

Poetry Series

Tony Pitman
- poems -

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Tony Pitman()

Childhood

Childhood

Pens.

Scratchy nib on wooden stick,
Dipped in inkpot desk set.
Try to write, big inkblot,
Raising high Miss Nelly's wrath.

When little, greatest wish,
Fountain pen and bottle of Quink.
Such things were scarce post war,
Lucky to have broken pencil to draw.

Remember queuing outside toyshop,
Water colours on sale, limited stock.
Unable to buy, no money to spend,
Just to see them brought content.

Best gift ever been given,
Brown fountain pen when eleven.
Reward for passing eleven plus,
Pride and joy till it was lost.

Now old with money to spend,
Huge collection, all types of pens.
Fountain, roller ball, biro and gel;
Favourite shop what stationers sell.

Eying a display of pens,
Childhood thrills rise again.
They're alive, raring to start,
Lucky children, what a sight.

Would the interest be the same?
If as available in younger days
Does the exciting fascination arise?
Simply from scarcity or a need to write

Bath Night.

Hung outside on nail at back
Early en-suite, big tin bath.
Taken down on Friday nights,
Fill with water, few inches high.

Kitchen becomes family bathroom,
Placed under light, out of gloom.
Special treat on cold winter's nights,
Element flickering in electric fire.

Rota for bathing firmly fixed,
Mam, dad, youngest child next;
Then the sibling first born.
Rest to follow in age turn.

Hair cleaning the prime ablution,
Labour rough hands do scalp scrubbing.
Lie back in vulnerable prone position,
Ladled rise, water in tepid condition.

Need to sit and soak awhile,
Others being dried with old towels.
Time to doodle with fingernail,
In old soap welded to bath interior.

All's finished, bath time done,
Shivering by fire in front room.
Bath lifted and emptied in sink,
Hung back on nail for another week.

Snowy's fright.

Pitch black and smelling vile,
Legs in water treading piles.
Six foot fall has caused a shock,
Trapped down here in pool of muck.

Shouldn't have trusted toilet seat,
Wobbly landing after leap.
Teetered on edge for an age,

Plummeted down with no grace.

Trembling with cold and fright,
Latest adventure will be goodbye.
Any minute tippler will go,
Washed down sewer in the flow.

Why oh why change from norm?
Running round yard eating coal
Saw door of loo left ajar,
Had to visit place that's barred.

Wait, noises from above,
People investigating what's up?
Silk rope dangling, tickling nose,
Grab with teeth and up we go.

Pulled to safety scraping sides,
Used as toilet brush on this ride.
At last daylight and fresh air,
Bounce round yard without a care.

Washed and scrubbed with Persil soap,
Drying by fire in posh white coat.
Much cosier than hutch outside,
An exciting day in Snowy's life.

Sick visit.

Bedroom dark in winter gloom,
Child in bed twixt fever and chill.
Old overcoats weighing a ton,
Keep out cold like eiderdown should.

Lonely place to spend his days,
Little chap longing for out and play.
Much too weak to lift his head,
Has to be here in sick bed.

Water in white pot stood nearby,
Spout on side for drink, lay down.

Noises come from down below,
Maybe a visit is on the way.

Doctor bursts in with his bag,
Not the choice the lad would make.
Looms over chap, prone in sack,
Menacing figure, always in black.

Cold metal probing chest and back;
Deep breath, keep still, blow out.
Must be serious or wouldn't be here,
This man's visits always cost dear.

As he thought, congested lungs;
Another case of pneumonia.
Hot poultices to be applied,
Encourage fluid to find way out.

Inspection over, alone again;
Listen to mumblings coming from stairs.
'Pneumonia, three strikes and gone'.
Oh my God, there's only another one.

Shivering in fright in night shirt,
Lad ponders on what he's heard.
Such a short life he now faces,
Make most of tonight's liquorice allsorts.

The slide.

Cold winter's morn with Jack Frost,
Off to school on local bus.
Exciting view through the gate,
New ice-slide on which to skate.

Stand in line then off on run,
Hit the slide, feet apart, side on.
Sway about to keep upright,
Or take a tumble on ride of fright.

Longer and longer the queue grows,
As more boys join the fun.
Faster and faster the slide's thrill;
Polished surface testing balance skills.

Whistle blows, time for classes,
Reluctant to leave ice attraction;
But temperature cold, slide won't melt,
Still be there when school's out.

Break time can't come too soon,
Sod the milk, there's skating to do.
Faces tingle as they hit cold air,
Group of lads stood in despair.

The line in the yard that marked the slide,
Now heaped with hot ash, glowing white.
Mr Rowbottom's been at dirty work,
Spoiling the fun with his boiler's dirt.

Anger simmers through the ranks,
Need to avenge the caretaker's prank.
How to hit him so it really hurts?
Must be his cellar where he works.

Line of lads waiting a turn,
Piss in boiler, so fire won't burn.
Hot cokes spit and splutter, belching fumes,
Stagger up steps, zonked but amused.

Nitty job.

Nit nurse Nora's due today,
Search for lice and powder give.
Plaster hair with comb that's wet,
Maybe wont disturb hair set.

Stand in line and wait your turn,
Please no powder, gives head that burns.
Rough hands pull locks apart;
What a job from nine till five.

Nurse is stern with heavy frown,
Concentrates most on the crown.
Ordered to one side or the other,
Passed the test or note for mother.

Back in class, clear this time,
Ponder, most nits in hair that's fine.
Johnny Mig sits down in front,
Scratching head, lice falls and runs.

May wind.

The wind is blowing hard today,
Gusting, swirling at the end of May.
Sun burns hot, the wind cools down;
Clouds are darting, fast all around.

New green leafs float through the air,
Ripped off trees that bounce and dance;
Drifting, flicking in the wind,
Mimicking butterflies while they can

Garden bushes bow and curtsy,
Supple and lithe, avoiding breakage.
Snapped dead twigs are freed to fall.
Late Cherry blossoms carpet the floor.

Delicate plant shoots seem to survive,
Their strength amazing for their size.
Nature has bred them for the onslaught,
Aware tree pollen needs a good blow start.

Birds in harmony with Nature's way,
Perched on branches enjoying the sway.
Gulls gliding on swift air currents.
Black birds low flying through the gate.

The wind does more than move things round,
Triggering fond memories of childhood sounds.
Homemade kites on Hikeshead Pike;
Dad's proud joy at his kids' delight.

Building a shelter on Blackpool beach;
Keep out the sand while family eats.
Model yacht on park paddling pool,
Mast bending over in graceful move.
Hair swept back on downhill run,
Wind a brake increasing fun;
Joins the game by switching round;
Head over heels and kiss the ground.

Memories of times not to revisit,
The wind can make most vivid.
Scenes alter, people are gone;
On the wings of the wind the spirit lives on.

Timeless wind without a clock,
Moving the plants as I watch,
Just as it did when I was young,
Again freely gifting Nature's song.

Plot of grass

Just a plot of grass like any other;
Nothing there to make it special.
Brown in patches, full of weeds;
Mowed in summer, covered with autumn leaves.

A tree as neighbour, Silver Birch for shade;
The only marker for this quiet place.
Silent now, sleeping in peace;
Protected by angel's spreading wings.

For this is a special place;
Here lie babies in God's grace.
Born and died before life began;
Untainted by sin, the curse of man.

Fifty odd children for fifty odd years,
Have been in this place beneath the tree.
Only God knows why their visit was short;
It'll be some party come the trumpet call.

'Hallo Tony'

'Hallo Tony'

Shouts gruff little voice from down below

'Hallo Libby'

Her infectious pleasure echoed in response

'Hallo Tony', she shouts again

'Hallo Libby', a happy call from deep within

Help us God to understand

Why somewhere along the way

We abandon that joyful little child

That always resides deep inside

Tony Pitman

Church

Faithful pair.

Nora and Dorothy are off to Mass;
Everyday they tread the same path.
Whether hail, rain or shine,
This pair will find the time.

For years they've done the same,
Forever truthful to their faith.
Sparse congregations no difference makes,
Their personal devotions paramount.

Priests come and priests depart;
Nora and Dot take it in their stride.
They help the clergy in their work
But contact with God is their real goal.

Easy to rubbish such belief,
When egocentric cynicism reigns.
Following customs considered outdated,
Theirs must be a habit hard to break.

Nora and Dot not moved by such notions,
They've found their path to enlightenment.
Whilst the rest of us scratch around,
Hopefully they'll pray ours can be found

Sunday.

Sunday morn on day of rest,
Off to Mass in Sunday best.
Remember the excitement as a child,
Family together, God in His house.

Halcyon days of certainty,
Born from Catholic faith.
Precious gift at my birth;
Did wonder, what was my worth?

Those blessed days were not to last,
Reality of life would be the test.
Step outside strictures at peril,
Condemnation and exclusion forever.

Years of struggle was the result,
Attempts at reconciliation.
Pain and sorrow the order of the day;
Energies diverted from life's real pay.

There were periods of respite,
Oasis in my spiritual life.
Dave Duanne and the Marsh people,
Realised my dream of true belief.

The fight is over late in life;
Compromise finally justified.
Excommunication has been lifted.
Was the effort really worth it?

Sunday morn again tomorrow,
Go to Mass? I'll not bother.
Still believe God's in His home
But years of struggle have taken their toll.

Perhaps the fight more important than prize.
Perhaps my need was greater when young.
Perhaps the ban still lies in wait.
Perhaps no longer it's the path to take.

I still think of the happy child,
With his family at Sunday time.
Clarity of mind with no doubts.
Were it possible to have such faith?

I would not change that child's life;
The joy and thrill worth later strife.
Perhaps such nearness to God is unsustainable,
Perhaps I was lucky for the glimpse of it.

Little church.

Little church across the street.
Should be haven for spiritual peace.
A place for prayer and contemplation,
For the soul to find peace and salvation.

Little church built with skill and care,
By people wishing their beliefs to share.
Symbol of grace, hope and trust,
For love to foster in their midst.

Little church sad, with vacant pews;
Where's the people, you were once full?
Why this dearth in congregation,
Except for births, marriages and funerals?

Little church with words and rituals,
No longer inspiring for folk's interest.
Has the area really lost its faith,
Or is lack of Church charisma to blame?

Little church once centre of community,
Under threat of closure because empty.
What went wrong to reap the change;
Is there hope for its redemption?

But Church is not the building across the street;
It's the people who should go there to meet.
Realising that with outstretched arms,
Little church may once more fill again.

Ye Olde Christmas.

Christmas Eve and all's prepared,
Midnight Mass and Mabel's pies.
Walk to church through wet or snow,
Candles, incense, heart that glows.

Late to bed but eager to rise,
Presents in pillow sack to surprise.
Some bought but mostly home-made,
Toys, puzzles, nuts and an orange.

Chicken dinner and Christmas puds,
Thrupney-bits in the lumps.
Tidy up, off to Grans,
Family party, an annual event.

Sandwiches, sausage, jelly and cake,
Lot of chatter, maybe some games.
Time for Ronny to give a song,
From next room, hiding embarrassment.

Special days in special times,
Rationing and poverty put aside.
Parents with love and ingenuity,
Gifting their children everything.

Furness.

Stones soaked in tenor voices;
Earth compressed by bended knees;
Strange carvings a message to give;
All is here where communities lived.

Walls crumbled lay in piles;
Roof long gone opens the sky;
Grass now where once were tiles;
Vertical pillars, prone they lie.

Plainchant seems to fill the space;
Matins to Vespers every day;
Lead voices and descant flair;
Psalms were written for this air.

Birds roosting on statue plinths;
Wind blows through the open sides;
Lines mark out the cloister's width;
Pace the naïve, marvel at its size.

Men in habits walking round,
Heads covered to warm bald crowns;
Murmuring prayers the only sound;
Young to old, all are found.

Just a derelict site of rubble,
Close by road on way to Barrow.
Stop if you can and rest awhile,
Feel hallowed spirits of time gone by.

Flash back.

The Church is bright and dressed;
Packed with families in Sunday best.
Men in suits, collar and tie;
Women and kids in colourful attire.

Carols sung out in joyful voice;
All join in, in tune and out.
Music vibrant, full of good cheer;
Christ's birth is drawing near.

Celebrant's procession enters scene;
All stand, ready for Mass to begin.
Seasonal greetings echo round church,
To start great celebration of the year.

Readings and hymns follow on,
The Mass proceeding in time honoured way.
Structured to capture individual hearts;
The congregation in communion together.

Time passes without burden;
The joy of the occasion not confined.
The final ritual in the church,
Queue to pass the corner crib.

This could have been a dream of long ago,
The heart bursting with spiritual joy.
But not a flashback to boyhood times;
Midnight Mass at Arpora, West India.

Dorothy and Nora.

Dorothy and Nora make their way home,
Filled with the spirit of morning Mass.
Two old ladies, grey heads bent low;

Such faith to cling to while their last days pass.

Nora once stood straight with pride;
Now bent low in her evening time.
Nursed her mother through sickness and health;
Now just a shadow of her former self.

Dorothy her friend for many a year,
Worries that Nora is losing her strength.
Mind not working as once it did;
Memory fading, perhaps dangerously.

What does the future hold for these two dears?
Is there a life that could bring them cheer?
Perhaps the spirit of their faith is all they need;
They were promised that as children, now we'll see.

Rekindling.

Just an e-mail sent out of the blue;
Generated from papers, searched through.
Words arriving in electronic form;
Triggering feelings suppressed by time.

Enthusiasm generated by delight of discovery;
Infectious even on a spirit smothered.
Interest lost, the brother of cynicism;
Cracked open by hopes of church acceptance.

How fickle our belief in ego;
Just symbols on a screen can challenge our stance.
Complacent and sure we believe ourselves;
Yet a call from a stranger can influence.

Passions and hopes blocked forever;
Key discarded, thrown away.
Buried at last, or so believed;
Just under surface was where it lay.

Thirty years at the struggle;
Personal peace and hope for others.
Despair and joy have marked the path;

So many times I said enough.

Dilemma again, how to proceed?
Realism or idealistic dreams?
Drive with force against the tide?
Failure a certainty on this ride.

Oh dear God, why this pressure?
I did my best without success.
What more is there for me to offer?
Maybe the trying is all that's asked.

Sad to say love again was not present

Hawthorn

Hawthorn blossoms deck the lane,
Heralding Mary's month of May.
Cricket matches, statue crowning;
Youthful joy, life full of promise.

The tree that reflects times ahead;
Thorns and flowers on a stem.
All will experience pain and loss;
With joys of life we're all blessed.

Swarm of priests

Swarm of priests for Gozo ferry,
Westminster lot on a jolly.
Baseball caps and T-shirts,
But most in clerical gear.

What itinerary will be followed?
Sun bathing, strolls, jive and beer?
Just the same as any tourists?
Or here for more Mass and Vespers?

What a life they have chosen;
Celibacy leading to old life lonely.
How many will last the course,
Without a woman's healing love.

Worshippers

Mass attendees pour out the door;
Done their duty on this Sunday morn.
Carrying with them the Body of Christ;
Completed their journey to Emmaus.

Blessed people with such belief;
Safe and secure in their destiny.
Certain in their path of faith;
What comfort that must bring.

Once knew an ex-Communist;
Disillusioned by Stalin's reign of terror,
Who envied people with such devotion;
Saw it as giving them a corner stone.

Faith

Bill said he was a man of no beliefs;
Could find no ism or ology to cling to.
Spends his life in sceptical search;
Such faith it was a privilege to witness.

Tony Pitman

Dance

See little babes on the floor,
Moving limbs in time with tempo.
Automatically relating to music,
Not taught, naturally driven.

Dance is part of our fabric,
The first form of language;
Conveying joy and excitement;
Reflexes responding to rhythm.

Why is the gift discarded,
Not nurtured and encouraged?
Apart from exceptions rare,
Dance abandoned before seven.

What is lost by neglect,
To be realised with regret?
Opportunity to express ourselves,
In a way universally recognised.

Not a question of form or training,
Except to help ease of movement.
Watch the child and understand,
The thrill that dance commands.

Magical moments.

Heavenly music, heavenly sounds;
Flashing smiles, flashing feet;
Rhythmic movements, rhythmic beat;
Happy couples, happy groups.

Dance to fill and lift the heart;
Dance to dispel all worldly woes;
Dance to share a common tongue.
Dance to express the inner self;
Dance to forget the aches and pains;
Dance to stimulate the brain.
Dance to give expression to feelings;

Dance to set the spirit free.

Dancing

Nothing special, quite plain
Spanish lady out with friends.
Rhythm changes, gets up to dance
Blossoms out with beauty and grace.

Little man, shapelessly formed
Withered hand carried from birth.
Natural dancer, Tango his passion
Displaying his lady in Latin fashion.

Old couple, look in their nineties
Hobble along, wife holding tightly.
Transformation when they dance
Lithe and loose with elegance.

Dance stripping away masks
Unburdened the heart free to prance.
Dance the universal language
Gift from birth all are given.

Draw of dance

What draws people to dance?
Well those who take the chance.
Watch their movements, hear them talk
In their way they'll tell you if you listen.

Ballroom dancers learn to move
Like acting a role in a play.
Their steps and patterns may differ
But the intention is to tell a story.

Sequence dancers have different approach
More test of brainpower than movement.
Scores of new dances to learn every year
Need leaders to show which dance is next.

Then there is dancing from the heart

An expression of feelings the music brings forth.
The Latins in particular have this gift
Watch Mediterranean people at this pursuit.

The base for the rhythms of this dancing
Can be seen if watched closely.
Viennese waltz for German folk,
Pasadobla style the Spanish choice.
Sometimes this passion is at the extreme
Only tango danced in Buenos Aires.

No fool like a old fool

The joy of dance enlivens the spirit,
Stimulates the mind, all aching reduces.
Motions of grace to tempos fine,
Lyrics of phrases that sometimes rhyme.

Partners in time or out of step,
Faces of frowns or teeth, full set.
Gliding or stumbling across the floor,
Struggling to recall that once taught.

Duos together like whirling Dervishes,
Unobstructed path or Dodgem skirmishes.
Intent on achieving the task that's set,
Round and round with gusto and zest.

Males and females dancing in pairs,
By invitation or pleasure, couple shared.
Custom of bloke requesting the dance,
Unfair really, lady's refusal causing offence.

Partners aplenty to whisk round the floor,
'Dance?' 'Yes please', and so they cavort.
The shared attraction, the thrill of the dance,
No other motivation, no intent on romance.
But be aware, unexpected danger lurks,
A look or remark can change the sport.
The dance replaced by portentous desires
Unsought 'beast with two backs' mugging the thoughts.

Those stirrings long buried, or so believed,
Lie under the surface, easily revealed.
Over three score and ten is no defence,
Teenage eagerness sweeps away sense.

The dance, the point of coming together,
Becomes the vehicle for different pleasures.
Meticulous planning to attain the goal,
Only succeeding when desired by both.

What a strange device the human form,
Procreation drive, unlikely able to perform.
Same thrills and expectancy experienced when young,
Same disappointment when signals misunderstood.

Embarrassed silly old sod, what's been achieved?
Joyful nights now ruined at this dance scene.
The impetuous pace of misguided chase,
An insult to beauty and movements of grace.
'No fool like an old fool', rings true,
But then again, 'is there life in the old dog', too?

Dance starvation

Open air dancing a delight to watch;
Perfect environment for night-time spot.
Couples moving to music's beat;
Tile floor ideal for gliding feet.

But missing dancing company;
Free as the wind my spirit can be.
Common ground to meet and share;
The body's need to express itself.

To witness the dance is interesting,
But no comparison to participation.
Music beat sets the foot tapping,
But body movement brings true happiness.

Feather dance.

Never danced with someone so light;

Like holding a feather in my arms.
Effortlessly she follows the lead,
Complex or simple the steps with ease.

Body grace brings joy to the heart;
Such movement defying gravity.
Can't be real, too good to be true;
Must be an angel in feminine form.

Every type of dance brings no change;
The music interpreted fluently.
The mood conveyed with Thespian art;
The story conveyed playing her part.

Hard to believe she's never been trained,
Balance and poise coming naturally.
A dancing delight in every way;
Some lucky chap a partner would make.

A night dancing.

Great time dancing Tuesday night;
New venue for delights.
Two sisters who love to jig;
Not a single dance was missed.

Sequence dances of all forms;
Waltzes, Saunters, Latin types.
Most popular ones can now perform;
Know the steps, so move with style.

Came unstuck at Foxtrot time;
Not in tune with partner's style.
A dance difficult with someone new;
Different links to negotiate through..

Nice dance floor, plenty of space;
Good DJ, Rex by name.
Works at many single's venues;
Opportunity increase circle of chances.

Tango.

Argentina Tango the dance for me
Must fix up lessons urgently
Sway to the music, bodies held close
Smoky bar venue after trip into town□

Grimy and sweaty from the ride
Need a drink and woman to glide
Crouch into her as we move around
Can't stand the smell, her head to the side

Need a partner to fit the role
A Thespian to fill the part
Who to choose to give the honour?
Who would want to take me on?

Maybe Sue from Wednesday night
Melt the Ice-Queen with the drop
Likes the Latin and the Jive
Nothing to loose, I'll try invite

No harm in such a venture
Just keep to the dance, avoid danger
'Wait a minute, same intent as before'
'Look what mess you were landed in'

This time different again
Tango the aim, not romance
'Oh yeh! We'll see'
'This time next year report to me'

Wednesday dance.

Different kind of dancing at Chorley
Interesting crowd, more variety
Women with fascinating pasts
More than a dance, there's mystique

Gail the quiet one, drawn to me
Sue the skier, called Ice Queen
Janet the teacher with deep eyes
Christine the Jiver of mystery

Rex the DJ pulling the groupies
Solo Club expert, his appearances
Pretty good selection of CDs to play
Should do his experiments during the day

Dance floor quite small for Sequence
Two circles impossible without bumping
Facilities good and spotlessly clean
Good bar service and bowling green

When social calendar up for revue
Likely this one will remain
Near to home, less petrol to burn
Suspect more secrets to discover here

Thursday dance.

Thursday night dance at Denton
Labour Club at Crown Point
Eight till eleven is the norm
Two-fifty in, with the form

Crowd been going there for years
Yet welcoming to new beginners
Friendly bunch the Denton mob
But that's dancers normally view

There's Rose, Joan, Erica and Ann
Ready to jig with any willing man
Thrish, Meg, Joe and May
Ready to twirl the night away

Rumba, Tango, Waltzes and Jive
Select the partner that fits the style
Modern Foxtrot and step that's quick
Need experience to handle this

The night passes on with speed
Can't fit in enough for the need
As the witching hour approaches
Cram as many in as possible

Always a good night at this venue
Not distracted by other agendas
Concentrate all on the dancing
Never sit while music's live

Frenzied

Frenzied dancing to excess
Whirling, twirling, extreme zest
Can't sit still, must hit the floor
Night too short, need much more

Was it making up lost time?
Weeks devoid of dancing need
Use the space and the music
Express the shadow side of me

Was it to purge the picture of Sandra?
Erasing her from my heart's space
Rushing through the grieving stage
Can't wait for time's healing pace

What a selfish expression it was
No thought for my partner's care
Simply used for her style and grace
No consideration for her place

Must draw back and realise
Jean needs consideration in this flight
Not fair to use her in this way
Must make it up to her some day

Great it's Wednesday

Great, Wednesday dance tonight
Chance to lift the spirits high
Distracted from toil and woes
Free to express the inner core

Let the music play to start the stirrings
Body movements respond instinctively

No tiredness resulting from this exercise
Raising temperature, adrenalin surge

On and on the dancing goes
Seek partners with twinkle toes
Graceful or frantic, whatever movement
Expressing the music the only goal

No time to sit and chat
Venue wasted on all that
Partners pleasant and interesting
Encourage a bit of friendly flirting

Cha Cha

Come on Marian let yourself go
No inhibitions, no discomfiture
Let the music seep deep inside
Release your body to the tempo

Opportunity to set the child free
Unrestricted as was born to be
The Cha Cha giving permission
For the core's vital expressions

Come on Marian let yourself go
Or miss the opportunity bestowed
Choreography is just the form
Your true personality to adorn

Wallflower

Always there were Wallflowers at the dance
Girls who sat as their mates pranced
Week after week the same result
Still they continued to turn up

Men passed them over when partners sort
The plain left behind for pretty ones choice
Always sat in the same places
No opportunity to show their paces

Most strange of all
Some beautiful flowers on the wall
Men reluctant to make approach
Was it from fear of rejection?

