happy day, what does it mean
This time machine in...

Was he really sent with vowed intent
To give me hope? Well I'm no dope
What does it mean
The dream machine in....

How long ago, this an to know
They travelled far no phone or car
And so today with cardboard hay
We seek the same in...

The world is changed, problems still
Evil men exert their will
So 'Peace on earth' a dream must be
I wish that he were real to me in...

The cave that once so dark and dank
Smelt of muck, yes lets be frank
Yes here upon the stinking floor
The one who to be the door in...

Today's the day when God said loud
"Your not just one within a crowd"
This days for you, it is no dream
Yes truth upon the history scene

Because of him all folk have worth
To live and give from start of birth
New birth he offers all who seem
To trust this truly dream machine in...

The glittering tinsels are so small
When seen within the stable stall
God here among us rings the steeple
God has come to save all people

It's true for us in....

James Tipp

Christmas Poem 2005

In the darkness of winter we have sown the seed
As of old is was scattered thrown into the air.
For a whole month they came in their hundreds,
To celebrate what, or who? The mystery unravelled.
God among them is scary, a baby is manageable.
The lights they lit which danced and pranced,
Men in red ascending and descending rope ladders.
Could almost be a paradox of medieval pageant,
The ladder of life visual from hell to heaven
With figures in red coaxing the pilgrims to fall.
Their ones bring presents of happiness!
So the message is given as always in the market place
Competing with peoples other interests and desires
Did anyone hear or see the God-child for real
We shall never know we are only the messengers
The sower of seeds, He will water and nurture to life

James Tipp

Christmas Poem- Is Anybody Listening

Is anybody listening
To the crying of the child
Is any body listening
The noise is getting wild.
In the stable he is greeted
By the bullet and the gun
Not by the sound of happiness
For no one's having fun.
The world has stopped its business
They sing 'give peace a chance'
But the angels are not dancing
The world is in a trance.
There are children who this Christmas
In the place where he was born
Who will blow themselves apart
Kill others with their scorn
So their captors will take lessons
Deal another blow
So the screaming of the children
Will grow and grow and grow.
We have to keep on singing
We have to say their wrong
We have to sing the music
That is the Christmas song
We cannot let the evil win
We must give him a chance
To sing his song of love of men
That the world might really dance
To the tune of love and healing
To the tune of peace and joy
Remember then this Christmas
The coming of this boy.

James Tipp

Christmas Poem Mary's Thoughts

The days leading up to the big event
Were tiring and really not fun
I pondered the age old question
What it's like just being a mum.
I'd carried this babe for a long time
But now we were well on our way
The donkey was swaying and moving
I sat and endured it all day.
The nights were spent in the open
Too poor to stay at an inn
Remember I said in the darkness
This baby's a sign yes from Him.
But the pain was really quite awful
The next day we started along
The donkey was swaying and moving
I knew it wouldn't be long.
We came to the family village
Exhausted we knocked on the door
But the house was heaving with people
Who'd arrived at the house just before.
We tried the various cousins
We tried their relations as well
But nobody had any room left
The baby was near I could tell.
At last a friendly landlord
A friend of the family I'm told
Allowed us room in his stable
It was good to be out of the cold.
His wife changed the straw in the stable
The manger was made as a bed
I lay on the sweet smelling grasses
As good as any clean bed.
I struggled and cried in the moments
That lead to every new birth
I held him and fed him and kissed him
Not knowing my baby's real worth
Till a knock on the door some hours later
Revealed a number of men
Who insisted on seeing my baby

In all they numbered about ten.
Some were dressed in real finery
The others smelled of sheep and of wool
But all knelt in sheer adoration
The innkeeper smiled like a fool.
So now I'll know about mother-hood
Do my best for this little man
One day look back on this moment
Knowing I was part of His plan.

James Tipp

Christmas Poem Redeeming Love

O Little town of Bethlehem who once saw such wonders
The night sky lit with a chorus of heavenly voices
That created chaos in the hearts of simple men
Whose lives until this moment, had been mundane.
O Little town of Bethlehem, today you lie in shock
Nothing is mundane, and heavenly voices cease to be heard.
Your voice of peace goodwill, muted by the cries in Ramah
We are reminded of your need to come, by being challenged
By the place in which you entered in, to redeem mankind.

James Tipp

Christmas Poem- The Differance

Does it make a difference
If once a year the world stops, listens
To a message of peace?
Does it matter if we stop telling the story,
Of shepherds and stables and roomless inns?
Does it matter if the star is put out, packed away
And the angels cease to sing 'Noel'?

Will it make a difference to my life
If tomorrow the shops remove the glitter?
That tales of Father Christmas, St Nicolas,
And all the present givers are no more.
Will it make a difference if the 'after shave'
Pair of socks, and my new 'Game Boy' are never bought
Will it make a difference if there's no party?

Will there be a difference in the world
If we remove the 'Love of neighbour'
That came in the darkened starlit night
To a stable in a far off place?
Will there be a difference
If there is nobody to love me
As I am, warts and all?

The Christ child came to make a difference
To send the ripples of His birth
Through the passages of time.
That all life matters, creation is important,
Life has value and meaning, you have value.
That His birth gives hope to a darkened world
That God cares and still offers another way.

James Tipp

Christmas Poem-Lest We Forget

In the silence of the night the blackness was impenetrable
The soldiers came, the screams began, the angels kept silent
They had sung their song of joy for the shepherds.
The starlight never lit the scene of fear and horror
It had only guided the wise to a stable then extinguished itself
In the many cities the lights twinkle yet the darkness still reigns
In Bethlehem the rubber bullets hum, the children still die
There is still crying in Ramah for her children, the angels weep
Once in Royal David's City wise men came, angels sang
But all is forgotten, the stable packed away, Christmas over
But then in many places it never ever began.

James Tipp

Christmas Poem-This Is The Day

This is the day we celebrate the one who comes among us
Who reaches down, enters in and then lies helpless.
The one who empties himself, but knows the father
Listens and learns grows to challenge the world
The one who challenges oppression by ritual
Who refuses to lay boundaries around his love
Who looks upon the hearts of people and draws them in
Yet we who follow refuse to see, listen or learn
We erect barbed wire around his truth
Daring people to come in and be shredded
To rip themselves upon our lack of understanding
To fall upon the swords of do's and don'ts
We challenge them to accept our rules or die
Yet he subverted all the rules, refused to be bound
Neither Greek nor Jew, neither male nor female
Neither rule keeper or rule breaker felt safe
He comes to be the Good News, the door
By which humanity wherever it is found
May enter in, to learn what love can do

James Tipp

Christmas Start Of A Carol Service

Christmas stands at the door and knocks
The coming king, small, dependent, sleeps
Visitors from near and far, high and low
Called by the heavenly host and cosmic sign.
Stand in awe, as all creation looks on.
We to should stand reflect upon his coming
Ask the question of ourselves, what brought us here?
What do we expect to find this night and Christmas morn?
This birth unlike no other, brings change to the world
To all creation a cosmic Kingship celebrated
In the heavenly realms as on earth, alleluia.

James Tipp

Christmas The Guest

Christmas stands at the door and knocks
The coming king, small, dependent, sleeps
Visitors from near and far, high and low
Called by the heavenly host and cosmic sign.
Stand in awe, as all creation looks on.
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James Tipp

Cragg Cottage 1

Bough Lake District

We drank from the bottle marked Bough,
Transported to the land of Alice.
Giants in a miniature world of beauty.
The tiny garden enriched with sweet perfume
Rose, Fern, the Wisteria covered entrance.
Cragg cottage minute in proportion, a romantic haven.
Here the intimacy is real, tangible, cosy
Ancient beams, thick stone walls, speak of age
Here amongst the hills and lakes, peace
A chance to hear and feel creations beauty.

(July 2011)

James Tipp

Cragg Cottage 2

Tiny Haven

This tiny haven from another era
White washed walls obscure its age
In time gone past what was your purpose?
Oaken lintels, beamed walls display the past
What were you in another time?
A labourers cottage filled with family?
A storage loft and barn that smelled of animals?
Whatever! now no hint remains no ghostly presence
Just the scratching bats as evening comes
Sharing a hidden place above our heads
A country retreat that inspires the soul.

(July 2011)

James Tipp

Cragg Cottage 3

The Garden

The fern covered gateway beckons
Sat between rugged stone walls
That are moss covered, ivy clad
A feature of the cottage garden.
Here the heady scent of roses
The larch beyond the gate a shelter
Here birds alarm the air with sound
Nature in her diversity is found
Heard and seen and gloried in,
Cragg cottage in summer

(July 2011)

James Tipp

Cragg Cottage 4

Moss Height Bough

The wooded path meanders upward
The dappled sun striking the stones
The ferns gentle swaying an aid- memoir
Transported back in flashing memory bits,
To Surrey, The Punchbowl, and games played.
Fifty years stripped away in seconds
The East End kid holidaying with the school
Playing hide and seek in the ferns of yesterday.
We travel on warmed by the summer sun.
Marley full of life, wagging tail, sniffing nose.
My companions hears my story, laughs
Lives bound in love, we climbed
The view of distant mountains refreshes
Our now is full of warmth and tall green ferns.

(July 2011)

James Tipp

Cragg Cottage 5

The Walk

The white tipped tail bounced ahead
The sun filtered through the green canopy
The stillness of dripping foliage, rain washed
Blows in the wind to dry the storm.
From a distance the shadow launches
With a piercing cry and gathered pace
Huge wings span, gaining height, it flew
Calling as it went casting its image
The eagle gathered pace and was gone.
Marley never noticed, and we wondered.

(July 2011)

James Tipp

Death Is Out There

Death is out there! !

Death stalks the planet in a million disguises
From the minutest virus to the terrorist bomb
From the civilised drone to the beheading ghoul
Its the secret we live with that remains unspoken
Its the certainty that nobody believes in, shush!
Its the silent ripple out that effects so many
Victims of this unspoken reality, silenced, shush!
Our reality is endless as the space we live in
Now measured in millions of light years, eternity
This vacuum that allows no sound to be heard
So the weeping tears are lost in the silence, no shush!
No anything that can be heard, yet we the victims
Walk ever onward into oblivion, never naming death
Only seeking in every way to remove its presence
Until the day will come when it will be needed again.
As a welcome visitor on a fading planet, too small to cope.

James Tipp

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James Tipp

Death Of The Innocent

After The Death Of The Innocent

My neutrality is ripped to shreds, consumed in a fury of disgust
The calmness of my position is shattered into a million shards
Each shard heading towards the vileness of the killers in black.
I want, no demand action to eradicate this evil from the world.
But then in my rush for vengeance and the sense of doing, a discloser.
They have won, they have achieved their objective, they are happy.
If we refuse to buy into their hate and brutality, measure our response,
If through determination we refuse to play by their rules of obscenity
Refuse to lower ourselves into the medieval mode of Jihad and crusade,
We win, we kill the oxygen of division and hatred they require, to be.
I refuse to hate, but I do feel pity on such darkened soulless people,
For to live in their darkness of hate filled killing is a mire of despondency
A light-less inhabitation that is to be rejected, rather seek the cult of mercy.
A more painful journey is the one travelled of grace and forgiveness.
But its rewards are light and love and a world of peace, for all.

(c) J Tipp 2014

James Tipp

Diplomatic Truth

Why is truth always the victim of diplomacy
The blindingly obvious gives way to the mundane
The victims of injustice feel victimised again
If justice is blind then the victims are blinded
Saying the truth acknowledging the wrongs of others
Accepting the unrighteousness of self as well as institutions
Is the road to the Kingdom of God being real for people.
But the clamour of the media strikes again opens a gate
Through which words are withdrawn or repudiated in meaning
Speaking the truth is not the privilege of authority figures
Theirs is to weigh every sentence so they say nothing.
The victim's champion is expected another day, like tomorrow.

James Tipp

Do We Know It All

In the silence of space the angels hover
Man cannot see so man does not bother
Things I can touch smell see or hear
Those are things that man holds so dear.
But mysteries forgotten all things can be known
So life after death or God on a throne
Dismissed as too simple this once holy dove
Then show me the mystery of the thing we call love.
We speak of it, write of it, sing of it too.
But its mystery remains gives us no clue.
Where does it come from? How do I feel?
When do I know if it's fake or its real
So touch, see and smell are not all they claim
And mysteries abound in this world just the same.

James Tipp

Drowning In My Own Ignorance

I feel that I am drowning in my own ignorance
Lost in sea of information that I never knew.
I considered that I had a doctorate in life
But realise that I have not even learnt to read.
In my world I have risen to the top or near the top
Regarded as 'successful' clever even.
The world is said to be so small yet it is so big
Millions of people living different lives, so different
I sit within my living room and travel, via the TV
I see a world where my values are meaningless
My priorities so infantile and silly
They have little to do with the meaning of life.
My understanding of life is so limited to my tiny world
I cannot rationalise my feelings of having knowledge
In the light of my own self knowledge,
I feel inadequate, based on the reality that,
All learning should lead to greater humility.
For the more I know, the more I realise
I am drowning in my own ignorance.

James Tipp

Early Summer Morning

Today the mist was warm
Like a lovers embrace.
The birds sang, the river ebbed.
All is at peace.
The heat of the summer sun,
Shrouded for a time,
Drawing up the vapour
Like gathering in the harvest.
We too look for a son
To be warmly embraced
Gathered into his presence.
While we wait, we are warmed.
The spirit moves across the earth
Drawing people to himself
Into the summer of eternity

James Tipp

Easter 1982

Tick-tick-tick-tick, Jesus!
Tick-tick-tick-tick, Jesus
Jesus! Are you ready?
Tick-tick –tick-tick
Jesus! Are you sure?
Tick-tick-tick-tick
That's your heart
Its rhythm beating time.
Has there been enough?
Tick-tick –tick-tick
Can I change my mind?
Tick-tick –tick-tick
Son! Father!
Tick-tick –tick-tick
I hear the blows
1-2-3
I feel the pain.
Darkness overcomes me
Tick-tick –tick-tick
How many seconds tick away
Till suddenly it's light
The clock is silent
The grave is empty
Time has been defeated
Eternity beckons through Jesus
The door through which time died.

James Tipp

Easter A Night To Remember

The night sky was brilliant, star studded
The warmth of the air hung upon us loosely
The garden seemed full of smells, cooking fires
People smells and the smell of fresh air mingled together
It gave a sense of closeness and warmth even safety.

We lay beneath the moon's soft glow and wondered
So much had happened, so much achieved
The look on their faces when the crowd called
'Hosanna in the highest blessed is he
who comes in the name of the Lord'

The Passover eaten together, yet different
Why does he always say such difficult things?
My body, when he broke the bread
My blood as we passed the wine
Ah well! Never mind now we are seeing results.

Keep watch with me he says; look at him praying
I should not have had the extra cup of wine.
My eyes feel heavy and the air is soft and the...
"Sorry Lord it was the wine and the night air"
Ill keep watch nothing to fear, this grass is so soft.

What's all the commotion about, soldiers! where?
This cannot be happening, soldiers and temple guards
No its ok, there's Judas with them, it must be alright
They have drawn their swords, Judas has kissed Jesus
They aim to kill us all, run everyone run, don't look back.

I can hardly breath I've lost them, I think, what happened?
Why did Jesus let them take him, and what was Judas doing?
So many questions, such a change in fortune in a matter of hours
Surely Jesus will talk his way out, they all saw the crowds cheering
Yes! Jesus will turn everything round and we shall triumph.

I'll take a chance and get as near as possible, its turned cold
Or perhaps its me, fear can do strange things to a person
The fire looks cheerful, nobody knows me here, "Excuse me,

What's happening to the one they call Jesus? " " Do you know?
Friend of his, never met him, course I'm sure, leave me alone.

In hiding now, ashamed of myself, slept instead of watching
Ran instead of fighting, hid instead of helping,
Denied him, and now I remember his words; he knew.
I cannot face the others for I cannot face myself,
All is lost, our hopes and dreams, our future wiped out.

Black Friday when the authorities of Israel and Rome combined
When they schemed to take his life, he who had given back life to others
Where is God in all this as he promised, where is God? .
Like scattered sheep he called us, now the shepherd is to be slaughtered.
So we hide and fear and tremble what is our fate this Sabbath?

Jerusalem is quiet the Sabbath has passed; the others found me
I feel a nervous wreck, jumping at shadows, as we all are.
They looked to me for guidance, they should have looked to the women
In all this they keep busy planning, they were there at the end
Now they go into the dark to anoint him, whilst we cringe in hiding

The banging awoke me from my nightmare, the women are back
Someone is laughing, a high nervous laugh, someone is saying Hosanna
Be quiet do you want us all found, must you make our presence so obvious
The women are crying and weeping and hugging and ignoring my plea for silence
Then I hear their words, "He is not there, his body is gone, " the angels said.

