

# 155 SONNETS

by Willie Watson

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*also by Willie Watson:*  
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*Twoems*  
*What Do Children Like to Do? (with Lenka Brožová)*  
*Uncle Willie's Very Silly Animal Poems*  
*The This of the That*  
*Tarot Poems (with Marie Brožová)*  
*The Alchemist's Notebook*  
*Four Syllables on Water*  
*The Guru Kalehuru and Other Poems*  
*Poems from Prague*

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## Introduction

A poem should have three things: rhyme, meter, and meaning. I have occasionally tried skipping the first two, the way most poets nowadays do, but I've never been happy with the results. It's never something I feel satisfied with; it doesn't feel poem-like to me.

Sonnets, archaic though they might be, have these three elements, so it's natural that I've dabbled in this form from time to time. After a few years in Prague, attending open mike (I know I'm swimming against the current with that spelling. I've got my reasons.) poetry readings on a regular basis, I thought "Damn, I must have written about a hundred sonnets by now. It would be cool to produce a collection of 155 of them, one more than Shakespeare." Yeah, I'm a nerd.

It would be a unique accomplishment, topping a record which nobody else is even trying to top, and which I'm not even sure is a record at all. In fact, I know for certain of a couple of people who've written more 'sonnets' than I have, but one frequently disregards the rule about rhyme, and the other one just throws rhyme and all the other rules right out the window, so I reckon I still win.

Anyway, I counted them up at that point and I'd actually only written about 35 or so. Still, I thought, I can do it if I crank up my game. After all, the human mind is basically a sonnet writing machine, if you adjust it to that setting. It takes in the raw material, which is the language itself, chops it up into lines of 10 syllables, matches the ones that rhyme, and after a bit more honing, rearranging, and stacking, voila, a bunch of sonnets pop out. Easy peasy. Yeah, right.

Ten years and millions of moments of self doubt later, the collection is complete, and here it is.

I'd like to write a few words of introduction about some of these poems individually; although I'm confident they all can stand on their own as far as meaning goes. The first 3 poems are the oldest, and were written while I was taking a course in Shakespeare at a community college. It was a fun class. The girl who was the inspiration for sonnet #3, *The Huntress*, was totally unimpressed, by the way. Poetry as a means of seduction is highly over-rated.

Two of the poems: *Sonnet #18, The Uniform Texture of the Human Race*, and *Sonnet #54, Speed of Travel*, were inspired by short stories written by Czech artist Marie Brožová, from her book *The Souls of Trees*, which I had the honor of helping with the translation of.

Three of the poems in this book are elegies. One for my father, one for Nelson Mandela, and Sonnet 61 for a kid named Alex Barber, who was well known on the Prague poetry circuit at the time I started out. He was also a musician and an actor. I asked him once how he could go so nuts on stage while still keeping things under control, and he said “That’s not me up there. I just open myself up and let the spirit move through me.” He lived fast and died too young, of a drug overdose, but that advice has stuck with me.

Sonnet #79, Rinat’s Poem, is based on a poem by a friend of mine, Rinat Magsumov. He handed it to me and asked me to read it through and give him an opinion. I’m afraid I overdid it a bit and completely rewrote the poem. The original idea was his, but I left out lots of detailed information about cardiology, selenology and the role of flowers in the ecosystem. Rinat’s a brainy guy, but it wouldn’t have fit in this format.

Some of the poems here have appeared previously in other collections. Walking Through Nusle at Night, The Legend of Libuše, Logos and Theos, and Millenium all (Sonnets 57 through 60) are from my first book, Poems from Prague. Elegy for Alex and A Beautiful Mind (61 and 62) were in The Guru Kalehuru and Other Poems. Sonnet #127, A Single Grain of Sand, was in The Alchemist’s notebook, as were Binary Lives, Democracy, Danger in the Grass, Empty Nests, Fading Conversations, 5 a.m., Phantom Map, Poem Without Clichés, The Moving Gallery, Parallell Tracks, Mid-Life Crisis, Points on a Line, Geometry, Soliliquy, Reciprocation, The Cynic, Rinat’s Poem (mentioned above), Dandelions, and Sam at 5 months, and you can look them up. The Choice, is also from that book.

I don’t feel I’m double dipping too egregiously, because this book contains plenty of Sonnets which have never found their way into print before and all of those books contain many other fine poems. So, they are done. My challenge is met, my goal fulfilled, and I am quite pleased with myself, to tell you the truth.

Whether they are any good or not is up to you to judge.

Willie Watson

## April 14th

The modern world calls out for modern words  
And modern words fall into modern rhymes  
The message from the medium is inferred  
The words we choose speak plainly of our times

While singing songs of post industrial gloss  
Our Rock and Rappin' rhythms seemed to fit  
Yet truth is truth the universe across  
And love and beauty haven't changed a bit

Five billion people people now the Earth  
Live lives of jubilation and despair  
Four more than at the time of Shakespeare's birth  
Yet, I can't think of one I would compare

His language, so expressive and sublime  
Still speaks to us across the space of time

## Cleopatra

The younger love that's borne upon a glance  
And buffeted on zephyrous winds of chance  
It may as easy disappear as grow  
Time will tell, and future ages know

But love that's fruit of two well-grafted vines  
Two actors that know each the other's lines  
Has gained in strength what it has lost in ease  
It can't just drift away upon the breeze

Can never drift away, yet still could die  
As cooler glances transforms the loving eye  
Familiarity sows the seeds of scorn  
Unless that love is constantly reborn

Though love may last as long as life is long  
It's only when that love itself stays strong

## **The Huntress**

The woman who's both beautiful and bright  
A huntress grown disdainful of her game  
Draws men, like moths, unto her beauty's flame  
But sees us all too clearly in that light

The woman thus endowed will soon suspect  
As she becomes the object of men's eyes  
Her thoughts are not the subject of their sighs  
But beauty is the means that's more direct

Yet, it cannot be a crime to be a man  
And follow nature's clearly posted way,  
And sway with winds were meant to make us sway  
And love as men have loved since time began

There's no apology we need to make  
For loving beauty just for beauty's sake

## **Urban Wilds**

I took a walk around my neighborhood  
A sunny day and everything was good  
A random turn and suddenly I saw  
A place where I had never been before

Abandoned, derelict and overgrown  
Some trees, some flowers, some garbage and some stones  
Behind a supermarket, sort of blocked  
From view and so I was a little shocked

Out into space and underneath the sea  
We see so far when watching our TV  
Around each corner and behind each door  
For everything we see, there's so much more

No matter where we are, or where we go  
There are so many things that we don't know

## Fractals Revealed

Great rivers start as rivulets and streams  
Which carve the landscape everywhere they go  
A moving template for an artist's dreams  
The changing rhythm of their steady flow

Nothing's random, everything conforms  
To nature's constant law, it never fails  
The movement of the stars, the growth of storms  
Each flowers petals, swirling shells of snails

The mighty trees (which grew from tiny seeds)  
Stretch their arms into the endless sky  
Each branch's twigs are thick as garden weeds  
From which the flocks of birds take off and fly

From large to small is how the branches grow  
From small to large is how the rivers flow

## Crown Jewels

The tourists stand in never ending lines  
To see the gems of long forgotten kings  
An endless fascination with such things  
Lies deep within the caverns of our minds

They marked the wealth of those who ruled the Earth  
The colors are both beautiful and bold  
The emeralds so green, the amber gold  
Their beauty's more than equal to their worth

POWER, power is flowing from the Sun  
Every day we're basking in its glow  
It helps the flowers and the trees to grow  
It shines; it shines on each and every one

The wealth of man is growing all around  
And more is growing upward from the ground

## **New Tech, Old Emotions**

Poems are a reflection of their times  
And, of course, of all the times before  
Ancient words rewrit in modern rhymes  
Each generation gives a little more

There are some themes that are, forever, true  
Love and lust, desire and jealousy  
But there are always some things that are new  
New concepts, fashions and technologies

Shakespeare never sent an SMS  
Shelley couldn't access online porn  
Wordsworth never used the internet  
They were long dead before these things were born

Things have changed, and they will change again  
But what we feel is what they felt back then

## **Walking on Earth**

My feet are quite attracted to the ground  
It's work to even lift them up and then  
Sledge hammer fashion, they come dropping down  
And then, the process can begin again

Quite opposite to that, there is my head  
It sits upon my neck quite easily  
And so it goes wherever it is led  
And breathes the air, which blows so breezily

The sky goes up and up until it's blue  
And turns to black when it is late at night,  
Up close, it is invisible, it's true  
Because of some strange trickery of light

We're planted on the Earth, the Earth spins round  
The sky is everything above the ground

## **A Different Interpretation**

It's in the bible, Seek and Ye Shall Find  
Matthew 7:7, to be precise  
If you don't look, you might as well be blind  
Generally, it's pretty good advice

If you're at home, just sitting in your chair  
You will not see the lilacs in the park  
The waterfalls and castles everywhere  
You'll never see a rainbow in the dark

But ...if you're seeking that which isn't there  
The act of seeking causes it to be  
Magic worlds and castles in the air  
There are so many things that you might see

The mind is strange, and subject to confusion  
The quest for truth can lead to self-delusion

## **Reconnection**

The people who we knew from way back when  
When we were kids, when we were troubled youth  
Idealistic, radical young men  
Wild eyed hippies looking for the truth

And when we traveled round the world we met  
Some people here, some other people there  
We were friends, and sometimes lovers, yet  
We then grew worlds apart, and unaware

But now we live part time in cyberspace  
Now and again, we meet these friends of old  
And usually we find that it's the case  
They've gained some weight; they've gone a little bald

But they are living fairly normal lives  
Houses, pets and children, husbands and wives

## On Rivers and Fountains

The fountains that we see in public squares  
Every major city has a few  
Send up a mighty spray and clear the air  
They're beautiful and rather useful, too

They are a pleasant spot for friends to meet  
For tourists just to snap a couple shots  
For kids to splash in, in the summer heat  
There's a lot that happens in these spots

But also, almost every city's set  
Upon a river's banks, or on the shore  
Of lake, or bay, or mighty ocean, yet  
We always feel we need a little more

I love to sit and watch a fountain's spray  
But a river can still carry you away

### It's in the Meter

Poetry's a rhythmic form of speech  
The lines are a specific, matching length  
Each line is weighted, at the end of each  
There's a rhyme, and that's the poem's strength

Table Tennis is a pleasant game  
Conversation isn't an attack  
The oarsmen in a boat all row the same  
Dip together, pull, then lift, then back

Poetry's a form of intercourse  
The Yin and Yang, each ping inspires a pong  
And as our thoughts get echoed, back and forth  
A simple set of words becomes a song

A dance, a chant, a ritual, a spell  
Poetry's like magic, when done well

## Appropriate Means of Locomotion

They spread their wings and drift upon the air  
As easy as we walk upon the ground  
Each in his place, so it is only fair  
We each have our own way to get around

The sky above's a sullen sort of gray  
And there are puddles on the ground, but yet  
It is a rather pleasant sort of day  
The world is very pretty when it's wet

Now and then we get a bit frustrated  
With stupid things that people say and do  
Life is difficult and complicated  
It is for me, I'm sure it is for you

Relax. Don't struggle. You don't have to try.  
Look at the birds –how easily they fly

## Lucien's Poem

Everything that's wood was once a tree  
I read those words and felt that they were fine  
There is a string of continuity  
contained within the wood, and in those lines

The windowpane was once a pile of sand  
The steel was just another bit of stone  
Everything has come up from the land  
the homes we live in, everything we own

But somewhere, there's a line that we have crossed  
We've stripped the Earth, and nearly left it bare  
In memory of the paradise we've lost  
we have the table, and we have the chair

So, when you feel that things have gone off track  
Touch something, and just let it all come back

## Cavemen and Us

We aren't so very different, in some ways  
From those who lived a million years ago  
They had the clouds, the rain, the wind, the snow  
Starry nights and long, hot summer days

They liked to talk, to laugh, to eat, to sing  
To sleep when they were tired and to eat  
(Although they lived on nuts and scavenged meat)  
And copulation was their favorite thing

There was no way that they could then foresee  
Telescopes in space, computer games  
But their urges and desires were the same  
They were the seed of what we've come to be

We aren't so very different from them  
Though what is new to us was then unknown  
They had some revolutions of their own  
Plus ça change, plus ça reste la même

In many ways, we're similar enough  
But, certainly, we have much cooler stuff

## **Redefining Magic**

A movie wizard says a word or two  
And suddenly there's food on every plate  
We all say aaaah and think that would be great  
But is it really something we can't do?