The passage of time has made little difference
Even with emancipation the same situation
Women who sit for the whole night
Complaining not enough men about

Some exceptions are to be seen
Confident women doing the inviting
Using their right to break convention
Look, nod or a wink to show intention

Hangover

Blissful, peaceful feeling of the morn
Breeze and sun my balcony adorn
Satisfying thrill of dance lingers
Evening to savour over and over

Good company, nice venue
Music perfect to dance to
Partner to share delights
Food for spirit to satisfy

French Jive

New venture with the dance
French Jive has come alive
Floor packed with gyrating couples
Moving to different music rhythms

Mixed age group gathered here
All engaged in evening's joy
This a dance with opportunity
Irrespective of natural ability

Sessions organised all-inclusive
Learners mixing with experienced
Tuition encompassing the mix

Mutual help does the trick

As the evening shadows fall
Free style expression to the fore
People who have danced for years
Put different styles on display

Now time to sit and watch
Incapable of joining in the fun
Real longing to be a part
Dearth of knowledge holds back

The music seeps into the core
Needing interpretation to bring forth
Frustration sets in, need to leave
Must curb impatience if to succeed

Nice surprise

Nice surprise the other night
At the venue Eve arrived
Many months since last we danced
The magical movement had survived

Of all the partners I've encountered
None glide so effortlessly
So easy to turn and sway
Like dancing with a feather

Music interpretation in tune
Synchronised as if together we'd trained
Right from the start it's been the same
Perhaps we danced in formative years

The Waltz is our favourite
Seem to float across the floor
Surreal in it's affect
Transported to Vienna

Only on rare occasions we should dance
Familiarity would break the trance
Technique and routine would dominate

Smothering this natural joy we create

Valentine

The Spanish have invaded town
Drawn in groups having a ball
Here to celebrate romance and love
St Valentine's day to commemorate.

Young and old, most middle aged
Mediterranean temperament on display.
Boisterous and chatty is their way
Proud to proclaim why they're here.

Their dancing such joy to watch
Infectiously drawn to participate.
No Anglo Saxon stiff holding back
Spirits released as bodies sway.

No hesitation taking the floor
Packed full as bodies gyrate.
Latin rhythms, quick of foot
These are people who dance a lot.

No early night for this lot
Don't eat till nine then on the town.
Every space filled with dancers
On display, never ending romance.

Early morning

At last the sun's caressing my face
Sat comfy on my balcony
Early morning, family off to toils
Got this beautiful place to myself

Soothing caffeine, nicotine catch up
Birds singing their repertoire
Wild rabbits seeking tender greens
Pair of ducks on their annual sortie

Spirits uplifted by the scene

Little wonder Greeks prefer it to prosperity
Our very existence depends on this star
More importantly is its source of joy

Off to the Pop Club tonight for dancing
Enjoying new venue in Accrington
Fresh people to meet and have a laugh
Social scene satisfying requirements

Oh how I really love to dance
A wonderful way to restore sanity
That engaging happy child set free
Uninhibited like a bird on the wing

Thank you George and Joyce for the gift of dance
Patiently teaching the technique of movement
You provided the canvas and the paint
Giving my soul the means of expression

Tony Pitman

From The Heart Of Anthony De Mello

Awareness.

The student monk had spent seven years,
Learning how to comprehend awareness.
At the end of his study it was time for assessment,
To visit the master was his final assignment.

The master sat, at the young man he looked,
Was he ready to become a teacher monk?

The young monk, wet from his walk,
Had placed his umbrella in the hall
Master asked, 'to the left or right of your clogs,
Did you place your umbrella to dry at rest? '

The monk was taken by surprise,
Why such simple thing, when so wise?
Try as he might he couldn't recall;
Had to admit, no idea at all.

'Go back to your teacher for seven more years,
To learn once more the secret of awareness'.

To late the young monk remembered,
Awareness encompasses everything.
No chance of ever really seeing,
Unless every second has meaning.

Entrepreneur Spirit.

Young fisherman sat on the beach,
Smoking his pipe in shade of boat.
Finished his work for the day,
Sold his catch, got his pay.

Passing man stopped for a chat,
Interested in fisherman's lot.

'Why aren't you out catching fish? '

'I've already caught all I need'.

'But if you land more you'll make more money'.

'What would I do with the extra cash? '

'Buy bigger nets and make more money'.

'What would I do with the extra cash? '

'Buy bigger boat and make more money'.

'What would I do with the extra cash? '

'Buy second boat and make more money'.

'What would I do with the extra cash? '

'Hire men to make you more money'.

'What would I do with the extra cash? '

'You could have time off to do what pleases you'.

'But I already have time to do as I please'.

The man moved on with puzzled frown,
Not understanding such lack of drive.
Young fisherman with such opportunity,
Sat, puffing his pipe, looking out to sea.

Riches.

The young couple sat in their garden,
Watching the sun set in the west.
Holding hands and nestling close,
Their hearts in tune and at rest.

The children were in their beds asleep,
Sated with supper and fairy tale book.
The air was still and filled with scent,
Flowers tempting night time guests.

The woman whispered in her lover's ear,
'One day we'll have money to make us rich'.
'Look around my darling, how rich we are,
One day lots of money we may also have'.

Righteous gift

Christ descended down to Hades,
To set all the sinners free.
His sacrifice was their salvation,
With love he'd died on a tree.

Satan wept in a quiet corner,
Sad and forlorn on his own.
He didn't even wave goodbye,
As the last of his mates left for home.

'What's up with you', Christ asked.
'There's no one left to have a chat'.
'It'll be alright, I've made an arrangement,
You'll get the self righteous, until I come back'.

Revelation.

The wise man returned from his distant travels.
After searching for years he had touched the divine.
The people of the village could see the affect on him;
He was so uplifted that they wanted a share.

For days and days they pestered him,
'Tell us the secret, explain what it is'.
There was no way to describe the experience,
It was for each to discover the way for them.

The people would not let up their pleas,
'Just tell us a little of what you have seen'.
Finally the man relented and did his best,
To give some insight into enlightenment.

The people listened and wrote it down.
The words were copied and passed around.
The story became the truth revealed;
The people adopted it as their belief.

The dogma was spread from village to village.
Groups gathered together to read their faith.
Missionaries were sent to spread the word,

Travelling the world with book and sword.

The wise man helplessly watched the result,
His inadequate words taken as absolute;
With overwhelming sadness in his heart,
He wished he had said nothing at all.

Sinning.

Two monks approached the river ford,
Brother Francis and Brother Tom.
A young woman was waiting to cross,
Afraid of the river's fast torrent.

'Climb on my back', said Brother Tom,
'I'll safely carry you over'.
Brother Frank was taken aback;
Such a deed transgressed their Order.

The woman alighted on the far bank,
Thanking Tom for his kind act.
Frank could not hold back his anger,
Berating Tom for his unholy action.

On and on Brother Francis raged,
For hours and hours after the passage.
Tom duly admitted momentary fault,
But Frank was perpetuating any sinful act.

Words.

Beware of word's bewitching ways;
Look away and they take on a life of their own.
They dazzle, mesmerise, lead astray;
Making belief they are reality.

Words can kill by breeding ideas,
That freeze into beliefs and dogmas;
Causing a hardening of the mind,
And a distorted perception of Reality

The words of the Scholar are to be understood;

But the words of the Master are to be listened to,
Like the wind in the trees and the song of the bird;
They will awaken something in the heart,
That is beyond all human knowledge.

When words and thoughts are silenced,
The Universe blossoms forth; real, whole and one.
Words become what they're meant to be,
The score, not the music; the menu, not the food;
Only the signpost, not journey's end;
For the language of the divine is silence.

Love

A word so misused and abused,
Often confused with ownership.
Provenance of poets and romantics,
Yet the core of human essence.

It's love that binds humanity to God;
Not law or religious observance.
It's love that's the key to the good life;
Not power, wealth or possessions.

For love only sees that all is one,
No distinction by colour or creed.
For love never seeks to divide.
Its power is to encompass all.

The core of love is care for the other,
For to give is to receive oneself.
The action of love is help for the other,
Everyone's welfare is thus ensured.

The rule of love is simple to observe.

It is impossible to help another,
Without helping oneself.
It is impossible to harm another,
Without harming oneself.

Reality.

People reacting not to Reality,
Responding to conceptions in the mind.
Deciding to love and hate
Configurations not essences.

True Reality can only be grasped,
When going beyond thoughts in the head
Seeing the world in its naked loveliness,
Forgoing the dominance of self.

Reality's not dwelling on sorrows past,
That are gone, not worth a moment's grief;
But a dramatic change of the mind,
To a radical different view of Reality.

Reality can't be recorded as history;
A documentation of appearances and doctrines.
Reality only exists in the moment,
Resulting from boundless Awareness.

Truth.

The human heart yearns for Truth,
In which to find liberation and delight.
Yet its discovery always brings,
Humanity's hostility and fright.

Faith is the fearless search for truth,
Why the mystery of the great fear of it?
Can't grasp it by a conceptualising mind;
No formula to pick up from a book.

Truth is purchased at the price of loneliness,
To follow it one walks alone.
The searching journey does not truth find,
But prepares one for it to recognise.

Theology now an obstacle to the cause;
No longer on the quest for Truth.
A maintainer of belief systems,
Closing the mind to the search.

Enlightenment.

Recognising reality, not as we think it is;
Seeing the hollowness of success,
The nothingness of human striving,
The emptiness of achievement.
Not through pessimism and despair,
With excitement and flair.

Knowing that life could be less painless,
Not by changing the world but the human heart;
That awareness of death gives sweetness to life,
Since fear of death negates life;
Knowing fear obscures how things are viewed
And the unimportance of everything we do.

Enlightened is to understanding oneself;
Identifying self as the cause of one's grief;
Understanding that Wisdom is learnt not taught,
Not a terminal but a means of travelling to truth.
A heart not enslaved, happy in any state,
Always free as only the contented can be.

Possessions.

Possessions to fill an empty heart.
But only held for a while.
Possessions to trap if not to gift.
Hoard and soil, set free and thrive.

What's the true measure of riches?
To strive for wealth without joy?
Like a bald man collecting combs?
For richness is the capacity for joy.

Life's finest things do not cost or hide;
Worthwhile one is a change of heart.
The greatest wealth we possess,
Is contentment with what we have.

Prospect always finer than event;

Expectation and acquirement never met;
For things can't really be possessed;
More likely to be possessed by them.

Religion.

The best and worst of things we possess;
Understand enough to hate but too little to love.
Taking belief as a statement of reality,
Instead of a clue about a mystery beyond grasping.

Religion is neither social nor inherited;
It's an intensely personal thing.
A signpost pointing a way to Truth
Not to cling to for security.

Religious law is not God's holy will,
Poetic expressions of the Unknowable.
It can't demand honour and obedience.
Except by fools claiming Divine instruction.

Religious law is a necessary evil,
To be cut down to the barest minimum.
Rules with only functional value;
Yielding to the Supreme Law of Reality.

Sin.

The greatest sin in the world?
Simply to see others as sinners.
A world seen shrouded in the darkness of sin
More interesting to the human condition;
Excusing the exercise of the right to judge,
Whose defect resides simply in the judging.

Is the act of sinning the greater offence,
Than the dwelling on the thought of it?
The body may indulge in pleasures of the moment,
The mind and heart may chew on it forever.
Perhaps the chewing on other's sins,
More pleasurable than the sinning itself.

Not to think in terms of sin but of forgiveness;

Forgiveness, whereby each broken thing is bound;
Forgiveness, whereby every stain made clean;
Forgiveness, whereby everyone is forgiven;
Forgiveness of Life, God, neighbour, self.
Forgiveness accepting no one to blame.

Spirituality.

Nothing magical about Spirituality,
The realisation of what one has always been.
The journey without distance to self-recognition;
An awakening to that always sought.

Spirituality isn't knowing what one wants
But understanding what one doesn't need.
Travelling from ignorance to understanding;
From where one is to where one has always been.

A path that brings one to oneself;
A quest making one what one always was;
Seeing what was always looked for;
A matter of becoming what one really is.

Realisation of what has always been,
The essence of worldly existence;
Pure untainted Spiritual beings,
Struggling vainly to be fully human.

Partial truth.

Lucifer was walking with a friend,
Through the woods at Knott End.
Having a stroll this fine day,
Time off from tempting ways.

In the distance man and dog,
Ambling along without a care.
The man stops to bend down,
Picks up something with shining crown.

'That man's found a bit of truth',
The friend whispers in Satan's ear.

'I'm not perturbed', the Devil responds,
'I'll persuade him to make it absolute'.

Story

Listen carefully to a Story,
You'll never be the same again.
'Once upon a time.....',
The most enchanting words to begin.

Spiritual teachers of humanity knew its power,
A device to circumvent opposition to Truth.
Pictures given in parable form,
Not to be resisted by anyone.

Listen carefully to a Story,
You'll never be the same again.
Words worming their way into the heart;
Breaking down barriers to the Divine.

Even stories read for entertainment,
Can slip through barriers and explode,
Throwing light onto the meaning of life,
When least expected to.

Divisions.

'How much do your sheep eat each day? '
'Which ones, the white or the black? '
'The white'.
'About four pounds of grass each day'.
'And the black ones? '
'The black ones too'.
'How far a day do the sheep walk? '
'The white ones about four miles'.
'And the black? '
'The same'
'What about wool yield, how much per year? '
'Which ones, the white or the black? '
'The white ones'.
'About six pounds every year'.
'And the black ones? '

'The black ones too'.

'Tell me, why divide your sheep,
White and black each answer you give? '
'That's natural. The white ones are mine'.
'Oh I see. And the black? ' 'Them too'.

Taking sides.

To the football match his friends took him;
Protestant Punchers verses Catholic Crusaders.
The most ferocious battle of the season,
Would be Jesus' first match to see.

Crusaders scored first and Jesus cheered.
Punchers equalised and Jesus leapt with joy.
The man behind with puzzled frown tapped his back.
'Good man, which side are you rooting for? '
'Neither', was the answer, 'Just enjoying the game'.
Sneered the man to his neighbour, 'Hmm, another atheist'.

After the game Jesus' friends a question asked,
Did he never see reason for sides to take?
'But of course. All the time', he replied,
'People not Religions. Humans before the Sabbath day'.

Authority.

The Great Owl, a Centipede consulted,
'Oh wise one I have such pain in my legs'.
'The answer's simple', replied the Owl,
'A mouse become, reducing to four percent the pain'.

'What a great idea', cried the Centipede with joy.
'Please show me how to become a mouse'.
'Don't pester me on implementation,
Policy only I make in this house'.

Vindication.

The king was amazed at the sight;
Everywhere circles, bullet hole centred.

'Who's responsible for this skill? '
'How such marksmanship possible? '

A ten year old stepped forward;
The king could not believe his eyes;
Such a little fellow before him stood.
'How in the world do you do it, my child? '

'Easy as pie', the boy replied,
'It's not very difficult sire'.
'I just shoot first'.
'Then draw the circles after'.

'Conclusions first', said the Master,
'The premise can wait till later'.
'Arguing not to discover truth'.
'Vindication of presumed view'.

Seeing.

The old man was wet and muddy,
But explanation he had for his state.
The creek he crossed was getting wider;
Once jumped with leap, now can't make.

The Master commiserated with his pal;
He too knew how things were changing.
'Nowadays I realise whenever I stoop,
The ground was nearer for a younger me'.

'Perhaps my friend the problem we share,
Seeing things as we be, not as they are'.

Conceptualisation.

Scribbled rubbish was the memorandum;
Presented by the Secretary for his attention.
'I can't read this', complained the Manager.
The Secretary seemed unrepentant.

Again he asked for explanation.
The Secretary replied seriously,

'I couldn't understand the caller,
So wrote the message appropriately'.

Theology.

Greatest Theologian of his church;
Prolific output from Aquinas.
Thesis on thesis he did write,
On every subject with insight.

Interpretation and extension of sacred texts,
Believed derived from divine inspiration.
Accepted as dogma were his words;
Copied and spread throughout the world.

Suddenly his prodigious scratching ceased;
Pen lying idle on parchment sheet.
Worried Secretary was bemused;
Tom must be ill, was only excuse.

Months went by but still no work;
Angry frown screwed Secretary's brow.
Berating Thomas for lack of effort;
Took some time before came the answer.

'Some weeks passed I touched the divine,
Now I know, just straw the words of mine'.

Rituals.

Everyday service disrupted;
Meandering Ashram cat distracting them.
The wise guru had the answer,
Cat to be tied at Ashram prayer time.

Tethering of cats after Guru's death;
One following another as each expired;
Disciples saw it as crucial,
Guru's orders to be obeyed.

Centuries passed, learned texts produced;
Scholars interpreting Guru's command.

Great liturgical significance was the truth,
To tie up a cat at worship time.

Religious Fair.

My friend I took to the Fair;
A quest for truth, his desire.
Perhaps the religious displays
Would help in his path of faith

The Jewish stall cried out:
Yahweh is all-compassionate;
We the Jews the chosen people.
All humanity are his children,
But non as chosen as the Jews.

The Muslim stall displayed:
Allah is all-merciful;
Mohammed is his voice.
Salvation is given to all,
By listening to the prophet's call.

The Christian stall campaigned:
Christ's love is all-embracing;
No salvation outside the church.
Come and join us now,
Or risk damnation of your soul.

After the visit I asked my friend,
What he thought of religion's god.
Without hesitation came his words with sorrow,
'Bigoted, fanatical, cruel, not the truth I look for'.

Back home I said to god,
'Why put up with this farce? '
'Why allow them to tarnish your name? '
Sadly he replied, 'I do not believe in Fairs'.
'And I was too ashamed to be there'.

Gifts.

People assembled for the debate,

Representing every state.
Old, young, wise and humble;
To answer the question on the table.

'What's the greatest gift of life? '

'Love', shouts the romantic.
'Knowledge', says the scholar.
Religion, the choice of the theologian.
'Freedom', cries the liberal.
'Enlightenment', intones the mystic.
'Wealth', says the poor man.
'No, health', replies the sick.
'To be able to run', says the legless man.
'Eyes for me', enjoins the blind.
A wife for the lonely bachelor.
Babies for the childless couple.
Work for the unemployed.
Retirement for the toil stressed.
Composition for the musician.
Choreography, the dancer's dream.
Imagination, the author's wish.

A voice from the back joins the debate,
'To know myself, to understand who I am'.
People look at one another with puzzled frowns.
What fool on the door let in this clown?

Tony Pitman

How?

How is such little emotion possible?
Seemingly no response or reaction
Heart and mind in turmoil
Carry on as if nothing at all

How is such little emotion possible?
Relationship shattered by pent up feelings
Expecting friendship to continue
Carry on as if nothing at all

How is such little emotion possible?
So cold and unmoved by events
Almost as if heart not involved
Carry on as if nothing at all

How is such little emotion possible?
Are they buried deep or non-existent?
Just mechanical robotic motion
Carry on as if nothing at all

How is such little emotion possible?
Are they stirred but hidden from view?
Not exposed for abuse or ridicule
Carry on as if nothing at all

How is such little emotion possible?
Is it life experience for survival?
Learned to pretend nothing can affect them?
Carry on as if nothing at all

How is such little emotion possible?
Is this the reason for not finding love?
Years of searching without success
Carry on as if nothing at all

Tony Pitman

Images Of Nature

Kite.

Soaring high on wings golden brown;
Breast snow white, reflecting light;
Swooping silently in motion;
Taking prey whilst still in flight;

Not just one but many;
Gliding at different heights;
Stacked like planes awaiting landing;
Brahminy Kites fill the sky.

Some land in Palm Trees high,
Branches bow from bird's size.
She sits and sways with the motion;
Eagle eye watching all around her.

Crow flies in, sits beside her,
With a stare to frighten off.
Kite stays put, like queen on throne;
Crow no threat to this great bird;

Could easily knock him off his perch.
Crow gives up and squawks away;
Tried his best, to no avail.
Kite continues at her rest;
Swaying on her Palm Tree bed.

Time has come to take to air;
Just two wing flaps, off she soars.
Spreads her wind sail wings full space,
Warm air currents lift her with grace.

No words of mine can explain the scene;
Feel with heart, don't think with brain.
Called, "Bird of good omen" before Christ was born,
"Lucky faced one who loves the sky".

Crows.

Black shapes flying all around;
Croaking, croaking tuneless song.
Soaring with ease and flare;
The Crows have taken to the air.

Not much loved the world over;
Blamed for damage and plunder.
They survive shotgun and snare;
If you look you'll find them everywhere.

What is the secret of their success,
That makes them immune to harassment?
They look out for one another;
Their colonies are always together.

Asian Koel knows their worth;
Lays her eggs in Crows nest berth.
Even Koel chicks come out black,
So foster mother doesn't chuck them out.

Can man be taught by Crow's example,
To love, live and earn in harmony.
Or are we too proud to learn from a bird;
An ugly black one whose song is absurd.

Flowers.

Every colour grown in the sun;
Every shape of leaf and petal;
Every arrangement man can make;
Every inch of space they take;
Every vender eager to sell;
Every tourist waiting to see;
Flowers in Panjim's market.

Flowers not from abroad;
Flowers from dry paddy fields;
Flowers grown in fertile soil;
Flowers strung as neck garlands;
Flower heads to make displays;
Flowers that are short for vase;

Flowers long and elegant;
Flowers sent for St Valentine;
Flowers piled upon each other;
Flowers for adornment of people.

People busy everywhere;
People stood in wonder;
People squatting on their stalls;
People sowing with big needles;
People calling, "Buy from me";
People carrying big bangles;
People choosing for loved ones.

Every flower and people all,
Part of God's creation.

Sandpiper.

Water runs, then turns back,
Depositing sand in its track;
Tide line advances then retreats;
The sea is ebbing in timeless beat.

Three little birds stand on the edge;
Sandpiper, reflection and shadow;
Watching carefully as sea rolls out,
For tasty morsels gifted there.

Tries to judge depth of water,
To keep feathers dry, able to fly.
Legs like sticks with great power;
Motors at speed, blur to the eye.

Hops over ripples, waits with patience,
As sea deposits its treasure.
Nips in quick and grabs it up,
Before soft sand gives shelter.

Knows to run into the wind;
Tide line longer for tuck in.
Stands and waits as walkers pass,
Oblivious to Sandpipers task.

Little fellow's not perturbed,
They're only here short term.

Palm trees.

Thin as sticks reaching for the sky;
Feathery leaves, stretching out far,
Spread from the top like a crown,
Coconuts bunching all around.

Bent by winds at Monsoon time,
Still shoot upwards on their climb;
Dropping branches on their ascent,
Used for poor man's sleeping tent.

Always found in groups together,
Swaying in harmony, giant feathers.
Home for Squirrel, roosting Crows;
Perch for Kite and other birds.

Woodpecker's love to beat a tune,
Enticing out grubs and worms.
This slim giant, growing tall,
Is refuge and home for all.

Nuts which fall like a bomb,
Hit the ground, car, anyone;
Harvested by climbing man,
Just using tied feet and hands.

Coconuts, the fruit of the tree,
A hard nut to crack but nourishing;
Fresh milk, tasty to drink;
Flesh to make a thousand sweets.

A tree seen on many postcards;
Symbol of barmy beach paradise.
Bending over to shade from sun,
The Palm tree, good omen for everyone.

Egrets.

Big white bird flies in to land,
Neck and legs tucked in for flight;
Turns wings into breeze and glides;
Lands lightly, no hop or slide.

Neck shoots out, full extent;
Body slim and erect.
Bird all white wings in flight,
Stretched white duck when alight.

Takes slow, delicate strides,
Searching for grubs in their hide,
Or stands perfectly calm,
Waiting for food to pass by.

Often seen in groups together,
Herding cattle, shepherding hogs.
Tuffs pulled, soil disturbed,
Reveals treasures for the bird.

Evening roosting, time to discover,
Snow white blossoms filling bushes.
Egrets resting for the night,
By water hole till sunrise.

Flower power.

Little Daisies in the lawn
Staying small when grass shorn;
Clever, surviving man's assault,
Flowers for chain, costing nowt.

Dandelions drilling deep roots,
No tool invented to lift them out,
Ensuring little bits remain
For one o'clock in time's domain.

