MY WORD in YOUR EAR
Selected Poems 2001 - 2015

think for yourself with others in mind

Richard Scutter
National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

Creator: Scutter, Richard, author.

Title: My word in your ear : selected poems 2001 - 2015 / Richard Scutter.

ISBN: 9780987242716 (paperback)

Subjects: Australian poetry.

Dewey Number: A821.4

Copyright © 2016 Richard Scutter

Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of study, research, criticism, review, or as otherwise permitted under the Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission. Inquiries should be directed to the author

Printed in Canberra by Bytes ’n Colours
Dedication

To Maureen
Sophie, Ava, Olivia, Emmeline
For two
word

Song of the Universe

every voice
endless rapture
your

voice
oration instilled
creating eternity

I started a greater involvement in poetry after my retirement in 2001 at the time of the internet expansion. Communication is so fast and furious nowadays and there is such a flood of words on offer that I just had to add my words to the fray. I currently have a poetry blog named ‘My Word in Your Ear’ and so I thought it equally appropriate to use this title.

The poems cover the period from 2001 to 2015. In the main I have selected poems where there has been unsolicited appreciation. In one case I was taken aback when a dear lady mentioned that she had put one of my poems on her fridge door and made a point of reading it before breakfast.

I agree with Robert Frost that a poem should be valued ‘pure without any wrappings’. However I have included some of my own images against a number of poems especially those in the Landscape Section. Poems of this nature, where another art form is used in conjunction with the poem text, are known as ‘ekphrastic’ and currently this appears quite a popular form of presentation. All the images are my own or from my wife Maureen unless otherwise stated.

I hope readers find the poems entertaining and thought-provoking even if they don’t quite reach the vaulted heights of fridge-door status.

Richard Scutter, February 2016
## Contents

### Landscape

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Garden Eyes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green to Brown</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Dance</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Ends</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn Air on Mount Painter</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drought at Lake George</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind Farm Country</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn is Always Afternoon</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Accident</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Sea</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopping One Day</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daintree Drowning</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Wet Days</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Foulwind Walk</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only Two Lips</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Latest Forecast</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awake My Love</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Death and Life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Breaking of the Drought</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kind Death: Keeper of Your Word</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America Beautiful</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Release Me</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the End of the Day</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Emergency Now</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fragrance of Flanders</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Breath of Air</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Last Visit to Mum</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacred Ground</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closure</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Two of Us</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Life and Death</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*continued* ...
With Other Poets

Bianca and Kate 39
In Gratitude 40
In Remembrance 41
The Healthy Worm 42
Paging Geoff 43
Edge Walk 44
A Meta Metamorphosis 46
Fathers and Sons 48
Go Gentle and Enjoy Your Last Day 49

Miscellany

Red Hat 53
Anointing Ann Anonymous 54
Men Shedding 56
Gran Always Called Her Joy 57
Australia Day 2007 58
Ant Attack 60
A Token Life 61
Guidance from Above 62
Mermaids Singing 63
Passing Love 64
Finding Happiness 65

Frivolous

Metal Jazz at Moruya 69
Early Morning Run at Batehaven 70
He was not superstitious 72
March of the Killer Crabs 73
Seeking Revenge 74
A Silly Burst of Syllables 75
Haiku Pieces 76
Four Fun Limericks 78
Arthroscopic Attention 79
### Spiritual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yesterday and Today</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Unearthly Perspective</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Quiet Day at St Mark’s</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMG Just Imagine</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Let Your Beauty</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Nothing God</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paradise Ignored</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolution</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be Inspired By Christ</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Mother-in-Law Problem</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song of the Universe</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Poetry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growing the Poetry</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poets Are</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words Waiting</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Anonymous Poem</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Words</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Epilogue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Identified</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You and Me</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank many in the local poetry scene who have encouraged my writing over the years especially Queanbeyan poet Alan Watts who has supported me from my first days of involvement with poetry following retirement.

I would particularly like to thank all my special friends in Canberra University of the Third Age.

I also give recognition to the ACT Veterans Athletics Club and the Holy Covenant Anglican Church at Cook, Canberra for their supportive role in publishing my poetry whenever submitted.

I am indebted to Alan Watts and John Hunt for review of this work and for advice on publication.

And it goes without saying I would like to thank family and friends, especially Maureen my ever supportive wife, partner, and critic.
Landscape
Landscape
Garden Eyes

walking through her garden eyes
clouds depart to clear the way
flowers in sunlight cause surprise

into a world that mystifies
pretty shades come out to play
walking through her garden eyes

dandy smiles and dainty sighs
dance the breeze in disarray
flowers in sunlight cause surprise

depth of colour intensifies
gleaming joyous with the day
walking through her garden eyes

teasing the mind to tantalize
different faces have their say
flowers in sunlight cause surprise

carefree letting the path decide
wandering in thought I dream away
walking through her garden eyes
flowers in sunlight cause surprise
Green to Brown

this is no gentle autumn smile
to colour the slip of an ageing year

and after the cool generosity
of early spring rain
there was a certain prospect
that the greening of the land
was more than just a transient flush

but dashed in days
this frown of burning brown
colours more than the changing hills
as the thought of summer heat
sweats at an already exhausted body

Footnotes

*In 2009 Canberra experienced record heat in November which is the last month of spring. The average day temperature throughout the month was above 30 degrees.*

*Published in the Canberra Times*
Summer Dance

the gracious movement of her being
brightens morning with light and laughter
heaven moves through her cloudless sky
a soft translucent wind stirs

her emerald eyes spin thoughts of love
a gentle warmth permeates my body
she is pure joy sifting across cool waters
a champagne sweep across the countryside

momentarily she holds her figure
then, with a glance, she trails before me
an evening gown burnt by a golden sun
as slowly her body brushes the earthen floor

Summer Ends

heat dissipates like an ice-cream melt
colours disappear as swimmers desert the sand
the last couple converse at the beach-end
while only seagulls are left to peck at car-park chips
Autumn Air on Mt Painter

the apple crispness
presents with cutting clarity
the early morning light
yielding its muted colours
in rediscovery of shape and form

nature is transmuted
in a spider-spun fragility
the Brindabella amphitheatre redefining
while in the valley sweep
horses steam in slow movement

a kingdom of thistle heads
their crowns pillaged
and washed thin of colour
stand testimony to the heady days
of the hot summer-party

while far below
cars collect at traffic lights
give a distant murmur
token to another world
unknowing of this ephemeral magic

a certain peace prevails
captured in the calm
after-taste of summer
a breath of quiet surrender
lingers a gentle submission

Footnote
Mount Painter is in central Belconnen, Canberra.
Drought at Lake George

Lake George is dead
more a case of a passing
slowly at first
then swiftly, gone

years ago
it was another story
bird-life endeared the eye
water and sky sang in soft harmony

now the relentless sun continues to suck
drill burns the core
cracks, breaks
opens the wound

old fence-posts stretch the expanse
stand dying in the distance
in the afternoon still only cicadas
shrii in the vibrant heat
Wind Farm Country

as if an alien God threw gigantic spears
in random fashion fathomed deep into the ground
the shafts cluster to shock the skyline hills
in a steel structure out of all proportion

I view in Lilliputian awe
with eyes that never quite come to terms
then watch as the starch-stiff scissored hands
turn in a slow monster movement

the car window now disappears the site
mesmerised by this intrusion of the mind
these foreigners still frame my passing thoughts
of where, and from what country?