Just put a tiny seed into the ground  
It takes a while, but eventually  
That little seed becomes a mighty tree  
Where bright and shining globes of fruit abound

The words we write are like a magic spell  
The music, which is sculpted from thin air  
Is a chant, an incantation or a prayer  
To call on heaven or raise a little hell

We're in a magic world, but unaware  
Just because it seems so ordinary

## **Erosion of Intent**

I admire William Blake, he was...divine  
He penned deservedly immortal lines  
Alas, no matter how hard one might try  
Symmetry just doesn't rhyme with eye

I don't know for sure, but I suspect  
That in his day, and in his dialect  
They did- but with the steady flow of time  
There has been an erosion of the rhyme

As brand new concrete soon is black with dust  
And gleaming steel eventually will rust  
The warm spring rain consumes the snowman's flesh  
There is no fruit that stays forever fresh

No matter how well formed, or full of wit  
Time will pass, and turn our words to shit

## The Uniform Texture of the Human Race

A field of snow, a gently rising slope  
A sea of white, its billows calm and still  
it's uniformly beautiful, until  
we take a look into a microscope

They're individuals! Unique and proud  
Each flake of snow presents a different face  
these complex fractals, drawn in frozen lace  
a trillion different faces in the crowd

We have our individuality  
But if beings came from outer space  
To investigate the human race  
That is not the first thing that they'd see

What they'll think is really hard to know  
But we are not as clean and pure as snow

### Letnany

The world comes into focus upside down  
Revealed in steps, each step along the way  
As we exit from the underground  
And step into the lucid light of day

First, the sky above comes into view  
Some days it's blue, some days it's sullen gray  
When we come out at night, the stars shine through  
Like signals from a billion miles away

Then, the buildings—first, the upper floors  
Then the rows of windows moving down  
Finally, the sidewalks and the doors  
Then we're back on the surface, back in town

As we move from point to point, it's not so strange  
At certain points, our point of view will change

## **Pacengo**

There are some perfect beaches made of sand  
Others are grass, and some are made of stone  
The surface cover is what sets the tone  
In the place where the water meets the land

At Pacengo, the beach is made of shells  
The skeletons of things that were alive  
In this placid lake, these creatures thrived  
I'm not surprised, I also liked it well

They had the water, and they had the sun  
They ate, they grew, they bred and then they died  
Their inert corpses drifted to one side  
Washed up on the shore when they were done

A place for me to place my towel and lie  
In the sun and let my body dry

## **Time is an Onion**

In events sequentially unfolding  
We measure out this thing that we call time  
The petals drop, the secrets they were holding  
Are revealed, the process is sublime

The water that is gushing from the fountains  
Looks almost solid in its symmetry  
The tiny trickle high up in the mountains  
Flows in a steady stream down to the sea

Children grow and some of them have children  
But then we all get old and fade away  
Generation follows generation  
And kids are always pretty much the same

So it has been, so it will always be  
Existence is in continuity

## **View From the Pont D'Arve, Geneva**

The river winds, as rivers tend to do  
(a pattern that is generally thanks  
To gradual erosion of their banks)  
In nature, straight is not the same as true

I wonder what is just around the bend  
What rocks, what flowers, what houses and what trees?  
The void is full of possibilities  
I'm curious, although I know they tend

To be in some particulars the same  
A house must be a house, a tree a tree  
There are some limits to what things can be  
The picture never goes outside the frame

But then, there is the bend around the bend  
And then, and then, and still...it never ends

## **Flying Bikes**

I see the bicycles sailing through the sky  
(Attached to the roof of a car, I know)  
A hedge obscures my view, and so they fly  
It makes me wonder where they'd like to go

These progeny of Pegasus have wheels  
Which are, in some ways, just as good as wings  
There's a sense of freedom that you feel  
There's a sense of happiness it brings

Sure, when they arrive, they'll be unbound  
Of course, they cannot literally fly  
Their wheels will be in contact with the ground  
But the rider's head is in the sky

The pedals start to turn, the wheels to spin  
And the rider turns his face into the wind

## **Beads**

It's so much fun to string the little beads  
Orange and yellow, green and blue and red  
No limit to the possibilities  
The ways they can be ordered on the thread

Chess, a game of tactics, must be played  
Upon a board that's eight small squares by eight  
And yet, the different moves that can be made  
Are nearly infinite, they are that great

The markers in a strand of DNA  
The winds unscripted music on the chimes  
Red and orange, yellow, green and gray  
The sequence will be different every time

Infinite variations on a theme  
Poems, snowflakes, human beings and dreams

## **Consumer Society**

While walking through the park one day so fair  
I saw some rubbish lying on the ground  
And wondered why it should be lying there  
When there were rubbish bins placed all around

It makes me mad, there ought to be a law  
People are like pigs and always throwing  
Their garbage everywhere, but then I saw  
All the bins were filled to overflowing

The candy bars, the ice cream and the chips  
Everything we eat we first unwrap  
The world's become a giant rubbish tip  
And what's left over is a lot of crap

When I see how much people can consume  
I truly think the human race is doomed

## **The Sea and the Night**

The sea is vast and goes the whole world round  
And there are many people it has drowned  
The sea is frightening to you and me  
But not so scary if you are the sea

When you go for a walk outside at night  
The day is gone, and with it's gone the light  
The lines are blurred and all you see and hear  
Is colored by the things you truly fear

But look out at the universe at night,  
That's speckled with a million tiny lights  
The sea, the night, the never ending dark  
Illuminated with a billion sparks

The sea, the night, the universe are one  
And nothing in the chain can be undone

## **Above the Church**

A flock of birds that's surfing on the breeze  
So elegant, so beautiful, so free  
And what they do they do with such great ease  
They are a living form of poetry

The choreography is sweetly planned  
No humans ever work as such a group  
They wheel as one, and climb and turn and swoop  
More synchronized than any marching band

And yet, they are such tiny little things  
Whose brains are not much bigger than a pea  
Although they soar upon their outstretched wings  
It's not, to them, a flight of fantasy

We look up at the birds and are amazed  
To them, it's just an ordinary day

## **The Difference Between Man and the Animals**

Though animals have eyes with which to see  
They taste their food, and feel the things they touch  
And ears to hear, the same as you and me  
And sense the world around them just as much

As any human being in this room  
They do not tend to dwell upon the past  
Or moan about their own impending doom  
They live their lives as long as they may last

Like us, they see the stars in outer space  
But do not know that they are balls of fire  
Though we admire their innocence, and grace  
On evolution's scale, we are the higher

The past, the future, distant worlds unknown  
Are the realms of human beings alone

## **The Second Coming of the Snow**

The snow is falling softly on the ground  
Just as soft as anyone could please  
And as it falls, it doesn't make a sound  
And some lands on the branches of the trees

The snow can be a metaphor for life  
Its silence can be louder than a song  
It's lovely, it's pristine, it's very nice  
But doesn't stay the same for very long

The sky is clear and now the snow has stopped  
In puffs and chunks upon the ground below  
The stuff that's on the branches starts to drop  
It is the second coming of the snow

As long as you're alive, and not in jail  
You've got your second chance, try not to fail

## Touchstone Days

At Hallowe'en, you see the pumpkin's leer  
Reminding you of Hallowe'ens gone by  
That ghastly smile's the same in every year  
Among the autumn leaves so brown and dry

At Christmas you will see the brilliant lights  
And remember your sweet child's joy  
The way his eyes grew large and shined so bright  
At the opening of a brand new toy

Easter's eggs, the fireworks in July  
For most of us, spark memories quite pleasant  
Reminding us of holiday's gone by  
A happy link between the past and present

But to a parent who has lost a child  
These touchstone days will bring more tears than smiles

## My Favorite Zoo Animal

I like to watch the primates in the zoo  
Because they are so much like me and you  
Their curling fingers love to grab and clutch  
And they'll hold on to anything they touch

And they are often hesitant to share  
Anything that they perceive as theirs  
They fight - they are competitive as hell  
But they can have a softer side as well

The mothers hold their babies to their breasts  
And for that one they would fight all the rest  
The little ones just love to run and play  
Instinctively, they know to seize the day

I like to watch them swinging in the trees  
Because they are so much like you and me

## One Important Aspect of Rhyme

As a poet, I confess, I am a hack  
While some express their thoughts, I juggle words  
And hope that, in the end, a thought is spurred  
Just as a train must stay upon the track

The wild river flows between two banks  
The picture cannot go outside the frame  
There are boundaries in every game  
The sheep must have the sheepdog at their flanks

Not everything that's written has to rhyme  
In fact, sometimes it sounds contrived and wrong  
A novel cannot keep it up for long  
Haiku is short and simple and sublime

There are many styles, we all know,em  
But if it rhymes, you know it is a poem

## Mutual Evolution

We have evolved within this atmosphere  
This envelope of air, this tiny shell  
Around the planet we all know so well  
We know so well, of course, because we're here

The rivers flow with water we can drink  
The plants that grow are good for us to eat  
The surface is well suited to our feet  
It couldn't be more perfect, I don't think

Yet, as we find new planets out in space  
Each one is very different from our own  
Fiery hells or frigid, barren stone  
Although life could evolve in other places

On different planets, under other skies  
The phrase "life as we know it" won't apply

## The Imaginary Artist

I've always been an artist in my mind  
Because I can see faces in the clouds  
And when I see these pictures in the sky  
For some strange reason that makes me feel proud

That I am so perceptive and aware  
That in these shapes which shift so fluidly  
I can see a world that isn't there  
And that is an amazing thing to see