I have nothing to compare this morning with, nothing to gauge it by
Disbelief, anxiety, joy, doubt, ran through me like a torrent
The tomb was empty of everything including the guards
Only the grave cloths lying there as if they had never held a body
Somehow then I knew my work was about to really begin in earnest.

James Tipp

Easter Fill The Space

The empty tomb wherein all mystery lies
The empty space defying all to look and learn.
Some seek a way to fill the space with people,
The Jews who came and stole the body,
Yet kept their silence when all around cried
'Empty! Risen! Emmanuel!
Or fill the space with Romans,
Whose power could silence all.
They like mute swans,
Make no sound to challenge.
Yet blame could fall upon his followers
Intent on what?
Running from the living,
Would they die for a corpse?
The tomb stands empty, calling all
To look and learn.
Fill the space with God and the answer is,
"Why look for living among the dead? "

James Tipp

Easter Friday 2009

Easter Friday 2009

The world wakes up to the sound of bird song
The day is as ever nothing has changed
But for the people of 'The Way' life has darkened
They look back down the ages to a single point
A cross on a hill raised high with bloody corpses
To explain the now they look back to the then
But they need to move from the past to the now.
We need to relish the resurrection and its meaning
Realise that he is the one who is present now
Has been present building his people always
Not confined to an alleluia for just forty days
But an alleluia that rings out the message
In a constant stream of living hope in the now.

James Tipp

Easter Is Always Now

'He is not here', proclaimed in bold letters
So often these words ring true in paradoxical style.
The empty tomb proclaimed a new beginning
He would be forever here the experience of many
But the centuries have dimmed the liberation from death
Rolled the stone back only to be opened at Easter
For the rest we just repeat the story annually.
Our words and rituals have marred his living image
Confined him to certain people at certain times
Yet the living Lord meets with those outside their time
Outside the appropriate places set aside by those who know!
We have forgotten it is forever Easter, forever empty
Our systems for containing the one who walks among us
Are dying because he is worshiped in the past
But he is always future always before, always outside
Outside the tomb of control we seek to capture him in
Met by the multitude in their glimpse of the divine

James Tipp

Easter Morning

The world wakes up to the sound of bird song
The day is as ever nothing has changed
But for the people of 'The Way' life has darkened
They look back down the ages to a single point
A cross on a hill raised high with bloody corpses
To explain the now they look back to the then
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But an alleluia that rings out the message
In a constant stream of living hope in the now.

James Tipp

Easter Morning In The Twenty First Century

I have stood in total darkness
Without the redeeming glimmer of light
I have waited in the darkness for sight to come
The waiting was intolerable long and unfulfilled
I have reached out to those near to me
Unable to identify even my own hand in the darkness
But when the light came all was revealed the fear dispersed
I saw others as they were and rejoiced to see myself.
This is the light of Easter joy the light of hope
This light forever shines on into eternity
The darkness cannot overcome it.

James Tipp

Easter The Gate

Crude and awesome
Stands the gate,
Its post wet
With blood and urine,
Stained for all time.
The gift has been rejected
Despised, removed;
The world became black.
Love, real love,
Snuffed out like a candle.
Yet love in all its glory
Returned, restored revived.
The cross still stained
But the death is mine.

James Tipp

Easter Thoughts Of Judas

The purse keeper, who ever likes the purse keeper,
Always suspicious these people for whom money
Is of no importance an irrelevance to Gods mission.
They soon moaned when there was nothing for food
Or to give to the many beggars who came our way.
Jesus never made it easy, always saying blessed are the poor
Leave home and friends and come and follow me.
My heart went out to the young man with all that money
Would I have been here if I had possessed so much I asked myself
As it was I was here because of Barabbas and the other zealots
We thought he might be the one, the Messiah, who would set us free
I still don't know, I have dipped my hand in the bowl with him
Seen miracles that shout to all he is chosen of God.
Yet his teaching, his attitude is so naive, so un-Jewish.
We who aspire to usher in the Kingdom of God are scandalised
Fancy curing the servant of that odious Roman centurion
Then proclaiming to all around that his faith was greater
Greater than those of the house of Israel, madness, I tell you.
Then there was that Samaritan whore who gave him water
He treated her and her people as equals before God, unbelievable.
It is time to speak to the zealots in the Temple, we must find a way
Get the Romans to move against him and in so doing
He will have to act to call down legions of angels show them who he is.
They offered me money, even here the purse bearer has no honour
I tell them I am insulted but they insist, it must look right for the Romans
It must not appear to be a set up job, some hope I say, but nobody listens
Supper was a strange affair, he knows, I feel sick but he really does know
He let me go without telling the others I have betrayed him, he is a madman.
I had to go with them, nobody knows what he looks like accept me.
I'll give the kiss of peace I say, this is for his good I tell myself.
I looked into his eyes and I knew that I had got it all wrong,
He would do nothing, in that one moment I knew, I knew without doubt
He would go to his death, and I would have betrayed him for nothing.
I would have betrayed innocent blood, the purse weighed me down
As I ran to the Temple and threw their money at them and called it off.
Too late they said, the action has a mind of its own now, go away
I watched from afar as if time had slowed down, everything so clear
Precise and real so very real, the blood, the cross, the crying,
He is dead by my hand, the Sanhedrin's hand and the Romans hand

So I stand beneath this tree in the Potters Field ashamed, so ashamed
God forgive me this final act of blasphemy

James Tipp

Easterr 2014

Emptiness as an absolute seems a strange position to cling to,
A contradiction in a materialistic world of things and must haves
'He is not here' could be an emptiness of the institutions of faith
Spirituality is found in other places, by other means in the ether
Here emptiness is a reality that we all can use, alone on twitter
Not really there, but being followed by thousands empty non tangible.
The citadels of faith from an ancient past cling on almost empty
Convinced that here the emptiness makes sense, offers hope
The tomb was outside the city, visited by the marginalised, women.
The emptiness of the tomb revitalised them, emptiness meant hope
So were is faith were is hope today, inside the citadels? Unlikely
Outside the walls outside the human constructions that divide?
Yes found in the the actions of the living one who brings inspiration
He is not replaced inside man's constraints re-tombed in time
But rather always lives in the hearts of those who hear the call
Responding in love and compassion to a world that's never empty
Of the one who walks among us and brings hope and love today.

(c) J Tipp Easter 2014

James Tipp

Empty

If I should reach that time of not knowing that which is known
When all I see is the immediate the now and yesterday is lost
Then let me pass in peace to another place to find myself and you,
To be lost when found is a sadness few can bear or few would seek
Our laws human and just seem pointless to our reality our condition
Rather they seem to punish the memory keepers with a flaunting image
Saying look at me in here is something you once had but is now empty
Like a label on the packet bearing the image, but only the packet remains.
So if the time comes when these words are no longer found within, remember
I would rather be in another place seeking after who I was, than be a packet
An empty packet, a label that shows the image of the past, but empty.

James Tipp

Expectations

Looking in the mirror I see what others see
The image comes loaded with expectations.
They have made up their mind as to who I am
What I am and how I will have my being.
Overlaid with a thousand role models
They never knew, but rather made.
I am covered in their perceptions
The mirror image is only that
A reflection of the outside, superficial.
Inside looking out I shudder, groan.
The me who God called is trapped
Inside the expectations and dreams of others.
How do I fight the urge to run, escape
This ongoing turmoil of deception.
Like all before me my weakness' cry out
My failures stark and real this side of my eyes
But God has chosen, called and will equip
Despite their expectations, he knows
Loves and speaks, no escape is possible
As the Jonahs of this world discover.

James Tipp

Feed The World 20+on

'Feed the world' the Christmas song
Starving kids we know its wrong.
So once again the clock ticks by
Children starve and children die
So why does Christmas make us feel
That we must act do something real
The answer lies within the stall
A message here for one and all
He calls us to be just like him
This child who is the King of Kings.
Yet here he lies so frail and weak
A door by which we all may seek
To bring his love to all on earth
To show to others their true worth
Not let them starve or die in pain
This is the reason why he came
To change the hearts of those with power
Let's make this time our finest hour.
Then when we sing of Peace on earth
The words will have some real worth.

James Tipp

Fly-Filled Face!

The fly-filled face
Sunken eyes, wasted limbs
Speak of another place,
Entered by the T.V.
Without the agony of involvement.
Another tragic story.
To watch in comfort.
The world turns
God speaks to men
From the crying of a fly-filled face.
Twisted body
Hanging from a tree.
Love one another,
This is how man responds.
So the tragedy continues
Policy and people
Politics and power,
So people in Gods image
Remain a fly-filled speck,
Whilst we sit and watch the TV.

James Tipp

For A Friend

Empty eyes search her room
Seeking to escape,
Frightened by the loneliness
The empty time with self.

With no desire
No need to eat
To watch the clock
The pain time.

Prayer is empty
Life is empty
Only the needle time exists
This time of fear.

Fear isolates,
Stretches friendships,
Reduces callers
Creates loneliness.

So we seek to help
Crying, shouting, appealing.
Bewildered by your silence
Bowed by the burden

You expect to much.
We, who stand and watch
She whose pain
Crushes all here faith.

James Tipp

Forged In Fire

It began in flame and turmoil
God's outpouring of the Spirit
Freely given to young and old
Male and Female Greek and Jew
No one left out the gifting had begun
Transparent and egalitarian the ecclesia.
A watchword of love and humility
Of sacrifice and service to all.
So how did we get here?
How are we so blind to our past?
Even the world in which we live
Describes it's conditions as meritocracy
Those with the gifts and talents to shine.
Whilst hovering spectre shaped darkness
Denies this influence upon itself.
Little is transparent the past all to present
Hierarchy replaces egalitarianism
Opaqueness instead of transparency
Out of step with our beginnings
Unbolted from the social norms
We struggle, marginalized, irrelevant
Seek to become a mission church
Whilst carry the baggage of yesterday
Weighed down the people stumble
On the stones of their recent past
On the structures of yesterday.

James Tipp

Freindship?

What makes for friends and friendship
The giving of self, the exposing of the inner self
The pain of letting go of being wrong in safety.
Life is so demanding and self-righteous
Every sentence analysed by experts
For the missing nuance, the inflated spin.
To be myself means sometimes being arrogant
Self opinionated, hopelessly out of touch.
It means reading the sign from others
Walking away knowing the score, and walking
Its sometimes hurting others, by my certainties
Disappointing some because of my doubts.
In all of this friends are the grease, the oil
That stops the friction from burning me out
The safety net that catches me
Despite my weakness, and strengths.
Friendship says its ok, to be me.

James Tipp

Genesis 1971

What have you done little man
Look around you,
The mess you have made.
The state this planet is in.
You have elevated yourself
Into the position of God,
Saying for life or death.
You have declared God is dead
Stupid people, what have you
Done with your freedom?
You have murdered and raped,
Starved each other,
Nations have been at war.
We have made extinct
Thousands upon thousands of animals
But listen this is really great
You're so good at it,
You've done it
Since man can remember.
Your genius for learning
Is unsurpassed.
Some have advanced materially
Yet retarded spiritually
So left a vacuum
That can only be filled
By God. but I forget
God is dead.
Stupid people,
When did ever make life
In a vacuum.?
When did you last
Make something from nothing?
You cannot not.
O stupid people you're so
Incomplete, insufficient
Nothing more than in the beginning
God made you from dust
So you remain the same.

Global Warnings Paradox

Winter white the dispenser of despair
Grinding to a halt the aspirations of a nation
Nothing is sacrosanct, the veil covers all
This is the paradox of global warming.

James Tipp

God What Shape Are You?

God just what shape are you?
Are you round and soft and cuddly?
Or hard and rigid with sharp edges?
Can you hear me now as I struggle?
Then why do you remain silent?
Throughout the ages
We have described you
Making you like ourselves,
Or other parts of creation
We have struggled from primitive
To enlightenment, to space age
Each step has caused us to re-evaluate
Some have killed you off 'God is dead'
Some have held onto the 'Old Man'
Some have made you a rock singer
Many only look backwards to find you
You are for them the God who acted
Once long ago but now silent.
But the cosmos is infinite
The creation more than we ever knew
We are intricately made DNA rules ok.
Whatever shape you are remains mystery
You are other, unlike us in your majesty
Known only in your son born of a woman.
Jesus is God incarnate but not God in totality.
So we need to listen to the world now
Then we will find that you are greater
Greater than all we can ever conceive or imagine.

James Tipp

Good Friday 2008

The cacophony of sound erupted as the day began
People meandered into the souk ready to bargain
To enter the daily chores of this Passover willingly.
Jerusalem was heaving with the masses of pilgrims.
Whilst beneath the Pretorium a carpenter bled.
Above in the Temple the blood flowed river like.
So a few drops from a carpenter's back made little difference.
Both actions were about religion, his one was banned
The Messianic hope was for tomorrow never for today
The Priest found today a problem, interrupting their Passover.
The crowd turned from the disturbance the Romans made
Dragging the carpenter through the streets an example
Yes keep your heads down, do as you are told or else
The message was graphic enough and understood
Made more real by the presence of their own leaders
Whose boat needed no rocking amongst the masses.
Most of Jerusalem never blinked or knew about the carpenter
Who like so many others had hit the wall of Rome running
Found it an impenetrable barrier and died crushed by its weight.
For them this was just another Friday Passover time
The world turns the time moves on, centuries pass
The reaction of Good Friday as it has become is drowned again
By the cacophony of sound made in today's markets
So the bloodied back of Jesus turns few heads or hearts
The priests still hold vested interests that make him theirs
To be shared by them at their behest, nothing has changed.
The messianic hope is still tomorrow today we are too busy
Too frenetic and too obsessed with our agendas our needs.

James Tipp

Good Friday 2009

Was it mans worst day in history or God's best?
Was it the loneliest time for God and man?
Separated for a millisecond of eternity
Or united forever in eternity God and humanity?
The question for the masses is irrelevant
They are consumed with other priorities in this season.
Spain or Portugal, West Country or the Lakes?
In work out of work, paying the mortgage, dispossessed?
So Good Friday with its misnomer is only a holiday break
A getaway time, a family break time, not a God time.
The ever decreasing few stoically endure the mysteries
Looking for signs of renewal hoping for a re-awakening.
Take hope in the words from the cross 'It is finished'
For in truth it had only just begun in God's time.

James Tipp

Good Friday 2012

Good Friday

Outside the walls they hung him, a dangerous idealist
Which transpired to be the place so many others choose
The outsiders, the don't no brigade of uncertain ideas.
The world has turned, there is now no up or down
There is only out there, a cosmos of discovery and mystery.
Certainty has been eroded some of the mystery unfolded
His idealism remains a constant challenge to our humanness.
His choice to drink the cup, to go on loving the unloving
To demonstrate that out there the father is aware, waiting
Waiting for the love to display itself among the nations
That outside of dogma and certainty, not knowing is OK
That outside the understanding of the few, the many exist
So love does not distinguish, the cross a choice for all
Good Friday regains its meaning, in the living ones submission
Outside the walls God wins the world, with his all embracing love

© J Tipp
Easter 2012.

James Tipp

Good Friday Meditation

In Him are mirrored
All our failures
The pain of contrast
Leads to the final solution.

Injustice is man's weakness
Each new age invents new ways.
As God stood among them
His challenge, was too great.

So today beneath the stairs
Their game took new meaning
The King is crowned
By men outside 'Torah'.

Darkness that leads to death
Overshadows the sun
The winding stair,
That leads to so much pain.

Yet the pain of betrayal
Is deeper than the wounds
That ooze and drip
Red puddle forming droplets.

The gate is open, the way is set
Pass the traders,
Who yesterday,
Sought your custom

Around about the voices cry
The telling clink of money
The smell of fresh baked bread
Normality goes on without pausing.

Somewhere on the fringe
The water seller waits
The thirsty crowd
Will make his day.

The contrast of compassion
The soldiers cursed by the crowd
The victims cursed by the soldiers
All are cursed by the act.

Here is the holocaust
The murderer, and rapist
The thief, the scum of humanity
Bound in this one act of shame.

The darkness settles
The rain cannot wash this moment
From the pages of man's history
Cannot expunge our failure.

That will only be explained
Lifted from the dirt
Dealt with in full
On Sunday.

James Tipp

Good Friday Meditation The Silence Of Meditation

They have forgotten Lord,
You have slipped from their memory.
Your coming is celebrated with abandonment
Your departure is pushed aside, relegated,
Into the darkened corners of their minds.

You did not slip away unnoticed
Your going was public, placarded
They lined the streets, confused and angry.
You were not what they wanted
An avenger, soldier, another Macabee.