Footnote
'Wind Farm Country' was published in the Canberra Times with a photograph.
Autumn is Always Afternoon

Autumn is always afternoon
that time after lunch in the garden
the plates scattered to one side
but still some wine in the glass

the children at play in the background
the old swing objecting strongly
while discussion leads to friends they've known

far-off the low moan from the motorway
the sun still gives some comfort
as shadows stretch into the lawn
soon it will be time to call the children to task
but now they talk and laugh oblivious

a gust of wind detracts and for a moment
she looks down to the end of the garden
where the children are at play
her fingers feel her woollen jacket on the chair

and if you could hold time in a photograph
it would be caught in this moment forever
in a picture of complete happiness
Animal Accident

Empty night road
stars with the moon off centre.
Talking of people met, then
bigger than a Qantas\textsuperscript{2} tail plane
highlighted by car light
it was before the windscreen.

Inevitable as judgement day
Tony shouting \textit{kangaroo}
the brake screech
rubber hot into the road
and thud!
Shocked stillness.

Dark paddocks alongside
the parked car steaming
and we on centre stage
enter the evening chill.
inspect the damaged bonnet,
radiator intact and car driveable.

the roo lying in right hand lane
motionless except for a watery eye
alive to our movement.

Dragging the broken body
clearing the road for traffic
streaking her wet internals.

Our car disappears.
The countryside reclaims the night.
The grass verge cradles a dying animal.

There will be no flowers.

Footnotes

1This poem was based on a personal encounter with a kangaroo and thanks to Tony for help in dealing with the situation.

2Qantas - Australian airline. Accidents involving kangaroos are common in rural areas of Australia. An organisation called WIRES (Wildlife Injury Rescue Emergency Service) exists to help injured animals.
Landscape

Caseys Beach Batehaven, New South Wales

**Winter Sea**

applique on applique of dulling light
washes the bland sky-sea merge
into an ever increasing dark

spates of seaweed disgorge a thick edge
the lonely remnants of empty days
the late afternoon drifts to an early close

finally the beach is lost from sight
but an intermittent sigh continues
like a sallow woman refusing death
Stopping One Day

I remember one day in June.
The height of summer and the sun
still rising on one of those days
that calls all nature into song.

Biking the back lanes of the Hampshire countryside.
Stopping on a bridge over a stream
the clear sparkling chatter below, while beyond
the fields praising their contentment.

Footnote
It was one of those startling English summer days in June. The sun stretching and all
nature responded as I cycled down the lane thinking of my future. I stopped on a narrow
bridge over a little stream totally intoxicated with the joy of life. It is an image I have
retained in my mind.
Daintree Rain Forest, Northern Queensland

Daintree Drowning

as on the moon untouched
we step into sifting winter rain
sixty million years of rainforest wilderness
the endless down-drip green dispersion
as dank moist exudes from the gorged undergrowth

in summer a metre can fall in half an hour
our thoughts are awash by such enormity
it is not man that disturbs the upright integrity
water and wind weep down in continual amendment
while trees fight back skywards in tropical adjustment

and each night we drown in the ceaseless sea-sound
the wave-sigh flowing over our inert bodies
while the canopy combines wet-shaking its intimacy
with intermittent morse-splatter on metal,
the window riddles and rattles in back-chat

on the last day, and well before dawn
we arise in total darkness with wild expectation
walking passed the estuarine crocodile sign
we explore the open beach, our appointment
with a cassowary is not reciprocated

Footnote
The Daintree in northern Queensland is known for rain and when we stayed there in basic bungalow accommodation we were not disappointed.
On Wet Days

on wet days morning scratches
like a dog at your door

the close-in tight encounter of cloud
the mesmerising knock of rain on tin
mitigating any movement
the bed hard to break
the snug warmth of your own body
gives a lullèd contentment from just being

reluctantly you know you have to answer
to open the door on your day
Cape Foulwind\textsuperscript{1} Walk

on a summer day winter crowds-in to submerge
the sky and sea sweep together enclosing thoughts
no imagination is needed for this foul named place
this country continually perforated by wind driven rain

the weather deepens impregnating every footstep
the old Gortex\textsuperscript{2} coat starts to slowly dampen from the inside
but the path is set along the cliffs to the promised sight of seals
as wekas\textsuperscript{3} scout around before darting to their rabbit hole existence

then that point is reached when saturated by the wet
resigned acceptance takes authority absorbed to the conditions
but when wailing guttural sounds waft up in the squall
thoughts turn inside out to the rocks far below

oblivious of any impending storm, with thick skin immunity,
at home, on vacant rock spaces, in waterhole pools,
and indolent in the continual spray of the Tasman chunder,
the seals slub around regardless, in elemental play

Footnotes

\textsuperscript{1}Cape Foulwind is on the New Zealand west coast 20km from the town of Westport.

\textsuperscript{2}Gortex – breathable waterproof material.

\textsuperscript{3}Weka is a flightless New Zealand bird about the size of a chicken.
Landscape

Only Two Lips

who do you think you are
standing so pert and penal
asserting yourself in rich colour
arrogant, obvious
demanding my attention

well I’m not falling for it!
such a brazen showing
with your closed-mouth talk
I will give you what you deserve -
lip service, and just you wait

your day will come
believe me, you will bend
becoming quite dishevelled
falling to kiss the ground
in total disarray

Footnote
Written for a Canberra University of the Third Age Art Exhibition on the theme of spring flowers.
The Latest Forecast

in response to the terrorist attack in Martin Place, Sydney in December 2014

today will be fine with temperatures in the low twenties at 9:00am cloud will build up but the sun will break through by 10:00am to a full rich blue sky just after mid-day clouds from the south will enter with the chance of just a little rain expect about 3-4mm in the form of light drizzle if you live in suburbs to the west of Main Street expect only a touch of moisture the skies will be totally clear again by 3:00pm the mild temperatures will continue ...

early this morning Mr R G who always takes his dog for a walk first-thing was seen walking back home along Ocean Road accompanied by a well-endowed billy goat currently there is no explanation ...

Footnote
Published on the NarratorInternational website.
Awake My Love

Take my hand a bird is singing
golden touch of light is ringing
morning breathes above the sea
promise kept for you and me.

Gentle wind is slowly lifting
misty cloud a veil uplifting
voices rise into the day
give response to what they say.

Strive to serve to love the living
gift on gift enhance the giving
whisper softly in my ear
precious words I need to hear -

Now evening rain is softly falling
sealing both our love and loving.
Death and Life
Death and Life
The Breaking of the Drought

remembering Max

there is a certain feeling to the day
that something will happen

the air massing, with no colour to the sky
sifting itself inside out in turmoil
but the cloud disperses
dissipating expectation

the sun is quick to return
stretches headstrong to the horizon
hard pressing its flat horror
the stunted scrub squeeze-dried

bent over double in submission
the ghost wrap of the winter crop
rattles its dead prayers to the wind
his harvester idle for the season

the long wait begins again
that endless wait for change
day after day of disciplined ritual
waiting for a break in the heavens

in the tomorrow that never came
at dawn in the patched shadow
with the sky groping to contain itself
he walked to the back shed

a sudden, sharp crack-echo
the air shocked still
and it is over,
too soon the family will find
and the endless cry
Kind Death: Keeper of Your Word

only in death is truth known

At daybreak we arrive together.
An upside-down slap engenders the mandatory cry.
The mother-sweet sigh before the coming of maiden aunts.
Joy beams across the sun-drenched room.