But when I try to tell you what I've seen  
It doesn't sound like very much at all  
There's a face, and over there's a tree  
It's just a picture on a big, blue wall

An artist is someone who can convey  
That other world in painting, sculpture, sound  
In words, perhaps, there are so many ways  
To represent the images you've found

I've always been an artist in my mind  
But that's not where an artist is defined

## **If a Tree Falls....**

If a tree that's in a lifeless forest  
Falls down and makes an imprint on the ground  
Far away from life's incessant chorus  
Actually, it doesn't make a sound

When I write a poem I'm really trying  
To write down every thought that's in my head  
But that's only half, there's no denying  
That they are incomplete if they're unread

The words we write don't all get passed along  
But they are placed within the growing pile  
Of all the shit on Amazon.com  
A silent archive of expanding files

Billions and billions and billions of words  
Which stay unread, that is to say, unheard

## **Chicken or Egg**

The chicken or the egg, which one came first  
It's a conundrum and a paradox  
The hen lays eggs, containing hens and cocks  
When the yolk's no longer funny, out they burst

But dinosaurs laid eggs long, long before  
A chicken ever sat upon a nest  
To put philosophers to such a test  
And there are many other creatures more

Amphibians and reptiles, frogs and snakes  
The lowliest of creatures can lay eggs  
Even fish, who haven't any legs  
They're unevolved, but have the stuff it takes

It's the egg, and please don't ask me that again  
You're giving too much credit to the hen

## **Anonymity**

The people who are on the moving stairs  
Are moving in a never ending line  
There is no way to know what's on their minds  
Their faces give no hint of their affairs

And when they're in their cars we see still less  
There's nothing that might give the slightest clue  
How old they are or what they like to do  
We can't see what they look like, how they're dressed

Each one a drop within a mighty stream  
And when you go online, it's even more  
Each voice subsumed within the mighty roar  
Of faceless fans all cheering for the team

While on the quest for anonymity  
We lose our individuality

## **Cemeteryville**

We marvel at the beauty of the reef  
A cemetery deep beneath the sea  
Where tiny little corals came to grief  
And this is what their bodies came to be

As I walk down this ancient city's streets  
And try to know this ancient city's heart  
I see how it's complex but still complete  
A jigsaw puzzle made of many parts

How many people worked until they died?  
Hearts and minds dressed up in skin and bone  
To build this monument to human pride  
Stacking bricks and carving things in stone

Centuries of work is quite a price  
For us to look and say "that's very nice."

## God's Big Stone

The question has been posed, can God create  
A stone of such great density and weight  
Or perhaps of such great size around  
That he himself can't lift it from the ground

Since mankind first conceived of deities  
About the time we came down from the trees  
We've used them to explain this world of ours  
The wind and rain were godly magic powers

Then came language, civilization, science  
Brilliant new inventions and appliances  
How much more advanced can we all get  
Now that we have got the internet?

The question about God is moot, because  
Humble homo sapiens can, and does

## Lobsters in a Pot

If you put just one lobster in a pot  
The chances are that he will get away  
When the water starts to get too hot  
There is little reason he should stay

But there's a simple thing that you can do  
To secure your succulent seafood snack  
Just add another lobster to the stew  
When one climbs up, the other pulls him back

People are a bit like that at times  
In the city, in the country, in the town  
Whenever they see someone start to climb  
They reach right out and try to drag him down

If you want to go beyond the comfort zone  
You just might have to make it on your own

## Back to School

New born babies are one of life's great joys  
But, Jesus Christ!, they make a lot of noise  
They cry, they poop, they poop, they cry, they cry  
And there are moments when we wonder why

We thought it would be fun to reproduce  
As we suffer through an earful of abuse  
We eagerly await that golden day  
When we can send the little brats away

Today, there is a cool and pleasant breeze  
The leaves are brown and falling from the trees  
It's time to send the children off to school  
That's the schedule, the tradition and the rule

Every year we see the seasons change  
We should not be surprised, it's not so strange  
The green of summer wasn't meant to last  
It fades into the sweet nostalgic past

It's natural and always has been so  
Autumn is the time for letting go

## The Dawn of Intellectual Curiosity

The naked apes began to walk the plains  
A hundred thousand years ago or more  
How odd it must have felt that they had brains  
No creature had had such a thing before

Intellectual curiosity  
Science and religion, magic and art  
Long ago in the days of prehistory  
No one thought to keep these fields apart

They painted pictures that were more than art  
Pictures of the animals they killed  
Magic and religion played a part  
As the world became the subject of their will

How very strange existence must have seemed  
When they slept, I wonder what they dreamed

### Fading In

When we wake up, our dreams are bright and clear  
But in a moment they all fade away  
There are new sights to see and sounds to hear  
After all, it is another day

Like the stars that shine from such a distance  
Become invisible at break of dawn  
The light of day rolls over all resistance  
And the stars, in all their millions, are just gone

Those who had dreams of glory in their youth  
Get lost in life, as every day they deal  
With the very inconvenient truth  
Life is, has been and always will be real

Dreams by day as well as dreams by night  
Fade quickly when they are exposed to light

## **A Picture of the Wind**

We look through a window and see a world  
The grass, the trees, it all looks rather tame  
Just the tiniest fractal is unfurled  
Just that small bit within the window frame

We cannot see the wind, but we can see  
The leaves that bow before it as it passes  
The automatic unanimity  
In the deferential movement of the grasses

Perhaps we see the traffic zipping by  
But where they all are going, we can't say  
Perhaps we see a field of pale blue sky  
Which other times appears as somber gray

What we can see is just a tiny part  
Of a vastly more expansive work of art

## **An Advantage to Social Media**

When Robert's Rules of Order are applied  
Opposing points of view can be discussed  
We may not understand the other side  
Or like them much, but deal with them we must

Of course, some people prattle on too long  
They shout, they scream, they shake their fists in rage  
The most verbose are usually most wrong  
And yet they tend to dominate the stage

And that is why I love the written word  
It's silent and does not offend the ear  
It is, inside your head, distinctly heard  
It isn't loud at all, but still it's clear

I write down all my thoughts and post the text  
And then I wait to hear what you say next

## Sky Sonnet

The passing airplane leaves a narrow trail  
That marks the plotted course by which it flies  
As straight and true as if it were on rails  
Two white lines across the clear, blue sky

And if we were to follow those two lines  
They would take us to some other place  
Where there are different words on different signs  
There are different people, different faces

We don't all dress, or look, or speak the same  
Spaceship Earth has quite a motley crew  
But we are like one picture, in one frame  
Here underneath this dome of baby blue

The moving finger writes, and leaves it there  
A line that is a link, up in the air

## The Mirror

The glowing moon we think we see at night  
Is, in reality, reflected light  
The sun is far away, the moon is nearer  
And so, it acts a little like a mirror

By day, we are immersed in light and heat  
At night, the sun is shining more discreetly  
The great, almighty sun has many ways  
To spread and to perpetuate its rays

The speckled beams that shimmer on the sea  
The chlorophyll that's in the grass and trees  
Its energy's been spread both far and wide  
So everybody has a light inside

Do not frown, and be oppressed by gloom  
When you smile, there's sunshine in the room

## **The Problem of Overpopulation**

There are 7 billion people on this Earth  
The number is increasing every day  
The deaths cannot keep pace with all the births  
And usually, I think that that's O.K.

We love to touch a pregnant woman's belly  
We're thrilled to hear a newborn infant's cry  
When they smile, we all turn to jelly  
But oh, we are so sad when someone dies

It's instinctive, this urge we have to breed  
But very soon we will run out of space  
And food, and other things that we all need  
To make the world a pleasant sort of place

If we don't want the world to turn to shit  
Perhaps we need to slow things down a bit

## **The Seven Billion**

These 7 billion living, breathing souls  
Have 7 billion different pairs of eyes  
And so they see their 7 billion roles  
In 7 billion very different ways

Each vision of the world is quite distinct  
But there is love in 7 billion hearts  
We will have conflict, but I also think  
That we will have great music and great art

There are 7 billion pairs of hands  
To make light work of all that must be done  
And so I find it hard to understand  
Why those hands should have to carry guns

If we all work together, we can thrive  
But if we don't, then we may not survive

## The Beat of Life

Every day at 9 a.m. he barks  
An animated version of a clock  
Piercing, sharp, staccato, loud and stark  
The suburban version of a crowing cock

The tennis balls that fly across the court  
Meet the racket with a sudden thwack  
It's the drumbeat, it's the rhythm of the sport  
As once again, the ball goes flying back

The breaking of the waves upon the shore  
Shattering into a million drops  
The opening and the closing of the doors  
At every place the tram comes to a stop

Off and on, we all go on our way  
In the rhythm of an ordinary day

## Phantom Map

I wonder, if there were some sort of map  
That led to a Utopia, somewhere  
A perfect place, that's free of all the crap  
That is the current state of world affairs

I wonder, if there were a microscope  
So powerful that we could plainly see  
A gleam of promise, or a ray of hope  
That someday everybody would be free

I wonder, if there were a looking glass  
So honest, it could see inside our minds  
Below the surface; gender, race or class  
I wonder if we'd like the things we'd find

If the answers were all written in a book,  
Would we believe, or would we even look?

## One Fine Autumn Day in Sady Svatopluka Cecha

The leaves are falling from the trees like snow  
Almost as light as air, they fall real slow  
They scratch the asphalt with a rasping sound  
But fall quite silently on grassy ground

A scooter roars across the public green  
And in its wake, it's churning up a mean  
And angry cloud of chopped up leaves and dust  
As the driver, and his boss, assume they must

But if he hadn't come to work at all  
It would not, in any way, disturb the fall  
The winter would still come, as we all know  
And leave the leaves all covered up in snow

They'd decompose into the rich, black earth  
In preparation for the spring's re-birth  
That, of course, was always nature's plan  
Which worked quite well, before the time of man

If we want the joy that nature brings  
We don't need to do a single thing

## **Train of Thought**

A train of thought, a stream of consciousness  
Are things that spring, unbidden, from your mind  
Both are accurate metaphors, I guess  
For how everything is moving in a line

The stream pours out, a single, massive force  
Unstoppable, a wave, a juggernaut  
The train is more mechanical, of course  
With links connecting each and every thought

The moving finger writes and having writ  
Moves on and writes another line or two  
Some of it is brilliant, some is shit  
Hopefully, at least, it's something new

We think faster than we can write, or read  
In particles and waves, our thoughts proceed

## **Speed of Travel**

The view we see outside our moving train  
Or from the window of our speeding car  
Goes by so fast we cannot see it plain  
But everything becomes a sort of blur

When you're on foot, each second is distinct  
Each tree, each bush, each blade of grass, each stone  
When you have time to contemplate, and think  
Each moment forms an image of its own

And when the day is done and you reflect  
On all the memories that you have got  
A clear result is what you should expect  
The slow exposure took the cleaner shot

Although it's true that speed gives us a thrill  
We see more clearly when we're standing still

## **The Meaning of Life**

We work, we play, we eat, we sleep, we dance  
We talk, we sing, we read, perhaps we write  
We love and we experience romance  
We have some laughs but there are times we fight

Our time is filled with lots of different stuff  
From when we're born, until the day we die  
Of some of it we never get enough  
But still, we sometimes stop and wonder...why?