You brought confusion to those who killed you
You were the lamb led to the slaughter
Yet your silence had the power to disturb
The angels fluttered in silent legions
Your silence was to them as well.

You came into the world and disturbed it,
Your beginning found no favour with the King
Only the foolish saw your radiance and wondered.
So you left the stable by night,
To become a refugee.

Now today, the clock has turned full circle
You cannot run. In the garden you asked,
But the cup could not pass, it had to be drunk,
And in the drinking would come the pain.
Rejected by friend and foe alike.

We are so far from that point of history
Yet the pain of loneliness strikes our very souls
The rejection of those who find us foolish,
Disturbs our very being. In losing your memory
We have lost something of ourselves.

So help us to remember your presence with us
Help us rejoice in the light of risen power
To remember when all was lost and shameful

Your hidden agenda. had begun
The tomb was waiting to be emptied.

James Tipp

Good Friday Meditation 2003

The silence waits
Waits for me
To be still
Waits for the journey
To begin; to be real

The music touches my soul
Lifts me from this place
Helps me to reach out
To see your walk of passion

The closeness is sometimes to close.
I stare at my feet,
Soon yours will be holed, bleeding
I clasp my hands in prayer
Soon yours will be spread and nailed.

I look at my companions
Together here in love
Their love for me a contrast
Today, hate, fear, jealousy
Were your whole experience

Today in this hour
I will seek to understand
To draw back the veil
Look deep within myself
I will declare in truth 'my fault'

Within the silence of creation
Within the fellowship of love
Within the music of emotion
I will seek to say
'I love you'

James Tipp

Good Friday Meditation 2004

When they came I stood alone, empty of emotion
My prayers had drawn everything from me
Exhausted me in a new way, my father seemed removed
This loneliness was unnatural to me, his voice an echo
I wondered if this is how it feels to be without God.
Something I had never known since birth.

The soldiers crowded around, these temple guards
Who smell of smoke and oil and leather and now,
They also smell of fear, strange how fear has a smell
I smelt that smell so often in my life on those who came
Those who crept in the night to speak to me
Afraid their credentials might be tainted by their contact

I smell the Temple before I see it, the smell of blood
It hangs like a curtain over Jerusalem's Passover
John called me 'The lamb of God', do they require my blood
Is this the end that makes sense of all I have come to do?
I do not fear this place although I fear for it,
My message has no part in this as God will show somehow.

The priest in their piety cling to power like drowning men
Expediency always taints those who have much to loose
One man against the establishment, against they claim history
There will be no contest, I will not play their game,
I begin to feel where this will end and I shudder
God must it be this way, must I really go through with this?

The Praetorian, here the gentiles smell so different
Clean shaven faces, none of the fanatical glaring
Here the politic of Rome is exercised at their whim
Nobody seems to be worried about being tainted tonight
The priest crowd around to make their charges
For Rome I am of little interest, just another Jew

Herod, I am to see Herod whose father once
So long ago tried to kill me, does this Herod know that?
Did the Magi see him as a child as well, on their visit?
Did he wonder who it was they sought on that day?

When Ramah wept her wails cast into the sky
Still heard on the voice of history, does he know?

So now Rome must decide but duplicity is their game
Whom shall I release? Is a loaded dice waiting to roll
So it begins, the pain, humiliation, degradation, more pain
How does humanity think of such terror, such agony?
Inflicted through the ages, worse is yet to come
Such total pain as the nails bite, and breathing is impossible

'My God My God why have you forsaken me'
Wrung from a chest that has no breath, a mouth
That has no moisture, a body in so much pain.
Is this the end or the beginning? Confused
The lights go out, the crowd grow smaller and dimmer
For now they have won, but victory will be brief.

James Tipp

Good Friday Meditation Alchemy Of Pain

How do we make sense of it all?
What is it about the cross that makes us shudder?
We have many finer more painful ways to inflict cruelty,
We have made mass destruction an art form of technology.
We have witnessed the self destructive power of elitism,
Unleashed into millions of wisps of smoke that hang in history.
We have found a way to inform our conscience daily,
Then found a way to ignore the cries of those who we see suffer.
So what makes the cross the pivotal point of our experience?
Why should it hold such a power over our imaginations?
Why from this lonely wooden stump crudely made by man
Should suffering cease to hold its power over us?
In our seeking after the ultimate one we call God
In our longing not to be alone in this vast creational order
We took the ultimate in love and compassion seen among us
Condemned him to the loneliness that we now feel and experience
We lost ourselves in finding the answer we did not want
So made nonsense of him and nailed him to a cross
The word made flesh that made us walk a path
More lonely than we have ever been.
Yet in the darkness we call death, a light will shine
Overcoming the wisps of smoke made by man.
Overcoming the technology of the masses piled so high
Is hope, a hope that takes us beyond the horizons of humanity
Into the light that turns the wood of destruction
To the bright light of gold in three days.

James Tipp

Good Friday Meditation Do We Understand

Good Friday Meditation before an Agape

We reclined and ate the meal, not understanding
But then we understood so little.
We thought this was so familiar, so very old
Yet it was the beginning of new things.
The bread was ordinary, nothing unusual
The actions were just the same, breaking offering
Yet the words surprised us and we never understood
But then we understood so little.
The same with the cup so familiar
Yet O so very different, and still we never understood.
He washed our feet, we never understood
We went to the garden we slept, not understanding
He prayed, his understanding not a problem.

Pause

So now we sit in the twenty-first century
He sits among us and we don't understand
We take bread break it, the words now familiar
Yet still we need to fully understand
As we are fully understood.
We drink the cup he gives us
Needing to wash each other's feet
To understand his purpose fully
Being called to follow is costly, painful
He served at table washed their feet

Pause

So do we understand any better
From the distance of time.

James Tipp

Good Friday Meditation How It Is

The backdropp is appalling,
People oppressed, bitter, disillusioned
The smoke rises, the streets filled.
People everywhere looking over their shoulders
Looking into the eyes of the stranger and wondering
Will I be next, will I die for the protest of others?
Jerusalem two thousand and three, today!

Only yesterday I stood here, feeling the same
As I do today, only today there is no excuse.

People living within the walls, divided,
Divided by religion, culture and dreams
Some dream of a new Jerusalem, messiah
Others dream of a Muslim state, the prophet.
You spoke of the Kingdom, not of this world,
So today they stay divided over land.
You said 'God so loved the world'

Only yesterday I stood here, feeling the same
As I do today, only today there is no excuse.

The sound of injustice beats over the city,
The soldiers fully armed and ready,
The children caught in a time warp
Throw stones, the automatics burst forth
Death screams in the street, over powered.
So history repeats itself, the strong win,
The weak are crucified, outside this city
□

Only yesterday I stood here, feeling the same
As I do today, only today there is no excuse.

The world turns, the rich remain aloof
Like Pilate, power treats weakness with disdain
The politics are plain for all to see
'He who has ears let him hear'
The world is blinded by its fear of the unknown,

Truth is sacrificed upon the altars of self interest,
Calvary is still outside the city.

Only yesterday I stood here, feeling the same
As I do today, only today there is no excuse.

Does God ever say? 'Did I come for this? '
Does God ever say? 'I wash my hands'
The evidence lies within God's history
The faithful one, the merciful one, the holy one
So he came among us, full of grace and truth
Lived in this city, loved this city, cried for this city,
Yet the city refused to listen, refused to love.

Only yesterday I stood here, feeling the same
As I do today, only today there is no excuse.

So we come together, to pray, to listen
We come as those called by the living one,
The one who cries still for the torn and bleeding world
Whose love demands new ways, from tired out dogmas.
Who offers life and hope now in the midst of despair
Who forever is the alpha and omega of hope.

Only yesterday I stood here, feeling the same
As I do today, only today there is no excuse.

James Tipp

Good Friday Meditation The Thoughts Of Others

The Thoughts Of Others

The killing machine moved in double ranks
Shields held close to the chest, gladius's polished
Sharpened ready for the task ahead, the killing zone
The temple echoed the tramping slap of studs on stone
The legionnaires braced themselves for trouble.
But the crowd fickle and easily swayed cried out
Crucify, Crucify, a fellow Jew cast to the wolves
No need to fight today, Pilate scrubs his hands
They have a prisoner to play with, death
The deterrent that silences all, the final act awaiting.

The crowd hear the tramping feet, feel the vibration
The priest, pause in their deliberation, will Pilate bend?
Or act as he has done before to humiliate them for pleasure.
Politics are played with high stakes, Jesus as a Caesar!
If the spies have done their job Pilate will ignore their plea
Yet even he must play the game of being Caesar's friend
So Herod will not ruin his post with the charge of indifference.
The crowd on cue cry Crucify, we have only one Caesar
The words strike the walls rebound around his mind
He plays it safe, why not? There's life beyond Jerusalem.

Barabbas stands bemused, puzzled, angry and defiant
Readied for death, he struggles with life, caught in limbo
Jesus he knows and despises, a lover of people, all people
Did he not cure the centurions slave, and spoke of his faith?
What faith can a pagan have or a tax collector come to that?
Yet here he stands in his place, to be crucified, for what?
For healing the sick, for preaching love of enemy.
The peasants love him, he feeds their minds and souls
It's said he fed their bodies to, but miracles I think not.
Just another messiah hailed but soon to be forgotten.

The seller of sweat meats gazed at the backs of the crowd, and sighed.
Another day of death for some poor souls, nothing to get excited about,
Yet the families and friends, the curious and the ghoulish, gathered.
Lined the streets wailing to a God who has not heard for a millennia

Trade will be slack for a while, till the soldiers have tramped past,
Until the families and friends have recognised their God's deafness.
Outside the walls the screams will be drowned by the noise of Jerusalem
Then life will return to some kind of normality, Passover madness awaits.
The city streaming with pilgrims jostling by his stall, buying his wares
The wailing will be forgotten, nothing ever changes, death is final.

Thomas cannot believe he is here in the crowd hiding
They could not have been this wrong, could they?
The fly covered face, oozing blood, bears little resemblance
Where did all that power go? All the vision for something new
The talk of the Kingdom of God coming to free them all.
What kind of freedom is this? death has always been here.
I cannot believe this is the end, yet I cannot believe it is not
I am torn in so many ways, hurt by the deception of love
Hurt as I see his pain and agony, the dripping wounds
So much for believing in a God who acts and cares, fool.

The beggar is trampled on and kicked out of the way
This is his spot and he always sits here, but not today
The soldiers push him and everyone else off the road
The crowd ignore him lying on the dirt, whoever sees a beggar
He hears the name called out as a woman passes by 'Jesus.'
Not the Galilean surely, the one who did notice the poor,
What could he have done to deserve this awful death?
There will be many a sorry tale to tell tonight with his passing
He once gave my friend his sight, but nobody believed him
How sad to see such goodness rewarded like this.

Mary watches from afar, her silent prayer to God
You saved him from Herod so long ago, save him now
Her mothers anguish blocks the remembrance of his mission
"I am about my fathers business", said so long ago on these steps
Can this humiliation and agony be part of a greater plan?
From where she stands it looks as though her world has crumbled
Mary from Magdalene weeps by her side, whilst John tears his hair
All three are just observers on the tide of history, disconnected
By the soldiers, by the priest, by the fear they carry within themselves
"Woman your son, son your mother" the last gasps of breath are gone.

The high priest's spy watches without malice or compassion
This is just another job in another day for another gold coin.

He will wash away his distaste of this butchery after the death.
His masters will merely want to know the facts, is he dead?
Nothing else will suit their aim, so they will be pleased.
He neither cares nor ponders on the rights and wrongs,
Only the rich have the luxury of have the freedom to choose.
They reach the spot, the deed is done, the spear goes in.
Dead it is over and done, now for my reward and that drink.

The crowd begin to move, but not soon enough
The clouds have darkened the sky and delivered their verdict
Rain cascades down and the earth seems to shake and tremble.
The Romans are keen to leave, their work complete, death delivered
Joseph approaches with caution, cautious of the Romans and the priest.
There is danger in claiming the body from both sides of this equation.
Saddened by such an end, their talks after dark had raised a spark of hope
God had not forgotten his people, there was a newness in his message
Now the corpse weighs heavy in the rain, his face a mask of pain
The tomb a thoughtful gesture to someone he admired and respected.

James Tipp

Good Friday Today

Good Friday Today

The Via Dolorosa

Seems tragic.

Guns, soldiers, tear gas

All wait with anticipation

The pilgrims jostle

Stare, wonder;

The tragedy of yesterday

Dims into the tragedy of today.

Lord as you stumbled,

Sweated, screamed along this way

As the cross cut into your flesh

The wounds of the whips,

Stung and oozed

Was it all for this?

Was this all we could manage.

Good Friday Today

The deserts of compassion

Stand stark upon our maps.

Drought scorches the land

People starved of water

The life giver.

Cracked fly filled mouths

Plead into the cameras

Whilst we drink tea

Look on and wonder.

As you faced the agony of pain

Your mouth parched and fly filled,

You knew the pain

The helplessness.

' I thirst' croaked out

From your cracked lips

Was it all for this?

Is this as far as we've come

Today

Good Friday Today

Terror struck the bomb explodes
Another life ceases, another tragedy,
In the catalogue of sickness.
The innocent die, by an unseen hand.
Who calls himself freedom fighter!
Patriot but never murderer
The families weep; crying "God why?
Why us? why them? "

The darkness was complete
You entered your vigil of loneliness
The agony the pain, so terrible so complete
Everything was far away
Everyone so distant, even your Father of light;
Hidden I the clouds, of agony and pain.
On your lips the cry, "My God My God
Why have you forsaken me"
Was it all for this
Was this our only answer today

James Tipp

Grace Called

The saint and sinner ever combined
Unable to un-mix the two contradictions
Who are at constant war within.
Grace is a must in my world, my experience
The past clings like an exposing wet t shirt,
Yet those around see only now and smile.
How do I unhook the sledge of yesterday
Without the knowledge of a constant love
Undemanding agapaistic, beautiful love.
A love that sees all, knows all and calls,
Calls me by name to be His person in this place.
I know His love and calling, His acceptance of me.
My problem is accepting myself, loving myself
So that in the scheme of things, I might love others.
That I might grasp the great commandment
Love of neighbour begins with self love.

James Tipp

Greenwhich Park 2008

The capital stands stark resplendent
Viewed from this ancient meridian park.
The Thames the highway of the past
Meanders past old and new in twist and turns.
Here kings hunted with their hounds
Admirals planned the conquest of the world
Today tourists view the city with delight.
For us a place of relaxation and inspiration
We journey with friends enjoy the space
To be ourselves in the company of others.

James Tipp

Grieg

History is made by ordinary people doing extraordinary things,
Great moments of the past begin often inauspiciously, quiet remote.
Such was the great moments of Grieg, sitting here on this fjord
In a hut, a piano, and the view, here The hall of the mountain King,
Is envisaged, heard on this piano, the only witness the mystic fjord.
A man of passion and peculiar idiosyncrasy, nobody must hear him play.
His wife, family could bring on silence, piano closed, he needed nobody.
So today we stare at this tiny space an ordinary piano, the unchanged view.
Marvelling at his inheritance, that goes on inspiring with its magic sounds.

(c) J Tipp Ullensvang Norway

James Tipp

Gundulph's Tower West Malling Abbey

Like a giant sentinel it stands oblivious of time
The knights who built this sacred place long dead
Yet here it stands a marker for another time and place
Hell fire and hopes of heaven were part of its purpose
To avoid one and to gain the other, for all time
Sticks and carrots, incentives, excommunication a fear
Today the churches are excommunicated by society
Dwindling congregations oblivious of the church's role
God is all love and care and the sticks have been broken
What will stand from our age for the age of the future
What will our legacy of only love bequeath?

James Tipp

Happiness Is?

Happiness is?
A cigar called Hamlet?
The taste of Martini?
Fairy soft hands?

Happiness is?
Holidays in the sun?
Ski-ing in the snow?
An awayday?

Happiness is?
A talk on the phone?
A Slumberland bed?
Being a Flora man?

Happiness is
Giving to others
Seeing you smile
Directing the way

Happiness is
A tree in Bud
Wind in your hair
A mackerel sky

Happiness is
The silence of night
The song bird
Loving each other.

James Tipp

He's Gone

He's gone moved on whilst we still linger,
We hold him captive as the baby in the manger
He's easy to handle as the baby; we're in control.
But when he moves on what then? Things change.
He upsets his mother disturbing her peace and dreams
He disturbs the quiet of fisherman moving them on
They follow and are equally disturbed even then.
His following disturbs the authorities
Both Jew and gentile find him hard to take
Mary the stable long forgotten puzzles over this her child.
The arrest and crucifixion painful episodes retold
But just as the stable now lies empty, so does the tomb
The Christ child now fully comes of age, in eternity
Leads his people through the time and tide of human endeavour.
Still disturbing his world through the voice of his people.
We are called to be disturbers, for his Kingdom is to come.