You rejoice at my birth or is it your own?
Attached for life a mutual respect will develop.
A kind of friendship forms while others fall away, forget.
Who am I? You know who I am!

Close your eyes,
I am with you always.

.....

(i) On 1 May 1947 Evelyn McHale jumped off the top of the Empire State Building. The first sentence of her suicide note -
‘I don’t want anyone in or out of my family to see any part of me.’
demanded disappearance from the face of the earth.

Her body rested on a crumbled car roof as though lying on a lounge.
It is her face that stuns; a sense of the sublime. Four minutes later a student photographer captured her composed serenity. Her image spread across the world to be immortalised by Andy Warhol.

(ii) His rural village is far from Saigon. Every day he walks past his future with the reverence of ritual. He is too old for labour.
His son now works the family rice field but he can still tend the plot reserved for him.

The covered shrine protects his parents.
Simple flowers neatly placed are a daughter’s daily duty.
Incense is burnt, palms of hands unite and a dignified bow.
Soon it will be his turn to shake hands with his ancestors.
(iii) Antiochus Epiphanes\(^3\) has despatched his brothers. The youngest Maccabee\(^4\) awaits his fate. His mother stands behind him unmoved from her persuasion. Trusting himself and the certainty of his faith his decision is easy.

It is his special time of grace. He moves forward into the fire. And with a joyful heart, smiling his eyes aflame, burning, into the sun.

.....

and the words said in advance ‘thank you’ ... ‘thank you’ ... ‘thank you’

Footnotes

\(^1\)Evelyn McHale. A photography student, Robert Wiles, was at the scene of the suicide and took a photograph of McHale’s body as it lay on the car. It was widely circulated, her suicide labelled the most beautiful.

\(^2\)Andy Warhol used a repetitive grid of 16 images from Wiles’ photograph in his painting Suicide (Fallen Body), 1962.

\(^3\)Antiochus Epiphanes, A Greek king (175 BC - 164 BC) known for persecuting the Jews.

\(^4\)Maccabees – a Jewish group – reference to the martyrdom of seven Jewish brothers, their mother and teacher.
America Beautiful

the torn sky repairs
jet scream silence
searing desert diminishes
smoldering buildings disappear
their life left ruptured
stinking in the sun

her mother protected the shrapnel
her brother dead in the dust
but she is still breathing
unknowing so much
at six months
alive

will hate dictate?
will the gun be her gospel?
and what will she know
of beautiful America
foreign from first breath
on a day of independence

4 July 2007
Release Me

tired with all these to restful death I cry
with apologies to Shakespeare, sonnet 66

the military plane is unseen
high above the sea
her seatbelt is unlocked
she is taken to the cargo door
without ceremony, a rush of cold air

falling ... falling ... falling  she falls
like an angel
stop world! I want out

I had no choice
I was sent on this journey with a kiss
wrapped in warmth, some might even say love
seemingly there was some portent
a sense of being carried in the flow
moving in creation’s active pulse

falling ... falling ... falling  she falls
like an angel

where there was beauty -
where there was faith -
where work held a distraction -
where honour was head high -
where respect gave value -
where duty gave a pride -
where nature’s eye was clear -
where virtue was untainted -
where art showed merit -
where strength was steel -

falling ... falling ... falling  she falls

but that thin line of blood connecting all humanity
finest cover woven of eternal love
invisible safety net
the only release
At The End of the Day

remembering Ron

the last time he went to church
he couldn’t sneak out for a fag
slip into a secret sleep in the sermon
do crosswords as a choir boy
or wonder at the fruit on Mrs Brimacombe’s hat
no, this time it was decidedly different

he had to lie back in silence
but at least he had his own space
and for once in his life
he had himself to himself
with no one to make demands
and today there was no offering to organise

he didn’t hear all the talk and testimonies
the subject matter a little too familiar
he would have been embarrassed
appropriate that this was hidden from him
though he would have appreciated
the playing of the piano by his grandson

more than eighty summers were moulded in his being
cucumber sandwiches, church fetes
the odd game of tennis with other parishioners
family camps at the beach, fishing trips
and card games to the early hours
yarns and cards very much his game

eighty winters of fireside fellowship
in the communion of church circles
but he hadn’t been one for academia
‘they could keep all them books!’
God was within, to be experienced
always part of his daily dialogue

but the service was now ending
the church reclaiming an austere chilliness
the congregation quietly departing
into bright light and morning sun
his grandson last, turning
shutting the heavy church door
Death and Life

View from Suicide Seat, Weston Park, Canberra
*Although the world is full of suffering
   It is full also of the overcoming of it*
Helen Keller (inscription)

**No Emergency Now**

on this early forsaken morning
the sun is yet to make impression
with no warmth to this part of day

there are no children floundering out of parental eye
nor bathers out of depth in deep distress
the life-line stands redundant in the chill air

winter removes
nature takes a deep breath

across the far side of the lake
the wind stirs life to water
people collect at a picnic shelter

from the dead-still of a reflective moment
I move away into the living morning
and shake off these lines that entangle
The Fragrance at Flanders

This was not scented Alps
where nothing but the daylight changes,
nor descending by the Starnberger See¹
after early exercise, strolling into
the Hofgarten to drink coffee with friends
as unbridled talk merges
with the expanse of morning.

Nor was this a plunge
into a Bloomsbury morning
of Clarissa² opening French windows
to the breath of a summer day. Nor a
blackbird singing in the daze of early light,
or the buying of flowers while thoughts distract
to the arrangement of a party.

In Flanders, in a half-born morning
body after body fell
indiscriminately into mud.
Each man glad to take their final leave,
exuding a common stench
until it accumulated in a message
that couldn’t be ignored.

For a brief moment
there was a lull in the fighting
as the men were buried.
And for once there was sensitivity
as if Christ walked out of dead flesh
to shake hands with both sides -
or perhaps just nature self-correcting.

Footnotes

¹Reference to T. S. Eliot and The Waste Land Starnberger See – a large lake near Munich.
²Reference to Virginia Woolf and Mrs Dalloway (Clarissa).

At Anzac cove on the 19 May, (1915) Turks made a massive attack to drive the Anzacs off the peninsula. The attacking troops suffered heavily, losing over 3000 dead before daylight. An armistice was arranged on 24 May to bury the Turkish dead rotting in no man’s land.