We live our lives to our allotted span  
Eighty, maybe ninety years or so  
Although we do the very best we can  
It's possible that we will never know

No matter how courageously we strive  
Exactly what it means to be alive

## **Hrabovska Dolina**

The streetlight shining on the placid lake  
The water dancing in its steady lights  
The streetlight is a camera which takes  
A photographic negative of night

The cars continue driving in the dark  
Their headlights bore two holes in the unknown  
Slicing out a segment, clear and stark  
To mark the path by which they need to go

The sunlight shining through the big glass door  
To signal the beginning of the day  
Casts a golden shadow on the floor  
And anything that's sitting in the way

The light of day, so beautiful and fair  
Is greater still at times when it is rare

## **Walking Through Nusle at Night**

It's two a.m; I need to get some sleep  
But the night bus is a half an hour away  
I'd rather walk than stand around and wait  
And so, at night, I walk the city streets

When all the trade and traffic of the day  
Has disappeared and all the streets are clear  
The static's gone away and we can hear  
The click of shoes a block or two away

I feel compelled to silence and to stealth  
The night is black in mourning for the day  
And all that's bright has faded into gray  
The city is a statue of itself

Each building is a piece of that design  
And here and there a screen is glowing white  
But the action's mostly hidden from our sight  
The human drama plays for private eyes

It's only in the darkness of the night  
We see the true significance of light

## The Legend of Libuse

Between two sloping banks the river flowed  
About a river deep and river wide  
An ancient forest covered either side  
One fall, a couple thousand years ago

One day, a princess walking through the wood  
Ate some mushrooms growing from the ground  
(The kind that make your head spin round and round)  
Sat down on the bank and it was good

The evening sun so red it looked like fire  
Belied the coolness of the evening breeze  
And in the light it cast upon the trees  
She saw a city of a thousand spires

Whose beauty reached up to the very sky  
There by the river, with its steady flow  
She sat and watched the golden city grow  
And her vision was completed, by and by

How could Libuše so exactly see  
The way things really did turn out to be?

## Logos and Theos

In the woods, a tree falls to the ground  
But no one's there, so does it make a sound?  
If sounds defined as something that we hear  
The answer must be negative, it's clear

If God created man, and not instead  
The other way around, as some have said  
It may have been because he had no choice  
Does he exist if no one hears his voice?

From the seed, the reaching, looping vines  
Never, ever grow along straight lines  
Yet plants whose leaves are twisted, random, tangled  
Are seen as fields with even lines and angles

From the mountains towering above  
The pattern's only clear when you're clear of it  
The credit for the universal plan  
In fairness, must be shared by God and man

The Logos is connected to the Theos  
What else but order could come out of chaos?

# Millenium

We're spinning as we're turning round the sun  
In 24 hours, each and every time  
One year and then we're back where we began  
It's a pattern, it's a system, it's a rhyme

About a hundred thousand years ago  
We marked the seasons and we named the days  
Planted seeds and stayed to watch them grow  
And got a bit more settled in our ways

Began to shape the earth to our desires  
Killed for profit - killed for power - killed for fun  
Scarred the earth with fences and with fires  
As year by year we turned around the sun

Somehow, we've managed to survive this far  
The sun still shines upon us as we dance  
Weak and undeserving though we are  
Each day presents us with another chance

Spinning, spinning through the cosmic night  
We've got another thousand years to get it right

## Elegy for Alex

Here in this town where people come and go  
You meet a lot of people passing through  
Most leave no impression, but you know  
Some make a mark, and one of them was you

You played on your guitar and sang your songs  
The power of your voice could move a crowd  
You sang with feeling and your voice was strong  
It suited those of us who like it loud

As I'm walking down these cobbled streets  
Or sitting in some smoky bar at night  
I know that it will never be complete  
I think of all the songs you'll never write

What does it mean, to say you died too young?  
Is eighty years enough, or eighty five?  
Most who live so long don't do as much  
As you accomplished when you were alive

The songs you sang still echo in my head  
Alex, I'm so sorry that you're dead

## A Beautiful Mind

Most people find it difficult enough  
To go to work each day and deal with things  
Like traffic, bills and all the other stuff  
That daily life inevitably brings

By concentrating on the daily grind  
By diligence, and focussing too tight  
We dull our senses, slowly we go blind  
Or simply close our eyes against the light

Outgrow imaginary childhood friends  
And leave the shores of never-never land  
Instead of understanding to pretend  
We accept, and then pretend to understand

Is it an aberration or a gift?  
To see more than two sides to every coin  
To float above the clouds, to catch the drift  
Is that a poet...or a paranoid?

Self-delusion or a lucky flair?  
For seeing things that aren't really there

## Binary Lives

While walking past the panelaks at night  
I notice that a few of them are dark  
While some of them emit a brilliant light  
The contrast in the images is stark

Some on, some off, that's all they ever show  
Of the lives that people live inside  
People I may never get to know  
Some in, some out, and thus we are divided

Some are happy, some, no doubt, are sad  
Some are sitting down to eat their dinner  
Some are talking, some are getting mad  
Some are losers, some of them are winners

Each screen tuned in to a different station  
We all live our lives in isolation

## Democracy

Democracy is such a lovely word  
It means "The People Rule," in ancient Greek  
A lovely thought, a worthy goal to seek  
And to all other systems it's preferred

But "people" covers quite a lot of ground  
The good, the bad, the ugly and the sick  
Some ignorant, and some are just plain thick  
I think that covers most of us around

The issues are complex, but we are not  
And fail to really think the issues through  
(The way the rulers really ought to do)  
When a clever slogan fills the spot

As long as we, so easily, are fooled  
We, the people, always will be ruled

## **Danger in the Grass**

I've noticed that there are not any signs  
In Prague's fair parks, through which I often pass  
Warning of imprisonment or fines  
If you should dare to step upon the grass

The grass is dark and thick, and getting long  
But tourists learn, and locals are aware  
That there are dangers lurking in the lawn  
Placed like little land mines here and there

They're shaped a little like a fat cigar  
The texture's like a squirmy sort of glue  
Tread on the grass, you won't get very far  
Before one finds the bottom of your shoe

Although the lawn looks sweet, and green, and nice  
Stray from the path, and you will pay the price

## **Empty Nests**

In summer when the leaves are thick and green  
The forest is a dark and hidden place  
And from outside the inside can't be seen  
So dense that you can hardly find a trace

Of order, form, the structure of the plot  
It doesn't want to give a thing away  
The velvet curtain can conceal a lot  
But somewhere near the climax of the play

The leaves fall to the ground, the curtains part  
And so reveal the sights which were forbidden  
The woven works of ancient avian art  
The nests which once were quite demurely hidden

A shallow bowl, a small inverted dome  
That is the birds abandoned summer home

## Fading Conversations

At parties, or the clubs where we all go  
The sacred places of the social scene  
We talk with people who we barely know  
And don't always say exactly what we mean

When someone says "How are you?" we say "Great"  
"O.K.," "Not bad," "I really can't complain"  
We do not pause, no need to hesitate  
We're always ready with some old cliché

But then there comes a moment when it's still  
We sip our drinks, as if our throats are dry  
Conversation takes a bit of skill  
And no one wants to be there when it dies

We make a lame excuse and walk away  
When we can't think of anything to say

### 5 a.m.

I like to go out walking round the town  
When everybody else is still in bed  
Without the constant stream of city sounds  
I can hear the thoughts inside my head

Without the hum of busses, trains and cars  
The rat-tat-tat of drills against the walls  
The conversations spilling from the bars  
Without the phones, their different tones, their calls

The city seems so calm, and so composed  
A scene that's as serene as it can be  
Without the interference that's imposed  
You can hear the birds up in the tree

The city would be wonderful, no doubt  
If only all the people were kicked out

## Poem Without Clichés

I'd like to write a poem without clichés  
No stars that shine like pinpricks in the sky  
No brooks that babble as they're rushing by  
No children playing on hot summer days

To represent the innocence we've lost  
For words, like bees, once used, have lost their sting  
And used again, no longer mean a thing  
They're like a bridge that we've already crossed

No rain that falls on lonely streets at night  
As metaphor for life's unending pain  
The weather's insufficient to explain  
The depth of our emotions, and our plight

No hell below, no heaven up above  
No birds that fly upon a gentle breeze  
That whispers as it ruffles through the trees  
No soaring hearts with wings to speak of love

I'd like to write a poem without that shit  
Alas, I must confess, this wasn't it

## The Moving Gallery

Looking out the window of the train  
A moving window on a placid scene  
There are things out there I can't explain  
There are things I don't know what they mean

I see a tractor drive across the ground  
I don't know what his plan is for that day  
From where I sit, I cannot hear a sound  
It's just a picture in a silent play

I see a castle standing on a hill  
Once, it had great power in its grasp  
But we move on, and it is standing still  
Once again, receding in the past

I see a princess on the tower's top  
Looking at the peasants down below  
Walking through the fields and tending crops  
One sunny day, one spring of long ago

The mind can drift; it will, in time, come back  
It's just the train must stay upon the track

## Parallel Tracks

The train is running on parallel tracks  
It rolls across the earth and then it's gone  
As far as the horizon and beyond  
Na paralelních kolejích jede vlak

The mighty dragon crawls along the ground  
A couple hundred tons of rolling steel  
The clicking of a thousand tiny wheels  
Racing forward, as they spin around

Riding in the belly of the beast  
Like Jonah, in the belly of the whale  
Each passenger can tell a different tale  
And thus, the dragon's power is increased

I watch the trains as they go rumbling by  
And wonder at the tales they have to tell  
As countless other poets have, as well  
Across the years, across the clear night sky

There are two trains that run on parallel lines  
One on the ground, and one that's in my mind

## Mid-life Crisis

I know that I should be a happy man  
My health is good, I get three meals a day  
I watch the news, but that's all far away  
We're living in a green and pleasant land

I have a decent flat, a lovely wife  
A son who, most folks say, looks just like me  
And so, I can't explain why it should be  
I feel there's something missing in my life

Could it be down a path I didn't take  
Or something that's behind some secret door  
Something different or just something more?  
It's just a nagging feeling I can't shake

Living well, of course, is well and good  
But in the end, what is it all about  
I'm not a true believer, I have doubts  
Am I doing everything I should?