Buttercups waving from fields;
Enticing, yellow shining beams:
"Come over and lick my head,
Send you home to wet the bed".

Poppy seeds buried deep,
Patiently waiting to germinate.
Disturb the ground, up they pop;
Display a while, more seeds to drop.

Dog Daisies on motorway banks,
Rosebay Willow Herbs swelling their ranks.
Corydalis from seed on the winds,
Shepherd's Purse, gift of the Robins.

No need to spend fortune on flowers,
Nature provides glorious bowers.
Force open your eyes to a derelict site,
See flower power for the heart's delight.

A View.

Glaciers carved out the scene,
As they bulldozed down in a stream;
Glens and islands left in their wake;
All from compressed snowflakes.

What delicate touches their force left;
Great might and strength they possessed;
Producing such beauty as they melted away,
A living picture for eyes to survey.

Mountain ridges for clouds to hang on.
Lochs to let sea treasure wash in.
Highlands and islands too many to count,
Teaming with life that's colonised.

Not a picture to view just once,
Even a blink is a vision gone.
Light, shade and colour on the move;
Nature displaying all her plumage.

Cumulus wool rolling across the sky,
Obscuring peaks from the eye;
Casting shadows across Loch waters,
Producing dance as winds alter.

The scene's prolonged by Northern light,
Waking Eastern bright with the dawn;
Western glow dusk ends a day,
For the heart to ponder in its own way.

Nest box.

Nest box in spreading ivy hangs,
Waiting guests to pay their rent.
For years it's been in this spot;
Never chosen by passing Tit.

At last, a welcome sign,
Head bobbing in and out of hole.
Tiny Blue Tit on peg to perch,
Feeding her first brood of chicks.

Squeaking noises from inside;
Gaping beaks waiting to dine;
Hard work for parent Tits;
Multitude of mouths to satisfy.

Early feeding brings problems,
Morsels scarce in the garden.
Aphids yet to make appearance,
Main source of Tit's nutrition.

Will this be first time and last,
Tits make home in nest box?
Perhaps they'll come back now every spring'
A reminder that's when life begins.

Clouds.

Clouds drifting aimlessly;
Backdropp of blue to eternity.
Little islands of cotton wool,
Or strands connecting horizons up.

Clouds raging, black to threaten,
Causing flashes, clashing with thunder;

Emptying hail and water in torrents,
Cats and dogs raining metaphoric.

Clouds dense, low and still,
Clinging dewdrops from nose and chin.
Ceiling low and heavy hanging;
Ton on back, feet a dragging.

Clouds resting round mountain sides,
Ring the top, not to slide;
Gathering energy for the trip;
Wind gathers up and off they flip.

Clouds gone, disappeared,
Over the sea, sucking water in.
Sun free to wander the sky,
No clouds to jump, nowhere to hide.

Clouds asleep in western sky,
Cushioning sun, going down to lie.
Canvas of colours from red to gold;
Breathtaking display for the eye to behold.

The Wind.

Strong and fierce or gentle breeze,
The wind has many faces.
Turning windmills, pushing yachts,
Flattening harvests, causing havoc.

But far more than a physical force,
For man's use or to destroy,
The wind can stimulate the senses,
More than any other power existing.

The wind's touch stirs the memory,
Causing the most evocative feelings.
Just caressing the skin, lifting the hair,
Brings childhood sensations everywhere.

Why this power of the wind?
Is it an angel flapping wings?

God gently blowing to calm,
A reminder all are in his arms?

When life stagnates with spirits glum,
The wind can move us from the doldrums.
Like mariners trapped on still waters,
We're blown along to safe harbours.

Daffs.

Lines of flowers stretch down the road,
Bobbing heads with yellow faces;
Turned outwards to watch the traffic;
Visiting for a few weeks annually.

What do they think as we pass by;
Driving somewhere in our cars?
Do they remember last year's scene?
Is it the same annually?

Do they whisper to one another?
"There's that bloke we saw last year."
"Are you sure he looks much older? "
But they only see us annually.

Annually the Daffs appear,
Proudly proclaiming, "spring is here".
Their yellow heads lift the heart,
Bright as sunshine in a clear sky.

Not the Daffs of Wordsworth's time,
Short and stumpy, no higher than grass,
Man has made them have long stalks,
To be cut and placed in a vase.

We've planted them in road verges,
To give us colour on our journeys.
Put them in plant pots on patios,
On window ledges near plugholes.
Harvested them when still in bud,
Tied in bundles in a water butt.

Our yellow friends don't seem to bother,
No action of ours can stop their cycle.
Soon they'll go back to their slumber,
Preparing to come again annually.

Daisy.

White petal halo spreading round,
Golden yellow centre like a crown;
Set on stalks, straight or bent;
Flat leafed plant or is it a weed?

Daises flowering all through summer;
Shade or sun makes no difference.
Perennial native makes its home,
Spreads by root or seeds thrown.

A flower we take for granted,
Not protected as endangered species;
Carpets of them everywhere,
Giving pleasure to the eye.

Strange treatment of this flower;
Engineered to meet man's needs;
Given posh name to sell in pots;
Natural form is thrown away.

Little daisy takes it in his stride,
Growing in lawns and at road side;
Can adapt itself to all conditions;
Flowers tall, or low when lawn is mowed.

Dandelion.

Dandelions growing in the lawn,
Can't shift them no matter what I try.
Roots that burrow deep, deep down;
Pull at them, leave some behind.

No weed killer can make them go;
Always go brown, pretend to be dead;
Turn my back and look away,

Green leafs appearing once again.

I'll give up and leave them be,
They're in tune with Nature's harmony,
As much right to air as the grass,
Perhaps I should learn to love them.

Autumn leafs.

Thin gold shapes in the air,
Dancing to earth with flair.
Crinkly edges rustling on ground,
Blow together forming mounds.

The trees are shedding their cover,
Getting ready for winter slumber.
Finished the work of energy conversion,
Find place to rot the soil replenish.

The leafs have given final display,
Changing colour in autumnal way.
Green to red or golden brown,
Giving tree a glorious crown.

Trees stand proud in their finery,
Nodding heads setting foliage free.
Off they fly, no backward glance,
Their genes remaining for spring romance.

Flower power.

Little Daisies in the lawn
Staying small when grass shorn;
Clever, surviving man's assault,
Flowers for chain, costing nowt.

Dandelions drilling deep roots,
No tool invented to lift them out,
Ensuring little bits remain
For one o'clock in time's domain.

Buttercups waving from fields;

Enticing, yellow shining beams:
"Come over and lick my head,
Send you home to wet the bed".

Poppy seeds buried deep,
Patiently waiting to germinate.
Disturb the ground, up they pop;
Display a while, more seeds to drop.

Dog Daisies on motorway banks,
Rosebay Willow Herbs swelling their ranks.
Corydalis from seed on the winds,
Shepherd's Purse, gift of the Robins.

No need to spend fortune on flowers,
Nature provides glorious bowers.
Force open your eyes to a derelict site,
See flower power for the heart's delight.

Flying Spirits.

White, cream and orange tint;
Little blue ones, grey underneath.
Fluttering with no apparent pattern,
Alighting to feed on flower nectar.

Soaking in sun's golden rays,
Recharge battery for energy.
No concern for fuel pump prices,
Oil speculation not a priority.

Soars off to great height,
Soon disappears out of sight.
Returns with his mate,
To start dancing display.

Spiralling up and down;
Twisting, turning in unison.
Fly close but not to touch,
Teasing, testing the other's trust.

Delightful creatures residing with us;

Hard to believe they come from a grub.
Slimy and ugly, to the eye unsightly,
Producing these beautiful Butterflies.

Often thought to carry the spirit
Of loved ones no longer with us.
Appearing at times of stress,
A reminder that we're all blessed.

Webs.

Tangled thread round the face,
Fine as silk or thick as lace.
Spun by spider, different heights,
Trap for fliers passing by.

"Not you again spoiling my net."
"Can't you go by other path? "
"Back to work on a repair,
Just settled on corner chair."

Webs of every size and shape,
Vertical or horizontal plane.
Connected by alarm cord,
Rings a bell when prey caught.

Fine gauze of delicate weave,
Jewelled with dew drops or rain.
Necklace spanning tree branches,
Trap of death awaiting chancers.

Waterway.

Turn the corner, go under the bridge,
Scene opens up to lift the soul.
Horizon only limited by vision's strength,
Sense of space and space, God's essence.

Canal meanders along its way,
Now only conveying tourists on holiday.
Narrow boats hired for the week,
Chugging along a mooring to seek.

Towpath route for bike and foot;
Easy passage with no gradients.
People are friendlier in this place,
Relaxed and comfortable, away from rat race.

Huge white birds drifting along;
Mated for life, grey offspring behind.
Patrol their territory with elegant grace;
Look with disdain at dogs that race.

Blue flash at periphery of sight,
Disappears in bushes before identified.
Takes off in flight as approached;
Kingfisher guide leading the way.

Dive-bomber swoops then soars aloft;
Banks on climb for another sortie.
Twists and turns in its aerobatics;
Swallow showing off to passing admirers.

Signs are appearing of summer's end;
Leaves changing colour, dropping to ground.
Time for signets to spread their wings;
Swallows gaining weight for long journeys.

Not to despair at fading light;
Soon time for sleep through winter's nights.
Strength to replenish, extinguish fears;
All will come good when spring reappears.

Just a leaf.

Golden shower floating to earth;
Billowed by breeze making a twirl.
Fall in heaps light and airy;
Crunch together forming path for fairies.

Trees shaking free final dressings;
Time to rest from summer glory.
Season greens, emerald or pale;
Gilded golden before set to sail.

Walk under tree into raining leaves,
Tickling face and clinging to beard.
Feet disappearing in golden mound,
Disturbing leaf's rest as they settle down.

Apple tree almost completely bare;
Isolated fruits still hanging there.
Tree determined with baubles high,
Be first sign that Yule Time's nigh.

Invigorating perfume this time of year;
Champaign air to fill the lungs.
Farewell gift from leaves set free,
Those purifiers of air so we can breath.

Dancing light.

Dancing light on wave tops;
Flickering, glittering, never stops.
Thousands of mirrors matching the sun;
Never twice the same reflection.

Ocean expanding to the edge;
Endless reflectors stretch and stretch.
Signalling in some secret code;
Maybe to aliens in another world.

Mirrors dropped from outer space,
Relaying messages about human race.
Reports on wars and genocide;
Of heroes and heroines who improved life.

Fastest way to convey this mission;
Speed of light is the transmission.
Even at such a rapid rate,
Aliens just receiving news of ice age.

Sand holes.

Drill holes in sand like poker dots;
Left behind by ebbing tide.

Air holes for living creatures,
But what could fit this aperture?

Piece of fluff blows over sand;
Plugs hole then disappears down.
Has something sucked it in?
Perhaps to build nest for suckling.

Stand still and wait awhile,
See more fluff sucked down hole.
It can't be stuff coming off the sea;
It'd be too wet to blow so free.

Bend down for closer look;
Be patient don't rush things.
Then the dawning of what's afoot;
Bonsai crabs wearing hairy skirts.

Little Sparrow.

Little Sparrow, crumbs he seeks;
Hopping in and out of tourist's feet.
Just a morsel is all he needs;
Risking life for tit-bit feed.

This his patch for the season;
Booked this shack after permit seeking.
Takes his fill before he goes,
To family raise in the north.

Little Sparrow looks so frail;
Slim and sleek with long tail.
Adjusted to this alien world;
Off man's excess he has his fill.

Not his choice of habitat;
Fields and trees primary spot.
Needs must be so here he comes,
Bird-eye watching for any crumbs.

Sand.

Trillions and trillions of grains of sand,
Twix ocean and rock, the start of land.
Hard and ripply as tide recedes;
Then soft and fluffy, sink to the knees.

Sand for mixes to make concrete;
Sand for glass sold by the sheet;
Sand for play with buckets and spades;
Sand to time boiled eggs just laid.

Yellow sand with Minor's touch,
Turned to gold grains worth so much.
Castle turrets with water moats;
A material of priceless worth.

Sand for dunes and camel trails;
Sand to surround desert mirage;
Sand to reflect sun's burning rays;
Sand to fuel storms that rage.

Gritty sand sharp as diamonds;
Splintered stone and river sediment.
Heat retention, burning feet;
Dig deep enough reach Ausy State.

Sand so free and plentiful;
Beaches and beaches full of the stuff.
The further you move from the shore,
The cost of a bag rises more and more.

Early Daf.

Daf. finger pointing at sky;
Appearing early in December time.
Pushing prior to frost's appearance;
Green and firm like tip of spear.

Not just one but family group;
Naturalised over many years.
Bulbs not disturbed or moved;
Give glorious display every spring.

Next flowering there'll be difference;
My departure before buds open;
Left to start life in different place;
He'll not see me with his yellow face.

It'll not be my mower's grass cut;
Spraying his head with chaff and muck.
Not my shears trimming the edge;
Raising anxiety of chopped off head.

Will he notice that I have gone?
Perhaps we all look the same to him.
We're just people passing by;
Full of ego; what self pride.

He'll go on doing his thing;
Sleep in winter, flower in spring.
He's only aware of nature's rhythm;
Not distracted by dubious decisions.

The Loch.

Raindropp prism moving on the wind,
Refracting light for colour spectrum.
Rainbow travelling down the Loch;
Caressing water and bracken brown hilltops.

Comes to a stop to illuminate a spot;
Stage lighting beyond compare.
While it waits, perhaps to rest,
Another appears behind, as if in silhouette.

A magic switch in the sky is thrown;
The coloured lights are extinguished.
The clouds open to change the scene;
Dancing shadows replace the beams.

An angel delicately lifts the prism,
Moving it back to its origin.
A pot of gold is left behind;
The rainbow will return in time.

Now white horses racing on black turf;
The wind has changed the millpond into surf.
The Loch's displaying another facet,
Of the many from its repertoire.

Gulls gliding on air currents;
Shag's wings stroking horse's backs.
Boats bobbing, just pieces of cork;
Quarry ferry chugging men to work.

Things to wonder, lakes linked to oceans;
Tides ebbing and rising at moon's push and pull.
Waterways carved by glacial action;
Arrogant man thinks he's master now.

Calm descends to the Loch once more;
Low cotton wool ceiling is put in place.
Clouds hung on invisible chains,
Draped down hillsides, heavy with rain.

The view.

What a view right down to the sea,
Over land and trees sustaining life.
Fenced off in patches for farmer's work;
Barns and houses for shelter to give.

Lambs curiously inspecting their patch,
Looking for gaps to give way out.
Big wide world out there somewhere;
Time to discover how much we can share.

Sheep and swans gathered together;
Grazing or resting as if brothers.
Sheep are at home, this is their place;
Swans are visiting on their way.

On the calm sea ships at anchor,
Waiting for high tide to take them to port.
Cargo and people from distant shores;
To land at Heysham then on by road.

Along the horizon Lakeland peaks;
Uneven shapes against the sky;
Snow topped and craggy they rise and fall;
Clouds vying to be in picture as they drift by.

A view not to be complacent with;
Light and shade change it every day.
A living scene to give pleasures;
Nature kindly sharing her treasures.

White lines.

White lines mark out the field;
Painted with whitewash, so it seems.
Flash in the sunlight, glow at dusk; ;
Giant football pitches, a World Cup match.

Narrow ski runs for spring fun;
Imported from the Alps, Steve's home.
Planks and boards people ride.
Another gift from the countryside?

Trails for Fairies to skip and run;
Child's imagination set free to roam;
Stainless and pure as the lines;
Untainted by life's searching times.

Heavy perfume fills the air;
Carried on breeze over fields.
Carefully touch, beware of thorns;
Hawthorn edges with glorious crowns.

Pebbles.

Pebbles piled high on the shore;
Some imported, others at home.

Pebbles resting in warmth of sun;
Dry from tide, ebbled on the run

Pebbles of every colour and form;
Millions and millions in rippled mounds.

Pebbles to throw with arm that's strong;
Skim on water, bounce along.

Pebbles to last a thousand eons;
Grinding together, making sand to play on.

Pebbles to crunch under foot;
Walk with care or ankle bust.

Pebbles to form coastal defence;
Breaking waves on the attack.

Pebbles ignored by passers by;
They'll still be here long after our time.

Swifts.

Hundreds of swifts in the sky;
Swooping, soaring, flying high.
Pointed wings outstretched to glide,
Then tucked in for downward ride.

Feeding on insects disturbed by rain;
Drawn from leaves to become the prey.
Hovering in unruly mass;
Easy crop for this bird of class.

Suddenly they all disappear;
Moved on to another place.
Is there a scout surveying the scene?
Call to leader for flight path change.

Easy to envy this bird of grace;
Free to use its flight and pace.
All that space to roam and play;
Not tied down by man's rat race.

Pylon wires

Pylon wires seem thick today;
Lumpy and hairy in their girth.

Is it the light that deceives the eye?
Viewed from distance along roadside.

Approaching near the view is clearer;
Not black growth on the wires;
Thousands of Starlings in rows.
Crowded together shoulder to shoulder;

Lofty perch to avoid feet in mire;
On a journey, resting awhile.
Which way are they going, north or south;
Perhaps back to Russia for spring cavorting.

Silver Birch

Silver Birch sat in the corner;
Bare but elegant against open sky.
Delicate fingers radiate from branches
Hands droop gracefully silently weeping.
Knobbly trunk of pure silver,
Set against green of field behind.
Branches sprouting haphazardly,
From base to apex without man's design.

Wood

Crunch, crunch, crunching;
Frozen twigs and frosty ground;
Along the path through the wood;
Brambles still waiting a chance to grab.

Mist moisture seeping down trees;
At branch ends, frozen beads.
Dewdropp icicles suspended in space;
Petrified crystal with prism face.

The wood a place of wonderment;
Trees towering with bare elegance.
Branches spreading everywhere;
Forming shapes too complex to share.

Having difficulty speaking of this wood;

Words fail me, being inadequate.
Not for description, justice could not be done;
Need personal experience to be understood.

Fir tree

Pyramid nest box on the lawn;
Swaying in wind, still in calm;
Home to many species of birds;
Doors and windows at every turn;
Camouflage place for birds to hide;
Evergreen Fir tree standing proud.

Butterfly

Butterfly dancing through little orchard;
Bonsai Swallow with flying skills;
Twisting, turning, sails fast beating;
Nectar seeking on sun blessed wings.

Kiss of the maker

Healing, soothing, comfort giving;
Stroking, caressing, always forgiving;
Source of life to all creation;
Sun's in its heaven, the kiss of our Maker.

Blossom

Flakes of pink tinged snow drifting down;
Twisting, twirling in a cloud.
Blown by sea wind arriving off shore;
Gathering in delicate mounds to lie on floor.

Shapes and patterns in sun and shade;
Geometric forms; what template as aid?
Huddled together for last embrace,
Before puffing breeze dispatches to space.

Wafer thin, delicate to touch;
Stick to finger; on shoe form crust.
Enter flat through tiny gaps;

Say, "Hallo" to wrinkly chap.

Blossoms have completed spring's task;
Lifetime of glory in just weeks now passed.
Attracted pollinators to complete the work;
Setting the fruits for summer time growth.

Misty

Hazy blue mist lying on ground;
Bluebell carpets been laid down.

Delicate blossoms of pink and white;
Cherry trees bursting to glorious life.

Sun now rising high in it's sky;
Late evening before on sea it lies.

Bird's song clearer, more in tune;
Nest sites seeking to raise a brood.

First Martins and Swallows patrolling sky;
Advance party, soon more will arrive.

Last of lambs have fled the field;
Muck spread and rolled, cows to appear.

Visitors

Summer visitors have appeared;
Vivid marked Goldfinches in a tree.
Normally seen together in pairs;
Strangely there's three, a branch to share.

Not for long this odd number last;
Scrap breaks out for cock dominance.
Soon battle settled, one flies off;
A pair remaining, did hen make the choice?

Garden pond has become a new home,
Two ducks enjoying swim and a roam.
Are they resting before onward trip?

Energy building from families bread bits.

Tame or wild, as their want;
Best of both worlds in this pond.
Relishing the comfort as new found pets;
Free to fly off to next rest spot.

Sparrow scrap

Screeching, scrapping, chasing around,
Sparrows fighting for the crown.
Settling pairings for spring's approach;
Young buck's challenge for cock of the north.

Wrinkles still standing their ground;
No desire for expulsion from flock.
Nature's way, the strong will survive;
Young for old the species to thrive.

No Bird Commission to determine fate;
Sell home or insurance take.
No sitting drugged in time-warped rows;
Better on back, turned up toes.

Orchestra

Orchestra was in town today;
Dressed in their finery, tails and all.
All done up in stiff white shirts;
Necks held ridged in collars starched.

Sorting out their seats and places.
Wind section here, stings over there.
Soon the audience will be assembled,
Here to witness last night at the proms.

Players settle and compose themselves;
Calming nerves and filling lungs.
Performance strains under control.
Then without warning, Great Tits fly away.

Night flight

The night is still, mist hangs low;
Orange glow of street lamp subdued.
Birds silent, sheltering somewhere.
Dog in the distance howls to the night.
Squeaking wing sound from above,
Heralds Swans flying passed nearby.
Search the sky but too dark to see their form.
Where are they going in such bad visibility?
If they are migrating what guides their way?
Darkness and mist obscures the ground;
Cloud cover hides moon and stars.
What means do they use to navigate?
Some built in compass moved by magnetic waves?

Robin

Neighbourhood Robin visited today;
Interested to know, what goes on?
Who's this old wrinkly working my patch?
I'll hang about and see what digs up.

Jenny Wren flitters about; little mouse with wings.
Quick dash from bush to bush, then disappears;
Pretending she's invisible to the human eye,
But her rapid movements give her away.

Robin really thinks he owns the patch;
Chases Tits and Finches come for a scratch,
But no affect on Genie Wren;
Still flitting about without a care.

Season change.

Winter's arrived early this year,
Snow and frost, temperature zero.
Coughs and sneezes at every turn;
Humans adjusting to bleak season.

Trees stripped bare of summer dressing,
Opening views to far horizon,
Elegant forms of delicate shapes,

Decorating landscape in nature's way.

Calls of birds on the wing,
Flocks in lines migrating.
Flying north or to warmer south,
Inbuilt compass guiding their path.

Air that's crisp and fresh,
Fills the lungs, swells the breast.
Vision unimpeded, crystal clear;
Mind can't absorb all that's here.

Marigolds.

Once upon a summer's day;
Yellow Marigolds came out to play.
Full bobbing heads, petal filled;
French variety, visiting still.

Crowded together for company;
Holding hands and having a chat.
Smiling at folks passing by;
Proud of their form, lifting their hats.

Martins.

Martins filling the air;
Playing, feeding, testing their skills?
Zigzag paths but never collide;
Silent in flight, shadowy forms.

Flapping wings to gain height;
Diving and ducking on wings spread.
Perfectly aerodynamic, nature's design;
Efficient and graceful at the same time.

Martins at rest having a chat;
On telephone wires they're sat.
Nodding and calling to their mates;
Squabbling 'Sparrow wrangles' not their way.

Visitors from south of equator;

Residing with us for the summer.
Breeding and rearing the next generation.
Why such a long trip? The question.

Star Racer.

Straining for air to reach the sky;
Shoots of green springing to life.
Seedpods swelling with their loads,
Preparing to open for winds off shore.

Star Racer coming to life;
Favourite grass on my site.
So slender and elegant in its shape;
In another life, a dancer had been.

Starved of adequate water and light,
Still produces wonderful sight.
Adversity cowering lesser species,
Not to conquer a determined spirit.

Fruits.

Blue bulbs spread over the trees;
Decorations of late summer scene.
Babbles strategically placed;
In groups or singularly spaced.

Summer fruits for taste bud delights;
For pots of jam or fruit salads.
Damsons ready for harvesting;
So many, an excess of family needs.

Rose.

Expressions to describe the glory of a rose?
No words exist to do it justice.
Colour and shape hard to express;
Fragrance quintessence beyond explanation.

Evocative flower with such power;
Symbol of romance and gory wars.

English rose proudly proclaimed;
Flower found throughout the world.

Late bloomer standing out,
Refuses to believe summer's over.
Proud and elegant in its form,
No need for bower company.

Self assured it boldly proclaims,
Confident in its individuality.
Still gives its colour to the scene,
Its brother's petals strewing the floor.