The Defence of Anzac – Australian War Memorial


A Breath of Air
for Janice

you saw me before I was born,
the days allotted to me
had all been recorded in your book,
before any of them ever began.
Psalm 139 v16

a breath of air
one breath
one breath of life, and gone
untainted by this world
your fragile existence
held the form of a perfect body
gave a testimony to life

a value magnified
in the painful enormity
of the shattered lives of family
in the struggle
of your precious gift

a glimpse of being
more important than the stars

a breath of air
one breath
one breath of life, and gone –

forever remembered
Our Last Visit to Mum

I remember well the warmth of the morning
the sun brilliant in a clear sky
an early spring blessing
all Sydney a dancing

we parked the car, pressed the button
to announce our arrival, gain access
to another world, Mum’s world
the closed world of the aged

so to her room and she asleep
in the final cell of her being
we sat until she stirred
her eyes opened registering
weeping involuntarily, we gave a tissue

she studied our presence while
trying to fold the tissue carefully like linen
then slowly formed her words ...
‘you have a pretty face’
invoking her daughter’s response ...
‘you created it Mum’

we walked her to a seat on the veranda
with others in various vacuous states
then leaving with a kiss implanted
we looked back from the road

I remember the sun highlighting her face
she waved to us - like her old self again
being surprised by such vigour
it stayed in my mind, she still had
that touch of defiance

she wanted to say her goodbye
as we departed for the crowded city
but for her, a new journey
and Dad was waiting
a spontaneous memorial at the traffic lights
Batehaven, New South Wales

Sacred Ground
for Vlado

defined by blood this place
spring air taken away
the lights set red

they came late Saturday
to an empty intersection
the outpouring of grief

messages and tied flowers
personal tributes, names
a photograph - their memorial

but more than a name was left
ingrained in the ground
the lights set red
Closure

in memory of a twelve year old who reluctantly self-detonated early to save lives

don’t slam the door kid, when you leave your room
don’t slam the door tight when you enter the night
go quietly; go gently, as you enter the night
go gently as you vanish from sight

at that age when there is no age
and when the rolling of the years
matters only to another
and the inscription on the wall
is left for others to recall
and when they resurrect your name
will they relinquish certain blame?
let them shed their tears kid!

how can that have any meaning
is there meaning in a flower?
you knew exactly who you were kid!

don’t slam the door kid when you leave your room
don’t slam the door tight when you enter the night
go quietly; go gently, as you enter the night
go gently as you vanish from sight
The Two of Us

like death
the two of us
you and me
in the empty room

beyond the empty room
the removal of dead flowers
the quietening footsteps
and the distancing of our tomorrows

beyond understanding
within the very web of life
the rising of the veil
and the overlap of our eternities

beyond imagination
in the comet-lit electric shock
of the star spangled universe
we restructure our heavens

and like death
there's always
the two of us -
you and me
Death and Life

After Life and Death

Life is an interruption
an uncalled-for shock

as unexpected as green sky
out of nowhere, an aberration

an explosion in a sea of darkness
diminishing like a firework

Death is forever patient
always content to play that waiting game

you could say the ultimate backdrop
increasing prominence with age

and when the glass is emptied of the last grain
returns the equilibrium of eternity.

Afterwards, thank God,
we can all breathe a sigh of relief –
and return to base camp!
With Other Poets

With Other Poets
Bianca and Kate
considering the two ladies from 'The Taming of the Shrew'
with apologies to Shakespeare

Bianca, a summer’s day do I compare
thou art pure softness and so tender fair
as billowing clouds drift slow across the sky
while summer’s heat falls tepid to the eye
sometimes too soft your shallow nature seems
your life you swallow as in empty dreams
everything to everything sweet to sweet effect
there’s nothing such sponge being can deflect
as mist evaporates with each rising day
so everything in you fades its fading way
it is perhaps you act this way by choice
your choice to end in whisper of a voice
so long as man can breathe or eyes can see
your being is a total loss in me

Kate, completely winter’s day the same
thou art deepest black in all disdain
the violent rage of battering storm
the path you take as daily norm
and thy eternal winter does not fade
no passion lost or cheap parade
you shout and scream a constant yell
in all you meet you give pure hell
but beneath the scowling winter rain
there is a hidden quiet, a soft refrain
though never would thou give as choice
that whisper of your other voice
so long as man can breathe or eyes can see
your blackness shines reality in me

Footnote
The ‘Taming of the Shrew’ is a delightful play on the duality of the female character. This poem was written as a performance piece for a University of the Third Age Shakespeare appreciation course.
In Gratitude
on Sylvia Plath’s birthdate 27 October 2001

time to stir the blue water
a fixed star radiates
the coffin lies wide open
time to forget the idle prattle
a soft peace wind comes
from afar there is a sound
the indefatigable hoof-taps flame
all else is lost
an angel descends
In Remembrance  
on Sylvia Plath’s birthdate 27 October 2007

poppies, ambulance poppies  
caught in unseasonable warmth  
stragglers of the stubble

an untimely October showing  
buttoned black unseeing  
breathe out their reminder

a present of such enormity  
where bones or a button would suffice  
becomes a birthday gift

this eyeless blood flap of memory  
soaks through the stopped pages  
in the back-drip of the years

Footnotes

1 Reference to ‘Poppies in October’ (27 October 1962), Sylvia Plath Collected Poems.  

Both these Sylvia Plath poems were published on the Sylvia Plath Forum Website.
The Healthy Worm

with apologies to William Blake

O worm, thou art ’earthy!
the visible flower
that shines in the light
of the bright day

has raised from thy bed
of rotten decay
and opened her face
from thy composted waste
Paging Geoff
for Geoff Page on reaching 70

while you paginate all your textual time
we try to read between the written line
as the allotted chapter closes in your book
we now take time out for a closer look

we know that the page is far from complete!
but the lines you have inked you can’t delete
so what is the story so far offered?
so what exactly has been proffered?

abundant poetry of great distinction
in bounded works that defy mere fiction
for the text manipulated by the page
are words of wonderment that will not age

and may your own book close far from now
with no appendicitis at that final show

Footnote
This sonnet was written for Canberra poet Geoff Page and published in the Canberra Times at the time of his 70th birthday. The photo above is more recent taken in November 2015 courtesy of Maureen Scutter.
Edge Walk

*Meredith McKinney led a walk through her Mother’s property at the ‘Two Fires Festival’ – Braidwood, 21 March 2005*

between Budawangs and Little River
scratchy soil on dry eastern rocky ridge
where hip-high she-oaks¹ hide the way
and rare boronias² bloom
we come to walk with Meredith

who came here thirty years ago
the moving image conveyed by her words
confronts our current view
no major fires have ravaged
early wet years then continual dry

the scars left are from man and mining
mercury poison dissipates
growth claims back vacant diggings
old shafts provide shelter for ferns
and Edge³ itself designed to fit this framework

we walk down from the ridge
ancient rock speaks from the slope
unknown meaning except perhaps old Nellie⁴
last of her tribe to walk this land
who feasted on mussels from the river
we stop where the family once camped
to join the bush, swim in the rock pools 
and sensitive to the tent print left behind -
today the water is out of sight 
but cupping hand to ear there is a chatter

Meredith reads the poem River Bend
wattle caught in autumn sun 
white eucalypt stands by Black Sally
then we pause, turn, walk back up the ridge 
while the azure kingfisher darts upstream

Footnotes

1 casuarina nana
2 boronia rhomboidea
3 ‘Edge’ was designed to mirror mining structure
4 Nellie last of the ‘Braidwood Tribes’ part of the Yuin people
5 River Bend – Judith Wright poem
6 eucalyptus stellulata - distinctive brown trunk
**A Meta Metamorphosis** - *a tribute to Peter Porter*

Beyond unhappiness
and the closing of the door
a little stone slips from a pocket
tumbles down each stair-step
leading from the darkened room
and comes to an uncertain rest,
returning the equilibrium of eternity.

The potential energy is held fast,
a gold vein in the inviolate rock
and the voluble voice of a virtuoso
lives on in his volumes.
Never one for self-proclamation,
though other notables now aptly state,
without any washing of words, -
‘A king of the stay-aways’.

And on the other side
after the taxation of text,
and beyond all insinuation
perhaps there is a certain satisfaction
and wry smile.

Footnotes

1 Permission was obtained from both the artist and the National Portrait Gallery to include this image against this poem. The above image is not to be copied without the caption and not without the permission of the artist.