As life goes on, and time is slipping by  
I do the things I do, but don't know why

## Points on a Line

When I was young, I couldn't quite conceive  
Of being quite as old as I am now  
Actually, it's still hard to believe  
Aging really shouldn't be allowed

I looked at those much bigger than me then  
As creatures from another universe  
I really didn't want to be like them  
Slow and grumpy, that would be the worst

Life is a parade in time and space  
And no one gets to pass the same point twice  
Proceeding at a slow and steady pace  
Sometimes it's hard, but usually it's nice

We stand at different points along the line  
From where I'm standing now, it looks just fine

## The Interface Between Nature and Man

Unhurriedly, the shallow river flows  
In its own time, across the old stone weir  
It's muddy at the top, but down below  
The water is miraculously clear

The campground on its bank is filled with cars  
Families with their tents and caravans  
The borderline is anywhere you are  
Between the world of nature and of man

Looking up, upon the towering hill  
Sheep are grazing, then there are the woods  
The sheep look like they're almost standing still  
Change comes slowly, everything is good

The sun goes down, the shallow river flows  
The stars come out, and that's the way it goes

## Geometry

In winter, when the trees are shorn and bare  
And all the leaves have fallen to the floor  
We see what's there behind what isn't there  
It was, but now it isn't any more

The skeletons of trees now stand exposed  
The patterns of their branches are revealed  
Against the heartless sky is juxtaposed  
Their naked beauty and their stark appeal

Their structure, from the branches to the twigs  
A monument to fractal symmetry  
The smaller forms that duplicate the big  
The way things are, the way they'll always be

The view is clear, the air is cold and fresh  
Winter shows us nature in the flesh

## Soliloquy

The very blankness of the empty page  
Is begging for some words to fill it up  
As the water's destined for the cup  
And so I sit and type some words of rage

Bitter words, of anger unexpressed  
Words of pain, and sorrow for the dead  
We sit and write our hollow words instead  
Of doing what we know would bring us rest

The answer to the question Hamlet posed  
To be, or not to be, is clear enough  
Even when things get a little rough  
I'd never want to bring it to a close

Though life is sometimes hard, it's understood  
Compared to the alternative, it's good

## Reciprocation

Sometimes it seems a parent's job is one  
Of stopping kids from having too much fun  
We will not let them climb up on the shelves  
Perhaps because we can't do that ourselves

We will not let them touch a lot of stuff  
It makes a child's life extremely rough  
No knives, no scissors, none of life's great joys  
We try to make them play with boring toys

But, sometimes it also works the other way  
There are things that we can't do or say  
Children copy everything they see  
And that is not how we want them to be

So, everything is working out just fine  
Because the children keep adults in line

## Rules of a Sonnet

A cherry pie is more than just some food  
That, by happenstance, has cherries on it  
So, when poets ply their poetude  
Not every piece they pen is called a sonnet

Of syllables there must be 10 per line  
Perhaps eleven if one of them is weak  
You might get away with only nine  
But ten's the magic number you should seek

Just 14 lines, or 18 is O.K.  
And it must rhyme, like this: aabb  
abab or else abba  
You've got choices, any of those three

Iambic meter is the hardest part  
But necessary to this form of art

## Rinat's Poem

The moon above is hard and bitter cold  
Its shining face is just reflected light  
But there it is, a beacon in the night  
Dispelling deepest dark with brilliant gold

A plant can be a flower or a weed  
A sign of our affection, or a waste  
But which is which depends upon our taste  
Their meaning is according to our need

The heart is just a bloody pump, it's clear  
The seat of our emotions is the mind  
The poets lie, but still, somehow, I find  
My heart beats faster every time you're near

Science can explain a lot of stuff  
Artificial hearts can beat as well  
And chemicals replace the flowers smell  
But explanations somehow aren't enough

When we want to write a poem of love  
It's hearts and flowers, and the moon above

## Dandelions

When dandelions bloom throughout the land  
Like golden jewels scattered on the lawn  
We know that summer days are close at hand  
Spring is here, and winter is long gone

But as I wander down these city streets  
Concrete canyons flanked by walls of gray  
There is no soft, green grass beneath my feet  
The day looks much like any other day

But even though we've blanketed the earth  
With concrete, plastic, glass and all the rest  
Spring is joy, and light, and love, and birth  
Spring springs back, spring cannot be suppressed

The tables that pour out of the cafés  
And sprout like flowers on each city street  
To take advantage of the sunny days  
Are omens no less certain, nor less sweet

Where dandelions are a rarer thing  
There are other, urban signs of spring

## The Cynic

One morning, barely half awake, I heard  
The sound of music, coming from the trees  
Gently borne upon the summer breeze  
But all that I could think was “stupid birds”

That evening I was walking through the park  
And saw the sunset, brilliant, in the west  
Its work was done, and it deserved the rest  
But all that came to mind was “now it’s dark”

So young and beautiful, well-dressed and rich  
My fleeting glance turned to a longing gaze  
I tried to think of proper words of praise  
But the rhyme that came to mind was “fucking bitch”

I try to write with dignity and class  
To clearly use the words as they were meant  
At least, without satirical intent  
But then a rhyme just bites me in the ass

It’s not the story that I meant to tell  
But cynicism rhymes so very well

## Sam at Five Months

Our son just turned five months the other day  
He isn't quite so helpless as before  
And he can scoot real well across the floor  
As long as there is nothing in his way

He struggles, and he turns from side to side  
He gets off balance, or gets turned around  
He bumps his little head upon the ground  
He hasn't learned to take things in his stride

He doesn't have a stride to take things in  
And so he cries, frustrated with the chore  
But tries again, and does a little more  
And soon, at least at this, I'm sure he'll win

What kind of man he'll be, we still can't tell  
But for now, he's doing pretty well

## Alienation

I see the other people in the street  
Each has an agenda of their own  
Each controls the space above their feet  
But, ultimately, each is all alone

I look up at the sky that's filled with stars  
Each one a quite distinctive point of light  
Like fireflies imprisoned in a jar  
Like beacon fires shining through the night

Like tiny pebbles on an endless beach  
Like a leaf, when millions of them fall  
Like drops of water in the sparkling sea  
Like the many bricks that make a wall

Sometimes I feel so very, very small  
I feel like I'm not even here at all

## **A Place Beside a Stream**

You don't need much; a place beside a stream  
The water will accompany your dreams  
A rock, out in the desert, far from town  
From which to watch the evening sun go down

An isolated beach where no one goes  
Where you can let the ocean touch your toes  
A place that's far away from city lights  
From which to watch the stars come out at night

Just as they have each night since time began  
Long before the troubled time of man  
'Cause every day we're hearing more and more  
Of politics and violence and war

It's good to get away from all the din  
And see the world the way it's always been

## **Fractals of the Human Race**

We go, we shop, we choose, perhaps we vote  
Everything we do defines the day  
And future generations will take note  
Of what we did, and what we didn't say

And everything we do or do not do  
Are things which lead, in turn, to other things  
And every moment we begin anew  
After butterflies have flapped their wings

It seems, sometimes, that things are on a course  
That can't be changed, no matter how we act  
But each of us exerts a certain force  
Everybody matters, it's a fact

Each of our six billion separate souls  
Is a fractal of the human whole

## **I Cannot Stand the Ticking of the Clock**

I cannot stand the ticking of the clock  
That horrid sound that will not go away  
Dividing every minute of each day  
Into 60, tiny, little blocks

We try to drown it out with other sounds  
Conversation, music, nothing works  
Patiently it bides its time, it lurks  
When other noises fade, it's still around

Time! The measure of eternity  
With which we calculate our time on earth  
It's ticking from the moment of our birth  
And never, for a moment, are we free

With each tick, each heartbeat, and each breath  
We are a second closer to our death

## **Snow in the Streetlight**

It falls, like slow confetti, in the night  
Passing through the streetlight's steady glow  
For a moment, in their falling flight  
There is a sparkle to each flake of snow

Along the row of pillars made of light  
The scene's the same, a still and silent show  
A beautiful tableau in gold and white  
Soft and soothing, sweet, serene, and slow

In the darkness, there is something bright  
A shifting scene of particles that flow  
One of nature's most amazing sights  
Enhanced a bit, but that's the way it goes

The darkness is a background for the light  
In the winter, in the city, in the night

## The Purposes of Poetry

Some say that poetry should be a spark  
A flash of brilliance that ignites a fire  
Or a light, to fight against the dark  
To clarify, enlighten or inspire

Some say a poem is meant to entertain  
Some clever words that make the reader smile  
Or maybe cry, for in a world of pain  
The flow of tears is also worth our while

Some say a poem is simply to express  
All the emotions that the writer feels  
The angst, the rage, the sorrow and, I guess  
To kindred spirits, that may well appeal

I'm not real sure what poetry is for  
For what it's worth, I'll write a couple more

## Appreciation

This world we're living on is pretty nice  
The land is thick with flowers, grass, and trees  
And if you want variety, for spice  
There is another world beneath the seas

The mountains are so high, the deserts vast  
The meadows are so pleasant and so pretty  
A system that, it seems, was meant to last  
But everywhere you look, we've built a city

Through the years we've pissed in all the rivers  
And through the years we've shat on all the banks  
If this great gift was given by a giver  
We have a funny way of saying thanks

This world on which we live is pretty great  
It would be nice if we'd appreciate it

## The Choice

When Dickens wrote “It was the best of times”,  
He wrote “It was the worst of times” as well  
And there’s eternal truth within those lines  
Life is heaven, but we make it hell

Things are getting better every day  
Technology’s advancing at a pace  
That, in the game of life that we all play  
the rules are changing for the human race

Things are getting better, but the curse  
That’s been with us since history began  
Is that they’re simultaneously worse  
And that’s the part that I don’t understand

If we all want the future to be good  
And smarten up a bit, I think it could

## Abundance

The flowers that were painted by Van Gogh  
As flowers had one season in the sun  
Today, we see them everywhere we go  
A million copies of each single one

A captured moment in a summer breeze  
Is like the offspring of the Octopi;  
A densely populated hive of bees  
For each that lives, a thousand more will die

The sights and sounds that hover in the air  
A painter’s vision early in the morning  
Is now immortalized, forever there  
As on the canvas, beauty is reborn

Of which, once golden petals were the root  
But most attempts do not bear any fruit

## The Great Divide

The river winds along the valley floor  
It seeks the lowest level it can find  
It flows as slow as syrup tends to pour  
And everybody goes there to unwind

Canoes attempt to ride the center line  
A pair of scissors cutting on the fold  
The day is bright, the view is mighty fine  
The sun is hot, the water's icy cold

Along the banks the trees are thick and green  
Bushes, flowers, cottages and farms  
All form a very pleasant summer scene  
Where city folk enjoy the rustic charms

Of course the cottage dwellers all have cars  
And roads connect to roads connect to roads  
There is no upper limit to how far  
On either side, the web of things can go

The river marks a line, a great divide  
We see infinity on either side

## Infinity

We look up at night and see the stars  
Tiny dots...the ceiling of the sky  
Our predecessors didn't know how far  
Away they were, or what, or how, or why?