What lies at the core of such belief?
Unabashed by its lonely stance.
No want for fellow confirmation,
To follow the rest is not its thing.

Morning glory.

Pink tinted puffballs in the sky
Angels awakening where they lie
Rising sun makes them glow
Look quickly or miss the show

So much of nature's beauty to see
If eyes are used as they should be
Especially the sky displays so much
Lift burdened head and look up

See the glory we've been gifted
Let the heart feel uplifted
Move the mind from the unimportant
Be aware of every moment

Evocative image

Evocative image of March dusk
Looking west towards setting sun
Sky light giving bright background
For images of bare tree forms

Oh for the skill to paint this scene
Captured digitally on microchip
Painting could convey the feelings
Triggered by such atmosphere

Mystic mist

Mystic mist above the ground
Clothing trees with woolly gowns
What secrets do you hide?
What apparitions will arise?

Eerie cloud fallen to earth
Tinged at edges with pink girth
Heavy raindrops sat at rest?
No, it's angels on a fag break

Signs of spring

Early March and spring's awakening
Flowering shrubs show sproutings
Heralding colour to burst forth
To greet arrival of swallows

Gloom of winter lifting
New life of spring awaiting
Lambs already prancing about
Soon warmth will lift the spirits

Surveying

Hair swept flat and sleeked back
Jet black with shinning lights
Core held high, posture straight
Haughty look with piecing eyes

Stands so proud looking round
Imposing figure with this stance
Occasionally moves to new position
Assessing surroundings within vision

Maybe a planner on a survey

Maybe under covered man on a mission
Then a giveaway, bright yellow beak
Blackbird seeking nest site for mate

Rare visitor

White fluff bundle caught in branches
Stray sheep wool rolled in ball shape
Standing out as bare tree dressing
Decoration prior leafs sprouting

Closer look brings surprise
Scarce Snowy Owl, daylight hunting
Adult male almost entirely white
With delicate sparse brown flecking

Rare visitor this far south
Normally found in Scottish highlands
Must have heard of our rabbit family
Waits for dinner to feed his appetite

Primrose

Little primroses in bright picture
Early bloomers for our pleasure
Small, insignificant as a plant
Such a range of colours their spectrum

Little primroses prolific bloomers
Many months displaying their glory
Crinkled leafs and grubby appearance
Painted bright hues their flowers

Little primroses gathered together
Always as groups in family setting
Normally yellow is their wild state
Man's engineering increased the range

Little primroses in splendid isolation
Don't usually mix with other species
Even when planted with new friends
Predictably finish up alone eventually

Sun

Sat in the sun, a little lunch
Guitar music playing low
Forget the jobs bringing toil
Can be left till the morrow

Caressing, relaxing, smiling sun
So warm and comforting its love
Bringing light of such intensity
Little wonder ancients worshipped it

Wish I could look into its face
See the energy generated there
Wonder at its size and elegance
Driver of all life in existence

Just one of many stars
Populating our universe
Will one day collapse and die
Like all life its destiny

Golden orb

Golden orb sinking to rest
Settling in to cosy nest
Trees straining to watch the view
Witnesses of scene spectacular

Orange tints spray the sky
Tapering upwards to yellow tone
An artist's dream for crayon or paint
But how do justice to coloured scene?

Hawk

Dark shape of Hawk at early light
Gliding over field wings outstretched
Eagle-eyed surveying scene below
Searching for movement showing prey

Effortlessly he traces every inch
Conserving energy using the breeze
At last he lands on tree branch
Here to rest before starting again

Once more he takes to the air
Now circling over selected spot
Down he swoops silently
Too far to see what he's caught

Two Crows approach from nowhere
Dive-bombing Hawk still on ground
Up he soars and makes escape
Pursued by Crows out of their territory

Perhaps the Crows use the Hawk
His hunting skills their reward
Let him spot and kill the prey
Return and eat when chased away

Chaffinch

Fluttering, fluttering, up and down
Touching, parting, as if in dance
Resting a while on a branch
Take to the air, resume romance

Cock the leader of the motion
Hen resists but doesn't fly off
Spring routine of dating pair
Courtship ceremony of mating

Maybe new to the game
Perhaps a pair of longstanding
Shape and speed suggest young
Both dressed in attractive finery

Hen all coy, pretending disinterest
Cock's action bordering aggression
Ritual imbedded in DNA
She the temptress, he impulsive

Cock believes he's in charge
Leading the wooing with panache
Hen's demeanour suggests compliance
But in the end, she'll decide

Visitor

Flutter tap, flutter tap
Picture window under attack
Flying object up and down
Little Sparrow forcing entry

What's attracting the little chap?
Surely not to rob my pad
Maybe not attempting ingress
Resting grubs being his target

Spiders hiding in corners
Prey for aerial assault
Will the reward for hunting
Be bruises on his spout?

The Swan

What a magnificent creature the Swan is
So elegant and regal in its finery
Confident in Nature's place
King and Queen of all the birds

Every species has its champion
Unchallenged ruler of the pack
Who can deny for plants it's the tree
For those with four legs the elephant must be

What of those creatures walking on two legs?
"Man", is the cry, who else could it be?
Of course it's man, there's no contest
What else could kill so effortlessly?

Tightrope

Tightrope walker doing tricks

Keeping balance without a stick
Confident with such ability
Stops to survey all about him

Stands proud, chest held high
No crouching in fear of fall
Not disturbed by swaying rope
Over learnt skill to the fore

Acrobat with physical advantage
To be copied at your peril
If this fellow falls off string
Glides away on spread wings

Dawn

Something special about early morn
Magical passing to light from dark
Gentle stillness permeates the air
Conveying the power of new birth

Trees whisper when stirred by breeze
Or raindrops pass onward messages
Dawn chorus begins to sing
Tuneless songs muffled by leaves

Daybreak opening the door
New life for games and toil
Energy at crest of its peak
Batteries recharged by night sleep

Man will soon despoil the mood
Noise of chatter, grinding machines
Cars conveying grim commuters
Herdsman gathering cows for milking

Nature looks on with amused smile
Headless little ants running wild
Distracted by nonessentials of life
Will still bless them with early morn

Bye bye Swifts

Swifts are packing up, going home
Fed up of weather, lack of grub
Rain and wind stops bugs flying
Difficulties feeding, raising fledglings

Each year their numbers reducing
Flying all that way from Africa
Other places now breeding grounds
Our sky void of aerobatic clowns

We'll be poorer for their absence
Filling the heavens on gliding wings
Sailing over Martins and Swallows
Sadly they may disappear too

Cowboy builders

Cowboy builders just moved in
Constructing shack in bedroom tree
Hustle and bustle this rushed work
Late start on annual breeding road

End of July before they began
Weather to blame or busy frolicking?
Perhaps parents kicked them out
Maybe mortgage late in coming

Cherry tree a strange choice
Firs normal preference for this bird
Now a scarcity of such abodes
Jason savagely chopped them all

Pair finally organise the labour
One bringing the other moulding
Fellow not allowed to "bill and coo"
House first then romance to follow

Male does all the carrying-fetching
Female artistry needed for dressing
Twigs and straw delivered to site
Hen makes choice, throws muck aside

Birdseye view through my window
Watch Nature's way unfolding
Will their union see task completed?
More Collared Doves to grace garden

Then the rearing

Left here on my own
Always the same this time of year
Eggs needing incubation
For me the job as usual

Cock's performing necessary duties
Like most species this female work
Off he's gone on important affairs
Always occurs when young to care

What's happened to emancipation?
Stuck at home with much education
Nothing changed over time
Rearing work still all mine

Migration

Thin dark cloud on horizon
Oscillating wave is it's motion
Travelling fast on southern trail
Occasional black dots break away

Sky calm, clouds still at rest
Smoke train transverses onwards
Eastern rising sun smiles upon
Lighting path for navigation

Stream sucked along by magnetic pull
Aided by tail wind from Angel's puff
Warmer summer climes the attraction
Be first to arrive for abode selection

V-shape formation disappears
Air again clear of activity

Heavenly highway free for traffic
Ready for next dark cloud passing

A walk

Majestic trees filling the air
Arms stretched to reach out far
Delicate forms tracing together
Intertwining their graceful patterns

Strength and gentleness they display
Nature's majestic power conveyed
Timeless their need to feel and touch
Teasingly, playfully enjoying the pleasure

Stone pathway laid out below
Chips and pebbles packed together
Yielding to body weight applied
Easing passage of drawn traveller

Gentle slope inviting descent
Perfectly easing body's joints
Floating experience walking on air
Gliding down to kissing-gate

Artistically created from forest wood
Blending effortlessly with branches above
Criss-cross of limbs married together
Designed with love by cabinet maker

Place to rest and dawdle a while
Sense the atmosphere, be aware
Let the trees caress and closely enfold
Shush. Listen quietly to what they whisper

"Now forever believe dreams can be grasped";

Reluctantly turn to continue journey
Leaving behind paradise picture
Exhilarating experience never to forget
Deep in the heart memory forever treasured

Tony Pitman

Impressions Of India

Surrounded by sights and sounds,
Foreign to my narrow mind.
Have tried to record the affect on me,
With the aid of this little diary.

No judgement intended in what I say,
Just impressions on the way.
What was stirred in my heart,
When I could force ego aside.

I am no wiser from this experience;
If anything, more confusion reigns.
The passage of time no answers bring,
Just more questions to add to list.

One thing learnt on the way,
So little I know for my many years.

The Beach.

Flags of parasols on beach;
Sun kissed sky goes on forever;
Surf rolls in endless motion;
Soft sand seeping, toes spreading;
Cool breeze from the sea,
Allowing footprints on the shore.

Bodies lying everywhere,
Sun beds, floor, easy chairs;
Pure white to glowing crimson
Burns stencilled in tee shirt patterns;
Plying with tattoo attractions.

White toothed men serving drinks;
Sellers, fruit, bags of trinkets;
Children with tin plates performing;
Beggars bowing, hands joining.

Sun shines on and isn't moved,

By ants activity on its earth.
Beach was here prior to man,
A place for sea to dump sand;
Now happy to provide pleasure,
For working man at leisure.

Customer care.

Man comes in with wife and son,
Look at bags to purchase one.
Boy has girl friend left behind,
Needs present, show still on mind.
Man not happy with the mission;
Stamps about with much aggression.

Woman smiles at son's selection,
"Nice, I'd have that one in my collection".

As is custom, time for price haggle;
Man steps forward with macho face,
"How much payee for the bag? "
"Seven fifty rupee";, is replied.

"What for crap like this? "
"Seven hundred, cash from hip".
"That's all I'll give for shit like this".

The attacked seller does not react,
"The price for that bag is seven fifty".

Party leave shop with man in hurry,
Slams door bang shut in his furry.
No bag to show for his efforts;
Bad manners no part of haggle.

Seller has no profit from deal
But who can price calm dignity.

Mapsa market.

Noise and throngs everywhere;
Rules for driving, no one cares.

Tut Tuts ply with cars and cows,
For room to mow people down.

Come to market for watch repair;
Boy carries bag with haughty air.
Help Mamma, Poppa, find their needs,
Knows every seller, every shoppee.
"Hallo there", from every quarter;
Men and women looking to barter.

Fruit and veg from this fertile land;
Cloths and shoes in big mounds;
Tins and pots, rope coiled round;
In shops and stalls, on the ground.

Vast range of colours for materials;
Silks and cottons, polyester;
Cut to length, then to measure,
For cousin make a thing to treasure.

Time to go home with goods of the day;
Hail Tut Tut chap, little to pay.
Looks poor man with no money;
Sleeps under tin roof with his honey.
Feel sad at Tut Tut man's plight,
Give big tip when we alight.
He reacts with toothless grin.
In return gives business card.
If we need Tut Tut at all,
Give his mobile phone a call.

Ocean.

Arabian beauty, ebb and flow.
Horses riding, high as snow.
Peaks and troughs, warm and salty.
Powerful, gentle, mighty, haughty.

Water that brought Romans here,
Now cools sunburn seekers.
Herbs and spices were the pull.
Now, easy living and low prices.

Monsoon winds blew Latins in,
Now it's planes causing a din.
The ocean cares not, it has no ego;
It knows its place within creation.

On the horizon, big ships at anchor,
Loading ore from river tankers.
Humans come and humans go,
Leave no impression on ebb and flow.

Kashmir man.

Traders of from long ago;
Merchants linking East to West;
Bartering in the needs of both;
Kashmir man knows the best.

Tall and handsome, chiselled features;
Teeth that shine, smile that pleases;
Knows his customers so well;
Realises product is himself.

Carpets and jewels are now his trade;
Not by camel, more by plane.
Persia not his main supplier;
Teaming tourists now his buyers.

Once it was the Khyber Pass,
That saw his goods go to and fro;
Now the shawls come in from China,
On their way to Stanlow.

Kashmir man does not care,
Goods from here going there;
He will always have profession,
Knowing love of possessions.

But beware of technique,
When enter into shoppee.
Years of experience are his forte.
He's not happy till sale is made;

Will mix personal with trade.

Gems are perfect, price is fair,
Just for you because he cares,
Make it difficult to leave shoppee,
No want to hurt new buddy.

Bazaar.

Ground floor, jewels, handbags,
Watches, glasses and dresses;
Counter for receipts to pay,
By card, cash, anyway.
Pretty girls to give assistance,
Young men in ties for direction.
First floor more dresses and shirts;
Things for tots, shoes and skirts;
Leather goods, cameras, magic tricks;
More pretty girls at back and call;
To help their aim, no task too small.

Make your purchase, get invoice;
Goods wrapped, ready at the door.
Air conditioning keeps out the heat;
To shop in comfort is a treat.

Beggars, with children wait outside;
Hands stretched out for a bite.
Shoppers step out and pass them by;
Believe the story, they've come by car.

Contrast of India in one spot;
Lots of people money to shop;
Outside, waiting, those with not.
Bombay Bazaar shows human race;
Money and beggars, face to face.

Peanuts.

Children running through sun-beds;
Newspaper cornets in their hands;
Filled with peanuts from Mapsa market;

Came by bus to make a profit.

"Mamma, Poppa, have a taste",
"Very fine nuts, no rubbish".
"Made no sale all day long".
"Get in trouble when back home".

If no sale still have a chat;
Easy smiles, soon joke back.
This endeavour more than selling,
Like kids all over, its adventure.

Card seller.

David limps through the sand,
Dragging leg to stomp it down.
Gruelling work as sand gives way,
Progress slow but to task stays.

Occasionally he comes to a stop
And leans on leg that wont hop;
Not to rest but for savour,
Goods on offer to sun bather.

Book of cards he shows with pride;
Greetings with leaf outside;
Beautiful in colour and shape;
Money raised for orphanage.

Most shake their heads, do not want;
Others look away in embarrassment.
David struggles off through the sand;
Just another seller, time on his hands.

Ingos.

Different tongues, different faces;
Multilingual sellers put through their paces.
Different goods, different offers;
Seller, buyer haggle to fill the coffers.

Tibetans sat in calm dignity;

Indians chasing possible buyer;
Ex-hippies staring at the moon;
German landlord site acquired.

Lec and a half, pitch for season;
Six months to make a killing.
Some will earn in one night;
Others some day, God willing.

"Look at my stall, no need to buy".
"You first customer, bring me luck".
"How much you pay for that in bag? "
Tricks of the trade to earn a buck.

Night falls and lights come on,
Changing site to fairground scene.
Enter music group, people dance;
Places to eat, sit and dream.

Saturday at Ingos more than a market,
A place with unique reality.
The world meeting at one spot
And trading with no fatality.

Passing by.

A dead man was wheeled passed the desk,
Layed out and poorly dressed;
Through people waiting for a date,
For health checks whilst on holiday.

The man was uncovered, eyes open,
On a stretcher pushed by porters.
Western eyes turned away,
From a sight difficult to convey.

Why shy at the face of death,
One commonality of the human race?
Was it death, or the man's state,
That turned heads to look away?

What right had I to my new eyes,

That money had bought in surprise?
When here a man at life end,
Possibly through no money to spend?

Not to comment on quality of life;
This man may have reached enlightenment;
Knew not to judge by material worth,
Spirit the master from his birth.

So why discomfort at the sight?
My state could be for pity more.
The man had gone to meet his master,
Free from pain into eternity.

Here a man not known but known;
Opportunity gone to learn from him;
Knowledge that could open hearts;
That's the loss that all death brings.

Day at seaside.

Pile of shoes a mountain high;
Cloths stripped off and thrown aside;
Boys and girls, young and old,
Are having day off on seashore.

Laughter fills the air,
As people run everywhere;
Along flat sand into the sea;
Playing like children in joy of spring.

Handball and cricket are played;
Girls with demeanour sit in shade.
Young men queue to have a ride,
On water bikes standing by.

Little games of gambling seen,
Gathering crowds with glee;
Soon pack up and move off,
When possible policeman turns up.

Young men and women with big grins;

Old whiskered men, wives with chins.
Courting couples, arm in arm;
Young men walking, holding hands.

All enjoying sea and breeze;
Travelled on bus, long way, for these.
Simple pleasures to fill the heart;
A privilege to watch, more to take part.

Taxi.

White vans with sliding doors;
Sit three in back, taking four;
Ten a penny on every corner;
Too many licensed by back handers.

Taxi men from all over,
Come for season, earn money.
Some own taxis, others employed;
Vying for people out for a walk.

Price is haggled with customer;
Rates high before tan begins.
As holiday progresses prices are lower;
Tourists wiser as going browner.

More than a trip from A to B,
Contains excitement and mystery.
If driver swaps shirt during ride,
He's out of area, should be elsewhere.

Knows best exclusive white beach;
Cousin has art shop within reach.
Can be hired for the day;
Willing to wait, if you pay.

Temples, plantations, all on his list;
Washing elephants, not to be missed.
More than a drive, a tourist guide.
Man with taxi knows it all.

Standard of driving hit and miss;

Depends more on temperament than conditions.
Some who think only, racing car,
Arrive no quicker than those with care.

Taxi adorned, little statue or temple,
Depending on historical influence.
Rubber snakes swing from mirror,
Obscuring clear view for driver.

Taxi ride is a must,
For all who visit these shores.
Not just to get round and about,
But experience local colour.

Festival.

Drums and trumpets out of beat;
Folk dressed up, walking in heat;
Carrying shrine between two poles,
Covered with flowers and symbols.

Procession stops and sets load down;
People gather from all around.
Food and money are placed on shrine;
Some taken off on other side.

Music plays on, people dance.
Cacophony of sound abounds.
Men, women, children of all age,
Join the scene to make a stage.

Tourists look on with Western eyes.
Cynicism in clouded minds.
Just a local native custom,
Clung to for hope, like opium

These poor people know no better,
Lacking our real sophistication.
Where's their wealth and academia,
Which would end this superstition?

Dear God, what have I lost,

When I only judge by material cost?
With eyes that only feed the brain,
Closing the heart to possible awareness.

Can't I see the worth of our none stop progress;
Only measuring happiness by degrees and profit excess?
Stop watch and try to learn,
See what the heart really yearns.

Travelling orange.

Men dressed in flowing orange robes;
Sometimes in groups, others alone.
Fine beards and sparkling eyes;
Varying age, new or wise.

They carry a stick or bag on back;
Faces painted or maybe chalked.
Orange colour predominates;
Flashes bright as they walk.

Often seen with elephant,
Driven from top by man in white.
Will stop for tourist photograph,
Inviting group to have a ride.

Local temple is their base,
Where all will stop for night's rest.
Elephant to eat huge heap of food,
Men to sleep in makeshift tent.

Why have these groups come so far;
Hundreds of miles from out of state?
They are here in tourist season;
Is ready money the reason?

Elephant ride or photograph,
Will cost quite a lot of cash.
Money needed for elephant feed?
Why come so far just to eat?

Maybe cost is like a tithe,

Placed on local economy;
Upkeep of temples, feeding of staff;
Contribution from tourists.
Fair enough.

New beginnings.

What brings folk to a distant land;
Different in culture, strange in sound;
Leaving family and friends behind,
To set up home, late in life?

Are they economic migrants in reverse,
Increasing worth of pension they've earned;
Using their savings from UK,
To live more comfortably in India?

Are they people returning home,
To find the place where they were born;
Who'd left these shores for lots of reasons,
Now to return in life's last season?

Are they folk who love the sun,
Who've holidayed here with lots of fun;
Think that life can always be that;
Sold up home and bought a flat?

Are they folk with lofty ideas,
Who think their standing will improve,
With big money compared to local wages,
To lord it up over customs ageless?

Are they attracted by pace of life,
Where appointments made by head nod;
Where next Tuesday means any day
And any day is someone's festival day?

Are they attracted by ceremonies shared,
Christians and Hindus coming together;
Can't say where one starts, one ends;
Marked by mutual respect and tolerance?

Are they drawn to welcoming arms;
Out stretched to all, especially in need;
To rub shoulders with Tibetans and others,
Needing shelter when fleeing oppression?

Are they pulled by nature calling,
Where birds fill the air in formation;
Butterflies bigger than Humming birds;
All size King Fisher's digging in dirt?

Are they bewitched by fields of rice,
Three crops possible due to Monsoon;
Fertile land that feeds a Nation;
Variety of crops in rotation?

Why not put off by red tape,
That frustrates and makes you wait;
Where maximum employment is the aim,
Not automated systems with no name?

Why not put off by traffic chaos,
Where cars, buses, Tut Tuts and bikes,
Fight for their space on the road,
Amid people and cows, the odd elephant?

Why not put off by daily power cuts;
Air conditioning, washing machine, all off?
Not same problem for local labourers,
Holes in tin roof, fire in doorway.

Why not put off by flyers and crawlers,
Mosquitoes at dusk, ants all day?
Difficult to grasp Hindu belief,
All of creation is sacred.

Why not put off by early callings,
Bread boy's bike horn, fish man's cry?
Everybody asleep in the afternoon,
Except mad dogs and Englishmen.

Why not put off by sight of poverty,
Children begging, rubbish sorting?

One legged man with hand outstretched,
Blind man led by wife and stick.

Why not put off by obvious disparity,
In wealth and possessions of inhabitants?
Pale skin men driving four by fours;
Darker women and children digging roads

Why not put off by open bribery;
Hand that's greased delivering early?
Police who act if right price paid;
Custom back handers to look away.

What's the answer to these dilemmas?
Why still come by the plane load?
One thing is certain in this Nation,
There's an openness to their situation.
No masks or pretence nor real ignorance.
They're open to life in all its forms,
Not living a lie - our norm.

Emporium.

Off to Mapsa to buy material,
For jacket and dresses made by tailor.
Shop full from floor to ceiling,
With bales of cotton, all appealing.

Assistants all eager to please;
Roll out the cloth with expert ease.
No bale can't be found,
Soon we have a great mound.

Patterns and weaves in variety;
Mind in a whirl with the artistry.
Too many colours, impossible to name.
How do they manage, no two the same?

Is all this produced in this fair land,
In thousands of villages or robot hands?
Or imported from overseas,
China most probable?

Shopkeeper not impressed by notion.
All Indian cloth in his emporium;
The finest produced in the world.
Well he would say that, wouldn't he?

Decisions are made, cloth purchased;
Cut to length, folded and parcelled.
Leaving shop but path blocked;
Shop man wants to show silk stock.

Vulture man.

Rubber Vulture swinging on string,
Tied to mirror, flapping wings.
Driver bent forward over wheel,
Specs like bottle bottoms, can't see a thing.

Races towards road speed humps;
Goes up fast, down with bump.
Doesn't look right, left or ahead;
Drive straight on, hope for best.

Fallen into same trap again;
Driven by eye doc's Vulture man.
Always the same after appointment,
Waiting outside, taxi door open.

Tried to pretend, hadn't seen him there;
Quick round corner for getaway.
Never another taxi in sight;
Stuck again with ride of fright.

No way is he driving us home;
Last time we finished up on road;
Couldn't understand a word said;
So got out and walked the rest.

Got fellow to interpret our desire,
Coffee Café Day in Mapsa centre.
Bobbing head does not confidence raise,
Know best we'll get is market place.

Vulture man haggles strange way,
Starts low price then increases pay.
Never mind, just get in;
Grip the seat and try to grin.

Mapsa market as expected;
Tap on shoulder, achieved objective.
No tip, quick get out, cross the road,
Recovery drink, Tut Tut home.