I have used words in association with some of Peter Porter’s poems - in particular from his poem ‘What I have written I Have Written’ with obvious reference to the source of those words. He was known to be a rather depressive person. He regarded poetry as potential energy. In that regard any energy release will be dependent on future readers of his work – as the same goes for all art.
the brash boys we dated
are in their forties,
their handsome sons
have stolen their strength;

and with arrogant stride
in cool contempt,
they flaunt their fathers’ wisdom
with their fathers’ features.
Go Gentle and Enjoy Your Last Day
reversing the Dylan Thomas poem ‘Do not go gentle into that good night’

go gentle and enjoy your last day
focus not on the loss of your sight
give a smile as you pass quietly away

a wise man knows how to play
knows exactly what is indeed right
go gentle and enjoy your last day

a good man accepts the pathway
as he enters the door of the night
give a smile as you pass quietly away

a brave man shows strong display
knows it useless in giving a fight
go gentle and enjoy your last day

a grave man will rise up to say
‘the end is turning quite bright’
give a smile as you pass quietly away

so to all I earnestly pray
savour the disappearing light
go gentle and enjoy your last day
give a smile as you pass quietly away
Miscellany
Miscellany
Miscellany
Red Hat

soft satin and velveteen
shiny glitter in between
ostrich feathers to catch the eye
‘look - look at me’ you cry

brimming bright with face aglow
you are here to steal the show
you bubble by bright and sure
doyenne of the dancing floor

focal point for fun and play
for excitement head this way
and at the end of your twirling day
carefully you’re boxed away
Anointing Ann Anonymous

when she was a child
and she was quite sure
that no one was looking
she picked up a stick
to scratch in concrete
‘I was here’

each day
as she walked to school
she would see her work
and laugh to herself
no one would know it was her

in her teenager years
she had that teenage crush
and melting against his name
cleared the dust on his car
with words that only she could write
‘I love you’

She thought he really knew
but she would never tell,
in later years
when thinking about him
she would laugh inside
with a little embarrassment

she had a long and ordinary life
a husband, children
and memories to drown
and if she could paint the sky
these would be her words
‘life is beautiful’
before she died
and with a knowing smile
she left these words
especially for you ...

‘I was here
I love you
life is beautiful’

© Ann Anonymous

Footnote
This poem was published with other poems by the ‘Yass Valley Writers’ in a local anthology.
Men Shedding

he dies
a little every day
by the things he used to do

from digging
up the veggie garden
to tying up a shoe

while his children
tell him constantly
to behave and not to stew

he remembers
in his childhood days
of reaching for the sky

that burst
of first excitement
with each new thing that he would try

but now he’s brought
back down to earth
as the old tasks pass him by

and soon everything
that he once could do
he just can’t do again

and he’ll wake up
one sad morning
the final task upon his brain

then, sad to say,
he forgets that too,
it’ll be his last refrain
Gran Always Called Her Joy

Gran always called her Joy, not Joyce
a cousin had contacted her
that was a few years after Gran died
he said he had done this family research
he told her she had another aunt
an unknown lady who had died recently
apparently Gran had had a daughter
that was before Gran married Granddad
and before another seven children
her cousin thought she would be interested
he thought it right to let all the family know
‘a dead branch coming alive so to speak’
then she knew the reason for Gran’s choice
why Gran always called her Joy, not Joyce
Australia Day 2007

following the discovery of Botany Bay by Cook
New South Wales was first established
under the equanimity of Arthur Phillip
with authority from Pitt, Lord Sydney and George III
due to over-crowded English jails
establishment of an experimental penal settlement

all were put in the same boat
from that first fleet of eleven
the convicts given a second chance
and soldiers, free settlers, sailors, allocated
equal rations, and a law that would be first
to protect a convict before a thieving soldier

and so over the years much has been achieved
from the federation of the States
to bloodied Diggers at Anzac Cove
continual Aboriginal recognition
and respect for the culture of extensive migrant intake
while prospering below the southern skies
so Australia and Australians
unite as one people, the
diverse voices of many make one note
ring out loud, to rejoice again
at the founding of this fair nation
and the rights of all its citizens

but today it is not a hulk in the Thames
but a hiccup in an alien land that
allows a man to lie naked
before a foreign power, exposed to
five years of violated rights –

the egalitarian spirit of Arthur Phillip
gives rent to a cry of shame!

Footnotes

When this was written David Hicks, an Australian citizen, had been imprisoned in Guantanamo Bay for over five years without charges being made. Responsibility had been abdicated relegating legal treatment to a USA military tribunal. Other countries in similar circumstances protected the basic rights of their own citizens.

This poem was published on a David Hicks Website dedicated to give support in obtaining Australian justice.
Ant Attack

I wondered where he was
then I saw him out in the garden
by the garden path, watching a stream of ants
as they crossed from one side to the other.

Suddenly, and quite unexpectedly
he stamped his foot down hard.
A little severe I thought,
they didn’t know what happened.

Then he saw me standing at the window,
he read my eyes immediately -
‘They can take it Dad’
as he leaved the ants to repair their path.
A Token Life

currently Australia has more poker machines than any other country on a per capita basis

they do not sigh, pass-judgement, back-talk, or give that evil eye
but flash bright forever their acceptance passive, with patience unlimited,
they wait disciplined in gaudy rows
a friendly arm outstretched for contact

but if they could speak they would say that the kids are unattended,
that the glass has been filled by the money planned for food, and that the sun is shining outside, and that time is devalued by a token life
Guidance from above

Strapped to my wrist, button pressed
jogging, walking or at rest
every step is measured with precision
on how I’ve run without derision.
The heavens track from out in space
where, how fast, my time and pace.
My watch reports without a flaw,
but perhaps, dear God, you can do more!
I don’t mean to be a little rude
but I would like so much to improve.
Could you give instructions to the letter
on what steps to take so I do better?
Now I’m not asking for heaven from you
just a few seconds from my PB will do.

Footnote
Written for the ACT Veterans Athletics Club at the time GPS watches started to be used by members of the Club. I was amazed at how this benefited my jogging. All joggers look for improvement. A bit hopeful to expect the kind of improvement identified in this poem.
Mermaids Singing
* I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each
* T. S. Eliot (Prufrock)

morning like faith rises
a blind man seeing the unseen
while mermaids muster
from their submarine love-land
sky and sea differentiates
into a sun splintered horizon
light upon light building
reinforcing form and colour
breathing life from the depths
the mermaids are on the move
glistening fresh in open air
sparkling at the sea’s edge
drowning the morning in song
Passing Love

blue and silver
fish and sea
you and me

blue and blue
gone away
sad today
Finding Happiness¹

Happiness cannot be found by searching for it on the ground.

Happiness is up to you - say to life – I do love you! Then by the little things you do happiness may come to you.

For happiness is in each day. It’s up to you to show the way. Your inward smile can spread its face to bring joy to the human race.

And happiness cannot be found by walking with your head set down. So look up into that bright blue sky And love life with your head held high.