James Tipp

Holy Week 2007

Holy week in an unholy world the title seems redundant
Lost in the annals of time and space, a theological nicety.
What is holy about crucifixion, killing a man painfully?
Yet the Church still in her wisdom celebrates or remembers
This one moment in history, when betrayal brought hope
Hope brought courage and courage was reinforced by nothing
The empty tomb with nothing in it, well apart from an angel or two.
Gods covenant made new by his actions his keeping both sides
Jesus the answer to mans inability to be sinless, and stable
The relationship with God made new by God through God in man.
Holy week because he turns betrayal and death into salvation
He turns the emptiness of the tomb into new life, new hope.
He turns disaster into victory and it is a Holy experience new life.

James Tipp

I Feel Like An Empty Box

I feel like an empty box,
Standing alone
Devoid of all content
Buffeted by the elements
Hurt by the emptiness
There is no place to hide.
Wanting only to be filled
The box stands waiting
Contents strewn for all to see
Nothing hid, exposed
The box cannot be refilled itself
Cannot reseal, so it is empty
And it cries and cries and cries.

James Tipp

I Have Lost The Plot

I have lost the plot, become a victim
To long in the kitchen I am burnt out
Standing in the hallowed place of emptiness
I wonder where it all went wrong, disappeared
The joy of knowing being certain, vanished
Knowledge, understanding, age, replace black
With reams of grey and very little white.
He knew the secret, called their bluff
He who is sinless cast the first stone
The elders left first, unconvinced of their cause.
So now thirty years on from that fresh white collar
You sit in the night, sleepless, pondering
What else can drive a person if not love.
If God is love and love is the source of power
The source of grace, truth, and mercy, the God gifts
How else can you live your life, what other truth,
Can match the costly truth of being called to love
But the results seem fragile and atom sized
Like panning for gold in a worn out creek.
With nothing else to offer the world I continue
To be the messenger of the risen living one
Amongst the reams of grey, in the realms of uncertainty.

James Tipp

I Live In The Space That Questions

I live in the space that questions
Rather than in the space that knows.
I have moved from the certainty of youth
To the wider world brought on by age.
Which no longer has such small horizons,
But is tempered by experience and life.
I have crossed the borders laid in black
Entered the space whose borders are grey.
Find this a place of compassion and care,
Instead of judgment, damnation, and ignorance
Knowing that the pilgrimage carries scars
The longer I travel, the more chance of failure
The arrogant young man knew all the answers
The old man searches, lives in the knowledge
That grace exceeds his failures here lies hope.

James Tipp

I Live On Fantasy Island

I live on fantasy island
Nothing is ruled out nothing ruled in
In reality there seems no rules at all.
I can sell sex to the young through pop
But this is not abuse because it only a video
I can sell lies as truth and truth what is truth?
Everything said has to be interpreted by experts
Who never make decisions, only guess
But we prefer the guess's it's more interesting
If everyone is wrong then I am exonerated.
I can live inside the moving picture on the wall
Inside other peoples lives without getting hurt
Inside other peoples fantasies, image makers
Pretending to mirror life, we forget their actors.
I can pretend that if I floss, shower and deodorise
Drink Barcardi breezers I'll be 'cool' irresistible, a stud.
I can spend money I don't have on things I don't need
Then vote for Green Peace to save the world.
I can drive a four wheel drive to the office
Tar macadam all the way not a field in sight
Then blame others for the ozone layer.
All this I can do because I live on fantasy island
Which many call 'Great Britain'

James Tipp

I Poem For Women In The Church

When God decided to enter our world
He gave it a lot of thought
He wanted people to know who He was
The problem really was fraught
Just to arrive out of nowhere
In a bush all burning and bright
Seemed a good idea at one time
This time it didn't feel right.
I know Ill go as a baby
But I'll need a woman as well
The problems he laid for the future
You never really could tell.
For women were deemed inferior
Not up to the task of us men
The problem remained such a real one
Nothing has changed much since then.

When Jesus preached of the Kingdom
With fishermen safe by his side
The women might have complained
Lord are we here just for the ride? .
We cook and we clean and we polish
We keep the lot of you fed
But we only get mentioned in passing
As if it might go to our head
It was the women who allowed them the freedom
To go about healing the sick
Were there when they came home quite tired
Who never complained gave them stick.
No the women were towers of strength then
They are towers of strength still today
But the way they get treated by some folk
You'd think they were just in the way.

When the spirit began to change lives
To thrill and inspire was the game
He looked at the people before him
And treated them all just the same
He never noticed their gender

Their function would all be the same
To tell of the Lords resurrection
To heal the world of its pain
Mary the first one to witness
The Lord as he rose from the grave
The world would marvel at her words
The one whose life had been saved.
Others would follow her leading
The church was made up of all
But only the males got the calling
If you think that's true, your a fool

James Tipp

In A Blaze Of Glory

The day extinguishes in a blaze of glory
Nature in all her beauty bids farewell to the light
We stand enthralled captured by the magnificance
The transitory reality holds us mesmerised.
This warm Easter Monday evening is given meaning
We are offered a gift that is free and compelling
As was the transitory nature of death, for the life bearer

Whitstable Kent.

James Tipp

In Death I See Myself

In the face of a friend I see death
Written large for all who can see the signs.
We who travel with the dying are frail
We have nothing of ourselves to offer,
Only the faith we carry in fragile vessels.
Each life accompanied into this dark mystery
Mirrors yourself, unable to escape the realities
Each person loved and treasured, memory filled
Reminds you that you are gazing at tomorrow,
Looking at your future, at all our futures.
Each will travel light, but for those of faith
We never travel alone, a companion
One who has been this way, guides
Sheds light before our path, draws us on
To the hope that is born of resurrection
In the knowledge of the one who is resurrected
So we are able to look into the mirror of death
Travel with those who go before us.
Because the light shines in the darkness
And the darkness has not overcome it

James Tipp

In Search Of The Spiritual

Is this a spiritual work
Or the work of the deranged?
I am left pondering the distant voices
'The Cloud of Unknowing' is just that.
Julian of Norwich might well be sectioned.
Yet here before me lie spiritual gems, I'm told
For me they are lumps of coal
To be burned and turned to ash.
I feel like the boy with the Kings new cloths
Am I at fault for not seeing the sparkle?
Is my perception so distorted?
Dare I cry out loud 'They say nothing'
They are the babblings of the deranged.

James Tipp

In Silent Contemplation

In silent contemplation we wait expectant,
Word and sacrament will speak your name.
Declare the living one is among us.
So we listen to the silence, yet hear your voice,
Un-clamoured, un-intrusive, yet ever present.
We present our petitions, gather to eat.
The meal is simple unchanging from day one,
Yet it captures a moment of humanities freedom.
Across the created beauty of the world it is so
Those who gather for a moment in time
To celebrate the living one, Word made flesh.

James Tipp

In The Garden

Before the cross Christmas thoughts!

In the garden
at thirty three.
I thought about my genesis.
my entry into my creation.
That beginning so inauspicious,
so right.
My father sent the messengers,
and the star.
The Magi had been waiting,
outside Israel.
They had wanted someone to come,
so they came.
The shepherd's were not waiting
just sleeping.
Their minds were on wolves
not angels.
So they awoke with fear
but travelled with joy.
David's town expected
the stable a shock.
I have always been a shock
even to Mary and Joseph.
"I am a virgin not married
I will do as you say".
My world has been filled
With the ordinary.
My actions and words
Extraordinary.
So once again they re-tell
my story
But who is listening
The shoppers?
Those surfing the internet
Looking for what?
I said so many times
"He who has ears let him hear".
The silence is deafening

Or is it that deafness brings silence?
Silence of the heart
silence of the soul.
All this I thought
in the garden in Gethsemane

James Tipp

Insipid Voyeurs

The face is angry and explosive driven by fear
Inside the car sit his family frightened, stunned
Today their world is turned upside down,
Without their permission or without consultation
Someone has ripped their lives apart completely
Thrown them on the scrap heap of humanity
Powerless people who have been bombed
Driven from their homes, made refugees
All this happens on both sides of the border.
Both lots of people who yesterday had ordinary lives
Today they have nothing but the cloths and the car.
They are filled with hate for each others leaders
Those who cause such pain in their name.
They will if not challenge feel hate for each other.
We on the outside sit like insipid voyeurs
The news man questions trying to get a story
To feed the watching millions behind glass screens.
We neither smell or feel the fear and pain
We are removed in our gazing like being at the movies
We are cauterised from reality hardened to reality
We are dehumanised by the medium of the media
Overloaded with peoples despair and powerlessness
We flick the button and watch Friends sanitised soaps
Unreal, undemanding and pain free my sojourn in unreality
Just a flick away from all that is painful and real,
In frustration at my own impotence I weep.

James Tipp

Is Anybody Listening?

Is anybody listening?
To the crying of the child
Is any body listening
The noise is getting wild.
In the stable he is greeted
By the bullet and the gun
Not by the sound of happiness
For no ones having fun.
The world has stopped its business
They sing give peace a chance
But the angels are not dancing
The world is in a trance.
There a children who this Christmas
In the place were he was born
Who will blow themselves apart
Kill others with their scorn
So their captures will take lessons
Deal another blow
So the screaming of the children
Will grow and grow and grow.
We have to keep on singing
We have to say their wrong
We have to sing the music
That is the Christmas song
We cannot let the evil win
We must give Him a chance
To sing his song of love of men
That the world might really dance
To the tune of love and healing
To the tune of peace and joy
Remember then this Christmas
The coming of this boy.

James Tipp

Is My Fate Sealed?

Choice is something I have more than enough of.
I live in a world of affluence and materialism
I can choose to shop where and when I like
Twenty four seven is the strap line for my society
It is the principle of democracy and freedom
That I have the right to choose is precedent
The oxygen of my world from the cradle.
Yet I read that all is ordained before my existence
That all my thoughts my actions have been and gone
So what of choice am I pre-programmed in eternity?
A mere robot who's every actions have no choice.
Is my freedom an illusion composed by God?
In the alpha and Omega of all things.
Good and evil sourced from the same composition
The word writ large on the pages of eternity.
No dualism to blame for the things that go wrong.
I struggle with the challenge to my very being
If I cannot choose my actions I seem to diminish
Slip into the world of 'not my fault' pass the buck
The world is exonerated from its chaos and evil
The cross becomes a mystery beyond comprehension
For nobody sinned, no need for repentance or sorry
I am merely being me, as I was planned to be

James Tipp

Isams And Ologies Kill

Pain on pain body heaped on body inexhaustible hatred.
So the eye less and the ear less, national pride persona's engage each other
The worlds news seeks to be neutral just does the body count
Yet in the maelstrom of hate and belligerence another voice.
From the grieving on both sides voices call for peace and dialogue
Another way must be found to engage the issues the dead have no voice.
Instead their loved ones speak, enough is enough, their pain the same.
The pleading falls on deaf ears, but the pleading for peace must never cease.

Dedicated to the BFF
(c) J Tipp August 2014

James Tipp

Isolation

Here as though caught in time in splendid isolation
A home or farmstead nestles in the new sown fields.
Here away from the maddening crowds, a picture of timelessness
The harvest has been and gone the new about to start.
We stand enchanted, amazed, how have you survived?
What stories could you tell those passing by, of other times?
When you really were a lonely farm yard, miles from all.
Today you are an illusion, a photographic opportunity.
For reality lies just a turn away, just a glance, a head turn
For the town is just a step away, the housing estate next door.
Sadly your isolation and mystery have been compromised.

J Tipp Oct 2015
Sittingbourne

James Tipp

Je Suis Charlie

Je Suis Charlie

Ignorance is bliss, knowledge is power, unless your holding the Kalashnikov,
The medieval barbarity explodes onto the Parisian street, darkens the light
Extremism of every hue and colour seeks to deny any questions of importance
Left, right, religious, secular all are tainted with the same brush of intolerance
All claim to be right and above reproach, whether divine or enlightened reason
The same intolerance is wrapped in many covers, race, religion, prejudice rules
A superiority that claims a special place for themselves above all others.
Intellectual or divine, so people will march 'je suis Charlie' spoken in a whisper
Yet the silence may be the only answer, to snuff out the oxygen of hate,
Let the silent march be the only answer to the barbarity unleashed, rejection
Criminals nothing more nothing less, refuse them the credibility of a cause,
Refuse to pass on their messages of hate and intolerance, by a silent response.

(c) J Tipp 2015

James Tipp

Kentish Barns New Years Day

This winter scene the misted view
The hedgerow bramble filled
Reveals a distant view of yesterday.
These Kentish barns shrouded
The fog and mist create magic
Transform the view into mystery
That resonates with all that is to come
For this year is new, the pages clean
Who knows what lies ahead?
What mystery waits to be revealed?
For now the day is fog bound
As is the future, not yet begun.

James Tipp

Life Is Fog Bound

Life is a mystery, a fog shrouded puzzle
With images and characters
All fuzzy round the edges.
We are uncomfortable with mystery
It denies our certainties our black and whites.
Our logic fails to work, is inconsequential.
Our faith journey is only clear when looking back
The now and the future remain fog bound.
For those who seek a certain path
Crystal clear and straight and narrow
Will find their way encumbered, misted over
In the reality of our being pilgrims led by him
Who is the way, the light in a puzzling world

James Tipp

Life Is Fragile

Life is fragile and gossamer thin
Like the transient life of the butterfly
Whose beauty adorns this world for hours
Then with all the intricacy of it's making, dies.
We are called to beauty too, imaged in the maker
We who listen to the call and are made beautiful.
The one who hung pinned by the world, listens.
The Maker knows the second of our coming,
The second of our calling, the moment of our parting.
Yet we who stand outside this mystery are puzzled
Pain and confusion tear at our being, anger strikes.
The years of toil, pain, and sacrifice to follow, gone
In an instant wiped away, our faith put on hold.
We who speak of Gospel and trust, are tested
The pain no less real, our life no less torn apart.
We have the hope, but we also have the emptiness
The confusion that sees, 'only dimly in the mirror' *

James Tipp

Life Is Indiscriminate

Life is indiscriminate, and arbitrary,
It neither helps nor hinders it just is.
The unknown forever changes plans long made
Redirects our lives to ways we never saw
To ways we never contemplated or imagined.
Life enables and disables depending on which side it falls
Into the heady mix comes providence, God
To those who believe nothing is as above
For those without faith everything chaos.

James Tipp

Like A Black Velvet Cushion

Like a black velvet cushion, studded in diamonds
Is how I remember the night of his coming.
I stood stock still, the light in the room flickered
The dimness exploded into a light so bright
The like of which I had never before seen.
Within the light a figure with angel wings appeared
"Fear not" he said, "To late" I said for I was trembling.
"Mary" he knew my name, yet still I was frozen
"You will have a child" "No chance" I said
Don't you know I could be stoned for such a thing?
I am as you an angel should know a Virgin,
and Virgins don't have babies"
"This will not be an ordinary baby"
That's for sure I thought.
This will be God's child and his name will be Jesus.
It was then that I pinched myself and stopped being so cocky.
We Jews had awaited the coming of the Messiah for a long time,
the chosen one, but why choose me to be his mum.
As if reading my thoughts the angel said
"God knows your heart Mary and he finds it ok"
But what about Joseph who's going to tell him?
I will tonight in a dream, now go and see your cousin Elizabeth
she's had a shock as well. You mean Elizabeth the barren one. Not any longer
said the angel, Wow I said that's great news. Yes it is, and yours will be just as
great to her. Then the room was dim again and I wondered was it a dream? Then
I missed my next showing and the one after so off I went to Elizabeth and you
know the rest.

I

James Tipp

Like A Spectre

Like a spectre, the sign of joy hangs over me
Disturbs my very being,
Transports me to another place,
Shatters my todays, with its yesterdays.
Like a fly trapped in amber I struggle
But the past holds firm, and hardens.
I awake and the present is bathed
In yesterdays sweat and humiliation.
I groan with the pain and terror
Such are the dreams we carry in secret
Exploding unexpected into our presence
Destroying our peace and calm.
But they are only dreams, memories
Locked away and shuttered down
The present is a million miles away.
Some of the lines etched on me
Were made by those very memories
But He has transformed them
Turned dross to gold for other's use.
Yet still they linger cling like gossamer
All I have become, all I am, is made
In the furnace of time, all achievement
Scar ridden, mysterious, yet transformed.
I look behind, the road that I have travelled
I recognise I have moved on, yet the pain is real.