Time to ponder, is there a link,
Between taxi man and eye clinic.
No matter what time of day,
Vulture man is looking for prey.

Perhaps doc PN has special phone;
Ring uncle, take patient home.
All part of service they provide;
Test new eyes with scary ride.

Deadly peril.

Flock of parrots flying in,
Land to feed, chattering.
Camouflaged green, disappear;
Bobbing heads just to be seen.

Joy to witness but be alert,
The time of day when they alight.
Dusk is near with the parrot arrival
And with that comes deadly peril.

Bred in stagnant Monsoon water,
Mosquitoes are rising for nightly slaughter.
Insignificant creatures, hard to see
But carrying our greatest enemy.

Malaria, biggest killer of man;
Rampant in most tropic areas;
Eradication has proved impossible.
Mosquito survives and flourishes.

Goa, with all its natural beauty,
Marked bright pink on map of cases.
Wealth and prosperity no difference make,
Here Malaria most likely in India.

? ?

Walk off beach after day in sun;
Enjoyed beds, drinks and grub;
Warm sea swim, cooling breeze;
Along paved path for taxi.

Big signs advertising shack delights;
Karaoke, barbeque, firework nights.
Tempting you back for evening time,
Spend more money, drink more wine.

But signs hold another message,
In their shadow lie resters.
Men, women and children sat on ground,
In shade of sign out of burning sun.

Children, bare foot in dirty rags,
Run alongside, hand moving to mouth.
Just a few steps then they stop,
Have moved into another patch.

Now turn of one-armed man;
Gives greeting, holds out hand;
Continues with toothy grin,
Until pass on to next one.

Man sat on plastic bag,
Peg leg lay beside at rest;
Greeting sign warmly waved.
Man is asking for your aid.

Sometimes pass over change from bar;
At others, look away and ignore.
Any action seems out of place;
Give for ego, deny, poor grace.

As is the way in this land,
Moral decisions not underhand.
At home someone else will decide;
Here, dilemma is personalised.

Men, women and children in distress,
Asking help from those with excess.
If there's judgement will the question be,
How did you respond to their need?

Crunchy sand.

Horizon stretches, unbroken line;
No start or finish, endless time.
Our ancestors knew their place,
Sail too far, fall into space.

White sand crunching under foot,
Creaks like fresh snow, lightly trod.
Flat beach goes on forever;
Nought to do with man's endeavour.

Palm trees overhang the beach,
Providing shelter with their reach;
Mark the end of vegetation,
Start of ocean's domination.

Isolated shack in the distance,
Provides respite from sun's insistence.
Cool drinks are ordered first;
Small oasis quenching thirst.

Young couple passing by,
Oblivious to sand and tide;
Enjoying the feeling of isolation;
Just soak in God's creation.

Here a place no words can describe,
Must see with eyes to appreciate.
Open heart to fully embrace,
Nature's beauty in all its grace.

Rough ground.

Passing by, it's just rough ground,
In UK called site that's brown.
No crops or life a glance can see,
Must be waiting development fee

Stand quiet a while and really look,
You may discover you've been mistook.
The tainted eye doesn't observe;
The brain thinks it's wise to the world.

Isn't that a hut in the far corner?
Camouflaged with palms and rushes.
There's a man chopping wood,
Wife in sari collecting up.

As the eyes open to the scene,
See children playing on a swing;
Hogs, big and small, running around;
Water buffalo tethered to ground.

Crows scavenging in rubbish burnt;
Swifts swooping in search of food;
Sparrows digging in the soil;
Kites overseeing full life toil.

Oh stupid eyes filling my head,
Because it's rough it must be dead.
Don't just glance, really look,
Not all is written in a book.

Holiday complex.

Bright apartments surround the pool;
Towelled sun beds under parasol;
Palm trees to set the scene;
Flowers, bright, cover balconies.

Waiters, brown suited, for every need;
Men with mops eager to clean.

Bar with stools in the water;
Swim and call out your order.

Entertainment nearly every night,
Magicians, singers, under twinkling lights.
Shop on site, even filtered water;
Chinese restaurant to phone your order.

Holiday complex, self contained.
No need to venture through the gate.
Even the children have their club.
Everything right for family fun.

People here from every Nation;
Indians taking winter vocation.
Strangely English the common tongue,
Even though Portuguese till sixty one.

Rear of complex a different scene,
Rural India can be seen.
Family dwellings surrounded by fields;
Milling people at daily needs.

Cows and piglets roam at will,
With their chums the Egrets.
Hens and chickens scratch about,
In the rubbish, turned out.

People of all generations in one spot,
Each with a job to serve the lot.
Families working in unison;
The joy of the children no illusion.

What are their thoughts looking this way,
At our castle building with its gate?
Do they envy the obvious wealth?
Do they desire to be here one day?

If they aspire, they're no different than us;
To earn enough money for the Taj is a must.
In our wisdom, we know it's their aim;
Material advancement is man's only gain.

Of course they may not look at us,
That in our pride we assume they must.
Perhaps we're a mirage passing their door;
They'll still be here as we look for more.

Just one day.

Day of extremes and profusion;
Mind in a whirl of confusion.
Morning witnessing dire poverty,
Night time experiencing pure luxury.

The day of Marjon and Taj Exotica;
Opposite ends of wealth spectra.
Men in rags sleeping on street;
Smart businessmen, glut of seats.

Women and children begging for food;
Five restaurants, which shall we choose?
Hot streets, amass with crowds;
Hugh marble lounge devoid of life.

Women laden with loads on head;
Three servants for every guest.
Walking barefoot to destination;
Electric buggy ride, no reservation.

Families sleeping under tin roofs;
Secluded bungalows with own pool.
Women, crossed legged, selling food;
Beauty therapy, if in the mood.

Crying children, pinched for handout;
Hotel nannies for child comfort.
Goods bartered to sustain life;
No need for cash with credit card.

Thirst quenching sugar cane drink;
Fine wines and liquors, imported in.
Rag ball for children to play;
Pool, golf, cricket, archery

Could go on forever at juxtaposition;
What's the point without a solution.
Just the observation of a single day,
Reflecting human race as it's always been.

Cricket field.

Driving along passed arid fields,
Palm Groves and derelict property;
Suddenly a flash of green.
Have we come across a cricket field?

I'm back in England in Spring,
Where bright is the Green;
Grass ready for the first cut;
Roll the wicket and set the stumps.

It can't be cricket that's played here,
Green as far as the eye can see.
Is it for grazing cattle and sheep?
But not an animal on the scene.

Is it the lawns of a Portuguese house?
A carpet of grass to set a mansion off.
There's not a building to be seen;
No one to cut and tend the green.

The vision is passed, I'm no wiser;
Perhaps an illusion, a mirage.
Wait. On the horizon another one,
Even bigger than the one just gone.

At last comes the dawning.
Not grass but shoots of rice.
Man's irrigation of paddy fields
Has gifted my first sight of Tropical grain.

Charity.

Lola's little shop burnt down,
And she nearly gone full term;

Should leave next week, go back home,
To give birth to girl, she hopes.

Sad young Lola sits in gloom,
All her stock gone up in flames.
One more thing to add to worries,
Pains keep coming in her tummy.

Off in taxi to hospital;
Get check up, see if baby coming.
Not the new one down the road,
Wont be happy there, or so its told.

Reception not very friendly;
Sister's been on night duty.
Not conducive to tender care,
Lola refuses to be roughly handled.

Gently persuaded to return,
Now turn of Matron to refuse.
Beg and plead for Lola's case;
Stubborn woman wont be moved.

At last relents, reluctantly.
Again Lola's questioned not lovingly.
Sad experience on Lenten Sunday,
At hospital run by Sisters of Charity.

Size matters.

In a land of skinny folk,
Shirts too tight, if not like rope.
Size at home would be small,
Here lucky with XXlarge.

Shorts to get just one leg in;
Manage two, can't fasten them.
Dresses so pettit and fine,
For Barby Doll they're designed

Why can't they resemble us,
Big, rotund, built like bus?

Bellies wobbly, full of fat;
Feet last seen when a lad.

They need feeding up;
Burgers, chips, other grub.
Make them into proper size,
Then we'll have clothes to buy.

Magician's hat.

Boy seller on the beach,
Bag full within his reach.
Out comes lighter, keen to sell;
High price start, haggles well.

If he manages to make a sale,
Hand back in bag again.
Now you've shown to be a buyer,
Not give up with his trying.

Torches, watches, wet wipes,
Even perfume to delight.
Calculators and mobile cases,
Belts, buckles, shoe laces.

His bag a bottomless pit,
Goods from India filling it.
He calls it his mobile super mart;
To me, more like a Magician's hat.

Ingenuity.

High fashion designer clothes,
Leather bags, models show.
Watches from round the world,
Kinetic Rolex, bracelet gold.

Anything not to hand,
Ordered quick from Mumbai.
India seller not defeated,
All your needs can be sated.

Why reinvent the wheel;
Possesses skills to replicate.
Not deceitful in their ways,
Proudly proclaim, genuine fake.

But beware you can be caught,
In trap of greed when sought.
Tobacco purchased as real thing,
Turns out to be Green China tea.

Smile.

What does a smile convey?
Not one for photo display.
That comes from deep inside;
Face lit up with this smile.

Does it indicate pleasure,
A funny moment to treasure;
A response to a happy event;
A reflex action showing content.

One thing noticed in this life,
No coloration with material strife.
Simple things bring a smile;
Truer way to use God's measure.

India seems a land of smiles,
White teeth and shining eyes.
No matter what station in life,
It's easy play to raise a smile.

Assumptions.

Driver of taxi making sell,
Visit white beach with Turtles on.
Make arrangements for evening fun;
Always available, airport run.

Must be local making his money,
From visitors here, season of fun.
Another two months, taxi covered;

Live through Monsoon on his profit.

Engage man in conversation,
Interested in his perfect English.
When did he learn to speak so well?
From tourists taking taxi rides?

Language perfected in a college,
Where he studied for many years.
Had to finish, family crises,
Prior graduation in psychology.

Parents died leaving dependents,
Son stopped studies to earn money.
Came to Goa from out of state;
Provide food and shelter for siblings.

Many years have passed since then,
Now has wife and Sid, his son.
Still sad not finishing college
But no regrets for his decision.

Make assumptions? Who me?
I've learnt nothing from my journey.
Can't assess what a man is,
No chance of knowing who he is.

Sunday lunch.

The expats have gathered for lunch;
Fake colonial setting in the sun.
Shirts with flannels, posh frocks;
Sunday again at the Marriot.

Gin and tonic on veranda;
Dine outside or in cool cover.
Mixing easily with rich locals;
Reminiscent of by-gone rituals.

Not colonial masters now gathered;
Joe from Swansea, Ron from Manchester.
New expats living in this land,

Making the most of strong pound.

Dishes more fit for a queen,
Served by many men in green.
Buffet bar so long and full,
Can't taste all food on offer.

Music staged in full view;
Eat to a song or have a dance.
Time for pretence and nostalgia,
Sunday lunch at the Marriot.

Empire lost.

Imposing mansion set in grounds,
Reminiscent of Portuguese colonials.
Splendid hallway, wide stairway,
Leading to upper rooms, both ways.

Knock on door to gain entry;
Opened by old lady, from gentry.
Enter into reception room,
Cool thick walls, marble floor.

Fine lady explains her role,
Descendent from owners of old.
House once centre of family wealth;
Now kept up by visitor's gifts.

Guided tour around the rooms,
Except for those in family use.
China plate and vases from Maco;
Rosewood furniture, crafted local.

Lady proud of house and ancestry;
Portraits on wall of landlords past.
Mixed blood Indian, Portuguese,
Family lived here for centuries.

Ballroom of fine proportions;
Hear the music, see the motion.
Picture room filled with laughter,

Centre of Portuguese India Empire.

Some sadness these days have passed;
Unless your people toiled the land.
Channelled irrigation by engineers,
Producing rice all through the year.

Lady bids farewell at door;
Collection box for house restore.
Symbol of times now gone,
But still dignified and elegant.

Wires.

Wires strung everywhere;
Electric cables, telephone lines.
Ugly mess obscuring view,
Erected for man's urban use.

But wires have other purpose,
Carrying birds on perches.
Magpie Robbins, white tail bobbing.
King Fishers, still, watching traffic.

Song birds, sitting in pairs,
Swallows ready to take the air.
Hunting birds, waiting for prey;
Paradise chicks on display.

Birds once hidden away,
Now on view as wires sway.
Man, with crude construction,
Opportunity to see Natures creation.

Tony Pitman

Just A Star

Oh how I love the sun
Little wonder ancients worshipped him
Never fails in her mission
Lifts my spirit, clears the mind

Such healing power possessed
So gentle the caress
Makes insignificant all hurts bourn
Reminder that life can be good

Of all the blessings nature gifts
None greater than sun's kiss
Such tenderness and care
Comforted child I feel again

"It's just our star", people say
One of millions in the universe
But this star's special to me
Proves love is possible unconditionally

When closed heart is full of sorrow
Offended ego demanding bitterness
The whispering sun puts me back on track
"Let heart return to awareness of love"

Tony Pitman

Just Sometimes

Occasionally I find in life
Happenings to confirm my ideals
Indications to justify the search
The discovery of true identity

Sometimes simple, little things
Normally passed by unseen
But huge in their influence
Proving ideals not just woolly dreams

One commonality they all share
Conveying love in one of its forms
Bringing joy, healing, affirmation
Showing someone they're cared for

Just as observer is sufficient
No need to be recipient
Witnessing love in action
My heart is uplifted

Tony Pitman

Love

A kiss.

I never saw Mam and Dad kiss,
Not even a peck on the cheek;
Never hold hands or touch each other;
They were more like sister and brother.

Tactile affection was not the fashion,
Especially in front of the children.
Sad to have such restraints,
When love demands spontaneity.

How did they manage such control,
Did it put their love under strain?
Did their romance take place in private,
Hidden away from public gaze?

Sadder still was their union devoid,
Of any need to touch at all?
Were they both happy with such a state,
Or did one hunger to physically relate?

Hard to imagine commitment for life,
If couples don't act as man and wife.
The healing gift such unions should bring,
Is the affirmation in touch and kiss.

Pol and Rach

Of all the sights to give great pleasure,
To bring a smile and memories to treasure;
None is more beautiful to behold
Than mother and daughter close together.

To watch the progress from parent and child;
To blossom and grow to adult and friend.
A privilege to witness along the way;
A lesson in love and harmony.

What is the secret of their success,
Not all can achieve, as we witness.
What ingredient binds them together?
What spell has been cast on them?

There really is no mystery to solve,
The ways are there for us all,
Their joy in being together
Comes from their care, each for the other.

No greater gift can a father receive

Hardest.

The hardest thing not to share,
Is simply being, doing nothing.
Events and pursuits distract the mind,
But to share nothing is divine.

Silence and solitude are for sharing;
Unspoken connection in company.
Spirits united in close bond;
It's where contentment can be found.

Silence is the language of love;
Universal gift from above.
No words to regret or lead astray;
Two hearts as one, no mystery.

In a world of noise and chatter,
We're diverted from that that matters.
Being close is what holds sway;
No words can describe such harmony.

Whatever distractions come our way;
Absorbing and consuming, sad or gay,
Eventually we must return to be,
Alone if not sharing silent company.

Round and round.

Round and round my finger bare;
Feeling for band no longer there.
Nothing firm to grip and hold;
Just cold flesh and knucklebone.

Round and round the mind whirls;
To find just cause for such hurts.
No big issues to grasp and hold;
Bits on bits, too much the camel's load.

Round and round I look for her;
For every decision there is to make.
Forgetting she's no longer there;
My hopes, joys and fears to share.

Round and round go the days;
Could we not wait for Nature's way?
We'd travelled so far side by side;
All discarded in the blink of an eye.

Round and round the cycles of life;
Swiftly, swiftly pass us by;
Surely such love didn't die;
Was too much expected to satisfy?

Round and round the earth spins;
Time will pass into history;
Anger and pain will seep away;
Tears will stop and dry some day.

Round and round life goes on,
That, now so tragic, will be gone.
New sadness and joys will come your way;
What's raw and tender now, a faded memory

Hold tight.

No matter what comes along,
To drive a wedge into your love,
Resist words to explain the way,
Just hold tight your bodies together.

Words can confuse and are inadequate,
But physical presence has no equal.
Let nothing divide you from your love;
Just hold tight your bodies together.

Evil will try to cause a divide;
Resist and you will survive.
No power on earth will drive you apart;
Just hold tight your bodies together.

Words were invented for commerce and trade,
Not the language of love to convey.
When love is assaulted with evil intent;
Just hold close your bodies together.

Then on reflection when you look back,
At those times your love was attacked,
Maybe you will remember you followed the advice,
Just hold close your bodies together.

The Gathering.

People gathered from all around,
Well figuratively speaking anyhow.
Gathered to hear the reason why,
So close a couple now to divide.

Divide possessions gathered in life;
Divide their lives so intertwined;
Divide their friendships loose and close;
Divide their families con and pro.

'We cannot understand', the common cry;
'We thought it impossible', they sob and sigh;
'We saw no sign, no indication';
'We're hurt and shocked', there's indignation.

Who can give some satisfaction;
Some reason to calm enquiring minds.
There's a yearning need for explanation;
Is there rational to deliver some credence?

Is it possible to satisfy such need;
To navigate through complex emotions;
To give logical sense to things of the heart;
To justify the move from closeness to apart?

But the gathering will persist,
The need for a simple reason why.
The head insists on a party to blame;
It's someone's fault we feel such pain.

So we'll pick and choose the best we can;
Settling our mind that we understand.
One or the other must be at fault
Hard to accept, no sin afoot.

Try to resist such temptations,
Just love them both, if you can.
No one's to blame for the situation,
It happened lacking premeditation.

No one to blame. No one.

Sometimes.

How to answer, 'How are you today? '
'Different than yesterday. Tomorrow? Who can say? '

Sometimes weak and mystified;
Sometimes strong and justified.

Sometimes mind all confused;
Sometimes clear, no ambiguity.

Sometimes see logical process;
Sometimes heart in a mess.

Sometimes hard and uncaring;
Sometimes concern overbearing.

Sometimes sleep brings relief;
Sometimes dreams induce reality.

Sometimes content and at peace;
Sometimes on verge of despondency.

Sometimes can see end of grief;
Sometimes no sign of relief.

Sometimes there's ease of ache;
Sometimes pain's unbearable.

Sometimes silence helps the mood;
Sometimes chatter incessantly.

Sometimes nature lifts the soul;
Sometimes the spirit dead and cold.

Sometimes prayers for help;
Sometimes cursing God Himself.

So if you ask, 'How are you today? '
'Sometimes bad. Sometimes ok'.
Is all I can truly say.

Just a wild flower.

Rosebay Willowherb's seeds blow away;
Fluffy white stars gone to germinate.
Clouds and clouds the wind has caught;
First time my eyes have seen this sight.

The flower that recalls the day we wed;
'Loneliness defeated', so it was said.
Was it possible for love to blossom;
In soil tainted with much sorrow?

Pure as snow the flower's seeds;
Set free to wander on the breeze.
Reach out; try to catch a few.
Darting, diving, they'll tease you.

So much to loose, so much delight;
Dance in a dream with beautiful Pol.
So much bitterness and resentments, too.

Could Solomon solve such a to-do?

Soon the plant will be stripped bare;
Flowers faded, seeds in the air.
Its cyclic season has been completed;
From seed to seed, never defeated.

Now it's over after three short decades;
A parting that's threatened frequently.
Many problems we faced as a couple;
Were they the glue that bound us together?

Our wedding flower stands tall and proud;
Not weighed down by feelings and ego.
Was Oscar right when he wrote,
'Man always kills the thing he loves'?

Moods.

Will she ever be out of my mind?
Night and day she haunts my life.
Why not move on, live my time?
Images of joy and pain won't pass by.

Time heals; or so they say.
Time a commodity I can't waste.
Time to bring peace of soul.
Time? Is there enough before I go?

New or old, whatever I try,
All result in same malaise.
Things come alive when we share;
And never again will she be there.

Excuse the moment, wallowing in grief;
It'll pass on like a stealthy thief.
Tomorrow will be different, a day to enjoy;
Concentrate on the cerebral, ignore the heart.

Unconditional love

Can love be unconditional?

Mothers may say it is so.
Lovers don't ask such a question,
So consumed in their burning passion.

Can love still be given,
When in return there is derision?
Does love sustain itself,
Or wither and die without reciprocation?

Snowdrops

Snowdrops appearing everywhere.
What was the real reason for going separate ways?

Little white heads drooping shy.
Was it open awareness of my dark inner self?

Plants once buried now with renewed life.
Ridicule of weakness at the core of my soul?

Battered and smothered, the Snowdrops survived.
Knowledge of knowledge love could not withstand?

Flowers giving support by company in groups.
Confirmation of guilt only solitude can bare?

Flowers with the purity of life.
Stark contrast to my darker side.

All those years

All those years we spent together,
Too often in hope it would be better.
Needing to touch and feel close;
Usually a reason why not possible.

Can love really blossom,
If differences in how it's demonstrated?
Heart and needs must be in tune,
To achieve healing and affirm.

Good times were also shared;
Common interests at the fore.
Not to compensate when need was great,
For understanding and just say, 'You're OK'.

Some may ponder, 'Why such a little thing',
Breaking a relationship of thirty years?
But little things are the building blocks,
From which great mountains soar.

Our Fred.

Fred lives in the whirl of dreams,
Far removed from life's realities.
Fantasies woven from factual glimpses;
Fairy tales intertwined with worldly things.

Fred won't accept such assessment,
Believes his hopes could be realised.
Even when smitten with disenchantment,
Thinks his hopes are based on love.

Poor Fred even with expectations shattered,
Clinging to his hapless expectations;
Hoping next time will be different;
Grasping stars still his ambition.

Is Fred alone with such visions?
Paradise lost before achieved;
Heart yearning for things impossible;
Lacking judgement and common sense.

Yet sometimes in a life of stress,
Many are touched by the thrill of happiness.
Love becoming a tangible reality;
Grab to hold before it vanishes.

Perhaps Fred isn't alone,
With his dreams and false hopes.
Is seeking love in all its forms,
The real norm for us all?

Maybe Fred has experienced love;
Felt the warmth of affirmation.
Now searching for that once known;
Perhaps not such a fool after all.

Still

Still she pops into my head
Stabbing stomach ache resulting
Will I never be over these thoughts?
Though not as strong, always disturbing

Still the same pattern they follow
Hate, anger, longing, acceptance
Their passage much quicker in pace
Always left feeling lonely and empty

Still over and over revisit that time
Trying to analyse what took place
Give some order to those events
Find the reason why it had to end

Still don't understand, was it her I wanted?
Or a kindling of what hungry heart demanded
Apart from intimacy there was little between us
Yet sensed deep needs desperate for merger

Still will never know the answer to such questions
If not clear now never will be
Just have to accept the obvious
The coming together was disaster

Still time will heal and all this will pass
Buried in history where it will rest
Other relationships will fill my needs
But will never trust contact her and me

Better

Better ignoring than responding
When the cord starts vibrating

Better resistance than surrender
When ache overwhelms you

Better bad times than good
When memories are stirred

Better realism than dreams
When hungry heart roams free

Better insult than compliment
When longing for her company

Better anger than concern
When heart starts to hurt

Better disdain than care
When beset by despair

Better loathing than longing
When thrown into grieving

Better stranger than friend
When reclaiming self-dignity

Better hating than loving
When seeking indifference

Question

The unanswered question throughout the ages
Baffling all the various 'ologies'
Hurts and joys fill our lives
Are these what make us who we are?