Footnote
¹Written for a University of the Third Age course on ‘Happiness’. 
Frivolous
Frivolous
Frivolous
Frivolous

**Metal Jazz at Moruya**
*Moruya Jazz festival - late night session held at the Golf Club*

razzle-dazzle swang box
the squeeze fat accordion
sends out swish notes
in black and white deference
to the club’s swinging swingers

strange shapes fire dance
the flash patchy floor
in a jam jamming frenzy

the spotlight switches
to the swash ring ding zither
of the silver washboard
shingling it’s slithers
in a swashbuckling zing

hovering notes hook waiting
as the brass breaks in low
with a fart blasting blow

dull clink of beer glasses
from the shadowy cave
are black background sound
at the back of the room

the circumscribed circle
of hidden eyes follow
all silly movement
with muted mirth –

while in a matter of hours
balls will skid skywards

**Footnote**
*This was a spontaneous response trying to use a ‘jazz improvisation’ technique in the creation of a poem. And in particular variation on words that resonated to the jazz.*
Corrigans Beach, Batehaven, New South Wales

Early Morning Run at Batehaven

open the door quietly as you do up a shoe
no light is needed; you know what to do
close the door quickly before there’s a stew
reach down and tie the other one too
skip down the steps to the grass and the dew
open the gate - it opens to you

you're king of the morning of the dim empty street
homes with front gardens are edge to your feet
start moving slowly the cool air is sweet
far now forgotten the warmth of the sheet
you acknowledge another’s ‘good morning’ greet
hi John and hi Jane and I think that’s old Pete

cross the road carefully to a track between trees
providing a path through littered gum leaves
while high overhead there’s a hint of a breeze
it moves with your body and bends with your knees
then all of a sudden you announce a sharp sneeze
the hanky's not handy but your shirt has two sleeves

out from the bush back to busier homes
suburbia stirs as you stir up some stones
children in school clothes and disinterested gnomes
an elderly lady in bright purple tones
while downward strides make mask to the moans
of those tiring muscles and aging old bones
Frivolous

cross the park to breathe the beach and the sea
the soft sand and sun sap away energy
inquisitive dogs decide to roam free
you join them and share in their found liberty
the beach is the place, the best place to be
but it’s right at the road to end the journey

come the last corner, you slow but you’re sure
another run’s done, one more to the score
another run’s done and you’re done to the core!
you swing open the gate; a note’s pinned to the door
‘gone shopping today, be back about four’

Footnote
*I like to jog early in the morning and this course is great because of the variety of terrains.*
*The run culminates with a stretch along Corrigans Beach, Batehaven and then a sharp up climb to home base.*
He was not superstitious

‘I am not superstitious’ -
He used to tell us all the time
and he never cared about numbers
you know birthdays and all that
or writing meaning into anything that happened.

It was just a touch unfortunate
that when we walked around the ladder
he missed the paint but not the car.
And in the ambulance with the siren blaring
saying to the nurse - ‘we all have to die one day’.

But later all his family thought he was so unlucky
for his death to happen on Friday the thirteenth.
March of the Killer Crabs

for Bill Mandle, the Pink Rock Poets at Moruya and the fight that took place against a charcoal plant in the local area

above, all is blue sky and summer light
unknowing any undercurrent in the day
ships sail against the far horizon
the breeze, a soft and gentle kiss
the world dozes like an after dinner nap

below and unseen, slinking from Sydney
taking their time to gorge the opposition
killer crabs pick at their prey without remorse
then wallow in the Bondi outfall wash
before their relentless journey south

then steeling themselves off Wollongong waters
they harden their shells for some gastronomic gobbling
tanks full and ready to trundle
they move over the rocks and the seaweed under
creeping the depths with their daggers a dangling

Longbeach clacks to their sharpened claws
snapping and cracking the timbers fall
blocking up bush they build up battlements
then charcoal their minds to make mischief at Mogo
slide sideways seaward on their insidious sweep

but off Broulee beach there’s a great blast
a bird with a bill as big as Batemans Bay
and magnificent mantle of precious pink rock
cries – enough – back to base -
you conniving clack tacking crustaceans
Seeking Revenge

for all nursery rhyme animals

this morning I woke up dreaming
when a browned-off cow
put its head through my bedroom window
uttered that she was tired of being milked dry
and ready to jump both sun and moon
in order to have a little fun

and on the fridge door
there was a message from the cat
said she had gone to London to see the Queen
and that she might take a little boat-trip too
and that I’d better check both the larder
and my wallet

and before I could gather my thoughts
twenty-four blackbirds started chirping
in a long line on the telegraph wire
saying they had escaped from the palace
and were eying off my blackberries and apples
and told me in no uncertain terms
that I had better watch out!
Frivolous

A silly burst of syllables
for children to understand syllables

ten syllables equals four syllables

ten syllables equals four syllables equals ten syllables

which by itself equals six syllables which is ten syllables

which is six syllables which is six syllables which is six syllables

... which is repetitive (which is six syllables)

1 April 2011
Haiku Pieces

haiku is defined as seventeen syllables five seven and five

she wrote a poem in seventeen syllables attempting high coup

this dismal attempt after much laboured thought was put in the bin

.................................

a grandchild playing a shoe-box full of dolls talk totally absorbed

.....

olive oil humour laughter lubricating life smoothing the journey

.....

pure gold in blue sky beauty of this risen day touches creation
Frivolous

.....

casting your shadow
with each birth a use-by stamp
mandatory attached

.....

tomorrow dark clouds
surgeon and toes colliding
temporary sun block
dependent upon
the fine skills of the surgeon
faith in his fingers

.....

Footnote

1 A haiku in English is a very short poem following to a greater or lesser extent the form and style of the Japanese haiku. The first and last lines have five syllables and the middle line has seven syllables.

A typical haiku is a three-line observation about a fleeting moment involving nature. I have taken a more liberal approach.

A number of haiku can be linked to form a set. Haiku are usually read twice when read to an audience.
Frivolous

Four Fun Limericks

Against the Apologetic

I once knew a man from Macquarie
wherever he went he said ‘sorry’!
I'm sorry to say
he ended his day
with one very enormous apology

An Old Friend

I met an old friend I once knew
who had skin a vivid dark blue
I said ‘are you cold’
he said ‘no but old
for my blood don’t do what’s its told’

Nose Spray

I once met a man from Hong Kong
who had a nose exceedingly long
that when he did sneeze
there came a strong breeze
that shook all the trees into song

Brenda at Bridge

a Bridge player I know called Brenda
unfortunately swallowed her agenda
on every play
she lost her way
it was a clear case of a hidden agenda
Arthroscopic Attention

Asclepius¹ please, I’m talking to thee
I have a slight problem with a crook knee.
My meniscus may need sort of mending
because I’m getting pain when I’m bending.

Asclepius came with a fibre-optic tube
and from my knee his rod did protrude
while the snake-eye inside peered at the view
sending images back to the surgical crew.

The video monitor blew-up the sad sight
clearly portraying what wasn’t quite right
then on the other side with a snip and a snap
a surgical instrument removed all the crap.

So if your meniscus is kind of sus
repair is possible with minimum fuss!

Footnotes

¹ Asclepius - a god of medicine in ancient Greek religion and mythology

This sonnet was written as a thank you to my surgeon and to encourage others who might be contemplating such action.
Spiritual
Spiritual
Spiritual
Yesterday and Today

Yesterday God decided to take a holiday and I really can’t blame Him at all, I mean He must have been a little disappointed with one of His projects going a little off track, and working twenty-four by seven over the centuries is, I imagine, quite demanding. I am sure God knows where to go for a break and I am sure He won’t want us to turn up!

Today is a little different, I’m happy to report that the sun is breaking through threatening clouds and the waste-paper bin is empty, sprawled out on the desk are His original drawings, a little crumpled, maybe He believes things can be straightened out - perhaps He has far more faith than you or I.