James Tipp

Looking For The Light

So you thought you found the light switch
But it turned into a fused burned out emptiness.
You thought you knew what you wanted
Only to find it was that empty bag spoken off
A moment of ecstasy that opens the chasm
Of disappointment and emptiness wider.
The still voice is missing despite the hearing aid
The amplification and the radar spinning.
The Preacher and the Psalmist empathies
Each generation must seek its own ways
To live in the darkness, await the glimmer
The path that leads to the tuner, the station
On which your track is being played
To hear the one who calls saying to your name
"This is our tune, dance with me out of the night
For I called and I will find a way to heal your pain"

James Tipp

Make A Stand Say Something Positive!

Governments only works because we collude with their aspirations
We give credence to the objectives when we keep silent, mute.
Hate and fear work on the same basis, we collude by remaining mute.
When both are seen in the same structures our collusion is costly
The innocent, the passer by, the families of victims, meet the cost.
To seek reconciliation in the midst of hate and violence makes a stand
Says we take away your right to speak for us, we refuse to hate on demand
Refuse revenge that blinds my neighbour, my nation, and the whole world.
Words are cheap is a saying without content, if true, why are people silent?
Why is speaking to each other and listening to each other ignored.
The end game is either living together on this tiny orb set in space
Or allowing fear and difference to drive a wedge of hate between humanity.
So seeking our own extinction in the pursuit of purity and isolation.

www.

James Tipp

Make The Time

My emotions spill out in a sea of exclamations,
Taken to new depths of feeling, they explode from me,
Like the bursting dam filled to overflowing.
New territory explored and shared, with such feeling
Old ideas ditched and left behind as the new implodes
Captures you very being, holds it firm, self is found
Alive in the moments shared in ways undreamed of.
Such can be the meeting with the Godhead, in silence
Time given, is time to listen, but you must make the time.

James Tipp

Maranatha (Come Quickly Lord Jesus)

The steel grey dawn,
Misted moon,
Honking geese,
Tell the winter scene.
Trees denuded of life
Bare other fruit.
The bobbing, squawking starlings
Sit like giant pears
Waiting, waiting
The light grows,
Grey becomes milk white.
Commanded by something unseen
They fly together.
The day has begun
Time speeds by
An so we wait.
Maranatha.

James Tipp

Maundy Thursday

White washed Lemmings

They gather like white washed lemmings awaiting their fate
Charged again with previous vows that have been broken
They stir themselves into yet another orgy of profound nothingness
Knowing full well that what is required has no human possibility
They have failed on-mass before they leave the building.
But the circle must be complete as this is a tradition of vanity
Outside the world neither see or hears or really cares at all.
The whole game is played over and over, and the excuses
They remain the same, broken vessels called we bow the knee.
The process like all traditions seems ridiculous lacking truth
The lemmings continue to get smaller in number each year
Will the game ever cease, outside the living one loves the world.

Easter 2012

Maundy Thursday

James Tipp

Maybe Its Because...

Maybe its because...

Memories are the bedrock of who we are how we have become,
They inform our present, by engaging with our past, giving insight.
The places, events, captured and stored to be accessed on demand.
But the reality changes memories are confused with the passage of time,
The places of childhood growing are now transformed with little remaining.
The London of my youth is no more, Cinderella in the ashes, now a Princess.
Yet the scars remain, physical and mental, they are writ large upon you.
The hand with its central scar, the bombed ruin, the glass that caused the pain,
The indented shin, another scar, from a ruined London Wall that is no more.
So we travelled the river in the dark, Greenwich to Westminster, amazed.
The old are still within view, the Tower with its builder Gundulph, set in the past
Tower bridge is passed and the sight from beneath is still breath taking,
Captain Kidd's pub looms out of the dark a reminder of yesterdays terrorists
The sights and sounds are both past and present, a magical moment in time.
The city is astounding in the darkness, lit up like a beacon of modernity.
Alongside the ancient and historic, lies the new, exciting monuments
Testimony to our times, the Shard magnificent towering grandeur, excites.
The Eye with its slow ponderous circling, red in the night sky, invites inspection
So new memories are overlaid with the old whose sights and sounds have gone.
I look with pride upon this my city, enjoy this Princess risen from the ashes
We have made this ours, as we stand arm in arm, full of wonder, together.

James Tipp

Minster

The year recedes draws to a close, draws down a pastel pallet
The sea an iron blue the sky daubed with dark and light cloud
Drifting over a pebbled beach of grey and beige sand, silky wet.
The air is chilled the sun a presence seen rather than felt, winter
The quiet walk, brings freshness to the inner soul, light and laughter
We wait with exception for all that is to come, with hope for our future.

(c) J Tipp Minster Dec 29 2014.

James Tipp

Mirror Mirror On The Wall

I saw a man I did not like
Rejected all his ways
Cannot stand his attitude
Or some of the things he says
He looked at others full of scorn
Rejected some at ease
Piously gave thanks to God
This man was on his knees
In him I saw thousand dreams
Of things I could have done
But he was papier-mache
He had not done one.
He scorned the simple minded
Despised him who thought alone
Rejected all ideas
That weren't from him alone
I saw a man I did not like
There was nothing left to say
So I turned from the mirror
And slowly walked away.

James Tipp

Mountian Mystery

Mysterious giants, tree lined smoke covered
Here is mystery writ large on the landscape
We are dwarfed by their magnificence
Cloud rising like smoke from a distant fire
Surrounds meanders and drifts on the breezes
Spiralling ever upward drawn by the hidden sun.
Creation in all her splendour adorns the lakeside
Making us wonder at the power of creation
Brings us to our knees in praise and adoration.

James Tipp

Mysterious Ethereal Curtain

Like a mysterious ethereal curtain
The mountain is enveloped in a cover
Vast as its snow peaks are, as close, yet
We draw the curtains and there is nothing.
The mountain weather produces the unexpected
Shrouded vistas soon replaced buy dazzling snow.
Within only minutes the mood is transformed.
The fjord goes from foreboding to inviting
Mirror clear to rippling movement
The speed boats cuts through the rippled surface
Leaves behind a frothing wake, our holiday
Is both a wonder and a joyous experience.

(c) J Tipp Norway

James Tipp

Mystery

Mystery ebbs on every tide
Like liquid mercury poured.
Upon this beach the challenge
Every sense that enriches the soul
Here creation calls, the voice says
Look beyond yourself conceited humanity
Seek the order you do not control
Here the language of creation cries
Behold the beauty freely given
To all who would drink the wine
That brings the awesome cry
Thank God for all we see
For nothing less than thanks will do
For all creations diversity and beauty.

Southerndown South Wales
Novemer 2004
No 1 in the Southerndown Trilogy

James Tipp

Mystery In The Mist

This morning has an air of mystery
The spider's web illuminated by the dampening mist
Decorates the bird table seen ghostly through the mist
The quiet stillness hides the summer sun
Mystery abounds, the churchyard drips softly
The echo of the birds lies out there somewhere
The river hidden from our view sluggishly meanders
What is to come hidden from our view
So it was so long ago his mystery unfolded
Yet hidden from their view this mystery
Which ebbs and swirls throughout time
Only to be revealed when the Son comes

James Tipp

Nacked Child Of War Vietnam 1972

Running down the road naked child of war
Back all burnt and blistered
You don't know what for.
Picture in the paper
A thousand miles away
The man said on the news
Your brother died today.
How to face the agony
Of a life without a home
A thousand miles away
A poet writes a poem.
He tries to tell the people
Of a God of love not hate
But the people only shake their heads
They're sorry your to late.
In his mind he sees your body
Your back is one vast burn
And he cries into the paper
For he knows they'll never learn

James Tipp

Nothing Is Real

At this moment in time nothing is real
Nothing makes sense in the emptiness.
Not even all the years of loving and sharing
The years of arguments and compromise
The times of highest love, and deepest loathing.
At this moment there seems nothing to hold onto
Everything seems detached and unreal.
Even my ability to cry has been put on hold.
Death with all of its inevitability
Still shocks me, stuns me leaves me reeling.
The sentence whether sudden, or expected
Clangs like a bell and drowns all else
Shakes my certainties releases my fears
So where is faith in all this? Where is God?
He is there in the comforting hand of a friend
The prayer of strangers, the Word read.
He is there on the cross and the empty tomb
He is there in his spirit, speaking through others.
Nobody dies alone, the Father is ever present.
In the now and in the beyond, his love goes on.

James Tipp

Obesity The Scourge Of Recession

Obesity the scourge of the western world
Obesity in all things everything in excess.
Now we are called to diet, the diet of recession
The politicians are in denial or seek to be
This diet will not hurt will change nothing
We can still be obese gorge on the superficial
Nobody believes anymore, credibility is gone
Those who seek a painless remedy are fools
Or worse just self seeking liars, charlatans.
This is a universal call to wake up, think
A chance to be healthier a chance for others
To become healthy and have a life.

James Tipp

Ospringe Churchyard

This Godly place lies waiting for the traveller
Beckons through the covered canopy of Yew
Twin paths around flint walls speak of yesterday.
Stone obelisk worn with age, etched in bygone days
Washed by the winter rain burned by summer sun
Fade into lifeless pillars of forgotten memories.
This English churchyard surrounded by summer wheat
Remains a secluded place of refuge for today.

James Tipp

Parents Of Faith Who Live With Pain

Together in the darkness we struggle
We the messengers of light, and love.
We struggle with the pain
Of the one we love, cherish,
One who is part of our very selves
For whom we can do nothing,
But be there.
We are drained by who we are,
Who others want us to be,
Unreal expectations.
We cry to the one who sent us, called us
Our voices echoing in the darkness
Muffled as the echo dies
Till only we are left,
Standing in the darkness,
Looking for that glimmer.
Listening for that still voice,
Of hope, of understanding
Is this how the cross felt?
Bleak, empty, exposed, painful.
Is this how the tomb was?
No space to hear the echo?
We long for the daylight
We cling to the promise
Of resurrection, restoration, renewal
For here alone lies hope, our futures.

James Tipp

Past Events

The autumnal season brings richness of colour
The sky daubed with pinks and mauves
An impressionist master class unveils itself.
The mist recedes and the majesty of colour
Demands and audience to look up enjoy
The advent season matches natures best
We await with expectation the celebration
Of past events made real for today.

James Tipp

Petrified Truth

Petrified Truth

The journey of a people who say they belong to God,
Their lens on life is only made real by this encounter.
Everything is distilled through this focused lens, regardless.
Reason plays no part, faith is the arbiter of truth and truth is?
Truth is that God cannot be wrong cannot change, neither can they,
Rooted in traditions that saw the world as flat, sickness as punishment,
A patriarchal society that dominates the other fifty percent of humanity.
Enlightenment, reason science, progress are words not used, anathema.
So each faith community is guilty of double talk and immobility,
We are sorry to de-humanise you and insult you, but its in love.
Some do not seek to disguise their intentions, its done in hate.
However its done, it remains a blight on the face of humanity.
The great seekers of truth and God must be mystified and hurt.
It was to be so simple, love, care, trust and compassion, eternal seeds
Which die in a parched land of doe's and don't s a petrified truth.

(c) J Tipp Jan 2015

James Tipp

Pigeons

The bare skeletal tree in winters nude apparel
Plays host to a large and silent group of pigeons
Like large grey winter fruit they hang from every branch
Gazing down upon the Eurolink and us, still, watching.
The ivy's black and fruitful berries their winter store,
A feast on a cold grey wet, windy, overcast day.
So we stare and they stare back, both longing for the sun.

(c) J Tipp Jan 2015

James Tipp

Poem For A Funeral-Life Is Always Ahead

Life is always ahead, exciting and full of adventure. What has been lives on in the memories of those with whom we have shared our love. Memories that make us laugh and cry and sometimes make us angry. Nothing can erase the life that has been lived, give thanks for the good times, remember what we learnt together in the bad times, for every memory makes us all that we are. Today begins as yet another adventure into the hope that God has given us. Not into darkness and decay, but into light and love, for God is love and in him is no darkness found. Enjoy me as I was, look forward to me as I will be; whole again in the presence of God.

James Tipp

Prayer Is?

Prayer is to seek the way of God to find direction
So that vision is rooted in the possible and probable.
Prayer is a dialogue of un-equals adult and child
One seeking to expand and re-create limited by knowledge
The other knowing all and wanting to re-direct without crushing.
Prayer is not telling but seeking wisdom from its source.
Did Abraham change Gods mind, or did the spirit prompt concern
Is the widow of Jesus steadfast or stubborn in her requests?
Prayer is not shouting in the dark but a seeking after light
That will illumine all I am and all I do in the pilgrimage of life.

James Tipp

Psalm 139 Another View

When God is not far off we can relate
The hand that touches, the ear that hears,
The voice that speaks, are intimate words
Words that speak of knowing, on both sides.
In all we seek as pilgrims, these words explain
They transmute the inner core of the spirit
Into the world of humanities striving to be known.
God is not far off and distant for the psalmist
He is there in the macro and microcosm of life
My life, your life, humanities heartbeat is His
I am known, I am unique, I am important
Because there is communication with my God.

James Tipp

Psalm 139 Revisited

The scan sped down the lines
Jumbled into a million electronic signals
It emerged on the printer as a baby
For the first time mother sees her child
Passed to father, grandfather, grandmother
All have the unseen image our technology brings
We have discovered another God like quality.
To be known in the womb in the hidden places.
Yet is this in the psalmist mind, to be known.
To be seen is not to be known as in the mind of God
We may see the knitting together, know its process
But we have only an image of our human nature
The image of the one who will grow and become.
It is the becoming that God knows, the personality
The soul within the thoughts that will emerge.
Like a mothers womb you encase my being
Offer protection and guidance in all that lies ahead.
You have promised me your spirit as a guide and mentor.
To hide is an impossibility, for you are life itself.
In all this knowledge there comes for me a paradox
Those who say they do not know you, are given equal value
I hate them but you do not act in the ways I would
Are there faults within me, do I fail to follow correctly?
My desire is to be your servant, for you to lead me.

James Tipp

Quinquagesima 8am Bcp Holy Communion

Candle mass has past
So the light comes early
Darkened clouds roll onward
Yet still the winter
Has not shown her face.
The squawking gulls
Cooing collar doves
The caw, caw, caw, of the crow
Make up the morning chorus
We shall read of love
The power so benign
We shall be challenged
Paul reaches down the centuries
Demands attention
In a world
That needs more light

James Tipp

Reflections

Reflections.

I once wanted to change the world, vision of a better future
I had a fire and zeal that drove me, filled me with intolerance
Seeing it as God given and God inspired, it was the the truth.
Now I have time for reflection the world has changed immensely,
Yet the changes are as much in me as in the world, good and bad.
The unthinkable is now thinkable and I don't mind or disagree
Those things I thought were immutable have mutated for the better.
Evil still rides high in the annals of the media, their priority headline
Yet good rides high in the millions raised for the unknown by the unknown
Does my reflection see things better or worse or just different, surprise
The world spins other firebrands claim God is on their side, truth abounds
My reflections merely assume a new cynicism, travelled this way before
The fire is quenched, reality pushes in, so this is what it means to age.

(c) J Tipp 2016

James Tipp

Refugees

The pain and exhaustion are writ large on every face
Young or old, man or woman, child or young adult
All bear the same marks, all wear the same expression
Hunted and haunted by what they have been through.
Strip away their nationality, their language, their culture
The results are like looking in a mirror, they are human.
Their pain is identical to what ours would be if roles changed
If we lost all, home family, children possessions, identity.
They are not aliens, they are not other, they are family
This globe on which we all have our being is fragile
Small, in the vastness of the cosmos, in time and place
We are the keepers of history of our journey, and so we are one
There is nowhere else to go, this is all we have, so we must share,
It resources, its space, the good characteristics of this species,
Such as love compassion mercy let these rule our responses.
Seek to see yourself in the tired and weary faces of the disposed,
Make love not war a reality and not an empty pithy saying.

James Tipp

Relationships?

Relationship means what?

Being interactive?

Belonging?

To be a part of?

It requires what?

A giving and receiving

An acceptance

A recognition.

It dies in?

A dearth of contact

One way control

A vacuum of denial.