There's no order in such a conclusion
Assuming we have no controlling influence
There would be no point in existence
If merely bouncing to fate's insistence

Better to believe we're stronger than that
Possess all we need for complete happiness
The spirit holding all the building blocks

Our choice to construct the being that's us

It's the model we make that can beat fate
Designed with awareness of path to take
Weakness and opposition will be overcome
Joy, peace and contentment achieved through love

Seems so obvious when you think of it
The need for love's at the core of all of us
'Giving and receiving for the welfare of each'
The simple answer of what we're meant to be

Not so simple when put in practice
Too much fear, too much timidity
Ego fighting against vulnerability
Spirit struggling in limitations of humanity

Recovery

When the ache has seeped away
Heart returning to pumping ways
Time to reflect and wonder why
Such ebb and flow engulfs me

There never was a relationship to fail
No commitments or promises made
Little in common to bind together
No big physical attraction present

So why smothered with sense of loss?
There's only one cause, the intimacy
Not the physical relief of lust
But its symbolism of couple love

Right from puberty it's been the same
When young, wrongly linked to family
Believed to have resulted from nurturing
Now known to be at my heart's core

Relationships can be on even keel
Sharing, enjoying as suits the needs
But once bodies are joined together

To me, a sign that love's being sought

The ache comes from no hope of her love
Not loss of company, for that never was
Even realisation of this knowledge
Won't stop its return when heart hurts

Just a bit

Just a bit of fun
Not to hurt anyone
Some comfort and joy
In our lives

Tranquil peace
Shared by each
To laugh not cry
Uplifted not dry

A little love
Just for healing
Sense of belonging
That's affirming

To feel good
About ourselves
Too much to seek?
But it's just a bit

Sensible head

Such highs, such lows
Better to be just friends

So much joy, so much woe
Better to be just friends

Such desire, such hurt
Better to be just friends

So much passion, so much regret
Better to be just friends

Such awareness, such blindness
Better to be just friends

So much acceptance, so much jealousy
Better to be just friends

Such love, such loathing
Better to be just friends

So much dreaming, so much sense
Better to be just friends

Such weakness, such strength
No choice but accept, just friends

So much high, so much low
Only my friend's joy in my field to sow

Arms

Arms stretched to furthest point
Reaching out to touch the sky
Fingers tight locked in vice grip
Longing to become just one skin

Soothing touch of bodies close
Nature dispelling life's woes
Minds resting in timeless peace
Essence of spirits in harmony

Forms fitting like comfy glove
Interlocked like puzzle pieces
Can't be chance made this way
Had to be moulded together

Total wholeness of kindred souls
Loneliness on the wind blown away
Gift of love we're meant to share
Mutual healing of feeling good

Care

All about is brighter and clear
Keen awareness of everything
Numbed senses been revived
Heart bursting with intensity

No mystery underlying the cause
Always been known throughout life
Sorrow and despair blown away
With just a touch conveying care

Feeling special, the pinnacle of life
Nothing on earth matters at all
No wealth, no possessions can surpass
That intangible magic of being loved

Years have passed with emptiness
Fading hopes of true happiness
Reached the point, it had gone by
Then someone special touched my heart

Different dance

To dance is always a delight
Like playing a part in a musical
No self consciously holding back
Mind transported to another place

Movements to convey interpretation
Of different melodies being played
The mood of each dance changing
Depending on beat or lyric phrasing

But dancing with someone loved
Moves the experience to a new level
No longer playing a role
Now it's truly of the soul

Magnetic pull of bodies close
Tantalising nearness of the hold
Eyes conveying unspoken thoughts
Opportunity to risk a passing brush

More than an invitation to dance
A platform for continuing romance
Even though in a public forum
Loving touches can be stolen

Searching for words

I need to keep telling you how much I care
As if you were here by my side
But I just can't do justice
To the feelings I have for you

How is it possible to put into words?
When all are inadequate for purpose
Misused words have abused and confused
Even 'love' can be used meaning 'possession'

If you were close no words I'd need
Just to hold your hand, your head on my shoulder
You'd sense my heart beating for you
Wanting to encompass you in it

So few weeks I've known you
So little time we've spent together
So many things to catch up on
Years ago I should have sought you

No sense in dwelling on the past
The only real thing is the moment
To make you happy my only intent
Your beautiful smile to reward me

Tuesday dance

Want to dance with you tonight
Hold you close but not too tight
Feel your breath upon my face
Nuzzle your neck but must resist

Move to the music, you in my arms
Thrill to the touch you always bring

Electric shock stirrings coming alive
Desire you so much but must resist

Lightly hold hands in your lap
Feel the warmth of your close thigh
Watch that smile light up your face
Caress those lips but must resist

Follow you in the Line Dance routine
Just can't get hang, which foot to lead
Hope you help with gentle push and pull
An opportunity to hold you but must resist

Share a Guinness, soil the floor
Share a chuckle at my poor pour
Enjoy the taste but much more the sharing
Long to be alone with you but must resist

Leave at eleven, they're closing the door
The night's passed too quickly once more
Walk to your car, our lips briefly touch
Yearning to follow you but must resist

Slowly drive home on empty roads
Still sense your touch, though alone
The thrill of the night lingering on
Never want it to end but must resist

Just a meal

To eat with you is divine
Enjoying a meal together
As in everything we do
It's the sharing that matters

Such a simple thing it seems
Satisfying the body's hunger
What makes it so special?
It's the sharing that matters

It's not important the venue or meal
Weatherspoons or Café de Paris

Fish and chips on Blackpool beach
I know it'll be the sharing that matters

Something special in eating together
Satisfying a basic essential of life
Like all our needs for happiness
It's the sharing that really matters

Driving home

Driving home through the mist
Tranquil feeling of utter bliss
Air is soft, peaceful and calm
Can still feel you in my arms

Heart is full of your presence
As if you were there beside me
I've not left you behind
Distance can't divide us

Tug on the string

Just a tug the only need
Not even that, just a feel
Ready and eager to respond
Waiting for the pull on the cord

Even when distracted, so it seems
Something inside waiting patiently
Does the need traverse space
Are the pulls self induced?

Mind settled on other things
Response deadened, or thought to be
That little hook buried deep inside
Eager to sense any snag on string

Vowed never be in this position
Ego to dominate such a state
No energy needed for this tug
Waiting hunger is enough

Perhaps the vastness of the care
Greater than I dare admit
Why else such continuing need
To feel excited by vibrating string

Pain

Sometimes the pain is unbearable
Overwhelming in its intensity
More severe than physical blows
In my heart the bruises show

Try as I may, can't push aside
Even distractions don't survive
Though there's knowledge it will pass
The hurt will decide how long to last

No logic for such strong feelings
For never a hope this love could bring
But the mind stands no chance
When the heart feels so very sad

Even after periods in female company
Still this uninvited ache rips through me
She feels so close, reach out and touch
But time and needs, barriers between us

After so many years of starvation
False hopes brought such elation
But dammed before it even began
Only pain the inevitably outcome

Need to write down this ode
Though pride diminished by it
The scribbling helps restore perspective
Dampen the swing of agitated pendulum

Water bliss

Once upon a time a Crab and a Fish met
Dancing in bliss in their aqua heaven
'Hallo Mr Fish. You look fine'

'Come on Crabby. Please be mine'

So off they swam in unison
Sharing dreams and visions
Having found each other
Is this the end of their story?

Perhaps leave them be for a while
Then see what happens in their tale

But do they understand the dangers they face?
Not from within but out of their space
Have they the strength to hold firm?
When assailed by unimportant things
Will the joy they give each other
Overshadow complacency?

Why bring up negative notions?
Awareness will ensure their survival
Every story deserves a happy ending
Relating joy, peace and contentment

'Oh Mr Fish. We came together so quickly'
'Don't knock it brown eyes. Just call us lucky'
'What draws us so close Mr Fish? '
'Who knows my beauty? '
 'Maybe exchanging bits one to the other'

Keswick

To Keswick I want us to go
Just drawn there, don't know why
Dinky streets a timeless view
Park and lake beauties like you

There's a little theatre close by
Shall I book us seats side by side?
No idea what will be on
Doesn't matter if we're as one

If sad play we can cry none stop
Perhaps music making us need to hop

Daft drama, not understood
We'll still find something to give us fun

Joy on joy there's house-selling shops
Real estate for your artistic gaze
I can watch you imagining reconstruction
Seeing you happy my satisfaction

So come on soul mate, say yes
Crack the shell, take the chance
Set the soul free to run wild
Your vulnerability safe in my hands

Fairy gate

Fairy gate hidden from sight
Corner of steps to Mrs Cs
Snugly fitted in such a way
Only obvious when shown its place

Fairy gate where do you lead?
What treasures lie beyond my reach?
Perhaps just a mill for magic dust
Or treasured secrets of exciting love

Fairy gate show me the key
That opens the door and lets me in
I hunger for the power that you can give
Do I have to wait endlessly?

Mr P don't fret away
There is no secret that lies within
The magic rests in your heart
Love will blossom if in tune with hers

But I need her now to hold close
Feel her heart beat, pull her toes
Fun in her company, dance through the air
Everyone needs close companion to share

I know Mr P that's your human state
Incomplete without loving mate

But don't you see that's only possible
With two hearts that beat in unison

The key to try is just be yourself
Turn it carefully with tender care
Her key she'll use on the other side
If door stays shut don't be surprised

Don't be sad if there's no way in
Eventually you'll see it's the best to be
Walk away, your heart at rest
Treasuring the thrills of trying its best

Hurts

So much pain we carry in our hearts
The slightest mention can bring alive
Hurts first suffered years gone by
Still not quelled by passing time

Confiding with a listener brings no relief
Transient settling then again buried deep
Can healing only occur when love is shared?
Bringing new life and a spirit whole again

Masks

God, rid us of these masks we wear
Hiding those feelings we fear to share
Only chance of experiencing love
Vulnerability and openness

de Mello's right, the truth we fear
Even though the spirit urges to seek
See the example in the innocent child
No masks there to hide behind

Almost as plain as the nose on the face
'Walk in their shoes'. 'Empathy reigns'
Peace and love from real understanding
Why need masks for imagined enmities?

Is this the cross we bare with life?
Born without masks, free as the air
Soon fear drives us to seek shelter
Outer crusts for ego's protection

The irony is these shells don't defend
The spirit's trapped, can't influence
Life's solutions and joys pass on by
God, please destroy the masks we wear

Just sometimes

Occasionally I find in life
Happenings to confirm my ideals
Indications to justify the search
The discovery of true identity

Sometimes simple, little things
Normally passed by unseen
But huge in their influence
Proving ideals not just woolly dreams

One commonality they all share
Conveying love in one of its forms
Bringing joy, healing, affirmation
Showing someone they're cared for

Just as observer is sufficient
No need to be recipient
Witnessing love in action
My heart is uplifted

Tony Pitman

Missing

'What's missing in your life? '

'How possible to miss something I've never had? '

'Maybe just one thing. Some people call it love'

Tony Pitman

More Of India

December

Beach shack skeletons lying on sand;
Permit crises got out of hand.
Hotels complain they're loosing trade;
Brit. numbers down this year.

Russian money leads the way;
Buying property in great sways.
Locals complain but when asked, 'Why',
'They don't speak English', is the reply.

Goa's beauty still draws crowds;
Bus loads of people from States around.
Crowding the beach in a mass;
Chattering and laughing, school's out.

When feeling glum and low,
Just sit on wall and watch the flow.
No gloom or despair can cloud the sight;
Such infectious joy, such delight.

Who decides?

Poor beggar man passing by.
Old in years? Who can say?
Body bent, hair sparse and grey;
Hand held out for charity pay.

Cold beer in hand, comfy chair;
Look up at man standing there.
How did fate decide our positions;
Him begging, me sitting?

Is it reward for life lived?
If merit were judged, I'd not sit.
In comparison to mine was his life so bad?
Even if so who's worthy to decide?

Is life so indeterminable,
Simply fate decides roles we play?
Ego persuades man's in control;
A view this beggar wouldn't hold.

Even harder to grasp,
Some Master's will in charge.
What's this form of Divinity,
Allowing such indignity?

Food.

Such cuisine, such tastes;
Mouth tingling food feasts.
Herbs and spices enhancing flavour;
So much, so much, ready to savour.

Dishes from around the world;
Here in Goa, even on the beach.
Italian, Indian, Continental;
Too wide a choice, too much to sample.

Chiefs with skills taught at home,
On par with those in five star hotels.
Each with their own Masala recipe,
Whispered in secret on Grandma's knee.

Could spend a month in this place,
Never tasting twice the same dish.
Sun, breeze, food and waterside;
Closer to heaven you can't reside.

Birds.

Where have the birds gone this year?
Normally so bountiful in India.
Birds once seen filling the air,
Now so sparse, hardly there.

Magpie Robins bouncing along,
Not to be seen, nor heard their song.

Brahminy Kites gliding so free,
Are grounded somewhere. For MOT?

Kingfishers all sizes and colours,
Not patiently waiting for supper.

Chirping parrots, vivid green,
Missing from the customary scene.

Even the Crow's squawk is rare;
Egrets no longer patrolling in pairs.

No Humming birds with helicopter hover;
Love birds not sitting on wires with Swallows.

Woodpeckers neglecting hammering trees;
Birds with blue tails stopped chasing bees.

Perhaps the birds aren't really missing;
Perhaps too distracted with mind visions;
Perhaps too tied up with self concerns;
Perhaps too inward looking to really discern.

Pity really if I miss the chance,
To savour once more fruits of this land.
Lift your head man, stop looking down;
Sky's the place where heaven's found.

Trade.

Dark shapes lay at anchor;
Line the horizon on the edge;
Waiting patiently for their cargo;
Iron ore shipped to distant lands.

Pieces of India transported away;
Build new factories the Orient way.
Bound for China, the new promised land;
No longer a threat to Western banks.

Good example of world's priorities,
Not related to people's well being.

Not politics or ethics that determine friends,
But wealth and prosperity in the end.

No different than it's always been,
Trade and possessions rule supreme.
Iron ore shipments of today,
The silks and spices of yesteryear.

China's market now the target;
Huge ships driven by turbines.
Once it was the Roman Empire,
With Monsoons the pushing power.

Litter.

A drawback of Indian custom,
They're litter-louts, without conscience.
Not just debris from cig. Packs,
But household waste, out the back.

Plastic mounds on every corner,
Strung in trees like flags flying.
Garbage, food waste, rotting stuff,
For savaging cows and crows to taste.

All waste recycled is the claim;
Collecting and sorting for gain.
There's some credence in this view,
But why on floor and not in bins?

Indifference appears to reign;
No pride in civic responsibility.
Don't seem disturbed by unsightliness,
Strange for people with personal cleanliness.

Colour.

What a strange thing skin colour is.
We are never satisfied with what birth gives
Pale people attempting to burn brown;
Indians applying whitening balm.

White honkies see brown as healthy;
In Indian caste system pale is desirable.
Each wants to be more like the other.
Why this quest? Why do we bother?

Is white/brown the green of colour tone?
Better on the other side of the road?
Why change the state of genetic formation?
What drives the need for modification?

Is it all down to commercial pressure?
Persuasion that different is what matters.
That's a simple cop out from the problem.
Not happy with ourselves for some reason.

Tatty Mutt.

Tatty Mutt lay on beach;
Under lounger, out of heat.
Stands a while to have a scratch;
No dexterity to reach every spot.

Beach dogs sleeping through day;
Nighttime creatures out to bay.
Roaming around in large packs;
Scavenging for scraps in rubbish heaps.

No control to limit size;
Were once culled prior to animal rights.
Domesticated mammals running wild;
Dangerous at night, can snarl and bite.

Hardly like Western pampered pets;
No fashion breeds to visit vets.
Locals don't seem to turn a hair,
Just another night menace they have to bare.

Progress.

Palm trees dropped on land behind;
Making space for holiday site
Trees that have stood for many years,

Giving way for modern needs.

Swaying feathers in the sky,
Sacrificed for developments.
Lollipop sticks for men to climb,
Replaced by bricks, mortar and lime.

Kites have sensed something's afoot,
Nesting Brahminy replaced by Black.
Man's action, changing habitat,
Roosters exchanged for scavenging flock.

No longer near view of brown bird;
Tipped white wings stretched out in flight;
Gliding, swooping gracefully;
Symbol of this rich fertile land.

Such progress is our loss;
Brahminys will find another spot.
We will miss a heavenly vision;
Great bird now living at other location.

Tut Tut.

Tut Tut men plying their trade;
Proud owners of three wheeled carriages.
Black and yellow is the livery;
Two stroke engines, power delivery.

Tut Tuts grouped like a herd;
Waiting for tourists who want a ride.
Nipping in and out of traffic;
Tut Tut sound heralding their presence.

Cheapest form of taxi ride;
Powered rickshaw its real title.
Always haggle for the price,
Before commencing on the ride.

Vehicle designed to carry three,
But no restriction there seems to be.
One pulls up to discharge its load;

More and more passengers pore out on road.

Most owners are local chaps;
Six months work when tourists here;
Rest of year farm their plots;
Growing food for family pot.

More than a ride this experience;
Like covered bike but open to seasons.
A thrill and special treat;
Without it visit to India incomplete.

Please give.

Beggars in all shapes and forms,
Roam the land seeking alms.
Holy men dressed in orange and red;
Little children with hand outstretched;
Men with missing limbs;
Bankers demanding bonuses.

The principle is the same for all;
To feed their need you must respond.
Size of reward not important,
From few rupees to small fortune.
Their plea is really to our needs;
To calm our conscience, our sense of security.
Our low self-esteem is their food;
Without that they'd disappear.

White wrinklies.

White wrinkles taking sun;
Stretching skin to avoid stripes.
Lost the tightness for even tan;
Uncomfortable postures where they can.

Wood lounge with just a towel,
Gives aching joints and sore bum.
Will need attention urgently;
Tiger Balm and Germolene

Like the dogs they come in packs;
All look the same laid out by shacks.
Rotund figures and red of face;
Eking out pensions at Goan pace.

Most are here for six months;
Winter in the sun on modest incomes.
The new Spanish Costa for cheap living;
Their pounds and shillings going a long way.

Close your eyes you'll still find them there;
Huddled together sharing latest gossip.
Driving chaos, visas or land registration;
Like Colonial settlers they demand privilege.

Their expectations are greater than home;
Relative wealth should be a bonus.
The locals should realise how lucky they are;
To be chosen and the wealth to share.

The Goans have sussed them out;
Wise in ways to tap the wealth.
Haggling rates directly relate,
To colour of skin not expectations.

At the end of the day there is a balance;
In ways they each achieve their objectives.
Brit's class ambitions are realised;
Local economy flourishes.

Like all evolution throughout history,
Species adjust to new situations.
Given the challenge of new ways,
People thrive by their ingenuity.

Flash back.

The Church is bright and dressed;
Packed with families in Sunday best.
Men in suits, collar and tie;
Women and kids in colourful attire.

Carols sung out in joyful voice;
All join in, in tune and out.
Music vibrant, full of good cheer;
Christ's birth is drawing near.

Celebrant's procession enters scene;
All stand, ready for Mass to begin.
Seasonal greetings echo round church,
To start great celebration of the year.

Readings and hymns follow on,
The Mass proceeding in time honoured way.
Structured to capture individual hearts;
The congregation in communion together.

Time passes without burden;
The joy of the occasion not confined.
The final ritual in the church,
Queue to pass the corner crib.

This could have been a dream of long ago,
The heart bursting with spiritual joy.
But not a flashback to boyhood times;
Midnight Mass at Arpora, West India.

New for old.

Concrete elephants stand guard,
At entrance to new five star hotel.
Moulded in cement with artisan skills;
A symbol of India for tourists.

No holy man to guide their way;
No man in white to drive today
Clever and pleasing to the eye,
But not real India.

No flick of trunk or bended knee
No ride on back round temple space;
No watermelon to sate his thirst;
No farts or heaps of sugar cane.

Maybe maintenance free;
No crap and pee to clear away;
No herding from out of State;
No begging, photographs to take.

Maybe it's better this way;
Nasty things hidden away.
Pretend the elephant's pliable,
Not proud mammal of India.

New use.

Coconut tree must come down,
Impeding way of power line.
Tree at this spot for many years,
But that gives no right of tenure.

Little man shins up the tree;
Like monkey using hands and feet.
Height no problem for this athlete,
Hidden in crown on swaying seat.

Traffic and pedestrians come to a stop,
As palms and coconuts from top are chopped.
Falling debris not carefully aimed,
Crash through tiles of roof beneath.

Coconuts landing like bombs,
Bouncing down road, huge cricket balls.
A weapon of thunderous power,
Each year the cause of fatalities.

At last the tree is topped;
Saw into sections, carted off.
Split into planks of hard wood;
Used for floorboards in development.

Tree still serving a purpose,
Not providing drink or food process;
Now nailed neatly in rows,
Carrying feet, each of five toes.

Relax.

Surf splashing under boards;
Tide well up, lapping shore.
Refreshing breeze blows through shack;
Perfect conditions to relax.

Relax from tensions and strains,
Self imposed and outside origin.
Just let the heart absorb the scene;
Soak it up, too few have the opportunity.

Breath deep and let the lungs expand;
Air blown in from Arabian lands.
This beach has seen it all before,
For centuries man has relaxed on this shore.

Open your heart to the view;
Let it shrink your ego appropriately.
Accept your place in creation,
Against Nature's awesome majesty.

Comfort can come from such philosophy,
Realisation we don't control destiny.
Man has little influence on his fate;
Acceptance of that, awareness state.

Tide's now on the ebb,
Revealing rocks and smooth sand.
Breeze still rides on the waves;
Cooling, refreshing, God be praised.

Bus ride.

Bonshaker approaching fast;
Race through gap twix bike and cow.
People standing, clinging on;
Faces at windows for cooling draught.

Door swings open, man jumps out;
People pack in to his shouts.
All disappear, God knows where;

Man blows whistle, collects fare.

Foot hits floor, accelerating off;
Only five mph but feels like rocket thrust.
Aimed at obstacle at full blast;
Applies brakes just before crash.

Safety not to rest on driver's skill;
Icons of various religions adorn the bus.
Gods and Saints will see us through;
Flashing lights attesting to their worth.

Travel far for few Rupees;
Cost depends on collector's honesty.
Sometimes heat and noise will hypnotise;
Guard fast asleep on his side.

Chat on the shore.

Edge of water the place to meet;
People paddling, waiting to greet.
Head springs up from watching feet sink;
'Hello there', smiling face speaks.

Men from Mumbai, Delhi, Calcutta;
Others from places unpronounceable.
Relaxed and enjoying holiday fun;
Time for a chat against setting sun.

Naturally curious minds engaged;
Genuine interest in conversation.
Charming, friendly, all social graces;
Not a trace of confrontation.

Age and appearance no criteria;
Young ones wanting picture taken;
Insist on my standing in the group,
To capture white wrinkly in the shoot.

Must be careful on such encounters,
Assumptions can be wide of mark.
Hansom man from North Kiristan,

Was chap from Leeds with his wife.

Day on beach.

Cold Kingfisher bottle cooling hand;
Prone bodies litter sand;
Gentle breeze drifts through shack;
Endless horizon, the palm of God's hand.

No cloud roof to hide the sun;
See blue on blue to eternity;
Lapping tide smoothes the beach;
Strolling folk leave prints of feet.

Young Thespians perform to the crowd;
Contortions through rings to beat of drum.
No admission charge to see this act;
Contribute on plate if you enjoyed the fun.

Immaculate cows lay in groups;
Groomed sacred cattle having picnic;
Calm, unruffled, without fear,
Pose with a smile when camera appears.

Board as wicket and tennis ball;
Impromptu game of cricket attracts all.
Youngsters quick of eye, with energy;
Men passed their prime, hard to see.

Flashing yellow ball and white teeth;
Blur of bat dispatches a boundary.
Jaw clamping dentures in case of sneeze;
Man wading to recover bobbing ball in sea.

Magic tricks the great attraction;
Slight of hand brings fascination.
Wide-eyed faces staring hard;
Unbelievable things with playing cards.

Just a day on Goan beach;
So much to see, so much to learn.
People selling, people playing,

People greeting, people smiling.
People, people, just people and cows.

Fruit seller.

Fruit seller with old cart
Offering his wares to passers by.
Doomed to failure with this mission
No marketing skills or selling vision.

No attractive display or clarion call
Sparse dishevelled fruit on his stall.
Only reason to ask for price
Pleading look and poor attire.

Can't see a future for enterprise
No competition to shops and market stalls.
Yet every year he's at this spot
Ancient trader that time's forgot.

Maybe it's not fruit he's selling
But an opportunity for compassion.
If hearts are moved by his state
Perhaps there's hope for the human race.

Balmy morning.

Air is still waking from sleep
Palm leaves spread giant quills.
Wispy clouds stopped to rest
Sun arising for journey west.

Bird calls gentle to fit the mood
Dogs now quiet from night time prowl.
Wisps of smoke from rubbish burnt
Humans stirring for day long work.