Footnote
This poem was written after becoming totally depressed with the world. The news that night was negative, negative and negative. I thought to myself if there is a God and the World is his personal project then somehow things are not really going that well. Then of course the next day I became a little more positive!

Published on the NarratorInternational Website.
An Unearthly Perspective

The photograph shows
the beauty of Saturn’s rings
taken at that point in Cassini’s orbit
with the sun blocked behind.

Earth is a speck of light left of centre
when the image was first released
some one thought it a blemish
and tried to remove it ...
someone else did likewise,
that was a long time ago before
deciding it was not a good idea
but the rings are quite stunning.

She turns and grins ... ‘not quite’ ...
the mirror grins back without thought
a hair out of place is snipped
‘I’m off ... see you tonight’ she calls
a reply from the open door
‘... your hair looks nice today’.

Seven billion bodies
exploding within a pinhead
pricking the consciousness of matter
painfully incubating a microscopic eternity
while everything that is you and me
is absorbed in the space that is hidden within.
Many light years distant on another planet a strand of hair holding her DNA is unravelled recreating the beauty of her heavenly body image and image maker merge something spectacular – beyond the stars.

Footnote

1 The ‘Earth-speck’ has been enlarged in this image.
A Quiet Day at St Mark’s¹
a Canberra quiet-day retreat

Nikolai presses the pause button while the world moves on the drone of a plane high above

the wind wrestles the trees everyone taking time the crunch of gravel underfoot

solitary figures seek communion for a settling of the soul while a lost name-tag dances the grass

the chill air disturbs any attempted after lunch sleep but warmth in the cut short sun

someone’s dropped programme flaps across open ground words whisked away by wind

the Carillon chimes the closing hour a fat black crow waddles and laughs unruffled by the occasion

now to press the restart to place back Christ in the context of the world

Footnote
¹St Mark’s is known as the religious precinct at Barton in Canberra. This poem was written after attending a ‘quiet day retreat’ on a winter day. It is quite surprising what you notice if there is no conversation between people. It is a way to promote awareness of both people and the immediate surroundings.
OMG\textsuperscript{1} Just Imagine

OMG just imagine life without Easter.

We need Easter, holidays might disappear! Not to mention those rabbit-eared children running sweet-toothed through our classrooms. It may be egg-centred commercialisation but there’s no harm in a bit of gaiety!

Even if Easter is a little chocolate coated Christ always seems to have a presence, whether in the background or foreground depending of course on your point of view!

But without Easter life is a momentary firing a captivating firework display none the less but perhaps a series of confused sparks dying in a sea of perpetual darkness.

Easter Day

\textbf{Footnote}  
\textsuperscript{1} OMG – oh my god \ldots written for a Facebook audience
I let your beauty
I let your beauty
touch my mind
and stand stunned,
in awe.

Eternity comes
and goes,
and still I gaze
in wonder.

My cup fills over
and tears of joy
distil as rain
as a silver mist.

You are here today,
tomorrow, forever
bringing new life,
creating all that is good.
My Nothing God

my God is, well, like nothing
nothing’s of value
there’s nothing quite like nothing

when friends, fortune fade
and a pocket empty made
there’s still something
the golden coin nothing

nothing’s of value
and nothing’s more important
capitalise on nothing –
to gain everything
Paradise Ignored

on viewing Wenzel Peter's Painting ‘Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden’

greater love has no man than that he lay down his life for a friend
John 15 v13

Images of more than two hundred animals
perfected in paint in unreal detail
carefully positioned in a still of verdant harmony
show an intricate love of the animal world
and for the very marvel of creation
in all its great variety and abundance.

For one brief moment
we are invited into this paradise
but as we enter this unreal world
there is a certain foreboding
an animal premonition prevails ...

a flock of birds stir into the air
scurry above the tree of knowledge
give the danger warning
the wise owl sits atop another tree
knowing of the unknown perhaps
that knowledge is truly a dangerous thing
the cockerel at the foot of Eve
exhibits a full throttle crow –
an ominous omen
and the monkey appears to taunt
all ready in mischievous mood
proffering the reason for the disquiet.

At Adam’s right hand
dogs sit true to the letters of their name.
Below the left foot of Eve
lambs are bleating their concern, for ...

Eve has left the paradise party
locked herself out to a deadly world
her skin is turning a shade pale
now separated from eternal life
alone, cold, knowing she must die
makes her desperate plea for company.

But Eve is Adam’s very own flesh and blood
his one and only friend and in a state of total need
can he not ignore! - he has no choice -
surely love and surely God
would equally agree.
Revolution

James Ussher\(^1\) calculated the starting point. About 4004 years before the birth of Christ, apparently at 9:00am on a Monday morning in late October.

Thomas Guy\(^2\) then annotated his holy bibles enforcing this fact within the Church and for years the populace believed his added words. Then Darwin learnt that truth lies in geometry and that a circle has no start or finish.

But if you believe in the 'Big Bang' theory then everything is gradually losing energy. Being in my latter years this is understandable, my circulation not being what it once was.

However, we do have plenty of time up our sleeves for our best scientists have predicted it will take several billion years before the sun expands and drags the Earth within its heated arms.
So there may come a day when everything stops. Perhaps at 11:15pm on a Saturday in September – after the late night news.

Footnotes

1 James Ussher (4 January 1581 – 21 March 1656) was the Irish Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland between 1625 and 1656. He was a prolific scholar and church leader, famous for his chronology that sought to establish the time and date of the creation.

2 Thomas Guy (1644–1724) was a British bookseller, speculator and official publisher of bibles and from his wealth became the de facto founder of Guys Hospital in London.

Published on the NarratorInternational Website.
Be Inspired by Christ

be inspired by Christ!
live by his ever-living example
that in your own life
you too may become Christ-like!

and maybe somewhere someone in need
will be inspired by the Christ in you
that you will come alive
in the Christ of another
A Mother In-law Problem

it is not a well-known fact
that Eve won the Miss Universe Contest
three years running

it was planned out from the beginning
the whole thing ribbed from above
stage-managed to perfection

nobody said 'she was one in a million'
so she always took top honours
the decision a one-off personal affair

how could Adam vote for another
for he had magnetic affinity for dark hair
and he couldn’t vote for a blonde unseen

but the fourth year Adam simply had to abstain
it was all Eve’s doing in the cookery department
an unwise decision to make apple pie

for how could she emulate her Mother-in-law
when the recipe wasn’t God-given,
perhaps she just thought she could do better!

a bit unfair on poor old Adam though –
for he never ever looked at another woman
and always treated her as his very own body

so now we’re all eating Eve’s humble pie
and whether we realize we’re married or not
we can blame the Mother-in-law for dictating our lot
**Home**

The inviolate temple
core of her being.
A sacred sanctuary
built over a lifetime.
Impenetrable gold.

The tent-door flaps
restless in the morning breeze.
The fine membrane,
a silken shadow in the sun,
memory to her being –

she has gone home.
Spiritual

Song of the Universe

every voice
endless rapture
your
voice
oration instilled
creating eternity

Context
I wanted to create a poem of ten words, ten most meaningful words against my personal philosophy. I broke the words into two connected five word stanzas. To easily remember these words I used the first letters of the ten words to make the first two words - ‘every’ and ‘voice’. I wanted to stress the importance of being inclusive. We all have a voice in the universe – at the same time paying homage to that wonderful unseen voice of the spiritual creator of life.
Poetry

poetry, like all words
define who we are

life
the nature of existence
the human condition
Growing the Poetry

oranges and lemons
say the bells of St Clement’s

Poetry is a rather difficult fruit to grow. First things first, you must be very mindful of the nutrients needed for germination. Then, of course, you have to wait.