James Tipp

Remembrance Sunday 2001

That war word, has been given meaning yet again,
As we meet in the shadow of the twin towers
Seeking to remember those who died
In what seems so long ago, freedom remains illusive.
Freedom from fear, freedom to speak, freedom to worship.
So on this day, we say our thanks, with gratitude
To the names etched here long ago.
Remember with pride the sacrifice they made for us
Remember to the young who fight today
To keep that flame of freedom lit
Throughout our world, for all people
Remember to that single sacrifice
On a hill outside Jerusalem,
The one who called the world to love
Whose words inspire today's, humanity
To seek that which is the ultimate power
To love your neighbour as yourself
The greatest challenge of all.
To become powerless, in a world
That seeks for power by domination

James Tipp

Return Of The Telegram Boy Circa 1962

Sunday mornings of my youth flash back
White helmet, yellow gloves, motorbike all red
Delivery for the London Docks pier nine.
Deserted streets, silent, no traffic, nobody.
Pass high brick walls, windows set high,
Filthy dirty glass, the ruins made by bombs
Scar the dockland landscape of Limehouse,
China Town source of much imagination
Deserted on this Sabbath day of rest.

So here I stand, returning to my past
The Rotherhithe steps are all that's left
With their tiled lavatorial walls
All else is new and vibrant, stunning.
Through Narrow Street to the Isle of Dogs
Unrecognisable, here the Thames becomes transformed
The sun sets on the skyline, the scene majestic
My memories fade in this picture of beauty
Autumnal colours, light the sky I am transformed

Waterfront houses line the farther bank
Whilst here the cycles move with ease
Joggers pant their way along the waters edge,
Lovers sit beneath the giants of glass,
Soft romantic light shines up from the pavement
Wine is sipped, waterbus stir the river
The transformation is for real, Cinderella
You are at the ball and the clock has stopped.

James Tipp

Rochester Cathedral 2005

Pass by this ancient door and pause
Look upon it very history etched in stone
Wonder at its age and all who stood,
As you are standing now, looking.
The good and great of history
Have passed its portals just like you
Kings and Queens of every age
Have worshiped here, the Christ King.
Sit, be still, as voices young and old
Raise in perfect sound, the alleluia's
To echo round the vaulted heights.
Kneel and pray as others have
So many times before through history
Evidence of the living God worshiped still.
Here Justus placed his knee in prayer
When all was daub and wattle
The imprint of history remains however
A time line of experience, and calling.
Today its mission written large in stone
To worship the alpha and omega
We see its beginnings, its end?
Is always in the future, waiting.

James Tipp

Searching

The search for the inner person the 'religious' 'spiritual' inner me seems doomed
I know what I don't believe but am so unsure of what I do believe, so I question
I question all realities and none at all, all religious experience and the call of the
atheist.

The church, that ill defined and unfathomable institutions, that is like a jigsaw
messed up,

Hammers pieces together to try and make them fit but they have become fit for
nothing.

Their raison_d'être has become the historic building project, they have lost their
soul

The structures have nothing of the Kingdom of God about them, rather terminal
illness.

The vibrancy of the call of the living one goes unheard and unspoken, lost under
the dust.

So here I am looking for a home but knowing my very presence will bring
emptiness

There are no solutions other than people just following the call of the Christ alone
Living and breathing the newness of his life in their daily lives, un-bordered, rule-
less

For rules begin the corruption of the very life he calls us to, failure looms large
The very failure that lived and breathed in Peter and Judas, Paul and Timothy
In those who failed before them, failed to keep the rules and live up to their
calling

Forgetting it is God who calls and knows and brings grace to bear, on all failures.
Whose catalogue of names begins with Adam and ends with you, searcher after
truth.

James Tipp

Septugesima Bcp Holy Communion

Still we wait for winter
The grass crunches under foot.
The river shows her muddy banks
The moon full and resplendent
The sun peeps over the downs
Creating purple light on all
The time of fasting near
The time of feasting was but yesterday
Today we run the race
The personal faith of Paul
The present faith of now.
So we wait, remember
Those who've seen it all before.

James Tipp

Sexagesima Bcp Holy Communion

Sexagesima cannot be seen
The freezing air
Lays heavy damp
Only sounds penetrate.
Hazy street lights
Guide our way
The church hidden
Appearing only yards away.
The sower and the seed
Seem far away
Yet the picture the same
Both church and seed
Lie hidden
Yet by Gods hand
They will spring to life
To bless all who feed on them.

James Tipp

Shekina Light

The shekinah light drove Moses into the cleft
Felled Paul on the way to Damascus
Blinds all who look upon God's unveiled face.
The light must be diffused to bring life
Light cast shadows from creations store
Beneath the shadows, life teams multicoloured.
Only the shadows give meaning and hope
So the light came, human in form
Seeable, recognisable, man shaped
Yes the light in him gave shape to everything
He is the prism by which love is known
Creation is ordered, humanity has hope.
The shekinah light of glory can be looked at
Bring new life, new hope, out of the shadows.

James Tipp

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James Tipp

Soft Mist

Soft mist that lays upon the earth
Soft shroud of white disguising all.
Yet from the hidden mantle life itself
The river listens to the words,
Taking and cleansing inner grief.
Whilst on the rise, His house
Jutting through the haze
Disclosing mercy, truth and time.
Soft steps upon the soaking grass.
Return to meet the Church
To celebrate once more
The fact, the faith, the joy,
He knows, he cares, he loves.

James Tipp

Somewhere Near Damascus

Jesus! Carpenter! Chosen One!

Like brands of fire these words crease my mind.

The utter blasphemy, the sheer horror, proclaimed by fisherman

Common folk and no doubt their women, unclean vermin.

How dare they even speak of Him 'the Holy one of Israel'.

They whose minds are never lifted higher than the gutters

In which they live.

We who know the facts must purge the city, our homes even our synagogues, of those who proclaim 'The Way' and this charlatan, this miscreant as;

No I cannot bring myself to even think of such Blasphemy.

I will be the one who brings the cleansing to my people;

Seek those who infest the purity of our race in Jerusalem or wherever.

Damascus! The infection has spread like a putrid boil, like a raging pox; but I shall cleans the whole like a surgeon, I shall remove the sores.

"Saul! Saul! "

What Trick of light is this? The heat burning my eyes, my mind

"Saul! Saul! "

That voice again, who speaks to me in my sickness? Which of my companions lends a hand?

What is this?

A pierced hand!

Whose face is this?

But your are dead!

"Saul, Saul why do you persecute me? "

Can I be so wrong?

A Carpenter, a crucified carpenter, a risen crucified carpenter!

Who are you Lord?

The gentiles, barbarians, the world

Teach me Lord send me.

James Tipp

Sotherndown South Wales No 2

The Secret Door

From childhood the secret door
Has beckoned to the inner me.
A challenge to open the secret
To peer behind the castellation
Into a world that ceased so long ago
Yet shouts of mystery and difference.
So now confronted with a reality
I ponder and deliberate the question;
To end all childhood dreams and enter
To find that life lives in real time behind
The door that speaks of yesterday
Or walk away and live my dreams
For in them no pain exists, no disillusion
Just an emptiness of never knowing the truth
So living with the consequences,
That dreams can be real, behind shut doors.

Dunraven Estate November 2004

No 2 in the Southerndown Trilogy

James Tipp

Southerndown South Wales No1

Mystery ebbs on every tide
Like liquid mercury poured.
Upon this beach the challenge
Every sense that enriches the soul
Here creation calls, the voice says
Look beyond yourself conceited humanity
Seek the order you do not control
Here the language of creation cries
Behold the beauty freely given
To all who would drink the wine
That brings the awesome cry
Thank God for all we see
For nothing less than thanks will do
For all creations diversity and beauty.

Southerndown South Wales
Novemer 2004
No 1 in the Southerndown Trilogy

James Tipp

Southerndown South Wales No3

History Writ Large

Like layered cake the tide washes
The crumbled mix of history
Laid down in times that ceased so long ago
Yet stand so resolute for all to see.
Peering through the lens of time
We scan the distant vista with impunity
The cliffs that tower over all the bays
Along this ragged coastline etched in time
We feel the hand of God writ large
Yet most who pass this way see nothing
Nothing but the weathered view
Transient and ephemeral, short lived
But here history was made and carved
In the mind of God and in eternity

Southerndown South Wales

November 2004

No 3 in the Southerndown Trilogy

James Tipp

St Benedict's Paddlesworth Snodland

Here you stand in the mist on new years day
You're unimpressed, for you have seen a thousand.
Your history known yet unknown, chequered.
This ancient place of homage to the infant King
This place of refuge for those long past,
This barn that stored the crops for those long dead,
You have seen them all pass by, lost in their own mist
Time the traveller that never moves, yet changes all.
So on this fog bound new years day, you wait
For what or whom you do not say, we cannot guess.
But here you will remain, whilst the pilgrim wonders
How long will he remain in the history of anything.

James Tipp

St Pauls London R.I.P.

The message was one of unqualified invitation.
But then they shot the messenger who was replaced,
By the manager of the gift shop, with the financial advisor.
Who were not around in Bethlehem to see the Shepherds
They wandered in when the the wise men came with gold.
That way Christmas wasn't ruined by corporate influence.
That's if you overlook it was in a stable because, 'there was no room'
Did no-one mention you can pray outside the walls in the open
That standing alongside might be seen as meaningful and real
Yes they did but he was shot on the first day, and the money was safe.

James Tipp

Strangers Weep

Red rimmed swollen eyes
Sad eyes that gaze back
Seeing only yesterday
The look of scorn contempt;
How do you know?
The cold nights of suffering
The warm days of pain
What do you know?
A prayer!
Why not its over now
Yet even this is empty
How do you speak to a stranger?
Praying is like shouting
Into an empty room
All you hear is yourself
So cry a thousand tears
Weep for your own death
Cry for your own suffering
And God?
He weeps for those
Who call him strange

James Tipp

Surreal

Travelling through other peoples space
The race, or stroll spiralling down a hole
To emerge in a place that never existed
Only in your imagination does this happen.
The mind machine drives ever forward
Making up stories from the random chaos
I drift in a panic of expectation ever lost
People from my past and present intermingle
Some old some new some a mystery, faceless.
Struggling not to be late for an appointment
Knowing the way to the place where you fly
Leap from mountains and buildings, unharmed
Boarding the train that will take you home
If only you knew the way, when you stop.
Lost keys, phones that never work, madness.
Finding the book to read, but unable to read
Holding forth and nobody listens or cares.
Such is the surreality of dreams, from the mind.

James Tipp

The Autumnal Phase

My life is static caught in an autumnal phase
Looking through the glass I see that all is hidden,
The certainties of finding the way shrouded;
The familiar wrapped in clinging mist,
The distance reduced to myopic proportions.
I could struggle through, face pressed against the glass
Lights so bright reflected back at me, useless in the mist
Or rest in the comfort of the past clarity of purpose
Remember images in my minds eye of previous visions
We always want the spring, and summer periods
Never the winter, or the autumns, as we pilgrimage.
We want to be sure that we are on track successful.
Life gives us variety and each phase has its purpose
In the mist I have to be still and wait on God
Instead of thinking he is following me.

James Tipp

The Bauble

Like a Christmas bauble on a black velvet curtain, surrounded by sequins
So the earth spins beautiful full of colour unique in our solar system.
Here only are the questions asked, Why? How? and What for?
The answers cover a multitude of disciplines from Einstein and science
To the people of faiths whose theories are as multiplex and as complex
Each one having a reason or a theory of this spinning life filled globe.
As man circumnavigates the world in hours on that tiny orbiting satellite
On earth humanity struggles with as many diverse problems as nations.
The inner world of humanity remains a mystery, human nature concealed.
We may know we are alone, we may know there is nowhere to escape to.
Yet we continue to destroy the only option that we have, this home base.
Our propensity to destroy and to love in equal amounts baffles our minds.
This dualism of intent seems to remain a constant base line for humanity.
Regardless of revelations of science and theology we remain an enigma.

J Tipp 2015

James Tipp

The Blushing Sky

Autumn skies are tributes to the eyes
Such glorious hues demand to be seen.
You look in wonder at the sky
The sky looks back embarrassed
Blushing pink at your tribute of words
Here the royal colour shouts to all the world
Rejoice in your creator, give thanks
This gift of beauty so sublime
Freely available to all who care to look up.

James Tipp

The Buck Stops Here

From the beginning to the end
Your vision was unique
You understood completely
Your wisdom unending.
Yet I dare to ask "Why?
In the beginning you said
" In my image"
The apple the serpent
You knew you saw, Why?
You chose a people
They failed in every way
You knew they would
Why choose them?
You sent men to say
" Thus says the Lord"
Nobody listened
You knew they would'nt
So why send them?
The cross your ultimate
Why?
From the beginning to the end
Your vision was unique
No wonder we speak of mystery
I for one say why bother?
Why apportion blame?
Sinners fallen short!
Yet you knew
From the beginning to the end
Your vision was unique
On the gates of heaven
Should be written
The buck stops here.

James Tipp

The Captive Jesus

The envelope arrives,
Contains a thick expensive catalogue
Everything we need to be the people of God!
Embroidered copes, stoles of every hue.
Collars to fit the fat and thin men and women of God.
Decorated boxes to keep the wafers in
Tabernacles to keep the host in, wooden Jesus'
Carved with European faces, hands held high.
Whatever happened to the Jesus?
Whose life despised such trappings?
Whose condemnation of the temple and priest
Caused ordinary men and women to follow
The one who wore sandals, said to his followers
Go and do not take a purse or food with you.
Whatever happened to the subversive Jesus?
Who said it was harder for the rich to enter
The Kingdom of God than for the camel
To pass through the eye of the needle
Whatever that means, it's still difficult.
It's difficult to see this Jesus in the catalogue
It's difficult to find this Jesus in the church
He's been made captive by the very things
He despised, fought against, the fleas
That live on other fleas, ad infinitum
He fought against anyone standing
Before God other than himself
Risen glorified, the man of access
The door by which all are saved.
But now we hold him captive
Think by ritual we have control
The right words said, by the right person
Brings him down into all he despised.
Then we wonder why we are irrelevant.
The catalogue is just a symptom
Of a people who have forgotten
He is always there, he is the risen one
Alive and ever present, still touching lives
Still reaching out across all cultures
Still exiting people with freedom

That cannot be found in catalogues
No matter how costly the production.
Often never found in this reconstructed Temple
As gaudy and costly as the first
Yet now there is no excuse.

James Tipp

The Clock

Tick-tick-tick Jesus!
Tick-tick-tick Jesus!
Jesus! Are you ready?
Tick-tick-tick
Jesus! Are you sure?
Tick-tick –tick
That's your heart
The rhythm beating time;
Has there been enough?
Tick-tick-tick-tick-tick
Can I change my mind?
Tick-tick-tick
"Son"! "Father"!
Tick-tick-tick-tick
I hear the blows
1-2-3
I feel the pain
Darkness overcomes me.
Tick-tick-tick
How many seconds tick away?
Till suddenly its light
The clock is silent
The grave is empty
Time has been defeated
Eternity beckons through Jesus
The door through which time dies

James Tipp

The Darkness Of Self 6th Sunday After Trinity Bcp

The tide has receded
The muddy banks exposed
The reeds green and tall
Wave in the morning breeze.
Rain has kissed the land
Brown gives way to green
As life once more is seen
The greyness of the sky
Will soon be challenged
Like the greyness of our minds
Hate, pride, envy
The tools of winter
The Son has come
To light the inner man
That we might not be deceived
In the darkness of self.

James Tipp

The Death Of A Child- The Pointing Finger

A life ended before it has begun
In the time it takes to blink,
A millisecond, he was gone,
Not even the echo of his laughter
Disturbed the house, spoke of his presence.
Yet the cruelty of this chance happening
This accident, has sent a tidal wave
Of grief and fear and frustration
Roaring through his friends.
And you the man of faith,
Are you exempt, detached?
Can you remove the pain and grief?
Answer the question, Why?
This dark wave is no stranger to you.
You have stood beneath its shadow
Been deluged in its mighty force.
Your saving grace is you are just a finger
A finger that points to Him who saves.
The one for whom pain was real
Whose body torn and bleeding
Lay lifeless in the tomb, life's echo gone
Yet hope was just a millisecond away
The power of God that calms the storm
Brings light in the darkness, real light
The echo of life goes on in him
The one for whom death meant life for all
The finger points to him, who lives
Gives hope to you a hope to be shared.
In the midst of grief and pain.
Easter beckons with its empty tomb
Its message of hope for all who grieve
'Why look for the living among the dead'

James Tipp

The Death Of A Child-This Torn And Broken Heart

Today the question why?
Bounced off my mind
Through my heart
Ricochet around the room
Returned unanswered.
What answer would suffice
What explanation heal
This torn and broken heart.
Today is not the day
For casual words of comfort
This is the day to weep and cry
To mourn and weep unhindered.
But we do not weep alone
The Father who lost a son
Weeps with us, knows the pain.
Offers comfort to those in need.
Hope is for another day,
When sore red eyes, can see
The light that always shines
In the darkest hour.

