

Poetry Series

**e Redwood  
- poems -**

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## e Redwood(6th February,1947)

I grew up in Rhodesia but left when Mugabe came into power. I have loved poetry and lyrics all my life. I now live on my brother's game reserve in Northern Natal.

# Black Independence (1972)

His proud shoulders stooped and aching head bent,  
The man looked at the earth beneath his feet.  
Blood, sweat, tears and long years on this land were spent.  
Man alive! No man won land without pain.

His beloved wife lay here at eternal rest.  
On this very land they had met and wed.  
They faced their hard life together with zest;  
Life was cruel and the price they paid, high.

The lush land before him was proudly his own  
No man could have achieved more in his life.  
This was his pride, his joy and his only home,  
He knelt there on the dry red earth and cried.

His servant of many years watched in sorrow,  
He knew the thoughts that tortured his master.  
What would become of his great land tomorrow,  
And Oh God! Why could a man not just die?

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# Border War

Rhodesia December 1973

No glory here and not patriotism,  
just the lifeless body of a friend  
whose bloody clothes are his only protection  
from the deep humility of death.

Soldiers look at each other, eyes dark with pain.  
They can't understand, he was so young!

No medals here and not bloody tradition,  
this is war, just as war truly is  
stripped of its uniform and glory  
just pain and death and sheer wastefulness!

When the war is over, will they have achieved  
enough to make his death worthwhile?

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# Growing Up

What does the laughing child  
know of growing up;  
the pain of first love  
rejected?  
The heartache of losing  
a loved one  
and learning to live with emptiness?  
Finding money to meet the bills  
and worrying about the situation  
politically?  
Not knowing the cure for the ills  
of a very sick world,  
corrupt with power and hate;  
yet trying to make it a place  
for your children to live  
and you to die?

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# Heartache Forever (Dedicated To Jaryd Stapleton - 12.03.07)

I lost a special friend today  
It was grey and looked like rain,  
But no rain fell -  
Although we needed it like hell,  
Not as much as I need my friend!  
He was just nineteen,  
So intelligent, so talented, so special!  
It was so easy to love him  
And so hard to let him go!  
But he has gone anyway  
So much still to say and do!  
The desperately needed rains?  
Well, they never passed this way at all  
They have gone without leaving their trace of green  
He has gone leaving a hundred hearts empty  
And full of pain!

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# In Remembrance

Thoughts, oh these obsessive thoughts  
begone from my brain!

Let this churning, whirling end,  
So night, take away the pain,  
no longer trapped by desire  
and burning guilt.

Let my mind rest in blackness,  
Darkness beyond life!  
Release the chains that bind fast  
take sorrow away!

Oh night, no balm for conscience,  
cease to be so dark!

Always man must live and die  
and night become day.

Blood of the living must wax cold  
and anguish must end?

Yet when death took my own love  
heartache came to stay.

You, loving arms of the sad  
fold gently around me,  
let the peace that comes with loving  
calmly flow oe'r me,  
as you close your death doors  
on complexities!

Heart of my heart, lost to me,  
I cannot hold you,  
and while my longing arms ache  
to touch you again,

I close my eyes and I see  
emptiness once more!

Your were my life and my hopes,  
my dreams were all of you!

Now crushed and trampled I see  
them strewn at my feet!

The tears that flow from my eyes  
fall warm on my breast  
and with them my blood wanes cold

and life starts to fade  
while death's black oblivion  
opens to receive!

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# Life's Way

Tiresome and cold the road has become  
This road to nowhere I'm travelling on.  
My feet are weary, my brain is numb  
Life is naught but a tragic con!

Born in anguish, we die in sorrow,  
Between we stumble meaningless miles  
Searching for a brighter tomorrow  
In youthful love and kitten smiles.

Losing our lov'd ones along the way  
We try to understand God's great plan,  
But nothing can our heartaches alay,  
For each smile, a thousand tears for man!

Gazing upon a golden sunset  
You see the black rolling in behind,  
Happiness and sorrow there have met,  
All you men who cherish hope are blind!

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# Old Man

Gnarled hands, shaking, grip the worn stick  
Groping the way for blind eyes,  
This man knows nothing but his pain  
And his sorrow for lost friends!