Giant country coming to life
Soon much noise and traffic strife.
Take opportunity this time of day
Enjoy the peace set the heart free.

Memories return.

First vista of Arabia sea this year
Wonder at view never disappoints.
Sun, light and breeze intense
Memory can't retain this scene

Dancing lights on wave tops
Swimmers floating in water warm.
Boats bobbing, flags flapping
Coloured parasols shading sun bathers

Big attraction of Goan coast
Stretching sands, soft to touch.
Gentle shelving for sea dip
Serf for riders to test their wits.

People here from every land
Holiday time to have some fun.
Carefree days from dawn to dusk
Everything here at low cost.

Changing world.

Hugh shapes sat on sea
Fingers pointing to the sky.
Cranes for loading precious ore
Off to China to build a store.

Hulks in line and three deep
Anchored to floor to stop drift.
Waiting their turn tug arrives
Chugged down river parked aside.

Natural resources, dug, transported
Feeding hungry steel furnace.
Economic power on the move
China emerging as world force.

In two decades beach will change
Chinese replacing Brits on holiday.
Goans won't mind a bit

Cuisine ready for Oriental taste.

Ship up anchored, stern in view
Under steam, smiling crew.
Soon disappear over horizon
Round point of India, homeward journey.

Harvesting.

Little man shinning up narrow leaning pole
Alternate gripping hands and tied feet.
Movement quickly carries to top
Disappearing into feathery leaves.

Head sways with weight and breeze
Acrobat on pole beneath circus top.
Leafs spread with searching hands
By what means is he holding on?

Objects dropping to sound of thud
Speed determined by Newton's law.
On and on the bombs fall
Hope nobody's at base catching balls.

Finally bomb bay emptied of lethal load
Man reappears now shinning down pole.
Jack-knife action speeds descent
Soon upright back on terra firma

Difficult to imagine mechanical device
Suitable to replace this harvesting climb.
No ladder or cherry-picker could achieve
Feat of little man with hands and feet.

Progress.

Line of women walking tall
Slim in stature dressed in saris
Proud straight back models poise
Elegantly tread fashion walkway.

At edge of dais acknowledging bow

dropp of head spreading stardust
Bollywood stars displaying their art
Rightly proud of their gifted talents.

Turn around retracing their steps
Sensual walk of womanly form
Suited men watch with a smile
Swaying shape of humanity's crown

At back of stage sip of wine
From earthenware jug so fine
Refreshed they repeat the walk
Untouchables repairing highway.

Why the attraction

Why the attraction to this place?
Poverty and wealth both abound
Natural beauty contrasting with grime
Noise and chaos, competing bird songs

Is it the sun and depth of sky?
Warming the skin, giving such light
Too hot to sunbathe most of the day
In doors at five, keep mosquitoes at bay

Is it the beach and rolling surf?
Walk for miles, bathe in the warmth
Pestered by hawkers plying their trade
Groups of cows blocking the way

Is it the food and prices to pay?
Cuisines of the world here to taste
Full belly guilt passing beggars by
A long way to travel just to dine

Is it the leisurely pace of life?
Relaxing, refreshing, no strife
Waiting forever to get something done
Goan behind wheel worse than a gun

Is it these people of gentle ways

Such easy smiles to lift the day
Tolerated disparity between classes
Women still burdened in shackles

So why the attraction to this place?
People struggle to explain the reason why
One thing is certain from what I've seen
Decision made, either love or hate this state

Lola's shop

Little Lola's corner shoppe
Touts all day, no sell a lotte
Always complains, no trade today
It's the same old story everyday

Twenty four seven she's in her chair
Smile on her face, arm outstretched
Teeth reflecting the sun's bright light
Hand ready to greet and pull passers by

Bangles, bobbles, all colours and shapes
Stretched in lines or hung on tape
Shirts and skirts on hangers, head high
Even second- hand books left behind

To all who pass the same pleading cry
'Come look in my shop. No need to buy'
Most move on without taking a glance
Not to worry, there's tomorrow's chance

Mother of three our lovely Lola
From out of State with her hubby
Kids run in and out of clothes display
Just hard floor at night to dream away

Should we pity young Lola?
The cards life has dealt her
But wait for just one second
Recently opened second shoppe

Little church

Little church back of bus shelter
Seen better days in grandeur livery
Tatty and grimy from Monsoon rain
Needs a spruce for celebration day

Each year church will be freshly painted
Gleaming white for saint's anniversary
Mass devotees on pews imported
Priest's visit from distant parish

Veneration of life long, long gone
No longer relevant to present time
Why all this tradition of past honour?
Needy kids still in rags round corner

Beggar girl

Palm held open, drum by her side
'Please Poppa give some alms'
Hand circling empty tummy
'To buy food, I'm so hungry'

Immediate reaction, pass her by
Ignoring cry as she trails behind
Can't pay every time in these cases
Believe stories rich beggar enclaves

Just out taking pics of local scenes
Why not include her in selection
Give her some pay, reward the pose
Satisfy worries, not being conned

Signing talks complete with head shake
Bargain struck with minimum of debate
No spoken language needed for haggle
Commercial contract with little hassle

Scene set, position agreed
Camera ready to record the scene
'Wait, wait', straighten headdress and drum
Whatever situation female vanity to the fore

Education

Education universally essential
Train children to attain potential
How else can economy grow?
Without workers in the know

Skills needed in next generation
Require learning, university level
Slice and shape to meet demands
Ignore the soul, leave that behind

Every nation knows the need
Trained ants for Capital greed
Here in Arpora next road to this
It's school time for street kids

Hindu Temple

Hindu Temple along the street
Always open to visit and see
Worshippers use it every day
Locals, Portuguese didn't convert

Every Friday at celebration time
Prayer and greeting blasting forth
Reminder of need to consult God
Thousands of years the same call

A religion that's stood the test of time
Unyielding to conquerors passing by
Knowing how to bend and sway
Meeting needs as they change

Survived many attack through the ages
Islamic Moguls, Christian missionaries
Will it last another thousand years?
Let's see how it resists Capital greed

The Taverna

Portuguese haven still standing
Place to sit, rest and chill out
Three hundred years man's sat here
Greasy head marks on plaster caste

Isn't chauvinist or prejudice biased
Ladies would be very welcome here
But loo is open air against the wall
Only easy target for standing tall

Mix of people gathered in this place
Like UN assembly, from far afield
French, Brits, Swedes and locals
Even Kuwaiti with his Danish daddy

Drawn by ambience of this place
Joined by spirits of long gone age
Discussing together like any pub site
Politics, women, passing spiff alight

Proud Taverna owner serves his guests
Once Goan International football star
No longer trains for fitness sake
Imbibes not his brews. Wonder why

Cheap Peanut Feni is the choice
Can drink all night for few Rupees
Bingo, pole dancing not on view
Too little space in this room

In daylight Taverna is difficult to find
Hidden amongst buildings, a little gem
Need to follow someone who knows
A path leader knowing the access code

Was lucky with my Arpora discovery
Had Steve ready to guide me to it
Man of discovery our Leicester Steve
Always has taste of local scene

Frank's Emporium

Prime spot on tourist path
Opposite hotel, way to bus stop
Row of restaurants and gift stalls
Fine surroundings for this Top Shop

Groceries, toiletries, drinks and cigs
All on display for haggling
Travel deals, money exchange
Want a taxi? Here's the place

Frank's the owner of this Emporium
Staffed by kids and grumpy wife
Every year the store gets bigger
The Indian Tesco of these parts

Local equivalent of Alan Sugar
Franky with entrepreneur's style
Look-alike of Sammy Davis Jr
Exciting song and dance every time

Each visit new talent discovered
Now available free medical advice
'How much for Shooter cigs Frank? '
'Don't buy those bad for healthy life'

Arpora the richer for this shoppe
With an owner of such class
Where in UK could you get
A smile with the easy rip-off?

Luxury travel

Wait for the bus to take a ride
Fare much cheaper than taxi guy
Air conditioned, comfy seats
Room to stand if that's the wish

Well maintained and safe as a house
Smooth as silk along it glides
Driven by man with style and panache
Shrines and statues for God's help

Shepherded to seat by fare collector
Wad in hand change dispensing
Waits calmly for all to be seated
Fail-safe signalling with his whistle

No overcrowding in space age vehicle
For more and more people bus expands
Orderly rear entering to alight at front
With military precision arrives on the dot

Arpora rightly proud of its transport
Envy of the world's travel experts
Keep your Bullet train and fast car
Can never improve on the perfect

Barber shop

Coiffeur palace par excellence
Stylists rated throughout the world
Offering their talents to all who pass
Unisex beauty salon down Baggar road

London trained on scholarships
Renowned professionals as mentors
Returning home when Visa expires
Unless manage escape Immigration

Wall to wall air-conditioning
Mirrors to view every position
Latest equipment to do the work
Electric tools splutter and spark

Shampoo, wash, cut to style
Gel or cream after head massage
Nose, ears and eyebrow trim
Shave close, Sweeny Todd blade

Costly but worth every penny
Priceless such personal treatment
More than a necessary grooming
Pick up all local juicy gossip

Tea time.

Head round door, looking in store
Obviously been many times before
Foot tapping to silent rhythm
Perhaps emanating from indoors

Stands waiting patiently
No one comes. Anyone home?
Doesn't seem to bother visitor
Staff unaware of his presence

Suddenly woman banishing cloth
Attacks visitor around the chops
Chap doesn't bother one iota
Almost as if he had expected it

Realise not viewing animal cruelty
No need phone protection people
Action with cloth is affectionate
Cow shows signs, really enjoying it

What is witnessed, cow calling for tea
Delivered in box are tasty treats
Apparently regular visit each day
Usually with mother and brother

Admiring action just displayed
Hindu care of sacred cow
Enter shop need to buy some cigs
Mother Theresa's picture proudly in place

Panjim at night.

Dusk quickly descends on Panjim
People busy exchanging places
Workers leaving, revellers coming
Traffic chaos and din increasing

Sun setting in east to rest
Exhausted from long day's work
Electricity new source of light

Carried on poles falling apart

Shops ablaze with displays
Hidden gems coming to life
Sites during daytime obscured
Now coloured bulb illuminated

Cars, bikes and buses weaving to and fro
Creating complex patterns along the road
Take life in hand to cross the street
Especially if traffic policeman there

Pedestrians mingling together
Shopping, strolling, sight seeing
Tangled web thus created
Stop for nibble along the way

Lots of restaurants and bars
Which to choose is an art
Rely on trusted, tried method
Follow the locals for refreshment

Good to visit this time of day
Different aura on display
To complete my impression
Panjim city, Goa's capital

Economic growth.

India, one leader in economic race
Pace of growth exceeding West
Natural resources aplenty
Wealth potential endless

Opportunity for benefits spreading
Most unlikely with speculators
Temptation to borrow against growth
Become as vulnerable as before

Already signs, example of West being followed
Rich becoming richer, poor getting poorer
Same malaise as besets all

God of possessions comes to the fore

Is there still hope for this land?
So often conquered but never owned
Will the Hindu faith influence again?
Concentrating minds away from greed

There are hopes that beliefs won't change
Fundamentally India will remain the same
Infrastructure growing yearly
Honoured cow still roams freely

Traffic chaos.

Horns blasting, tempers rising
Traffic stationary, grid-locked
Normal scene on Goan streets
Never giving way, tail gating

Today witnessed new tension
Fistycuffs and general mayhem
Bike bumped into motorcar
Irate driver went into attack

Soon crowd joined in the fun
Arriving from all directions
Opportunity for physical combat
Relief from boredom of waiting

Even women joined in the affray
Brought to scene by youngsters
Would their calming influence
Quell the masculine aggression

No effect there seemed to be
Battle raged from street to street
Only end came to motorist's war
When heat brought on exhaustion

Flowers

Flowers, flowers, floor to ceiling

Such varied colours, so appealing
Flowers, flowers of every fragrance
Nature's jam packed in this space

Flowers gathered from this fair land
Sent over the world for flower stands
From paddy fields when rice cropped
Soon for sale in your local shop

Flowers for every conceivable occasion
Their presence needed on all celebrations
Flowers mixed in exquisite displays
Flowers for lovers to show they care

Eye Doc.

Always a pleasure when in these parts
To visit my friend the Eye Doc
Check the eyes to see all right
Discuss the times we live in

Lens' clear, no need for Laser shooting
Oilcan for sticky eyes, glasses for reading
Riots in the UK reminded him of India
Gap between rich and poor ever increasing

Embarrassed when parking big 4*4
Next to labourers digging
Certain trouble will soon arise
Between the need and the greed

As usual, friendly and easy manner
Genuinely pleased to see you
With such personalities India will survive
Adjustments to new standards of living

Farewell.

Taxi booked, cases packed
Ready to return to Thurnham
Some farewells already made
Eat with Guerish at seven today

The three weeks have flown by
Enjoyed the company and the rides
Increased my knowledge of India
But will never really understand it

Only twice visited the beach
Aloe Gobi not so much a treat
Only occasionally on a bus ride
Those things for sharing avoided

Spent much time sorting my mind
In which direction should life take?
Enlightened reality of what is needed
Quest now set, how to achieve it?

Emotional isolation been of benefit
No distractions to tease the heart with
Remote from the possibility of touch
Physically painful, but what was needed

Will I return to this land I love?
Depends on ventures yet to come
Not to guess on what lies ahead
But a place here always for me

.

Tony Pitman

More People

Pete

Pete thinks of eternity by his parent's grave,
Wondering if they're looking down his way.
Remembers life in their care,
Sixty years ago when but a child.

Pete was raised in their faith,
Strict and severe in all its ways.
Punishment if Mass was missed,
Fear, not love, mostly stressed.

Pete threw off these shackles as a man,
Ploughs through life the best he can.
Considers the faith that came with birth
A myth and burden to be dispersed.

Pete puzzles at his thoughts by the grave;
If discarded, why this faith trace?
Reason says, no God, no eternity.
Why imagine his parents are looking at him?

Pete reasons it's a blast from the past;
Brain washed ideas will always last.
The notion will pass as he leaves the scene
But perhaps his parents were praying for him.

Sad sods

If you look you'll see them everywhere,
Sat alone on bench or chair;
Usually staring straight ahead,
Unsmiling mouth, eyes quite sad.

Statues you could mistake them for,
Unwanted sculptures abandoned there.
Often drab and quite seedy,
Seen better days when less needy.

Always look strange and out of sorts;
Found in locations that don't seem right.
Why do they come to spots so alien?
Did they not learn on the last occasion?

Do they derive some satisfaction,
Always on the fringe of the action?
Is it just there's nowhere else to go?
Poor sad sods, dead of soul.

Ron and Moll

Ron and Moll like Derby and Joan,
Always together, did nothing alone.
Lived their life within their means,
Strong moral code, Christian beliefs.

Ron and Moll ever self sufficient,
Gave of themselves for other's benefit.
The love they possessed as a pair,
Rippled out for many to share.

Ron is now dead, Moll is old,
The fire in her belly going cold.
The years they spent side by side,
No stalwart against being left behind.

Sad reflection on frail human life,
When soul mate's gone, how to survive?
Sustaining support no longer there,
Price of love so difficult to bear.

Uncle Jim

Uncle Jim with card from queen,
'Congratulations on reaching century'.
Tiny and thin is his frame,
But still with all his marbles in.

Rest home on front his residence,
Old folk his new family and chums
Jack Tar, old trawler chap,

Prof. or doc. with dementia.
Fat landladies from long ago,
Shop keepers once owning stores.
Held together for their safety,
Care home providing security.

People from all walks of life,
Brought here, awaiting their card.
Individuals once with private lives,
Under one roof being organised.

Jim seems content with his fate,
Asked to be put in this rest place.
Not to comment on his way to survive,
It's for Jim to make such hypothesis.

Uncle Jim now passed away,
Just following hundredth birthday.
Decided he had reached his goal;
Time to pack up, time to go.

One hundred years of life now over,
What memories he'd have in his locker.
Mixture of happiness, sadness, misery and joy,
Through a life from man back to boy.

Childhood pictures of Curzon Road;
Mam and Dad Pitman with their fold.
Army days in drab khaki wear;
Handcart loaded with painting gear.

With Florrie and kids in Diamond St;
Hard days, jam for bread as a treat.
Work not easy with a bad back;
Pint to quench thirst at Halfway House.

Retirement in Blackpool in son's flat,
Favourite place for wife and chap;
Better still, breaks in Spanish sun;
Shade and local to have some fun.

Goodbye Jim, join your chums,

Awaiting you over the horizon.
My dad will be waiting to finally start,
Decorating partnership with your handcart.

Family tree

Dusty records coming to life;
People jumping out of files;
Carrying labels for recognition;
Giving spirit to family history.

Branches spreading every which way;
Generations appearing from nowhere;
Names never seen, coming to light;
Family on family, once out of sight.

Families growing by the score,
Children born every other year.
Houses bursting at the seams,
But still room to take lodger in.

Infant mortality seemed a curse,
And parents too died young.
Short lives, in time's measure;
Hard life, little longevity

Location changing all the time,
Why did these families move around?
Travel was difficult in their day,
How long to make such journeys?

Try to enter people's minds,
Living life in a different time.
Were they happy and content,
Did life bring enlightenment?

Genetic links to who we are;
Does knowing make it clearer?
Can reasons be given to our traits,
By coming to know our ancestors?

Dad

Bicycle squeaking up the road,
Paint splattered overalls to adorn.
Spectacles as usual needing a push,
Dad's coming home, to him quickly rush.

Always a greeting, a ready smile;
Family man, children his pride.
Joke on his lips, often repeated;
Safe in his arms, all danger defeated.

Strong man in arms and mind;
Small stature, hiding big heart;
Patient and always understanding;
Rarely raised to real anger.

Maintained through life work ethic;
Proud, independent, no social benefit;
Still working in late seventies,
Snooker Hall, leaning on broom handle.

Lucky to have dad like this;
Kind but clear boundaries laid;
Fair and always even handed;
A hand that slapped when needed.

Faithful to beliefs from his birth;
Always with the men on Whit Walks;
Daily communicant for most of his life,
Strange, not acknowledged at his funeral.

Fireside.

Spitting, crackling, fireworks,
Backed up chimney all alight.
Flames dancing, shooting high;
Embers glowing, sucking air.

Natural heat permeates the room;
It's only equivalent a burning sun.
Skin tingles with warmth sensation;
Eyeballs feel as if bursting.

Wood or coal to feed its hunger.
Energy converted to heat and smoke.
Red face set in black surround;
Once heated ovens and kettle pot.

Many a man has sat here,
Eating his grub and having a beer.
A little brass plaque remembers one.
Chris Hadfield his given name.

'The Dalton Alms was home to Chris
He came for a drink and here did sit
He aired his views which packed a punch
He read his paper and had his lunch
He is missed by all his friends'.

Fifty six years he spent on earth;
What was he like, what was his worth?
He obviously had friends who loved him dear;
Why else the plaque to mark he was here?

Fire's dying now; on the wane;
Shot its bolt, too eager to burn.
Flames subdued, struggling for life.
Without more fuel just ash will survive.

People.

People, people everywhere,
Going places or stand and stare.
Some in groups, others alone;
A world of people at every turn.

People, people populating the earth,
Colours to cover full spectrum.
Sizes and shapes of every form,
Impossible to say what is norm.

People, people working and not,
Scratching existence or living it up.
Worried where next meal comes from,

There's nothing left to spend fortune on.

People, people with goals and ambitions,
Some next day, others with vision.
More and more possessions obtained,
Contented peace the mystic's way.

Lonely chap

Who's that chap always sat on his own?
Why not in company like us all?
He solitarily chomps his food like the rest
But no conversation to help digest.
He was out again on the prom today
Strolling along absorbing the sun,
Sipping his brandy drinking a café,
Surely he's lonely with no one to chat to.
What about the evenings after his meal?
A rear table for one supping his beer
Watching the dancing tapping his foot
No one to embrace for jigging and reel
What's his story, what tale to tell?
Long in the tooth and no one to share.
Where's the woman to be at his side?
Every man needs partner or wife.
One thing is certain, don't ask him why,
Such curiosity would invade his privacy.
And anyway there's more satisfaction
Creating our own fantasies on his position.

Single men

Lots of men with no partner;
Some alone, others in company.
Thinking or speaking about their lot;
Normally separation settlements costing much.

Strange, it's never their fault,
Being taken to cleaners on break up.
Ex and solicitor robbing them blind;
Never any justice on this ride.

Relationships starting with much promise,
Ending in bitterness and sour grapes.
Do we expect too much of each other?
Are many capable of long monogamous life?

My son.

Fly away across the sea
To my son and family
Share New Year and the fun
Lots of snow maybe sun

Safe and secure in company
No issues to upset or complicate
Relax and let the world go by
Enjoy the warmth of family

In many ways distance is a bonus
Longer periods together than nearer
Quality time to talk at length
Opportunity to get to know each other

Fascinating how different we are
He of the head, me of the heart
Interesting the difference in approach
He of logic, me of the soul

How wonderful such variation
Nothing worse than cloned son
Both free-willed in living life
No straight jackets restricting choice

In many ways I envy my son
Better father than I was to him
Nurtured with care and skill
Not abandoned when he needed me

Shows no malice at my action
Just accepts that that's life
No reason to give forgiveness
Must learn to forgive myself

Skiers

Skiers waiting to board the plane
Long thin bags with planks in
Kids running in and out the queue
Free at last from ski schools

Up and down mountains they have been
Riding Button Seats, what a thrill
Round and round they spin
Hit your bum till black and blue

All different weathers to endure
Rain, snow, sloppy stuff
Cold and dripping, drying out
For some reason think it's fun

Every year the same crowds
Unlike before, from all parts
Rich and poor, middle class
Perhaps even some on benefits

Resorts drawing with the crowds
Plenty of splints and plaster about
Masochistic need to feel pain
Better than beach in sunny Spain

Green, blue, red and black runs
Depending on skill levels won
Tutored by proficient exponents
In it for job with good bonus

People flying back to Blighty
Had their fun, paid aplenty
Suffered wet, wind and cold
Back home complain, lack of sun

Brothers

Three brothers in this family
Ten year gap between first and last
Siblings with common roots

How different they've turned out to be

Brothers with similar intellect
Nurtured by two parents who cared
Same education, school and sports
Same religion shared from birth

The eldest carried the weight of first
Path leader for the other two to follow
Loner from the start was his burden
Few his friends to help the journey

The youngest was always the baby
Spoilt some would say. Well maybe
Born to parents then older in years
Reared as only child in many ways

The one in the middle had the easy place
Most comfortable spot in any family
Neither leader nor last in line of command
Any clothes passed down to be handed on

Where do variations reside?
In their hearts or in their minds
Why does the way they lived?
Convey little similarities

The first one was always unsettled
Moved from job to job hastily
Never nestled in a couple relationship
Disappeared for years without trace

The one in the middle with feet firmly planted
Stoically did the same job till retirement
Married twice, each time a failure
Raised five kids, hardly ever sees them

The youngest also married too soon
Girl pregnant, like the one above
Four children, who remain close
Domineering wife now cast aside

Are these life styles alone sufficient?
To indicate where lies the difference
Do they show what these brothers are?
Or must we dig much deeper?

Arthur now lives in residential care
Spends his time in his own company
Reads and contemplates on life
Base of his beliefs, that God is love

Michael has his Chinese lady friend
Thinks life is wonderful in new found land
Sees success residing in worldly happiness
Make the most of life, God doesn't exist

And me, in my seventies what do I believe?
Still searching for that idyllic love
Can never accept what life clearly teaches
Heart permanently stuck in cloudy reaches

If the parents are observing the brothers
If judgement their way, what would it be?
All three have grown quite differently
Is that a sign of their good parenting?

Trevor

Welcoming, warm and friendly
Eager our Trevor to give attention
Funny stories of building trade
Trevor rolls out, self-deprecatingly

Earned a bob or two over the years
Travelling around at his trade
Employed men to aid the work
Trevor would always treat them well

Now retired he still rises early
Get wife and kids to work and study
Strong family man is our Trevor
The girls his joy and pleasure

Overwhelming hospitality, Trevor's way
Ply you with drinks and food all day
'Is the chair comfy; want the TV on? '
Even cadge you a fag if that's your want

Always attentive in conversation
Listens with interest and funnels down
Then at the end, to my embarrassment
'Why call me Trevor, my name is Kev? '

'Where did Trevor come from? '
'And where's he gone? '

Jack the lad

Jack the lad lauding his place
Proud of his masculinity
Says the shape of man's balls
Purposely made to roll around

Not embarrassed in his boasting
Giving such talents to society
Women appreciative of the service
That's what men do. Don't they?