But now we know that there are other suns  
As big and brightly shining as our own  
With several planets orbiting each one  
Billions of them...we are not alone

And that's just in the galaxy we see  
Worlds as endless as the night above  
There are billions of other galaxies  
And lots of stuff that we know nothing of

Boggling the mind, but what is worse is  
There are probably more universes

## Earworm

The echo of a song that I once heard  
Is bouncing back and forth inside my head  
I don't exactly recollect the words  
I am not sure exactly what they said

Perhaps it doesn't matter much at all  
The buzz of a mosquito in the tent  
The moment that I suddenly recall  
It bums me out, how little it all meant

If only there were some way we could know  
Which things are relevant, and which are not  
So we could just forget it, let it go  
And get beyond that sticky, clinging spot

It's like a piece of bacon in your teeth  
Until it's gone, you won't get any peace

## The Road and the Journey

They went out hunting and, at night, came back  
The naked apes, across the plains they strode  
The steps they took became the beaten track  
And those were the precursors of our roads

And then there came the horses, and the carts  
Transporting goods and people, place to place  
Civilization grew in many parts  
And slowly spread across the planet's face

Water couldn't stop the surging host  
They built great ships to sail across the seas  
And railroads linked things up from coast  
And traveling was suddenly a breeze

And then the plodding apes learned how to fly  
To explore the air so free and clear  
The aeroplanes sailed up into the sky  
And rocketships escaped the atmosphere

We've come so far, but we are far from done  
The human journey's only just begun

## **A Summer Day in the Park**

The ladies lying on the sun-bathed lawn  
Their skin, just like the leaves, absorbs the rays  
Butterflies fly by and then they're gone  
In the playground, little children play

A wino is passed out from too much wine  
Two dogs run back and forth, their favorite game  
Among the willow, chestnut, oak and pine  
And lots of trees that I don't know their name

People sit on benches there and read  
One man hard at work, he cuts the grass  
To keep it neat and trim and free of weeds  
On the street, trams rumble as they pass

The frivolous, the tragic, the divine  
There is life in each and every line

## **Kaleidoscope**

Kaleidoscopes are quite amazing toys  
So many different possibilities  
Their endless forms of beauty bring us joy  
And we're amazed by their complexity

The world is like a big kaleidoscope  
The weather changes every single day  
Deserts, seas, and pleasant, grassy slopes  
And all the different animals at play

There are seasons, there is day and night  
There are mountains high and rivers long  
Green trees, blues skies, red roses, and snow white  
And the wind, that sings a constant song

The earth is an amazing little ball  
Each poem is just a fractal of it all

## Experience

We work, we play, we eat, we sleep, we dance  
We talk, we sing, we read, perhaps we write  
We love and we experience romance  
We have some laughs but there are times we fight

Our time is filled with lots of different stuff  
From when we're born, until the day we die  
Of some of it we never get enough  
But still, we sometimes stop and wonder...why?

We live our lives to our allotted span  
Eighty, maybe ninety years or so  
Although we do the very best we can  
It's possible that we will never know

No matter how courageously we strive  
Exactly what it means to be alive

## Light and Dark

The streetlight shining on the placid lake  
The water dancing in its steady lights  
The streetlight is a camera which takes  
A photographic negative of night

The cars continue driving in the dark  
Their headlights bore two holes in the unknown  
Slicing out a segment, clear and stark  
To mark the path by which they need to go

The sunlight shining through the big glass door  
To signal the beginning of the day  
Casts a golden shadow on the floor  
And anything that's sitting in the way

The light of day, so beautiful and fair  
Is greater still at times when it is rare

## Rivers, Trains, and People

You cannot step into the river twice  
It changes from one moment to the next  
The old folks claim the past was paradise  
But it's as obsolete as ancient text

The idols of our youth grow old and die  
The actors and musicians we all know  
And we all heave a sweet, nostalgic sigh  
But younger ones replaced them long ago

At every step the ritual's observed  
Of people getting off and on the train  
Their faces change, the balance is preserved  
The doors slide shut, the train moves off again

Old folks, young folks, babies, husbands and wives  
We are at different stages in our lives

## Shakespeare's Sonnet #3, Updated

Shakespeare wrote, in Sonnet #3  
And there was wit and wisdom in his rhyme  
"Die childless and thy image dies with thee"  
And that was fitting to his place and time

The world today's oppressed beneath the weight  
Of more than 7 billion pairs of feet  
And if those 7 billion replicate  
All we'll have is Soylent Green to eat

Write a book if you would make your mark  
Paint a painting, make a film or plant a tree  
Or dedicate a bench inside a park  
With your name upon it for eternity

Live a life of elegance and style  
Not everybody needs to have a child

## **In Vino Veritas**

The vinyard lies inside a lake of light  
The light is then transformed into the shape  
Of perfect little green and purple grapes  
So spherical and plump, so firm and tight

The universe is beautiful and good  
The grapes are plucked and their life's blood is poured  
Into the new containers where it's stored  
Venerable casks of ancient wood

From there to glass, the journey's almost done  
We lift our glasses, then we have a drink  
And that affects the kind of thoughts we think  
As we consume the power of the sun

It's more than metaphor to say the wine  
May be the means to access the divine

## **The Ride**

Lie on your back on a grassy hillside  
Stare straight up into the evening sky  
It's the solar system's greatest thrill ride  
Seriously, you should give it a try

You should be far away from any city  
Far, far away from any city lights  
The stars above are really very pretty  
But they are best observed in bleakest night

You'll have to stay there for a couple hours  
To see that things aren't staying in one place  
Embrace the void, and you will feel the power  
The vast and awesome emptiness of space

You'll feel the earth as it is spinning round  
Alone, in empty space, without a sound

## The Origin of Painting

The hungry tribe was huddled in the cave  
Sheltered from the weather and the lions  
They were timid more than they were brave  
They had to be, to live in those environs

When someone got some gunk upon their hand  
A bit of ochrous clay, and slightly damp  
They rubbed it off against the nearest wall  
And noticed that it left a ragged stamp

Then, in the light of fire dimmed by smoke  
They altered it with fingers and with sticks  
Perhaps, at first, they thought it quite a joke  
A game, perhaps, a sort of magic trick

But once you've killed the bison in your brain  
Then you can kill the bison on the plain

## Legacy

This is meant for future generations  
It is to them this humble book belongs  
The past is gone, despite our lamentations  
And the present isn't going to last for long

When I was young, I thought the world would change  
I felt our true potential was untapped  
The future could be perfectly arranged  
And all good hippie children would adapt

And so it changed, but not as I'd foreseen  
History's a complex situation  
We didn't do so well, is what I mean  
So this is meant for future generations

My kids, my kids' kids, and my kids' kids' kids  
I hope that you do better than we did

# The Greatness of the Common Man

As individuals, we're not that great  
Most people never play the starring role  
A beauty queen, a major head of state  
Or thrill the masses with the winning goal

And yet, the people who make up the crowd  
The ones for whom the players play the game  
They raise their voice as one, and it is loud  
They are the source of that one athlete's fame

In Greece, they make a special sort of wine  
From what is at the bottom of the kegs  
Inelegant, for sure, but still divine  
There is a lot of flavor in the dregs

There are times when we can all be proud  
Just to be a person in the crowd

## I wonder

I wonder what is going through their minds  
These people who I see upon the train  
What hopes, what dreams, what plans, what grand  
designs  
What joys, what fears, what pleasures and what pains

Are their thoughts formed in pictures or in sounds  
Could there be some who do not dream at all  
But concentrate on what is right around  
And focus on not bumping into walls?

Statistically, I guess, it must be so  
But at the Bell Curve's positive extreme  
Some must have mental images that glow  
With vivid fantasies and golden dreams

I wonder what is going through their minds  
And wonder if they wonder what's in mine

## Let There Be Light...

God said "Let there be light" and there was light  
It's written in the book of Genesis  
And lo, the Universe came to exist  
And daytime was divided from the night

Science has a slightly different angle  
A mass of matter, gathered in one spot  
Everything that is, and that's a lot  
Exploded in a massive bloody bang

The universe exists, so we are blessed  
And when all our senses are in play  
We know the world in more than just one way  
And truth is truth, however it's expressed

I'm convinced the Bible's only fiction  
But, in fact, there is no contradiction

## Collective Consciousness

We are 6 billion people, more or less  
And see things through 6 billion sets of eyes  
So, it should really come as no surprise  
Our politics is such a fucking mess

We have different values, different goals  
Different tastes and different points of view  
Though each one thinks the things he thinks are true  
Each one is only playing out one role

Some are beautiful and telegenic  
Though some may go against the given grain  
Most of us, alone, are fairly sane  
Collectively, we are a schizophrenic

If we work together we can be great  
If we do not, we'll have a lesser fate

## Fog

One day while I was walking in the fog  
So thick that I was very nearly blind  
I heard a bark, but it was just a dog  
And not the werewolf that was in my mind

I heard the hum of tires coming near  
And saw two orbs of yellow on the gray  
Though not the giant juggernaut I feared  
Nonetheless, I stepped out of the way

A square of light that hovered in the air  
Was probably a cottage on a hill  
It also could have been a castle there  
In the fog there was no way to tell

It's when our vision is a bit impaired  
We see the things that aren't really there

## Sonnet from 30,000 Feet

At 30,000 feet above the ground  
Encased within a hollow tube of steel  
They sit, and read, and chat, and have their meal  
And seldom even bother looking down

There's something here unnatural, unreal  
Separated from all earthly things  
Suspended here on artificial wings  
Feet touch no ground, no road's beneath the wheels

Mankind, who was by nature born to walk  
(But, nature being not enough for man)  
Soars higher than the eagle, than the hawk  
And doesn't even wonder that he can

At 30,000 feet up in the sky  
Behold! The mite of man who's learned to fly

## Elegy for my Father

My father's dead, I got the news today  
He was fit for a man of seventy nine  
And we all thought that he was doing fine  
A sudden stroke just took his life away

Nine grandkids, seven kids, a loving wife  
The buildings that he built, the war he won  
One has to say, when all is said and done  
He led a fruitful and rewarding life

I went walking through the Old Town Square  
Here in this ancient, European town  
And saw the tourists looking all around  
At all the tourist trinkets that are there

I saw boys dressed up like girls and girls like clowns  
Ringing bells and asking me for change  
Laughing, and perhaps they found it strange  
That I wept as I tossed in a couple crowns

With every step we take, each single breath  
It's reaffirmed: Life doesn't stop for death

## Perhaps

Perhaps the bird who's singing in the trees  
Doesn't see himself as wild and free  
But a diligent defender of the nest  
Because that is the place he loves the best

Perhaps the reason turtles move so slow  
Is that they really have no place to go  
Perhaps they're shy, and life inside their shell  
Is comfortable, and suits them very well

Perhaps the fish that's swimming in the sea  
Knows nothing of what was, or what will be  
A limited existence, we might say  
But for the little fish, perhaps, O.K.