James Tipp

The Death Of A Genius (Alan Turing)

A Belated Homage To A Genius.

(Alan Turing)

The world I entered was a shattered world a broken world
Millions dead, millions homeless, millions starving, bleak!
The creative imagination held sway, now anything was possible,
From the rubble of a thousands city's new life sprang, hopeful!
The war was called cold between East and West, but non violent
The fear of the bomb of all bombs made talking a necessity, a must.
Within this fragile landscape a man had emerged, a lonely man
A man obsessed with mathematics, no social skills, a savant.
His war was the enigma of all times, the code breaking genius.
So from that shattered world, his mind would change the new world
Would set humanity on a course of unbelievable change and knowledge
Yet few had heard his name or knew his great invention, so secret.
His treatment from a grateful nation, a cocktail of repression, scandalous!
His answer an ignominious death, alone misunderstood, he hangs.
So here I write a recipient of all his genius on the latest model computer
Built on the back of a lonely man's dream, thought through in secrecy
Built to save millions upon millions lives, in that shattered black past.
His story now told, brings an awkward silence from the old and prejudiced
With incredulity from the young that such treatment was even possible.
Yet nothing in our world moves or speak or travels or eats, nothing
That does not have the hand of Turing upon it, forgive us our trespasses.

J Tipp

2014

James Tipp

The Disabler The P Word

Pain the great divider, the isolator, the manic depressor.

Comes when it wills and goes leaving no scar,
Or blemish on our subtle memories.

Remember the incident, the time, the place
But the pain memory is dissolved, forgotten.

So each pain experience is new and awful
Fresh and debilitating

We cannot remember how we dealt
With the last pain incident.

So we have nothing to draw on for strength.

Only this new fierce cutting pain,
That drains our minds of all we cherish.

So our humanity is protected from itself,
To remember all of our pain would be
To carry the burdens of life forever with no respite

James Tipp

The Great Leveller

Like a knife it stabs,
You shudder, stumble, pant.
You did what you always did,
But today it was different,
Pain the great leveller,
Rich or poor, literate, illiterate
Genius or fool, pain levels all.
There is no comfort in pain.
Silk sheets, heated room,
Pavement hard, freezing air
Make no sense of pain.
It reaches the very depths.
In all this I seek a friend
Someone who says "I know
I have been where you are
And beyond"
Arms outstretched, pain
Oh so much pain.
He knows, He cares
I'll share with Him.
He reaches out, I see the marks
I know He's here.

James Tipp

The Guest Called Pain

Pain that guest in our lives that is most unwelcome
He comes in many guises physical, mental emotional.
He is persistent and life denying, focusing our thoughts
Driving away the joy and goodness, so we seek isolation.
When we need others most, we are driven from them.
Pain is something never shared it is hidden, covered
Too much sharing brings that look of incomprehension
The listener can only say they're sorry, but never feel.
The words that 'God knows and understands' are dry
They make no sense in the night of pain and darkness.
Light will come; hope is there, only when the pain recedes.
For now the pain is the master and you the slave
You wait in silence for the guest to leave, to live again.

James Tipp

The Hulder

The majesty of the mountain draws us ever upward
The scenes of waterfalls, granite faces, snow clad peaks.
As meter by meter we ascend, cascading water falls in abundance.
Tunnels dug long ago, plunging into darkness, then startling light
We reach the snow line, chilled air, ears popping we climb
The water fall immense thunders past plunger ever down.
Soon music is heard, revealing the Hulder singing their mystical song.
We are transfixed by the moment, as they dance, appearing and disappearing.
We are pulled into the mystery of the mountain, spellbound, in time.

Norway 2015

James Tipp

The Information Highway

The information highway has expanded
No longer the exclusive domain of the elite
Today every idea is questioned by a myriad of minds
Every proposition examined in detail by individuals
The global nature of this highway means
The very nature of who is an expert is in doubt.
Those who polarise the truth saying it's easy
Have misread the times and denied the new reality.
Ignorance is the key to subjugation and obedience
Filtering the truth a way to control the masses.
Yet the highway will not be denied or closed
Authoritarian structures with exclusive truth
Will be denied the oxygen of such control
The truth is out there in a million different ways
Truth is coming unstoppable and diverse.

James Tipp

The Internal Desert

I have never been in a desert,
My world is a green and pleasant land.
Yet emptiness and desolation are companions.
The desert is where I find myself alone,
Cut off from the normal ebb and flow of life.
The grass is as green, the views no different
Yet I am in a desert that is unseen, internal.
Is God outside this isolation and emptiness?
Is this a testing of Lenten proportions for me?
It is when I wander aimlessly in my own world
That I fail, I fail to recognise, that God is there.
Ever present wanting to bring comfort and healing
If I will only let him in and know his love.

James Tipp

The Life Of Prayer Wet Malling Abbey

Gurgling streams perturb the silence,
No voice raised except in praise.
Seeking God in watchful worship,
Praising God through endless days.
On your shoulders rest the burden,
Of a world that's passing by.
In your silence you can hear it,
As it makes its mournful cry.
So you listen in the silence,
And you raise your voice in praise.
Finding God in watchful worship,
Praising God in all your ways.

James Tipp

The Light Eclipsed

So we gather to remember, but the bleak midwinter has remained elusive.
Instead the garden is alive with bursting life, bulbs in seasonal confusion.
An apt reminder that in life there are few certainties no real conformity.
This meal however has a past, a sameness passed from generation to generation.

Consumed in many and various tradition and ways and differing climates.
Its genesis an upper room in the city called peace, it recalls a life of service
A life of sacrifice and grace and mercy, a life filled with compassion
So a simple meal of bread and wine, that speaks of greater things a divine plan
So here in this small room break bread sip wine and pray for family the world
This Christmas celebration a family affair the eve tide meal of expectation.

(c) J Tipp 2015

James Tipp

The Master Painter

The master painter unfolds his palette
Strokes generously with his brush,
The sky explodes with images of delight,
An inspiration, for the mind, and heart.
Turner would be envious of such a canvas.
But all too soon the inspiration fades
The light extinguishes and darkness comes
For just moments you painted with your mind
Flew with the eagles into the soaring beauty
Escaped the everyday for the world of imagination

James Tipp

The Medway

Beneath the shadow of the mills.
Past ancient hallowed stones,
Erected to the living one,
The Medway passes by.
This life-giver more ancient
Than all who line her banks
Twist and turns towards the sea.
Her course decided long ago.
So we who live beside your path,
Came see the picture of his promise
Of living water in a parched land.
Still the spirit of the living one
Decides the course that he will run
Seeks those who long for life
In a parched and weary earth.

James Tipp

The Mire Of Despond

From the darkness everywhere I look seems light
In the darkness I have nothing to reflect that which is me
So I see only more darkness, I loose my value,
My sense of proportion, my identity.
I thrash around, looking for something to lighten my world
Something that will give me hope beyond my darkness
But I destroy the very essence of all that I am
I bruise the love that seeks to try to draw me up
By not letting go and trusting, by wanting tomorrow
Next week or any other time but now.
But we all only have now, yesterday slipped by
Tomorrow awaited with eagerness,
It's tissue strength and slides into the thinness of time,
All we can contend with is now, it's all we can hold on to.
So leave the darkness to others, come into the light
Be enriched by the things you hold dear and love
The rest will pass, slipping into the void of the unwanted
But that which is real, solid, trustworthy
Will always be with you, holding you, drawing you
Out of the darkness in the light of love.

James Tipp

The News Of War

The News Today

I listened to the news to day there was death in every place
I wondered how we'd sing, of such amazing grace
The screaming of the mother, the body wrappers tales
The screaming of the mortar round, the piercing jarring wails.
Its happening so far away, its happening there today
The politicians wring their hands there's nothing left to say.
The body mountains growing whose selling them the guns
We don't do arms to monsters, that's how the story runs.
We watch the slaughter daily, detached and far away
Yet worry over Rednapp and how he's team will play.
The information over load mixes trivia with pain
Whilst the people in the killing zone, wondered why we never came.

© J Tipp

James Tipp

The Night Watch 4-30am

Again I have the night-watch, my shift
Too many thoughts too many expectations
In the night-watch I sit alone, listening
The silence is deafening, the darkness complete
The fear of failure haunts you like a spectre.
Yet it is not in your experience,
No model to draw on to haunt you,
The fear is irrational, yet its this fear
That calls you to the night-watch
Beckons you to be awake
Promotes the tiredness that thins you out.
Success has its rewards, the night-watch is one
In the world called sleep you live your fears
Everything goes wrong out of control, disorganised
In the night-watch I write my thoughts
Trying to expunge the feelings of inadequacy
That drive my dreams, expose my fears.

James Tipp

The Obelisk Of Nature

This ancient obelisk stands sentinel along the track
Its weathered trunk appears to be etched in hieroglyphics
But no human hands have done this work, here nature rules
The signs of wear and tear of age and of transition
Once a might tree that stood proud and tall alive and well
Reduced to this an obelisk of great beauty and age
Changed over time remaining for another period
An object of beauty whose pocked mark trunk
Still bring joy to the casual passer by who seeks inspiration.

James Tipp

The Ordinary

I saw a holy man in a holy place
Holy separate and content to be with God.
I called him but he saw me not, nor heard me.
I looked again the radiance of his face shone
His face a picture of peace and joy, I called
He never turned but gazed into the far place.
I waited for a while hoping to meet with him
But he remained entranced, unable to respond.

I met a man in a pub who spoke of God,
He spoke to me above the radios blare
Amongst the noise and hubbub of the lunches
He spoke of God and the things of God to me
Surrounded by the profane and transience of life
His face held no special light or grace or peace
Just a simple man in a simple place sharing
God found me there amongst the ordinary.

I met Holy women veiled and serene
Her every gesture marked her out as 'other'
She neither glanced or stared, she was.
I sought a way to engage with her, make contact
But she was never there in the space with me
She was floating in a space with God alone
I longed to know her secret find her truth
She lingered in the cloister gazing heavenward.

I met a woman at a dance, dressed in red
Her lips reflected the colour of her clothes
Her nails polished to perfection red talons
She spoke of God between the dances
Between the music and the alco pops
Her figure models dreamed of, she dreamed of God
Spoke of God in this place of entertainment
God spoke to me and found me there in the ordinary.

James Tipp

The Original Story Revisited

Suddenly I have time to reflect, listen, observe
I have stepped off the speeding train of 'Must do'
That was heading for the station of 'Never get there'
The lights seem brighter, the people seem apprehensive.
But it's Christmas and the children must have everything.
People spending money on things they don't need but must have
People trying to square the circle of the Christmas message.
If they can remember what it is and who's involved.
Within the stable rampant commercialism is evidenced
He gets Incense, Gold, and another strange sounding smelly
We need Gucci and Armani, and still throw in the gold
There is a precedent you see within the stable
To go over the top with the giving, there was a lamb
We have turkey but no doubt the cost was considerable
So before the religious get all pious and snotty about giving
Just examine the story again and you will see it's all there
Set in stone and we are merely following on the example.

James Tipp

The Pain Of Extremes

Summer declared her intent this morning
The sky filled with an explosive ball of light
Orange dowsed hills reeled under her coming
The sky pulled back at the promise of heat
The earth parched and dry sighed, withered
The human observer gasped at the power
Five thirty and already my world is sticky
Already I am drained of energy, sucked dry
Like all extremes few enjoy them, most suffer
Another picture from nature describing our world

James Tipp

The Painters Eye

The hills are stark and clear,
The shafts of milky white light
Make the colours almost paint like,
Surreal and yet more real than ever.
Black silhouetted trees,
Light brown fields with just a hint
Of winter green caught in the spotlight.
The air is chilled, uninviting
This winters day in Kent.

James Tipp

The Railways Lost Heritage

In the quiet of the forest lies a track so straight and clear
It's an echo of another age that suddenly comes near
In the setting of the sun comes the shadow of a dream
Listen to the ghostly sounds the clanking and the steam
Then hurtling down this forest glade an engine puffing loud
The rails all glistening in the light the carriages gleaming proud
This path a well used highway for the people of the past
Now has the ghostly echo just when the day is past
When imagination makes her presence felt listen to the dream
Hears the hissing of the pistons driven by the steam
See the heads outside the windows as the train goes clanking by
Smell the steam and oily water as she passes with a sigh.

James Tipp

The Reaper

In the land of plenty they're dying
Lost in their profit and greed
They have no need of a saviour
Money meets all of their need.
But their hearts are colder
Than crushed ice
They're so busy working the net
They haven't got time for salvation
No time to worry or fret.
So the world turns round on its axis
The reaper appears on their screen
No time to download the meaning
The reaper has come and you've been.

James Tipp

The Repository

Secrets long held are poured into your ear
You are the repository of guilt and anxiety
Of pain and disillusionment suffered in secret.
You are the confirmer of love and joy
Brought in to join and celebrate new beginnings
You are the conveyor of truth and hope
In the passing of friends and ones held dear.
You are the teacher called to be the leader
You are ever there and ever ready to listen
That is their expectation their need, their hope.
This is your vocation, your calling, your role.
You look into the mirror puzzled and perplexed
For you see only a fragile broken image
Whose knowledge is less than adequate
Unable to meet your own dreams or desires
The place of those called is a lonely place
In the night-watch bearing your load
You feel lonelier still and more empty.

James Tipp

The Six-O-Clock News

He stands transfixed on a road to nowhere
Pregnant and traumatised she stares into empty space
His voice is one of complete despair we have nothing
Yesterday he dispensed drugs to the sick and suffering
Today on this road to nowhere he stands bewildered.
I sit in front of the screen sobbing with grief for them
For the rest of us who sit by and can do nothing
I have entered their grief and seen their powerlessness
Yet unlike my vocational calling, I can do nor say anything
I view as one like the ancient gods of Greece on Olympus
Detached and far away, yet I feel the pain and despair
They scream at me from their faces, their body language
So I sob and sob, wondering for whom do I feel so sad
For on both sides of the glass we are powerless
So the bombs still fall and people are left in despair.

James Tipp

The Surprise Prophet

The Surprise Prophet

Like the prophets of old he stands unrepentant, challenging
Hair long and listless, eyes bulging and intense, but also that smile
The charge is your facetious, the challenge, who gave you the right?
Unlike the establishment figure, there is no denial, I take that right.
Facetious, why not, he disarms his interrogator, by not playing the game.
He elicits from the questioner his tacit agreement of much he is saying,
Challenges with the question, "Are you saying there are no
alternatives";
We watch enthralled as this cracked and sometime broken human spokesman
Rails at injustice to the poor, corruption of the bankers, indifference of politicians,

Speaks with passion and commitment and conviction that change must come.
Is he the spokesman of choice? No, yet he falls into the category of Prophet
Those individuals called with a purpose often from the margins, odd balls.
So I question myself, does the messenger negate the message, hardly.
So Russell Brand, I find myself saluting you, for your words, your vision
Your care and thought for the poor and oppressed, those on the outside,
I caution you as well to remember another prophetic voice, that wrote,
Of the problem of humanity, don't forget Orwell's Farm, or his pigs.

© J Tipp

James Tipp

The Valley Of The Crematorium

Once more you walk
Into the valley of death.
Made pleasant, clinical
Swabbed clean of pain
Unpleasant thoughts
Antiseptic and sterile.
Music cassetted for convenience
Repeats itself all day
Unaware of emotions
That live and beat
Within these hallowed walls.
Death made bearable!
Hiding its gruesome reality
Shielded from its inevitability,
We pass on through
Quickly quietly
Hidden from its starkness.
Should we question why
People are never made ready
Prepared to travel this route themselves?

James Tipp

The Water Fall West Malling Abbey

Here in visual form a parable for today
Within these cloistered walls daily worship
Gods name exalted and revered a constant theme
Here nothing is owned or possessed by individuals
All is given up for the sake of the community.
Through this place the river winds its way
Gurgling springs of living water pass the prayers
Then cascade out into the world blessed in passing
So we the sojourners in this place are blessed
We come to be refreshed and made ready
To take the message of living water to the world
Pouring out the beauty that is Christ on passers by
Praying that something in the spray of hope
May catch their imagination wash away the transient
In order to be washed in the eternal love of God.

James Tipp

The Wooded Lovers

Within this ancient woodland scene the lovers stand
Entwined it seems for all eternity, they have grown together
The story of their plight lost in the myths of time and space
The lovers whose love excluded them from family and friends
They ran and in their running were cursed and found new forms
But nothing could untangle their love for each other
So now they grown ever closer together a sign of completeness
Love can never be separated or forbidden this image a sign
Love is the greatest of gifts that searches out the soul
Can never be extinguished by imposed rules or regulation
Love always finds a way despite the clamouring crowds.