Jack the lad. Wonder if he's lonely?
Need to relate story to stranger
Does it give him some street cred?
Conquests showing him real man

Interestingly tales always include
Revelation he's in permanent relationship
Partner's preference is line dancing
Great woman, many common interests

Are the conquests real or of his dreams?
Are women taken in or use his needs?
Does he really believe he's in control?
Is it last gasp chance of youthful hopes?

No judgement intended here
Interest in what makes Jack tick

Perhaps his boasts are genuine
Maybe he's just a disillusioned prick

Molly

Sad visit yesterday
Molly accelerating through decay
Mind switched off to reality
Body carrying smell of death

Such a short time it seems to be
From vibrancy to distressing state
Where's the sense of any of it?
Prolonged process of letting go

Conspiracy theory could suggest
Money made from this strategy
Keeping alive people in batteries
Good return on venture capital

Molly no exception in this format
Fellow inmates in same condition
Conversation possible on early visits
Now vacant eyes staring into space

Death must one day come to all
Body machine attacked, worn out
This way of keeping people alive
Kills the spark of human pride

History will condemn this time
Taking dignity out of a life
Tranquillising to maintain control
Men and women zombies in a row

For pity's sake set the spirit free
Not locked inert in this purgatory
No one deserves to die like this
Designer mummies filling seats

Next man

Steve marshalling his troops
Organising time of departure
Showers booked, breakfast over
Hair to dry. Where's the blower?

Today will be scheduled
No 'couldn't-care-less' attitudes
Things to do, places to go
Need to fill hours of holiday

Precise leaving time not given
Girls will need some latitude
Let's say ten we'll depart
Knowing not before eleven start

Anywhere near not appropriate
Car, train and walk needed
Travel essential for this outing
The longer the trip the better

Finally arrive and off we run
Food and drink first priority
Quickly pass tourist's sites
Seat in shade only objective

Precious time we wait for food
Fast consumed then off we go
List of places we must see
No time to stop, absorb atmosphere

Day quickly drifts away
Filled with lots of sustenance breaks
At last final order of the day
Back to station, a hour to wait

Exhausted we return home
Tired and sweaty from many toils
Hardly time to sit and rest
'Next man' planning tomorrow's trip

Tony Pitman

People

Tony's stones.

At last the weather's looking fine,
No more rain the earth will dry.
Time to plough the field for spuds,
But Duncan's tractor's rounding up.

Tony can't wait he knows his soil,
Out with the tiller and get to work.
Pull on the cord with strength and might,
The motor will fire and throb into life.

Man and tiller march down grass path,
The field gets ready to resist assault.
Off they go along the first line,
Wobbly and jerky as creation fights back.

What can I do to help in the struggle?
I have not his strength to man the tiller.
The need to share in his endeavour
Is born from Tony's obvious pleasure.

Stones appear behind his big wellies,
As he marches along the planting furrows.
Big and small, round and pitted,
They rise to the surface as if from sleeping.

Get a bucket and collect them up.
Make piles of them along the edge.
Back and fore the bucket goes,
But on return there's always more.

Once started there's no stopping.
The big man tills and the stones keep popping.
The piles grow higher, will they reach the sky?
What will Duncan think when he passes by?

What foolish venture have I started?
What chance to move what God's planted.

The stones are here for a purpose,
But still I labour with my bucket.

Oh thank you God at last he's finished,
The fight's over, Tony's the winner.
I stand proud by my piles of stones.
As man and tiller return to their home.

A cup of tea round the kitchen table,
As Jenny applauds Tony's effort.
'But didn't he do well collecting the stones? '
'Look at the piles he's managed to gather'.

I looked through the window as my heart swelled,
Were the stones smiling back as they sank in the mud?
Both had finished their work for the day,
They and Tony had made me feel good.

Or should I say loved?

Signalman Joe

Joe sat across the table;
Social chatter from his neighbours.
'I'm sure I know you', Joe said,
But couldn't remember where or when.

'Where do you live? ' Could it be there?
But no, perhaps shopping somewhere?
Maybe its work or social event?
Still no connection raised its head.

The topic was dropped without result,
The general talk to carry on.
Then Joe mentioned with a grin
His experience of National Service.

Catterick was mentioned and the date,
Immediately triggering memories.
Joe was in my barrack room,
Over fifty years since that had been.

All the images came flooding back,
Funny hats and photographs,
Square bashing and scrubbing floors,
Orders barked by Corporal Dodds.

For five decades we'd gone our ways,
Different lives, different worlds.
For a few moments across a table,
We relived a time that had drawn us together.

Strange how folk relate to life,
Joe and I are quite different types,
Unlikely there'd be mutual friendship,
Why this feeling of natural affinity?

We'd met momentary when children,
In a strange place of bewilderment.
Was that the reason for this brotherhood?
Bonds of adversity stronger than blood.

David.

I never even touched his face,
Viewed from distance through glass screen.
Tubes and equipment distracting my stare;
Little chest struggling, gasping for air.

David was only to live thirteen hours;
A lifetime for him in less than a day.
A child born of my loins,
Left to die on his own.

He should have been in my arms,
To know that life can be more than pain;
To feel the strength a Dad can bring;
To experience love before he went.

I know not if, or where he lies,
I was absent from his side.
I left it all in the hands of others,

A stain on my soul, not seeming to bother.

Many years have now passed by,
Filled with laughter, sadness and strife.
Little thought I gave to David,
Almost wiped completely from memory.

No excuses to stand scrutiny;
Man enough to father, my responsibility.
Children are loaned for nurture and care;
I missed the chance while my child was there.

Nearly fifty years since David died,
No mention is made of his time;
No anniversary marked with a tear;
No sign to show he was ever here.

Forgive me my son, if you can.

Johnny Mig.

Johnny Mig's greatest wish,
Have a family, wife and kids.
Married life was his intent,
Numerous girls he asked consent.

Wonder if the burning desire,
Product of childhood denial?
Johnny lived with his old mum,
As far as known, only family.

Johnny did find girl to marry,
Ran Paper shop with his family.
Augmented income with odd jobs,
Chauffeur at funerals earned a bob

Did Johnny's dream materialise?
Did family life meet his desires?
Who best to judge the outcome?
Perhaps a word from his grandson?

'He made the best porridge in the whole world'.
Just a little note on Johnny's death anniversary.
A simple epitaph given in love,
Yes Johnny, your dream came good.

The enemy?

Three young couples here together,
Sharing the sun and holiday pleasure.
Travelled across Asia to arrive at this place;
Hail from the Ukraine, once a Red State.

Just like young people since time began,
Frolicking and playing, having fun.
At a glance they could be from anywhere;
Just happy beautiful folk without a care.

Yet less than three decades ago,
Their parents were seen as our enemy.
Part of the Iron Curtain's Eastern block;
A danger to our lives and security.

But these youngsters don't look a threat;
They have no horns or feet that are webbed.
How did we come to have the belief?
They were monsters, menacing unseen

Of course we were fed misinformation;
Time honoured spin psychology.
Propaganda to create an enemy,
The meat of battles between ideologies.

Even looking at these lovely people,
I know we'll still not learn to question;
Being convinced again of new enemies.
Perhaps first we should observe them on a beach

Tom

Tom's funeral wake was in a pub,

Snooker table spread with grub,
Beer pumped by hand from casks,
Spirits from optics with mucky glass.

Small pub, low beams, little doors,
Left unchanged on Yorkshire Moors.
Built by rough hands with local stone,
In terrace of houses on main road.

Family and friends who knew Tom,
Gathered here to remember him.
One man had drawn us together;
Yet strangers also, one with the other.

Those assembled broke into groups,
Similar interest by relationships.
Common contact with the man now buried,
Sharing knowledge by stories remembered.

Listening on the side, what a surprise,
Man described not the Tom in my life.
That Tom I'd known for many years,
They'd seen quite different than my eyes.

But why astonished by new aspects?
We're all comprised of many facets.
Only real mystery to be solved,
How we decide which one to show.

Little man.

Little man that life's passed by,
Not in status, nor in size.
Mind and spirit turned down low;
Missed so much that was on show.

Eyes distracted by things of greed,
Far surpassing his human needs.
Ears blocked by noise and din,
Drowning nature's whispering hymns.
Heart just used for pumping blood,

Closed down tight to feel what's good.
Head accepting only things proven,
Senses not tuned to all awareness

Judged eagerly in black and white;
No sense of doubt or compromise.
Only believed what was told;
Blind to things not written bold.

Little man with pompous pride,
Thought he understood life.
Little man so ignorant,
Lived a life quite bare.
Little man sadly missed the chance,
Given to him in a life's span.

Tony Pitman

Seasons

April

April beginning the first signs of spring.
Showers to start the summer blooms.
Lengthening days, warmer sun;
Beware of nights, frost can come.

Daffs, Tulips, Anemones still in flower;
Leaf buds bursting trees into glory;
Magnolia flowers opening like hands;
Cherry Trees bearing white and pink strands;
Forsythia and Gorse glowing bright yellow;
Flowering Currents on fire with colour;
Privets covered in carpet of green,
Hiding the beauty of garden scenes.

Birds in new plumage, singing clearly;
Lambs growing from new grass feeding;
Squirrels finishing winter hoard;
Snails appearing from under plant pots;
Worms surfacing from thud of rain drops;
Woodlice scurrying from lifted stones,
Discovered place of their winter homes.

April the start of new beginnings;
Where better to see it than in the garden.
Nearer to Nature, nearer to God;
The joy of creation in one spot.

Spring in the garden

Calling Blackbird is the first sign,
He's preparing a nest for his mate.
Pick his spot for a new home,
The first of his families soon to be born.

Great Tit appears in his finery,
Waistcoat washed and gleaming;
Head held high to show it off;

He really is the garden toff.

There's a Thrush on the wall,
Having a look to pick a spot;
Needs to know if there are enough snails;
The size of his brood will need a lot.

Blue Tits performing gymnastics,
Defying gravity with their antics.
Time to play for they know their site,
They came and booked it November time.

Early May

Sheltered from wind by corner stones.
Blackpool Tower makes spike stab sky.
Clouds still, wind on the ground.
Planes with white tails not grounded by ash.

Tide sucked out, filling the sea;
Flat shore stretches as far as can see;
Lighthouse stranded all alone,
Since nineteenth century anchored to stone.

Satin sheen grass caressed by wind,
Twinkling feathers reflecting sun's beams.
Dandelion heads open wide,
Photocells recharging plant's energy cells.
Little Sea Pinks waiting to bloom,
Salt air lovers will appear in June.

Swallows ducking, diving, showing off;
Hares with bob tails on zigzag paths.
Black and white shapes roaming fields,
Heavy with calf, udders on heels.

Abandoned Farmhouse, boarded and sad;
Once the home of Cockerham lad;
Tended these fields with love and care;
Fulfilling life but some pain he'd share.

Abby Canons collecting their tithe;

Salmon caught in ebbing tide.
Songs of thanksgiving with evening prayer;
Spirits high with prospect of supper fare.

June

June the start of summer blooms;
Colour bursting from green buds.
Filling every inch to spare,
Planted again too close together.

Begonias, Geraniums, Impatiens,
Reared in warmth for early start;
Now free to spread their wings,
Displaying to all their grandeur.

Summer perennials reach for the sky,
Biding their time to join the display.
Filling the space between earth and heaven,
Before enjoying the colour canopy.

Returning Swallows swooping in,
Twist and dive at speed of light.
Coming home to raise their broods,
From far-off lands in Africa.

Swifts gliding on currents high,
Catching tit-bits flying by,
Courting and sleeping on wings outstretched,
Whilst cousin Martin spits to cement her nest.

Flaming June

Flaming June, what a laugh
Windy and poring buckets
Cats and dogs raining down
Plants and trees battered

English summer no longer to enjoy
Where's the hot days had as a boy?
Woollens and raincoats at the fore
T-shirts as dusters, nothing more

Daytime shortened by lack of sun
Spring time passing direct to Fall
Diverse climates rolled into one
Where have our beautiful seasons gone?

Is there conspiracy afoot?
Genetic manipulation by scientists
Create bad weather is the order
Divert attention from economic disaster

July.

Garden now full to burst;
Plants plying for earth and air,
Racing each other to fill the space;
Climb too high, blown on their face.

St John's Wart a common sight.
Bushes laden with heavy blooms;
Roses of every hue and shape,
Filling garden and wall space.

July the peak of summer display,
More plants in flower, less fade.
Watering needs hard to predict,
Rains all week or watering can trip.

Baby Robin pays a visit,
First trip out on his own.
Feathers all fluffy and scraggy,
Uncertain of his footing.

Shows no fear standing there,
Looks me straight in the eye;
Try him with a bit of cheese;
Gobbles it down with ease.

Hangs about the rest of the day,
Expecting another tasty morsel;
Later joined by younger brother,
Both watching what's on offer.

August

Signs of summer's end acoming,
Autumnal browns in the trees;
Flowering coming to conclusion,
Green once more predominates.

Begonias still bursting blooms,
To continue for weeks to come.
Gladioli yet to flower forth,
Delayed because of shady cover.

Weather wet, no need to water;
Cold evenings fast descending.
Summer time seems so short,
Is it global warming's fault?

Garden growth approaching end;
Not much call to chop and chip.
Bushes reaching final size,
Soon to shed their foliage.

Summer game

Grass cropped short, a number two;
Brown in patches, no rain due.
Boundary lined, crease measured and marked;
Stumps knocked in, bails apart.

What could be a more English scene;
Cricket grounds or village greens?
Men with caps, dressed in white;
Umpires wearing Panama hats.

Fielders set in their places;
Crouching low or to wicket pacing.
Batsman nervously patting ground;
Bowler on run-up to hurl ball down.

Thud of Willow or gasp at miss;
Maybe a catch or run hit.

Leather ball bouncing over ground;
Third man on knee praying, 'don't hit mound'.

Match to be played in leisurely manner;
Conducive to peace of mid summer.
Not a game of bullish aggression;
Cricket's there for gentleman's pleasure.

October

Autumnal leaves cover the ground,
All sizes, all colours they tumble down.
Sweep them together and gather up,
Tomorrow will bring down another lot.

Last of summer colours soon to go,
Except for rogues who think it's spring.
Lawn lumpy, full of worm castes,
Perennials fading, dying back fast.

Time to clear Atrium,
Cacti waiting for winter home.
Spiders moved from cosy corners,
Made to find shelter in other abode.

Autumn the setting for spring;
Not of death but new beginnings.
New shoots already show,
To withstand winter, even snow.

Birds returning to feed on fruit,
Provided by trees and shrubs.
Nuts will soon be on the menu,
Scattered on bird table, if I remember.

November

November the start of winter proper;
Chilly nights and firework poppers.
Ice cold winds and bright days
Grey rain, when sun hides away.

Last of autumnal colour going,
Dying out in grand encore.
Golden avenues where spirits can prance,
Blowing away on east wind's dance.

Deciduous trees stripped of cover,
Standing proud in birthday clobber.
Fingers pointing every which direction,
Silhouettes 'gainst sky's colour selection.

Flocks of tits visiting our gardens,
Chattering whilst picking last morsels.
Are they playing, having fun?
No, selecting spring nesting homes.

November the time for nature's reflection,
Taking stock prior winter's defection.
Which plants have thrived, set their seeds?
All overseen by majestic, master trees.

December

Nature sleeps as sales ascend;
Christmas dominates year's end.
Cards and presents to the fore;
Travel for parties by the score.

Christian festival but few believe,
Birth of Christ no longer seen.
Commercial opportunities seized,
Pay by credit card as tills ring.

Time for children and make-belief,
Santa and reindeers on the wing.
Christmas morn and turkey roasting,
Playing games, family gathering.

Crisp bright days or misty wet;
Hoar frost crystals forming nests.
Icy patches, watch your step,
Lead with heel and risk your neck.

Crunchy grass trod underfoot,
Soil globules forming crusts.
Evergreens still giving colour,
Occasional primrose breaking cover.

Blackbirds chirping their dawn call,
Feathers fluffed out for warm ball;
Inspecting garden for spring nest find,
Family rearing dominating mind.

January

Cold and wet, occasional sun,
Depth of winter and Christmas gone.
Many resolutions of good intent,
Unlikely to last to month's end.

New Year sales, bargains to be had,
Little cash, credit payments bad.
Lots of goodies still left over,
Chomp away, waistline growing

Garden awakening from its sleep,
Bulb shoots taking a first peep.
Days are lengthening all the time,
Sun journeying back from Capricorn.

Crystal clear views on bright days,
Light and shade in stark display.
Images defined in sharp outline,
No fudge or blur deceiving the eye.

February

Snow flakes falling out the sky,
Glide, soar and flutter as butterflies.
Gently land to join the crowds,
Building together, forming mounds.

Child's joy to see the sight;
Downhill sledging, snowball fights.
Maybe school will close today,

Perfect conditions for free holiday.

What can be used on which to slide?

Piece of tin, plastic, anything that glides.

Snow compacts on Bobsleigh run;

Maximum use before turns to slush.

Garden covered in white wool mat;

Trees and bushes sporting Busby hats.

Plants force up boreholes to breathe,

Drooping Snowdrops still to be seen.

Birds hop from bush to earth,

Producing a flurry of crystal pearls.

Bodies too light to sink in snow,

See line of walk, prints of three toes.

Tits, Blackbirds, Doves pay call,

Searching for grub at the garden stall.

Brilliant blank canvas to display the scene,

Painted by feathered friends on a spree.

March

Daffs starting to lift their heads,

Anemones flowering with great zest.

Colours returning to garden sites,

Greetings of spring to lift the heart.

Roses sprouting new branch growth,

Magnolia flowers ready to burst.

Evergreen bushes swapping their suits,

Greetings of spring is their salute.

Perennial sleepers coming to life,

Soon to fill those winter gaps.

Tree buds swelling at a fast rate,

Greetings of spring they all display.

Blackbirds preparing for first broods,

Prodigious breeders our garden birds.

Tits will soon select family nests,

Greetings of spring worn proud on their breasts.

Temperatures rising day by day,
Anytime cold snap on the way.
March winds can still bring the snow,
But greetings of spring they can't blow.

Tony Pitman

Two Men I Knew

Two men I knew.

Once I knew two big men.
One called Tony, the other John.
Tony was Welsh and roamed about,
John was Manch and didn't move out.

John never thought himself a scholar,
Could enlist help without bother.
Tony with much education,
Taught and farmed with vocation.

Different as these blokes may seem,
Both drew people as honey the bee.
Young, old and children especially
Felt the magnetic effect of their presence.

In our world of material success,
Where wealth and position are the tests,
What was it about these two men
That made us sit up and look at them?

Was it their noses, both big and large?
Seen at their best in side profile.
Concorde was Tony's, ready to land.
John's a hill ridge tipped on its side.

Is a person's appearance the answer?
Or just a shell to display their ancestor.
Do nature and learning have a bearing?
Maybe only tools for man's working.

If you asked John what made him tick,
All he'd say was "I don't know";
Tony would smile and toss his hair
Feel his shirt pocket for a fag not there.

Both are now gone, passed away,
No more laughter, no more pain.

We are poorer from their loss,
Heaven is richer for its gain.

Now on reflection I need to assess,
What made them special, why so blessed?
What pulled us to them like moth to light?
Why this great ache when I awake at night?

The answer may be they made us feel good.
That brought us to them, our need to be loved.
Both would laugh at such a suggestion,
Both had their way of bringing affection.

Each saw the world as family and friends
The needs of others before their own ends.
A greeting from both, genuine and warm,
Would light up the day to feel like home.

This was the measure of these two men,
Big in stature, bigger still in sense.
They knew what living was really about
And thanked each day that God had sent.

We lost them both in just one year;
No not gone, they'll always be here.
Their essence is much bigger than death,
How huge it must be now they're together.

Rest in deep peace John and Tony.
You've walked the path, completed the journey.
The world is better from the visit.
You touched us all with your spirits.

Tony Pitman

Why?

Why was such love possible?
Extremities of joy and sadness
So little in commonality
Yet being close was magic

Why was such love possible?
Without great physical attraction
So different in life style choices
Yet any touch was magnetic

Why was such love possible?
When no chance of relationship
Vulnerability and trust always absent
Yet closeness made parting so difficult

Why was such love possible?
What was nature's purpose for it?
No fulfilment with this love
Brief moments of utter ecstasy

Why was such love possible?
Would separation diminish it?
Distractions with other pursuits
Resulted in aching more acute

Why was such love possible?
So deep it disturbed the emotions
Was it life's grand passion?
Too late arriving in dotage

Why was there so much torment?
Masochistic tendencies to the fore
Finally accepting unrequited love
Will 'why' question be no more?

Tony Pitman

Writing

Revival.

For fifty years no poem I wrote,
No thought of verse or rhyme.
No great desire to write things down;
Not since adolescent time.

Was my life so full or distracted,
To lose all sense of awareness?
Why stop the only way I have,
To open my heart and speak my mind?

Tony's death started the revival,
The need to say what I thought of him.
Closely followed by beloved John;
Only this way to describe the loss of them.

Once restarted I cannot stop;
So much to relate in such little time.
Can't speak the words my heart feels
But through this form I can reveal.

So why this drive to write things down,
In a form hard to comprehend?
Why this need to expose the heart,
When not done since early times?
Why this struggle to find the words,
To express the indescribable?
Why this hope, connect heart to head,
When the brain lacks common sense?
Why this compulsion to pick up the pen,
When it was decided it would end?
Why this scratching at old sores,
Making them bleed once more?

Is it to leave my mark on the world?
But the words are written for my soul.
Is it to sort out the mind?
Confused since being a child.

Is it to find the spirit within?
Buried beneath endless din.
Is it to discover who I am?
Peel away the layers whilst I can.
Is it to quieten the demons that lurch?
Confusion with love, passion and Church.
Is it to find peace at last?
Rediscover the truth that's lost.

Whatever the reason it will go on,
Till the ink runs dry or the need has gone
Whatever people may think of the words,
They're only written to quench my thirst.
Whatever the result of the quest,
It will be accomplished.

Words.

What words could describe,
The song of a lark in the sky,
The lapping tide on the shore,
The sight of a tree in glory,
The sun setting in the western sky,
Clouds drifting round cliffs high.
Sounds and sights not for words,
For none can do them justice.
The heart's receptive to such things,
Can only relate triggered feelings.

Writing odes

Writing odes is my response
To express stirrings come upon
Thoughts triggered by things seen
Feelings translated to vocabulary

It's my way of making sense
Sorting webs I find confusing
Describing emotions as they beset
In some ways a personal diary

For long periods the writing dries

No need to note life's events
Then suddenly can't stop the flow
Just like a smoker on the weed again

Blank sheet of paper

Blank sheet of paper staring back at me
Demanding the feel of a pen, writing
Almost threatening in appearance
A challenge to write, something, anything

Or is it a mirror reflecting the soul?
Needing expression from out of the core
Sense and feelings, deep, deep buried
Writing giving freedom of expression

Just the first mark on the paper is required
Then the flow will be started
Outline sketch appears like lightening
No forward planning in this endeavour

Words pouring out as pen scribbles
Gaseous explosion as cork's removed
The soul given a channel of exit
Rushes forth with all it has to say

As the pen slows and writing dries
The soul's decided it's said enough
No matter the mind wants to proceed
The soul demands, outpouring's ended

The paper once empty now full of words
Inner sense calm, task completed
No threat now from blank piece of paper
Till next time soul needs a mirror

Surprise image

Words I use to try paint the scene
Not a description of type or form
How the image moves my heart
Is what I attempt to record

Sometimes when finished surprises appear
Double meaning of what's written
More than sense of image recorded
Different scene appears before me

This much more than mere coincidence
Soul with important message to give
Perhaps dark corner mind refuses to light
Discoveries displayed on back of rhyme

Like Pandora's box, full of revelations
Only ask heart to speak if ready for truth
Once the floodgates are ajar
Spirit decides what to write

Little red book

My little red book for company;
To write my thoughts as they come.
Ideas I can express freely,
Without the need of explanation

Tony Pitman