Perhaps there is a reason things are so  
I say perhaps, of course, 'cause I don't know

## Dangerous Elements

The amber fields of gently waving grain  
Vast, majestic, beautiful and still  
Until the wind comes sweeping down the plain  
Howling, and with clear intent to kill

The angry sky is storming 'cross the ground  
Consuming everything that's in its course  
It spins around and faster spins around  
Till it becomes a solid wall of force

The forest fires leap from tree to tree  
Tectonic plates can split the ground in two  
The rolling river rises steadily  
It seems that there is little we can do

Earth and water, fire and raging air  
These are still things of which we should beware

## The Inherent Futility of Poetry

The poet's job is futile, for, at best  
Only other poets are impressed  
The quest, from the beginning, is absurd  
To think we can define the world with words

A stream does not require words to flow  
The plants do not require words to grow  
The Sun, without our words, would shine as bright  
And still be hidden from our eyes at night

And how much less the sentiments we feel  
Need our hollow words to make them real  
Love and passion, sorrow, fear and rage  
Gain nothing from expression on the page

They have been with us from the dawn of time  
Though languages have changed, and feeble rhymes  
Dissove into a meaningless refrain  
That makes the very effort seem insane

Still, I present to you the world I see  
In all its madness and absurdity

## **Dawn and Dusk**

Though different both in meaning and in name  
The dawn and dusk look very much the same  
An optimistic pink Atlantic hue  
Foreshadowing the deep Pacific blue

Think of them as covers to a book  
Open it at dawn and take a look  
The letters are quite clear and plain to see  
Though most of us just scan, and never read

Letters forming words in plants that grow  
Expressing in a way they seem to know  
The sunlight spells it out so very plain  
In phrases which describe the magic chain

A consciousness is flowing in the streams  
There, for us to see, in golden beams

## **Earthly Powers**

We have within our hearts both love and hate  
The power to destroy or to create  
Destruction is the easier of the two  
And seems to be what we prefer to do

We have a thumb so we can grasp and clutch  
Manipulate and change the things we touch  
The touch of man is felt across the land  
As greedy eyes are fed by willing hands

We have within our minds the power to plan  
Just what will be the future state of man  
Homelessness and famine, war and woe  
There is no law that says it must be so

The world could be a better kind of place  
If we but willed that that should be the case

## Sonnet on Buckminster Fuller's Definition of Fire

The leaves absorb their living from the sun  
A process that is hard to comprehend  
Of energy to matter, but the end  
Results a standing forest when they're done

A forest filled with trees that grow and die  
And leave their scattered trunks upon the ground  
Abandoned treasure, waiting to be found  
We gather logs to put them on the fire

Fire flies, it's such a pretty sight  
From logs and twigs and other burning things  
As curved and graceful as a Phoenix' wings  
The flames are flying up into the night

Each curving wingtip shoots a spray of sparks  
Like champagne bubbles rising in a glass  
Their brief illumination soon will pass  
Their heat disperses in the cold and dark

The sun, which was wrapped up inside a tree  
Unwraps itself, and once again is free

## In Photographs

In photographs we keep upon the shelves  
In heroes we portray in films and books  
In each reflective surface that we look  
We seek a sharper image of ourselves

But should we wish for more than just a glance  
And dare to leave the valley of the blind  
We must accept the image that we find  
We have to be prepared to take a chance

Reality itself is not so bad  
Our imperfections only give us some  
Things for us to try and overcome  
There is no point at all in getting mad

When imperfections fail to disappear  
We can't, in fairness, blame it on the mirror

## Restraint

How often have we slowly walked away  
Pondering the thing we meant to say  
And looking back with retroactive dread  
Upon the thing we actually said?

Things are different now in cyberspace  
Because we are not meeting face to face  
We can think a bit before we write  
We mostly don't but, nonetheless, we might

While scrolling through the comments on the screen  
So many are so ignorant and mean  
False assumptions, hate and blatant lies  
The trick is to compose a good reply

“Fuck you, retard!” Sounds O.K. at first  
But out of all our choices, it's the worst

## Smoothed Glass

A broken bottle left upon the beach  
Small and jagged pieces scattered 'round  
Lying with the pebbles on the ground  
Left carelessly within Poseidon's reach

Garbage left at Paradise's door  
Granted time and tide and left alone  
The waves will turn the glass to polished stone  
Green as jade and glistening on the shore

The mother's touch is there in every breeze  
As paper turns to pulp in pelting rain  
And grass breaks through the sidewalk once again  
The wind will brush the soot from off the trees

The magpie and the beetle and the ant  
Will do their part, not knowing what they do  
To clear the old, and make way for the new  
And fire and flood will finish what they can't

Though scars run deep and wounds are very real  
Earth will survive us and, in time, will heal

## In Memoriam

We saw the flames, the smoke and the debris  
But did not feel the sidewalk as it shook  
We only had the pictures that they took  
As filtered through the screen of our TV

We didn't breathe the clouds of rolling dust  
We didn't feel the panic in the air  
We do not bear the burden of despair  
That all the victim's families now must

We sat, transfixed, and listened to the news  
The newsmen soon ran out of things to say  
We called our friends to see they were O.K.  
There wasn't that much else that we could do

Words of sorrow never will erase  
The horror and the grief, perhaps instead  
We should dedicate our living to the dead  
And try to make the world a better place

Today, the unbelievable is true  
But life goes on, 'cause what else can it do?

## **That Bloody Flag**

I'm American, and I am ashamed  
When I hear the stupid things that people say  
A couple thousand dead'll be O.K.  
You seem to think that it's some kind of game

Those are real people that you plan to kill  
Real bodies will be lying in the street  
Real burns upon real skin won't look so neat  
As the CNN half hour version will

You wave your flags and talk a lot of crap  
About our great, heroic, fighting boys  
Playing with their billion dollar toys  
As you move your pins around a paper map

I see a wave of flags across the sky  
And know that children are about to die

## **Plato's Cave Revisited**

How fortunate our history begins  
Upon a world which, neat as clockwork, spins  
We see our world, as lighted by the sun  
The fine detail with which the work was done

And then, at night, the blinding light goes out  
And certainty gives way to dark and doubt  
But yet, though all the world may be concealed  
It's then that vast eternity's revealed

We get a new perspective of our place  
By looking on the sea of time and space:  
The Yin and Yang, the in and out, the two  
It's fortunate that we have had this view

Our vision is no better than our sight  
Obscured by dark, or blinded by the light

## Valentine's Day

Upon this very arbitrary day  
When every husband has to find a way  
To show the flame of love's still burning true  
I do not know what I can give to you

I don't have cash to buy a diamond ring  
A necklace or some other blingy thing  
To show you that you are my special girl  
The banks have all the money in the world

Every day, there's so much that you give  
Without you, I don't know how I would live  
And yet, this little poem will have to do  
To let you know how much I treasure you

Upon this day I pledge to you, my wife  
My heart is yours, and will be all my life

## Hollywood and Mulholland Drive

The candles give the meaning to the cake  
The pine trees are reflected in the lake  
Each generation resurrects the last  
The future is a mirror of the past

A classic work performed upon the stage  
Reflects what is reflected on the page  
Words so poignant, music so sublime  
Are not decreased with distance or with time

The image of the whole that meets the eye  
As chaos yields to order by-and-by  
When looking at the city from a height  
The clutter of the day erased by night

A bright reflection of the cosmic plan  
A sky of stars spread out across the land

## A Single Grain of Sand

A single grain of sand has little weight  
The most that it can do is irritate  
Somewhere inside your shorts that's hard to reach  
But lots of them make up a lovely beach

Snow requires more than just one flake  
A single word does not a novel make  
A single thread does not create a net  
A solitary voice a choir, but yet

The quality of each and every one  
Affects the whole, when all is said and done  
A single rotten plank can ruin a boat  
And make it quite impossible to float

You cannot have a money making store  
Whose shelves are stocked with useless rubbish, or  
A healthy forest made of sickly trees  
People are a lot like that, if we

Were all just slightly better than we are  
The world would be a better place by far

## To a Newborn

I don't recall at all when I was born  
My first impressions of this crazy world  
What sights before my virgin eyes unfurled  
I don't recall a single thing before

I was four, or maybe even five  
I don't remember learning how to walk  
I don't remember learning how to talk  
Or the moment I first knew I was alive

And now we see you at that early stage  
You look at us and don't know who we are  
In fact, you don't know anything so far  
Your mind an as yet unimprinted page

The slate is blank; the screen is free and clear  
But, 1st impressions mean a lot, we know  
And we trust you'll understand them as you grow  
You'll see it in our faces, and you'll hear

It in our voices, feel it in our touch  
Your parents love you very, very much

## Sudoku

Sudoku puzzles are a lot of fun

987654321

The symmetrical arrangement of the squares

Every number fits in there somewhere

Some people (I confess I am not one)

Arrange their lives like that, and get things done

A place for everything within their space

And all those things fit neatly into place

It takes all kinds to make a world, Lord knows

And it's a better method, I suppose

But things arranged in lines are rather tame

And leave us yearning for the burning flame

The howling of the wind, the crashing waves

These are the things the human spirit craves

## If There's a God

If there's a God, then how can we explain

This world of evil, suffering and pain

Fear and famine, hate, disease and war?

Why are some folks rich, and others poor?

It isn't quite convincing just to say

The big guy works in strange and secret ways

If this is what he does with total power

It's safe to say his motives aren't ours

But still, we have the forests and the streams

And the better world we're building in our dreams

Could be that he exists and doesn't care

Or it could be he really isn't there

In this, as in a random universe

Things could be better, or they could be worse

## Dear CNN

You didn't want the pictures to be seen  
Of mangled bodies lying in the sand  
It wasn't suited to the family screen  
In living rooms across our Christian land

Interviews with soldiers were O.K.  
Images to fill our souls with pride  
Those friendly faces from the U.S.A.  
Who could deny that God was on our side?

And now they say it's over and we won  
We should be proud, we should be standing tall  
It's time for celebration and for fun  
'Cause it was fairly easy, after all

Without the pictures, fresh, inside our heads  
How quickly we forget about the dead

## Centigrade

At two degrees, the rain comes pelting down  
The leaves are gone; the trees are stark and bare  
That, months ago, were full and green and fair  
The sky is gray, the earth a muddy brown

The people run for shelter from the rain  
And cringe to feel its cold and clammy touch  
Slightly warmer wouldn't matter much  
But slightly colder, then you see a change

The chilling drops turn into crystal flakes  
Pretty, soft and gentle, almost dry  
That fall like slow confetti from the sky  
Amazing, what a difference it makes

At zero, nature goes into reverse  
And things get better, once they've gotten worse

## January

I feel a cold wind blowing from the west  
Whose bitter breath will turn the world to stone  
The kind of cold that chills you to the bone  
If you're outside, no matter how you're dressed

The bright and hopeful summer faded fast  
A time of laughter and a time of fun  
A time of hope, when things were getting done  
We should have known it was too good to last

The rings of power all have been secured  
The emperor, his congress and his court  
Now rule, without dissent, and will resort  
To any means, so power is assured

The wind is blowing, it's dark and scary  
Hell will freeze over, this January

## Mandela

We had the first snow of the year today  
Appropriate, it marked the moment when  
A legendary leader passed away  
The world will never be the same again

Born into a hot and troubled land  
He studied hard and always did his best  
To get along in life and understand  
Became a lawyer, helping the oppressed

For 27 years he was in jail  
But through it all stayed faithful to his cause  
They limited his visits and his mail  
But in the end he won and changed the laws

He left hope that we can live together  
In all lands and in all kinds of weather