It’s no good rushing into things. When the ground breaks be prepared to spend time nurturing. Pruning is often needed. Letting light into the branches is essential to ensure the whole tree benefits.

Eventually fruit will start to form. It is up to you to taste first. Then you might feel like sharing with a friend.

At harvest time you could market hoping to find others who appreciate what you have to offer. But beware not everybody loves lemons!

when will you pay me?
say the bells of Old Bailey

Footnote

1 Traditional English Nursery Song
Poetry

unearths
the best words
the supreme fiction
must be as well written as prose

conceived and composed in the soul
the spontaneous outflow
a way of taking life
the breath and finer

shall tune her sacred voice
in the pity
the feverish fit
the flower of experience

a spark of inextinguishable thought
the opening and closing
should surprise
should be great

the achievement
makes nothing happen
what is lost in translation
at bottom a criticism of life

Footnote

This is a ‘Cento poem’. A poetical work wholly composed of verses or passages taken from other authors, disposed in a new form or order. Each of the twenty lines uses text taken from quotes by famous poets on the nature of poetry - Keats, Wordsworth, Auden, Frost, Owen, Hunt, Pound, Coleridge, Finch, Shelley, Sandburg, Arnold, Hill and Stevens.

I have shown the text from the quotes as a separate context page ...
Poetry

Context

Geoffrey Hill (English Poet) – Poetry **unearths** from among the speechless dead
Coleridge – Poetry equals **the best words** in the best order
Wallace Stevens – Poetry is **the supreme fiction**, madame.
Ezra Pound – Poetry **must be as well written as prose**
Mathew Arnold – Poetry is **conceived and composed in the soul**
Wordsworth – Poetry is **the spontaneous overflow** of powerful feelings
Robert Frost – Poetry is **a way of taking life** by the throat
Wordsworth – Poetry is **the breath and finer** spirit of knowledge
Samuel Johnson – Poetry **shall tune her sacred voice**, and wake
from ignorance the Western World
Wilfred Owen – Poetry is **in the pity** of war
Anne Finch (English Poet) Poetry’s **the feverish fit**, the overflowing of
unbounded wit
Leigh Hunt – Poetry - I take to be **the flower** of any kind of **experience**
Shelley – Poetry - a single word may even be **a spark of inextinguishable thought**
Carl Sanburg (American poet) - Poetry is **the opening and closing** of a
door, ...
Keats – Poetry **should surprise** by a fine excess
Keats – Poetry **should be great** and unobtrusive
Carl Sanburg (American poet) – Poetry is **the achievement** of the synthesis
of hyacinths and biscuits
W. H. Auden – Poetry **makes nothing happen**
Robert Frost – Poetry is **what is lost in translation**
Matthew Arnold – Poetry is **at bottom a criticism of life**
Poets Are ...

lovers of cats who
create in cosy comfort as
they contemplate their
word collections closely

methodical classifiers
neat and correct to
the core of their creations,
prompt, precise, perfidious

park their personal slippers
in the most appropriate of places,
cataloguers and custodians
of the finest of the fine

dog lovers that dither
dirty, disgusting in their daily domesticity,
Bohemian borrowers leaving books
beneath breakfast bowls

authors of graffiti gracing
grey begrudging buildings,
frolickers of the gutter who
grope in their grubbiness

producing profound ponderings
in between all their pandering,
beholders and believers
faultless to the faith

you and me - definers of reality

Footnote
This early duality poem reflects my inclusive philosophy. I was involved in programming at
one stage in my life so I guess binary flowed into this text.
Poetry

**Words Waiting ...**

*‘the genius of poetry must work out its own salvation in man’ – John Keats*

words waiting
for re-release
awaiting eyes
your mind
for resuscitation
to bring life again
to share with you

**The Anonymous Poem**

the writing on the door
an invitation to enter
no one at home
but left behind
the faceless letters

complain or praise
the forwarding address
is in your hands
these furnishings
the homeless remnants
Poetry

Using Words
*based on a story by Coleridge*¹

they walked up great Clyde Falls² way
then thunderous water
soaked their day

he gazed intently, looked for clues
but couldn’t think of what to say
for any word was bound to lose –

but if one word he had to choose
sublime’s the one,
the one to use

she too was mesmerized by might
such waterpower
such a sight -

but pretty was the word she used
pretty defined her pretty views,
pretty matched her pretty shoes

he wished she’d used another word
then much more beauty
he’d have heard

perhaps it was mere female ploy
a move by her
his thoughts destroy

Footnote

¹*Coleridge led two friends to a waterfall. Upon reaching it, the first exclaimed, ‘This waterfall is sublime!’ and the second stated, ‘This waterfall is pretty.’ Coleridge looked down on the one who called it pretty – in his mind not the appropriate word.*

²*Clyde Falls refer to a series of waterfalls on the Clyde River in Lanarkshire Scotland.*
Epilogue
Epilogue
I Identified

in response to Shelley's poem ‘Ozymandias’

I am I, I am
I am Ozie and a man
I am, I am, an Ozie am
King of Kings I am I am
I also am you man I am
I also am you woman am
I am the you, you see -
the I that is the you in me

Footnote
An emphatic personal response to the ‘Who am I’ question posed in Shelley’s poem.
Empathy

I cannot see you as
you knock upon my window
I try
all I have
my eyes
and, try as I may
I do not see

I know you cannot hear me as
I picture at your door
you try too
all you have
your ears
and, try as you may
you do not hear

but in the motion of a silent voice
you say you can imagine
you say that you are able to,
see what is meant

your insight may be enough
to reach beyond
to close the night
for dawn to slowly break
crystal
clear
You and Me

consciousness only grows through the
communion of at least two entities

in the fleeting moment
that imperceptible touch
of the you that is me
and the me that is you

words fall short
scattered fragments
seek an understanding
leaving the sky to the stars

and from this brief encounter
in the forever that lasts an eternity
love is never lost
in the open book of life
About the author

Richard originates from Hampshire, England. He is a retired public servant living in Canberra. In another life, as a statistician, he helped produce metrics in an attempt to define reality and now wishes to do the same through the use of text delighting in exploring how words define people and life. He enjoys analysing poetry as much as the process of creating poems and actively supports the local poetry scene in the running of University of the Third Age (U3A) poetry appreciation courses.

He is a freelance Internet Poet and his sites have been well-supported for many years. This Internet work is ‘free to air’ with the hope his poems challenge readers in different ways of thought.

His poems have been published in the Canberra Times, in local anthologies and publications and on the Narrator International Website. He has an affinity with Batehaven on the New South Wales south coast where he supported local poetry for two years while building a new home in Canberra following retirement.

He continues to disseminate his writing through the Internet with great satisfaction in knowing that others around the world read his work and occasionally make comment.

Website Details –

This site contains analysis and poems over the two year period from 2011 to 2013.

https://mywordinyourear.wordpress.com/
This is his current site for sharing poetry analysis and poems.
Publication details

*My Word in Your Ear* was self-published as a paperback edition in February 2016.

The font is Cambria (Heading) 14pt and 12pt.

Second Print – May 2016

Email: richardscutter@bigpond.com