James Tipp

To Boldly Go

Shall I search the depths of space
As did the men of old?
Seeking for the one to come
Bold enough to follow.
To journey to the unknown;
Because they felt the time was now.
For our generation the stars have become
The source of mystery again.
They are still immeasurable
Yet far more knowable.
We have stood upon the night-light,
Know the heat of the sun.
We have set our hearts and minds,
Across space to the Milky Way and beyond.
Recognised our own minuteness

Now we are the centre of nothing
Yet somehow now are the centre of something
Like the psalmist of old
We recognise the stars are infinite
Like the grains of sand.
We have looked back upon
Ourselves from the heavens
And know that we are beautiful.
So we search and seek.
Ever conscious of our need to encounter
The one whose word became flesh
And dwelt among us,
Full of grace and truth.
Ever conscious that in the vastness
You are mindful of man.

James Tipp

Tolkien Dream

Pin pricks of light sparkle through the snow
Miniaturised by the scene
Spellbound in a Tolkien dream
All is clean and bright
Softly, softly down it falls
Tracing your path so to speak,
In the coldness you communicate
Wonder if God sees this time
As the 'grumble of the week'
The meeting where He knows all
Your emptiness deepens
Your only a man, standing in a dream
Talking! To yourself?

James Tipp

Trafalgar Square Then And Now

Trafalgar square then and now.

This place of childhood memories, bereft of pigeons,
Cleaned and scrubbed, yet still the memories persist.
A photographic image captured, a child holding hands
Walking between young parents, memory jogged, reclaimed.
Here the fountains, lions, and scrubbed up Nelson,
Then London was home, my city, bombed, bruised, and battered
But this was home the cockney kid, now sixty five years on
I return as a tourist, a visitor, stand with my soul mate,
Enjoy the moment, now our city, where love was found
Captured spoken of realised, so past and present combine
A special day we share together, Trafalgar square then and now.

(c) J Tipp

James Tipp

Tree From Bedroom Window

The tiny form sits on high, surveying,
Perched on this winter silhouette
Natures gift in the last days of winter
Leafless trees create their own special beauty
Gently they sway to the music of the wind
Through the empty boughs and twigs, colour
The ever changing backdrop resplendent,
As viewed from a bedroom window.

(c) J Tipp 2015

James Tipp

Trinity 27 Bcp

The sky a vivid red
Like refugees from afar
The clouds sparkle with crimson.
The frost thick and crunchy,
Turns red roof's white.
Whilst underfoot the grass snaps.
Clear morning sky of winter
Yet even now the rain
So need fails to come.
Today the church is called to dress
Against the chills of men
Compassion, kindness, loneliness,
Worn as mark of holiness
Seeking in the world of want
The footprints of the saviour
Clear like your frost prints in the grass
A path for us to follow.

James Tipp

Unfettered Love

Unfettered love unchecked by protocol or pride
Speaks its name and calls its tune into the night air
Love unknowable before demands to be heard unclouded
With all its passion and joy and liberation of the soul
Love is not an object but a feeling that electrifies, brings life
Touches the very essence of who I am and what I am.
Disturbs my very being affects me in ways undreamed of.
Its power unlimited makes me more alive in ways un-thought of
Cannot be simulated or contrived its reality lies elsewhere
In the sudden disturbance of the mind that looks on beauty
Where beauty had never been and is enraptured and surprised.
Seeks the Godhead in a straw lined box, simplicity itself
For here love seeks me calls my name, simple yet sublime.

James Tipp

Unlike Joseph

Sleep evades me and I wake up stiff.
Dreams that cannot be shared or remembered,
Have stolen my night and left me empty of reason.
The tangled bed speaks of my struggle in the night
The heaviness of mind and eye are seen upon me.
Am I a chosen one, part of His Kingdom, or what?
Can such a confused mind share the truth?
Grace is the key to calling, a grace that mends,
Mends the broken and refuses to quench
The flickering, smouldering flame
So sweat drenched and dripping there is still hope.

James Tipp

Volcanic Interruption

Suddenly all our certainties and pre- paid plans are in disarray
The world that is so small has enlarged considerable overnight
Being grounded has moved from the teenage punishment
To the shutting down of the nations across the many flight paths
The best laid plans of mice and men of Burns fame calls out
A just reminder that there is a bigger picture we to often forget
Just a small eruption in a far off place unheard of until now
Changes the pattern of our thinking and our life style, challenges
Do we really have all the answers, when the question is unknown?

James Tipp

War

Our ever shifting world of insecurity and dilemma
Our expectation of the young to fix the world
The drapped coffins show the price they pay
Lives cut off from the future they are meant to fix
The cortege passes slowly amidst the bowed heads
A town reflects the nations mood of grateful hearts
The tabloids shout aloud the numbers killed incessantly
Forgetting those who still fight on and need our support
The nations knows thier purpose and approves the task.
Afganistan this backward planetary spot, breeder of hate
History's place to humiliate the powerful in wars theatre.

James Tipp

We Are Sailing

The death of the church is drowned in tradition
Those who believe that nothing changes,
The ship of faith papers over the holes
Dismisses the cracks in the superstructure
Lowers people into the water poorly equipped
The ship must sail on, rather than be rebuilt
The icebergs of indifference and inability
Grow larger by the day, but in the pew
The people, reduced in number, sing on.
The prophetic voice is drowned in parochialism
The charge 'Go into all the world and preach'
Ignored and rejected from their comfort zones.
Repentance a biblical word, to turn around
Is lost on the saved of today, will be unheard
By the children of tomorrow if we sail on.

James Tipp

We Gather

So we gather to remember, but the bleak midwinter has remained elusive.
Instead the garden is alive with bursting life, bulbs in seasonal confusion.
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This Christmas celebration a family affair the eve tide meal of expectation.

(c) J Tipp 2015

James Tipp

We Want It Coated In Sugar

We want it coated in sugar and cosy
No crying baby, but swaddled into silence.
We want our celebration to be just that
Regardless of the reality of the dung filled stable
The pain of giving birth, with its blood and mess.
This time of joy is filled with human paradox.
Creator comes among us in human form
In desperation for a place to lie his head
This manger straw filled, despite the angels singing
Is all there is to welcome the saviour of the world.
This entry establishes the president for us all
Humility the overarching theme of salvation
The key that grace may abound for the entire world.
Salvation the gift of God not earned by merit
Bestowed instead to all that hunger and reach for it

James Tipp

West Malling Abbey

I stand transfixed caught in a time warp,
The sun burns down into this haven of peace.
Here God is found in prayer and solitude
Amongst the ancient stones and Elizabethan windows.
The stream gurgles its intrusion through this place
Monkey flowers tall and yellow rise from its bed
Whilst flying things bounce off the flowers like trampolines.
Nature tamed and untamed share this holy place
The ancient gatehouse waits in vain for the horse drawn carriage
Flanked by the place of prayer, the ancient chapel rose lined.
Pause here and kneel, speak to God, here time stops;
You feel his presence in the calm and tranquillity
The words 'he was in the still small voice' resonate
Certain you would hear him hear in the calm.
So another journey of silence and space; The Abbey
With its black clad nuns with their winning smiles
Here the Church is at its best challenging the culture
Minimalist challenges materialism, nothing challenges abundance
Seeking for life real God filled life abandoning self
We seekers of God search out this holy place
To pray, to calm the frenetic need for us to be or do
The oasis of spiritual water refreshes the soul
On this sun kissed day give thanks for time.
Time to stop, step aside reevaluate our lives in safety

James Tipp

West Malling Abbey St Justus Day

St Justus in Microcosm

(written after St Justus day celebration)

St Mary's Abbey West Malling
Encircled we stand together
St Justus is on our mind
Inspired by words of frailty
Humanity and courage.
We the heirs of calling
Reflect upon our weaknesses
Upon the weakness of the church.
Can we turn back discouraged
Merely hit by the storms
Of apathy and indifference.
Our cracks are visible and real.
From a distance they are the lines
Etched on others humanity.
The 'Peace' is given
The robed and casual kiss
Determined to go on
They in prayer and contemplation
We to our calling in the world.

31

The Cathedral full and brimming
St Justus day at evening.
The pomp has lost its tingle
Removed our spontaneity to 'be'.
The pilgrims return to a whimper
Small recognition, small celebration
The Primate speaks of 'Exodus'

I wonder has the Spirit flown
Our Bishop honoured in silence
Whilst we all longed to clap.
What happened to that frail humanity
Spoken of with such passion.
What stifled our celebration
Exorcised our party spirit.
This morning the clouds are pink
A sign of embarrassment
We all colluded in the silences
Celebration exchanged for pomp
The sterility of state.

11th November 2004

James Tipp

West Malling Abbey The Dance Of Spring

The dance of spring begins
The Mallard rises majestic
Reflected in the still cool waters
That gurgle though this place.
Here prayer is said, work is done
Life abounds in the tranquil stillness.
Here the alleluias rise each day
In the presence of the living one
Whose hand is seen writ large
On all creations beauty.

James Tipp

What About Joseph?

I stood outside for the birthing, the place we men have to go
The journey to get here was tiresome and seemed so terribly slow.
We'd managed to find us a shelter, the room away from the din
The place where they kept all the fodder as well as the animals in.
I stood and waited quite anxious the dream seemed light years away.
The angel telling me quietly "You've got to let Mary stay"
The babies a gift to the whole world, Gods son is who he will be
I wondered if I had been dreaming, it all seemed too much to me.
The story Mary had told me fitted with what he had said
We wondered where this was leading, this accommodation could be better I said.
The Innkeepers wife was all bustle, you've got a new baby boy
I asked after Mary his mother, she fine now and quite full of joy.
We thought we would just get some rest now, a boy as the messenger said.
When out of the night came some shepherds more angels were talked of instead.
I knew at that moment the truth then, no dream this was truly Gods son
I pondered the implications, knew one day we'd all have to run
The talk of Herod was awful, a King who murdered at whim
If he heard of the baby before me his actions would be really grim.
Then just to compound the evening, three kings all bowing so low
Bearing gifts for the baby before them, saying God had ordered it so.
In all this I felt an outsider, what was I to do at this time?
My role in his story to be there, to love him as though he were mine.
I thought of the angles the shepherds, the kings all bowing in line
I look back with joy to that moment, when God gave me this as His sign.

James Tipp

What Does It Mean?

The words were read from scripture
"Death where is your sting"?
Its here, right here and now, as I listen
The pain is still unbearable some times.
What does it mean death has no pain?
The words that followed made no more sense
"Grave where is your victory"
From where I stand I feel a sense of defeat.
I long for my loved one,
Cling tenaciously to their memory.
If all there is in life is the experience of now then cry
But what if, what if life has just begun
When the passage of this journey is over.
What if the message of scripture is true?
That the tomb empty of Christ is ours
To claim and to hold in the hope of eternity.
Then death has not sting and grave no victory
For all that lies ahead is life, and reunion.

James Tipp

What Of Him?

'What of him' asked Peter to the Risen One
'He is not your concern' these words define mission
Yet the church built itself on competition and comparison
'The pagans Lord it over each other, it shall not be so with you'
Another sign of mission, yet the church designs grandiose titles
'The Kingdom of God will be full of sinners, tax collectors and harlots'
The church never knowingly sees the like within its precincts
We cannot put the genie back in the bottle mistakes remain
But we can challenge the whole structure to reform and repent.
Encourage clergy to work together and speak the truth
Seek to help the laity with being church outside the building
Know that the Kingdom of God has no boundaries set by men.
Where love is found in abundance God is at work and thriving
Where humanity seeks to unite and be reconciled here is the Kingdom
This is not a competition that seeks status in the world's eyes
But a walk of faith to bring love to a broken world and to broken people
Who even when they have heard it and responded will still be broken.
As we saw in the disciples who followed in the beginning so now.

James Tipp

Whatever New Year It Is?

The famous clock awaits, the giant hands move slowly
The crowd in raucous expectation waits in anticipation
The hand moves the clock strikes and all hell breaks lose
The New Year with all its future before it explodes onto the scene
Yet in the reality of things we have only this moment, now.
We cannot rewind the clock or fast-forward to the next frame
We are still as we were, nothing more or less, caught in the moment
The past is set forever, the future a complete mystery unseen
Yet we have hope, a hope that is clouded yet longed for.
The people of faith are chided for their optimism in the unseen
The hope that is found within the mystery of the Godhead
Yet we to are told in the holy writings the source of our hope
That now is the day of salvation, yes only the now is real
Whatever New Year this is, it will only ever be now for us all.

James Tipp

What's In A Name?

The name is everything so thought the ancient world
Your naming gave you ambition or gave thanks for your existence
Knowing a name meant power and bought fear because of knowledge
So 'I am' was ambiguous and intimidating all in one announcement
So they called you El, Jehovah, to give substance to the ambiguity.
The world turned and in its turning man found a use for Jehovah
The vengeful god, the storm god who hurled his punishment down
Casting man into an abyss of fire and brimstone a god to be feared
So that the powerful could control the ignorant keep them in line
The meekness of Jesus held no appeal to the men of old, the jihads
Who frightened friend and foe with their images of an ungraceful god.
The world turns and the people of power long for the old days
They want to use the names and ideas of yesterday but nobody understands
They have lost the idea of a god who terrifies more frightened of themselves
What science can do or the environment, or the tiny virus that virulent killer.
We view the cosmos in such detail and find it awesome and intimidating.
What name can we evoke today to describe the mind behind creation
A name that will resonate with people in their world and bring them hope.
Perhaps we need to return to our beginnings, that ambiguity of presence
'I am what I am' somehow can reflect today's images far better than most
We cannot name the mind behind the glory, it is beyond our comprehension
Merely recognise the presence in all we see and marvel at the wonder of it all.

James Tipp

Where Are The Easter People?

Like a gaping hole in the rocks it lies open
The tomb has been empty for two thousand years
But they insist on putting him back each year
To produce him again on Easter day, Surprise!
The risen Lord is always among them, Surprise!
To listen to the liturgies would you ever know?
That week by week hour by hour minute by minute
He lives within the body of believers always, Surprise!
So here we go again retelling the story as though its now
Fixing in the worlds mind this is just an ancient story
Re-enacted annually to remind us of what or who?
Can you hear the weeping in the wind of the spirit
Can you feel the challenge of the risen one now?
Tell the story but live the truth 'Christ is Risen'
'He is Risen indeed' Surprise!

James Tipp

Whose Model

What am I?

This priest in the twenty first century.

To what am I called and how do I serve?

I followed His voice to live the gospel,

What kind of job description is that?

In a world hooked on money and success,

I am a failure for I have neither.

If only some say you had 'better management skills';

If only you had 'letters after your name';

If only you were more 'professional';

Instead I find myself, crying with those who mourn

Puzzling with those who suffer,

Laughing with those in love,

In fact I find myself living by being there.

Breathing the same polluted motorway air,

Smelling the sewage works in summer

Fighting with the supermarket trolley

Struggling with the parked cars at school time

Sitting in the doctors with the other sick people.

It used to be called vocation, called by God.

What am I?

This priest in the twenty first century

One called to live in Christ amongst those He loves

Who may not know they need Him.

James Tipp

Winter 1984 Or Whenever

White haired
The grass has aged
The night frost lies heavy,
To crunch beneath your feet.
White headed buildings
Winter is here.
The river runs slow
Chilled by the elements.
Whilst people heads bent
Thrust forward to be gone
Leaving behind the cold.
The ancient house
Seen from the river
Like a granite peak
The sky is pink
Dazzling the scene
Give thanks for the beauty.
Creation, His love for all.

James Tipp

Winter In The Abbey

The cloister bare and cavernous
The echo of footsteps resonates
The latticed screens displays the fountain
The place of contemplation empty
The gathering has begun 'The meal'
From the windows Narnia beckons
Crisp white lawns chilled by nature
Are viewed in wonder and joy.
The liturgy begins, we stand
Here we come as those whose lives
Are set apart for God in prayer
In contemplation of the divine.
Space to pray for healing of the world
His world, in which the Word spoke
So all that was to be came to pass.
'Holy things for the holy people of God'
Shared and meditated upon, together.
'Go forth in the peace of Christ'
Responded to; the day begins.

James Tipp

Wisdom Walked Through The Night

Wisdom walked through the night
Searching the heavens for a spark
The journey one of faith and perseverance
Driven by a tiny light in the celestial realm.
Wisdom always seeks to follow the light
Search out the truth wherever it is found.
The Christ child lies awaiting discovery.
Each year amidst the dazzling neon's,
The flashing decorations that are tree bound,
There lies a tiny spark, which can still be seen
By the seekers of wisdom the Magi of today
Who search for truth, hope and meaning
Amidst the glitter and glare of commercialism.

James Tipp