## Family of Man

Scientists have recently revealed  
A bit of human genealogy  
From way, way back in our prehistory  
Which prior to this point had been concealed

From tracing back our DNA they know  
One man was the granddaddy of us all  
In Africa, a long, long time ago  
Back when the human gene pool was still small

There were other lines he interbred with  
Some, perhaps, are with us to this day  
But everybody who you go to bed with  
Is related to you in some way

From this, the thing we need to understand  
Is that we are a family of man

## Enter the Garbagemen

The garbagemen are up before the dawn  
We hear the clashing gears and then the whine  
The clash of gears again, and then they're gone  
Then we go back to bed and all is fine

In the country it's the cock who crows  
At first perception of the coming dawn  
Some people rise, but they're still moving slow  
And there are beads of dew upon the lawn

These scenes, repeating, constant as a GIF  
The line of light moves forward zone by zone  
So steadily it almost seems as if  
It's the lighting of the stage that sets the tone

The sky is changing color as we spin  
And this is how another day begins

## Waking Up Slow

I take my time re-entering real time  
If you wake up and jump right out of bed  
You shatter what was tranquil and sublime  
The memory of the dream falls from your head

We close our weary eyes at night to sleep  
Our image of the world is redefined  
The outside world does not go down that deep  
What we can see is all inside our mind

Sometimes we see, again, our childhood face  
We may have conversations with the dead  
Our actions aren't proscribed by time and space  
Sometimes we are someone else instead

It's wonderful, I'd rather not let go  
And that is why I'd rather wake up slow

## The Worst Thing about Littering

People should be somewhat more ashamed  
At all the garbage lying on the ground  
There's none but human beings can be blamed  
For all the crap that's scattered all around

Apple cores and stuff will blend right in  
Feed the insects, all part of the chain  
Scraps of paper that never reach the bin  
Eventually are broken down by rain

Plastic bottles, butts of cigarettes  
Look like they're a scalp disease of grass  
We find the sight a bit disturbing, yet  
Eventually, the groundskeeper will pass

BUT, a plastic bag caught up in a tree  
Can stay up there for all eternity

## Inevitability

Moving, moving everywhere we go  
A conga line of farting, metal beasts  
Sometimes stopped, and sometimes moving slow  
Two lanes, from North to South, from West to East

They never stop; they roll by night and day  
And have been ever since, at least, my birth  
Obliviously smiling on their way  
While sucking up the juices of the Earth

Which scientists have told us, there's no doubt  
Every minute, every single mile  
We're closer to the oil running out  
And they've been saying this for quite a while

When we run out of oil, by and by  
Everybody's going to act surprised

## Mustek

Trudging through the corridor at Mustek  
The daily hordes of people bravely march  
Hurriedly, and you can hear their shoes peck  
Peck, peck, peck they echo around the arch

Some of them are ambling, most just gotta  
Get to work, a meeting, or a class  
It's an everyday spartakiada  
The individuals make up the mass

Like the power of a raging river  
Like a current surging through a wire  
Alone, we don't have that much to deliver  
All together, we're as fierce as fire

This people power is quite exciting  
On the other hand, a little frightening

## CWTC7

Admittedly, I'm not an engineer  
An architect or anything like that  
But, nonetheless, to me it seems quite clear  
Upright columns don't get squashed down flat

They fall down to the left or to the right  
They are not pancakes, that's a lot of crap  
They don't get zapped and vanish from our sight  
There had to have been something made them snap

Building 7 was not so far away  
And not built quite the same as 1 and 2  
But just the same, upon that fateful day  
Fell straight down (as buildings seldom do)

Two planes could not have made 3 buildings fall  
That just does not make any sense at all

### **In the Land of Metaphors**

A seed can be a metaphor for birth  
The night can be a metaphor for death  
A word can be worth more than what it's worth  
The wind can be a metaphor for breath

Or for change, as it sweeps across the land  
The birds that surf its wave are metaphors  
They stretch their wings out to their fullest span  
We watch them and our own self-image soars

The path starts in this world in which we're caught  
It is laid out like stones across a stream  
The other side is in the world of thought  
We do our best to navigate the dream

We draw the map, so that we can explore  
We jump from metaphor to metaphor

## The Leering Poet

There is a world contained inside each mind  
Not bound by laws of physicality  
Unique and individually designed  
Different versions of reality

But as we live and breathe in time and space  
We're always seeking hoping that we'll find  
A magic portal or an interface  
Enlightenment, so we will be less blind

The words we speak, or put upon the page  
Are a door between these worlds, a link  
They are a point, a step, a crucial stage  
In making real the thoughts we merely think

The leering poet's standing by the gate  
Hey! Come on, people. Let's communicate.

## Dreamers and Poets

You're late to class, and you're not wearing pants  
The monster chases you right off a cliff  
You meet a kangaroo who wants to dance  
The scene plays out inside your minds as if

Things could turn into other things at will  
Suddenly a flower becomes a fire  
A flaming surge of passion, it's a thrill  
And a beacon of your true desire

Everything we see inside our mind  
Behind our eyes, when they are closed at night  
Represents the things we're trying to fight  
On our endless journey into the night

Juggling symbols, metaphors, and memes  
It seems we all are poets, in our dreams

## Respect

Most modern poets have disdain for rhyme  
And some treat meter with contempt as well  
They seem to think tradition is a crime  
But here I am, and they can go to hell

You take away these things, and all you've got  
Is someone talking, just a bunch of words  
They say that it's a poem, but it's not  
More than random phrases we all have heard

The things that people say when people meet  
Some rambling sentences where they digress  
The things that people shout across the street  
Can that be poetry? O.K., I guess

Call it what you like, then, I'm not fighting  
But what do you call what I am writing?

## Viral Smiles

To smile, or not to smile, you have a choice  
Of course, a bit depends upon your mood  
But in your choice of mood you have a voice  
And that depends upon your attitude

It may seem hypocritical, a bit  
To smile when your mood is dark and gray  
And everything you had has turned to shit  
But it will help to get you through the day

And like the maple seed upon the breeze  
Like Nutella on a piece of bread  
A smile is just as pleasant as you please  
Both easily and very swiftly spread

Just flex a couple muscles in your face  
And you can make the world a better place

## **New World**

The thoughts that are contained inside my head  
Do not have color, texture, scent, or weight  
Or anything that's physical, instead  
They exist within a different state

That which we think of as imaginary  
Fantastic, metaphorical, sublime  
Is becoming real, its presence carries  
Into physical space, and current time

Our fingers hit the keyboard and they send  
Our minds constructions out into the air  
A thin, but never ending thread that tends  
To form a link with other threads out there

These interlinking threads soon form a net  
And that's about as real as real can get

## **Sweet Spot**

Some people spend a lot of time in cars  
Some the great outdoors, exotic places  
Some inhabit dark and smoky bars  
But millions spend their days in office spaces

Clean, so very clean, so stark, so bright  
A total contrast to most people's flats  
The pictures on the walls lined up just right  
No piles of dirty clothes, no shedding cat

The girls in cubicles, all in a line  
The cute receptionist, who smiles so sweet  
Their typing fingers, manicured so fine  
Oh, what I'd give, to be in their spread sheets

Intended for the art of making money  
Nonetheless, most offices ooze honey

## The Pace of Progress

Every day, at quite a frightful pace  
Scientists find new planets out in space  
Another thing they're finding frequently  
Is different forms of life beneath the sea

Artificial eyes to help the blind  
Computers that are merging with the mind  
New paradigms are coming into play  
Almost each and every single day

3-D printers and elevated trains  
Above the fields of amber, waving grain  
Each new thing that we find fits into place  
The scope increases, and so does the pace

When we reach information overload  
Will civilization flower, or explode?

## Ballet Lessons

I drop my daughter off at ballet class  
And then I have about an hour to wait  
To master the sweet art of how to pass  
This surplus patch of time would be real great

My kindle has some books I haven't read  
But machines don't like me very much, you know  
It's always then the batteries go dead  
Coincidence? Somehow, I don't think so

Some can just sit and sit and blankly stare  
To me, that is a tragedy, a sin  
Life is too short; there is no time to spare  
Empty moments beg to be filled in

If I can write a couple decent lines  
It won't have been a total waste of time

## Breakfast

Two eggs that look like daisies on a plate  
Two thick slabs of tender, succulent ham  
Two pieces toast, and that works out just great  
One to mop up the yolks and one for jam

Some fried potatoes, hot and golden brown  
To break the fast, and feed our human greed  
Before we struggle with the world around  
It's coffee; it's the coffee that we need

Praise the pig as you consume his flesh!  
The amber fields of grain that grew the flour!  
Praise the eggs, for they are new and fresh!  
From all of this, we draw our daily power

To face the day, to deal with what is real  
Breakfast is my very favorite meal

## The Universe Inside Your Head

I see your face; I look into your eyes  
They are the windows of the soul, it's said  
No way! No matter how hard I might try  
I cannot see the thoughts inside your head

The curtains drawn, there's nothing we can see  
Behind the barrier of skin and skull  
In that forbidden city, all is free  
Non-physical, unbound, dynamic, full

The body's just a vehicle we use  
Hands to gesture with, and a mouth to speak  
With so much we could say, why do we choose  
To keep our words so mild and so meek?

The world in which we live is incomplete  
When we speak out, two universes meet

## Manifesto

The perfect world we're trying to create  
Quite humbly I submit, we should resolve  
To, as best we can, approximate  
The natural one, on which we all evolved

The water that is flowing in the streams  
Should be crystal clear and fit to drink  
The golden past inspires our present dreams  
And to the golden future is a link

As we grow up we still must feel our roots  
Biology cannot be put aside  
The herbs, the grains, the vegetables, the fruit  
Should grow in great abundance far and wide

The air should not be filled with toxic fumes  
We should be able to enjoy the breeze  
We can choose a future dark and gloomy  
Or we can choose a future filled with trees

To make the future sunny, bright, and breezy  
Actually, should be rather easy

## The Lure of Femininity

I do not understand why girls like boys  
We're dirty, crude, and sometimes not too bright  
We're indiscrete; we make a lot of noise  
Aggressive, and some even like to fight

But women, oh, a woman's skin is smooth  
The merest touch is heavenly delight  
Their soft and flowing hair, the way they move  
A little to the left and to the right

Boys don't look at paintings on the walls  
We piss upon the flowers in the park  
Sometimes, we need a respite from it all  
A bit of light in all that's mean and dark

Around the world, in every town and city  
Boys love girls because they are so pretty

## City of Art

Writers walk around its neighborhoods  
Photographers take photographs like mad  
Some of them, sometimes, create something good  
And we can just ignore whatever's bad

There are galleries everywhere you go  
And some of them are restaurants and cafés  
There are events where living artists show  
The work that they are working on that day

The art of architecture's everywhere  
Bands make music in the pubs after dark  
There are buskers in the city's squares  
And the birds are singing sweetly in the park

Here, there is a certain atmosphere  
That inspires us to something higher  
Especially at night, the light shines clear  
On the gold and silver domes and spires

Most cities just exist, but have no heart  
Prague, sweet Prague, is a city made of art