He finds a bench in the cool shade  
And there rests his aching legs,  
Tears trickle from his sightless eyes  
For the young people who die.

Time goes marching by so slowly  
Meaning in his life has gone  
And yet still he grips its slender thread  
Not understanding why.

He has lived three score years and ten  
The time allotted us all,  
And then he has lived still ten more  
He is so very tired now.

The sun sets darkly in the west  
But his blind eyes do not see.  
There he sits a lonely figure  
Waiting out the beat of time!

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# She's Only Three Years Old?

Tiny hands grasping tightly to the fence  
Lost forlorn brown eyes staring,  
A pathetic figure torn by life  
And she's only three years old.

In the distance a young nanny stands  
Talking to her friends.  
No time, no love for this frail child  
And she's only three years old.

Mother left this morning in a rush,  
She was late, never said goodbye -  
Daddy went away a year ago,  
And she's only three years old.

A sparkling tear trickles down her cheek,  
And splashes on her bare feet,  
There's a little ache in her heart  
And she's only three years old.

Tonight Mother will be going out,  
A cocktail party or the cinema,  
A little soul alone and forgotten  
And she's only three years old.

Rain starts to patter down  
Still she is there, getting soaking wet,  
The tears and rain blending in sadness,  
And she's only three years old

No laughter in her young heart  
She is hungry but they've forgotten.  
She shivers in the cold  
And she's only three years old.

A kindly word, an affectionate kiss,  
Goodnight! Goodbye! and a little time,  
But how can she tell them?  
She's only three years old.

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# Suicide

There is no hope for tomorrow  
the pain inside will not leave me,  
and I'm drowning in my sorrow  
that the world outside will not see!

My eyes have no more tears to cry,  
I cannot bear another day  
in this world that can only lie  
and race along its thoughtless way!

When I am dead it will say of me  
the man had no courage at all!  
He was a coward don't you see!  
Oh why can no-one hear my call?

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# The Drunk

Dejected, outcast and despised  
He sits on the sidewalk  
Surveying the world that was his  
But cannot be again.

His eyes are glassy pools of fear  
He knows what fate is his.  
The trembling hands can't wipe the tears  
That trickle down his face.

People walk by and glance at him,  
Another social wreck  
To be scorned and pushed aside  
Lest he contaminate!

So lonely in his twilight world  
Where no-one understands  
He tries to smile but fails somehow,  
The pain inside strangles.

Won't someone stop and lend a hand  
To this pathetic soul  
Who lost his reason for trying  
Somewhere along the way.

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# Wages Of Sin

Death, end of all beginning  
Why took you him?  
Death, wages of my sinning,  
Why such a price?

When the sunset ends the day  
With endless night,  
Interminable time pray  
Let me wake free!

The harsh burden of sorrow,  
Deep in my heart,  
Will not leave me tomorrow  
Nor forever!

My sins you paid for with pain,  
And your own life -  
Life's plan was not made in vain,  
For now I pay!

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# What Is Victory?

Hungry hearts remember loves lost in battle  
While parents despair over bodies  
That once were their sons so abundant with life,  
And wonder why they should die!

What do these broken, bleeding bodies prove?  
Were these men brave or just loyal?  
Do soldiers know or even care why they fight?  
Are they murderers, or only men  
Fighting for what they truly believe is right?

How fruitless is all the fighting and bloodshed,  
Why can man not live in harmony?  
Can we know that young children die in anguish  
And not weep for man's cruelty?

Why do we destroy what Nature has made wondrous  
All the beauty that surrounds us?  
Fill it with blood, tears, death, sorrow and despair,  
Until the horror of man disgusts  
And revolts all those who look upon his face!

Do we just close our eyes so we cannot see  
Babies dying of starvation,  
Young men who will have to face life without limbs,  
And people lost and heartbroken?

Is it possible we think the wounds will mend,  
Or is it just that we are callous?  
How can a man, knowing death's reality  
Call a war 'for man's benefit'?  
How can he think victory is important?

Victory, the treasure of evil men's hearts,  
How can they think you are precious,  
Tell me you men who institute battle  
What is this thing called Victory?

I will tell you that when the war is over,

And the broken soldiers come home,  
The victorious nation will raise their flag  
Watched by the tear-filled tragic eyes  
Of men amidst the ruins that are their Victory!

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